

BRIEFS



ADD ANOTHER TO NGP/AGC PORTFOLIO

SANTA MONICA, Calif. — National Golf Properties has acquired Baymeadows Golf Course in Jacksonville, Fla. for \$4.5 million. The course will be leased to American Golf Corp. Baymeadows features an 18-hole, daily-fee course designed by Gene Sarazen and Desmond Muirhead and includes a driving range, practice facility and clubhouse. NGP has acquired three courses in 1997 for approximately \$19 million. Since its initial public offering in 1993, National Golf Properties has acquired 73 courses representing an aggregate initial investment of \$374 million.

CRESTA VERDE BUYS MEADOW LAKE CC

ESCONDIDO, Calif. — Cresta Verde Inc. of Los Angeles has purchased Meadow Lake Country Club here. The property was sold for \$3.8 million. The seller was The Welk Group of Santa Monica, Calif. The buyer has previously owned and operated golf courses in California and Florida, and plans to make improvements to the Meadow Lake property immediately.

BROWN NAMED ROCKY GAP GM

CUMBERLAND, Md. — Gary W. Brown has been named general manager here at Rocky Gap Lodge & Golf Resort, a \$53.1 million destination golf resort under construction here in western Maryland. Brown, who was just awarded the American Society of Association Executive's "Associate Members Fellows Designation," comes to Rocky Gap from G.W. Brown Hotel Sales & Marketing Services, a Virginia-based hotel consulting firm where he served as president. Prior to that he served for six years as director of hotel sales for Colonial Williamsburg Properties, Inc.

PERDUE NAMED TO CMAA POST

ALEXANDRIA, Va. — The Club Managers Association of America (CMAA) has promoted Joe Perdue,



Joe Perdue

CCM (Certified Club Manager), CHE (Certified Hospitality Educator) from director of education and professional development to vice president. Perdue has been

with the Alexandria, Va.-based association since 1986.

GOLF COURSE NEWS

Golden Bear finds niche in managing Nicklaus courses

By PETER BLAIS

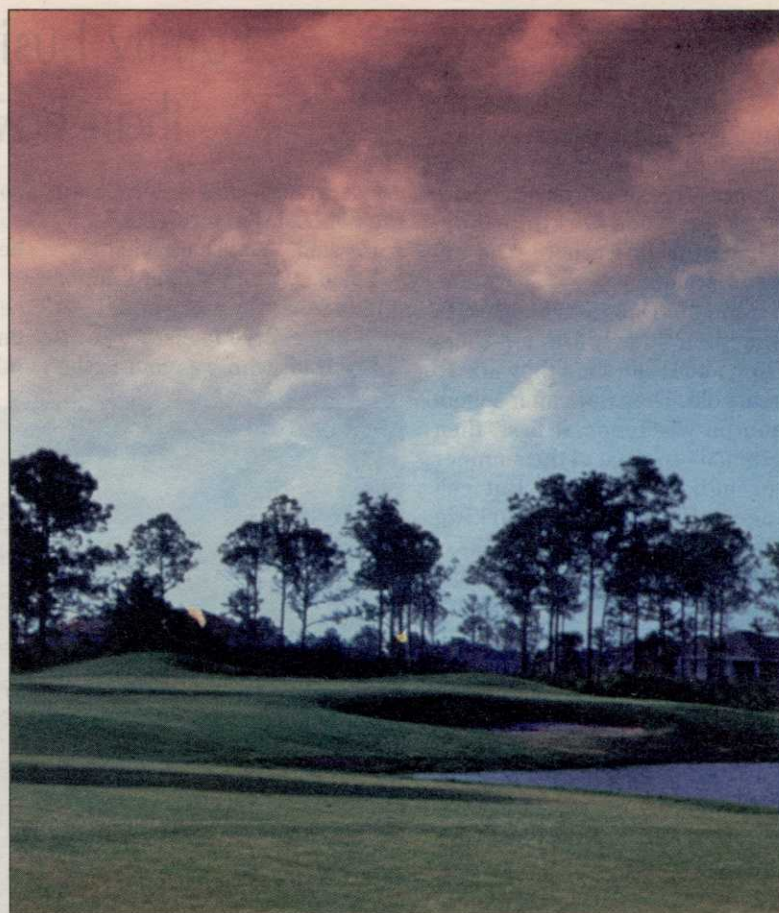
NAPLES, Fla. — The Nicklaus family imprint is all over Twin Eagles Country Club here, the latest project to come under the paw of Golden Bear Club Services, Jack Nicklaus' club management division.

Jack and son Jack Jr. will design the 36-hole private equity club, according to Steve Walser, vice president of Golden Bear Club Services. Nicklaus' construction company, Paragon Golf Construction Inc., will likely do the shaping when construction begins this fall, Walser said. And Golden Bear Club Services will manage the facility once it opens in late 1998.

"Golden Bear Club Services' niche is the management of high-end courses," Walser said. "We plan to have about 15 courses under contract within five years. We're not looking to be the biggest company out there. We have a high-end niche, managing Nicklaus-designed properties in particular. But we'll manage non-Nicklaus courses, as well, if they are in the right market."

The Golden Bear market is worldwide. In addition

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Nicklaus-designed, Golden Bear-managed Hammock Creek GC in Palm City, Fla.

MOVIN' ON UP

Dick Schulz knew something: Take a risk

By PETER BLAIS

COVINGTON, Ga. — Seeing hard-working people at his father's course pay top dollar to play off hardpan turf convinced a teen-aged Dick Schulz that public golfers of average means deserved better for their money.

Seeing that same stoic father break down in tears the day the insurance company fired him after 21 years of loyal service convinced Schulz that he'd free himself from depending on someone else for a paycheck as soon as possible.

"Sometimes it's the little things that



Dick Schulz (left) and his superintendent, Trey Rusk III.

turn out to be very important in getting you started on a particular career path," said Schulz, 40, a former superintendent who owns 70 percent of the moderately priced Oaks Course, located a 32-minute drive from the state capitol building in Atlanta. If all goes as planned, Schulz will acquire several more courses in the near future.

Schulz grew up in Louisville, Ky., and Chattanooga, Tenn. He played some high school golf and worked on a grounds crew summers, but didn't get serious about a golf career until injuries sidelined the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga linebacker from his first love, football.

Schulz transferred to the University of Tennessee at Knoxville and entered the turfgrass management program, graduating in 1979. He soon found an assistant superintendent position at Lords Valley Country Club in the Pennsylvania Poconos, 60 miles west of New York City.

"I had to go North to learn how to grow bentgrass," said the native Southerner. "I saw that knowledge as the key to my goal of one day operating a first-class facility

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Family Golf Centers press on with range consolidation

MELVILLE, N.Y. — Family Golf Centers, Inc. — which owns, operates and manages golf-related facilities — has signed leases to operate six golf properties and letters of intent to acquire three additional centers.

Family Golf has leased or acquired concession licenses to operate College of the Desert Golf Center in Palm Desert, Calif.; Capital Sports Center in Raleigh, N.C.; Randall's Island Golf Center in New York City; Darlington Golf Center in Mahwah, N.J.; Trotter's Glen Golf Course in Olney, Md.; and Green Oaks Golf Center in Arlington, Texas.

Letters of intent or purchase agreements have been signed to acquire or

operate San Bruno (Calif.) Golf Center; Rio Salado Golf Course in Tempe, Ariz.; and Divot City Golf Center in Milpitas, Calif. Final approvals with local municipal authorities are pending in San Bruno, Tempe and Santa Clara, Calif.

Each of the nine properties contains ranges, pro shops, and short-game practice areas or mini-golf courses. Trotter's Glen is a full 18-hole course, located near Washington, D.C., and Rio Salado has a nine-hole executive course near Phoenix. Some facilities will undergo renovations.

The expansion brings Family Golf into new markets in North Carolina and Texas. Following completion of all these trans-

actions, three of which are subject to certain conditions, the total number of facilities owned, operated or under construction will be 45 in 17 states.

The company also announced that Michael P. Kelly, formerly a senior vice president of Golden Bear Golf Centers, Inc., has joined Family Golf as senior vice president and manager of the Southeast region.

Dominic Chang, chairman and CEO, said: "The company has more than doubled its number of operating sites in the last year, and we look forward to continued growth in the future. Mike Kelly brings significant management experience and golf industry knowledge to the company."

COBBLESTONE MAKES FIRST GA. BUY

SNELLVILLE, Ga. — Cobblestone Golf Group, Inc. has purchased The Champions Club of Gwinnett near Atlanta. Cobblestone operates 24 golf properties located in California, Texas, Arizona, Virginia, Florida and Georgia. This is its first Georgia acquisition. The Champions Club of Gwinnett is an 18-hole facility designed by Steve Melnyck.

Movin' on up

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in the South."

Schulz credited Lords Valley superintendent Levi Travis, who died five years ago, with teaching him most of what he knows about growing bentgrass. After a year at Lords Valley, followed by a brief stay with the Fairfield Corp. building a Joe Lee-designed course in Crossville, Tenn., Schulz went to work for pro Cotton Berrier at Gatlinburg (Tenn.) Country Club. Schulz thanks Berrier for teach-

ing him the pro shop side of the business. Schulz was runner-up among 250 applicants for the head superintendent position at Atlanta Country Club in 1984. Two weeks after the members of the greens committee made their selection, their top choice died in a plane crash and they offered Schulz the job.

"It was an eerie situation," Schulz recalled. "I talked to Cotton, Nancy [his wife] and my dad. Cotton said it was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and I accepted the job."

Schulz spent five years in Atlanta, up-

dating much of the course and particularly the turf-care facility, formerly a 106-year-old barn where the chemical storage room opened onto the employee lunchroom. He formulated 10- and 20-year plans, which are still guiding maintenance efforts at the nationally ranked club.

Schulz had several opportunities to move on before finally deciding to leave Atlanta CC. "In 1989, a group asked if I'd design, build and operate this course. They offered to make me a partner and give me a maintenance contract on the facility. We started Nov. 1 and opened the following August, which meant we made the incentive clause to open the course within 12 months. That's when I found out the partners had no money left. The next two years were hell."

Schulz petitioned the bankruptcy court to allow him to manage the facility. His plan was scrutinized against those presented by some major management companies, he recalled. The judge eventually awarded Schulz the facility and granted him a year to put a reorganization plan in place. It took Dick and Nancy seven months to free The Oaks from reorganization. The course greeted its 300,000th customer in February.

"I'm a risk taker," Schulz explained of his success. "I like to dream about something and then put it into action. But for every dream you must have a back-up plan."

"Nancy is the detail person on our team. She can translate a dream and put it on paper in a way that makes sure everyone can follow what is going to happen. None of this would have been possible without her."

The Oaks sits on 260 acres. Schulz plans to add nine and possibly 18 more holes in the near future. He is also considering purchasing two or three more courses in his market area, within a two-hour radius of Atlanta.

"The golf industry needs to give the average golfer something better for his money," he said. "Most good public courses in the Atlanta area are charging \$80 to \$100 a round. We're getting \$25 to \$39. Seventy percent of our customer base drives 30 or more miles to play here. We give people great conditions and friendly employees for that price. We could easily go to \$50 to \$60, but we won't do that. If I could cookie cutter this operation, I could build three or four more courses around here and take a big chunk of the daily-fee market."

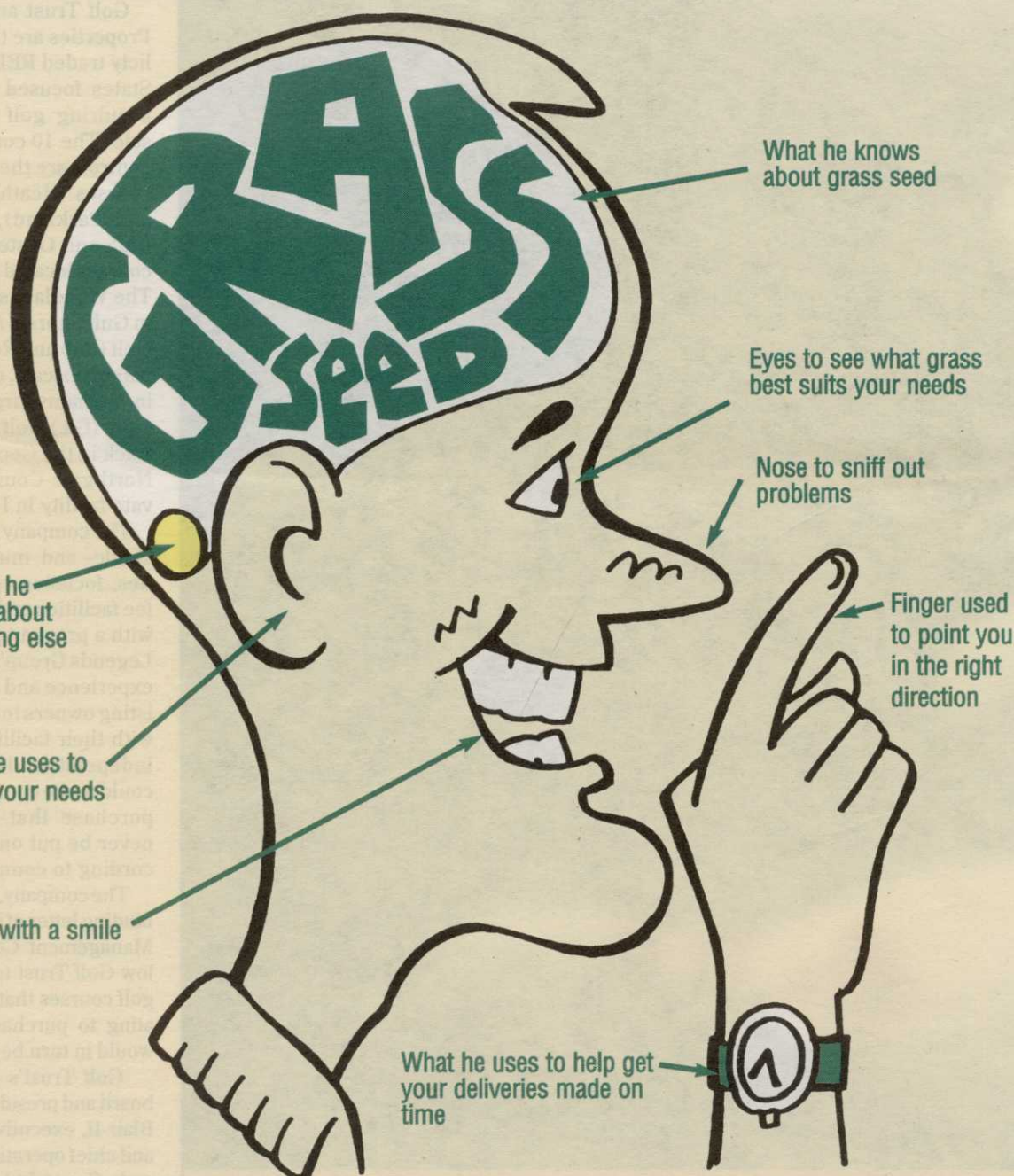
Schulz is considering buying another Atlanta-area course that is going through reorganization. "We'd need to do something to set it apart," he said. "Putting in bentgrass would make it an ideal facility."

What would be his advice to other golf course superintendents who want to become course owners?

"If you are putting up your own money, be very careful of the pie-in-the-sky syndrome," he advised. "You don't have to have everything state-of-the-art right from the start. There are always two or three unexpected things that come up and you'll need the money to take care of that."

"If you're part of a group, check out your partners' financial strengths and character references. Do your homework and stick to your plan. If it's a good plan, it will see you through."

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