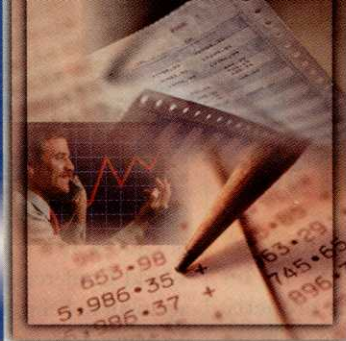


# MANAGEMENT



## BRIEFS

### LAKE WINDSOR INTRODUCES NEW MANAGEMENT TEAM

WINDSOR, Wis. — Lake Windsor Country Club, which is owned by Meadowbrook Golf of ChampionsGate, Fla., recently promoted Mindy Foster to general manager and hired Brian Norton as head professional. Foster has been with the club for 10 years and previously served as assistant general manager at the club. Norton spent the last eight years working at Odana Hills Golf Course in Madison as first assistant golf professional.

### FREEDOM GOLF SIGNS FOREGO FOR WEB SERVICES

HERSHEY, Pa. — Golf course management and consulting firm Freedom Golf Services (FGS) has signed a three-year contract for Internet services with Forego Systems Inc. of Harrisburg. Forego will design and host Web sites for FGS-managed courses, and will also help FGS with search engine optimization.

### DORAL NAMES DIRECTOR OF GOLF

MIAMI, Fla. — Doral Golf Resort and Spa, which recently hosted the PGA Tour's Ford Championship, has named James Devine its new director of golf. Devine brings more than 10 years' experience in golf operations and instruction to his new position at Doral. Prior to joining Doral, Devine served as general manager for Bull Run Golf Club in Virginia.

### WESTBROOK CC NAMES NEW MEMBERSHIP MANAGER

SAVANNAH, Ga. — Vernice Rackett has been named membership director for Westbrook Country Club at Savannah Quarters, a 2,588-acre master-planned community here. Rackett will be responsible for new member enrollment and working with businesses to educate them about the benefits of corporate membership.

## KemperSports comes back to Harding Park

Company also takes over management for three former Gotham Golf Partners courses following lender's foreclosure

By DEREK RICE

NORTHBROOK, Ill. — Two years after bowing out of negotiations with the San Francisco Recreation and Park Commission, KemperSports Management has agreed to manage the city's Harding Park Golf Course.

The company also assumed management of three former Gotham Golf Corp.-managed properties for commercial lender ORIX Capital Markets LLC, which reacquired the courses in lieu of foreclosure.

The Harding Park deal culminates a turbulent four years in the course's history, which saw two management companies back out of deals (Arnold Palmer Golf Management was the other one) and several false starts in attempts to give the course a much-needed facelift.

KemperSports pulled out in

2001 because of what it said were unrealistic expectations on the part of the city. According to Steve Skinner, KemperSports president, the city's desire to have the renovation project privately funded made any deal nearly impossible to complete.

"The last time it came up, they wanted a private developer to come in and pay for the improvements, and then lease it from them. But they also wanted resident rates to be very affordable and have 60 percent of the tee times go to residents," Skinner said. "The num-

bers never really worked to get private investment in and still have such a favorable rate for the residents."

At that time, KemperSports

CEO Steve Lesnik said his company would consider managing the property if some of the requirements and expectations

Continued on page 15



The old clubhouse at Harding Park will be replaced, but in the meantime, the course will operate out of a temporary facility, according to Steve Skinner of KemperSports Management.

## Private Club Network collects awards, adds ChampionsGate

By DEREK RICE

MANHATTAN, Kan. — Private Club Network, a reciprocal play network for private country clubs, has signed an agreement with the Meadowbrook Golf-managed ChampionsGate Resort in ChampionsGate, Fla.

Under the agreement, which is the company's second foray into the central Florida market, Private Club Network's more than 30,000 members will receive special pricing at the resort's two courses as a supplemental benefit to their primary reciprocal private club privileges.

Steve Graves founded Private Club Network in 1999, and formally introduced its service in May 2002. The concept for the network developed out of Creative Golf Marketing, which Graves began in 1990 to help clubs grow their membership levels.

In its 13 years in business, Creative Golf Marketing has helped a number of clubs reverse their declining membership trends. One of those clubs is Riverside Golf and Country Club in Portland, Ore., which was able to realize a major turnaround in a very short time.

"In less than 45 days, we went from 448 members—with over 20 of

those on a waiting list awaiting refunds—to full membership at 500," said Bill Johnson, president of Riverside. "Additionally, we cleared the list awaiting refunds and we now have 13 prospects on a waiting list join. All that during an economy in the state with the nation's highest unemployment figure."

In 2002, Creative Golf Marketing generated more than \$15 million in initiation fee and dues income for its clients, Graves said.

The industry is also taking notice

Continued on next page

## Heritage Golf acquires two

SAN DIEGO, Calif. — Golf course owner-operator Heritage Golf Group added two courses, Washington National Golf Club in Auburn, Wash., and Trophy Lake Golf and Casting in Port Orchard, Wash., to its portfolio last month.

Heritage acquired both courses from Scottsdale, Ariz.-based OB Sports LLC. The additions, which are Heritage's first foray into the Pacific North-



Bob Husband

west, bring the company's portfolio of courses to 10. The remaining eight courses are located in California, Georgia and Florida.

Bob Husband, president and CEO of Heritage, said the

two courses were a perfect fit for his company's operational philosophy.

"Both Washington National and Trophy Lake are premium golf properties, and we are

Continued on next page

## Troon adds seven courses in six months

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — The first quarter of 2003 has brought a flurry of activity for golf course management company Troon Golf, with the signing of several properties.

At press time, Troon had signed management contracts with four facilities in 2003: The Traditions Club in Bryan, Texas; Gaillarda Golf and Country Club in Oklahoma City, Okla.; Corte Bella Golf Club in Phoenix, Ariz.; and TPC Snoqualmie Ridge Golf Club in

Snoqualmie, Wash.

Combined with the addition of three facilities in the fourth quarter of 2002, and it's been a busy six months for Troon.

In addition, the company also kicked off the third year of its Troon Rewards program. The frequency program offers frequent Troon customers benefits as a bonus for their loyalty. Among these rewards are free rounds of golf, bonus miles from Troon's airline partners and discounts on golf and merchandise.

Through the opening of the Mahoney Instruction Club at Talking Stick, Troon's director of education Tim Mahoney founded the new Tim Mahoney Golf Academy. Mahoney's academy will operate under the umbrella of the Troon Golf Institute, and will complement Troon's other golf instruction schools, among them Resort Golf Schools at Legend Trail Golf Club in Scottsdale and Golf Digest Schools located at a number of Troon's properties.

— Derek Rice

## Western Golf sold

Continued from page 1

company said its long-term focus will continue to be on driving revenue at the property level, while assuming a more aggressive growth strategy. Part of this strategy is to take equity positions in deals as the right opportunities present themselves.

"We understand how the golf business has changed over the last few years. Owners need partners in their business, in addition to operators," Heath said. "We intend to focus our growth on course owners who want long-term vision and support from an established, sound business network."

The exact reasons behind the sale are not clear, but Western Golf is currently one of the defendants, along with Thunderbirds Golf Course in Phoenix, in a pending \$20 million lawsuit filed by the family of 15-year-old Nils Beeman. Beeman died last July after contracting a virus suspected to be linked to water-handling procedures at Western Golf-managed Thunderbirds. Last August, 84 people in Maricopa County contracted the Norwalk Virus, with the common denominator being the water at Thunderbirds. In November, the medical examiner's office determined the cause of Beeman's death was asphyxia due to vomiting caused by the virus, making him the lone casualty of the outbreak.

His death led to widespread changes in the way water is handled on golf courses, not only locally, but nationwide. However, the negative press generated by the incident led to severely decreased rounds at the course, which was sold to a pair of local businessmen for \$4.8 million in a foreclosure auction last December (GCN, Feb. 2003).

Western Golf first became affiliated with Thunderbirds prior to its opening in 2001. The company served as a construction consultant for the course, which was designed by PGA Tour Design Services Inc. with cooperative efforts of local professional golfers Tom Lehman, Howard Twitty and Billy Mayfair.

Intrawest Golf took over management of the course when the course's lender, Bank One Corp., foreclosed on the property in September for defaulting on a \$6.6 million loan, but the new owners ended that contract at the time of the sale and said they plan to run the course themselves as MGC Properties LLC. ■

## PCN seeing success

Continued from previous page

of Graves' two companies. At the World Conference on Club Management in February, Private Club Network was recognized as New Product of the Year. Creative Golf Marketing was recognized as Membership Marketing Firm of the Year for the third straight time.

"We couldn't be more pleased

to be recognized with these awards, especially three years in a row," Graves said. "We feel it validates the services we're able to deliver to our clients."

Graves said he hopes to eventually have 250 member clubs in Private Club Network.

"Obviously, the industry continues to weaken and the prominence of my two companies creates a strong demand," Graves said. ■

## Heritage Golf

Continued from previous page

extremely fortunate to be able to add them to our portfolio," Husband said. "Our mission all along has been to associate the Heritage name with the finest golf properties in the country. We continue to fulfill our mission with the addition of Washington National and Trophy Lake to our

family of clubs."

Washington National is a John Fought-designed 18-hole daily-fee course with a University of Washington theme. Trophy Lake, designed by Fought and design partner Tom Lehman, is located near Olympic Range and Mount Ranier and offers both golf and fishing at its location. Both courses opened in 1999. ■

— Derek Rice

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