

GOLF COURSE NEWS

THE NEWSPAPER FOR THE GOLF COURSE INDUSTRY

A UNITED PUBLICATION
VOLUME 11, NUMBER 9
SEPTEMBER 1999 • \$5.50

INSIDE

Winter Prep

We've got it covered — from overseeding and dormant seeding to VFDs & irrigation systems 21-25

Post-traumatic Stress

Superintendents hosting the four Majors have tons to deal with in the aftermath, most of it not turf 38

Sandy Lyle Speaks Out

British golfer is taking his architectural thoughts from philosophy to reality 27



A NATIVE SON
George Frye, a native of nearby Pinehurst, S.C., has proven you can go home again, taking Kiawah Resort's The Ocean Course to new heights. See stories on page 13.

COURSE MAINTENANCE

- Michigan State adds Espanol 13
- International Environmental Summit planned 15

COURSE DEVELOPMENT

- Survey shows growth in Canadian golf 3
- Rulewich restores Yale University layout 27

COURSE MANAGEMENT

- Pebble Beach sale finalized 6
- OnTee.com provides one-stop shop 33

SUPPLIER BUSINESS

- Lesco profits bounce back 39
- New products unveiled in marketplace 41-42

NEWSPAPER

Geologists examine Ocean Trails; future unsure

By ANDREW OVERBECK

RANCHO PALOS VERDES, Calif. — In the weeks since the landslide at the Ocean Trails Golf Course here, geologists are still examining the geological substructure beneath the golf course to determine what exactly caused a 200-by 400-foot section of the 18th hole to slip towards the Pacific Ocean. However, the largest earth movement to hit the Palos Verdes Peninsula since the Portuguese Bend landslide in the mid-1950s, has unsettled more than just a fairway and a green complex. Environmental activists, regulatory bodies, planning commissions and even other golf course

Continued on page 5

Drought plagues East Coast

I just got back from New Jersey. You've got to feel for the superintendents down there. It's been so dry, even the weeds are brown.'

— Scott Cybulski, superintendent, Falmouth (Maine) CC

By PETER BLAIS

Scott Cybulski's sympathy for his fellow superintendents is well placed, according to Stan Zontek, agronomist for the United States Golf Association Green Section's Mid-Atlantic region.

During his travels throughout his five-state area — Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, Virginia and West Virginia — Zontek has witnessed the effects of what some are calling the worst drought in the past 100 years.

"It's a notch above awful," Zontek said. "Today [Aug. 5], the state of Maryland imposed mandatory water restrictions. Watering of fairways is only allowed with syringe irrigation with an 80-percent reduction in water usage required. Greens and tees are limited to the minimum necessary.

"Delaware is on voluntary restric-

tions and will probably go into mandatory water restrictions by noon on Friday [Aug. 6] north of Wilmington.

"Pennsylvania went to mandatory water restrictions last week. They allow watering of tees and greens only and syringing to a maximum of 15 minutes a day to heat-sensitive grasses, which are defined as bentgrass and *poa annua* fairways. Any irrigation of sodded or seeded areas can only occur from 9 p.m. to 5 a.m., which isn't going to help for sodding or seeding.

"In Maryland, they don't even allow that. No agricultural irrigation is allowed at all.

"West Virginia was just designated a drought emergency by the President. Virginia has voluntary restrictions, although in the far western corner of the state it's wet,

Continued on page 32



WALK, DON'T RIDE

Colleton River Plantation's Pete Dye Course hosts its grand opening in September, hailed as a cog in the trend towards walking and "core" golf courses, and full caddie service. Since the course's "soft opening" last Dec. 15, half the members have walked track, which stretches from 5,105 to 6,889 yards over Lowcountry property on Hilton Head Island, S.C. Above is the 135-yard 13th hole.

Mark Brown photo

Golf Communities files for bankruptcy

By PETER BLAIS

ORLANDO, Fla. — Golf Communities of America, a publicly held Orlando-based course owner and operator that recently filed for bankruptcy court protection, hopes to submit a reorganization plan by early fall, according to R. Scott Shuker, an attorney representing GCA.

GCA and its 21 subsidiaries operate five active courses, have three courses in planning or under construction and own property in Florida, Texas, Utah and North Carolina. Among GCA's courses are Cutter Sound Golf & Yacht Club in Palm City, Fla.; Hillcrest Country Club (under con-

Continued on page 38

Golf Communities

Continued from page 1

-struction) in Clermont, Fla.; The Plantation Golf Club in Pinehurst, N.C.; NorthShore Country Club in Portland, Texas; Wedgefield Golf & Country Club in Orlando; The Pines Golf Club in Orange City, Fla.; Red Hawk International (in planning) in St. George, Utah; and The Lakes of Arlington (under construction)

in Tarrant County, Texas.

Another GCA property, The Club at Pelican Strand in Naples, Fla., is not included in the bankruptcy filing.

In its Chapter 11 filing, GCA listed \$122 million in debts and \$145 million in assets. Credit Suisse First Boston (CSFB), the major creditor, is reportedly owed more than \$100 million. CSFB is also GCA's largest

shareholder (24.9 percent).

GCA President Warren Stanchina said the firm's problems resulted from Credit Suisse First Boston's decision to cut off funding, but expressed confidence the firm would successfully emerge from its financial problems. He referred specific questions to Shuker.

"The companies had to file for bankruptcy to protect their as-

sets and try to get a dividend to unsecured creditors and, potentially, stockholders," Shuker said. "The company had restricted access to its ongoing loans from Credit Suisse and construction at a number of the projects stopped. The purpose of the Chapter 11 was to try to restructure that debt obligation and find a meaningful workout plan."

Shuker said he didn't know

why Credit Suisse had cut off funding to Golf Communities.

"All the [existing] courses are still operating," Shuker said. "We received a commitment for interim financing to keep them operating and get to a place to make a proposal to all our creditors on how we are going to restructure debts and what the company will look like in the future. We're talking to a number of parties about further investments or loans or a combination thereof to restart construction at a number of the projects."

That new financing could include Credit Suisse, Shuker said. "In fact, the interim financing is being provided by Credit Suisse," he added.

Asked when the situation would be resolved, Shuker said, "We'll likely file our plan of reorganization within the next three months."

Golf Communities is a publicly held firm.

In a written statement, CSFB said: "We have acted in a commercially reasonable manner and fulfilled all of our legal obligations as a lender. All allegations to the contrary are without merit. We have worked with GCA in the past and are open to working with them in the future."

Another course operator, Crenshaw Golf Properties of Dallas, has slowed its course acquisition plans since dissolving its relationship with Credit Suisse First Boston, according to company President C.J. McDaniel.

ClubLink

Continued from page 33

Domaines is in the Mirabel-Blainville area, about 20 minutes from downtown Montreal and about 15 minutes from Cedarbrook.

"Quatre Domaines Golf Club is an important building block in putting together ClubLink's cluster of courses in Greater Montreal, a dynamic area with a robust economy and an appetite for quality golf," said Bruce Simmonds, president and CEO of ClubLink. "The project developer, Gilles Debut, has extensive golf development and management experience and the Dion family has built three golf courses around Montreal. The Dions and Debut will be of great assistance as ClubLink expands in Quebec."

The 7,200-square-foot clubhouse, which opened in May, includes a 2,200-square-foot covered terrace, dinner seating for 280 people, a 25-seat bistro and 1,200-square-foot conference room. The club also boasts a 10-acre practice facility with target greens and a practice putting green, and a three-hole academy course with a par-3 and two par-4s.

GOLF COURSE NEWS



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