

## PAR tee time service enters Ariz.

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — PAR Golf Systems has entered the Arizona golf market with a tee time network linking a well-respected area hotel with four widely known courses.

Resort Suites can now provide computerized access to instant tee time reservations at Stonecreek The Golf Club; the Karsten Course at Arizona State University; Grayhawk Golf Club; and Tonto Verde Golf Club.

The Hyatt Regency Scottsdale was scheduled to join the so-called PARNET system in February and discussions are underway with a number of other resorts and courses. PARNET allows the golf concierge at the resort to book starting times through the hotel's computer without making a phone call.

PAR has provided the technology for five other regional tee time networks, the largest of which links 55 golf courses and 20 hotels in Myrtle Beach, S.C. Other regional networks are located in Orlando, Fla., Ocean City, Md., Traverse City, Mich., and York County, Pa.

## GMs must view greenkeepers in new light, GCSAA official says

By MARK LESLIE

FALMOUTH, Maine — Declaring superintendents are "without doubt responsible for the greatest asset that any club or golf course has," R. Scott Woodhead urged general managers, green chairmen and others gathered here to adjust their views of greenkeepers.

A certified golf course superintendent and Golf Course Superintendents Association of America board member, Woodhead said: "We can no longer be viewed as the dude out in the barn who grows grass while he chews on a blade [of grass] on the mower... It is through our management practices that we have a direct effect on the bottom line of any golf club."

Speaking at a meeting hosted by the Maine GCSA, he said superintendents should not be viewed "as just the largest expense item on the budget, because the success of attracting players is based on a superintendent's ability to meet the aesthetic, agronomic and playing standards of his or her club. There is no question that the more players you have on your golf course, the more green fees you will rack up, the more business there will be in the pro shop and restaurant, the more revenue from your driving range and practice facilities, and, in the case of private facilities, the more members you have the more dues they will give."

The superintendent at Valley View Golf Club in Bozeman, Mont., Woodhead added his colleagues are also critical to the cost savings in the business. "The superintendent's skill in controlling labor, equipment and supply costs has a direct effect on the financial statement of any club," he said. "And by being up-to-date on environmental regulations that occur daily on any golf course, your superintendent is saving hundreds of thousands of dollars in fines and penalties."

The new breed of superintendent, he said, is "highly educated, highly skilled and highly professional." Agronomy consumes merely 10 percent of today's superintendent's schedule. "I spend 90 percent of my time managing the golf course," he said.

In a remark aimed at club officials, Woodhead said: "Standards set on any course should not be so high they cannot be met with the resources provided to the superintendent. Make sure customers don't expect more than they are willing to pay for. If they want to see Pebble Beach on Sunday morning, they should be prepared to pay \$200 greens fees."

## Marketing Idea

Continued from page 55

and business travelers who spend large sums on food, lessons and merchandise. According to one study, visiting golfers spend seven times as much per visit to a Florida course as do local golfers. Fitzgerald noted.

"The Japanese always seem to buy a new set of golf shoes," she said. "The Germans and Swedes buy new clubs, because they are so expensive back home. The program resulted in hundreds of thousands of dollars in advertising for Deer Creek and the Carolina Club. We had 100 people from the hotel staffs promoting our courses."

What did all this promotion cost the two Franklin Properties-owned courses? Very little.

The arrangement called for the two courses to guarantee guests at participating hotels their lowest advertised golf rates. A VIP package designed to give hotel guests "that little something extra," provided such perks as range balls, yardage books, bag storage, lockers (when available), souvenir bag tags, merchandise discounts and a second cocktail all free of charge.

But more importantly, guests were allowed to book tee times up to a month in advance of their visit, something most courses don't allow for individuals or small groups.

"Guests are guaranteed the opportunity to get on a world-class course at times that fit their schedules, even in season," Fitzgerald explained. "By reserving in advance through their hotels, guests don't have to fight for tee times once they get there. This is a big selling point for the hotels."

The courses also offered the hotels commissions ranging from \$5 to \$10 for each golfer sent to their facilities. Bellmen, desk clerks and concierges could keep the commission as an incentive for promoting the courses to guests. Hotel sales managers could pass on the commissions to groups to encourage additional business.

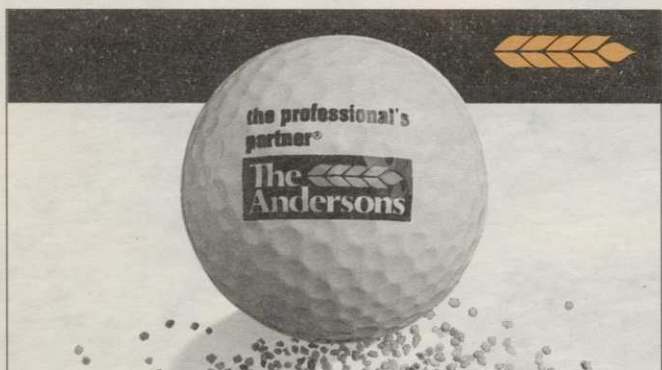
"It's a win-win situation," Fitzgerald said. "The course benefits from the hotels selling their courses and the additional volume that generates. The hotels benefit from being able to provide an additional benefit that helps fill rooms. Golfers get guaranteed tee times at the low rates plus a VIP package that makes them feel special."

The program has been in effect for three years. Twenty-eight hotels are now participating and it is "still going strong," Fitzgerald said.

A similar program could work anywhere there are two or three hotels that don't have courses of their own, but would benefit by having their guests have access to one, Fitzgerald said. All hotel chains have sales staffs as do larger, independently owned operations.

"Even Mom-and-Pop operations can help a course's business. It's inexpensive to print up vouchers that hotel staff can encourage guests to use," she said. "Your golf course is one of many things competing for a guest's time. If the hotel staff is pushing your course, then you can benefit."

"Worldwide, the tourism industry generates \$74 billion worth of business a year. There's no reason the golf industry shouldn't get a good share of that," she added.



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