

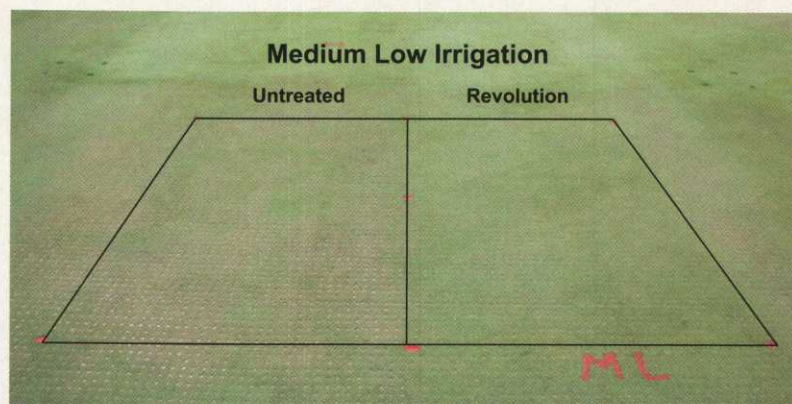
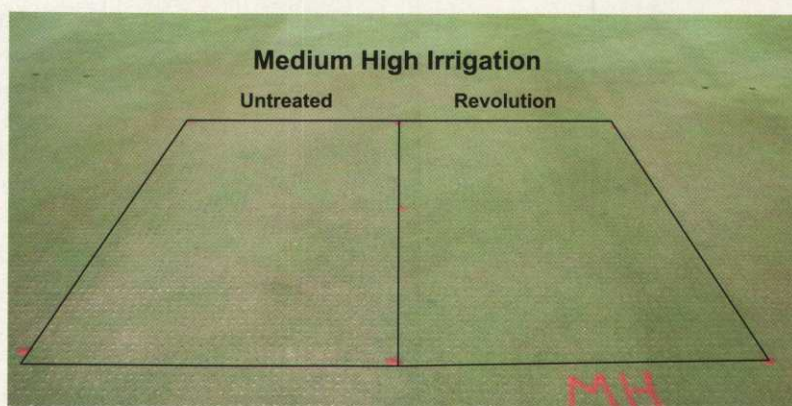
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Isn't it time you joined the Revolution?

Editor's note: This column is a parody. So please feel free to laugh — out loud.

Bushwood Country Club Board of Governors Meeting Notes

*The Judge Elihu Smails Conference Room
Aug. 8, 2006*

Meeting called to order by Chairman Daniel E. Noonan at 6:04 p.m.

Board discusses replacing retiring Superintendent Sandy McFiddish with Carl Spackler, a topic previously tabled at the March, April, May, June and July meetings.

Vice Chairwoman Crane repeats her concerns that Spackler is not right for the job because he leers at female members. Dr. Beeper says he believes Spackler is ready for the job after serving 32 years as McFiddish's assistant. Beeper also wants it on the record that Spackler is a talented agronomist, having developed his own bentgrass variety.

Noncongenial discussion ensued.

The board votes 4-3 to offer Spackler the position, pending completion of contract negotiations to be handled by General Manager Chuck Schick. Staff members welcomed into The Judge Smails Conference Room. Spackler is asked to step away from the hors'd oeuvres table to hear a special declaration.

Chairman Noonan announces the board's decision. Spackler thanks the committee. His speech is indecipherable.

Green Committee Report

Green Committee Chairman Spaulding Smails reports the greens are rolling only at 11 feet to 12 feet, according to the Stimpeter bequeathed to him by his late grandfather Judge Smails.

Outgoing Superintendent McFiddish reports he has been doing his best to get the greens to 13 feet, but repeats his concerns that such speeds might expose the putting surfaces to disease during the warm summer months.

Spackler reports he has been developing a roller in the wee hours of the night in the maintenance shed. Dr. Larry Beeper asks if this roller would be ready in time for September's Judge Elihu Smails Invitational. Spackler says it is possible but that he would need to abandon his Canada goose-control project to complete his invention.

News from Beloved Bushwood CC

BY GEOFF SHACKELFORD



DR. BEEPER SAYS

CARL SPACKLER IS

READY FOR THE JOB

AS SUPERINTENDENT

AFTER SERVING

32 YEARS AS

AN ASSISTANT

Dr. Beeper states that reaching the desired green speeds is the top priority. Mrs. Crane disagrees and states that the possibility of an *E. coli* outbreak is too great to halt the goose program.

Caddymaster Report

Caddymaster D'Annunzio says it has been an excellent summer for the caddy program, which is now up to 23 participants after having been discontinued in the late 1980s by Judge Smails.

Spaulding Smails takes exception to the remark. Lacey Underall-Webb takes exception to the remarks by Smails. Head professional Lou Loomis takes the blame for the program's "retreat." Chairman Noonan commends D'Annunzio on the fine job he has done with the program.

In light of the improved caddy program, D'Annunzio asks if the board would consider extending the time that caddies have access to the club pool.

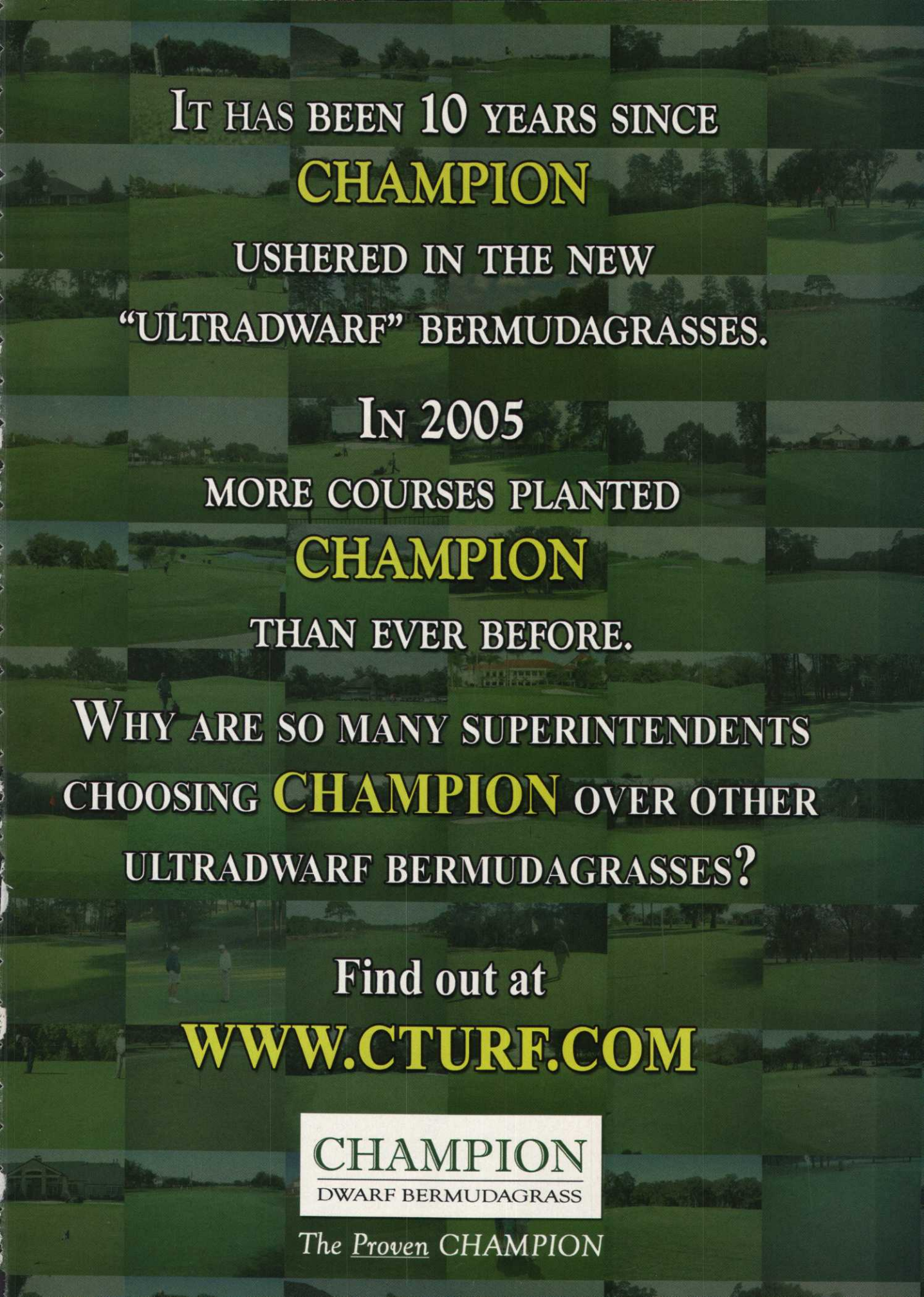
Elihu Smails Invitational Report

Dr. Larry Beeper announces that a strong turnout from across the county is expected for the 12th-Annual Smails Invitational, where 60 two-man teams will vie for the coveted Billy Barue gold replica putter.

Dr. Beeper asks Spackler if the rough could be grown to 5 inches and the fairways narrowed in time for the event. Head Pro Loomis expresses concern about the impact on speed of play. Smails asks if Spackler could implement the USGA's new tiered-rough concept to ensure fairness. Spackler says he would study it and report back to Green Chairman Smails.

Motion to adjourn the meeting made by Chairman Noonan and seconded by Dr. Beeper. Meeting adjourned at 8:27 p.m.

Geoff Shackelford, who watches "Caddyshack" weekly, can be reached at geoffshac@aol.com.



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The *Proven* CHAMPION

A young boy is captured in the middle of a golf swing on a lush green field. He is wearing a white short-sleeved polo shirt and dark-colored shorts. His eyes are closed in concentration, and his arms are extended forward, gripping the club. The golf club is a dark color, and its head is visible on the left side of the frame. The background is a soft-focus green, suggesting a golf course. The title "Let the Kids" is overlaid on the image, with "Let the" in white and "Kids" in a large, bold, light green font.

Let the Kids

When the grumpy old man saw the kids overrunning the golf course, he blew his stack.

“Get them out of here,” he barked. “They have 50 more years to play golf. I’m an old man, and I only have a few years.” • The setting was a course at Bethpage State Park in Farmingdale, N.Y. The old man’s complaints were directed to David Catalano, Bethpage State Park’s director of golf. • “He was disapproving of the fact that we had a junior tournament going on,” Catalano says. “My response to him was, ‘Have a nice day.’ It wasn’t a point we were going to debate.”

While an isolated incident, it bothers Catalano that some golfers don’t realize the game’s future — as in the number of players, the rounds they play and the revenue they generate — lies with the nation’s youth. But it’s not just cranky golfers who can’t envision that future. It’s also the golf industry’s decision makers, including owners, operators, general managers and superintendents, all of whom must realize that more young players are needed to grow into “core” adult golfers, defined by the National Golf Foundation (NGF) as those who play at least eight times a year and average 37 rounds annually.

It’s not that the industry’s decision makers don’t realize

the importance of attracting and retaining new players, such as youths. In fact, they talk about it all the time at industry meetings. But it’s time to walk the talk, says Mike Tinkey, deputy executive director of the National Golf Course Owners Association (NGCOA).

“It’s one thing to say you welcome junior golfers,” Tinkey says. “It’s another thing to put a plan into action [to do so.]”

A golf course’s plan to accommodate junior golfers (those aged 12 to 17, according to the NGF) and even younger players begins with educating the course’s adult players that youths are welcome to play at the facility.

Tolstoy once wrote of kids, “A torment and nothing else.” Unfortunately, that’s the way some adult golfers view kids who play golf. They stereotype them as slow players who spray

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Play

BY LARRY AYLWARD, EDITOR IN CHIEF

Golf’s future lies with the nation’s youth.
What are you doing to attract younger players?

PHOTO BY: DIGITAL STOCK



Sticks for Kids, an instructional program created for kids ages 7 through 15, recently teamed with the National Recreation and Park Association to help it expand.

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their golf balls in myriad directions. And they scold them, which doesn't help matters.

Mike Nass, general manager of Cantigny Golf in Wheaton, Ill., recalls older golfers berating his young daughter for slow play when she took up the game several years ago. "It wasn't a very good experience for her," he says.

Nass knows it's not a golf course's fault when its players behave in such a manner. But a course's personnel should instruct adult golfers not to react to youth golfers in a demeaning way.

Chad Ritterbusch, executive director of the American Society of Golf Course Architects (ASGCA), says good golfers can be the game's worst enemy. While they love the game, they want to keep it for themselves, which is not fair to other players.

"We need to work together to address

stereotypes and encourage golfers to welcome other golfers and support the game's growth," Ritterbusch says.

Of course, some kids do play slowly, Catalano notes. Hence, course personnel must instruct them when to pick up their balls to speed up play and avoid taking 20 shots on a hole.

All in the family

If golf courses want more kids to play their tracks, they must market the message to parents that playing golf can be a family affair, industry experts agree.

According to the National Golf Foundation, seven in 10 junior golfers come from households in which one parent plays golf. Three in 10 junior golfers come from households with nonplaying parents.

"It's about parent involvement," says Dan Van Horn, owner and founder of U.S. Kids Golf, an Atlanta-based company that

Check ... Check ... Check

Mike Tinkey, deputy executive director of the National Golf Course Owners Association, says owners and operators should consider the following questions if they want to attract more junior golfers:

- ✓ How often do you offer introductory clinics for junior golfers?
- ✓ Do you offer instruction in groups that are affordable (\$15 or less)?
- ✓ Are juniors able to play nine holes or less?
- ✓ Do you help juniors find people to play with?
- ✓ Do you offer special rates for junior players?
- ✓ Do you offer incentive programs for repeat players?
- ✓ Do you sell junior clubs, shoes and equipment?
- ✓ Do you offer discounted or loaner clubs for juniors?
- ✓ Do you have family tees or junior tees?

markets children's golf equipment. "The easiest kid to bring into the game is the kid who has a parent playing the game."

Frank Jemsek, owner of Cog Hill Golf & Country Club in Lemont, Ill., says his course markets to families because its most reliable traditional players — fathers — don't play as much today because of increased family commitments. As a result of Cog Hill's promotions, more dads are bringing their families with them to play.

Joe Louis Barrow Jr., executive director of The First Tee in St. Augustine, Fla., points out that mothers often can coax kids to play golf, too. "Many women are the

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[ABOUT THIS SERIES] "Growing the Game," a four-part series appearing in *Golfdom* throughout 2006, focuses on how the golf industry can attract more new players and create more rounds from four distinct groups: **disabled people; women; children; and minorities**, including African-Americans and Hispanics. *Golfdom* interviewed representatives from people representing each of these segments to get their views on what the golf industry needs to do to attract more players from their segments. Then we spoke with golf



industry representatives to see what the industry is doing and what plans it has to grow the game within these segments.

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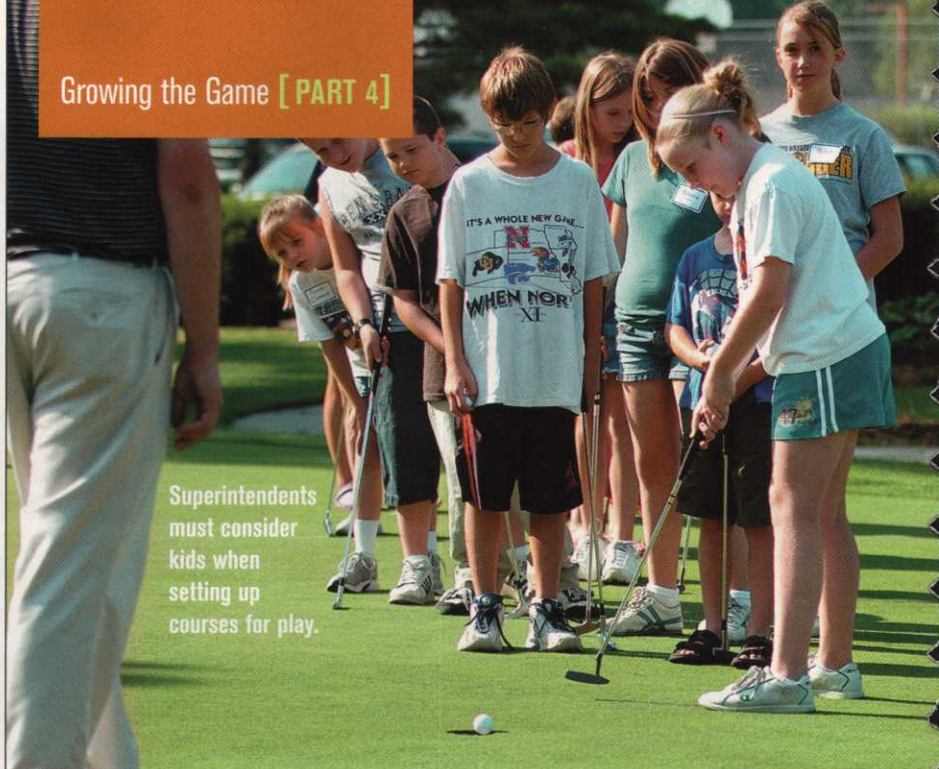
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Growing the Game [PART 4]



Superintendents must consider kids when setting up courses for play.

Continued from page 26
gatekeepers for their kids," he says. "They stimulate what activities their kids play."

Of course, some moms and dads are afraid to bring their kids golfing because the courses they play are too long for them. Parents are worried their kids will become frustrated after taking a couple dozen shots on the first hole and sour on the game.

Consequently, course managers must consider kids when setting up courses for play, Van Horn says. Providing a fair course setup is vital to attracting and retaining young golfers. And it's not simply a matter of having kids tee off from the red or forward tees.

"The red tees are too long for beginning golfers," Van Horn adds.

To help shorten the game for kids, Van Horn and his company created customized tee plates, which are placed in front of forward tees and easily installed in fairways. The tees are also close to cart paths.

U.S. Kids Golf recently made a deal

with ValleyCrest Golf Course Maintenance to provide its facilities with the tee plates. Greg Pieschala, president of ValleyCrest's golf course maintenance division in Calabasas, Calif.,

says the tees will help attract more young players to the courses the management company maintains.

"We believe courses that cater to families will have a competitive advantage in the years to come," Pieschala adds.

ASGCA members realize the importance of their role in designing courses more playable for children and their families, Ritterbusch says. That's why they're working with their local communities to develop practical golf courses to accommodate younger players with the goal of making the game

more easy, fun and exciting for them.

Ritterbusch says the ASGCA promotes "Building a Practical Golf Facility," a book by Michael J. Hurdzan, a Columbus, Ohio-based golf course architect and past

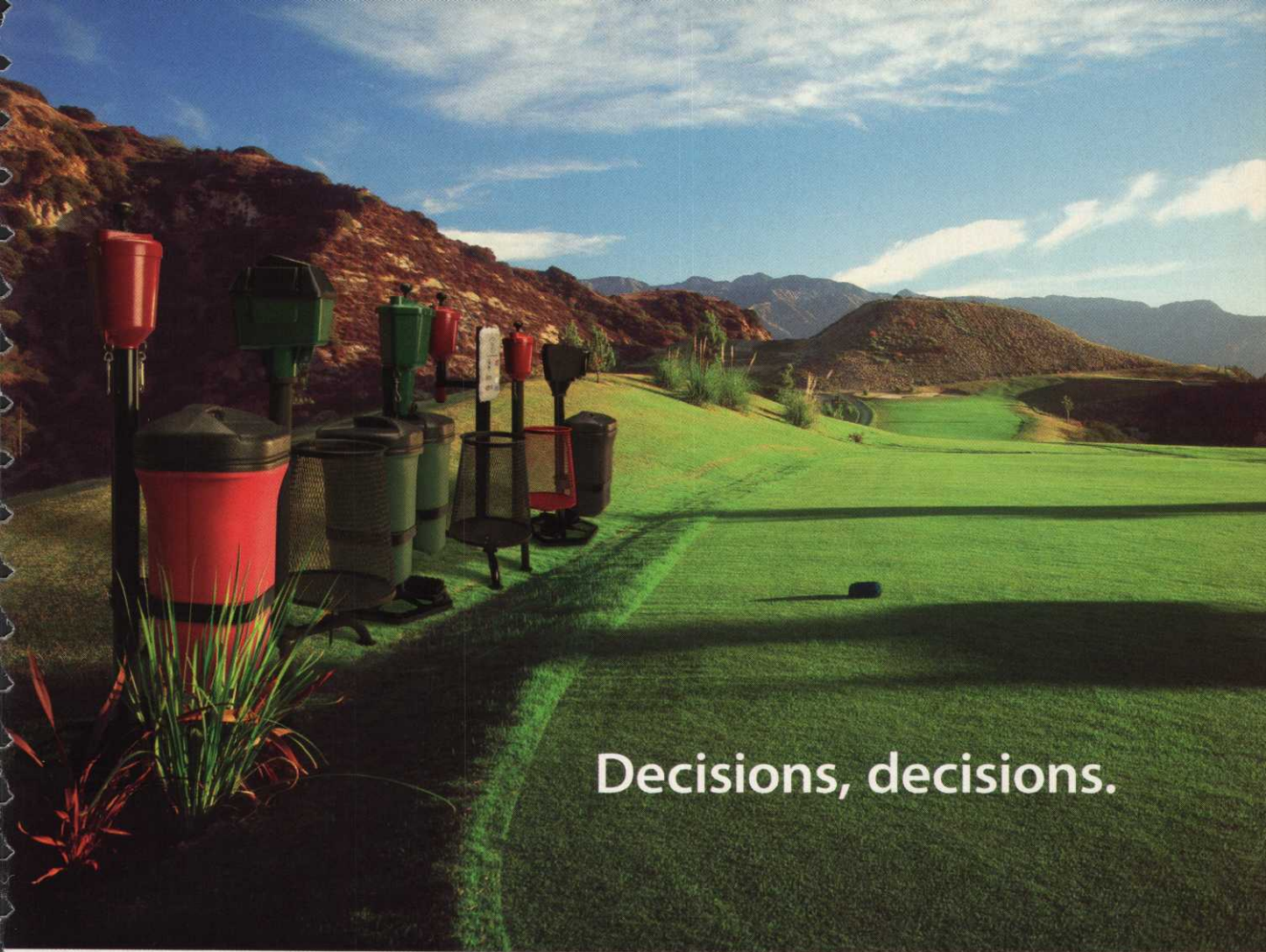
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"We need to
work together
to address
stereotypes."

• **CHAD RITTERBUSCH**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ASGCA



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Continued from page 28

president of the association, among its members and others involved with designing and building courses in the industry. The book advocates more practical and affordable golf facilities, including three-hole courses and executive layouts.

Jemsek also favors building more three- and nine-hole courses with shorter holes. "That's where the future golfers will come from," he says.

When his now-grown children played, Jemsek says they preferred playing at smaller venues than Cog Hill. "They had a better time playing short courses than they did playing our course because the holes were too long," he adds.

Paul Hollis, executive vice president of Redexim Charterhouse, a turf equipment supplier, supports the building of more three-hole and executive courses for another reason. He says many young golfers, especially teenagers, don't have the patience to play 18 holes. They're of the PlayStation gen-

eration and are accustomed to sensory overload on par with a mall arcade.

"After playing nine holes, they start getting fidgety and bored," Hollis says. "The golf industry needs to find a way to speed up the game to keep those kids interested."

The industry also must ensure kids are playing the game with the appropriate equipment, says Van Horn, who founded U.S. Kids Golf in 1997 on this premise. The company's Ultralight Kidsklubs are lighter than adult clubs and some junior clubs, says Van Horn who developed Kidsklubs from a personal need. While his children, ages 3 and 6, were enthusiastic about golf when they first learned the game, their interest waned quickly because the cut-off clubs they used were too heavy.

"They weren't having fun," Van Horn recalls.

That might steam dad if he paid \$30 for his 10-year-old son to play nine holes. Recognizing this, Cog Hill implemented separate rates for children several years ago. A child always



"Let them
nurture their
interests in a safe
and controlled
environment."

• **JOE LOUIS BARROW**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
THE FIRST TEE

All About Junior Golfers

The golf industry needs to attract and retain more young golfers, including junior golfers, which the National Golf Foundation defines as those aged 12 to 17 who play at least once a year.

- ✓ Core junior golfers are players who play at least eight rounds a year and average 26 rounds. There are about 900,000 core junior golfers, but the number has remained flat since 1997.
- ✓ About 2 million junior golfers are regarded as occasional players and play one to seven rounds a year. The number of occasional junior players has increased, but not to the point of them becoming core junior golfers.
- ✓ Most junior golfers are boys (about 86 percent).
- ✓ 13 percent of junior golfers play 25 or more rounds a year.
- ✓ Junior golfers report playing 72 percent of their rounds on regulation-length courses and 28 percent on short courses (executive or par-3).
- ✓ 90 percent of junior golfers say they're likely to continue playing in the future.

Source: National Golf Foundation