

# NEWS OF THE INDUSTRY

## Industry leader victim of fatal accident

**Jerry Johnson**, vice president of Fernquest & Johnson, died August 9 in a dune buggy accident. He was 36 years old. He is survived by his mother, Lola, his father, Oke, and his sisters, Linda and Ester.

## USGA moves toward testing of golf club shafts and new golf ball regulation

The **United States Golf Assn.** has contracted Polytechnic Institute of Brooklyn to study the golf club shaft for distance and durability, with an eye toward development of a national standard testing machine for shafts.

USGA executive director P.J. Boatwright told GOLFDOM that the association's ultimate aim is to establish a shaft testing program similar to that for golf balls.

In another contract arrangement, PIB also is putting a new golf ball testing machine through performance tests. The device can run at variable speeds and has a computer that measures the ball's speed over a short course, compares it with the speed of the striking mechanism, and thereby determines the liveliness of the ball. The machine will become a national standard tester.

Currently the USGA outlaws balls that exceed an initial velocity of 250 feet per second when hit at the standard speed (143.8 feet per second), with a 2 per cent tolerance for error. Current testing machines check out this requirement.

However, the additional capabilities of the new machine opens up the possibility of a new regulation to govern the golf ball's performance when hit at several different speeds, both faster and slower than the current standard speed.

"The USGA believes that, because of new synthetic rubbers with different characteristics from natural rubber, testing golf balls at several speeds may be necessary to control the distance of the ball," says Philip A. Abrami, head of PIB's golf research programs. "If there were not such control, the ball could become much more lively and thus render present-day courses obsolete," he adds.



## Re-assessment rocks South Hills

**South Hills CC**, located five miles south of downtown Pittsburgh, is celebrating a half century of existence this summer, but this otherwise happy event is strongly clouded by a re-assessment headache.

Allegheny County's assessors have gone over the southern section of the county seeking more income.

South Hills was assessed on a basis of \$500 an acre in 1960; now the county says the property assessment should be based on a valuation of \$10,000 an acre or an assessment of \$4,900 an acre for charge purposes.

The course has no county sewage, no lighting or roads, only police and fire protection from Whitehall borough. The club has 55 acres in a good residential section, but it believes the new assessment is unjust.

Thomas L. Jones, an attorney and the new vice president of the Western Pennsylvania Golf Assn. says he has been a resident of the area since 1938 and "there's never been an undeveloped piece of ground there worth \$10,000 an acre."

The club building is old, but it is assessed on current values. Like most other clubs South Hills is trying to break even, not make a profit.

Seven years ago the club sold 14 acres to Whitehall Borough for a borough building and the price was only \$4,000 an acre.

The Internal Revenue Service has put a limit on the uses a country club can make of its property for non-member use in order to bring in income.

Like all other clubs South Hills employs a lot of different people and like others it has had to update its health and accident program. The pension funds now cost \$20,000 annually.

The parking lot, swimming pool as well as the clubhouse are being assessed at commercial rates, despite the limitations on their use.

The club's directors also point out that if the club is forced out of operation by over-assessment, the surrounding land values will drop appreciably.

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### Brunswick builds 18-hole indoor golf centers

After eight years of testing and planning **Brunswick** is finally moving forward with a program to build computerized 18-hole indoor golf facilities both here and abroad. Brunswick updated its trial facility and installed its first complete indoor 18-hole golf course in Chicago in January 1970. A second one was built in Woodhaven, New York, also in January 1970. Plans are now underway to complete similar recreational centers in Buffalo, New York and Tokyo, Japan.

The Brunswick 18-hole indoor golf course is set up so that the golfer dials each hole on a computer and a picture of the hole is flashed on a nylon tape screen. The golfer hits a standard golf ball through the screen, the computer registers his hook, slice or whatever, and the golfer watches his ball in flight over the fairway as it would appear on any golf course. A diagram on the screen pinpoints his position.

After his tee shot the golfer goes to the chipping area, sandtrap and green. The green is on hydraulic lifts so the contour can be altered for each hole.

The installation is arranged with three computers and fairways sharing one chipping area, sandtrap and putting green. As many as three foursomes can play at one time at a cost of \$20 for two hours per foursome.

Brunswick has scheduled building of its Buffalo and Tokyo installations for early 1971.

### Beating the membership decline

One of the effects of the nation's economic situation has been the drop in membership rolls at some clubs where older members are heavily involved in the stock market. One club, threatened with a fairly serious decrease in members, opened its rolls to junior applicants. Apparently, the younger people pay smaller dues, but run up larger food and bar bills, and play considerably more golf.

### Golf car sales up slightly; projections made for 1970

*Sales of golf cars by manufacturers increased only slightly for the year ended June 30th, according to the American Golf Car Manufacturers Assn.'s annual report. Previous year's sales had been 42,000 units according to AGCMA.*

*"Sales this year appear to be up several hundred units [over last year's figure] but not significantly," said Harold K. Howe, executive secretary. "The economy certainly had some effect, but the shortage of electric motors due to*

*work stoppage in the critical spring months also hurt shipments."*

*The association estimates that about 203,000 golf cars are in use.*

*An independent survey conducted by Club Car, Inc., a manufacturer of golf cars, estimates that in 1970 243,800 golf cars will be in use and that the average fleet in 1970 will number 32 cars. These figures are based on a survey of the 7,618 golf facilities that have golf cars or 85.7 per cent of all regulation facilities in the United States.*

### The year of the Cinderella dress

*The success story of the year, according to Ernie Sabayrac, Inc., is the overwhelming acceptance of the Lacoste dress. When it was first introduced into pro shops in the fall of 1968, the Sabayrac organization, which distributes the Izod/Haymaker lines, predicted an increase of a half million dollars to pro shop business. The prediction, happily, was wrong. During 1969, over 100,000 dresses were delivered, each at a retail price of \$33. Nationally, this one item added three million dollars to pro shop coffers and opened up a new area of profits for the golf professional. As phenomenal as these figures appear, predictions are that they will be topped when 1970 pro shop sales of the dress are tallied.*

### Future of sporting goods market dependent on knowledge of past

*A note of warning was sounded by New York City-based management consultants Drake Sheahan/Stewart Dougall, Inc., in the firm's "Marketing Strategy Memo 103" released last month. Although the growth rate of leisure time and recreational products is more than 10 per cent a year and annual sales run about \$4 billion, a lack of market data could cloud the horizon of sporting goods manufacturers who hope to profit from the bright future that has been forecast for the industry.*

*According to the report, sporting goods marketing research has been neglected and marketing data are poor. To cash in on the potential growth of the leisure time market in the 1970s, manufacturers and retailers must have first-rate marketing research and planning on which to base decisions. And right now there is a serious lack of such information and statistics.*

*For a free copy of the memo, write Burr. W. Hupp, Director, Drake Sheahan/Stewart Dougall, Inc., 330 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10017.*

### Record earnings for Kinney this year

**Kinney National Service, Inc.**, a leisure time service company, reports record earnings for the nine-month period ending June 30, 1970. Net income increased 21 per cent from \$21,626,000 to \$26,113,000 while revenues increased by \$5,782,000 from \$365,407,000 to \$371,189,000.

Earnings per share of common stock increased by 18 per cent, from \$1.26 per share to \$1.48 per share.

Kinney is an international service organization and is the parent firm of Licensing Corp. of America, which recently signed an agreement with the Professional Golfers' Assn. to use PGA's name and endorsement on certain products sold in pro shops.

### Snyder receives plaque

Southern Hills CC superintendent **Leslie Snyder** was honored jointly by his club and the Golf Course Superintendents Assn. of America for bringing the course into peak playing condition for the 52d PGA National Championship.