



LESS IS *MORE*

IT WASN'T HARD TO SEE how the Golf Industry Show was going. The look on the faces of the GCSAA brass said it all.

With only an hour until the show closed, a group of GCSAA board members assembled near the center of the trade show. The group was laughing and smiling, sharing a moment of satisfaction as well as relief. "There's the story," Peter Grass, CGCS, a GCSAA director and the superintendent at Hilands Golf Club in Billings, Mont., said. "No one has had a single bad thing to say about the show."

Indeed, it seemed everyone was smiling at the 2011 Golf Industry Show in Orlando. And for good reason: the show actually saw a 4 percent raise in attendance and an 11 percent increase in qualified buyers, something exhibitors definitely noticed. Overall attendance was 14,781, with 5,752 of those people labeled as "qualified buyers."

But the show was visibly smaller from a square footage perspective, measuring 180,000 square feet, a drop of 4 per-

The common thought at the 2011 GIS: **the show was smaller, but better.**

BY SETH JONES, EDITOR IN CHIEF

THOSE HALCYON DAYS

Comparing the last two times the Golf Industry Show was in Orlando

	2008	2011
Attendance	22,027*	14,781**
Qualified Buyers	10,553	5,752
Exhibitors	965	551
Square footage	300,900 sq. ft.	180,000 sq. ft.

* GCSAA only, excludes allied associations ** Includes GCSAA and NGCOA

SOURCE: GCSAA

cent from 2010 in San Diego. It was easy to gaze across the floor and see both ends clearly. Previously, the end of the trade show was beyond the horizon, but not this year.

And though there was much to smile about at the 2011 GIS, it was still a far cry from the last time the GIS was held in Orlando in 2008 (see chart). But it seems no one expects those numbers any more.

Reinie Drygala, manager, lawn care and agriculture sales for Civitas fungicide, said the show traffic exceeded his expectations.

"The amount of people who came by was great," Drygala said. "The attitude I saw of the individuals was that we're starting to turn things around... we're not out of the woods yet, but we're definitely looking up."

Tim Kennelly, superintendent at Baltimore Country Club, had missed the last two shows, but was happy with what he saw in Orlando.

"This show is a lot smaller than the last time I came, but bigger isn't always better," he said. "I had meetings with Bayer and Syngenta, and it was easier to get around to them. Before, you couldn't cover the entire place."

New GCSAA CEO Rhett Evans was thrilled with the way the show was winding down. In previous years, the trade show floor would become a ghost town in its waning hours. "Here we are at the end of the trade show, with only an hour left, and we still have a lot of traffic," Evans proudly told *Golfdom*.

Adam Manwarren, product manager, turf and ornamental for FMC, thinks the smaller trade show floor directly helped the traffic in the FMC booth.

"Our booth traffic was as much as I've ever seen," he said. "I liked it that the show was smaller... we didn't have any less booth space, and it seemed that people were always in our

GCSAA's 2011 Old Tom Morris Award winner, Nick Price, was on-hand to accept his award.



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Michael J. Rohwer, Superintendent, Shadowridge Country Club, Vista, CA

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Gonzalo Vargas, Coco Beach Golf Resort, Rio Grande, Puerto Rico

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Bob Gibson, Snow Creek Golf Course, Mammoth Lakes, CA

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Golf Industry Show // RECAP



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booth. I think last year in San Diego, the show was so big, people just stopped halfway through."

So things seem to be looking up, if ever so slightly, for the Golf Industry Show. But 2012 will have new challenges for the GCSAA: the show is later than usual (Feb. 29-March 1) and it's in Las Vegas, a fun location for sure, but one with the stigma that "what happens in Vegas stays in Vegas," which is the opposite of what a successful trade show is about.

"It's a bit far for people on the east coast, and the show is later in the year — by early March there is a whole slew of golf courses already in season," Drygala said. "Superintendents might not be able to pull away for the show because their course is greening up."

"But it is an exciting location, and we're still going because it is such an important show." ■

For more GIS coverage, including an interview with Nick Price and a story on the traits of great leaders and teams, visit www.golfdom.com

STRENGTHENING

Rankin's GIS keynote identifies two growth opportunities for golf

By Marty Whitford, Contributing Editor

To really grow the game, golf has to change the game — and public perception.

Such is the opinion of Judy Rankin, World Golf Hall of Fame member and television golf commentator.

Delivering the keynote at last month's Golf Industry Show in Orlando, Rankin said the game would benefit greatly if it embraced a new perspective on both nine-hole and women golfers.

"We tend to think of nine-hole golfers as ... well, bad ... or old — or both," Rankin said. "But many of today's great golfers love to get away and play a quick nine holes. We need to truly embrace nine-hole golf as a solid, equally respected alternative for a significant portion of our population, especially in today's time-starved society."



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Rankin got some loud cheers when she said, "You'll be happy to hear I'm the only golfer who does not consider herself an architect." However, she did offer a few growth tips that touch upon course construction.

Moving women's tees closer to the pin helped some, but Rankin said there remains a 13-stroke gap between the average woman's and man's handicaps.

"Most women do not want their tees moved up further," Rankin noted. "Length and par are what keep most women from playing the game of golf more regularly. Less than 20 percent of women can reach greens in regulation.

"You have to reach a goal once in a while — and not just once every five holes — to be driven to continue to pursue that goal," she added. "Make no mistake: Women are every bit as competitive as men. We just need to explore and embrace new ways to help women regularly rise to the occasion. Then, together, we'll all rise." ■



Judy Rankin made good on her promise to attend the 2011 GIS after a family illness caused her to miss the 2010 GIS.

PHOTO BY: BRUCE MATTHEWS, GCSAA

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