

Workers' comp

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"He's usually diagnosed with the same problem others have had, lower back. He'll go out on workers comp and end up suing with the same attorney others have used."

Despite the occasional flash points, Heacock reports workers' comp insurance costs are much less of a problem than health insurance, which has climbed 30 percent annually the last five years.

"We've changed insurance carriers three or four times during that period," he said.

Pro-active safety programs are the main reasons AGC and Club Corp. have been able to control workers' comp costs, Heacock and Faubion agreed.

"We mandate monthly safety meetings for our entire mainte-

nance staff," Heacock said. "And we promote a company culture of caring about our employees. We want to take care of potential problems before they threaten employees."

"Our insurance carriers help with that training. They provide materials and even representatives to discuss certain issues at safety meetings."

Club Corp. has established a safety program and holds frequent employee safety meetings, Faubion said. "We try to protect employees with safety equipment and make sure they use it," Faubion said. "Eye protectors and lifting belts help."

Vickers, Kopplin form management firm

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — Vickers-Kopplin and Associates, a new golf management and consulting firm, has moved into the golf marketplace bearing a "unique" approach to course development.

After a decade of developing courses in Arizona and Colorado, Michael Vickers and Richard Kopplin have pooled their resources to bring what they term "a comprehensive and unique perspective to golf course operations."

Both men were involved in

development of Castle Pines near Denver, Desert Highlands and Desert Mountain, both in Scottsdale. Kopplin's expertise lay on the club operations side, while Vickers focused on the marketing and real estate sales in all three developments.

"We have been very excited about the response to our company in the marketplace," said Kopplin. "We have supervised construction of a \$13 million, 52,000-square-foot clubhouse and the opening of three (Jack) Nicklaus-signature courses."

"We have also set up successful sales and marketing programs for them and have been very involved in all three communities as president of the homeowners associations and serving on the design review committees."

"We started the company in early 1992 and we have been retained by Desert Mountain in a consulting role," Kopplin continued. "We also have been assisting Lyle Anderson in planning his new facilities in Santa Fe, N.M."

Club Corp.

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Williams. "There have been a lot of investors up there who were enamored of the real-estate possibilities, just like here. They thought it was easy."

"Our three new clubs just need to straighten themselves out."

Enter Club Corp., which has experience in righting wayward clubs in the midst of recession.

"When Houston took its dip a few years ago, we picked up market share because we're seen as a solid, conservative influence," said Williams.

"Recession, for us, hurts operating business. But in terms of new business and opportunity, we grow externally. We actually grew during the worst recessionary times because of the stable-influence factor."

The next recessionary frontier, as it were, may be Canada.

Traditionally, Canadian business trends mirror those of its southern neighbor. And if Canada has even one-fifth the number of courses crippled by ill-conceived real estate ventures, Club Corp. is more than willing to listen.

Further, banks north of the border are still willing to make money available, said Williams.

"Before it was, 'Who's turn is it to go to Canada?'"

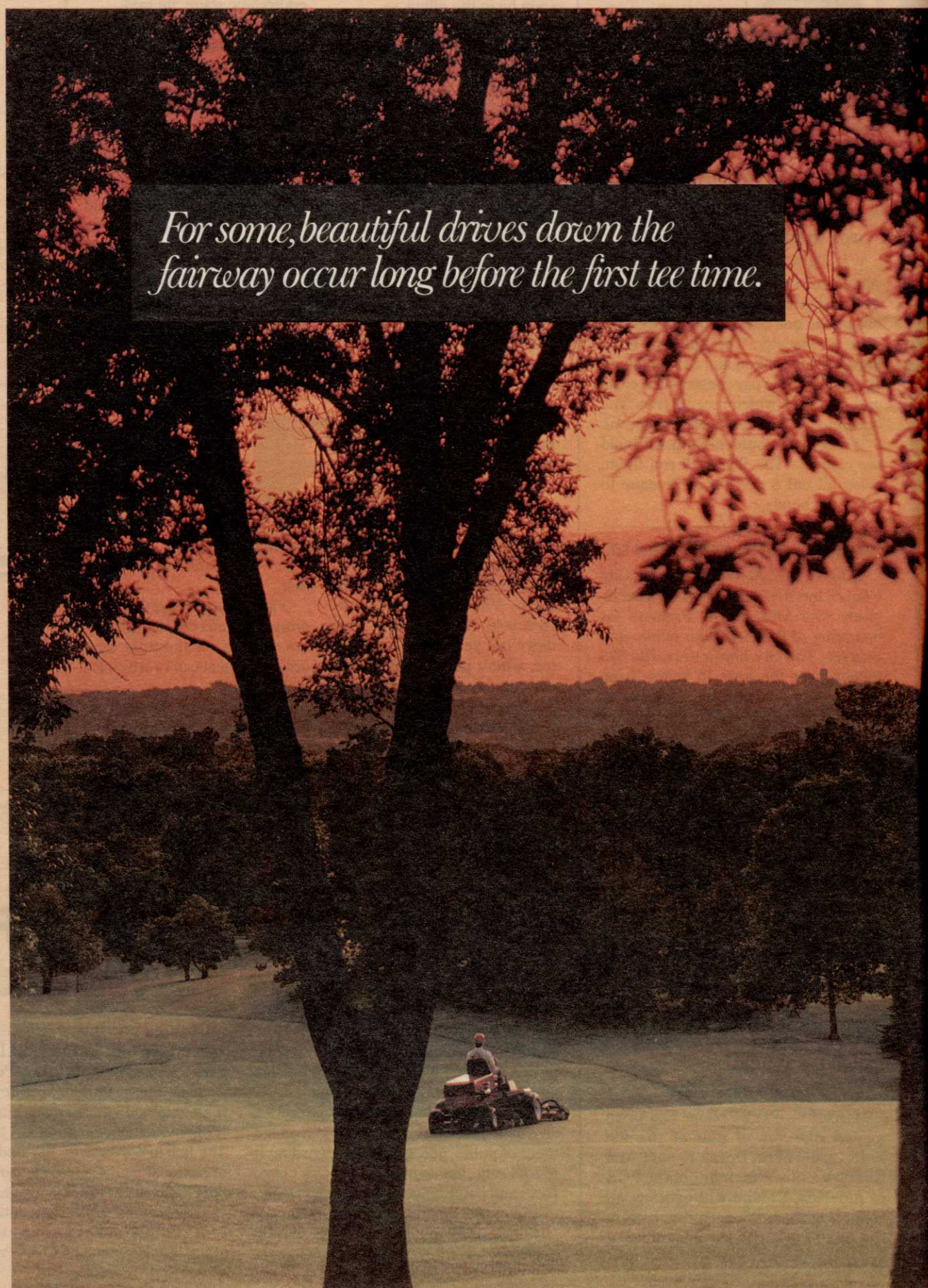
"But we have put some of our best people up there, and we want to demonstrate that we can be as successful in the Canadian market as we are in the U.S. market."

GCN conference

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Shook, Hardy & Bacon; Ken James, senior vice president for golf operations at American Golf Corp.; William Irwin, president of Golf West Companies; and Tim Sedgely, superintendent at Royal Melbourne Golf Course

For more information, call the *Golf Course News* conference group at 207-846-0600.



For some, beautiful drives down the fairway occur long before the first tee time.