



## BRIEFS

### TROON TO MANAGE COLONIAL

FORT MEYERS, Fla. — Pulte Homes Inc. has contracted Scottsdale, Ariz.-based Troon Golf to oversee all club operations at its new golf community under development here. Troon will work with Pulte during the construction phase at Colonial Country Club, which is scheduled to open in summer 2003, and then manage the club facilities and amenities moving forward.

### COURSECO TAPS HATHAWAY AS GM, DIRECTOR OF GOLF

SAN JOSE, Calif. — Golf course management and development company CourseCo Inc. has named Scot Hathaway general manager and director of golf for its Los Lagos and Rancho Del Pueblo golf courses. Hathaway is an employee of CourseCo, which has partnered with Capitol Development Group to manage both courses. Prior to his new position, Hathaway served as general manager and director of golf at Deep Cliff Golf Course.

### MARTINSEN NAMED GM AT WINCHESTER CC

MEADOW VISTA, Calif. — OB Sports Management has appointed Jonathon Martinsen general manager at Winchester Country Club. Martinsen's hiring coincides with the construction of a new clubhouse, which is currently underway at the club. Prior to his hiring, Martinsen held similar positions at a number of clubs, including Anthem Golf & Country Club, PGA West and Pine Mountain Lake.

### LAKE JACKSON HIRES KEMPER

LAKE JACKSON, Texas — Kemper Sports Management has been hired to manage and maintain Wilderness, the city of Lake Jackson's 18-hole municipal golf course, which is currently under construction. The course, designed by Jeffrey Bauer of Golfscapes, is scheduled to open in fall 2003.

## Freedom signs third course management contract

By DEREK RICE

HERSHEY, Pa. — Freedom Golf Services Inc., the golf course acquisition, ownership and management company founded last year by former Gotham Golf Partners regional vice president Allen Dupuy, has signed its third management contract.

Meadow Woods Golf Course in Orlando, Fla., has hired FGS to provide turnkey operational management for its 18-hole facility, including clubhouse operations, marketing, agronomy and accounting.

"We have been contracted to improve the overall facility through enhanced course conditions, customer service and targeted marketing," FGS president

DuPuy said. "We are excited about this opportunity and look forward to establishing a long and productive relationship with ownership."

Ralph Little, who represents the property's owners, said the more than 30 years of industry experience between DuPuy and FGS executive vice president Dan Stonionis, also formerly of Gotham Golf Partners, led them to hire FGS.

"We selected Freedom Golf Services based on the firm's experience and excellent reputation for enhancing the fi-



The 14th hole at Meadow Woods Golf Course in Orlando, Fla.

ancial performance and valuation of a property," Little said.

While there is work to do at Meadow Woods, the club does have some good things going for it, chiefly its location, DuPuy said.

"Meadow Woods offers an affordable, first-class golf experience only minutes from the Orlando airport, and the facility serves the area's seasonal and year-round residents," he said.

### Editorial focus: Promotions & Marketing

## Marketing becoming top priority for courses

By DEREK RICE

It's no secret that rounds played numbers declined in 2002, while the number of golf courses continued to rise. What that means for owners and operators is that there are more people competing for essentially the same size pie as we saw in 2001.

To draw more players and frequency to properties, owners and operators must recognize the importance of marketing themselves, according to Kim Allison of Scottsdale, Ariz.-based golf marketing firm In One Advertising and Marketing.

"Courses are going to have to compete in the marketing arena,

and I think people are starting to recognize that, but most of them don't know where to start or what to do," she said.

The first step, Allison said, is to understand your property's position in the marketplace, along with what unique need you can bring to market.

"There's such a sea of sameness and there are so many properties that are afraid to take some kind of unique stance," she said. "Their advertising is very generic and all of a sudden, the consumer can't really understand the differences. They need to understand what are the unique selling propositions for your property, because if they don't have any, they'd better get some."

"The challenge is going to be to find ways to keep it from always being a competition on price, because then everybody loses," she added.

One way courses can drive play is through customer loyalty programs. Desert Willow Golf Resort in Palm Desert, Calif., uses a card printer, the Zebra Eltron P420, to create "instant" ID badges that golfers can purchase to become "members" during the summer. The immediacy of the technology makes the program

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## Investment group hires CEO to lead NGP, AGC

By DEREK RICE

SANTA MONICA, Calif. — Assuming the buyout and merger between sister companies National Golf Properties Inc. (NGP) and American Golf Corp. (AGC) is completed, the combined company will have a new leader to steer it through what would seem to be difficult times ahead for the largest golf course owner and management company.

However, the new CEO, announced Dec. 6 by the group led by Goldman Sachs and Starwood Capital, has experience at this sort of thing.

Roland Smith, president CEO of AMF Bowling Worldwide, another financially troubled com-

pany Goldman bought in the 1990s, resigned his post with AMF the day the investment group announced he would be hired as CEO of the combined company that is expected to emerge from the buyout.

Smith was hired by Goldman in 1999 to turn around AMF. After steering AMF Bowling through a spinoff from its parent company, AMF Bowling Worldwide, as well as a subsequent bankruptcy filing, Smith oversaw AMF's emergence from Chapter 11 last year. He is also credited with rejuvenating of the Arby's brand earlier in his career.

Smith is expected to assume his new position in early 2003.

## NGCOA unveils marketplace, study

CHARLESTON, S.C. — The National Golf Course Owners Association has launched two new initiatives, the Golf Course Market and a compensation and benefits study.

The Course Market is a listing of golf properties available for purchase. Agents will be able to list properties instantly on a new Website, [www.golfcoursemarket.com](http://www.golfcoursemarket.com), which will accommodate

regular listings as well as auctions.

The compensation and benefits study is being completed by the NGCOA and the National Club Association as a means of establishing industry benchmarks for various job titles.

Results of the study are expected to be available later this month, as well as at both the NGCOA and NCA conferences.

