

BRIEFS



KSL ACQUIRES INDIGO LAKES

DAYTONABEACH, Fla. — KSL Fairways has acquired Indigo Lakes Golf Club. Redesigned by Lloyd Clifton, the 18-hole course measures 7,168 yards from the back tees. KSL Fairways now operates 17 courses at 15 sites, including PGA West and LaQuinta Hotel and Golf Resorts near Palm Springs, Calif.; and Doral Resort & Spa in Miami.

HYATT TO MANAGE TIERRA DEL SOL

ARUBA — Hyatt Resorts Caribbean will manage Tierra del Sol, the island's first 18-hole golf course. The Robert Trent Jones II-designed layout will open in December. Divisional Vice President Victor Lopez will direct the operation from his Miami office. Tierra del Sol is a joint venture with Sun Development Co., a leading developer of timeshare units on Aruba.

PALMER TO OPEN EAGLES LANDING

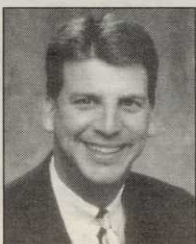
SEVIERVILLE, Tenn. — Arnold Palmer Golf Management Co. recently opened Eagles Landing Golf Club. The municipal layout's grand opening is scheduled for Sept. 21. Views of Great Smoky Mountain National Park are afforded from the facility's practice range, clubhouse, restaurant and pro shop.

SCRATCH GOLF PURCHASES TIMACUA

LAKE MARY, Fla. — Scratch Golf Co. of Hilton Head Island, S.C., has purchased Timacua Golf Club here. Head pro David Moore will retain that title and also become general manager of the Ron Garl-designed layout. Gary Alex, formerly of Forest Lakes Country Club in Ocoee, has been named superintendent. Scratch Golf now operates five golf facilities.

GRAYHAWK TAPS DIRECTOR OF GOLF

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — Grayhawk Golf Club has named Joe Shershovich as its first director of golf. Shershovich is a 10-year Marriott Golf veteran, who most recently served as that company's director of golf operations at nearby Camelback Golf Club. Grayhawk is a master-planned community. The Gary Panks/David Graham-designed *Talon* course will open in December. A second 18-hole layout, *Raptor*, is being designed by Tom Fazio and breaks ground later this year.



Joe Shershovich

Public sale allows Golf Enterprises to think big

By PETER BLAIS

DALLAS — Golf Enterprises, Inc. intends to acquire or lease 30 to 50 courses over the next five years, using the \$30 million it raised by selling 2.35 million shares of public stock.

Added to the 28 courses located primarily in Southern and Western states GEI already operates, that would place the Dallas-based firm among the three largest management companies in the country.

The stock offering also helped the company retire much of the debt incurred when GEI purchased most of the equity interest in Jim Colbert Golf, Inc. in 1991.

Interest charges on that original recapitalization of Colbert Golf, along with additional course acquisitions (six in 1993), were largely responsible for the almost \$8.5 million in net losses the company incurred over the past three years, according to company literature.

The company's debt stood at \$19.5 million as of March 31.

GEI believes its management team, headed by President and Chief Executive Officer Robert Williams, is the key to its success.

Before joining GEI in 1991, Williams, 50, was president of American Golf Corp. for eight years. During his tenure, AGC grew



Mission Hills South in Palm Springs, Calif., is one of 28 courses in the Golf Enterprises portfolio

from 20 to 120 courses. From 1971-83, he was controller and treasurer of Club Corp. of America.

"Bob learned how to grow a company with both AGC and CCA," said GEI Chief Financial Officer Steve Reynolds. "He witnessed the lack of management expertise at small operations and it amazed him. That's why he believes there is such a huge opportunity for an experienced firm like ours."

In addition to Reynolds, who was with Colbert and CCA prior to joining GEI, other key executives include Chairman of the Board Bryan C. Cressy, Senior Vice President of Operations Stephen D. Lambert, and Vice President of Acquisitions Kim Kochsiek. Collectively, the management team has more than 50 years experience in the golf industry.

"It's our experience in all areas of golf

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Course as doorprize? Bob O'Link Golf Club, located in Lawrenceburg, Ky., is there for the taking. The 145-yard, par-3 8th spans the small pond at right.

MARKETING IDEA OF THE MONTH

Not your average doorprize: Closest to the pin walks away with the whole course

By PETER BLAIS

LAWRENCEBURG, Ky. — One shot for \$1 million, or better yet, for the deed to the golf course.

It's a golfer's dream that Jack Ridge is turning into reality, while turning a buck along the way.

Ridge is the owner of Bob-O-Link Golf Club here. Beginning Oct. 3, as many as 3,000 golfers will plunk down \$2,000 apiece for a single shot at putting their ball closest to the pin on Bob-O-Link's 145-yard, 8th hole.

The 24 most accurate shooters will advance to a final round where each gets four shots at the 8th flag. The closest will receive either \$1 million or, if he or she prefers (and a minimum 850 golfers sign up by the Sept. 1 deadline) the title to the 126-acre course.

"I've gotten calls from Australia, Japan and Alaska from people interested in signing up for the tournament," Ridge said. "There's been more interest than I ever could have imagined."

Ridge, a PGA head pro, has owned the suburban Louisville layout for 18 years. He owns a second course and a part interest in a third.

A 2-handicap golfer who just turned 50, Ridge is considering a run at the Senior PGA Tour. That would take more time than the demands of operating three courses leaves him.

That's one of the reasons he considered putting Bob-O-Link, which is valued at \$1.6 million, on the line.

"It wasn't the main reason, though. This is primarily a golf event. We're planning on spectators, hospitality tents and a media center just like a PGA tournament. I brought the course into the picture just so we could make this the richest tournament in the world," said Ridge, noting that the Sun City Challenge in Bophuthatswana, South Africa awards a \$1 million first prize.

Ridge dreamed up the event during last winter's snow-induced hibernation. He selected the 8th hole figuring the 145-yard distance was within just about every golfer's range.

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AGC acquires Port Royal resort

HILTON HEAD ISLAND, S.C. — American Golf Corporation (AGC) will take over management of Port Royal Golf & Racquet Club and Shipyard Golf Club here, according to Joe Guerra, executive vice president of Acquisitions for Acquisitions for AGC.

AGC will lease both clubs from National Golf Properties, Inc. (NYSE:TEE), which has acquired a majority interest in the partnership which owns the two properties.

"This is an important lease acquisition for American Golf, representing two prestigious additions to our portfolio," said Guerra. "We will reinforce Port Royal's and Shipyard's long-standing commitment to quality by providing the golfing community with superior facilities, unparalleled service and special programs."

Port Royal boasts three 18-hole courses — Planter's Row, Barony, and Robber's Row. The club caters to private country club members with one course reserved for members only at all times. Resort play is available at the remaining two courses on a daily fee basis.

GCSAA approves CEUs for Expo

ORLANDO, Fla. — The Golf Course Superintendents Association of America has awarded 0.6 Continuing Education Units (CEUs) for the Golf Course Expo conference.

It is the responsibility of each certified golf course superintendent to individually document event attendance on the affidavit form that will be supplied to all conference registrants. To receive credit for participation, you must forward

the affidavit within 30 days.

Applicability for CEUs from other groups should be verified with the superintendent's professional board.

Continuing education credits can be earned by attending any of the three Golf Course Expo conference programs: Agronomy, Management and Development.

For more information, call the Golf Course Expo hotline at 207-846-0600.

Jones to keynote

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fee course, was built by Dalby and Michcon Gas Co. on a natural gas field.

The DuPage County Airport facility is an example of using public-sector land.

"Smaller, remote towns like Carrabassett [Maine] which has Sugarloaf Golf Club, or large cities like Chicago and Detroit, and smaller towns like Medford [Ore.] all need accessible golf," Jones continued.

"And that's what we're trying to provide.

"I think public golf is the future."

A former president of the American Society of Golf Course Architects, Jones is a former chairman of the California State Park and Recreation Commission and was inducted into the California Golf Hall of Fame in 1991.

The 1961 graduate of Yale University has many friends and acquaintances in the world of international politics and served in 1980 as the U.S. delegate to the Helsinki Accords Conference and as a delegate to the Bi-national Governors' Conference in Mexico.

Marketing Idea

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"There are a lot of longest-drive and hole-in-one contests, but they either limit the number of people who have a shot at winning to the big hitters or are almost impossible to do [score a hole-in-one]. But just about anyone has a shot at this," Ridge said.

The golf course goes on the line only if the minimum 850 golfers sign up and pay the \$2,000 entry fee by Sept. 1. Ridge said he could still run the tournament with just the \$1 million prize if 600 to 700 register.

Entry fees are held in escrow by a Louisville accounting firm and will be refunded if too few golfers register. In that case, Ridge could be out a significant amount in promotional funds he has spent on print (full page ad in *GolfWeek*) and television advertising (spots on ESPN golf shows).

But if the 850 sign up at \$2,000 apiece, and the winner takes the \$1 million, Ridge stands to make \$700,000 (less his promotional costs). If the 1,500 he expects or the 3,000 maximum register, his profit could be much greater.

The event has also generated extra rounds this year as curious golfers have come out to play simply to see the hole where the event will take place, Ridge added.

Anyone can enter the closest-to-the-hole contest, pro or amateur golfer. Among the 100 golfers who had signed up by late July were six Nike Tour players. Ridge expects a PGA Tour player or two may also register.

"After all, how many of them will ever make \$1 million in their careers," he asked.

The \$2,000 entry fee entitles the entrant to one shot. But the person or representative from the group that puts up the money doesn't necessarily have to take it. For instance, 10 members at a club can put up \$200 apiece and send their pro to take the shot. If they put up \$2,000 apiece, the pro could take 10 shots.

The event begins Oct. 3 with six days of qualifying. The four closest to the pin each day advance to the final round Oct. 9. Any ties for the fourth closest will also advance.

On Oct. 9, each of the 24 finalists (plus any ties) gets four shots apiece. The closest to the hole wins.

Why did Ridge select the 8th hole? "It's a fair hole," Ridge said. "Everything is right there in front of you."

The 8th has bermudagrass tees and a bentgrass green. The tee shot has a 130-yard carry over a pond. A 10-yard apron extends from the water to the front of the 4,000-square-foot green. The pin will be placed dead center on the green, about 5 yards from the apron.

"Three feet from the hole could win it," Ridge predicted. "I've been playing here 20 years, and I've never been closer than 2 or 3 feet. And then just a few times."



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