

NGF's 1996 report highlights

Other 1996 highlights from the National Golf Foundation's Golf Facilities in the United States report:

- Nationwide, 442 courses opened with 319.5 18-hole equivalents, down 5 percent from a year earlier.

- Forty-eight golf facilities ceased operation. Illinois had the most closures with five. California, New York and North Carolina had three each. The five-year average for closures is 33.

- Courses under construction numbered 850, the highest total in the 20 years NGF has tracked new course development.

Of those, 658 are scheduled for a 1997 opening. History shows that two-thirds open on time, meaning roughly 440 more courses should open this year.

- Approximately 88 percent of all openings were daily-fee facilities,

compared to 86 percent in 1995. All 11 New England openings were public, making it the region with the highest percentage of public openings for the third straight year.

- Sixty-one percent, or 268 of the 442 courses, were located at new facilities. Eighty-nine of the new courses were nine-hole layouts. In all, 245 new golf courses were nine holes, representing 55 percent of all new openings.

- The number of facilities reached 14,341, 70 percent of which were public.

- The 15,703 golf courses nationwide totaled 231,930 golf holes (12,885 18-hole equivalents).

- South Dakota and Myrtle Beach, S.C., continued to rank No. 1 in terms of potential golf accessibility at the state and Metropolitan Statistical Area, respectively.

Jammed courses give developers reason to expect continued success

Continued from page 5

"We see the boom continuing," said Ryan Doyle, communications director for Illinois' Chicago District Golf Association, "especially with the amount of land still available for development and the 40 courses reportedly planned, under construction or having opened recently in the Chicago area."

Tiger Woods' success at The Masters, Doyle said, should fuel the junior golf boom that has taken particular root in Illinois, ranked seventh with 19 new course openings. The problem is building courses that are accessible and affordable for junior players.

"We can put clubs in 5th- and 6th-graders' hands, but it's hard to find them tee times," Doyle said. "You drive a half hour in any direction from our office and you can't find a greens fee under \$35. That worries a lot of people concerned about the game's future."

Ohio tied Illinois with 19 new courses last year. "Ohio has two things going for it," said Jim Popa, executive director of the Ohio Golf Association. "First, we have every type of geography imaginable, from the hills in the south, to the river valleys to the lake shore, everything except the ocean. Second, the economy is humming. Columbus and Cincinnati are in great shape and there don't seem to be any restrictions on the future."

Popa noted that five private courses have opened in Columbus in the past seven years. Still, when recently opened Arnold Palmer-designed Tartan Fields next to Jack Nicklaus-designed Muirfield Village began its membership drive, it sold 150 memberships at \$20,000 apiece the first day.

"And the public courses are jammed, too," he added.

Upscale, daily-fee facilities led Indiana

'At this point, there is plenty of play at all the new courses. The danger is that we could get too aggressive with building, although we're not currently at that point.'

— Steve Quale

Golf Foundation of Wisconsin

to a 9th-place showing with 16 new courses opening last year, according to Mike David, executive director of the Indiana Golf Association.

"There have been very few private courses built in the last three years, and those few have usually become semi-private to help meet expenses," he said. "Otter Creek [Columbus] and Golf Club of Indiana [Indianapolis] used to be head and shoulders above the rest of the state's courses. But some very good public facilities have opened in the past few years and are already ranked in the Top 10 in the state, very much in the same league with Otter Creek and The Golf Club of Indiana."

The new upscale, public courses are performing well, generally hosting a healthy 25,000 to 35,000 rounds a year, David said.

"A few more will open this summer," he added, "including Prairie View on the north side of Indianapolis, a Robert Trent Jones Jr. course that people are very excited about. Things should level off in the next one or two years. But all the new courses have found a niche, even the ones in fairly remote areas. We seem to be catching up with the demand."

Wisconsin is 10th on the Top 10 list, with 15 new tracks opening in 1996. The state is blessed with the second-highest participation rate (18.2 percent) in the country, a nationally-acclaimed junior golf program and an abundance of developable space, particularly in the northern vacation areas, explained Steve Quale, executive director of the Golf Foundation of Wisconsin.

"At this point, there is plenty of play at all the new courses," Quale said. "The danger is that we could get too aggressive with building, although we're not currently at that point. We realize that we need to build up our base of junior players to make sure these courses are filled in the future."

The Golf Foundation of Wisconsin, Quale said, is introducing several thousand juniors to the game every year at very affordable rates through \$1-a-lesson programs with local PGA pros; \$1 green fees at Milwaukee County park courses; \$1-per-club equipment sales; competitive events at area par-3 courses; and redeveloping par-3 facilities, like Milwaukee's Noyes Park, for junior-player use.

"Participation nationally has been flat the past few years," Quale said. "The game has basically been limited to Baby Boomers who can afford the game. But with Tiger Woods coming along, we realized we need to make the game affordable for young golfers. We can open the market to junior players, but will the golf industry react by making fees affordable for them? I don't know."

YOUR "ONE-STOP" SOURCE
FOR AMERICA'S LEADING
GOLF SURFACES & SUPPLIES!

PARTAC®
GOLF COURSE
TOP-DRESSING



HEAT TREATED

FLEXIBLE GOLF COURSE MARKERS
TURF DRAG MATS & BRUSHES
SAFETY FENCING & BALL NETTING

TYPAR®

GEOTEXTILES & TURF BLANKETS

Terra-Green®

THE POROUS CERAMIC
SOIL CONDITIONER

NEW PARTAC® NEW
COLORED CERAMIC

**GREEN SAND
DIVOT REPAIR MIX**
PARTAC® GREEN SAND BLENDED
WITH PARTAC® PREMIUM
TOP-DRESSING FOR EXCELLENT
GERMINATION AND
DEEP GREEN COLOR!

THE BEST DIVOT REPAIR MIX AVAILABLE!

AVAILABLE NATIONWIDE

800-247-2326
IN N.J. 908-637-4191

PARTAC PEAT CORPORATION
KELSEY PARK, GREAT MEADOWS, N.J. 07838
ORLANDO (FL) MEMPHIS (TN) RENO (NV)

HIGHLIGHT GOLF HOLES,
IMPROVE VISIBILITY,
& MAINTAIN CONSISTENCY

U.S. GOLF HOLE
TARGETS™



ACCU-TECH™
PRECISION CUP CUTTERS

TerraFlow™
Drainage Systems

AND MANY MORE
GOLF SPECIALTY PRODUCTS

CIRCLE #152

HJM

HJM Corporation

**Golf
Course
Financing**

1982 Washington Valley Road
Martinsville, NJ 08836-0309

Tel: 908-604-4700

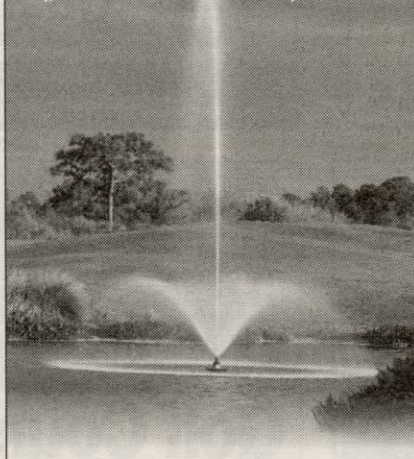
CIRCLE #144

The Beautiful Water Quality
Management System
Aqua Control

Manufacturers of Precision
Aerators and Fountains

Deep Suction
Lights

No Oil
26 Spray Patterns



"The Combo"

A Tornado Aerator & a Sky Geyser
Fountain driven by one 5 HP motor

Phone/Fax 1-800-377-0019

CIRCLE #145