

# GOLF COURSE NEWS

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INSIDE

## South Africa is on the move

Larry Gould and Ted Johnson wire in the definitive snapshot of one of the hottest golf markets ..... 51

## GCSAA '99: It's a wrap

The GCN staff covered the big show from tee to green. Here's what you need to know ..... 28-33



### HOUSTON TO GET REES JONES' TRACK

Rees Jones (far left) has put down his first complete design for a course in the state of Texas for the Redstone Group, owners of The Houstonian Hotel. To be called Shadow Hawk Golf Club, membership will be limited to 300. See page 47.

### COURSE MAINTENANCE

Bill Spence readies Brookline for Ryder Cup ..... 17  
Indian Ridge's Jake Parker considers the roller ... 22  
Don Lewis retires from Anaheim Hills ..... 23

### COURSE DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT

Robert Trent Jones Jr. discusses firm's split ..... 35  
Where does the practice range fit in? ..... 36  
Crown's Steele forms new building firm ..... 42

### COURSE MANAGEMENT

Atlanta group forms new firm ..... 55  
Diamond Players adds two more to stable ..... 56  
ClubLink, ClubCorp strike up a deal ..... 57

### SUPPLIER BUSINESS

Toro to expand its global reach ..... 61  
Terra announces staff restructuring ..... 62  
New products direct from the show floor ..... 64-66

## AGC/CCI to buy Cobblestone Golf

By PETER BLAIS

DEL MAR, Calif. — Two major players in the golf course management industry — American Golf Corporation and ClubCorp Inc. — have joined together to acquire Del Mar-based Cobblestone Golf Group from the Meditrust Companies for \$393 million.

The new partnership, Golf Acquisitions LLC, is expected to close on the 45-course acquisition by March 31. Upon closing, the two companies will divide the Cobblestone portfolio.

Meditrust, a Massachusetts-based real estate investment trust (REIT), bought Cobblestone in late 1997 for \$241 million. Cobblestone nearly doubled in size under the Meditrust banner. But the REIT experienced some

Continued on page 56

## Griffin walks the walk

By MARK LESLIE

ORLANDO, Fla. — Griffin Industries has become the first company to join the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary System, committing its 20-odd properties around the country to environmental stewardship.

Announcing the move at a press conference here, Audubon International President Ron Dodson said Griffin has "picked up the mantle of conservation activism at their plant sites and corporate facility. They are, indeed, walking the walk and talking the talk."

Continued on page 66



### N.C.'S GRAND STRAND OPENS 101ST

SUNSET BEACH, N.C. — March 1 saw the opening of the first 18 at Thistle Golf Club, the area's 101st golf course to hang the 'open' shingle. Thistle was designed by Tim Cate, a protégé of noted architect Willard Byrd. Above is the par-4 6th.



### THOMPSON GIVES PLAYERS A VIEW TO REMEMBER

LACEY, Wash. — Peter L.H. Thompson's Vicwood Golf Links at Hawks Prairie will be open and ready for play this spring. Built on a former logging site, the course offers rolling terrain, wetlands, water and this stunning view of 14,000-foot Mr. Rainier (above).

## Audubon to open first course this fall

By MARK LESLIE

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — It was a different process but the same result: The first Audubon International Golf Course will open here this fall — the Jack Nicklaus-designed Spring Creek Ranch.

"This is not how we thought we'd get there," said Audubon International (AI) President Ron Dodson, "but it is truly the first Audubon International Golf Course."

AI courses, thought for the last year to be on the verge of reality, have been stalled for one reason or another — to a great extent because Dodson and AI-affiliated scientists are writing the "rules book" as they go. In fall 1997, the AI Golf and the

Continued on page 43

## Richmond 1st Tee ready to roll

By MARK LESLIE

RICHMOND, Va. — A judge's stunning reversal of his own decision has paved the way for the Richmond First Tee project to, finally, get under way.

Richmond organizers, who had hoped to open the nation's initial new First Tee facility, had been stalled for months by opponents using legal challenges and appeals to administrative county approvals. Now, it appears, they can proceed.

On Feb. 3, Circuit Court Judge Jack B. Stevens reportedly told a

Continued on page 49

NEW PRODUCTS FROM THE SHOW

### John Deere's Gator goes electric

John Deere has introduced the Electric Gator. Designed for customers concerned with operational sound levels and exhaust emissions, the Electric Gator is a clean, quiet option for such indoor work areas as warehouses and such outdoor work areas as college campuses and resorts.

The electric utility vehicle pro-

vides the same advantages of the gas and diesel models—low ground pressure to help prevent ground compaction, smooth operation that's easy to learn, safety protections, durability for long life and easy access to service points for convenient maintenance.

Designed for quick acceleration and steady performance between chargings, the Elec-

tric Gators feature overspeed and roll-away control. This reduces the risk of dangerous high-speed situations by preventing the vehicle from free-wheeling down an incline when either carrying a light load or left unattended.

An anti-roll-back function prevents the vehicle from freewheeling in the opposite direction when stopped on a grade.

CIRCLE #210

### Redexim Charterhouse announces 2nd generation Verti-Drains

Redexim Charterhouse announced a second generation of its Verti-Drain aeration system. The Verti-Drain models include the 75 Series of larger, higher work-rate units as well as the company's new, high speed Mustang 7117 model.

Along with the new Verti-Drains, the company has also announced a few new products for the North American market, including the Slit Seeder, Tow-N-Seed and Pedestrian Scarifier (dethatcher) units. For more information, contact 800-597-5664.

CIRCLE #211

## QUELANT™-Ca

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CIRCLE #134

## Griffin

Continued from page 1

Rick Geise, director of marketing for Griffin, said: "Our approach has always been plain, simple country values: conserving resources conserves money... We believe that nobody does as good a job on the environmental side as we do as a company. But we also want to try to do better, which is one of the challenges we've all embraced with Ron's program."

Griffin Industries produces Nature Safe fertilizer at a plant in Henderson, Ky., but also operates nine plants that recycle bakery feeds and others that are rendering or cow-hide operations. All the properties included in the Sanctuary System encompass several thousand acres in the Southeast, Southwest and Midwest as well as headquarters in San Francisco, outside Philadelphia and Cincinnati.

"To me," said Dodson, "this forms the basis of a very unique partnership... Lots of environmental groups have gotten involved in licensing of logos — green watch issues where they stick logos on things saying they are wonderful products. We decided not to do that. We decided to form a partnership based on corporate philosophy and an Audubon philosophy being adopted by a corporation, not necessarily just a product."

"We challenged Griffin Industries to adopt the Audubon Principles of Sustained Resource Management as part of their corporate mission statement. They've done that," he added. "We challenged them to put all of their corporate facilities in the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program and try to get all of them fully certified as Audubon Cooperative Sanctuaries. In other words, we told them, 'You need to walk the walk before you talk the talk. You need to make a personal and corporate commitment to conservation and sustainability in the way you do things.' They have risen to that challenge."

The long-term partnership with Griffin, Dodson said, will "improve the quality of the environment, and help people make

Continued on page 70

# Griffin

Continued from page 66

better decisions as to what they may be doing on their property in regards to impacting the habitat, water quality and air quality.”

Use of renewable resources and an organic-based approach to caring for things like turfgrass is a major issue for Audubon International, which operates the Sanctuary Program.

To ensure continued compliance with the Principles of

Sustainability, Griffin like the many golf courses in the program, will need to be recertified yearly. The company will be able to use the AI logo as long as it remains certified.

Already, six of the company's properties are fully certified, having passed through the half dozen areas of environmental action.

Griffin employees “have embraced it, enjoyed it,” said Geise. “And people in the communities have come out to join in on our programs.”

Michael Schmidt, Griffin's environmental manager, has been working with AI staff ecologist Joellen Zeh on the broad-ranging project.

Geise said perhaps the most difficult task Dodson faces in winning companies and golf courses into the Sanctuary Program is a feeling that it is a policing or regulatory system. “But it's all voluntary,” he said. “To us, it made a lot of sense to get involved — not just from a Nature Safe point of view.”

# Golf courts

Continued from page 13

golfer with increased opportunities — seen as a real bonus in an era where time and space are at a premium.

The safety of the golfer on a golf court is equal to that on a full blown course thanks to the lower number of golfers per acre. A maximum of three matches and twelve players can use the court at any one time.



With Christy O'Connor Junior and Laura Davies lending their support in the company brochure, a certain level of kudos have already been attained and there are already 10 golf courts going through planning consent in the United Kingdom.

With leisure entrepreneur Chris Drummond promoting Golf Courts in South Africa and the new company offices in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, the compact layouts look set to gather an international following.

John Sale again: “We see our biggest potential market in the United States and plan to break into it as soon as possible.”

The major client base for golf courts appears to stem largely from the following social groups: hotel guests, children, women, beginners, business people, senior citizens and the disabled members of society. Environmentally, golf courts are naturally very acceptable — aside from taking up only one tenth of the size of a normal golf course, they also use less water, fewer chemicals and disturb the surroundings much less.

The compactness of a golf court allows inner cities to accommodate them on brown field derelict sites, creating an “inner city lung” right in the middle of a section of society who either have no chance to play the game or who have to travel many miles in order to do so.

This final point has long been cited as an important aspect for the development of golf as a growth sport.

As long ago as 1933 that doyen of revolutionary golf course architecture, Dr. Alister Mackenzie, stated that: “...golf courses for the masses are of value only when they are in close proximity to large towns.”

## See No Weevil.



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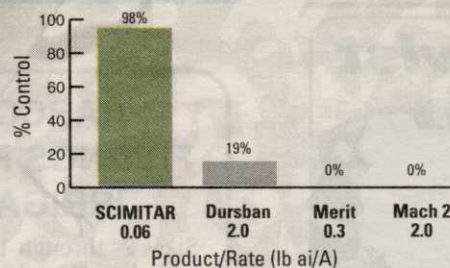
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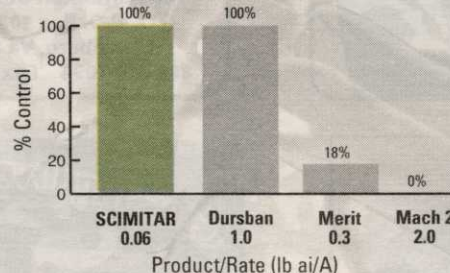
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#### Control of Annual Bluegrass Weevil



Source: S. R. Alm, et al, University of Rhode Island, Kingston, RI, 1997.

#### Control of Adult Black Turfgrass *Ataenius* Weevil



Source: H.D. Niemczyk, Ohio State University, 1996.

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