

## BRIEFS



## CLUBCORP ADDS TWO COURSES

DALLAS — ClubCorp and its public-access affiliate GolfCorp have added a pair of golf courses to the Dallas-based firm's portfolio. ClubCorp recently purchased J. Michael Poellot-designed Gainey Ranch Golf Club from Markborough Development, an operating unit of Stanford, Conn.-based Thomson Corp. The 27-hole layout hosts 60,000 rounds annually. B.T. Country Club LLC recently sold Belle Terre Country Club to Belle Terre Management Corp., a GolfCorp subsidiary. The Pete Dye-designed, 18-hole course will benefit from the company's initial capital improvement plan for the par-72 layout and clubhouse.

## COLLOPY JOINS THE RAVEN GC

TUCSON, Ariz. — Tom Collopy has been named the first director of golf at



Tom Collopy

The Raven Golf Club at Sabino Springs. Collopy previously worked at La Costa Resort and Spa in Carlsbad, Calif., and Douglas Park Golf Course in Glasgow, Scotland. Located northeast of Tucson in the foothills of the Santa Catalina Mountains, the Robert Trent Jones Jr.-designed Raven layout is scheduled to open in December.

## CAREFREE ACQUIRES VENTANA CANYON

CAREFREE, Ariz. — Carefree Resorts has acquired Ventana Canyon Golf and Racquet Club from Finova Corp. of Phoenix. Ventana includes two Tom Fazio-designed 18-hole courses, dining room and lounge, 12-court tennis facility, fitness center and salon. Carefree is expected to officially acquire the property in October upon completion of a \$4 million renovation that includes work to the two golf courses. Carefree also operates The Boulders in Carefree, The Peaks at Telluride (Colo.) as well as Carmel (Calif.) Valley Ranch.

## WILSON RETURNS TO GOLFCORP

GAINESVILLE, Fla. — GolfCorp named Jeff Wilson regional manager of northeast Florida operations. Wilson, is headquartered at Haile Plantation here and previously worked at GolfCorp for 13 years. He rejoins the Dallas-based management firm after a brief stint as general manager of Sequoia Springs Golf Club in British Columbia, Canada. Wilson will team with Jerry Moore, GolfCorp's regional vice president for southern Florida.

## Brassie and Stanchina reach accord

Orlando developer takes back 3 courses from realigned firm

By PETER BLAIS

St. LOUIS — Brassie Golf Corp. has subtracted three courses from its portfolio and added three others.

According to Brassie Senior Vice President of Acquisition and Development Lance McNeill, an out-of-court settlement has been reached resulting from several lawsuits involving Brassie and Warren Stanchina, president of Orlando-based Golf Communities USA.



William Horne

The agreement releases the parties from further action in connection with Brassie's March 1994 purchase of Palisades and Wedge-field country clubs in Orlando and North Shore Country Club in Corpus Christi, Texas.

Brassie transferred its interests in what it termed the three "under-performing" golf courses back to Stanchina. Consequently, an aggregate of \$11 million in debt (\$5.7 million of which is short term) was eliminated, resulting in a significant improvement in Brassie's balance sheet, financial position and liquidity.

Said Brassie President William Horne in a prepared statement: "We are pleased with the outcome of the Stanchina settlement. Although the company will incur a one-time, \$4.1 million charge during the June 1995 quarter as a result of this settlement, we have eliminated assets which did not have the potential to achieve our longer-term goals of return on invest-

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Cooks Creek Golf Club is aggressively marketing to the Columbus, Ohio, daily-fee market.

## MARKETING IDEA OF THE MONTH

## Cooks Creek seeks Columbus golfers with innovative marketing ideas

By PETER BLAIS

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Trying to grab a portion of the daily-fee market in a golf hotbed like Columbus is no easy task for a new facility.

Just ask the people at GolfCorp, operator of Cooks Creek, the 18-hole, Mike Hurdzan design that opened for play in early July.

"We're trying to be real aggressive," said GolfCorp's C.J.

McDaniel, who has come up with several ways to reach the links savvy Columbus golf community.

• *Discounts for using Softspikes.*

The course-friendly alternative to metal spikes has found a receptive audience around Ohio's capital. Private Muirfield Village and Scioto Country Club require them.

Cooks Creek opted for the soft sell.

Golfers buying a \$5 set of Softspikes at the Cooks Creek pro shop receive \$5 off the regular \$45 weekday and \$55 weekend rate for that day's and every subsequent round as long as they are wearing Softspikes. The golfer's name is also entered in a drawing for a top-flight driver (Big Bertha, Cobra and others).

"Every time a person buys a set of Softspikes, his name is entered in the drawing again," McDaniel said. "If we can get people to use them on a voluntary basis it will improve the course for everybody."

• *Incentives for following ads.*

GolfCorp had a well-known golf course artist paint a number of sketches of the course. In addition to hanging in the clubhouse, they are appearing in newspaper ads promot-

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## Focusing on business key to Nat'l Fairways success

By PETER BLAIS

Many people enter the golf business because they love the game and hope to somehow earn a living in it. Marc Bergschneider chose the golf industry because it was a good business, period.

"I don't play golf," said the chief executive officer and president of National Fairways Inc., a Greenwich, Conn.-based firm that operates 14 courses along the East Coast. "We really run our operations as businesses. We're very disciplined and make certain any investment makes economic sense."

Bergschneider is a Brown University graduate with a master's degree in business administration from the University of Chicago. He spent 10 years on Wall Street and five as a self-described deal maker before founding National Fairways three years ago.

One of his first moves was to hire Don Carpenter, a 20-year American Golf Corp. veteran who helped grow that manage-



Hudson National Golf Club is one of National Fairways' 14 facilities.

ment company giant from 10 to 150 courses.

"Don is a very sharp guy," said Bergschneider of his chief operating officer. "I rely a lot on people like Don who know the specifics of the golf business. Many people get in trouble in this industry because they think they know more

than they really do. I know what I'm good at — working the numbers, marketing and figuring out where to spend money. That's what I do best. I leave the rest to people with experience in those areas."

An affiliate, National Fairways Ltd., initiated the company's entry into the golf market by acquiring six western Florida courses for \$20 million in 1992. They included Hibiscus Golf Club (GC) in Naples, Tides Country Club (CC) in Seminole, Port Charlotte GC in Port Charlotte, and Rolling Green, Sarasota and Sunrise golf clubs in Sarasota.

A year later, the firm added Hidden Hills GC and the Oak Bridge Club at Sawgrass, a pair of private clubs in Jacksonville.

Bergschneider came back to the Northeast for his next purchase, Hudson National GC in Croton-on-Hudson, N.Y. The \$25 million, Tom Fazio-designed layout

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## UMass mulls adding course management program

AMHERST, Mass. — Already well-respected for its turfgrass management program, the University of Massachusetts is considering creating a golf course/club management curriculum.

Nearly 12 percent of Massachusetts residents play golf at 343 courses across the state. Thirty-five courses are located on Cape Cod, contributing an estimated \$142 million to the economy of that region alone. In addition, three major producers of golf equipment and accesso-

ries — Spalding Sports Worldwide, Acushnet Industries and Reebok International Ltd. — are based in Massachusetts.

According to Robert Halgesen, dean of the College of Food and Natural Resources, such a program would bring together existing courses from various departments with an added emphasis on business issues, to meet the increasing demand for managers that has resulted from rapid growth within the golf industry.

The turfgrass program, which has graduated many course superintendents and other turfgrass professionals, would be a major contributor. "UMass has become a center for turfgrass science in New England," said William Torello, director of the turfgrass management program.

Programs and research in the departments of sport studies and hotel, restaurant and travel administration would also assist in the development of the program, currently under study as part of

the college's long-range plan. Only four golf course/club management programs exist nationwide.

William Sutton, associate professor of sport studies, and Rod Warnick are conducting a major study for the Ladies Professional Golf Association. The survey examines many issues including women's participation in golf, golf merchandise for women, and women's attitudes about golf clothing and merchandise.

Warnick, an associate professor of hotel, restaurant and travel administration, is examining golf

participation throughout the American population.

"Golf was once perceived to be a game for wealthy, older men," he said. "However, research indicates the popularity of the game is reaching a broader cross section of adults. Participation is increasing across all age groups and has more mass market appeal."

Additionally, the UMass chapter of the Club Managers Association has been named the most outstanding student chapter by the National Club Managers Association.

## Brassie, Stanchina settle differences

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ment, and can now utilize these resources on golf course acquisitions with greater potential returns."

Brassie recently merged with Club Operations and Property Management (COPM) to form one of the country's largest management companies.

Stanchina characterized the settlement as, "amicable. We're very happy with the way things turned out." But, regarding the courses, he added: "They may have under performed for Brassie, but they didn't for us. They may have hit a bad time financially. They probably paid a little too much for them [\$15 million]. If they had put in more equity and less debt capital, they may have been in better shape."

McNeill agreed with Stanchina's assessment.

"We're pleased it was settled amiably," said McNeill, who was with COPM prior to the Brassie merger. "It was positive on Warren's side. He sold the properties for \$15 million a year ago and is buying them back for \$11 million. He is also developing the real estate around North Shore which he controls again. The settlement also helped us settle many financial aspects on our side."

"In the process of merging with Brassie, we reviewed their holdings and felt the short-term debt they'd taken on to purchase those properties put a tremendous strain on the company. We felt it was better to return the properties and take the one-time [\$4.1 million] hit. Brassie simply paid a high-end price and with that amount of debt it made it difficult on the whole company."

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Brassie also announced that it has signed three new management contracts — Heritage Links Golf Course (GC) in Gainesville, Fla., Manassas Park GC in Prince William County, Va., and Smokey Mountain (N.C.) Country Club.

"Based on current prospects, we expect to sign at least 10 additional management contracts within the next 60 days," Horne said.

GOLF COURSE NEWS



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