

The changing environment for golf course management

By ROBERT H. DEDMAN JR.

• President and Chief Executive Officer
ClubCorp

The golf industry has changed greatly in the past decade, particularly in terms of member service.

The trend toward consolidation has especially impacted talent resources, an issue we have met by formalizing our company's service-oriented operations into a culture called "Star Service."

The recruitment of skilled human resources is of such concern that I have charged all our employee partners with the responsibility. We

have a goal to be 100 percent staffed by employees recommended by other employees. Emphasis on the employment process has been critical to our success in selecting the best available talent and our attempts to become the employer of choice in the markets we serve.



Robert Dedman Jr.

To keep good hourly wage personnel, we have cross-training programs so many employees learn to do more than one job. At the same time, we strive to instill employees with a passion for delivering personalized service and exceeding ex-

Continued on page 29

10 satisfying years for golf

By L.T. WALDEN

• President, E-Z-GO Textron

The last ten years have been exciting for both E-Z-GO and the golf industry. Thousands of new courses opened, new companies came into the industry, some left the industry, and countless rounds were played.

One of the biggest changes in the golf industry is the emergence of multi-course owner/operators. They are now significant players in the golf industry, which is now a multi-billion dollar business. The emergence of these companies is a reflection of the growth and success of the golf business.

While individually owned courses are still the majority, there is no denying that the influence of multi-course operators will continue to grow in the next ten years.

A lot is written about new golf course construction and the number of new courses that open each year. Ten years ago, many new courses were private

clubs built as part of a large residential subdivision. Today, most new courses are high-quality daily-fee facilities. I believe that the total number of golf courses will continue to grow slowly and steadily.

The number of people playing golf is flat and it has not grown in the last five years. The challenge for the future is

how to entice more people to come out and play. We also have to strengthen the player base for the future. That's why there is such a focus on junior players and bringing young people into the game.

The golf industry has seen tremendous ups and downs in the last 10 years. While the golf

car business is not recession proof, the revenue generating potential of golf cars has helped us overcome most of the downs. Golf cars are a tremendous source of revenue at most courses. That fact has helped us smooth out the business cycles in golf.

For E-Z-GO, the last ten years were very satisfying. We introduced the TXT

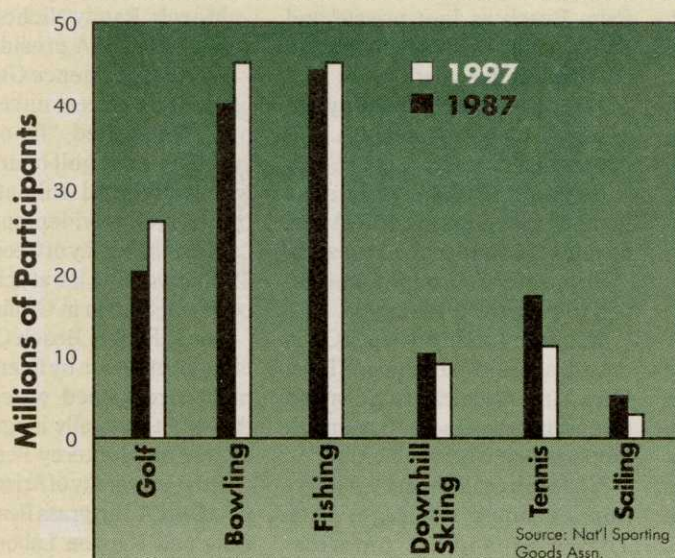
Continued on page 31



L.T. Walden

GOLF INDUSTRY STATISTIC

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Palmer/Seay

Continued from page 21

excited and encouraged about the potential for the next six to 10 years.

Seay: This isn't by happen-stance. Most of the design work in the 1990s by a lot of golf course architects has been a return to the more traditional-styled design. Which, in most cases, resulted in really fun courses to play, rather than difficult and severe. Arnold and I have always stayed pretty close to the traditional philosophies of design. That is, the playing of the game and, when possible, designing and building to and with the land. In most situations for the past 20 years or so, we did not get a naturally rolling, sandy, seaside, and beautifully timbered 400 acres without development to work with. I should add that the PCDC design team will continue to stay with the same traditional design philosophies.

Palmer: Along that same line, our course designs have always considered what effect the new equipment has had on the game. The U.S. Golf Association is constantly looking at this and now is concentrating on the area of primary importance: the stabilization of the ball.

Another major aspect of golf course design, construction and development that began slowly in the 1960s and has moved to the forefront in the '90s is the preservation, enhancement, and reclamation of our

existing environmentally sensitive lands. This will continue to be the strongest area of consideration. As it should be.

Seay: The industry as a whole is also promoting and exposing golf to more and more segments of the population, not only domestically, but internationally as well. The PGA Tour's First Tee program, The Executive Women's Golf League, golf academies, and family golf learning centers are gaining momentum and getting stronger and better every year.

PCDC is now promoting golf on a relatively new front in that, whenever we can,

we are recommending to all levels of development to provide golf in any structure. It may be six holes, three holes, 12 holes, 14 holes, practice facilities, etc. Not every golfing experience needs to be 18 or nine holes, or an Augusta National or a Pine Valley.

I really feel the next 10 years are going to be exciting for the whole industry, especially in the design, construction and development arena. We made great strides in the transition from the '80s into the '90s, and we all feel golf course development will continue to grow with particular emphasis in daily-fee and resort facilities.

Palmer: I agree with Ed and support and encourage everyone in golf to expose, provide and improve all of the elements of the game. And with more interest and more people coming into golf every day, all of us in the game need to promote, by example, the basic strengths of the game.

We must guard and protect these very elements that keep the game so great and be standard-bearers, if you will. This is one of the hallmark messages for the future from all of the Palmer companies. The game is in very good shape.

Witteveen

Continued from page 24

just that. I haven't missed an issue since.

Funny thing about *Golf Course News*. Just like Ken Wright, I easily part with past issues. It's not the sort of magazine that one hangs onto. Not like *The Greenmaster* and *Golf Course Management* of which I have stacks and stacks collecting dust on a bottom shelf. *Golf Course News* I read, usually within minutes after its arrival, even in the summer season, then take it to the staff room from where it disappears to God knows where, but never to a shelf.

The best thing about *Golf Course News* is the new friends that I have made. Most people in the industry one meets annually at convention time. But Mark Leslie, Terry Buchen, Kevin Ross, Michael Hurdzan and many others come regularly to my mailbox.

They speak from the heart in a language that I understand, and when I now meet them at convention time, my greenkeeping life is complete. Thank you, *Golf Course News*, for presenting golf course life as I live it. Have a Happy Birthday, with many more to come.

Walden

Continued from page 25

Golf Car, the DriveControl System with regenerative braking and the only twin-cylinder, overhead cam gasoline engine.

Our goal for the next ten years is to continue to be the innovation leader and to strengthen our position in all the markets that we serve both domestically and internationally. I see tremendous potential for golf and golf cars in the next ten years and I can't think of a better place to be than right here at E-Z-GO.

GOLF COURSE NEWS



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