

# GOLF COURSE NEWS

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### FLOCKING TOGETHER

Birds of a feather: PGA Tour star Tom Lehman (right) will team with former Tour player John Fought on a course design project in Arizona. For story, see page 37.

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## Stress tests bear fruit

Super-dwarf Bermudas gain favor

By MARK LESLIE

BELTSVILLE, Md. — Turfgrass breeders are concentrating more on warm-season varieties than cool-season types and their work is bearing fruit, some of it extraordinary, according to the national director of the National Turfgrass Evaluation Program (NTEP).

Advances are being reported on the zoysiagrass and seeded Bermudagrass fronts, yet vegetative Bermuda may prove the greatest immediate impact on golf courses, said NTEP's Kevin Morris. "Even though bentgrass is the ultimate in quality in the



FOR A SPECIAL SECTION ON SUMMER STRESS, "BEATING THE HEAT," TURN TO PAGES 30-34.



The Fazio Course at Barton Creek Golf and Conference Center in Austin, Texas, has already converted to a stress-tolerant super-dwarf Bermudagrass.

South, as some of the newer Bermudas come out that rival the bents in texture, people will move away from the bents in stressful areas," Morris predicted.

"There's a chance we have something practically as good as bent is in the North," said U.S. Golf Association Green Section National Director Jim Snow. "The goal is to get a

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## Operations biz has new Player: Gary

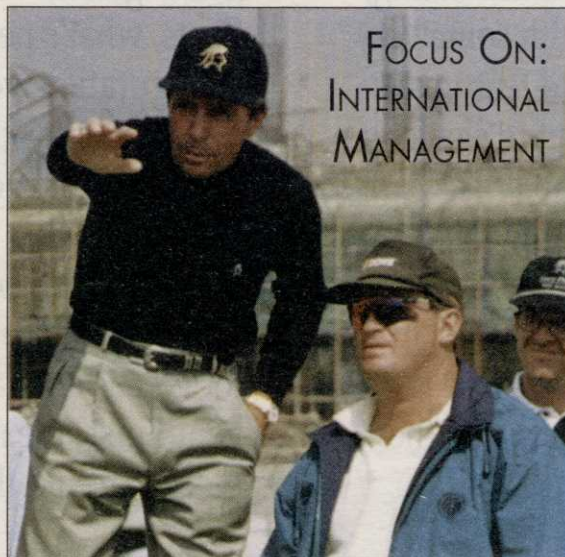
By HAL PHILLIPS

SINGAPORE — Not content with its considerable presence in the design, golf academy and club-manufacturing markets, The Gary Player Group has entered the course operations business, touting a full-service ability to develop, manage and brand its member clubs.

Unveiled here at Golf Asia '97, Gary Player Management Services (GPMS) has already signed its first club, Verdemar Golf Club, a Philippine project still in the early stages of development. However, don't read too much into the GPMS decision to launch in Asia-Pacific, where its sister course-design and academy divisions are better established, compared to the U.S.

"It's our full intention to be global," said GPMS Managing Director Mark

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FOCUS ON:  
INTERNATIONAL  
MANAGEMENT



Gary Player (at left) has added facility management to his design and club-making ventures. Above: The New Course at Portmarnock near Dublin, Ireland — one of a growing roster of courses managed by the European PGA Tour. For stories, see pages 43-46.

## Participation rates lag, compared to course supply

By PETER BLAIS

Golf's two main growth indicators, the number of golfers and rounds played, remained relatively flat at 25 million and 477 million, respectively, in 1996, according to a National Golf Foundation (NGF) report.

But while demand continued stagnant, the golf industry continued to increase the course supply at a near-record rate, with 442 courses coming on line last year. Though concerned about this seeming demand/supply imbalance, the NGF and others remain optimistic about golf's future, pegging their hopes on the continued interest of aging Baby Boomers and the newfound interest of their offspring, the so-called Echo Boomers.

"I don't think those numbers are a true indicator of the interest in the game," said Myrtle Beach, S.C. architect/developer Ken Tomlinson, who



NGF's Rick Norton

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## Golf, ecology look to curb 'Us vs. Them'

By BILL SUGG

WASHINGTON, D.C. — "Let's think beyond golf," said Audubon impresario Ron Dodson during last month's day-long symposium, *Golf Environments of the 21st Century: Integrating Wildlife Conservation Into Golf Courses of the Future*, held here at the National Geographic Society (NGS). "Our purpose in creating cooperative sanctuary systems was to create a vehicle that would lead to communication among a whole variety of individuals across the country. We are beginning to see that now. We are

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