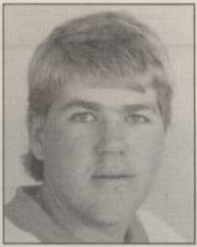


BRIEFS



WICKED STICK NAMES MANAGER

Myrtle Beach, S.C. — John Daly's Wicked Stick Golf Links has named TSC Golf Inc. as its management company. Wicked Stick is Daly's first design project. He served as player consultant to architect Clyde Johnston. TSC is managed by Gary Schaal, immediate past president of the PGA of America; Steve Taylor, Wicked Stick's general manager; and F. Darrell Childers, who recently spearheaded the opening of Whispering Pines Golf Course, Myrtle Beach's first city-owned golf facility. Wicked Stick is scheduled to open this fall.



John Daly

GOLF MANAGEMENT SEMINAR SET

JUPITER, Fla. — Reservations are being accepted for the National Institute of Golf Management's 13th annual education program to be held Jan. 14-18 in Wheeling, W. Va. The National Golf Foundation and the Continuing Education Center at Oglebay Park Resort are co-sponsoring the five-day event, which introduces participants to all aspects of golf facility management. Participants completing both years of the overall, two-year curriculum are eligible for continuing education credits from North Carolina State University and continuing education/recertification units from the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, PGA of America and Ladies Professional Golfers Association. The registration fee is \$350. For more information contact NGF at 800-733-6006.

ISS SIGNS FLORIDA AGREEMENT

LEESBURG, Fla. — ISS Golf Services has reached agreement with Florida Leisure Communities (FLC) for the maintenance of nine-hole Pennbrooke Fairways Golf Course. FLC has added nine new Gordon Lewis-designed holes at Pennbrooke and plans to expand to 18 holes in 1996. ISS, a division of Tampa-based Landscape Management Services, provides custom-designed maintenance programs for golf facilities.

AGC ADDS SILVERHORN

OKLAHOMA CITY — American Golf Corp. has added SilverHorn Golf Club here to its management portfolio. AGC has agreed to a long-term operating lease with owner O-Sports Development. Randy Heckenkemper designed SilverHorn, along with pros Willie Wood and Scott Verplank.

Distance devices attract business, speed up play

3,000 courses could have units by year 2000

By PETER BLAIS

If the brochures are to be believed, they do everything except take Stimpmeter readings. Electronic distance-measuring device screens are springing up on golf carts at courses throughout the country. Depending on the unit, they can provide the golfer an accurate distance to the pin, a look at the bunkers and other hazards along the way, advice from the pro on how to play each hole, warnings about approaching storms, two-way communication with the clubhouse, leader boards for tournaments, a food and beverage menu and other features.

The units attract business and supposedly speed play by anywhere from 15 to 20 minutes per round. "Golf courses are in business to satisfy golfers," said Douglas Dudley, president of Yardmark. "These devices are the latest and greatest amenities to be offered. And they speed play, which puts more money on the bottom line."

While just a handful of courses currently have them, suppliers predict they will be on 2,000 to 3,000 courses nationwide by the end of the decade. The units can generally be leased for \$1 to \$2 per round or purchased for as much as \$150,000 to \$200,000. Here's a sampling of some of the more active suppliers in the marketplace:

- Yardmark of LaJolla, Calif., was one of the first in the business back in 1988. Back then it depended on electronic



Continued on page 42 Sky Caddie is one of the electronic distance-measuring devices available.

Off-color ad puts California course in black

By PETER BLAIS

TURLOCK, Calif. — Turlock has more churches per capita than just about any city in the country, according to George Kelley, co-owner and co-designer of the recently opened Savannah Course at Stevinson Ranch Golf Club.

Therefore, he wasn't surprised when his billboard picturing the No. 4 Eden hole and asking "Do you have enough balls?" stirred some debate in the local community.

"I was getting a call just about every day from someone in the clergy," Kelley said. "It was kind of amusing. I knew the double entendre might be a little contro-

Continued on page 46

Ocean Course sale settled, at last

By PETER BLAIS

CHARLESTON, S.C. — After years of wrangling, the sale of the Ocean Course at Kiawah Island has finally closed.

Bankruptcy Court Judge Falcon Hawkins approved the sale of the Pete Dye-designed layout to Virginia Investment Trust (VIT) on Sept. 27. The Resolution Trust Corp. (RTC) has operated the facility since Landmark Land Co. declared bankruptcy and the federal government seized the property back in October 1991.

The RTC took over 22 Landmark properties and managed to sell off all but the Ocean Course. The sale of the seaside layout, made famous as site of the 1991 Ryder Cup, was delayed by environmental challenges and failed agreements.

VIT — which operates the Osprey Point, Turtle Point and Marsh Point courses at Kiawah — was the lone successful bidder for the property at a RTC auction last spring.

VIT offered \$27,000,100 for the Ocean

Course. The closing has been delayed the past several months because of a dispute over ownership of nine of the Ocean Course's 214 acres.

It was discovered that Kiawah Resort Associates (KRA), a major real-estate developer on the island, owned the disputed acreage.

In late September, the RTC and KRA reached an agreement on the nine acres, which included parts of several holes on the north section of the golf course, according to Resolution Trust Corporation spokesman Michael Fulwider.

"We are very pleased that the deal has closed and RTC was able to get a substantial return for taxpayers," Fulwider said.

VIT spokesman Beverly Armstrong said his company plans some maintenance work to the course, although he couldn't specify what work would be done.

"We're delighted to have the Ocean Course under our ownership because it places all the public courses at Kiawah under one management," he said.

CourseCo finds niche managing government-related courses

By PETER BLAIS

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — When CourseCo Inc. took over management of the nine-hole golf course at the former Mather Air Force Base earlier this year, it became the first private firm in the West to manage the privatization of a military golf course, according to President Tom Isaak.

Working with the County Parks and Recreation Department and a local citizens group, CourseCo is helping develop a master plan for the course and 1,400-acre regional park located on former Defense Department land. It's the type of government entity-related project in which CourseCo has proven very effective, explained Isaak, a

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View from the 17th tee at Sacramento's Mather Golf Course, a CourseCo-managed property.

CMAA mulls changes

Continued from page 1

often more exclusive than private clubs. It is not surprising, therefore, that private club managers often look at these facilities as another potential employer.

"If our members tell us they want more offerings related to the resort industry, then that could happen," Singerling said.

CMAA members will make their feelings known regarding this and other issues during focus groups the association is holding at its Business Management Institute training sessions and at chapter meetings throughout the country. The eight-to-15-person focus groups are part of the strategic planning process begun in September. Many suggestions should emerge from the brainstorming sessions. These will be whittled down to six to eight initiatives members want the association to address over the next few years.

Just what those initiatives might be are anybody's guess. A similar process undertaken in 1992 resulted in a worldwide network through which private club managers can communicate by computer.

Recommendations from the current strategic planning process will be placed before the CMAA board of directors next July and the full membership at the 1997 national conference in Orlando.

Whatever happens it will affect the golf industry. Of the association's 5,000 members, 3,500 work at private clubs. Three-fourths of those clubs have golf courses.

CourseCo active in Far West

Continued from page 41

former high-level California bureaucrat.

CourseCo was formed in 1990 as an offshoot of EBITgolf Inc., which was formed two years earlier to lease and manage municipally owned Riverside Golf Course in Fresno. CourseCo is developing a master plan for the city for the accelerated reconstruction of Riverside. In 1990, the National Golf Foundation awarded the course its Public Golf Achievement Award in two categories — promotion of public golf and golf course maintenance.

CourseCo also manages the golf operations at Deep Cliff Golf Course in Cupertino and Mallard Lake Golf Course in Yuba City. CourseCo employs approximately 100 people at its four courses. The company has also provided specialized agronomic services at facilities it doesn't manage, such as Bodega Harbor Golf Links, Bakersfield Country Club, Sherwood Country Club in Thousand Oaks and Petaluma Golf and Country Club.

"We have a regional concentration in Northern California and the Northwest," Isaak said. "We're actively looking at Oregon and Washington."

"Maintaining quality as you grow is the challenge. We think our niche is somewhere between a Mom-and-Pop operation with its obvious limitations and the larger management companies with their long lines of distribution. Our growth will be constrained by our emphasis on maintaining quality."

"We're not looking at buying 15 or 20 courses and then taking ourselves public. We're looking at places where we can make a difference by improving a project."

That was the case at Riverside. CourseCo committed to

spending at least \$300,000 annually on course maintenance when it took over the operation in 1988. The course was in dire need of upgrading and CourseCo exceeded that amount by an average of \$60,000 annually over the next three years, Isaak said. CourseCo rebuilt many bunkers, added a 1/2-acre bentgrass nursery, installed an 8,000-square-foot practice green and completely rebuilt three other greens.

"Greens fees had been real cheap at Riverside and golfers were concerned about fee increases when we took over," the CourseCo executive said.

"But they saw how much we were investing in the course and began to support us."

That support allowed CourseCo to raise green fees 60 percent between 1989 and 1992 without any golfer opposition and with the unanimous support of the Fresno City Council.

Altogether, CourseCo has managed \$2.5 million in improvements to its facilities since 1992, including a complete clubhouse reconstruction, parking lot addition and tee reconstruction at Deep Cliff; a driving range and rebuilt miniature golf course at Mallard Lake; and a proposed state-of-the-art irrigation system at Mather.

Isaak was general manager from 1977 to 1980 of the Bodega Harbour Homeowners Association, where he completed and opened the golf course. While that experience opened his eyes to the golf industry, he spent most of the next decade in government and politics.

Among the posts Isaak held while in the employ of the state of California was director of the Office of Majority Consultants and Chief Administrative Officer.

Isaak's partners include fellow Stanford University graduates Mark Fredkin, a San Jose lawyer, and John Telischak, a real estate developer residing in Marin County as well as Director of Golf Course Maintenance and Construction Gary Rogers and Director of Club Operations Steven Schwartz.

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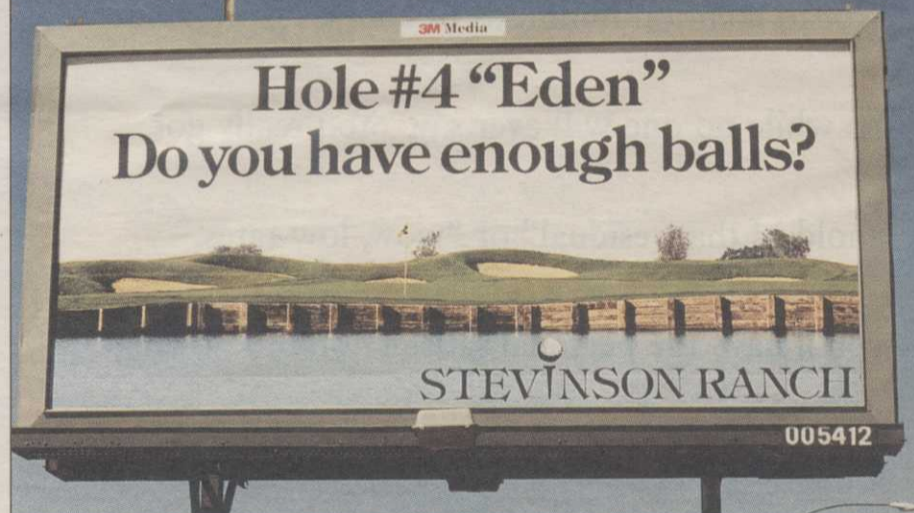
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R M R T A

MARKETING IDEA OF THE MONTH



This sign touting the opening of Stevinson Ranch has stirred some controversy in Central California.

Stevinson Ranch

Continued from page 41

versial. But it got us a lot of attention and some additional play. I don't have any regrets about using it."

The challenge and the beauty of this environmentally friendly 18-hole layout attracted a number of golfers during its first two weeks of operation. The John Harbottle design opened Sept. 30. The course averaged 170 rounds weekdays and more than 200 weekends at green fees ranging from \$35 weekdays to \$45 weekends.

"It's been very well received so far," Kelley said. "And people have lost a few balls. I'd say the average is three to four a round."

Part of the reason for that is the care Harbottle and Kelley took in designing the course.

"It was important to us that we preserve the natural environment of the wetlands," said Kelley, whose family has owned the surrounding property for more than 100 years. The wetlands actually resulted from a man-made earthen irriga-

tion canal constructed in 1905.

Kelley, whose partners include his brothers and former San Francisco Giants owner Bob Lurie, said the project was built along the lines suggested by the New York Audubon Society's Cooperative Sanctuary Program.

"Our first priority in developing this golf course was to respect the community and history of Merced County and its environment," said Harbottle.

The 18 holes were laid out over 450 acres, 150 of which are wetlands, Kelley said. While the course borders wetlands, it never enters the environmentally sensitive areas. "We agreed to a mitigation plan to create another 120 acres of wetlands to compensate for the areas where the course borders existing wetlands," Kelley said.

To further demonstrate its environmental sensitivity, Stevinson Ranch is instituting a caddie program to encourage golfers to walk rather than ride.

"We're losing a lot of cart revenue, but it's worth it environmentally. Plus, I'm a traditionalist and like the idea of caddies," Kelley said.