

GOLF COURSE NEWS

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Y2K

As the millennium nears, so does the Y2K computer bug. Find out what could go wrong and what it will take to reach compliance 17



NICKLAUS ARCHITECT BRUCE BORLAND PERISHES
Bruce Borland, right here with Jack Nicklaus, was among the passengers in Payne Stewart's Lear jet which crashed Oct. 25. See story, page 9.

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NEWSPAPER

Wadsworth to receive Don Rossi Award

CHAPEL HILL, N.C. — Brent Wadsworth, touted by many as the inventor of the golf course construction industry, will receive the Don A. Rossi Award for the year 2000 from the Golf Course Builders Association of America (GCBAA). The award will be presented Feb. 18 at the GCBAA's annual awards dinner in New Orleans.

Wadsworth is the first golf course builder to receive the award, which was inaugurated by the GCBAA in 1991 to honor its late executive director, Don Rossi.

"Going into the millennium, we wanted to honor the man who invented the golf course construction business," said James J. Kirchdorfer,



Brent Wadsworth

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Leiweke leaving First Tee Program

By MARK LESLIE

PONTE VEDRA BEACH, Fla. — Tod Leiweke, executive director of the First Tee program, has officially been named president of the National Hockey League's new Minnesota Wild expansion team.

Leiweke, who had spearheaded the First Tee nearly since its inception in November 1997, was expected to join the team by December.

Director of Resources Len Stachitis



Tod Leiweke

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THEN AND NOW: A LOOK BACK AT THE SUPERINTENDENTS' TRADE

In a special section, former Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) and Golf Collectors Society President Mel Lucas, former GCSAA Director of Publications Clay Loyd, and former GCSAA President and Acting Executive Director Palmer Maples weigh in on 1) the history of golf course maintenance equipment; 2) the evolution of the job of the greenkeeper/superintendent; and 3) a throw-back to "real golf," Oakhurst Links golf course in West Virginia. Audubon International, meanwhile, names its Top 200 Environmentally Conscious Golf Courses. See pages 11-16.

Rye suit reaches fed'l court

By ANDREW OVERBECK

EUGENE, Ore. — The Perennial Ryegrass Bargaining Association (PRBA) has filed lawsuits against Turf-Seed and Seed Research of Oregon (SRO), maintaining that they violated the Agriculture Fair Trade Practices Act of 1967 by sending letters to PRBA members demanding a price for tournament-quality perennial ryegrass seed below the PRBA established price.

The 260-member PRBA, which represents approximately half of the ryegrass growers in Oregon, first filed complaints against each company in Oregon state court but both cases have since been transferred. The complaint against Turf-Seed has been refiled in federal court and, in November, the complaint against SRO was in the process of

being refiled in federal court.

Meanwhile, Turf-Seed filed a counterclaim in federal court Nov. 3, alleging that the PRBA is acting improperly because not all of its members are producers or farmers — some are seed dealers, or board members and stock holders in seed dealers.

"We take the position," said Michael Martinis, Turf-Seed's lead attorney, "that the PRBA is not entitled to the limited Anti-Trust Act exemption that they claim to have by Oregon and federal statute." Turf-Seed, thus, considers all contracts or agreements of the PRBA void.

According to the complaint the PRBA filed in federal court on Sept. 20 against Turf-Seed, the letter that the company sent to growers on July

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ClubCorp obtains additional \$300M from Cypress

By PETER BLAIS

DALLAS — The Cypress Group LLC, a New York-based private equity firm, has committed to invest \$300 million in ClubCorp.

Said Robert Dedman Jr., chief executive officer of ClubCorp: "We examined a variety of alternatives to support the growth initiatives we intend to pursue, and we found that Cypress was the most compatible choice for us. ClubCorp has been a leader in consolidating our industry, and we believe today's investment from Cypress will position us to continue to proactively take advantage of that trend through the growth of our existing properties and the acquisition of others, both in the U.S. and abroad."

What are those growth initiatives ClubCorp will pursue?



Palmilla, on the Sea of Cortez in Los Cabos, Mexico, is a ClubCorp property.

"There are a number of opportunities in the marketplace for further consolidation domestically and internationally," answered Gerry

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Ryegrass lawsuit

Continued from page 1

29 "attempted to induce grower-members to breach their contracts with the PRBA ... and contained language intended to intimidate, coerce and threaten grower-members to terminate membership in the PRBA."

The PRBA alleges that these actions led to disparagement of the association's pricing methods, loss of bargaining power, and damaged the PRBA's repu-

tation among seed dealers and potential grower-members.

Prior to the 1999 harvest, the PRBA set a benchmark price of 59 cents per pound for tournament-quality seed and established a minimum guarantee to growers of 51-cents-per-pound. Turf-Seed and SRO both thought those prices were out of line with the market and issued letters to its growers stating that they were willing to pay 54-cents-per-pound for tournament-quality seed. Other companies have also re-

fused the 59-cent-per-pound contract price and the market has since dropped, with the price of tournament-quality seed going as low as 50 cents per pound.

The PRBA, whose members farm 80,000 acres, has determined seed prices since 1994, meeting with companies each year to assess current inventory, carry over, the health of the market and projected production.

"There are a lot of variables. This year we dropped the price off a couple of cents a pound

because we thought it was justified," said Jim Carnes, executive director of the PRBA. "But these two companies decided that it should be lower."

However, according to Carnes, there is more at stake than just money and market stability. "From the growers' standpoint, there are more things hedging on this," he said. "The legitimacy of bargaining associations is coming under fire."

In response to the alleged improper contact with grower-

members, Turf-Seed maintains that it did nothing wrong.

"We take the position that we had the right to make such contact because there was no specific contract in effect between the PRBA and its members which stated that there was a specific price that PRBA members would only grow grass seed at and sell it to Turf-Seed," said Martinis.

The defense outlines the reasons why Turf-Seed rejected the price established by the PRBA for tournament-quality seed. While the company honored the set price of 61 cents per pound in 1998, it did not sign a dealer agreement with the PRBA. Turf-Seed attempted to negotiate with the PRBA's 1999 price of 59 cents per pound but could not reach an agreement. Turf-Seed refused to pay that rate because, according to Turf-Seed's counterclaim, "it would only increase Turf-Seed's inventories and cause Turf-Seed to lose further sales and monies as a result of the inability to meet demand at actual market conditions, together with increased inventory carrying costs."

Turf-Seed's defense and counterclaim will be heard during the same trial, unless the judge rules to segregate the issues.

SRO's reason for not accepting the PRBA's established price is identical, according to company President Mike Robinson.

"Our contract does not refer to PRBA pricing," he said. "Our contract says we set the price based on the market and the market was not, and is not, what the PRBA suggested it was. So we didn't accept it. The price is too high."

Robinson also attempted to negotiate with the PRBA, but got nowhere, he said.

"We told the PRBA that it was too high and that it had to come down based on the world market and what was available ... Supply and demand should drive the marketplace," he said.

"Their contention was that the growers needed more money to cover costs of production, but that is irrelevant. We want the growers to do well, but we have to sell this thing into the marketplace worldwide and we have to be competitive."

The PRBA, meanwhile, is remaining adamant.

"At this point I don't feel that it [the lawsuits] has lessened the credibility of the PRBA," said Carnes. "We have a number of major companies that have encouraged the PRBA to see this through. If we prevail in this litigation we intend to seek the interest on the money that wasn't paid."

The litigation is now in the discovery phase, with depositions to follow. Once the SRO case is refiled in federal court, Martinis expects Turf-Seed and SRO to file a motion to consolidate the defenses. The trial is projected to begin in four to eight months.



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Doug Hall

Golf Course Superintendent

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