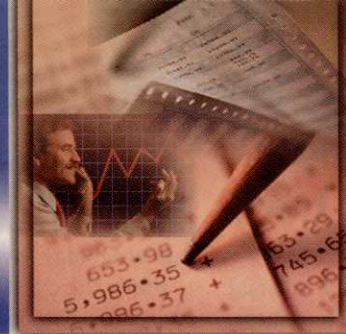


MANAGEMENT



BRIEFS

HERITAGE GETS \$44 MILLION IN REFINANCING

RED BANK, N.J. — GMAC Commercial Mortgage (GMACCM), recently provided \$44 million in interim refinancing for San Diego, Calif.-based Heritage Golf Group. The financing was for three unnamed golf courses, one in California and two in Georgia. The GMACCM Golf Finance Group based in Washington, D.C., arranged the transaction, which follows on the heels of GMACCM's foray into the golf industry by providing \$650 million in financing for the acquisition of National Golf Properties' 253 golf courses earlier this year (GCN, May 2003).

LEGENDS GROUP INSTALLS UPLINK SYSTEMS

AUSTIN, Texas — UpLink Corp. has installed its SmartCourse Profit Generating System at Legends Resorts Group's Moorland, Heathland and Parkland golf courses in Myrtle Beach, S.C. Larry Woodberry, golf operations director for the Legends Group, said UpLink's global positioning-satellite-based management system will allow the courses to realize significant savings by not having to print yardage books. Through UpLink's relationship with on-car scoring and live leaderboard capabilities provider Vision Perfect, Legends will also be able to increase its tournament bookings, Woodberry said.

LIGHTHOUSE SIGNS AGREEMENT FOR SOMERSET GC

ATLANTA — Lighthouse Golf Group has signed an agreement with Somerset Education Foundation to provide complete management solutions for Somerset Golf Club in Locust Grove, Va. The course, originally built in 1996, is in the midst of a renovation of its greens, tees, bunkers and several complete holes. Architect Rick Robbins of Robbins & Associates Inc. of Cary, N.C., is overseeing the renovation being completed by Links Construction of Palm City, Fla.

OB Sports rebounds from mistaken identity

By DEREK RICE

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — In the last two years, OB Sports Golf Management has experienced incredible growth in the number of properties it manages, jumping from five contracts at the beginning of 2001 to 14 at press time. According to C.A. Roberts, OB Sports' vice president of business development, this growth is the best of any in the company's more than 30 years in business.

"We've achieved our most success ever that I could point to in the history of the company just in the last year and a half, which is weird," Roberts said.

While that would be cause for celebration at any company, it is particularly sweet for OB Sports, which has had to deal with a case of mistaken identity in recent years.

In the mid-1990s, OB Sports managed two courses in the Las Vegas area, Angel Park and The Legacy. The owners of those two courses approached OB Sports founder and CEO Orrin Vincent

and proposed forming a new company to build and buy more golf courses. The result was OB Sports LLC, which existed from 1995 to 2000. During that time, the company bought several golf courses

and built others, all the while picking up management contracts along the way, Roberts said.

"We had a nice portfolio of 16 golf courses," he said.

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OB Sports recently opened The Duke at Rancho El Dorado, one of 14 courses the company manages.

Elcot draws on team's diverse background

By DEREK RICE

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Norm Carl, who raised the equity to develop Legends Club of Tennessee for Tom Kite and Bob Cupp's Legend Golf Development Co., has teamed with partners Rick Chukas and Joe Kennedy to form Elcot Golf Inc., a full-service golf management and consulting company.

The three principals come from diverse backgrounds. After raising financing for Legends Club, Carl continued to provide management and consulting services for the club. Chukas is a former partner with Arthur Andersen LLP, where he created a practice specialty area dedicated to the golf industry. Kennedy has more than 25 years of turfcare management experience and has been director of golf at Legends Club since it opened in 1990.

The company also hired Steve Nieman as director of corporate sales. Nieman previously worked for Raycom Sports as tournament director of the LPGA's Aerus Electrolux USA Championship hosted

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Editorial Focus: Golf Cars

Manufacturers tweak current golf car offerings

By DEREK RICE

The 'big three' golf car manufacturers have planned few changes to their main lines for 2003, but that does not mean they are resting on their laurels. Club Car and Yamaha Golf Car (YGC) and E-Z-GO Textron are all bringing new features, services or offerings, designed to make life easier for their customers, to the table.

REFURBISHED CARS

Earlier this year, Club Car, based in Augusta, Ga., made a foray into the used golf car market with its REserve program. Club Car now offers customers previously owned and refurbished golf cars backed by the Club Car brand.

Under the program, Club Car

will take back golf cars coming off lease and send them through



Yamaha has introduced its Genius diagnostic system, which allows courses to configure their golf cars with a Palm Pilot.

a refurbishing process, then sell or lease them to customers at a substantially lower price than a new fleet of cars, said Brian

Crawford, vice president of sales, aftermarket.

"There is a significant amount of demand in the market today for a lower-priced golf car that still offers the assurance of the Club Car brand," Crawford said. "This program helps us address that market with a consistently high-quality product offering that gives our customers great value."

For the most part, the vehicles that go through the program this year will be electric. They will be sent to either Club Car's main plant in Augusta or to its custom manufacturing facility in Indio, Calif., to go through the refurbishment process. Club

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Nelson relishes GM position at Half Moon Bay

By DOUG SAUNDERS

HALF MOON BAY, Calif. — The role that women play in the game of golf stepped to the forefront last month with Annika Sorenstam's appearance at Colonial Country Club in Texas as she competed with the men in a regular PGA Tour event. Her appearance helped to remind the general public that this game, which has certainly been male-dominated for decades, is one that should be shared by all who want to become involved.

But the revolution of women playing a role in shaping the future of golf has been happening quietly over the last 15 years and it is definitely a growing trend. It was just seven years ago that Judy Bell served as president of the USGA, the first woman to serve in that capacity, and women make up a large segment



Lyn Nelson

ment of new golfers coming into the game. The trend continues into the front offices of clubs and courses around the country as more women are ascending into managerial positions.

Lyn Nelson, general manager at Half Moon Bay Golf Links, just south of San Francisco, is part of this trend, but certainly is not new to the rigors of the job. Nelson has been working in the management end of the golf industry

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Elcot draws on Legends Club experience

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by singers Vince Gill and Amy Grant, which was held at Legends Club from 2000 to 2002.

Carl said the varied backgrounds of the founders should translate into a unique type of success for Elcot's client base.

"We have assembled a highly skilled team with extensive golf management experience and strong business skills," Carl said. "Our goal is not to become the largest golf and turfcare management company, but to provide a unique perspective on the business of golf and deliver the highest level of client service."

Despite their differing perspectives on the industry, Carl said the team has common goals when it comes to their customers.

"Each of us shares a passion for the game of golf and a deep respect for its history and tradition," he said. "But we also share a similar respect for golf as a business operation."

In addition to full-service management, Elcot will draw on its team's experiences to of-

fer consulting services, including developing golf operations protocols and staffing, business plans, facility planning, sales and marketing, personnel recruitment and placement, and equipment evaluation and sourcing.

As for services, Elcot plans to offer construction management, ongoing maintenance and renovation planning and management.

Despite being a new operation, Elcot finds itself busy. At present, Elcot manages the day-to-day operations for Legends Club and is consulting on renovation and managing golf operations and turfcare maintenance for Orange Lake Resort & Country Club in Orlando, Fla. The company is also consulting on Bear Trace Jack Nicklaus Signature golf courses located throughout Tennessee and providing construction and maintenance consulting for a new 18-hole facility at Fairvue Plantation in Nashville. The group also directed construction of Vinny Lakes First Tee in Nashville and continues to consult on the project. ■

OB Sports bounces back from partnerships, name confusion

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In 2000, the financial backers of OB Sports LLC decided to get out of the golf business, so OB Sports put together a package to sell the six courses they owned jointly. Heritage Golf Group then offered to infuse OB Sports LLC with some financing and manage those six courses for them. This was when OB Sports' management team decided to separate from OB Sports LLC.

"All of us on the OB Sports management team said, 'We'll separate from you.' So Jan. 1, 2001, we kept our eight management contracts and all of us on the executive team kept the name and logo of OB Sports and moved down to Scottsdale and set up our office here," Roberts said. "So OB Sports Golf Management was our name. They were not to use the name OB Sports in any way, but they didn't want to have to go change all their loan documents they had on those six courses. It would have taken an infinite amount of time, legally."

Confused yet? So was the industry to some extent, Roberts said.

"[OB Sports LLC] filed for reorganization and we had to do some damage control to say, 'We're not them. We have nothing to do with them,'" Roberts said. "But every time they filed for reorganization, OB Sports LLC was in the documents. So even though they didn't market the name, vendors were getting letters that were saying OB Sports LLC was filing for bankruptcy."

Rather than create more confusion by mounting an aggressive marketing campaign, Roberts said OB Sports chose to ride out the storm.

"We decided not to create a press campaign because we might have been dredging up people who might not have otherwise cared. We kind of watched all that unfold," he said. "The good news is that now they've either sold or dumped all of those courses and they no longer exist. They're no longer on the map anymore, so that issue is gone."

Since the beginning of 2002, OB Sports has added nine management contracts, and no longer gets involved in any type of equity deals, Roberts said.

"We've added seven contracts this year. It's a huge growth for us," he said.

At the same time, Roberts said, the company has to be careful about growing too much, which would fly in the face of its management approach.

"We have to be careful about growing too much. Our big hook is our boutique size," Roberts said. "We always tell people we don't want to be Troon or ClubCorp or American Golf. We like the lives we live and the jobs we have here. We don't want to have 3,000 employees in our office. Can we grow to 18 or 20 and be comfortable? Absolutely."

Among the 14 properties OB Sports currently manages are Angel Park and The Legacy, which are particularly sweet, Roberts said.

"It's like a homecoming," he said.

Roberts said OB Sports has two or three additional contracts that could potentially come to fruition in the near future. For now, he said, the company will continue to garner new business through referrals, while being careful not to exceed its capacity. ■

IN A PERFECT WORLD
THERE'D BE NO
BROWN
PATCH.

TESCO