

GOLF COURSE NEWS

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INSIDE

Public Golf Forum

The industry's annual conference focusing on public-access golf scheduled for Chicago in October 3

Consolidation Games

Management firms continue to grow nationwide. See our company chart and special section 43-52



NEW GRASS IN THE WILDERNESS

Assistant superintendent Charlie Riger spreads out PF-11 sprigs on a green at Wilderness Country Club. PF-11 is one of two Bermudagrasses that superintendent Paul Frank has discovered on the Florida course. See Super Focus on page 14.

COURSE MAINTENANCE

Rossi: IPM will expand with knowledge 13
TPC emphasizes safety at Vegas facility 17
'Speed bump' on greens: Life in the fast lane 20

COURSE DEVELOPMENT

Norman's march on Atlanta culminates at TPC 31
Architects society to honor Sarazen 33
Dasher strikes out on his own 40

COURSE MANAGEMENT

Legacy Management seeks owner input 43
Back to Sales School with Prof. Alfonso 44
Vanity fare: Rest rooms change with the times ... 45

SUPPLIER BUSINESS

No soft-pedaling: Spike biz gets complicated 53
What's new in the marketplace? 58-59

Stressed Out!

Superintendents and their turf living too close to the edge, say researchers

By MARK LESLIE

MONTREAL — Declaring that "pre-stress conditioning" will be the new buzz word in turfgrass management, Dr. Joseph DiPaola told Canadian superintendents here they should develop long-term agronomic plans for their golf courses.

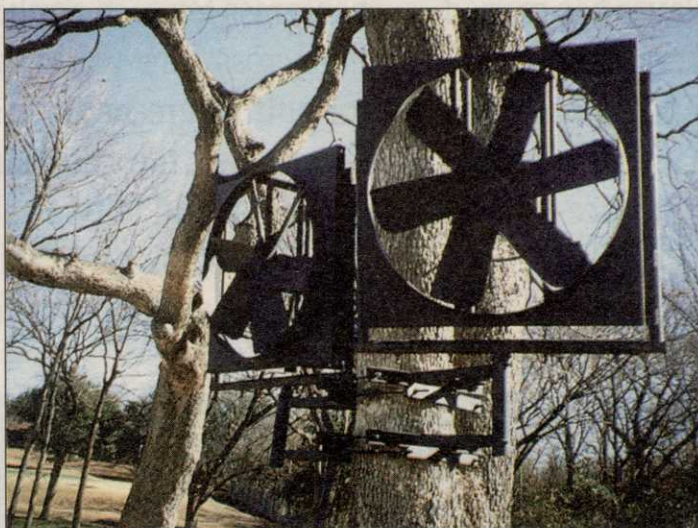
Speaking at the Canadian Golf Superintendents Association's International Turfgrass Conference and Trade Show, DiPaola said: "Our job is very simply to grow tomorrow's turf today. We have to be in a position of putting plants in place for next month, for next summer, well in advance of stress..."

"The heads-up is that we are going to be hearing more about pre-stress conditioning... We don't have all the answers right now. But we've got better answers today than we had five or 10 years ago. We can

Continued on page 24

BIG FANS OF ATMOSPHERIC CIRCULATION

New fan technology continues to improve its effectiveness and utility. See stories, page 13.



Course taking shape atop Montana Superfund site

By MARK LESLIE

ANACONDA, Mont. — It's a legend before its own time, designed by a legend in his own time. Old Works Golf Course won't

open until May 31, yet it has already made its mark: A Superfund cleanup site, which Jack Nicklaus called "one of the ugliest properties I've ever seen," transformed into a golf course that builder Chip Roe lauded as "breathtaking."

The former copper mine closed more than 90 years ago, but left behind a legacy of arsenic over its 250 acres. Turning it from a moonscape-like wasteland into a safe golf course

Continued on page 34

Rolling Greens Photography



QA &A HIGH-PROFILE DEBUT

After considerable ballyhoo, *The Sanctuary*—the first solo project from architect Jim Engh—opens next month in Castle Rock, Colo. Engh spoke with GCN about the project, his career and design philosophies. See page 31.

GolfSouth finds partner and funding source in ClubLink

By HAL PHILLIPS

GREENVILLE, S.C.—To compete for today's course operations contracts, it takes more than for-profit management credentials. It takes deep pockets.

The pockets at GolfSouth LLC just got deeper follow-

ing its alliance with Canada's only publicly owned golf course company, ClubLink. ClubLink and the founders of GolfSouth — N. Barton Tuck, Jr. and Derrell E. Hunter — have agreed the Toronto-based firm will initially fund certain capital for GolfSouth through loans. The pact also gives ClubLink an option to acquire the shares held by Tuck and Hunter in exchange for ClubLink shares.

For ClubLink, which operates six private clubs in Ontario, the alliance means a foothold in the U.S. market. For GolfSouth, it means the ability to compete with the increasing number of management companies which boast built-in funding sources. Among those firms hell-bent on acquisition are Santa Monica, Calif.-based

Continued on page 52



PGA Tour, Deere ink 3-tiered deal

By HAL PHILLIPS

MOLINE, Ill — In a deal that impacts three distinct segments of the golf industry, John Deere has reached an unprecedented nine-year agreement with the PGA Tour to provide turf equipment to the Tournament Players Club (TPC) network of courses, assume title sponsorship of the Quad City Classic and provide 385 acres for a new TPC course development here.

The nine-year partnership — comprising three consecutive 3-year leases — was announced at an April 2 news conference at Deere's world headquarters.

Other golf industry corporations have associated themselves with professional tour events, including The Scott Company's sponsorship of The Tradition,

Continued on page 55

GolfSouth/ClubLink

Continued from page 1

American Golf Corp. (AGC), capitalized through its REIT and sister company, National Golf Properties; Scottsdale, Ariz.-based Troon Golf Management, backed by the Starwood Capital Group, LLC of Greenwich, Conn.; and Orlando-based Palmer Golf Management, funded by Olympus Real Estate Corp. of Dallas.

"ClubLink was looking for a platform and an existing portfolio and management team," explained Hunter, the president and chief operating officer at GolfSouth. "We were looking for deeper, more reliable funding sources."

"We feel like this relationship gives us an advantage, quite frankly, because ClubLink is a funding source that understands the golf business a lot better.

They're in the business in Canada, which makes our affiliation a little different. Ultimately we may evolve into a full-fledged merger."

Justin Connidis, ClubLink's vice president of corporate development, also expects the companies to grow more interdependent.

"ClubLink and GolfSouth are jointly reviewing GolfSouth's capital and expansion plans," Connidis said. "It is the intention of

ClubLink and Golf South to work together to establish and implement a business plan for GolfSouth which will both enhance its position as a leading U.S. golf course company and facilitate its ultimate merger with ClubLink."

Through its wholly owned subsidiaries — GolfSouth Management, Inc., GolfSouth Capital, Inc. and GolfSouth Clubs LLC — Greenville-based GolfSouth con-

trols or manages 23 golf course projects: eight which remain in development, 13 existing operations in which the company has an ownership stake, and two it manages for outside ownership. The properties, most of them high-end daily-fee/semi-private, are clustered in three general areas: The Richmond, Va./Baltimore corridor, the Southeast and Central Florida [for a complete list of GolfSouth holdings, see chart on pages 50-51].

Hunter acknowledges the golf industry remains rife with poorly managed facilities ripe for operations assistance — many of them available at bargain-basement prices. Yet GolfSouth has also displayed the willingness to build its own facilities.

"It's a market-by-market consideration, whether you should be building or acquiring," said Hunter. "We'd like to have our holdings in clusters. I have to say, with a couple of exceptions, we haven't been able to accomplish that."

"We have three courses in the Richmond-Baltimore corridor. We always look at acquisition first, but there is a course shortage there; plus, the quality of what can be purchased there isn't what it could be. So we've done most of our building in that region. It's part of our fill-in-the-blanks strategy."

In Virginia, GolfSouth has two projects in planning (Cypress Creek Golfers' Club in Smithfield, and Pleasant Valley Golfers' Club in Fairfax County) and two more under construction: South Riding Golfers' Club in Loudon County and Chesdin Landing Golfers' Club in Richmond. Overseeing these projects is Noel Tuck, Barton's son and GolfSouth's vice president of construction.

Other key members of the GolfSouth management team are Dr. Joel Barber, vice president of agronomy (formerly head agronomist for Golf Enterprises); Marc Brady, group manager for GolfSouth's Mid-Atlantic holdings; Don MacLaren, group manager for Central Florida; and Phil Wiggins, vice president and group manager for the remaining courses.

Other team members include Ron Hakala, vice president of sales and marketing; Controller Dean Doolittle; Tom McKay, vice president of Mid-Atlantic Development; and Betti Wright, director of merchandising.

"We feel like we've built a very strong management team" said Hunter. "What we're trying to do is apply sound business concepts to this business: pro-active marketing, focused marketing, common-sense but progressive business management practices — incentive programs, networking, resource management. Ultimately, we'd like to take advantage of the synergies that result from having groups of courses.

GOLF COURSE NEWS

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