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GOLF COURSE NEWS

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Kolasa named new head of CMAA

By PETER BLAIS

The golf industry will find a knowledgeable ally in new Club Managers Association of America President Richard Kolasa.

"My experience with golf clubs is one of my main strengths. I've been involved with golf since 1963," said the general manager of Tucson, Ariz.'s Skyline Country Club. Kolasa will be elevated from vice president to the CMAA's highest office during late February's annual meeting in Nashville, Tenn.

One of the more interesting situations he's dealt with during that time involves the irrigation system at Skyline. While most Southwest U.S. courses have installed automated systems, Skyline still uses quick couplers.

"In the superintendent's mind, it's not a priority. If he came to me and asked for an automated system, I'd certainly consider it. But he's happy with the system he has. So we have two guys out there watering every night," Kolasa said.

Kolasa has been at Skyline since 1978. Before that he held similar posts at Blue Hills Country Club in Kansas City, Mo., Evansville (Ind.) Country Club and South Bend (Ind.) Country Club.

He graduated from Michigan State University in 1966, joined the CMAA in 1968 and became a certified manager in 1986. He

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Cape Cod study reinforced

New data confirms positive findings at sandy-soiled site

By PETER BLAIS

YARMOUTH, Mass. — Groundwater tests at a relatively new Cape Cod golf course substantiate many of the findings of the original Cape Cod study.

Stuart Cohen, director and author of the original Cape Cod study, said: "What the findings show is the minimum impact golf courses can have on ground water when an integrated pest manage-

ment program is used by an educated and experienced superintendent."

The initial Cape Cod investigation focused on four older courses. The feeling was that if pesticide contamination would be a problem anywhere, it would be on courses built long before today's strict environmental guidelines and in a place like Cape Cod, where sandy soil and a

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DEVELOPMENT DOWN UNDER
Asian-Pacific development is booming, as evidenced by no. 9 at the new Graham/Panks course, Turtle Point GC, in Repulse Bay, Queensland, Australia. For a report Golf Asia '93, see page 45.

IR-4 Project offers doomed chemicals a second chance

By HAL PHILLIPS

NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J. — Scientists at the Interregional Research Project No. 4 (IR-4 to the initiated) are beefing up their public relations effort. The golf industry stands to benefit from this campaign, especially those manufacturers of specialized chemicals that might not survive the 1997 reregistration deadline.

"The turf industry may have pesticide needs that we haven't heard about from our normal contacts," explained Dr. Richard Guest, director of the IR-4 Project. "Lack of industry awareness of what we can do is one of our chief concerns."

Conducted from Rutgers
Continued on page 48

Course-opening figures for 1992	Open	Under Construction	In Planning
Daily Fee	236	391	346
Municipal	51	91	92
Private	67	131	132
TBD*		3	10
Totals	354	616	580

* Type of facility to be determined Source: National Golf Foundation

Course openings up in '92: Experts see it as peak year

By HAL PHILLIPS

The National Golf Foundation has issued figures indicating 1992 was a record-setting year for golf course openings. Three-hundred and fifty-four is the tentative number — three more than the 1991 total, which had represented a 20-year high.

However, the 354 figure has generated little flag-waving in golf industry circles. Indeed, the general consensus among financial analysts, and the NGF itself, views 1992 as a peak year — after which a more reasonable, stable number of openings is expected.

"There's been a big, much publicized wave of activity, but the pipeline is a long one," said Don Rhodes, a vice president at Textron Financial Corp. "We're seeing the results of projects started in 1988-89. The

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NGF predicts 250 golf course openings a year through the 1990s

Continued from page 1

pipeline may be even longer than that."

Experts agree that local financing remains a viable source. But when larger lending institutions got skittish in 1990-91, the funds and corresponding construction abated. In essence, the approaching slowdown will reflect the lack of financing options during 1990 and 1991 — and the institutional lending community doesn't appear ready to get back on the horse.

"I'm afraid that lenders need to have some success in other areas before they warm to golf projects again. They need to feel comfortable again," said Gary Gilson, a partner in the Kansas City law firm of Shook, Hardy & Bacon, which specializes in golf course acquisition and divestiture.

"We anticipate 250 openings per year through this decade," said NGF Vice President Rick Norton. "Overall, the trend is going down somewhat. But I don't want to sound doom-and-gloomy because we're seeing golf much more realistically now — as a more publicly accessible, fiscally responsible unit.

"We're still going to see some pretty strong numbers in '93, but not like '92."

The NGF figures indicate that 236 daily-fee facilities opened their

doors during 1992. Fifty-one municipal courses were christened, while 67 private courses came on line. These figures, said Norton, do not include renovations or facilities gone bankrupt and subsequently reopened.

A more sobering figure might be the number of courses currently under construction, 616, which does not include projects that have been suspended due to lack of funding, said Norton. Once financing has been secured, it

takes about three years gain permitting for and construct a golf course. If you do the math, it's clear golf can't maintain a pace of 300-plus course openings per year.

It also appears that lower interest rates and a nation creeping out of recession are not enough to boost the dim financing picture.

"Golf is a funny business. It's not like putting up office buildings," said Rhodes. "It's not dependent on traditional market financing; never has been. You'd

think [the financing picture] would be getting better, but it isn't.

"Lenders tend to react with a lag. They will need institutional evidence for them to get back in. They're slow to get in and slow to get out."

"The RTC (Resolution Trust Corp.) needs to lighten up," said Gilson. "There isn't a lender out there who doesn't shudder when he sees a golf project in his portfolio."

Lending stagnation in the early

'90s has forced developers to seek all sorts of alternative sources. And while the Jones Trail in Alabama has intrigued many with its inventive use of state pension funds, industry experts agree that local equity financing will remain the most promising source of funds over the next few years.

"We tend to get caught up in the real sexy financing, pension funds, cooperatives and all that," said Norton. "But local financing is still the most dependable."

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Jones Trail at halfway point in Alabama

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — Alabama's Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail has reached the halfway point of completion, with nine of the 18 planned courses now open to the public.

Birmingham's Oxmoor Valley and Mobile's Magnolia Grove, two of the Trail's 54-hole facilities, are fully open, each with two championship courses and an 18-hole Short Course available for daily-fee play.

The Trail's other 54-hole facilities — Huntsville's Hampton Cove and Auburn-Opelika's Grand National — each has an 18-hole championship course open, with a second scheduled to open in 1993. Huntsville's Hampton Cove also recently opened its Short Course to area golfers.

"We are on schedule," said Bob Barrett, vice president of SunBelt Golf Corp. "With courses open at all our 54-hole facilities, golfers across Alabama can now enjoy a Robert Trent Jones-designed course. Since each course is distinctly different, golfers of all skill levels will be able to sharpen their game on the Trail."

In addition to four 54-hole facilities, the following three 36-hole facilities will open in 1993: Highland Oaks in Dothan, Silver Lakes in Calhoun County, and Cambrian Ridge in Greenville.