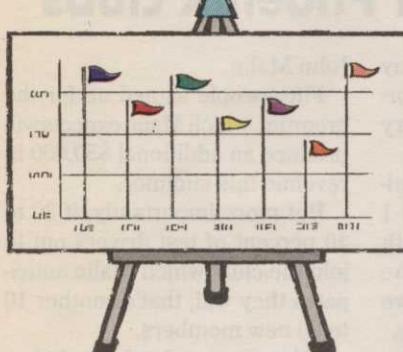


BRIEFS



CCA ADDS FOUR

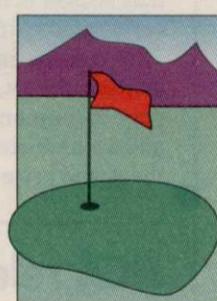
Club Corporation of America recently added four country clubs to its roster of more than 200 national and international clubs. CCA acquired Monarch Country Club in Stuart, Fla., and Falcon Point Country Club in Houston. CCA will manage member-owned Cliffside Country Club in Simsbury, Conn., and Braeburn Country Club in Houston.

RTC SELLS RIVERS EDGE

SUN CITY CENTER, Fla. — Florida Design Communities was scheduled in mid-July to purchase Rivers Edge Yacht & Country Club in Fort Myers from the Resolution Trust Corp. River's edge is a 547-acre gated community with an 18-hole golf course. Improvements are planned to the par-72 layout. This latest acquisition brings the number of golf holes operated by FDC to 171, making it one of the largest golf companies in the Southeast.

IBS TEAMS WITH GOLF ENTERPRISES

Integrated Business Systems of Richmond, Va., has signed a contract with Santa Monica, Calif.-based Golf Enterprises to develop, install and maintain a financial management system for all 25 of its courses and corporate headquarters. All GolfEnterprises facilities should be automated by spring 1994. Jay Livingood has joined IBS as director of marketing. Livingood was previously VP of Forecast Golf Marketing.



AGC ACCEPTS UNIVERSAL GOLF TICKET

American Golf Corp. recently opted to accept the Universal Golf Ticket at 100 of its facilities, bringing the number of participating courses in the corporate premium program to 500. The Universal Golf Ticket is used as a gift enabling the recipient to exchange it for one round of golf at a participating facility. Corporate Sports Incentives of Merrimack, N.H., operates the program.

CONTINENTAL BUYS BROKEN WOODS

Continental Golf Corp. of Minneapolis has purchased Broken Woods Golf Club in Coral Springs, Fla. Textron Financial Corp. provided funding for the acquisition of the suburban Ft. Lauderdale facility. Continental Golf also operates Wedgewood Golf Club in St. Paul, Minn., and Big Creek Golf Club in Memphis, Tenn.



Executive courses: Gems by any other name, deserving a better fate

By MARK LESLIE

First, trash the name "executive" golf course. Second, build in playing conditions comparable to championship-length tracks. Third, incorporate it with a variety of other practice and playing options. Then you have an executive golf course that will thrive, not take a dive.

That's the belief of owners, golf directors and designers involved in golf facili-

ties that carry the moniker — some say misnomer — "executive."

"In my opinion, executive golf courses are one of the greatest things ever dreamed up," said course architect Tom Fazio of Jupiter, Fla. "Unfortunately, they failed. They weren't accepted in the marketplace."

Fazio's death warrant for these facilities may be premature. But the failure of so many

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Casper's cure: Don't confuse golf 'the game' with golf 'the business'

By PETER BLAIS

"We run golf facilities like the businesses they truly are."

That simple philosophy, espoused by Marketing Director Rich Katz, is the cornerstone of Billy Casper Golf Management.

Too often golf *the game* is confused with golf *the business*. And the result, according to Katz, is potentially profitable ventures teetering on the brink of financial ruin.

"We take a business-like approach to a club's situation and strike a balance between the bottom line and member services," Katz said.

Founded in 1989, BCGM is a full-service company that can provide complete operation and marketing activities to all types of golf facilities. The Vienna, Va.-based firm specializes in devising and implementing workshops for clubs experiencing financial difficulties.

BCGM has been in the news lately for developing derived investment values of former Landmark Land Co. golf properties the Resolution Trust Corp. auctioned off



Billy Casper

last month in Dallas. Even with the greater-than-expected interest in the auction, the properties sold within 10 percent of Casper's figures.

"It was comforting for us to see that our valuations were consistent with what investors thought the properties were worth," said Vice President of Operations William Ochsenhirt III, who was heavily involved in the property valuations.

Casper has also made news for recent membership solicitations (adding 30 members in 30 days at Swan Point Yacht & Country Club in Issaquah, Md.) and successful conversions from daily-fee to semi-private courses (selling 45 memberships at former daily-fee Goose Creek Golf Club in Leesburg, Va. in just two months).

"The key [with any daily-fee to semi-private conversion] is striking a nice balance between outing, member and public play. For some clubs, that's a real problem," Katz said.

In addition to Swan Point and Goose Creek, BCGM is involved in Cedar Crest Country Club in Centerville, Va.; Cranbury (N.J.) Golf Club; Holly Hills Country Club in Frederick, Md.; Kiln Creek Golf & Country Club in Newport News, Va.; Stoneleigh Golf Club in Round Hill, Va.; Loch Ledge Golf Club in Yorktown Heights, N.Y.; WestWinds Country Club in Frederick,

This story is the first in an occasional series featuring golf course management companies. We invite management firms to send us information on their businesses for possible use in future articles. Address any correspondence to Peter Blais, Golf Course News, PO Box 997, Yarmouth, ME 04096.

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Public Golf '93 set for Nov. 14-16 at Wild Dunes

YARMOUTH, Maine — *Golf Course News* has announced dates and location for "Public Golf '93." Sponsored by *Golf Course News*, the program will be held Nov. 14-16, at the Wild Dunes Resort in Charleston, S.C.

This year's conference will also mark the inaugural Editor's Tournament, a golf tournament to be played Sunday morning on the Links Course at Wild Dunes. The dramatic seaside layout was designed by Tom Fazio and is routinely rated among the top 100 courses in the nation.

"Managers of public golf courses need to continue to learn and apply powerful results-oriented business tools to run their operations" said Hal Phillips, *Golf Course News* editor and program chair.

"Last year's conference received rave reviews — and met a real need in the golf course industry."

The national two-day conference is designed for course managers, owners, operators, and

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The underestimation of executives

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has raised concern.

"Developers built them for the wrong reasons. They wanted to get by with building some kind of golf form, and they didn't build in quality. They cut corners," Fazio said.

"The ones that have failed were glorified par-3s," declared designer Mike Hurdzan of Columbus, Ohio. "They were done out of ignorance. People tried to build holes that were only 300 yards long and they didn't take the time or money to build them correctly. To build one correctly, it's not a great deal less expensive than a full-sized golf course. The only thing you're leaving out is length of fairways. And that only accounts for \$3,000 or \$4,000 per acre in construction costs. By leaving out 50 to 75 acres of fairways you're only spending \$200,000 to \$300,000 under what a full-sized golf course would cost."

Hurdzan also pointed to poor design and location as major reasons for failure of executive courses.

"One would fail if it is not close enough to its primary market: Seniors, women, juniors and families," he said. "They aren't going to drive very far... It's probably got to be a 15- to 20-minute drive away from your

Editor's note: The National Golf Foundation defines an executive course as "a shorter or compact version of the regulation-length course, with a total length of 4,000 to 5,200 yards... and a par rating of 58 to 66." A regulation course is longer than 5,200 yards and a par-3 track measures under 4,000 yards. There are approximately 830 executive courses in the United States.

demographic market and kids have to be able to ride their bikes to them.

"Courses that close will be wildly successful."

The operator of one of the most prosperous executive tracks in the world, Sandpiper Golf Course at Innisbrook Resort in Tarpon Springs, Fla., put his finger on his reasons for success and failure.

"If there are failures, one of the reasons is that they call them 'executive' courses," said Brent Wadsworth. "Think about the name. Is it something you would like to play on? It has the connotation of being short-yardage. Give it another name."

Wadsworth, who also owns Wadsworth Golf Construction Co., added that executive courses fail if they don't have a full range of playing conditions and if they stand alone.

"We found that, along with a shorter course, there should be two other facilities. One is an extensive driving range and practice putting area. The other is a regulation-length course."

Dennis Lyon, former president of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America and manager of golf for Aurora, Colo.'s four municipal courses, said his executive track fills a niche and gets a lot of play from beginning golfers, juniors and seniors. He said it gives a balance to the city's courses, which include a par-3, a standard municipal 18-hole facility and a championship 18.

"Give the course another name [than 'executive'], build an upgraded facility in terms of aesthetics and the elements that go into a contemporary course, add a driving range and practice putting area, and you can have just as good a facility as a championship course for inviting play," Wadsworth said. He added that his 27-hole Sandpiper plays as many rounds as his two highly rated championship layouts; and all three were designed by Larry Packard.

"No question [executive courses] have a position," Wadsworth said. "Not everybody wants to play a 6,500- or 7,000-yard golf course. And given all the other elements, we've found the average player and possibly senior player gravitate to that type of facility."

"The hardest golf courses in the city of Columbus to get a tee time on are executive golf courses..." Hurdzan said. "The pluses are enormous. First, you can build on 75 to 100 acres. Second, it appeals to a wider demographic audience. And they do well in resorts because a person can play in three or four hours, then go to the beach or mountains or whatever."

Hurdzan equated executive courses to the intermediate slopes in ski areas. "It's a great next step up" from the practice range and par-3 track, he said.

"One of my favorite courses I've ever done is an executive in Tequesta, Fla., called River Bend," said Fazio. "I'd have no problems taking any future client to that project and showing that as representative of my work... It is absolutely sensational golf."

Casper Golf Management sticks to the business of golf

Continued from page 31

Md.; St. Lucie Westin Port St. Lucie, Fla.; and Sully National Driving Range & Family Fun Center in Sterling, Va.

BCGM relies on an experienced executive staff with diverse business backgrounds.

Chief Executive Officer Peter Hill and President Robert Morris founded BCGM in 1989.

Hill, who directs day-to-day operations, has 18 years in golf management and financial service industries. Morris has two decades of sports marketing experience and built the golf division of Pro Serve, which represented such stars as basketball's Michael Jordan, baseball's Dave Winfield, tennis' Jimmy Connors as well as golfers Payne Stewart and Raymond Floyd.

Other key personnel include Senior Vice President of Operations F. Thomas Marty, a 25-year veteran of the golf business and recognized specialist in conducting successful membership solicitations; Ochsenhirt, a certified public accountant who formerly managed large real estate portfolios for Mason International Inc. and now oversees general financial operations of Casper-owned and managed firms; Regional Golf Operations Manager Alan Thomas, former director of acquisitions and capital projects for The Fairways Group before taking over daily operations of all BCGM golf properties; and Katz, a sports event marketing expert who manages BCGM club marketing and promotional activities.

On-site personnel are trained and directly managed by the executive team, whose members conduct regular site visits. Club members and owners are kept informed of activities and programs BCGM recommends undertaking.

Casper, the winner of more than 60 professional tournaments, is busy playing 30 to 35 weeks a year on the Senior PGA Tour.

"He's not actively involved in daily operations," Hill said. "We keep him apprised of what's happening and the direction the company is moving. He's primarily involved in a promoting and marketing role."

BCGM plans to continue growing, although no numerical goals have been set.

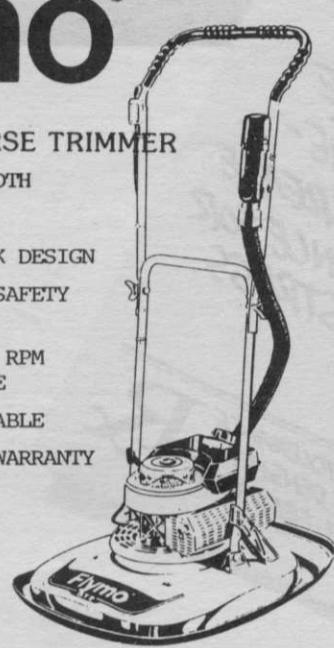
"If we do a good job, we'll get new projects by referral," Hill said.

As for the future, Hill sees the company becoming increasingly involved with the Wall Street investment and real estate firms who are playing a bigger and bigger role in the golf industry; joint venture partnerships; discreet membership assistance to private clubs; and practice facility development and management.

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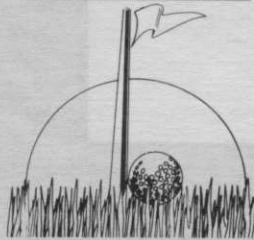
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