

GOLF COURSE NEWS

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Photo by Bob Spivak

THRONSON HAS DESIGNS ON ARCHITECTURE

Eagle Crest Resort superintendent John Thronson moonlights as a golf course designer. His latest project was as construction supervisor at Running Y Ranch in Oregon, a Palmer Golf Design Co. layout. See story page 19.

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Medallist, Troon launch Australia operations

By PETER BLAIS

SYDNEY, Australia—An Australian development company has joined forces with an American-based management firm to form an international course development and management company that will also call on the expertise of famed professional golfer Greg Norman.

Medallist Golf Developments, a golf course and residential development company with offices in Australia and the United States, and Troon Golf, a high-end management/development firm based in Scottsdale, Ariz.,

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Photo by Scott Bessette

Assistant superintendents Ron Kugler, driving, and Brian Coates check the progress of a wetlands fire at LPGA Golf Course's three-hole practice facility in Daytona, Fla.

Fla. fires: Golf escapes catastrophe

By MARK LESLIE

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. — With a wildfire leaping across LPGA Boulevard here and licking at his doorstep, LPGA International Golf Course superintendent Scott Bessette turned the irrigation heads on his new course toward the rough and flipped on the water.

When fire cut electricity to River Bend Golf Course in Ormond Beach, superintendent Bobby Gonzales couldn't turn on the sprinklers, but the course's fairways and greens

served as a fire break that may have saved a community of homes.

When a "wall of flames" jumped U.S. Route 1 and reached the 3rd and 4th holes at Matanzas Woods Golf Course in Palm Coast, the last two evacuees were superintendent Andy McGuire and Michael Fabrizio, director of golf maintenance and construction for Matanzas and Palm Coast Resort's four other golf courses, who kept the sprinklers going until the last

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On Whistling Straits (#16 above): "In my lifetime I've never seen anything like this. Anyplace. Period." — Pete Dye (see pg. 31)

Abbott jumps into market with organic nematicide

By M. LEVANS

NORTH CHICAGO, Ill. — Abbott Laboratories' Chemical and Agricultural Products Division has officially entered the golf course market with the

recent release of its new biological nematicide, DiTera WDG.

According to Abbott — a manufacturer and marketer of nutritional, pharmaceutical, diagnostic, hospital and agricultural products that did more than \$11 billion in sales in 1997 — DiTera has been produced from a naturally occurring microorganism (*Myrothecium spp.*) isolated from a cyst nematode.

"The non-toxic profile of DiTera is its key differen-

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PGF Development Track: Get the balance right

By M. LEVANS

PALM SPRINGS, Calif. — If you're ready to break ground on a new public course or put a new spin on a faithful old layout, this year's Development Track at Public Golf Forum was designed to help you save time and money in the process.

Six Development sessions are slated at this

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By M. LEVANS

CHESAPEAKE, Va. — The city of Chesapeake is finding that as industry booms public golf is sure to follow.

In the last year, Chesapeake has seen Chubb Insurance, Panasonic, Canon and Volvo, among others, expand existing physical plants and add well over 1,000 employees to

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Medallist

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have formed an international joint venture — Medallist Troon Golf Management. Medallist Troon will operate in Asia, Australia and the Middle East.

“There are some deals in the works that should be signed shortly in Australia, which is really where this whole thing started,” said Timothy

Greenwell, Troon’s vice president of sales and marketing.

Medallist Golf Development is an international joint venture between Macquarie Bank Limited and Great White Shark Enterprises. With offices in Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne in Australia and Florida and New York in the United States, Medallist is structured to develop, own and operate real estate-driven golf and residential de-

velopments throughout the world.

Great White Shark Enterprises, the business arm of Greg Norman, has six operating divisions: golf course design and construction, turf merchandising, events ownership and management, licensing and Medallist Golf Developments. Norman has designed courses in eight Asia Pacific countries.

“Medallist Troon is an appropriate line extension to our develop-

ment business in Medallist,” Norman said. The dynamics of the Australian market and the markets throughout Asia will each require independent approaches and vision of service. Our alliance with Troon Golf has uniquely positioned us to take advantage of the opportunity.”

Macquarie is a leading Australian investment bank. Said Macquarie Executive Director Bill Moss: “The Medallist Troon ven-

ture will provide sound financial and management consulting services to the Australian and Asian golf market. In particular, the current Asian economic crisis provides a very real opportunity for existing owners to differentiate their golf course through the combined strength of Medallist and Troon.”

Troon has more than 40 management/development contracts in 10 states and four countries.

Even though Medallist Troon will be based in Sydney, the firm expects to do the bulk of its business in Asia. “Based on what’s going on in the Asian market with the depressed economy, we’ve done some legwork in Japan and Asia and found some huge opportunities there,” Greenwell added.

Troon representative Paul Stringer and a representative from Medallist met for 10 days recently with Japanese banks that have notes on Asian, particularly Japanese, courses that are in bankruptcy. “There are quite a few apparently,” Greenwell said. “Even though it’s a complicated issue, with the banks trying to get their money back from the courses and the members having spent a lot of money, there are great opportunities there.”

The American concept of daily-fee golf, where a golfer plays his round and then goes home to another activity, is relatively new to Japan and the rest of Asia, Greenwell said. But it is growing and Medallist Troon hopes to take advantage of that growth.

“Golf is a full-day affair there,” Greenwell explained. “The typical Japanese businessman gets up in the morning, drives to the course, has a big breakfast, plays nine holes, has a big lunch, plays nine more holes and then sticks around for the rest of the evening for a big banquet. A new culture is emerging that has experienced the American version of golf where you go play and then go home. That’s a component we’re trying to bring there. Paul found that experience to be in high demand. It’s just a matter of getting the golf courses so that you can provide that experience.”

While the Medallist Troon arrangement is specifically formed for the Asia, Australia and Middle East regions, the groups expect to occasionally join forces for the development of projects in the North American market.

Troon entered the European market earlier this year with its agreement to operate Turnberry in Scotland. But Medallist Troon will likely stay out of Europe, Greenwell said.

“The joint venture that created Medallist Troon,” Greenwell explained, “consisted of Great White Shark Enterprises and Macquarie Bank. That company operates in other parts of the world outside Australia, Asia and the Middle East. They may already have partners there. So, Troon Golf will continue to expand in Europe, but not as part of the Medallist Troon partnership.”

GOLF COURSE NEWS

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