

GOLF COURSE NEWS

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John Deere looks skyward

By MICHAEL LEVANS

RALEIGH, N.C. — With its recent acquisition of Charlestown, Mass.-based Player Systems Corp., manufacturer of the SkyLinks golf course management technology that utilizes the global position system (GPS), John Deere has taken a long look up into the future.

"John Deere now has the ability to leverage the GPS technology across different applications," said Shawn Phillips, new general manager of Player Systems. "The GPS technology has been limited to the golf car.

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Diggin' golf in Beantown

Golf and traffic benefit from Boston's notorious 'Big Dig'

By PETER BLAIS

BOSTON — Developer Charles Geilich and course architect John Sanford have coupled the interests of a major Boston road construction project and a nearby landfill closure to develop a 27-hole golf course in suburban Boston.

Boston's "Big Dig" project, a multi-

year undertaking designed to speed traffic through Massachusetts' capital city, planned to spend \$300 million to dispose of the millions of cubic yards of dirt excavated from the construction site.

Meanwhile, Quincy and Milton officials were planning to close their

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An aerial shot of the Quarry Hills site and the Boston skyline in the distance.

La. to grow golf image

By PETER BLAIS

BATON ROUGE, La. — Louisiana officials plan to approach the state Legislature with a master plan to finance construction of seven to 10 courses throughout the Pelican State, making it more attractive to visiting and native golfers.

Representatives from Gov. Michael Foster's office, the state Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism, and golf industry representatives Thomas Martty of Martty Golf Management and Linda Curtis of The Sabine River Authority, which is building a new course, met to discuss the possibility early this fall and plan to meet again in November.

A joint commission which would research the state's golfing needs and the costs involved will likely be formed, according to tourism department

Communications Director Jennifer Romero.

"The state has put together a group of people interested in developing golf courses in Louisiana that is a very enthusiastic and committed group that wants to get something done," Martty said. "There is a pent-up demand for better daily-fee golf in certain areas of Louisiana."

Louisiana ranks 48th in

Continued on page 28

L-93 holds it own in NTEPs

By MARK LESLIE

BELTSVILLE, Md. — While the A and G series of bentgrasses have been grabbing the headlines the past couple of years, L-93 has quietly taken the grand prize in the final report of the National Turfgrass Evaluation Program tests for putting-green bents.



"L-93 has really taken off big-time," said Dr. Rich Hurley, director of research at Lofts Seed in Bound Brook, N.J. "We have good seed production, and superintendents are following the test results."

Those test results put L-93 atop Penn A-4, Penn A-1 by a mean average of 6.6 to 6.5 in the final results of the NTEP trials which began in 1993.

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KOLLSTAR GOLF CO. UP TO A DOZEN COURSES IN EIGHT MONTHS



The Ocean Course at Cabo del Sol, Los Cabos, Mexico, is a KollStar-owned and managed property. To learn more about this fast-growing company, see story page 33.

Deere/SkyLinks

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Now we have a chance to help the golf course owner justify this technology across various applications."

Just where John Deere can go with this technology married to its turf equipment line is anyone's guess. According to Phillips, the plans for exactly how Deere can take full advantage of this new acquisition are constantly evolving.

"Every time I turn around we're re-writing the business plan because it's getting bigger and bigger," said Phillips. "Due to all the possible applications, we really can't get our arms around it."

At the heart of the Player Systems deal are two components: Precision Turf Care and SkyLinks. Precision Turf Care controls the precise spraying of water, fertilizer and pesticides and is being marketed as a tool for general turf care management.

SkyLinks is mounted on golf cars and acts as an electronic caddy, giving the player distance measurements, tips and graphical representations of greens and fairways. It can also be used to send messages from clubhouse to cart and vice versa while allowing course operators the chance to monitor speed of play.

"The founders of the company realized that the potential of GPS within golf is much more than yardage," said Richard Beckmann, director of sales and marketing for Player Systems. "It's truly information technology. While talking to our customers — directors of golf, owners and general managers — they saw the information technology tracking players, counting rounds, getting information about overall course performance."

Player Systems realized early on that to get to the point where such a system can exist, a GPS system that's more than a yardage reader, the company had to do some partnering. Player worked with Deere for three of the company's four years in existence to make this deal happen.

"This is a way for SkyLinks is to reach the goals and potential that we knew it had," said Beckmann.

According to both Beckmann and Phillips, the Player Systems name, logo and product names will remain intact for the foreseeable future. New personnel are currently being added.

Where can this all lead? Will the golf course superintendent of the next five to 10 years be sitting behind a computer, maintaining his course with GPS controlled robotic mowers and pesticide applicators?

"Anything is possible," said

Beckmann. "You're going to see this technology on every course in some shape or form very soon."

According to Phillips the sky is the limit and Deere is not going to rule any possible application out of its plan. "The key thing for us is to provide our customers with cutting-edge technology and equipment. We saw GPS as a natural extension."



ASGCA puts supplier directory on CD

CHICAGO — Golf industry suppliers can promote their products and services directly to golf course architects through the first-ever CD-Rom version of the Suppliers Directory, published by the American Society of Golf Course Architects (ASGCA).

"For many years, ASGCA members have relied on our bound version of the Suppliers

Directory to specify products, materials and consulting services for new and existing courses," said Bob Lohmann, president of the Society. "We expect that reliance to grow now that the directory is in electronic form, and able to deliver more information more quickly for more suppliers."

Previously, the Suppliers Directory contained brochures, marketing materials and sell sheets from each participant. The pieces were bound into a three-inch binder and distributed to each ASGCA member.

The CD-Rom version is scheduled for release in August, 1999. Reservations will be taken from golf course suppliers through April, 1999.



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