

nications and course management software, provided advertising materials to more than 50 golf courses across the country to display in golf cars equipped with the UpLink technology. Twice during their rounds golfers saw images from the film on screens that are attached to their golf cars. Bobby Jones Film LLC also enlisted the support of the PGA, PGA Tour, USGA, American Junior Golf Association, National Golf Course Owners Association, Golf Course Superintendents Association of America and the Executive Women's Golf Association. The organizations lent their names and logos to collateral materials that Club Car sales people distributed to about 1,500 courses throughout the country.

**Lesco** opened nine new service centers in the first three months of 2004. They are in: Brookfield, Conn.; Kaukauna, Wis.; Wilmington, N.C.; Matthews, N.C.; Pleasant Valley, Mo.; Collinsville, Ill.; Lewis Center, Ohio; Millersville, Md.

and Austin, Texas. There were 256 service centers throughout the country as of March 31, 2004. The company's net sales during the first quarter of 2004 increased 8 percent to \$102.0 million from \$94.5 million during the first quarter of 2003. Lawn care gross sales improved 10 percent to \$85.7 million from \$77.6 million in the year-ago period, while golf gross sales declined 4 percent to \$17.2 million versus \$17.9 million last year. Service center sales grew 10 percent to \$68.3 million from \$62.0 million, while same-store service center sales increased 5 percent to \$64.9 million compared to \$61.8 million during the same quarter last year.

**Klingstone**, a manufacturer of a patented polyurethane soil stabilizer designed to treat the base of golf course bunkers to stop side wall erosion and sand contamination, will be featured on "Terry Bradshaw's Pick of the Week." The production company, Broadcast News Channel LLC, searches for companies that represent the backbone of America's economy.

Klingstone was chosen for its forward-thinking and consistent principles that have led to its growth and success, according to Dan Usry, executive producer. The two-minute segment aired on MSNBC June 16.

**Adverse Weather Insurance Group** introduced a seasonal and annual weather coverage program to the golf industry. Golf courses can purchase single-day coverage in bulk for a period of several days, weeks or months to protect profits during peak periods. If it rains during the period of coverage, golf courses can generate a profit during those days instead of losing revenue. Weekend seasonal, holiday weather, multi-day weather and tournament weather coverages are available.

**DryJect LLC** has four new franchises: Scott Szydoski in Northeast Texas, John Fleck in New York, John Majernik in

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southern Ohio excluding Cincinnati and Casey Dorn in Arizona. This brings the total number of U.S. franchises to 24. Since 2003, 16 franchises have been added. Dryject Service Centers are capable of injecting large volumes of a variety of dry materials into the soil while aerating, including sand/top dressing, granular insecticides, herbicides, fungicides, biologics and root stimulants.

## Personnel News

Angel Fire (N.M.) Resort named **Jon Bohannon** its head golf professional. Bohannon will be responsible for overseeing Angel Fire Resort's golf pro shop operations, instructional lessons, tournaments, retail sales, golf carts and driving range. Angel Fire Resort is a master planned development in a common interest community offering homes, condos and land.

**Doug Weaver** joined Greenwood Development Corp. as director of instruc-



Weaver

tion for Palmetto Dunes Resort and Palmetto Hall on Hilton Head Island, S.C. The 44-year-old former tour professional will assist golfers in perfecting their game-management abilities, their swings and their golf persona on the resort's three championship courses: Arthur Hills, George Fazio and Robert Trent Jones Oceanfront Course. Weaver plans to increase and improve the resort's women-only programs and daily classes, among other soon-to-be announced programs. Weaver will join his 8-year-old junior golf school with Palmetto Dunes Junior Golf Academy.

Eight individuals in the golf industry agreed to collaborate as members of The Environmental Institute for Golf Advisory Council: **Vernon A. Kelly Jr.**, president of PGA Tour Golf Course Properties; **H. Thomas Webb III**, senior vice president of residential development for Crescent

Resources; **Tom Crow**, founder of Cobra Golf and also a retiring trustee for The Institute; **Dana Garmany**, chairman and c.e.o. of Troon Golf; **R.D. Hubbard**, owner of Bighorn Golf Club in Palm Desert, Calif.; **Robert Sillerman**, c.e.o. of FXM; and **Frank Weed**, c.o.o. of Medallist Developments. **Jamie Ortiz-Patiño**, owner, president and golf course superintendent at Valderrama Golf Club in Sotogrande, Spain, agreed to serve on the Advisory Council in September. The Environmental Institute for Golf, the philanthropic organization of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, is a collaborative effort of the environmental and golf communities, dedicated to strengthening the compatibility of golf with the natural environment. The purpose of the advisory council is to provide guidance to the institute's board of trustees, in the areas of outreach, fundraising and strategic planning. The members were selected to the advisory council to enhance the institute's ability to cultivate relationships with current and potential donors,

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as well as communicate the importance of the work conducted by The Institute.

The Golf Course Builders Association of America elected five officers and added four new members to its board of directors. The officers and new members will serve two-year terms. The elections took place in conjunction with February's Golf Course Superintendents Association of America conference in San Diego. Elected officers are:

President - **Tommy Sasser**, Weitz Golf International;

President Elect - **Tom Shapland**, Wadsworth Golf Construction Co.;

Vice President - **Rick Elyea**, Tee-2-Green Corp.;

Secretary - **Michael Harrington**, HARCO Fittings; and

Treasurer - **Steve Christman**, Eagle Golf & Landscape Products (second term).

**Fidel Garcia** of Ryangolf Corp. will continue to serve the board as immediate past president. As the new president, Sasser brings more than 30 years of experience in golf construction and land development with him. At Weitz Golf International, his responsibilities include developing and presenting business plans for construction projects throughout the world. His affiliations include National Golf Foundation, the GCSAA and the Urban Land Institute. The GCBAA also welcomes the following new board members: **Klaus Ahlers** of Leemco; **Glenn Caverly** of Golf Course Construction.; **Mick Jones** of The Toro Co.; and **Scott Pate** of Seaside Golf Development.

During the Equipment & Engine Training Council's annual conference, the board of directors voted in five new members (see photo at right): **John Chocholak**, instructor, Ukiah High School; **Mike Goad**, training manager, Dixie Sales; **Brian O'Neil**, technical instructor, Kawasaki Motor Corp.; **Lynn Pesson**, owner, Southland Engines; and **Earl Miner**, manager, US Technical Services, Oregon Cutting Systems Group. Each will serve a two-year term on the EETC board of directors. Also, **Dann Roark**, service training manager, Briggs & Stratton Corp., is the news president of the EETC executive board. Rounding out the remainder of the executive board are vice president **Fred Moreaux**, technical service and training director, Ariens Co.; Secretary **Mark Lindemann**, instructor,

Alexandria Technical College; Treasurer **Brian Kassel**, customer care manager, Coye Consultants; and Immediate Past President **Pete Fernald**, service manager, Shindaiwa.

**Daniel Jazdzewski** was appointed accounts manager for John Deere Landscapes in San Diego County. John Deere Landscapes is a wholesale distributor of irrigation, landscape lighting and landscape products for professional contractors. Jazdzewski will work on new customer acquisition and will be based at a branch in San Marcos, Calif.

Lesco promoted **Luke Stratton** to technical services manager and **Mike Maravich** to technical services representative.

Rain Bird Corp. promoted **Barbara Booth** to director of the company's golf irrigation strategic business unit.

Rain Bird Corp.'s golf division added **Scott Stevens** as district sales manager for the Southern California region. Stevens will promote customized irrigation systems to new and existing golf courses in Southern California. He will be based out of La Quinta, Calif.



Stevens

West Coast Turf promoted **John Marman** to regional sales manager for Southern California and Southern Nevada. Marman will be overseeing the Southern California and Southern Nevada regions—responsible for new business development for golf, landscape and sports turf. In addition, he will be general manager for WCT's Las Vegas operation. Marman is a founding member of the Nevada Landscape Association's Southern Chapter and has served as secretary/treasurer of the state board for several consecutive terms.

**Curt Franklin** has been added to Waukegan, Ill.-based Precision Laboratories sales team. Franklin will be responsible for managing customer relationships in Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Mississippi, Tennessee and Texas for the golf course, lawn and landscape, and athletic field markets. Franklin's hiring represents a completion of the company's plan to expand its national sales presence. GCN



EETC 2004 Board of Directors. Back row, from left: Pete Fernald, Shindaiwa; Earl Minor, Oregon Cutting Systems; Brian Kassel, Coye Consultants; Kevin Stricker, Stricker's Outdoor Equipment; Eric Gearhart, SkillUSA. Middle row, from left: Mark Lindemann, Alexandria Technical College; Mike Barnett, MTD Products; Mike Goad, Dixie Sales; John Chocholak, Ukiah High School. Bottom row, from left: Dann Roark, Briggs & Stratton Corp., Brian O'Neil, Kawasaki Motors; Andy Sadlon, Florida Outdoor Equipment.

Photo: Equipment & Engine Training Council

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# Golf facilities revenue linked to rounds played

**D**uring January and February, the National Golf Foundation conducted a survey of U.S. golf facilities to collect rounds and revenue data to compare 2003 with 2002. About 1,850 facilities responded—150 are nine-hole courses, 270 are 27-or-more-hole courses and 1,430 are 18-hole courses. About 1,180 are public and 670 are private.

Revenue, including rounds, food and beverage and merchandise, at private

clubs are highest, followed by premium, standard and value public courses.

Generally, revenue correlates with rounds by region. For example, rounds decreased 6 percent throughout the Northeast from 2002 to 2003. For the same period, total revenues declined 3 percent at premium public courses, 7.2 percent at standard public courses, 13.3 percent at value public courses and 0.2 percent at private courses.

Where rounds declined because of severe weather, in some cases, revenue per round increased. For example, rounds declined 13 percent throughout the Mid Atlantic, but at private clubs, total revenue per round increased 17 percent because members continue paying dues but can't play as much golf. At public courses, where rounds decreased but revenue per round increased, the reason appears to be slight increases of green fees. GCN

## Golf facility revenue analysis

Source: National Golf Foundation

PREMIUM PUBLIC					VALUE PUBLIC			
	Average Total Revenue 2003	Percent Change vs. 2002	Average Rounds Revenue 2003	Percent Change	Average Total Revenue 2003	Percent Change vs. 2002	Average Rounds Revenue 2003	Percent Change
Northeast	\$1.65 m	-3.0%	\$1.33 m	-4.2%	\$394,449	-13.3%	\$189,980	-15.6%
Mid Atlantic	\$1.64 m	-1.4%	\$1.21 m	-3.0%	\$712,393	6.9%	\$599,376	0.7%
Southeast	\$1.90 m	-0.4%	\$1.58 m	-1.3%	\$447,805	-0.3%	\$386,341	4.2%
Central/South Florida	\$4.66 m	9.5%	\$3.08 m	11.3%	\$1.07 m	-0.9%	\$942,766	-3.0%
Gulf Coast	\$3.17 m	1.1%	\$1.92 m	-2.5%	\$802,482	5.2%	\$601,352	8.2%
South Central	\$1.83 m	8.2%	\$835,720	21.4%	\$456,545	-8.1%	\$376,584	-5.0%
Lower Midwest	\$1.50 m	-0.1%	\$954,159	-1.6%	\$520,537	1.7%	\$305,225	3.2%
Upper Midwest	\$1.35 m	5.9%	\$955,856	5.2%	\$385,149	11.0%	\$206,343	9.9%
Mountain	\$1.69 m	-1.2%	\$1.17 m	-2.5%	\$637,644	1.7%	\$528,587	-2.7%
Southwest	\$4.70 m	1.8%	\$3.35 m	-3.1%	\$1.13 m	2.3%	\$673,887	-4.2%
Northwest	\$1.45 m	4.6%	\$886,481	-1.8%	\$359,038	4.6%	\$886,481	1.5%
STANDARD PUBLIC					PRIVATE			
Northeast	\$1.02 m	-7.2%	\$742,862	-8.0%	\$2.82 m	-0.2%	\$1.23 m	-0.8%
Mid Atlantic	\$973,628	-10.6%	\$667,163	-15.2%	\$2.06 m	2.7%	\$968,758	-0.7%
Southeast	\$942,717	-3.7%	\$699,204	-3.3%	\$1.77 m	-0.1%	\$871,344	-0.7%
Central/South Florida	\$1.84 m	6.9%	\$1.52 m	4.7%	\$3.47 m	7.2%	\$2.22 m	4.9%
Gulf Coast	\$1.22 m	1.4%	\$884,535	1.1%	\$2.74 m	2.8%	\$1.79 m	4.5%
South Central	\$1.21 m	-4.0%	\$1.01 m	-7.4%	\$2.94 m	1.4%	\$1.93 m	-0.9%
Lower Midwest	\$739,760	-1.5%	\$533,324	-2.3%	\$1.59 m	-0.1%	\$619,086	0.0%
Upper Midwest	\$734,986	5.0%	\$445,359	4.2%	\$1.64 m	2.4%	\$654,895	1.1%
Mountain	\$1.41 m	-2.4%	\$844,107	-7.7%	\$2.08 m	0.1%	\$596,276	1.4%
Southwest	\$2.52 m	2.3%	\$1.64 m	3.3%	\$4.99 m	6.3%	\$3.33 m	3.9%
Northwest	\$1.12 m	1.4%	\$680,480	-0.8%	\$2.36 m	2.0%	\$708,699	5.4%

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Bacillus cereus	5.0 x 10 <sup>10</sup> cfu/ml
Bacillus levoleticus	3.7 x 10 <sup>10</sup> cfu/ml
Pantoea agastalis	5.0 x 10 <sup>10</sup> cfu/ml

0.00% Coated Iron (Fe)  
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Jack Brennan founded Paladin Golf Marketing, Plant City, Fla., to assist golf course owners and managers with successful marketing. A former associate publisher for *Golf Week*, he can be reached at [Jackbrennan@lj.net](mailto:Jackbrennan@lj.net).

## Contests inspire results

**G**etting things done means taking action. We're a society that loves results. In business, it's often said there's little else that counts.

But think more carefully about the process behind getting results. It starts by identifying a problem or some opportunity. In business planning, this step often is called brainstorming—an open discussion about what could be done, should be done or what's possible.

Once an idea is generated, the second step is to decide how to solve the problem or make some advance. Basically, this is a planning process that involves deciding what is the best way to get something done, deciding what the priorities are and looking at any of the trade-offs involved when taking one course of action versus another.

Results come when your best idea(s) are put into practice.

This process isn't an issue for superintendents when it comes to their agronomic duties. Any superintendent who doesn't approach turfgrass management in this way is probably not going to have his or her job for long.

But few superintendents apply the three-step logic to the nonagronomic parts of their jobs. Few stop to take an open-minded view of everything they do, or everything they could do for the course, especially in the area of marketing to generate more profit.

One of the exercises I use to help a golf course make its marketing effort more creative is to hold daily contests for all department heads and their staffs. Each supervisor is responsible to generate at least one action every day that will generate future profitable revenue for the course. This contest can last from several days to more than a month.

It's somewhat of an awkward contest to gain immediate momentum, but once department heads get on board with it, most are surprised at the many opportunities that they and their staffs have never seen before. Many times superintendents and their staffs are the contest winners because there are many aspects of the course they touch. And once the team is trained to think about contributing to net revenue every day, their mindset changes.

One superintendent handled his contest assignment by directing three of his staff to spend one hour per day finding something that could be done—without taking away

from their primary jobs. One staff member saw the county shredding trees in the area and asked if the course could take the chips to put around trees on the course. The county agreed, and the result added an attractive clubhouse curb appeal for almost no cost.

Another superintendent began to take grass from out of the way areas to patch the cart path. Another superintendent strategically ceased mowing 70 of his 260 mowable acres and created a turf repair farm located in different areas throughout the course. These ideas made maintenance easier and saved money for little or no investment.

But just as important as the actions taken is the creation of the mindset this contest produces. Most of us are so busy day to day we never stop to think about what could be done, or about the impact our creative thinking and actions could have on the course and our jobs. Thinking creatively isn't just the superintendent's responsibility. It's also tapping your staff for their best ideas—they're the ones out on the course everyday that see problems and opportunities that usually don't get voiced.

Which brings us back to the first two of the three steps listed above—brainstorming ideas and developing action plans. The good news is you don't need a consultant to make

or she talks. Try to capture the essence of the idea in writing in a few words.

When the brainstorming session comes to an end, when there are no more ideas, you should have many sheets with ideas on them. At this point, take a break and tape the sheets on the walls. After the break, analyze each idea, group the ones that are similar and start to prioritize them by deciding which are most important or easiest to do. The process is simply a cost/benefit analysis—if something is beneficial and easy to do for a low cost, then there's no reason not to do it. If another idea is beneficial but involves cost and more effort, then you have to decide whether to make the investment.

Some ideas will sound dumb during the analysis period. That's OK. They were created during the brainstorming session, so don't make the person who came up with the idea defend or explain it. That will kill their participation the next time. It's better to ask someone else if they think the idea has merit or could be modified to become workable. Some ideas will be unworkable. That's OK, too. But a few are going to be excellent ideas. Focus on them and start generating an action plan—the who, how and when of getting it done.

Many staff people will take ownership of ideas and give them extra effort to make

**"One of the exercises I use to help a golf course make its marketing effort more creative is to hold daily contests for all department heads and their staffs."**

this happen. You can do it in your next staff meeting. Just get a flip chart and a magic marker and start asking your staff how you can improve the course, make their work faster or easier, or improve communication. Then start writing the answers down without allowing any editorial comment from you or anyone else. Brainstorming gets killed when people start making fun of someone else's idea. No one wants to be made fun of, so unless you eliminate that fear right away, you won't get the ideas you want.

If certain people dominate, ask them to give others a chance to talk. If some don't offer ideas on their own, call on them.

It's fair to ask for clarification of an idea during the brainstorming process or to let the person who suggested it develop it as he

them happen. That's another benefit of this exercise.

Here are two suggestions to make your brainstorming and action plan session more successful. First, make sure you set the right tone right away by telling everyone that their jobs involve more than just doing their assigned work. Ultimately, everyone's job is to improve the course, cut costs, work safer and help the course be as profitable as possible. Second, make the meeting fun. Give prizes to the best ideas, and have some food and drinks as a way to thank everyone for their time and best ideas.

Actions generate profitable revenue. But actions begin by seeing the opportunities and planning the best way to make them happen. GCN

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\*source: USDA



Jeffrey D. Brauer is a licensed golf course architect and president of GolfScapes, a golf course design firm in Arlington, Texas. Brauer, a past president of the American Society of Golf Course Architects, can be reached at [jeff@jeffreybrauer.com](mailto:jeff@jeffreybrauer.com).

## Greens in renovation

During a recent project interview, the greens committee asked what kind of construction I recommended for rebuilding its greens. Another architect had raised the idea of using a different greens construction method than the traditional U.S. Golf Association method most architects recommend. This had piqued the committee's interest. But given the club's finances, I don't understand the curiosity.

If a course can afford it, it should invest in USGA greens. Considering the importance of greens to a course's success, one can't afford *not* to build them using the most recommended practice.

This is not to say that I've never recommended "California" or other greens construction, especially early in my career when budgets were tight. And in the current economy, I'm sure all aspects of golf course construction costs are being scrutinized, including whether USGA greens are necessary.

There are some key differences between USGA and California greens, and cost is just one. Typically, USGA greens cost \$60,000 to \$100,000 more than California greens on a 19-green renovation.

California greens also differ from USGA greens because they consist of 12 inches of pure sand placed directly on the sub-base. In contrast, the USGA method requires a 4-inch layer of gravel and, depending on

drain faster because of the gravel layer and do well even with poor water quality);

3. Weather is relatively temperate, and a qualified superintendent can grow grass under less-than-optimum conditions;

4. Where native sands naturally have porous characteristics;

5. When the owner absolutely needs to save money; and

6. Where long-term success isn't critical to the owners.

Still, constructing California greens isn't the only option for saving money. There are a host of modified USGA procedures, although the USGA may deny this. One typical shortcut on lower-budget jobs is rototilling organic amendments instead of mixing off-site or using sand that doesn't conform to recommendations. In either case, there's a risk of eliminating the benefits the USGA method was intended to create.

When construction cost is an issue, one way for superintendents to sell the additional expense of a USGA green is the insurance sales technique of breaking down that cost into a daily increment. This makes the cost seem smaller. Say, throughout the expected 15- to 20-year life span of those greens, the additional cost translates to less than \$1 per green per day.

Another plus is that USGA recommendations have always been based on extensive research and have been modified many times since being introduced in 1968. On

perintendents, and academic evaluation gleaned from turfgrass research over the last two years."

The revised USGA recommendations have come full circle to their original intentions of incorporating local sands to build practical greens inexpensively and minimize compaction, while using fertilizer and irrigation technologies to replace nutrients and water lost more easily through a sand profile. As a result, the cost differences between USGA and other methods are narrowing.

The cost of building USGA greens has increased for years. As the USGA refined the sand characteristics through more research, there was an unintended consequence. Adherence to the sand particle charts – which were intended as a first step to determine if a type of sand might have suitable characteristics – meant that sand choices narrowed too much.

A few high-profile lawsuits, such as one in which the contractor wasn't paid because greens drained 0.1 inch per hour less than the USGA guidelines, scared architects, superintendents and soil testing and agronomy consultants into using more expensive sands than necessary to keep within USGA guidelines. And the expense of sand isn't just a one-time cost. After selecting imported sand for construction, superintendents must continue to top dress with that sand or risk creating layers in the greens.

Luckily, the newest USGA greens material recommendations and increased options for sand, tile, organics and percolation rates allow more ways for greens reconstruction to meet recommendations. Typically, I recommend USGA greens and then working with the project superintendent to acquire local, site-specific materials.

Still, for all the science that goes into the basic USGA green, every course needs a specific green construction method. Superintendents who have been in regions for a long time have done their own research and may have a lot of information in their heads. One might call it "feel" or intuition, but superintendents with such experience should make the final call on minor tweaks to get the greens just right. There are many great greens not built exactly to USGA specs – a tribute to the skills of the superintendent and a nod to the notion that there's still some art, and not all science, to the job of producing great greens. GCN

"The new USGA greens material recommendations and increased options of sand, tile, organics and percolation rates allow more choices for greens reconstruction to fall under the recommendations."

material sizes, an intermediate layer of coarse sand to keep root-zone sand from filtering into the gravel. Both methods call for a herringbone tile pattern to drain water from the green cavity.

In spite of these differences, I've recommended California greens with success under the following six conditions:

1. The superintendent understands them and wants them;

2. Water quality is poor, and the pure sand moves it through the profile (although newer research shows that USGA greens

the other hand, university researchers developed the California method shortly after the original USGA green. The California financial crises prevented further research funds for golf greens, while USGA recommendations were revised earlier this year.

"The 2004 guidelines are the result of more than 100 people worldwide evaluating all aspects of greens construction," says Jim Moore, USGA construction education director. "We are happy with the approach taken, and it incorporates both real-world expertise of architects, contractors and su-



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Skaneateles, New York

# RAIN BIRD®



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# Why they quit the game

**W**hy do 3 million players quit golf each year?

Putting this question in context, it's noted that 3 million people also take up the game each year. But because it's difficult to bring players to the game and easy to lose them, the future welfare of the game requires the above question be addressed. Considering possible solutions to this crucial problem requires debunking three long-standing myths.

**Myth No. 1:** Golfers leave the game because scheduling tee times is a constant struggle. **Reality:** Because the preponderance of good municipal and semiprivate golf courses throughout the country provide as many as eight-day priority tee time access, golf can be scheduled comfortably when there's a will to do so.

**Myth No. 2:** Golfers leave the game because it's too expensive to play. **Reality:** While golf electively is expensive for some, the game remains affordable to the general golfing public. The secondary club market has developed to the point where a good set of used clubs can be purchased for \$500 or less. Regarding fees, many millions of residents living within municipal districts and members at many semiprivate golf courses can play 25 to 30 rounds of golf a year for less than \$1,000.

**Myth No. 3:** Golfers leave the game because of the time it takes to play a round of golf. **Reality:** In the current golf world, slow play is no longer tolerated. Almost every popular golf course will maintain play at less than four-and-a-half hours.

Younger families don't have the leisure time to play golf regularly, this reality should dictate when someone plays golf, not whether an individual commits to playing golf. Golf doesn't require people to play it continuously throughout their lives. Rather, the game is a patient "friend" that allows people to choose when they connect, disconnect and reconnect with the game as changing circumstances in their lives allow.

## The real problem

The paramount factor that drives golfers from the game is the difficulty playing the game, which often can be attributed to too many overbearing golf courses and not making effective golf instruction available to the masses.

The problems with too many new golf courses are:

1. With the better lands often long gone, new courses are built on more difficult sites, which produce more difficult new golf courses that result in 125 to 135 slope ratings from the men's regular tees. Recognizing that the national slope average for men is 113, more user-friendly golf courses should be designed within a 110 to 120-slope-rating range.

2. More difficult courses also can result from a latent conflict of interest between a project's golf course architect and its developer. This situation arises because the developer generally wants a course designed for everyone to play, and the architect generally wants a course that will earn the highest possible ranking, which means it will be comfortably playable only by the better players. The net result is a growing inventory of golf courses that discourages typical players more than it encourages them to play. Architects defend their aggressive designs by explaining that six sets of tees for each hole allows everyone to play a course comfortably. However, too many architects consistently overdefend their greens, which can add five to 10 strokes to a player's handicap.

## Real solutions

The basic remedy for this problem is to educate the development community about the slope-rating system – what it means and how it can be helpful.

Then, preliminarily slope rate golf courses during the construction-plan phase before they're built to put everyone on notice and to allow for plans to be amended when appropriate. Currently, a golf course is slope rated only after it's built and opens. This dual approach should result in more courses being designed for their clients' needs than for the pursuit of higher course rankings.

Difficulty of play is also a problem with many older golf courses because the majority older golf courses fail to provide the industry-recommended 6,100-yard tees for all male players with 15 and higher handicaps. These older golf courses generally are playing from about 6,400-yard tees, which will consistently add four to eight frustrating strokes to a player's medal score.

An approach that would soften older

courses, where necessary, would be to establish sets of 6,100-yard tees at courses that don't have them. This practice is underway throughout the country, with the new 6,100-yard tees designated as "green" tees. Other steps to consider include converting some of the strategic sand bunkers on a golf course to grass bunkers and controlling speed on fast-paced greens.

The paramount problem facing golf is the perceived complexity of golf instruction. Because golf is played in a 360-degree, three-dimensional environment, it can be difficult to teach and learn. This results in present day golf instruction being far less effective than the game requires.

A large segment of the game's teachers have fallen into the trap of overpresenting micro techniques before helping students master macro principles. This is too often exemplified by watching an inexperienced instructor using micro techniques to establish a neutral grip with a beginning student before establishing the most fundamental macro teaching principle that the club head should approach the ball at a square angle. Teaching "why" is often more effective than teaching "how."

Golf is faced with the huge challenge of restructuring its basic approach to teaching the common player. Golf can no longer afford to allow the game's most inexperienced instructors to teach the mil-

lions of the game's most inexperienced players. This can be accomplished by qualifying and rating teachers before granting them access to the country's in-

structional programs, and by using modern communications technology to improve golf-instruction visuals.

The golf industry has paid millions of dollars to consulting and marketing firms during recent years in a failed attempt to bring more players to the game and to keep them there. This approach has been less than effective because golf cannot buy its way to player-development success. Rather, the answers lie within moderating overly aggressive course design, and more importantly, substantially improving the quality of golf instruction.

The question remains, who will lead the renaissance? GCN

**GOLF IS FACED WITH THE HUGE CHALLENGE OF RESTRUCTURING ITS BASIC APPROACH TO TEACHING THE COMMON PLAYER.**