

BRIEFS



PALMER APPOINTS PAIR

ORLANDO, Fla. — Arnold Palmer Golf Management Co. has named Jay Bastian vice president of business development and Natalie Sellers corporate development marketing director. Bastian is responsible for course acquisition activity focused primarily within real estate development communities. Sellers will write, design and lay out sales proposals and related support collateral, plus assist in lead tracking and generation efforts, database management and a variety of additional activities.

STUART NAMED BELLE TERRE MANAGER

LA PLACE, La. — Belle Terre Country Club here has named James Stuart its new manager. Stuart will be responsible for overall golf, club and member operations at the Club Corporation of America-operated facility. Prior to joining Pete Dye-designed Belle Terre, Stuart was manager of CCA's Cooks Creek Golf Club in Ashville, Ohio.



James Stuart

NGP ACQUIRES SEACLIFF

HUNTINGTON BEACH, Calif. — National Golf Properties has acquired SeaCliff Country Club here for \$10.15 million. SeaCliff will be leased to American Golf Corp. Located 25 miles south of Los Angeles, the private facility includes an 18-hole course, practice area, clubhouse, tennis and swimming facilities.

LIGHTNING W TABS EIGUREN

WASHOE VALLEY, Nevada — The Golf Club at Lightning W Ranch has named W.L. "Lou" Eiguren director of club development. Eiguren, a 25-year PGA member, will focus on club membership development and growth with an emphasis on promoting the golf facilities. Prior to Lightning W, Eiguren was director of golf at Edgewood Tahoe Resort in Stateline.



Lou Eiguren

CASPER COMES TO TENNESSEE

OAK RIDGE, Tenn. — Billy Casper Golf Management will provide management consulting services to the city and a developer during the planning and construction phases for an as-yet-unnamed course. The Gary Roger Baird-designed course is scheduled to open this fall.

Masters Golf Corp. readies to expand northward

Florida firm adds Orlando facility, bringing portfolio to 8

By PETER BLAIS

ORLANDO, Fla. — Masters Golf Corp. plans to venture out of Florida this year as it attempts to become a major East Coast golf management company, according to President Tary Kettle.

Formed in 1992 with a single management contract, Masters has grown into a full-service, turnkey company with management contracts at eight Florida courses. Six belong to the Raymond Floyd Group.

The Orlando-based firm, which recently signed on at Rosemont Country Club here, expects to announce management contracts in either Georgia or South Carolina by year's end, Kettle said.

"We're planning to take on about three courses a year for the next few years," Kettle added. "We'd like to move up the Eastern Seaboard and eventually maybe affiliate or merge with someone to become a national company."



Rosemont Country Club is the latest addition to the Masters Golf Corp. list of courses.

Kettle and Floyd first met while Kettle was in the investment banking industry. He helped Floyd find and buy a course. The relationship continued when Kettle opted to open his own

management firm a short time later.

Masters' Floyd properties include Oak Hills Golf Club in Spring Hill, Rotonda Golf & Country Club (G&CC)

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MARKETING IDEA OF THE MONTH

Breakfast meetings help attract business

The following article appeared in the March 1996 issue of *The Club Marketing Report*, a monthly newsletter for club professionals. For more information contact Robert or Denise Bodman at 800-267-6758.

If your marketing objective is to expand the number of prospective members being introduced to your club, to increase member usage and involvement in the club, to add to the number of guests

your members are bringing to the club, or simply to enhance your club's image in the community, you may want to consider developing a program called the "Breakfast Speaker Series."

This program is a regularly scheduled, monthly series of notable speakers and presentations, addressing a group of members, invited guests, and other individuals from the community. Breakfast is chosen because it is typically a non-active

period of the day for clubs, and is usually not in conflict with other community events. Initially, this concept became popular when the "Power Breakfast" was the rage in the business world.

Breakfast occurs at a time of the day that can be effectively used for networking. Networking is one of the underlying reasons why a member joins a club. More importantly, networking opportunities provide members with a rationale for maintaining their membership. This program provides the club with a method to meet the networking needs of its members, and en-

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Heritage Golf Management recently purchased Hoosier National Golf Club in Bloomington, Ind., and renamed the 27-hole facility Whitetail Golf Club. The 538-acre property has a regulation-length, 18-hole course and a nine-hole executive track. The facility has been closed while going through bankruptcy proceedings the past two years. A local farmer even hayed the acreage on a couple of occasions, according to company President Tom Rodems. The course is undergoing a major renovation, mainly to the putting surfaces, through the remainder of this year and will reopen as a daily-fee layout in the spring of 1997. Heritage manages three other Indiana courses — Bear Slide in Cicero, Iron Horse Golf Club in Logansport and Twin Bridges Golf Club in Danville.

LEGAL CORNER

Avoiding employee suits a matter of attending to details

By NANCY SMITH

Lawsuits by disgruntled employees can be more than just an Excedrin headache for club managers. They can also be money pits for judgments and attorneys' fees.

Insurance can protect against lawsuits for personal injuries. But it generally doesn't protect against claims by fired workers.

Recent court rulings have endorsed methods some companies have used to protect themselves from wrongful termination claims. They have shown that attention to detail in employee agreements can prevail against suits.

In *Haggard v. Kimberly Quality Care, Inc.*, the California Court of Appeal ruled in favor of an employer who carefully worded both an employment agreement and employee handbook. When stated clearly the relationship could be terminated by the employee or employer at either's "will," the court found no implied agreement the employee would keep her job as long as she performed properly.

Many states consider employment to be "at-will," at the pleasure of either the

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Masters Golf

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in Fort Myers, St. Augustine Shores Golf Club and Whispering Oaks G&CC near Tampa. Rosemont and Marco Shores on Marco Island are the only non-Floyd properties.

Masters operates primarily on performance-based agreements, according to Executive Vice President Steve Sanford, who recently joined Masters from ISS Golf Services, a major golf course maintenance contracting firm.

"We work with the owner to come up with quantifiable expectations, such as green speeds," Sanford explained. "Then we develop a program to deliver those expectations. We agree to a certain timetable and then ask the customer [course owner] to grade us. If we don't meet the specified grade, we don't get paid."

Sanford, a University of Florida graduate and director of the Florida Turfgrass Association, is responsible for developing course management and maintenance programs and manages the day-to-day operation of the Masters Services Group (MSG). He works closely with Director of Golf Course Maintenance Operations Gary Alex, a former superintendent at public and private clubs and a University of Massachusetts turfgrass school graduate.

MSG provides complete agronomic and horticultural maintenance services, including:

- ✓ Developing an annual cultural program to meet customer goals, including correct pesticide application.
- ✓ Providing a professional staff, including a superintendent.
- ✓ Purchasing materials from fertilizers to flag sticks.
- ✓ Managing the maintenance equipment inventory.
- ✓ Maintaining the irrigation system.
- ✓ Developing capital budgets.

Sanford said Masters will make a major push in the municipal golf market. "We see a need for government to get out of the course management and maintenance business," he said. "Government systems are not equipped to supply golf to the marketplace and will continue to outsource their golf operations."

Kettle, who is also a certified public accountant, works closely with Golf Operations Managers John Gravely, Christina Leinheiser and William Turner to provide playing-side management services.

Kettle predicted management companies will continue to consolidate through mergers and/or buyouts. Asked if

his company's size and portfolio made it a likely takeover target, he said, "We're not thinking about acquiring or being acquired, but we'd consider different things, if approached."

As for the courses it operates, Masters Golf Corporation will continue to emphasize management arrangements rather than trying to acquire courses.

"We've looked into an investor group for acquiring courses," Kettle said. "But we prefer third-party management deals."

Ohio clubs turn to new computerized marketing scheme

AKRON, Ohio — WorldWide Sports Marketing (WSM), a division of Interactive MultiMedia Publishers Inc. (IMP), has begun installation of multimedia kiosks in 30 northern Ohio golf clubs.

The kiosks, located in the clubs' pro shops, are sponsored by the Northern Ohio Golf Association (NOGA), a U.S. Golf Association (USGA) regional organization. The WSM kiosks with AST Pentium PCs feature the USGA's computerized golf handicap system, GHIN, and also will provide club news, golf tips, NOGA/USGA news and advertising. The program has been developed as a "proof-of-

concept" for the 1996 season which runs from April through October.

According to NOGA Executive Director Robert A. Wharton, "This is the first program in the country to offer the GHIN system along with state-of-the-art multimedia equipment. We believe that this will provide several new benefits to our member clubs and other participating clubs using the GHIN system."

IMP is a competitor in the international marketplace for the development and sale of interactive multimedia software, kiosks and CD-ROMs. WSM is selling advertising space on the kiosks. For more information, contact 800-462-5483.

We'll keep the pesticide industry from

