

BRIEFS



KSL FAIRWAYS PROMOTES FOURSOME

MANASSAS, Va. — KSL Fairways, the community golf division of KSL Recreation, has announced the promotion of Mark Burnett to vice president of operations. In his new role, Burnett is responsible for field operations at KSL Fairways' 22 courses. New additions to KSL Fairways' management team include Mark J. O'Neil, who leaves TPC at Avenel to become the northern regional director of operations; Mike Hawkins, formerly director of food and beverage operations for the PGA Tour, now serving as KSLF director of food and beverage; and Willy Choma, who joins KSLF as national director of retail operations, the same position he held for Las Vegas Discount Golf & Tennis.

NGP DECLARES DIVIDENDS

SANTA MONICA, Calif. — National Golf Properties (NGP) Inc. declared a dividend of 42 cents per share for its fiscal quarter ended June 30 for each share of common stock owned by stockholders of record as of July 31. The dividend payment date is Aug. 15. NGP is a self-administered real estate investment trust specializing in the acquisition and ownership of golf course properties.

MOVIN' ON UP

Handling change key to Schlick's Marriott success

By PETER BLAIS

Variety, they say, is the spice of life. In Tom Schlick's case, it is what makes Marriott Golf's director of grounds operations look forward to coming to work each morning.

"I realized pretty early that I wasn't cut out to be a maintenance superintendent," said the University of Florida graduate, who oversees Marriott's 19 golf facilities and has grown in two of them. "I like new construction. They can take three to five years to complete and things are changing all the time."



Tom Schlick

"Change is what appeals to me about this job. I'm involved with everything here — construction, architects, manufacturers. It's different every day."

Schlick hadn't planned on a golf industry career. After earning his bachelor's degree in ornamental horticulture, he started his own commercial landscape contracting business in New York. While bidding on Marriott's Wind Watch Golf Club in Hauppauge, Long Island, he was offered the assistant superintendent's post.

"I hadn't considered a golf career," said Schlick, who worked part-time on the University of Florida's Gainesville course grounds crew while in college. "I knew nothing about golf course maintenance. But it was the late 1980s and the recession was hitting strong in New York. So I decided to give it a try."

Schlick helped grow in seven of the Joe

Continued on page 42



The signature No. 12 island hole at the Country Club at Heathrow (Fla.), a RDC facility.

RDC makes splash along East Coast

By PETER BLAIS

PARSIPPANY, N.J. — RDC Golf Management Co.'s recent purchase of Heritage Links Country Club (CC) in Gainesville, Fla., puts the relatively young management firm into double figures in courses. The semi-private club is RDC's third acquisition in the last year and gives the Parsippany-based company 10 courses at eight locations along the East Coast.

"We're looking to add an average of four courses a year through lease, purchase or management arrangements, although our preference is acquisitions," said company President Chris Schiavone, who co-founded the firm in 1993. "We're looking at properties from Florida to New England. We don't want to be the biggest, just the best in our regions."

RDC is planning \$500,000 in improvements to the Heritage Links' course and 25,000-square-foot clubhouse. The company has added \$100,000 to the course equipment purchase budget and will soon begin a major upgrade to the irrigation system and cosmetic changes to the course.

"The members and public guests will see significant improvements in all areas of Heritage Links' operations, with particular attention to course condition and the food and beverage operation," said RDC Vice President of Operations Steve Phillips.

These are two areas of particular importance to Schiavone, whose experience operating golf courses took root at 54-hole Fiddler's Elbow CC, a New

Continued on page 44

Lightning liability a tricky issue at golf courses

The following article was reprinted with the permission of NewsLinks, a quarterly newsletter published by Golf Property Analysts of Harrisburg, Pa. Ian Meklinsky is an associate with the law firm of Fox, O'Brien & Frankel LLP in Philadelphia.

By IAN MEKLINSKY

A New Jersey court has handed down the nation's first known ruling that lightning is *not* an act of God when it hits a golfer.

On March 28, 1993, Spencer Van Maussner, a member of the Atlantic City Country Club, was playing the back nine when one of his golf partners saw lightning. Since there were no man-made shelters along the way, they proceeded toward the clubhouse. While they walked, Mr. Maussner put up his umbrella and was struck by lightning. Although he survived, he was severely injured and sued the Club and its owners.

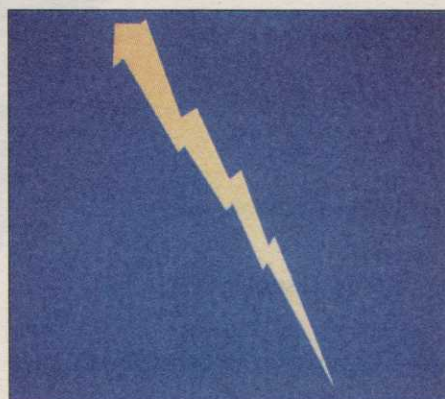
The case was dismissed before going to trial after the county Superior Court Judge found that the "proximate cause" of the injuries was lightning, an act of God, and that the "secondary cause" was the golfer's activities in exposing himself

to the possibility of being struck. Mr. Maussner appealed from this dismissal.

A two-judge appeals panel reversed the lower court and ruled on April 4 in Maussner v. Atlantic City Country Club, Inc. that breakthroughs in engineering and forecasting have given golf courses the capability to protect golfers from lightning better than ever. Therefore, though courses do not have an affirmative duty to protect their patrons from lightning, they are liable if they establish protective systems and the systems do not work.

The appeals court found that the Atlantic City Country Club had, by its actions (the Atlantic City club's practice was to monitor the weather, and it had an evacuation plan that consisted of golf course personnel driving onto the course to warn golfers), assumed a duty to warn golfers and that it is for a jury to determine whether the club exercised the duty reasonably. On remand, the court must permit discovery of industry data to help the jury determine what protection the club offered to its golfers and whether the club reasonably instituted and carried out these precautions.

The ruling sets the stage for proceed-



The painting is the work of artist Paul Reger of Shrewsbury, N.J. Reger has completed several different lightning paintings intended to heighten golfer awareness of the dangers of lightning and safety precautions golfers should follow during storms. The framed 48-by-48-inch paintings sell for \$4,800. Reger can be reached at 908-842-1236.

ings that could lead to a finding that would hit golf course owners in their pocket-books; the first judicially recognized industry standards for lightning warning and protection.

Significantly, the Maussner opinion contains the suggestion that courses can escape liability if, in effect, they decline to interpose themselves between God and golfers. The court noted that all golf

Continued on page 42

Palmer selects 1st course franchisee

ORLANDO, Fla. — Arnold Palmer Golf Management recently signed on its first franchisee, Braeburn Golf Course operated by Reflection Ridge Corp. in Wichita, Kan.

"As our first franchised course, Braeburn is our newest prototype and will be closely watched by both the industry and the thousands of independent owners around the United States," said Peter Nanula, Chief Executive Officer of Palmer Golf Management.

Said Braeburn owner Reg Boothe: "I decided recently that a franchise opportunity with Palmer Golf was the perfect opportunity for Braeburn. To me, association with the Palmer system is a major launching pad to distinguish our course from the rest of the competition."

The idea to franchise courses under the Palmer brand came to executives of the company who observed that many course owners were either unwilling to sell their facilities or to bring

Continued on page 44

Golf Trust of America closes on \$100m financing package

CHARLESTON, S.C.—Golf Trust of America, Inc. has closed a two-year, \$100 million secured revolving credit facility with a group of four commercial banks led by NationsBank, N.A.

Borrowings under the facility will carry a floating interest rate of LIBOR plus 1.75-2 percent with provisions for the rate to be reduced upon the attainment of a Senior Debt Rating.

"The line of credit will enable us to have a

ready source of capital to pursue further acquisition opportunities in the upscale golf course market," commented W. Bradley Blair, II, President and Chief Executive Officer of Golf Trust of America, Inc.

Golf Trust of America, Inc., is a real-estate investment trust specializing in course ownership. The company has interests in a portfolio of 10 courses located throughout the United States.

RDC

Continued from page 41

Jersey cluster is well developed with Fiddler's Elbow; Cherry Valley CC in Montgomery Township; Jumping Brook Golf Club (GC) in Neptune; Pebble Creek GC in Colt's Neck; and Woodlake CC in Lakewood. Heritage Links is located two hours from the firm's other Florida property, Heathrow Country Club in Lake

Mary. RDC is also developing The Crossings at Grove Park, a Ron Garl design in Durham, N.C., scheduled to open in October.

"We're looking at other facilities in Florida and a couple in North Carolina to group with our properties there," Galvin said. "There are many regional players [management firms] along the East Coast, so there aren't one or two firms we see as our major competition. In Florida it might be Arnold Palmer. In the Carolinas, it might be somebody else.

"In New England, it might be the Friel family. The relationships among companies seem pretty cordial. If we come across a property that doesn't make sense for us, we'll often pass that information along to another firm that might find an opportunity there. They often do the same for us. It's not a cutthroat business."

Schiavone said he sees the trend toward the consolidation of management firms into ever-larger entities continuing, although RDC "is not positioning itself to acquire other management firms or to be acquired by a larger firm.

"We could buy a small firm with several courses in order to become a regional player in a certain market. We're a young company. Matt and I are both in our 30s. We're not looking to cash out quickly, but to keep the company growing."

Palmer

Continued from page 41

in professional management companies to take over operations.

"There are great operators out there who want to continue to run their business first hand, but they realize they could benefit from associating with a branded national chain," Nanula said. "We provide a support system that allows independent course owners to maintain the day-to-day management of their course. In addition, they benefit from both the Palmer name and a unique operating system that has proven it can work at virtually any course."

To become a Palmer Golf franchisee, owners pay an initial \$35,000 fee, an annual royalty, and agree to course and facility improvements if any are recommended by Palmer Golf. To help with financing, Palmer has established a program with FMAC, a leading franchise lending institution providing financing for facility upgrades.

For more information about the Palmer franchising program, contact Randy Clifton at 407-876-6700.

Cool tools for hot spots.

If you've been using a pitchfork and hose to treat those high and dry trouble spots on your tees and greens, our new **Spot Doctors** will make your life considerably easier. Whether you use the **tine unit** for deep penetration or the **roller unit** for shallower treatment, you'll appreciate the ease and efficiency they bring to the job. Both quickly attach to a hose fed by your irrigation system. ■ The tine unit works like a combination pitchfork and syringe.

Just place the tines on the spot and squeeze the pistol grip. There's no need to push or force the tines into the ground. Water pressure helps them slide through the soil like a hot knife through butter—delivering water to a depth of up to six inches. ■ The roller unit can be wheeled back and forth over dry spots like a vacuum cleaner to distribute water to a depth of up to two inches. Both units can be used with a surfactant applicator to further increase soil permeability. Cool! ■ Spot

Doctors are the latest in our long line of specialty tools designed specifically for golf and sports turf professionals. For all the details, simply contact your nearby Standard Golf distributor and ask about Spot Doctors. They're the cool tools for hot spots!

**Standard Golf's
new Spot Doctors
make it easy to
cure problem dry
spots on tees and
greens.**

**STANDARD
GOLF** Pro-Line

Standard Golf Company
P.O. Box 68
Cedar Falls, IA 50613 U.S.A.
319-266-2638 FAX 319-266-9627