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GCSAA shake-up: Schilling, Roberts resign

By PETER BLAIS

LAWRENCE, Kansas—Executive Director John Schilling has resigned and other top Golf Course Superintendent Association of America staffers and officials have left in the wake of a GCSAA organizational review.

Schilling offered his resignation in late August to pursue other business interests, he said. Director of Communications Robert Ochs and Director of Operations Diana Green have also left GCSAA. They, Schilling and others have formed St. Andrews

Corp., a Lawrence-based firm providing consulting, management and trade services.

Prior to Schilling's resignation, Immediate Past President Bill Roberts resigned from the board of directors as a result of its decision to adopt several major changes suggested in the \$24,000 Arthur Andersen Co. organizational review.

Schilling denied his decision was influenced by the Andersen study that recommended, among other things, the hiring of a chief financial

officer and deputy chief executive officer, moves some saw as undermining his authority.

"The Arthur Andersen study did not play into my decision to leave," the 41-year-old executive said. "Opening my own business has been a dream since I left college. My experience with the association has put me in a position to do just that."

Schilling's resignation is effective January, according to GCSAA President Randy Nichols of Cherokee Town

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Acquisitions the aim of AGC spinoff

By PETER BLAIS

American Golf Corp. founder David Price's new company, National Golf Properties Inc., expects to spend \$64 million buying new golf courses over the next 18 months.

The purchase will be financed through NGP's recent stock offering, which is expected to eventually raise more than \$186 million. The company's initial portfolio includes 47 golf courses in 17 states — 23 daily-fee, 13 private and 11 resort operations. All have been and will continue to be managed by AGC.

NGP will focus on courses with strong cash flow growth potential and the possibility for long-term investment and capital appreciation, according to the company prospectus. Its founders believe many such facilities are avail-

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NGF Development Tracking Report

1993 figures gathered between Jan. 1 & Aug. 5	Open For Play		Under Construction		In Planning	
	1993 YTD	1992 YTD	1993 YTD	1992 YTD	1993 YTD	1992 YTD
Daily Fee	143	154	400	393	412	384
Muni	30	37	85	82	74	106
Private	46	39	106	149	150	157
TBD	—	—	5	2	15	10
Totals	219	230	596	629	651	657

'93 openings may reach one per day

By MARK LESLIE

Okay. Sit down. A near-record 350 to 365 golf courses are projected to open in the United States by year's end, according to the National Golf Foundation (NGF).

Disproving predictions that openings would tail off this year after two consecutive high-powered, high-production years, developers opened 219 golf courses

through Aug. 5. Another 244 are scheduled to open by Dec. 31 — the operative word being "scheduled."

"The historical average is 66 to 68 percent of those scheduled to open in a particular year actually do open that year," NGF Communications Director Bill Burbaum explained.

"For various reasons they get strung out and delayed. We have our biggest open-

ings in June, July, August,"

Using a 60-percent calculation, that translates to another 146 courses opening between Aug. 5 and Dec. 31, for the 365 total.

Catherine Suddarth, who tracks development for the NGF, said late-spring snows in the Northeast and heavy rains in the Southeast set back grow-in plans and could lower the number of

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NCAMP head to address RISE annual meeting

By HAL PHILLIPS

MCLEAN, Va. — The phrase, "Know thine enemy," will take on newer, deeper meaning for those members of the chemical industry attending the RISE (Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment) Annual Meeting, scheduled for Sept. 10-12, at the Ritz Carlton here.

One of the primary speakers at this meeting of chemical formulators, manufacturers and distributors will be Jay Feldman, head of the National Coalition Against the Misuse of Pesticides.

"He is our primary opponent and cer-

tainly our most outspoken critic," said Allen James, RISE executive director. "But he has agreed to speak, give his views and answer questions. I've no doubt it will enlighten our members."

Also on the speaking schedule is Steve Johnson, director of field operations for the federal Environmental Protection Agency. While Johnson will offer insights into the goals and objectives of EPA, James already has a well-defined view of the agency under its new head, Carol Browner.

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End-of-year projections

Great year for openings

Continued from page 1
 openings. NGF Vice President Richard Norton predicted a slightly more conservative 350 openings by Dec. 31 — still much better than forecast last January.

He noted that courses "under construction" and "in planning" are slightly trailing the figures of 1992 when 351 opened. NGF statistics say 596 courses are "under construction," compared to 626 at the same time in 1992. Another 651

are "in planning," compared to 657 in 1992.

Norton also said that compared to other times of the year, fewer courses that plan to open in the last quarter actually do open.

Industry spokesmen had said at the first of the year that the nearly one-a-day openings in 1991-92 (354 and 351, respectively) were the fruit of the good financial times of the late 1980s. This year's numbers, they said, would fall because

courses opening in 1993 were planned at or near the end of the optimistic economic climate.

The construction pipeline, they said, was running dry.

So, what is the explanation and what lies over the horizon?

"Low interest rates," said Norton. "They have been a catalyst. We're seeing more activity and getting more phone calls now than in quite a while from groups interested in developing golf courses."

"I'm not overwhelmed in my surprise with the numbers. A lot of people see a window to get their courses financed."

Nine months ago, Norton had

predicted 250 openings a year through the decade. Now he said it may be more than that—"if interest rates stay down and money continues to be available."

"It's hard to say now. You would think we can't keep up this pace. But there doesn't seem to be a tremendous amount of data that would indicate otherwise."

"To me 365 is amazing. I would not have suspected it," said Phil Arnold, executive director of the Golf Course Builders Association of America. "I know our members are all very busy."

"Our opportunities are now up considerably compared to 1991 and

1992," said Paul Clute of Paul Clute & Associates, a golf course builder in Hartland, Mich., who is doing work from coast to coast.



Rick Norton

"We're getting far more calls this year at this time than in 1991 or 1992," he added, saying he expects to begin construction on six courses between September and November.

Asked his projections for next year, Clute said: "I'm more optimistic than I've been in a long time. But my crystal ball stops at six, seven months."

But architect Dick Nugent of Long Grove, Ill., offered these sobering thoughts.

"We're still loaded with construction. Those projects began about two years ago," he said. "But, we don't have as much 'board' work. The new courses coming into the design mode are down."

Nugent said the industry is "beginning to see the tail end of the boom."

"Next year you'll be looking at the projects started in 1991, and you'll see a glitch," he said.

Joe Niebur of Niebur Golf in Medford, Ore., said: "Architects are pessimistic. I think there's a lot of work out there."

Niebur said there may be less action in New England, because it has not recovered from the recession, and in Florida, where nation-high construction the last few years has greatly narrowed the gap between supply and demand.

Nugent said the heavy rain and flooding in the Midwest have not affected 1993 course openings, but the drought in the Southeast has slowed grow-in of courses.

"Courses that would have opened this year are opening. If they were seeded, all the rains did was get them more water and grow in the roughs quicker and thicker," he said. "The other side of the coin is, courses in the Southeast in the grow-in stage like to plant Bermudagrass in May, June, July and it's pretty hard grow with no water. They don't water wall-to-wall like in the desert. They depend on supplemental rainfall from nature."

"It cuts on both sides." The Midwest, Nugent said, was not hurt badly by the flood but rather by "the torrential rains that just kept coming and coming and coming. You couldn't work. The construction guys couldn't get in three days in a row without being rained out. Then you had to wait until the mud dried up before you could start up again. Those were the delays."

Those courses are in the construction phase and aren't scheduled to open until 1994 anyhow, he said.

Meanwhile, because the Army Corps of Engineers took over permit approval for wetlands in 1986 and closed the door to construction near rivers, there is no construction in the flooded area to stop, Nugent said.



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