

# GOLF COURSE NEWS

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MEADOWBROOK BUYS NAGI, GRI

## Operations biz has new player

By PETER BLAIS

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. — New-kid-on-the-block Meadowbrook Golf Group has suddenly become a major golf course management company with its recent purchases of Chicago-based North American Golf Inc. (NAGI) and California-based Golf Resources Inc. (GRI) giving it 25 courses nationwide.

Effective Oct. 1, 1996, North American Golf began operating as the Eastern Division of 2-year-old Meadowbrook Golf Management. An exchange of stock was expected to occur by Nov. 1, with a final closing on the transaction scheduled for January 1, 1997.

Meadowbrook expects to close this month on a similar transaction with

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## Compost: A top-drawer top-dresser

By MARK LESLIE

GLENVIEW, Ill. — Scientists can't explain exactly why it works, but it does, and compost is gaining popularity among golf course superintendents as a top-dressing and divot-mix application.

"It definitely works, for whatever reason; it's being used more widely all the time," said Dr. Eric Nelson of Cornell University. "There is a qualitative change that happens in the soil but what, specifically, is anyone's guess. That's what we're trying to figure out."

Attesting to the fact that compost enhances divot

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### VANDALISM: A COMMUNITY ISSUE

Industry experts believe combating course vandalism requires more community involvement, not higher fences. For the story on this all-too-common problem, see page 17.

THE AMERICAS BRING HOME THE HAYTER CUP & MAKE THE WORLD SMALLER... PAGE 30

## Easy credit drives GATX out of golf?

By PETER BLAIS

SAN FRANCISCO — In an ironic response to the improving financial climate for golf course development, GATX Capital Corp. will no longer make golf course loans, according to Vice President Roy Powell.

GATX has traditionally loaned money in high leverage, high rate-of-return situations that traditional lenders [banks] typically shun, Powell said. GATX and companies like them were one of the few sources of capital during the late 1980s and early 1990s when traditional lenders, scared off by the depressed real-estate market, shied away from making golf-related loans.

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### JURASSIC GOLF?

Not exactly, but the new nine at Puddicombe-designed Dinosaur Trail Golf & Country Club in Drumheller, Alberta, Canada, is other-worldly. For story, see page 35.

## Big Fish/Little Fish: Jacobsen absorbs Bunton

By HAL PHILLIPS

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — If you believe consolidation indicates a healthy industry, the golf course business just got healthier.

In a move company officials claim will "increase its leadership role in the turf-maintenance industry," Racine, Wis.-based Jacobsen Division of Textron, Inc. has acquired the Bunton Company, a manufacturer of turf equipment based here.

No significant upheaval is expected at Bunton in the near future, according to Bill Robson, interim general manager here at the firm's Louisville headquar-

ters. For the time being, Jacobsen distributors will handle Jake products and Bunton distributors will handle Bunton products, he said.

"That doesn't mean that if a Jacobsen distributor wanted to sell Bunton, we wouldn't look at it," said Robson. "But right at the moment, nothing will change."

With approximately 100 employees, Bunton's 1995 sales were \$19 million. According to Herb Henkel, Textron president of industrial products, Bunton's facility and employees will remain in Ken-

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