

Seay accepts Don Rossi Award for Palmer

By MARK LESLIE

ANAHEIM, Calif. — Saying "some of the accolades we get as architects start right in this room," Ed Seay stood in for Arnold Palmer who received the Don Rossi Humanitarian Award from the Golf Course Builders Association of America (GCBA).

A partner in Arnold Palmer Golf Design who has worked with Palmer since 1971, Seay told the annual GCBA banquet here that he first spoke to the organization in its fledging stages in 1973. "Then you were not recognized much," he said. "Today you are not recognized as you should be — as the backbone of our industry — but pat yourselves on your back. You have made it. You're here and all of us architect and owners are very proud of your efforts."

In presenting the award in absentia to Palmer, outgoing GCBA President Paul Eldredge of Wadsworth Golf Construction Co. cited the Golf Hall of Famer as "the one who kicked off the game

of golf similar to Don Rossi kicking off our organization." Rossi was a founder of GCBA and served as its executive vice president when he died six years ago.

In a prerecorded, videotaped message, Palmer alluded to the approximately 200 golf courses on which he has been a design consultant and



said: "If there is anyone who appreciates a group of people more than I appreciate [you], I don't know where they are — because you have helped protect the integrity and the tradition of the game of golf. And I might add that I feel that you have an obligation to con-

Continued on page 41



Golf Course News publisher Charlie von Brecht (right) presents award to Bill Kubly

Landscapes' Kubly credits hardworking staff

By MARK LESLIE

ANAHEIM, Calif. — Golf Course Builder of the Year Landscapes Unlimited earned its award because of "the hard work of our staff," said its president.

Accepting the honor from Charles von Brecht, publisher of the sponsoring *Golf Course News*, Bill Kubly said his company "works hard all year to provide a quality product. I want to thank the architects, suppliers and distributors who help us all have this opportunity to have a wonderful livelihood."

President Howard Barnes accepted *Golf Course News'*

Best Small Builder of the Year Award for Quality Grassing & Services, and President Geoffrey Corlett accepted a special Honorable Mention Small Builder Award for Turf Drain, Inc.

The Builder of the Year Award has been presented for nine years and the Small Builder of the Year for two. Wadsworth Golf Construction Co., Paul Clute and SAJO as well as Landscapes Unlimited have won previous Best Builder honors. MacCurrach Golf Construction was the first winner of the Small Builder citation in 1997.

Venturi puts maintenance into perspective, wins Old Tom Morris

By MARK LESLIE

ANAHEIM, Calif. — Golf course conditioning, not playing equipment, has created the biggest change in the game of golf, according to Ken Venturi.

Venturi, here to accept the Old Tom Morris Award from the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, told a press conference: "The courses are so perfect. [In the past] you had to have imagination. You had to create something that wasn't there. Now, look at Augusta National and you can putt on the fairways. That has been one of the greatest changes in golf. You can talk about equipment. But I'm talking about conditions. That has made the game much, much different."

Saying he is inspired by tradition, Venturi spoke of Ireland and Scotland where "they play 'down' golf instead of 'up' golf."

"The ball is made to run," he said. "You can never make a green hard enough."

Irish and Scottish golf, he said, give the golfer multiple choices. "It allows you to use your imagination."

"Ask good shot-makers what they like," he said, "and they like

four things: small greens, hard greens, fast greens and narrow fairways."

He lamented that an entire field of golfers too often will play a hole in the same way. For that reason, for instance, Venturi doesn't like island greens because "they don't give you multiple choice... It doesn't give you the chance to protect a lead."

The annual Old Tom Morris Award honors individuals who have made a lifetime commitment to the game of golf, to promote the welfare of the game in a manner and style exemplified by the award's namesake, a four-time British Open champion and a golf course architect, groundskeeper and professional at Old St. Andrews in Scotland.

"Looking at the life of Ken Venturi you can see many parallels with the life of Old Tom," said outgoing GCSAA President Paul McGinnis. "They both met obstacles, and both overcame setbacks to find success on and off the course. Old Tom Morris had a passion for the game that he exuberantly shared with others so that they, too, could enjoy his experiences. Ken Venturi has

Continued on page 40

ADA an issue at GCSAA

By BOB SPIWAK

ANAHEIM, Calif. — As the future of tour golfer Casey Martin was being decided in an Oregon courtroom, a panel was discussing the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) at the GCSAA conference here.

As the lawyers argued in Eugene, the panel and attendees were watching a video news replay, headlined with, "Golf course cares more about grass than obeying the law."

The news replay was presented by Steve Gervais of Suncor Development Co. in Arizona, who was one of the panelists moderated by GCSAA Government Relations Counsel Cynthia Kelly Smith.

Other speakers included Greg Jones of the Association of Disabled American Golfers, Peggy Greenwell of the Access Board (a branch of the Justice Department), Jack Andre of the National Park Service, and Jerry Coldiron, superintendent at Lassing Pointe GC in Kentucky where a high profile situation involving a disabled golfer had recently been resolved (*GCN* December '97 and January '98).

Smith led the discussion with an explanation of the

Continued on page 40

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ADA at issue

Continued from page 39

ADA and how it pertains to golf. Under federal law, public facilities must make every possible accommodation to handicapped persons in terms of architectural design as well as permitting the use of assistive devices. Architectural barriers must be removed provided the modifications are reasonable and cause

no undue financial burden of the facility and will not alter the fundamental nature of the activity. Kelly-Smith noted that more than 20 complaints involving golf courses have been referred to the Justice Department.

Jack Andre of National Park Service explained that his agency, a branch of the Interior Department, is designated by the Justice Department to examine and rectify complaints involving golf

courses. He zeroed in on the cart path rule which was the root of the Lassing Pointe controversy — a golfer with a heart condition sought permission to digress from the cart path and the course refused because the new turf was not ready to have cart traffic.

The law, said Andre, should be viewed, "... more in the sense of guiding principles..." and noted that to refuse any disabled golfer permission to go off the path puts

the responsibility on the course to demonstrate that the cart causes an undue burden on the course, a significant burden.

The lawsuit and publicity by Casey Martin, a Tour professional who sued the PGA to allow him to use a cart, has made more people aware of the ADA. According to Andre, "There are 49 million people out there with disabilities. Golf is entirely different from other sports. Any-

one can play the game and should be allowed to."

Jerry Coldiron, the Lassing Pointe superintendent, responded that the course had benched the top course in Kentucky, in part because of its excellent turf, and that he had letters from both the United States Golf Association (USGA) and the University of Kentucky supporting Lassing Pointe's position of not allowing divergence from the cart paths until the turf had been properly established.

Coldiron said that to accommodate the golfer who filed the complaint, the county, which owns the course, offered to move the man's league to another municipal course 11 miles away.

Greg Jones, president of the Association of Disabled American Golfers (ADAG), disabled with polio since he was three, warned the audience that there is an aging population in the country, many of these with disabilities.

"We [ADAG] are advocates for the game of golf and the inclusion of everyone who wants to play," said Jones.

Suncor Development owns and operates seven courses in Arizona. Steve Gervais, vice president of corporate counsel, provided a video of an investigative news broadcast from the Phoenix area to point out the publicity attending conflicts between disabled golfers and courses.

A hidden camera followed a golfer with an artificial limb as he went from course to course seeking permission to use a cart on courses where overseeding had just been done. He was refused on several, which led to the headline about the course caring more for grass than the law (ADA).

Gervais pointed out that at two of the courses, the employees were new, and stressed the need for facilities to train all personnel in areas where ADA is applicable.

"How far can we go," he asked, "to determine if a golfer is truly handicapped? When is it permissible to deny carts off the path? During overseeding? When the ground is wet and carts make ruts?"

These and other questions have yet to be answered, and Gervais urged: "We need guidelines. We need assistance for uniformity on all courses."

Peggy Greenwell of the Justice Department's 30-member Access Board explained that her agency is responsible for establishing minimum accessibility guidelines for compliance with ADA. Based on the premise that the handicapped will use carts, some suggested guidelines are; breaks in the cart path curbing every 75 yards, ability to take a vehicle onto the teeing ground, and access to practice areas including hazards. On-course hazards, she said, did not have to provide access.

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