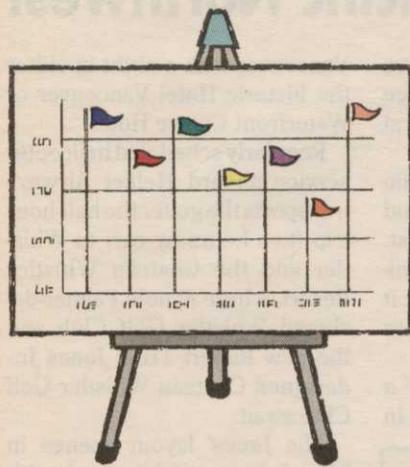


BRIEFS

**LUERSEN TO MANAGE THE WOODLANDS**

THE WOODLANDS, Texas — Tom Luersen has been promoted to managing director of The Woodlands Conference Center and Resort here. In his new position, Luersen is responsible for the overall management and operation of the conference center, including the Tournament Players Course at The Woodlands. Luersen joined The Woodlands in 1991 as director of operations. Prior to that, he served as resident manager at the Kingsmill Resort and Conference Center in Williamsburg, Va.

GREAT AMERICAN RELOCATES

DALLAS — Great American Clubs, Inc. has relocated its corporate offices here, according to President Paul John Daly. Note the new address and phone numbers: Great American Clubs, Inc., 3131 McKinney Ave., Suite 200, Dallas, Texas, 75204; telephone — 214-871-6070; fax — 214-871-3117.

CAMPBELL TO DIRECT GOLF ON LANAI

ISLAND OF LANAI, Hawaii — Gary H. Campbell has been named director of golf here. His responsibilities will include all aspects of administration and operation of the island's two resort courses: The Challenge at Manele (opening in December 1993) and The Experience at Koele. Campbell was most recently senior vice president of operations at Waikoloa Land Company in Kohala Coast.

BRADY TAKES OVER AT LEE'S HILL

FREDERICKSBURG, Va. — GolfSouth and Lee's Hill Partnership, owners of the Lee's Hill Golf Club here, have announced the appointment of Marc Brady as club manager and golf professional. Prior to joining Lee's Hill, Brady was head pro at Killlearn Country Club in Tallahassee, Fla., home of the PGA Sprint Classic.

GPA SECURES TWO CONTRACTS

HORSHAM, Pa. — Golf Property Analysts (GPA) has been retained by Commerce Bank, N.A., to perform a market value appraisal for the Talamore at Oak Terrace Country Club project here. Laurence Hirsh, GPA president, will direct and manage the project. Hirsh, a member of the Society of Golf Appraisers, added that GPA has been retained to provide appraisal services for the proposed Hartefeld National Golf Club in New Garden Township, Chester County, Pa.

NY Audubon to purchase Ocean Course for \$27 million

By HAL PHILLIPS

CHARLESTON, S.C. — With a bid of \$27,000,100, the Audubon Society of New York has entered the golf management business.

The not-for-profit organization based in Selkirk, N.Y., was the high, lone bidder for Pete Dye's Ocean Course on Kiawah Island, which had been developed by the failed Landmark Land Co. Audubon purchased the seaside masterpiece from Resolution Trust Co., the federal agency charged with selling off Landmark's former holdings. Federal bankruptcy court must still approve the sale.

Audubon was able to rustle up the \$27 million through its alliance with two investors: VIT, an arm of Richmond, Va.-based AMF Companies; and Kiawah Resort Associates, the owners of undeveloped residential land on Kiawah Island.

VIT had already purchased the Kiawah Island resort complex — save the Ocean Course — from the RTC in July. Because of the course's environmental sensitivity, the RTC was obligated to allow qualified conservation groups to bid separately on the Ocean Course, as stipulated by the Coastal Barrier Improvement Act.

"It's our belief at N.Y. Audubon that in order to do long-term good, we have to merge environmental ethic with the business world," said N.Y. Audubon President Ron Dodson. "We recognize that we can't run down to the local bank and withdraw \$27 million. It's not unusual for conservation groups to enter

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Kemper sees opportunity in ownership and management

By PETER BLAIS

Common wisdom these days holds that most of the profits are made in managing a golf course, while most of the risk is found in owning one.

That's why it's surprising to hear a management executive, particularly someone with the reputation of Kemper Sports Management's Douglas Schmidt, come down on the side of ownership over management.

"We're into owning, leasing and managing — in that order of preference," said the Northbrook, Ill.-based firm's president and chief operating officer. "With management contracts, if you do a great job, the owners eventually figure they don't need you. If you do a bad job, you don't deserve to be there."

"The only way to succeed is to be mediocre. None of the people here are interested in mediocrity."

Kemper is involved with 19 facilities. It

owns Royal Melbourne in Long Grove, Ill.; Crowfield Golf & Country Club in Goose Creek, S.C.; Pine Forest Country Club in Summerville, S.C.; Golf Club of West Virginia in Parkersburg; Carolina Springs Golf Club in Greenville, S.C.; and Holly Hills Country Club in Frederick, Md.

The company leases Kemper Lakes Golf Club in Long Grove; Patriots Point Links in Mt. Pleasant, S.C.; and the Chicago Park District's six golf courses and two driving ranges.

"We've vastly improved Chicago's properties already," Schmidt said of the lease agreement the company signed in April. Kemper has so far removed many of the asphalt (that's right) tees at many of the courses, professionally edged bunker faces, invested thousands of dollars in lightweight mowing equipment and improved the irrigation system at 18-hole Jackson Park. "We'll look at the

Continued on page 30

Dodson, Lesnik to speak at Public Golf '93



A TWO-DAY NATIONAL CONFERENCE DEDICATED TO THE NEEDS OF MANAGERS OF PUBLIC GOLF FACILITIES

CHARLESTON, S.C. — Ron Dodson, president of the N.Y. Audubon Society, and Steve Lesnik, president and CEO of Kemper Sports Management, will both speak at Public Golf '93, sponsored by Golf Course News and scheduled for Nov. 14-17, here at Wild Dunes.

Dodson — whose non-profit organization just purchased the Ocean Course on nearby Kiawah Island (see story above) — will discuss Audubon's Cooperative Wildlife Sanctuary Program for Golf Courses, which has created bird sanctuaries at 800 golf courses nationwide. The pro-active program, founded in 1990, has proved to be a significant environmental and public relations success.

Lesnik, whose firm manages 19 courses across the country (see story above), will lead a seminar dealing with alternative management strategies. Kemper recently secured the management con-

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**ONGOING ASSISTANCE**

South Florida Golf Academy Director Tom Welz assists student Jeff Priest at The Carolina Club in Margate, Fla. Priest is participating in one of the monthly clinics, sponsored by The Carolina Club and Broward County, that helps physically challenged golfers get back in the game. The clinics are led by teaching professional Frank Fitzsimmons, who is also the Circuit Court coordinator for the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). "Many clubs around the country have offered one-time clinics for the physically disabled," said Carolina Club spokeswoman Elaine Fitzgerald. "It gets them interested, but then what? We hope we're taking a lead that other golf clubs will follow in offering regular, ongoing clinics."

Publicly traded AGC spinoff acquires first course, Desert Lakes

FORT MOHAVE, Ariz. — National Golf Properties, Inc. (NGP), the publicly traded golf course owner, has acquired Desert Lake Golf Course here.

The property, NGP's first acquisition since its initial public offering in August, was purchased from Desert Lakes Development L.P. for \$3.15 million.

Located a few minutes from Bullhead City, Ariz. and Laughlin, Nev., Desert Lakes is one of just four golf courses in the region. Its amenities include an 18-hole, 6,569-yard course that features two lakes. An aquatic driving range features two island, target greens.

NGP is a self-administered real estate investment trust based in Santa Monica, Calif. President Craig Price also serves as president of Santa Monica, Calif.-based American Golf Corp. (AGC), which operates 153 courses nationwide. The management contract for Desert Lakes has been awarded to AGC.

NGP's portfolio now includes 24 daily-fee, 13 private and 11 resort courses.

Kemper Management

Continued from page 27

irrigation systems at the other facilities as well and make additional investments where it makes sense," Schmidt said.

Schmidt said Kemper believes in re-investing in its properties in order to *optimize* rather than *maximize* a facility's potential. "You can maximize profits right away by just taking money out of a course and putting nothing back in. That works well for about 2-1/2 years. You don't notice too much the first year. Then the second everything starts falling apart until nothing is left."

"We believe in optimizing. It doesn't maximize your return in the short term. But it makes the product better each year

and allows the owner to make more profit for a longer time."

While it prefers ownership and lease arrangements, the company has not forsaken the management-only market. Kemper has management contracts at Vernon Hills (Ill.) Golf Course as well as Pipestone and Mound Golf Course, both in Miamisburg, Ohio.

"We strongly believe in giving the golfer value for his dollar. Kemper Lakes greens fees are \$95 and Vernon Hills \$10. Both are full all the time. That's because we provide value for both types of golfer. We take a lot of pride in that."

Kemper's mission, Schmidt said, is one of providing quality, not quantity. The company plans to acquire two to four courses per year. "That's a reasonable number we can absorb in a quality manner," the com-

pany president said. "We're excited about the opportunities out there. But we'll only do things that make sense."

Making those judgments will be an experienced management staff.

Chairman of the Board James Kemper is former chairman of the board of Kemper Group. He founded Kemper Lakes and oversees major policy decisions.

Chief Executive Officer Steven Lesnik has 25 years experience in communications, marketing and sports management. Before founding Kemper Sports in 1978, he was vice president of Kemper Group.

Other key personnel include Schmidt, vice presidents Ben Brundred, Tom Lenz and Robert Wallace, Chief Financial Officer Bradley Stake, Marketing Manager Jeff Hunt and Director of Golf Bob Spence.

Landmark re-emerges

Continued from page 1

a 36-hole development planned across the street from the TPC at Scottsdale, an 18-hole public layout under consideration in Indio, Calif., and an 18-hole course along the coast of Chile scheduled to begin construction later this year.

"Development has slowed across the country. But considering how difficult things have been since the late 1980s, we're doing pretty well," said Brian Curley, former director of golf course design construction for Landmark Signature Courses and a partner in the new firm.

Construction should begin in early 1994 on the first 36 holes at Snow Mountain Resort, located on 3,800 acres of Paiute land 12 miles north of Las Vegas. All four courses should be completed within two years, according to former PGA Tour player Johnny Pott, a Landmark partner and project supervisor.

Pete Dye, Pott and Curley are combining to design the courses, which will cost about \$7 million piece. A single clubhouse will serve all 72 holes. The entire golf project is pegged at \$40 million. Casinos, hotels and residential areas are also planned.

"There are definite advantages to working with Indian land," Curley said. "There is no land cost. They have very well-established water rights. You only have to deal with federal agencies and there are no taxes. Imagine all those benefits on a site just 12 miles from downtown."

Despite its proximity to Las Vegas, the Paiutes originally planned not to have gambling at the resort. That restricted the type and amount of financing to a bond issue or traditional financing, Curley said. The tribal council now plans casinos, which has attracted more financing options, he added.

"The council is meeting soon to decide what to do," Curley said.

Paradise Ridge in Scottsdale is a year away from starting construction, according to head partner Ernie Vossler. The 2,000-acre project will have a large residential area. The Indio, Calif., facility would be adjacent to Del Webb's Sun City project, and the Chile layout will be an hour from Santiago.

Landmark Land Co.'s financial woes have been well-chronicled. The Resolution Trust Corp. recently auctioned off the bankrupt firm's major properties, including PGA West, Carmel Valley Ranch, Mission Hills Country Club, LaQuinta Hotel Golf & Tennis Resort, Palm Beach Polo & Country Club and Kiawah Island Resort (see related story, page 27).

But despite those problems, Landmark Golf's partners didn't hesitate to use the name. "People in the golf business were aware of the financial situation [that brought down Landmark Land Co.]," Curley said. "Landmark's reputation for creating quality facilities has not been tarnished. The problems that hurt Landmark weren't particular to Landmark. Just about anyone dealing with S&Ls had problems during the 1980s."

National Golf Foundation Vice President Rick Norton agreed. "I can't see that the name or association is a positive or a negative," Norton said. "They obviously have good experience in the golf business. They certainly can't be held responsible for Landmark [Land Co.'s] situation."

Landmark Golf's partners include former Landmark Land executives Vossler (ex-senior VP), Pott (helped design/build Carmel Valley and PGA West), Curley, William "Buzz" Gill (ex-president of Landmark Management Co.) and Chuck Fairbanks (ex-president of Landmark Land Co. of Arizona Inc.).

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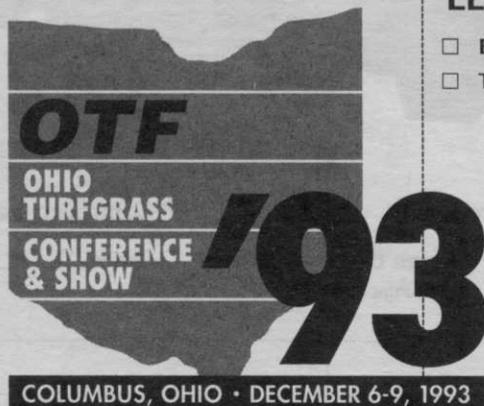
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