

BRIEFS



NEW GM AT ROYAL MELBOURNE

NORTHBROOK, Ill. — W. Paul Pearce has been named to succeed Paul V. Blaze as general manager at Royal Melbourne Country Club in Long Grove, Ill., a Kemper Sports Management golf facility. Blaze is joining Kemper Sports' home office as vice president of operations. Prior to joining Royal Melbourne, Pearce was general manager of The Meadow Club in Rolling Meadows, Ill. Previously, he served as general manager at English Turn Golf and Country Club in New Orleans and general manager/regional manager at Brookhaven Country Club in Dallas. Pearce is an active member of the Club Managers Association of America, Greater Chicago Club Managers Association, and United States Golf Association. He is a graduate of Austin College and earned his master's degree at Texas Christian University.

NGP BUYS ONE, SELLS ONE

SANTA MONICA, Calif. — National Golf Properties (NGP) has acquired Coyote Lakes Golf Club, an 18-hole, daily-fee facility located in a northwest suburb of Phoenix, for approximately \$4.1 million. NGP also sold Crescent Oaks Country Club in Tarpon Springs, Fla., to a local investor for approximately \$1.5 million.

NEW COMPANIES ADDED TO VGM MANUFACTURERS LIST

WATERLOO, Iowa — VGM Golf Inc., a major buying alliance for golf courses, has added several new companies to its list of 120 participating manufacturers. Among the new firms are Textron Turf Care and Specialty Products, a manufacturer of golf course maintenance equipment; The VGM Technologies, a telecommunications consulting service; The Kennon Group Audit Co., a utility bill auditing firm based in Stillwater, Okla.; ECO Golf Tee Co., manufacturers of environmentally friendly golf tees; and Maruyama U.S. Inc., Group, a quality brand power tool line based in Richmond Wash. The National Golf Foundation and VGM have formed an agreement in which the NGF's golf facility members can get a discounted membership to VGM, and vice-versa.

Software links courses, travel companies

PHOENIX — More than 400 courses have signed on with GolfSwitch, a recently introduced tee time software system that allows individuals and companies to book tee times at multiple golf courses using a variety of automated reservation systems.



GolfSwitch software enables airlines, central reservation systems, tour operators, hotels, golf vacation companies, travel agents and Internet users to make tee times at any course using one of 16 different automated tee time reservation systems including Computer Golf Systems, T-Links, Smyth Systems, Tee Master, Fore Reservation Systems and Fairway Systems.

GolfSwitch can be integrated into the tee time reservation system's software, meaning course owners need not worry about which of the 16 reservation systems they choose.

Likewise, marketing partners such as airlines, hotels and golf vacation packagers can easily install GolfSwitch into their operations. America West Golf Vacations, Delta Golf Vacations, Pam's Golf, Resort Suites of Scottsdale, the Mirage Hotel in Las Vegas and the PGA of America's PGA.com are among the travel and Internet partners using GolfSwitch software.

GolfSwitch displays up to seven differ-

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Chestatee Golf Club in Dawsonville, Ga., a Signet property.

Signet extending Southern reach

By PETER BLAIS

SALISBURY, N.C. — Signet Golf Associates has signed a management contract with Crescent Golf Club here, giving the Pinehurst, N.C.-based firm five properties in its growing portfolio. Signet will operate the John LaFoy-designed layout for owner Bill Kubly, president of Landscapes Unlimited, a major golf course construction firm.

"We hope we can do a good job for him," said Signet principal Peter Dejak, noting that Kubly has an ownership interest in a dozen courses nationwide. "It could mean some future business."

Dejak and partner Barry Embler founded Pinehurst, N.C.-based Signet in March 1996. The two had worked for Legacy Golf Management, an Atlanta development firm previously located in Pinehurst. Dejak's background is in agronomy and construction, while Embler's is in finance and operations.

"We had a lot of in-the-trenches experience and saw a need for a company where the principals were actually doing the work," Dejak said. "Many companies hire professionals to handle different divisions. What makes us unique is that we handle everything."

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CMAA SHOW COMING UP

ATLANTA — The Club Managers Association of America will hold its 73rd Annual Conference on Club Management and 23rd Annual Exposition at the Atlanta Marriott Marquis and Georgia World Congress Center here on Feb. 20-24, 2000. Plans call for pre- and post-conference workshops, more than 100 educational sessions and golf tournaments. For more information, contact 703-739-9500.

Troon adds, promotes key personnel

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — Troon Golf has promoted several existing personnel and added additional members to its corporate staff.

Within Troon Golf's corporate office in Scottsdale, Gloria McKee was promoted from assistant vice president to vice president, human resources. McKee will continue her efforts to support the staff through the development of new systems and resources in order to handle Troon's continued growth. Prior to joining Troon,

McKee was the director of human resources for Robinson's May department stores.

Newly appointed at the corporate office is Charlene Lowry, vice president, procurement. Lowry leaves the Getty's Group, a Chicago-based design and purchasing company, where she was the director of purchasing. Lowry will be responsible for vendor relations, purchasing initiatives and price negotiations for all Troon facilities.

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ClubCorp, Golden Bear team up on Georgia acquisition

DALLAS — A joint venture involving ClubCorp and Golden Bear International, Inc. has acquired Laurel Springs Golf Club in Suwanee, Ga.

Located 27 miles north of Atlanta, Laurel Springs features a Jack Nicklaus Signature Course and an award-winning 8,100-square foot clubhouse. Opened in 1998, the golf club lists 300 members.

"Laurel Springs complements the clubs that we have in the Atlanta area," said Dave Richey, senior vice president of development of ClubCorp.

Other ClubCorp golf properties in the area include Eagle's Landing Country Club, Northwood Country Club and Trophy Club of Gwinnett. The company also owns and operates three business clubs in Atlanta: Ravinia Club, Buckhead Club and One Ninety One Club.



ACQUISITIONS

Outsourcing

Continued from page 1

example, going to bulk fertilizer applications means that the crew doesn't have to spend time unloading bags and filling up spreaders or putting it out."

Outsourcing not only helps to streamline operations but it also helps keep capital expenses to a minimum.

"Instead of paying \$10,000 to buy

an aerifier, clubs are more than happy to budget \$2,000 a year to aerify the greens," said Buchen.

Time is money, according to Tim Anderson, superintendent at Prestwick Country Club in Frankfort, Ill.

"I could buy a Vertidrain and a Hydroject machine and over time and I may save money," said Anderson. "But the bottom line is that the contracting company can come out with three tractors and

three Vertidrains and in one day get through the whole course. It would take me a whole week."

Matt Taylor, director of golf course operations at Bonita Bay East in Bonita Springs, Fla., also uses outsourcing to handle several tasks that were at one time eating away at his manpower hours. Taylor employs contract maintenance to handle fire ant bait, mosquito insecticide and fertilizer applications and has

been pleased with the results.

"It is cost-effective and the efficacy is improved," said Taylor of the aerial fire ant bait and mosquito insecticide applications. "We just started this year with the wall-to-wall fertilizer applications. When I first looked at it I was dead set against it, because I'm already paying for the labor and I've got a 160-gallon sprayer. But since the bulk fertilizer truck has 40-foot booms

and greater capacity, it gets done twice as fast."

For these reasons, bulk fertilizer applications and other specialized services have become more popular.

Elwood, Ill.-based Tyler Enterprises, a manufacturer of custom-blended fertilizer, rolled out its first bulk fertilizer application truck this fall and has been overwhelmed by the response from area golf courses.

"We started the service in September and we are fully booked through the end of November," said Bill Davis, sales manager for Tyler Enterprises. "We are already ordering a second truck."

According to Davis, superintendents are getting into bulk fertilizer applications not only because it saves time but because it is more accurate. "We map the course in GPS as we apply, showing exactly how much has been applied and where," said Davis. "At the end we can give the superintendent a read-out of the course. It takes the hit and miss out of the way."

For Anderson this is definitely a plus.

"The truck can tell you how much went out where and can correct for mistakes as they ap-

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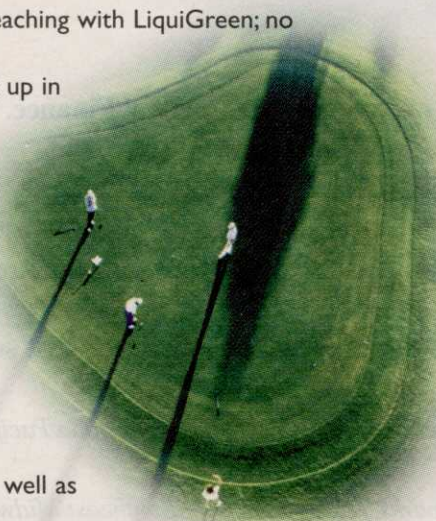
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GolfSwitch

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ent golf course tee sheets at a time on a single computer monitor, allowing travel companies to book tee times at multiple courses for customers.

America West Golf Vacations realized that for their vacation planners to effectively make automated golf reservations they would have to become fluent in the numerous systems in use. That was a daunting, if not impossible task.

"We needed some interface that would allow us as a third-party provider to talk to multiple tee sheets," said Jeff Reich of America West. "GolfSwitch provided that interface. It gives golf courses the autonomy to pick the automated tee sheet that fits their needs and allows third-party providers, like ourselves, the opportunity to book tee times electronically."

Tee times are booked and confirmed in seconds. The GolfSwitch system accepts all major credit cards, allowing tee times to be guaranteed and held with a customer's credit card number.

There is no charge to courses installing GolfSwitch. And course operators can make as many tee times available to GolfSwitch users as they desire.

GolfSwitch makes its money by assessing a surcharge to the travel or vacation planner for every tee time booked using its software.