

# GOLF COURSE NEWS

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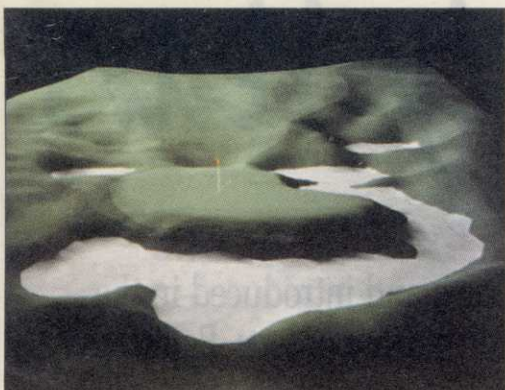
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## USCCA to offer clubs group buying option

By PETER BLAIS

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — A recently formed organization designed to cut costs and increase efficiency at private clubs has ruffled a few feathers among other golf associations. The main focus of the United States Country Club Association (USCCA) is a group purchasing program called the Cooperative Alliance for Purchasing (CAP), according to

Jeffrey Dykehouse, USCCA's founder, president and sole stockholder.

CAP reportedly leverages the buying power of USCCA member clubs to provide the best possible price for products and services such as insurance, maintenance equipment and supplies, food and beverage products, office equipment, irrigation materials and equipment, golf

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Jack Nicklaus (from right), Jack II and design associate Chris Cochran survey plans in Palm City, Fla..

## Nicklaus hops aboard the public-access bandwagon

By MARK LESLIE

NORTH PALM BEACH, Fla. — The Nicklaus umbrella is about to expand, adding public-access golf clubs and community development and management to its bulky portfolio.

Keying on a market tailor-made for his name and the fast-growing segment of public golfers, Jack Nicklaus is starting a network of Golden Bear Golf Communities featuring semi-private, daily-fee golf courses.

First out of the gate will

be Golden Bear Golf Club at Laurel Springs, north of metro Atlanta in southern Forsyth County. Ground was broken in April. Watch for future communities in Dallas, Chicago, Detroit, Tampa and Nashville, said Golden Bear Financial Services President Ira Fenton,

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## SPRING START-UP?



Pro-active, mountain maintenance paves way for late spring opening

By MARK LESLIE

KEYSTONE, Colo. — While golf courses elsewhere across the northern tier of the country are taking off green covers and tending to new young turf in April, superintendents like Steve Corneillier at Keystone Ranch Golf Course are snowblowing their greens clear in May.

"The term 'spring start-up' takes on a whole new meaning here," said Corneillier, whose been keeping to this upcountry regimen for decades. "This is springtime in the Rockies at 9,300-foot elevation...

"When it snows on July 4th weekend we're never sure if we should count that toward last year's snow or next year's," he laughed, although snow did shut down the course for two days on that weekend in 1993.

In his 20 years at Keystone Resort, this has been

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## Sticks & Stones: Firms play the name game

By HAL PHILLIPS

The automobile industry annually spends millions of dollars researching model names that will catch the fancy of consumers. Sometimes the money is well spent; sometimes it may as well have been flushed down the toilet. Who, for example, dreamed up the Ford Probe, a product aimed ostensibly at young women on the move? Unfortunately for Ford, marketing experts believe the name tends to remind young women of pending trips to the gynecologist.

The Probe may be the golf course

superintendents' equivalent to an herbicide called Leech-Rite.

While the dollar value is modest in comparison, suppliers to the golf course industry also spend a great deal of time and money on the formulation of product names. Perhaps because of their sheer number and the often thankless nature of their functions, seed varieties and turf chemicals are tops when it comes to invention. Is it coincidence that so many seed varieties share names with automobiles?

"Mustang, Falcon, Dasher, Fiesta,

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Focus on  
Bermudagrass  
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## USCCA

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cars, driving range materials, etc. Members will determine what other products will be added.

USCCA will initially market its services to a 10-state region that includes Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, New Jersey and New York. However, private clubs from any state will be accepted and Dykehouse plans to expand USCCA's recruiting efforts to the Southeast and Far West in the next few years.

Dykehouse expects to have the first product line — property liability insurance, possibly with a workers' compensation component — ready to unveil by the end of May. Future CAP programs will start with an advisory committee made up of representatives from member clubs who will determine the products and services to be offered in each program. Advisory committees will conduct a competitive bidding process to determine the manufacturer that receives final endorsement.

"The main thing we want to do is find out what clubs need and then get them the best deal possible on those products and services," Dykehouse said.

In addition to CAP, other programs include resource sharing, information exchange, golf travel, golf tournaments and pilot program development.

Existing associations, such as the Club Managers Association of America and National Golf Course Owners Association, view USCCA as a group purchasing company rather than a true association.

"The founder presented it to us as a group-buying situation," said CMAA Executive Director James Singerling. "They don't seem to be providing the full range of educational and professional services offered by a true association."

Dykehouse agreed, but left the door open for expanding USCCA's offerings in the future.

"We don't see a need for an educational component at this time," the former Michigan State University educator said. "The existing associations do a fine job at that. We want to get involved with areas the existing associations haven't addressed, such as group purchasing."

CMAA has avoided either endorsing or establishing group purchasing programs. In a letter sent to chapter officers regarding USCCA, Singerling noted a "potential for any organization to actually become the management company for the club when all of your purchasing and statistical basis for operation becomes part of their data base."

According to excerpts from the Association Law Handbook distributed with the letter: "Associations involved in group buying and selling programs should be especially concerned about two rules. First, participation in the programs should not be restrictive. Second, prices received or given should

not be discriminatory. If formed and run properly [however], association cooperative programs are effective in waging competition and do not raise the specter of restricting competition."

Singerling also noted the possibility of a group purchasing program running afoul of anti-trust laws and the need to seek legal advice before joining one. "In our opinion, independent relationships with suppliers are best," the CMAA director said.

Dykehouse said he was "surprised" and "disappointed" by CMAA's response.

"We've spoken with many at-

torneys regarding any legal problems," he said. "When they looked at what we are doing, they've all said it falls under free trade...We received some calls from general managers about the letter. They seem to be taking it with a grain of salt."

At first blush, CAP sounds similar to NGCOA's Smart Buy group purchasing program. The major difference is that USCCA is a for-profit business rather than an association controlled by its members, according to Smart Buy Director Mike Tinkey.

"We did a year-long study before starting this [NGCOA] pro-

gram," Tinkey said. "All the successful group-buying programs we found were run by associations. That included the ski industry, sporting goods retailers, hardware stores and many other groups. Associations seem able to do a better job at obtaining the lowest prices."

Dykehouse disagreed.

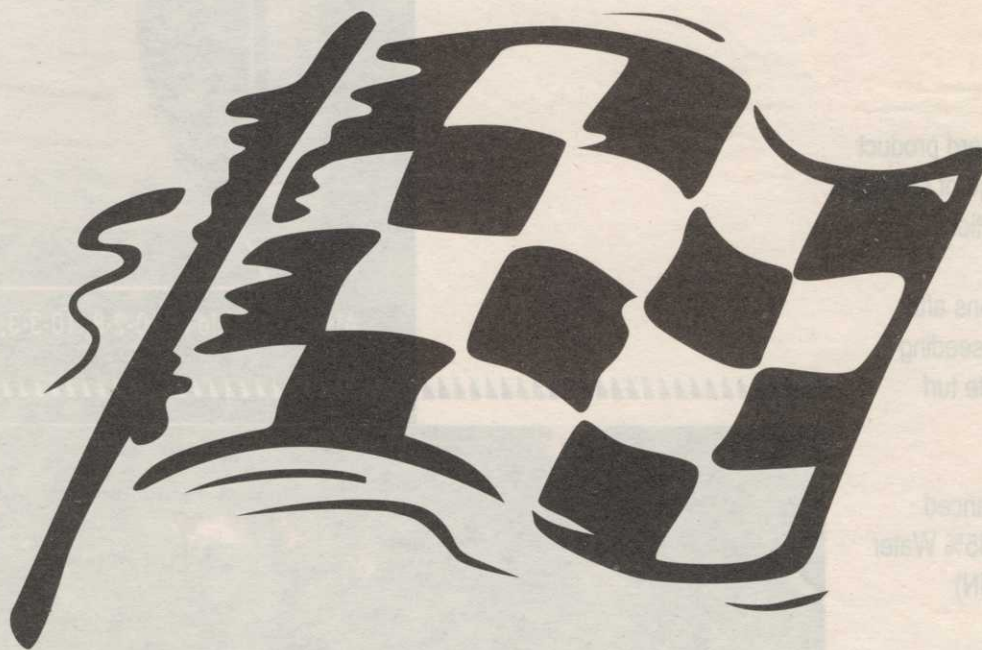
"Our sole source of income will come from dues and fees paid by our members," he said. "We will negotiate the best prices we can with manufacturers and suppliers and pass every bit of those savings on to our members."

Dykehouse expected to begin

soliciting memberships as soon as the insurance program is in place, probably late May. Charter memberships will be available through July 31. As an enticement to sign on early, the \$1,200 initiation fee will be waived for charter members. Yearly dues, which start at \$1,200, are guaranteed to rise no more than 10 percent annually for charter members.

Membership is expected to reach 800 clubs within three years with representatives from all 50 states within 10 years, Dykehouse said. Call 616-949-9411 for more information.

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