

BRIEFS



IRVINE, WESTERN GOLF TEAM UP

IRVINE, Calif. — The Irvine Co. has selected Western Golf Properties to manage Oak Creek Golf Club here. Oak Creek is scheduled to open for public play in September. Western Golf also manages The Irvine Co.'s Pelican Hill Golf Club, another Tom Fazio design in nearby Newport Beach.

CASPER TO OVERSEE MD LAYOUT

MIDDLETOWN, Del. — Back Creek Golf Club has selected Billy Casper Golf Management (BCGM) to provide complete turnkey management services. BCGM will oversee construction and later operate the course. Construction began recently with a summer 1997 opening anticipated. Steve Newgent JSN Golf Enterprises is the builder and David Horn of Architerra PC the designer.

MARTTY SIGNS ON AT LAKEWOOD

NEW ORLEANS — Lakewood Country Club has named Martty Golf Management (MGM) to manage the semiprivate golf facility. Lakewood has hosted the New Orleans Open for the past 16 years. MGM's mission is to create the club's philosophy, develop a business/marketing plan and reorganize the operations.



Thomas Martty

GREY TO HEAD KEMPER CHICAGO EFFORT

NORTHBROOK, Ill. — Kemper Sports Management has named Tom Grey director of marketing for Kemper Golf Management Chicago (KGMC), operator of Chicago's eight park district golf facilities. Grey will take over a schedule of events that reached 6,000 Chicago residents last year and be responsible for managing marketing activities at the eight facilities. Grey most recently served as assistant golf professional at Kemper-run Royal Melbourne.

FAHEY TABBED BY MATRIX

CRANBURY, N.J. — Matrix Hospitality has hired Richard Fahey as general manager of Ashbourne Country Club in Cheltenham, Pa. Fahey is a 25-year veteran of the hospitality industry with nine years of golf club experience. Ashbourne was built in 1922 on the Stetson hat family estate. Matrix took over the facility a year ago.



Richard Fahey



Heron Point Golf Links in Ancaster, Ontario, Canada,

ClubLink offers upscale private courses, large public profits

By PETER BLAIS

TORONTO — Since becoming a publicly traded company a little over two years ago, ClubLink Corporation has evolved into one of the leading course owners/managers in Canada.

ClubLink operates five, high-end private golf facilities in southern Ontario. In June it will open a sixth, The Lake Joseph Club located two hours north of the city. "And we'll continue to look at new opportunities as they arise," promised Marketing Services Director Richelle Arnott Nemeth.

To date, ClubLink has concentrated on quality private courses catering to Toronto-area residents. In addition to Lake Joseph, ClubLink's facilities include:

- 27-hole Cherry Downs Golf & Country Club (G&CC) in Pickering acquired in 1993;

- 18-hole Emerald Hills G&CC in Stouffville acquired in 1993;
- 18-hole Heron Point Golf Club in Ancaster acquired in 1993;
- 18-hole Greystone Golf Club in Milton acquired in 1994;
- 18-hole King Valley Golf Club in King City acquired in 1994.

King Valley and Greystone rank among the top 20 courses in Ontario with flagship King Valley rated the fourth-best course in Canada by SCORE magazine. But Lake Joseph may pass them all.

The 18-hole golf course and nine-hole golf academy designed by Canadian architect Thomas McBroom is the centerpiece of The Lake Joseph Club. The property totals 420 acres with 3,000 feet of lakefront. ClubLink acquired the property in October 1994 for \$2 million from a Canadian insurance company

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MARKETING IDEA OF THE MONTH

Taking to the air waves enhanced PGA club's reception

By PETER BLAIS

Officials at The PGA Golf Club at The Reserve say the 500 seeds they sowed during the last weekend of December are already yielding a bumper crop of additional rounds.

The PGA Golf Club held a pre-opening "Public Plays Free" preview weekend Dec. 30-31, giving away almost 500 rounds to Southeast Florida golfers.

"We've seen a lot of those people come back already," said head pro Bill Ciofoletti. "Many of them have brought friends and relatives. I think we'll eventually capture thousands of additional rounds because of that one free weekend."

The PGA Golf Club is the first public golf facility owned and operated by the PGA of America. But developers knew it would take more than the PGA name to draw golfers to another daily-fee facility in an area already well stocked with public courses. In fact, the PGA feared many golfers would simply assume that a PGA-owned course was private.

So last fall the PGA hired marketing specialist Elaine Fitzgerald of Fitzgerald Productions Inc. to devise a way to attract



The PGA Golf Club at The Reserve

public golfers to its two new Tom Fazio-designed layouts and spread the word that the PGA was in the daily-fee business.

The first 18 holes were scheduled to open Jan. 1, although the staff was in

LEGAL CORNER

Beware the insurer seeking reimbursement

By NANCY SMITH

When sports facilities are sued, one of the biggest expenses can be paying for the defense. Even if the case has no merit, a defense attorney can run up a big bill proving just that. Whether it is a country club or sports arena, a successful sports operation can be seen as a deep pocket to recovery.

When the rainy day of litigation arrives, the silver lining in the storm clouds may be an insurance company willing to pay the defense attorney — regardless of whether any judgment on liability is ultimately paid by the insurer. But as sports tycoon Jerry Buss recently learned, the insurance company may come asking for reimbursement for all attorneys' fees.

Buss owns the Los Angeles Lakers and Los Angeles Kings. He and his teams are the primary tenants at the Forum sports arena. When Buss had a falling out with his advertising agency, the dispute ended up in Los Angeles County court. Buss was surprised when his insurance company came back to him at the end of the suit and asked for reimbursement of more than \$1 million it paid Buss' lawyers.

It all started with the ad agency's suit for breach of contract and other claims stemming from Buss' termination of the agency's exclusive rights to handle advertising for the teams and arena. Attor-

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place and the first course ready to go by late December. The PGA had toyed with the idea of giving away some rounds to the public prior to Jan. 1 to thank the local populace for its support. The question

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New Dallas management firm formed

DALLAS — A Dallas company co-founded by a former Fort Worth golf pro has linked up with Lincoln Property Co. in a partnership specializing in management, development and design of golf course properties.

Called Lincoln/Brooks-Baine, the venture offers a full range of professional property management and consulting services to the golf industry. The chief executive officer of

the partnership is Burt Baine, a member of the PGA of America and a former golf pro at Mira Vista and Ridglea country clubs in Fort Worth.

Baine is also a partner in Brooks-Baine, a consulting and management firm he co-founded in 1992. His partner in that company is Mark Brooks, a five-time winner on the PGA Tour. Brooks-Baine Golf and Lincoln are co-partners in the new venture.

ClubLink

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that had foreclosed on the former Elgin House resort. Located in the heart of the Muskota cottage area, an upscale summer resort community, Lake Joseph will include a clubhouse, executive inn and conference facility, waterfront bar/restaurant, docking facilities and 100 residential units.

President and Chief Executive Officer Bruce Simmonds is the driving force behind ClubLink. Prior to founding

the company, Simmonds was involved with fast-growth companies in other fields.

Through his family's company, A.C. Simmonds and Sons Ltd., he acquired Glenayre Electronics in 1987. Glenayre's sales grew from \$23 million per year to \$200 million annually when it was sold in 1990.

The Simmonds family also purchased Dynacharge out of bankruptcy in 1982 for \$125,000. Simmonds built it into a major supplier of rechargeable batteries in Canada with annual sales of

\$12 million by the time he sold the firm for \$10.5 million in 1985.

Simmonds participated in the acquisition of Cherry Downs in 1989. In 1993, he assembled a management team and took ClubLink (LNK) public with a listing on the Toronto Stock Exchange. The firm has gone from 27 holes just prior to going public to 126 with the opening of Lake Joseph in June.

ClubLink markets itself as a network of high-quality clubs for the Toronto marketplace. Members at one club have playing privileges at the others as well. Entrance fees range from \$12,500 for the principal member at Cherry Downs to \$30,000 at King Valley. Annual dues for principal members start at \$2,500 at Lake Joseph and climb to \$3,650 at King Valley. These are attractive prices in the Toronto marketplace where entrance fees at Class A private clubs in 1994 averaged from \$20,000 to \$100,000, averaging \$30,000 to \$35,000, according to ClubLink figures.

ClubLink generates significant revenues from non-member events and programs. It is one of Toronto's largest organizers of tournament events, holding 15 percent of the area's corporate events and roughly a third of the high-end ones by its own estimates.

The company also owns real estate around several of its courses that it plans to develop into residential areas over the next few years.

ClubLink is bullish on the golf market. It estimates the return on cost at a typical ClubLink, 18-hole private club will reach 17 to 35 percent as the course reaches capacity over a three- to five-year period. Those figures are based on 550 principal members, 120 spousal members and 28,000 annual rounds.

The company plans expansions and improvements to its existing facilities. At Cherry Downs, the ClubLink plans to redesign the existing course and has an additional 336 acres where it hopes to construct another 18-hole course and 200 to 250 residential units. Additional residential development is likely at King Valley and Heron Point, where the company owns extra acreage.

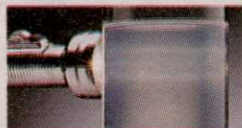
ClubLink is on the lookout for additional properties in the Toronto area, Western Canada and the U.S. Sunbelt, Nemeth said. A potential deal to buy Alaqua Country Club in Orlando, Fla., fell through recently when the members exercised their right to buy the club, she said. ClubLink does have reciprocal playing arrangements with Alaqua, however, as well as the Heritage Club in Ocala, Fla., and Starr Pass in Tucson, Ariz.



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