

IGM continues Southeastern push

LAKELAND, Fla. — International Golf Management, Inc. has been retained to provide professional golf course maintenance services on a contractual basis for two county-owned and operated golf courses at Sandridge Golf Club in Vero Beach, Fla., and the nine-hole executive course at Leisure Lakes Golf Course in Lake Placid, Fla.

Under the agreement with Sandridge, IGM will provide turnkey golf course maintenance services for the club's two 18-hole, par-72 courses — The Dunes and The Lakes, both of which were designed by Ron Garl of Lakeland, built by Guettler & Sons and owned and operated by Indian River County. The 7,000-yard Dunes course opened in 1986, while the 6,300-yard Lakes course opened in 1992.

Maintenance at both courses will be handled by IGM staff working under the direction of Scott Campbell, IGM's resident superintendent assigned to Sandridge, and Jim Wells, CGCS, IGM's Central Florida regional manager. Hank Vroman is the club manager. Bob Komarinetz is golf pro and director of golf.

At Leisure Lakes, IGM will handle mowing, irrigation, integrated pest management and equipment maintenance for the course at the Leisure Lakes Resort along the shoreline of Lake June. The resort is owned by Avatar Properties. Chuck Faremouth is club manager.

Headquartered in Lakeland, IGM specializes in contracted golf course maintenance services for private, semi-private,

public and municipal golf courses. IGM currently provides golf course maintenance services for 22 courses in Florida and elsewhere in the southeast.

In other news, two IGM officials have been named to the Industry Advisory Committee of Lake City Community College in Lake City, Fla.

Scott Zakany, CGCS, vice president and general manager of IGM, and Jimmy Witt, CGCS, IGM's regional manager for southeast Florida, were named to the committee. Witt directs a 60-member IGM staff which provides golf course maintenance for five championship courses at Palm-Aire Spa & Resort in Pompano Beach, Fla.

The Industry Advisory Committee established general guidelines and curriculum for Lake City Community College, one of the nation's leading schools specializing in preparing students for careers in the golf course management/maintenance field.

IGM has also awarded Derek Vaughn of Wildwood, Fla., a full scholarship to pursue his studies in course management at Lake City Community College.

"Derek has expressed a strong interest in a golf course management career and has demonstrated abilities in this field by being accepted into the Lake City Community College program," Zakany said. "We are very pleased to be helping him reach his career goal by awarding him an IGM scholarship."

Vaughn will begin his studies in the fall semester, which begins Aug. 15.

The Legends Group

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and 1992 he constructed The Legends in Myrtle Beach, a three-course complex that became the headquarters for the growing Young empire. Tom Doak designed the Parkland and Heathland layouts and P.B. Dye the Moorland track. The two-mile, tree-lined drive leading up to the massive Scottish-looking Legends clubhouse adds to the feeling that this is something a cut above the average Myrtle Beach fare.

But Young still wasn't finished. Believing Myrtle Beach was nearing capacity, he looked northward to Williamsburg. He struck a deal with the Chesapeake Corp., a paper company and major landowner. Chesapeake's real-estate subsidiary, Delmarva Corp., won a bidding war to build the state's only thoroughbred horseracing track in New Kent, halfway between Williamsburg and Richmond. Chesapeake plans to build as many as eight courses in the area and chose Young as its partner. The first two, The Legends at New Kent and The Legends at Stonehouse, opened this summer and are expected to contend for best new course of the year honors in many publications. Former Tom Fazio associate Mike Strantz designed both.

"It's going to take a few years to get these the way we want them," said Danny, who supervises course construction for The Legends Group and was in charge of building all Legends' properties except Marsh Harbour ("My Dad did that one."). "We want them to be perfect and then we'll look at building more. We have some big

plans. We can't comment on them yet, but they'll take us outside Williamsburg and Myrtle Beach."

Greens fees at the six South Carolina courses range from \$37 to \$83 with cart, depending on the time of year. The six layouts host more than 300,000 rounds annually, Blair said.

While each of The Legends Group courses has its own superintendent and head pro, overall management for the eight facilities is headquartered at the Myrtle Beach Legends complex.

"The marketing, personnel, financial, accounting and reservation functions are all done through our office here in Myrtle Beach," explained Blair. "Each course is an individual profit center but has a portion of its operation charged against our overall overhead budget. We have a real-estate and hotel management operation based here as well."

"It's very efficient," Danny Young said. "Having eight courses gives us some tremendous advantages in terms of buying power. We've aligned ourselves with John Deere and O.M. Scott Fertilizer, for instance."

In addition to the Youngs and Blair, other key executives include Director of Maintenance David Sapp, Director of Agronomy Terry Buchen and Chief Financial Officer Al Hooks.

"We have the capacity within our management structure to take on another three to four courses without overburdening our existing administrative staff," Blair said. "We'd prefer to build, own and operate our own courses. That's not to say we wouldn't do a management deal, or lease a facility if the situation were right. But the highest and best use of our resources is to build, own and operate our own facilities."

Group buying

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golf professionals to about 15 management companies.

"The initial stage was pro shop merchandise," said Dirks, "that's where the public sees the difference in pricing most. But we're looking to diversify out and catch the market."

While the number of buying groups is rising, there is also a growing number of specialized services offered.

VGM offers fax-on-demand service. It serves up fresh lists of excess inventory and discount equipment to members. VGM Golf members can dial a toll-free number, enter their membership number and get a direct, updated fax with equipment information. VGM runs several services with the fax program — a "Connecting Link" fax-exchange for golf professionals looking to buy or sell inventory, a "Want List" for members looking for rare or hard-to-find items, and a "Manufacturers Special" list that covers closeouts on items like golf gloves and other equipment that in the past would automatically get scooped up by off-course discount shops.

"It's like immediate gratification," said Dirks. He said the information on the fax lists is updated every other week.

We want to get everybody that's in the green grass industry and collage them together to improve the buying power of all the members. That's the only way you can compete against the Nevada Bob's.'

**- Kent Dirks,
VGM vice president of
marketing**

With the emergence of groups like the National Turf Cooperative and VGM Golf, groups like the National Golf Course Owners Association (NGCOA) and its "Smart Buy" buying program and American Golf and even smaller, regional buying groups no longer have the field to themselves.

But Dirks said that even though there is some competition, he believes there may soon be more cooperation among buying groups.

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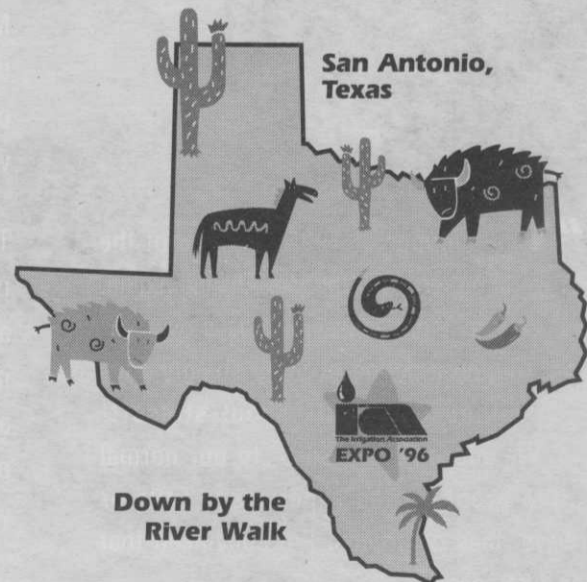
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