

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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By NANCY SMITH, J.D.

ESCONDIDO, Calif. — The owner of a golf course must design it to minimize the danger that players will be injured by balls hit by fellow golfers, according to the California Court of Appeal.

In the recent decision of *Morgan v. Fuji Country USA, Inc.*, the court found that removal of a dead tree which had previously provided protection from errant tee shots may have been the cause of William Morgan's injuries. The court upheld Morgan's right to sue the club to recover for his injuries.

Morgan was a member of Castle Creek Country Club here, where he played golf

Nancy Smith is an attorney working in Pasadena, Calif.

Owners must design courses for safety

two to three times per week. He frequently took refuge by a particular tree when other golfers were hitting from the 4th tee because the balls often flew onto either the 5th tee or green.

When the tree which had provided protection became diseased, the club removed it. Several people had near misses from golf balls originating at the 4th tee and ending up near the 5th tee box. Morgan stated that balls traveled farther after the tree had been removed.

Morgan was injured when he was struck by a ball hit from the 4th tee. He sued the

golf club owner for his injuries. Although the trial court initially ruled against Morgan, on appeal the higher court held that he could go forward with his case and sue the club owner.

In California, the law generally holds that a person participating in a sport cannot recover for injuries which are known risks associated with the sport, unless the injury is intentional. For example, a

player injured in a touch football game cannot sue another player for game injuries. A whitewater rafter cannot sue the outfitter for injuries sustained when fall-



ing in the boat while going through a rapid.

Although attorneys for the golf course argued that being hit by a golf ball is an inherent risk of the sport, the court nonetheless held that Morgan could pursue his claim that the course design was faulty.

The court held that a golf course owner cannot make the sport more hazardous by his design of the course.

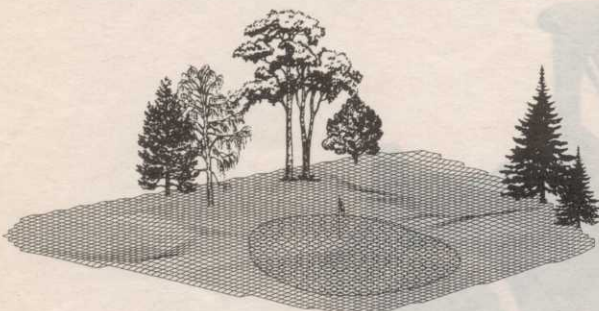
"Thus, the owner of a golf course has an obligation to design a golf course to minimize the risk that players will be hit by golf balls, e.g., by the way the various tees, fairways and greens are aligned or separated," the court wrote.

"In certain areas of a golf course, because of the alignment or separation of the tee, fairway and/or greens, the golf course owner may also have a duty to provide protection for players from being hit with golf balls," according to the court.

The ruling allows Morgan to return to court to have a trial on whether his injuries were caused by the removal of the tree from the course.

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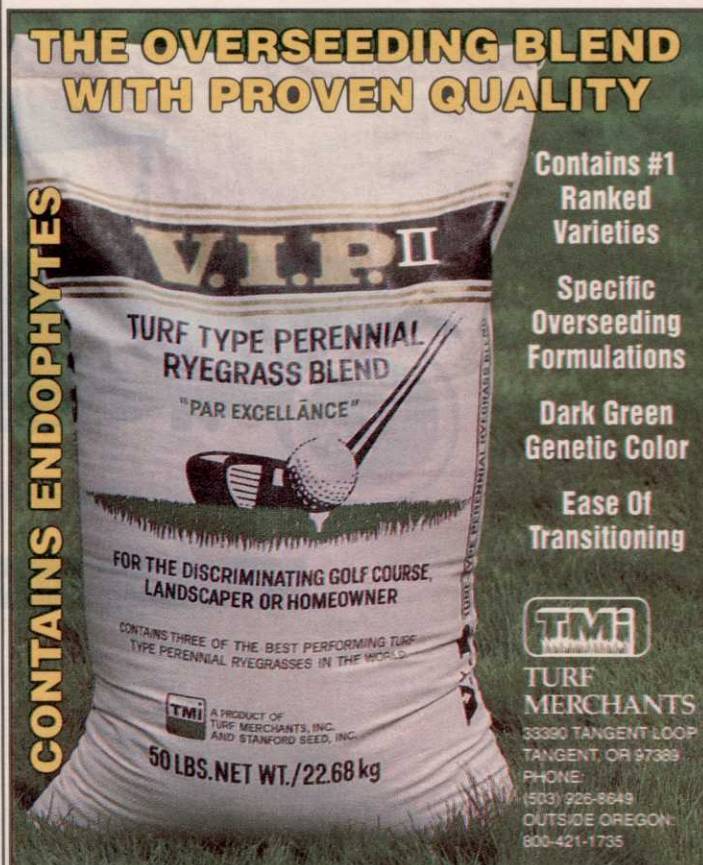
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National Fairways

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is 80 percent complete and should open next summer. This is Fazio's first private course in the New York City area. Memberships are selling for \$100,000 and the club has already recruited 106 members, making it one of the most successful new private facilities to open in the Northeast, Bergschneider said.

"The location is the main thing," he said. "The course sits 500 feet above the Hudson River, with fantastic views of the water from a dozen holes. The area was ready for something like this since private clubs are so hard to get into. And then there is Fazio. He's the best."

Other National Fairways holdings include:

- a management contract at Minesceongo GC in Pomona, N.Y.
- a 30-year lease to operate 36-hole D. Fairchild Wheeler GC for the city of Bridgeport, Conn.

• Lindbrook GC, an 18-hole executive course in Hopkinton, R.I., purchased in April

• Boulder Hills, a semiprivate, 18-hole layout in Richmond, R.I. set to open in August that was designed by Austin, Texas architect Tripp Wood.

• A Desmond Muirhead-designed layout in Connecticut the company is negotiating to purchase.

"Our goal is to buy more courses on the East Coast," Bergschneider said. "We'll concentrate on areas where we already have properties so we can benefit from some economies of scale. But we'll also be looking at the Carolinas and Virginia."

"Our main business is acquiring existing courses. Hudson National is the only one we're building and Minesceongo our lone management-only contract. We like to take existing courses, run them better and make them more profitable. We're at 14 courses now. We'd like to be between 25 and 30 within three years."

The company won't limit itself to a particular type of course. It currently operates everything from Hudson National and its \$100,000 membership fees to Fairchild Wheeler and its \$6 green fees, Bergschneider noted.

"Every market is different," he said. "You have to analyze a particular course's situation, adapt to the market and not overspend."