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In golf, it's important to choose your partner carefully.



Photo by Wood Sabold

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## From the CEO Vantage Point

By Jay Karen  
CEO  
NGCOA

### Are OTTAs Golf's Disintermediaries?

*"I don't believe most golf courses need the OTTAs' marketing services to meet the natural demand for golf in our marketplace, nor do I think they stimulate incremental demand for golf."*

Wow. Now that I read that a month after the print dried on the last issue of Golf Business, it sounds rather harsh. I think it's because I've become friendly with a couple individuals trying to make a go of it in the Online Tee Time Agency world, despite my skepticism. It's not the "golf way" to be so public with criticism like this. Nevertheless, let me see if I can get this straight. We have millions of people interested in playing golf, but who are not moved to do so. The volume of tee times and players have both declined since about the same time OTTAs came on the scene. The price of golf is cheaper than ever (compared to the Consumer Price Index). Profitability is arguably tougher to achieve than ever. While the golf course economy has been living under black clouds, tens of millions of dollars annually are poured into OTTAs each year. Something is incongruent here. If you look at it from the bird's eye perspective, how can you not be a skeptic?

Over the last three years, I can count on one hand how many times I've encountered a course owner who praised their OTTA. Rather, nearly every time the topic is broached, there are words of frustration, rolling eyes and shaking heads. The fact you can't even have a conversation about OTTAs without an undercurrent of negativity tells us something is rotten in Denmark. Talk all day long about golf cars, insurance, balls, sticks, apparel, turf equipment, F&B, etc. and it's all pretty copacetic. Mention OTTAs, and you'll see the tone go south more quickly than Ohioans converging on Myrtle Beach in April. If these relationships were healthy, this simply would not happen.

A year and a half ago, the CEO of one of the OTTAs (who shall remain nameless) literally

jabbed his finger in my chest and said (expletives omitted), "I'm sick and tired of NGCOA being anti-third party." Let me be crystal clear. I'm not anti-OTTA. I'm just against anything that doesn't clearly and unequivocally support the success of golf course operators.

If OTTAs want to win my favor or (infinitely more important) the favor of the thousands of courses that also look upon you critically, here's your simple recipe:

- Stop the incessant discounting. In the race to the bottom, you're handing out the bibs, the running shoes and you're manning the Gato-grade stations.
- Abdicate your ability to price tee times. Let courses price their inventory against the natural supply and demand without your finger on the scale.
- Implement demand-generating marketing and technology aimed at bringing revenue that wouldn't have happened without you. Prove to a course owner you're bringing them new customers and increased play from existing customers. Don't leave it up to the course to figure it out.
- Provide rich data on revenue and activity from the bartered tee times, so a course operator has transparency into the value of the relationship.
- Stop using a course's own brand to market against it in search engines and on your own directories. When an OTTA uses a course's name in the search engines to direct business to competing courses, how can you not shake your head?

When I started writing this, I was hoping to talk myself into a kinder position. But I'm not there yet. I need to be convinced the net result of all of this is a positive one – for every single course that participates, and for the industry as a whole.

Until then, I ask my readers and NGCOA members – am I being too harsh? I'm a reasonable guy. Tell me what you think.

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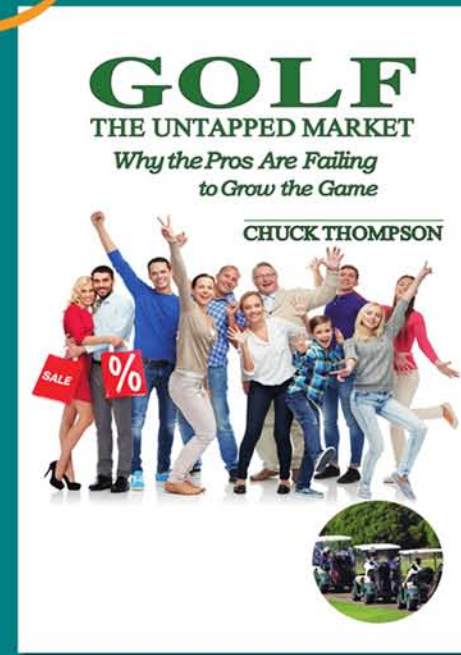
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Ted Bishop  
38th President PGA of America

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## A View From the Industry My Take

By Steve Mona  
Executive Director  
We Are Golf

## Issues Come Into Focus at Capitol

One of the primary aims of the World Golf Foundation is to represent the game's interests through WE ARE GOLF (WAG), a coalition of golf's leading organizations.

The 12th annual National Golf Day was held May 1 in Washington, D.C. In 2019, for the first time, Canada's National Golf Day was held simultaneously on that date. On National Golf Day, representatives from across the industry convened to share golf's positive messages. This year, there were more than 220 participants attending more than 250 meetings, both all-time highs.

National Golf Day celebrates the game's \$84.1 billion economy, its nearly \$4 billion annual charitable impact and many environmental and fitness benefits. Industry leaders met with members of Congress, the Executive Branch and federal agencies to discuss golf's 15,000 diverse businesses, two million jobs impacted, tax revenue creation and tourism value.

WAG advocates on behalf of the sport through its government relations coalition, focused on communicating the positive story about golf at the federal level. The golf industry seeks to ensure equitable legislation and regulation for the golf industry among policymakers, regulators and legislators at the national level of government.

Each year, a federal agenda is established with the areas of focus the industry

seeks to accomplish. These issues form the core messaging that WAG brings to Capitol Hill each year during National Golf Day.

This year the federal agenda focused on three specific areas:

- The first focused on environmental regulation and its impacts on golf properties. The three objectives included seeking support for funding of the National Turfgrass Research Initiative, replacing the Clean Water Rule (WOTUS) and seeking support of the passage of the "Reducing EPA Duplication to Advance Pesticide Enforcement Act" (REDTAPE Act).

- A second area of focus was on increasing participation in golf and promoting its health benefits. The industry is seeking support and co-sponsorship of the PHIT Act to improve health in America by encouraging more active lifestyles.

- The third area focused on golf businesses and current labor issues. We are seeking an increase in annual H-2B Visas to meet golf labor needs, educating DHS and DOL about golf's labor shortage and urged them to release full allotment of additional H-2B Visas and encouraging legislators to act to strike arbitrary anti-golf business provisions from Section 144 of the U.S. Tax Code.

All three of these areas are important to the industry and collectively we are working to make sure that our voices are heard.

Additionally, the industry annually gives back by holding a Community Service Project. This year, for the third time, representatives of the industry undertook projects to maintain and beautify the National Mall.

I would like to send a personal thank you to everyone who took part in this special event and for their support of the golf industry.



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## Addressing The Issues

By Ronnie Miles  
Director of Advocacy  
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## Dealing with a \$15 an Hour Minimum Wage

On Jan. 16, Rep. Robert Scott (D-VA3) introduced a bill in the House that calls for an increase in the federal minimum wage from \$7.50 to \$15. On the same day, Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT) introduced the same bill in the Senate.

In the House, with little fanfare and deliberation, the Education and Labor Committee voted to report the bill to the full chamber.

This legislation, if enacted into law, would raise the federal minimum wage to \$8.55 this year and increase it incrementally over the next five years to reach \$15 per hour in 2024. Following 2024, the law would also call for additional incremental adjustments to the minimum wage to keep pace with national inflation.

"The proposal would directly lift the wages of 22.5 million workers. On average, these low-wage workers would receive a \$3.10 increase in their hourly wage, in today's dollars," according to Economic Policy Institute Senior Analyst David Cooper. "For a directly affected worker who works all year, this equals a \$5,100 increase in annual wage income, a raise of 31.3 percent. Meanwhile, another 19 million workers earning more than \$15 would also see their wages increase from a spillover impact as employers adjusted their pay scales to the increase. A total of 41.5 million workers would benefit from this proposal, 29.2 percent of the wage and salary workforce."

For the golf course owner, the proposed legislation will dramatically impact their cost

to do business. NGCOA members have shared some of their concerns with us, indicating impact ranges from increased payroll costs from low of \$60,000 to a high of \$275,000. It is important to note the increase is not just limited to wages, but additional employer share of benefit costs and tax increases. For these owners who are already struggling to remain operational, their recourse will be one of two options, increase the cost of their products and services or reduce the hours and number of employees scheduled to work.

While the proposed increase in wages is spread out over a five-year period, the average annual increase is targeted to be 14 percent. With benefits and taxes, golf owners can expect the increase to be closer to 17 percent. How much will you need to increase your green and cart fees to offset this rise in costs? What will your new food and beverage menu look like? How much will your customers accept before changing their purchasing behavior?

Another very important element of this legislation is it eliminates the current tip offset scale for tipped employees plus it repeals the allowance of paying less than minimum wage for newly hired employees who are less than 20 years of age. For the golf industry, these categories of employees represent a large portion of seasonal hires.

So what can golf course owners and operators do? NGCOA recommends members voice their concerns with their representatives and senators. Let them know that while we support paying our employees fair and competitive wages, mandating \$15 per hour wages across the country fails to recognize that not all communities are the same.

*Have concerns about this or other advocacy issues? Contact me at [rmiles@ngcoa.org](mailto:rmiles@ngcoa.org).*

## GOLF INDUSTRY Calendar

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June 4

Women's Golf Day  
Nationwide  
[womensgolfday.com](http://womensgolfday.com)

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August 12-14

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2020

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## Coalition Concerns

By Jared Williams  
Managing Director  
GOLF USA TEE TIME COALITION

### What Lies Beneath

Sometimes, we cannot uncover the truth because of things another party may or may not elect to share with us. I use the word uncover because sometimes information that is relevant for golf courses is obscured by a vendor.

These vendors are withholding information such as the true cash price of the management software systems, the cash equivalent to access the distribution network, or failing to reveal the actual price golfers pay to the vendor for rounds booked via barter.

Day-by-day, I'm hearing more and more stories about vendors concealing the truth about the actual cash price needed to cover use of their software systems or access to their distribution networks. Eyes bugged and raised eyebrows generally describe the reaction of golf course operators after the cash equivalent prices for software and distribution services are finally revealed. The markup on the true cost of services your vendors are currently offering you is more often than not either overpriced or not even disclosed.

The prices are presented in such a way that influences or steers golf courses to agree to the barter exchange. Not all vendors are guilty of this. But a growing number of them are using similar tactics. If you put a pencil to it, they make much more when golf courses barter for software and services than when they elect to pay a cash or commission price (assuming those cash prices and commission prices are fair).

I had an NGCOA member, an NGCOA board member and a PGA professional reach out to me in the last month trying to uncover the true costs associated with their use of the software and services their vendors

were providing them. They were all either not interested in trading tee time inventory in exchange for distribution and software, or trying to find a way to compare the cost difference between the two and decide if the deals were fair and equitable.

The current business practices of many vendors make this very difficult. And I haven't even begun to broach the importance of vendors sharing the information about sales of barter rounds with the golf course.

Perhaps a call to action is necessary. Which vendor is going to be the first to offer a cash price for software and services that is an accurate reflection of the true costs associated with these products? I will venture to say it is much lower than the \$25,000 to \$40,000 that I have personally seen. We need to develop a baseline for some industry standards for what some of these items should cost and compare that to what golf courses are actually paying.

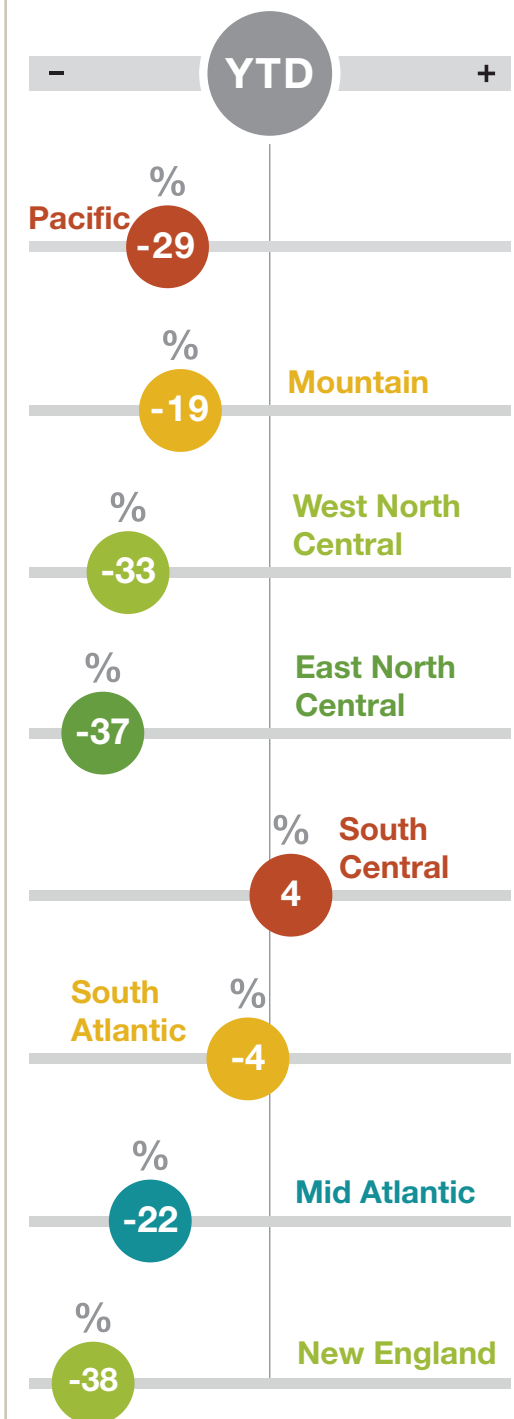
The same can be said for determining reasonable commission percentages. Which vendor, currently engaged in barter, is going to be the first to start sharing barter sales data with all of its clients who use barter as a method of payment?

I want to hear from both vendors and golf courses on issues involving the marketing and distribution of tee times. To the vendors, what is your plan to make sure golf courses have the information they need to make informed decisions? To the golf courses, what method are you using to pay for your software or services? If you barter, how many tee times are you giving per day? Are you paying a commission percentage; if so, what number? If you pay cash, what software and services are included? How did the barter and cash equivalent prices impact your ultimate decision on preferred method of payment? Contact me at [jwilliams@teetimecoalition.org](mailto:jwilliams@teetimecoalition.org).

## Rounds Played

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Data percentage compared to same period last year.





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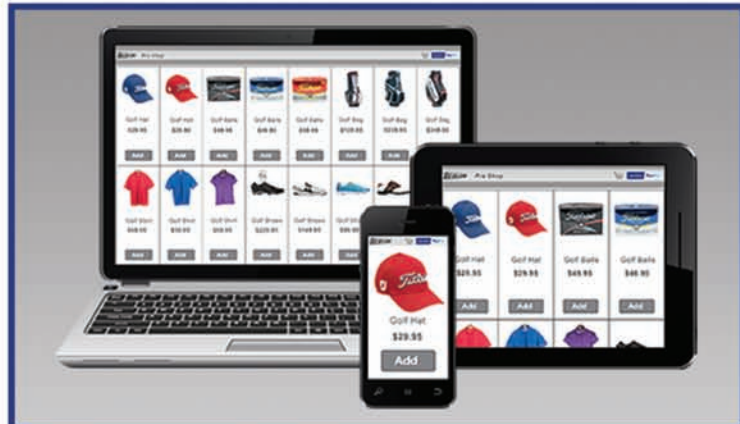
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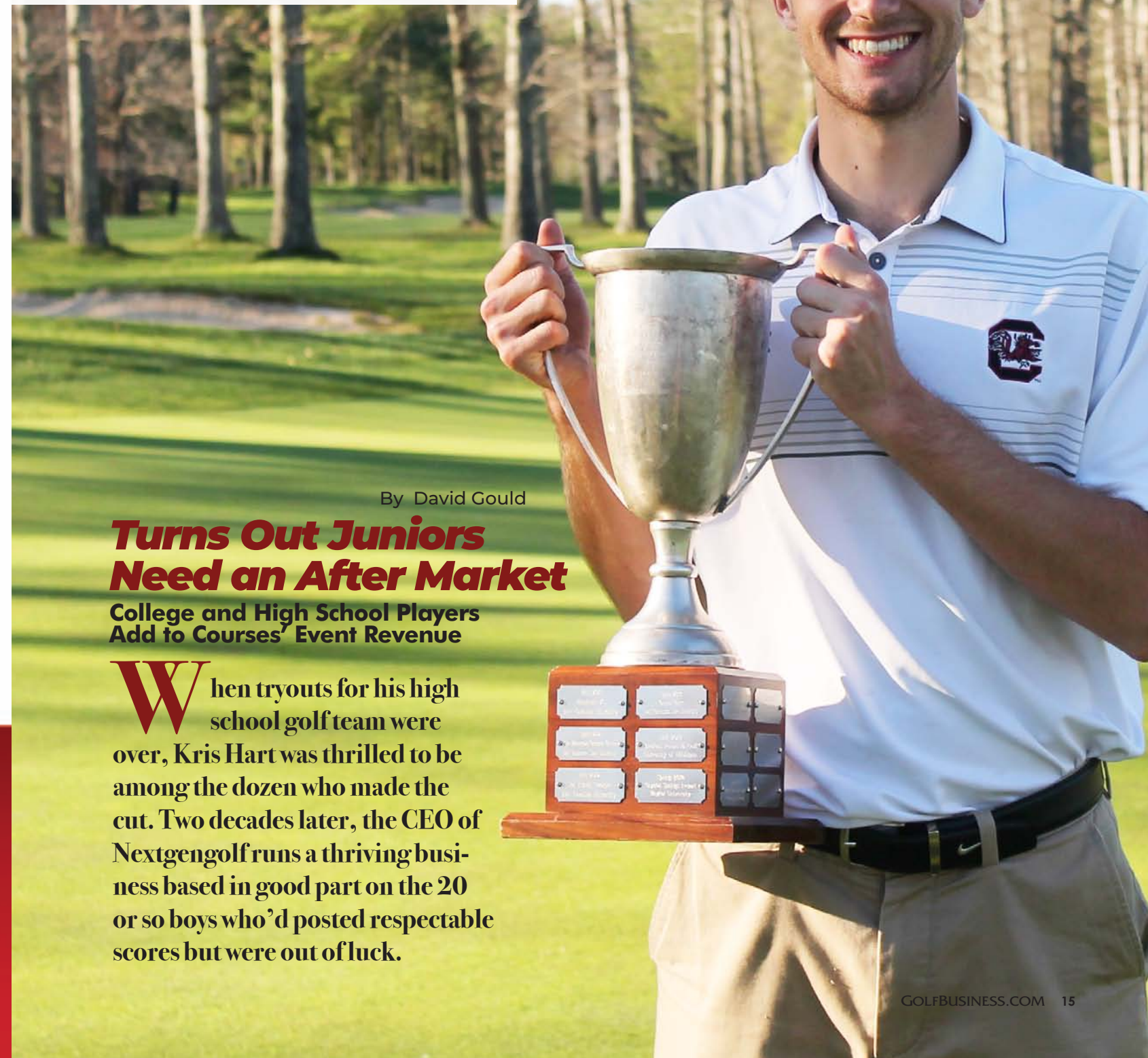
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## THE START

NEWS & VIEWS TO PROPEL YOUR BUSINESS

Wesley Long played in Nextgengolf's Glade Springs Championship held at the University of South Carolina.



By David Gould

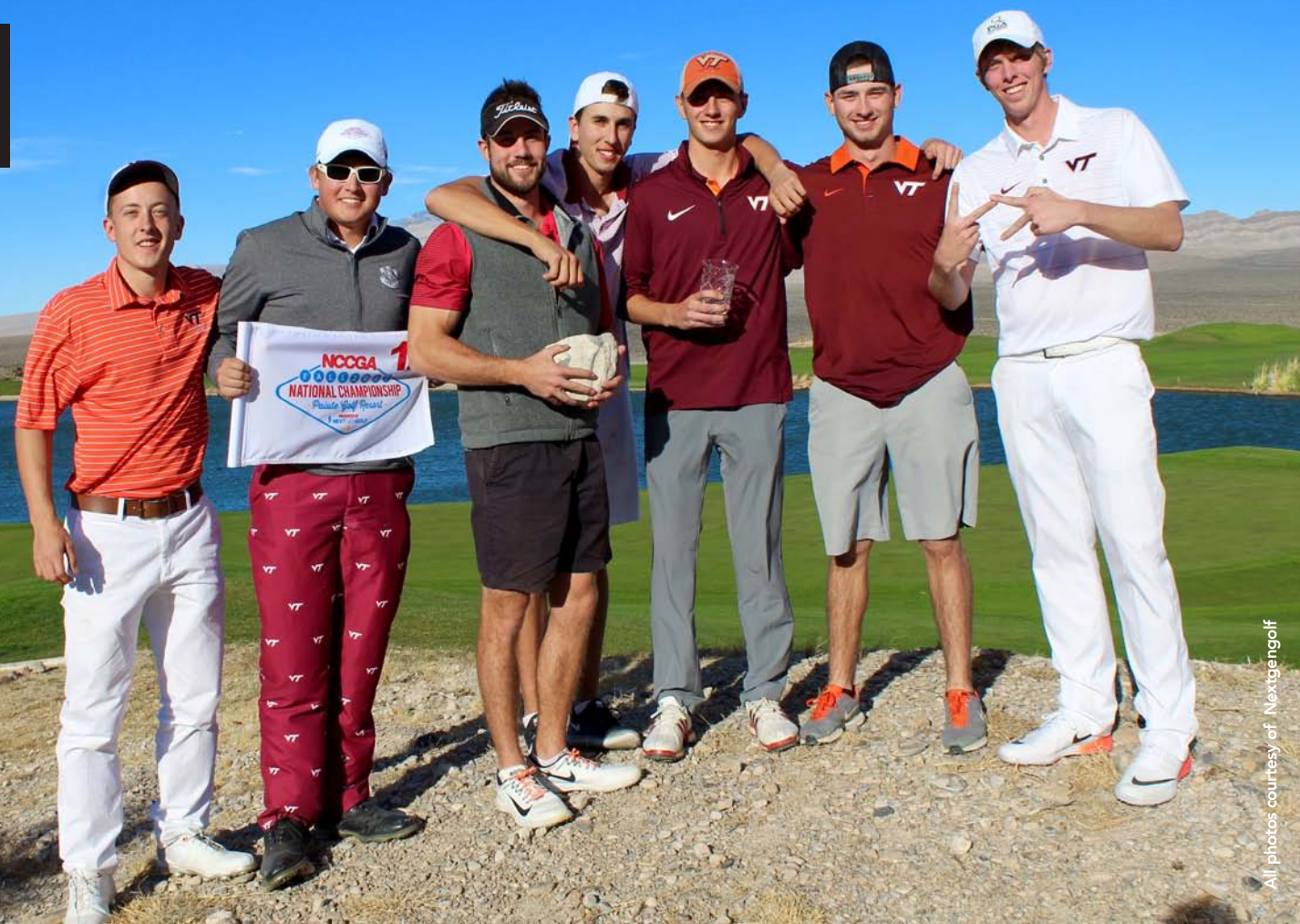
### Turns Out Juniors Need an After Market

College and High School Players Add to Courses' Event Revenue

When tryouts for his high school golf team were over, Kris Hart was thrilled to be among the dozen who made the cut. Two decades later, the CEO of Nextgengolf runs a thriving business based in good part on the 20 or so boys who'd posted respectable scores but were out of luck.



The Virginia Tech Club was represented at Nextgengolf's Championship played at Paiute Golf Resort in Las Vegas.



All photos courtesy of Nextgengolf

“Our golf coach took 12 players because he could get three tee times max at the course where we practiced,” says Hart, who grew up in western Massachusetts. “The ones who didn’t make the team were left with no competitive outlet.”

Hart was good enough to play NCAA golf at Bryant College in Rhode Island, but once he earned his degree and entered the workforce, he again noticed how estranged he felt from organized competitive golf. Meanwhile, he had met many former high school golfers who weren’t able to make their college team, and found themselves “cut loose from the system.”

That perspective became the seed for Nextgengolf, which began as an affordable-golf membership program for Boston collegians called CollegeGolf-Pass. Having tapped a pool of demand for recreational play among that cohort, the startup merged in 2013 with some-

thing called the National Collegiate Club Golf Association (NCCGA). In year one of the new operation, 100-plus new club golf programs were kick-started at universities and colleges nationwide.

The company truly found its calling when it branched into tournament competition — team-based and by all means fun-based — first through its City Tour division. These are one-day tournaments, played without handicaps, in either a scramble or better-ball format, or both. In 2018, Nextgengolf conducted the equivalent of one golf tournament every other day. At the top of its pyramid, so to speak, are national “major” championships. In the beginning, an 18-hole facility could host one, now it takes 54 holes of golf to handle the fields, which very often are oversubscribed.

And beyond the college market, there is the next group down in age. “Do you know that there are 220,000 kids in America who play on their high

school golf team?” Hart asks. “In the next concentric circle beyond them are twice as many — serious golfers who couldn’t quite make the team. We’ve expanded our business to cater to that market, because nobody else talks to that golfer.”

In short order, the company has grown its National High School Invitational (June 26-28 this year) to 348 boys and girls representing 40 U.S. states.

Hundreds of course owners reading this are well aware of Nextgengolf, having opened their first tee to one of the hundreds of tournaments the company conducts every year.

“We’ve taken entry fees from close to 100,000 players, and done business with nearly 1,000 different public golf courses in 40 U.S. states,” says Hart. His company now has nine full-time employees and operates at a comfortable annual profit, posting year-on-year revenue growth throughout its existence.

**“We’ve taken entry fees from close to 100,000 players, and done business with nearly 1,000 different public golf courses in 40 U.S. states.” -Kris Hart.**

That success, and its unique grow-the-game impact, has led to coverage on Golf Channel’s Morning Drive and in The Wall Street Journal and Golf Digest, among other outlets.

“For some courses, we’ve become a staple on their schedule,” says Hart. “We can host in out-of-the-way places, which helps us and helps the course operators. As long as there’s a good supply of motel rooms in the surrounding area, we’re good to go.”

In West Lafayette, Indiana, the 36-hole Birk Boilermaker Golf Complex on the campus of Purdue University has been a highly suitable site for Nextgengolf tournaments. Likewise for the WinStar resort complex in Thackerville, Oklahoma. The bigger events involve two days of competitive rounds and practice days beforehand. “It’s the full boat of lodging, golf, food and beverage,” says Hart. “And it’s out-of-town people who can help spread the word about you when they go back home.”

The level of play is good to extremely good, and the etiquette factor is way up there. That’s a tribute to the thousands of golf professionals at untold number of golf camps and club junior programs that, for years, have been indoctrinating pre-teens and teens into a by-the-book version of the royal and

**Editor’s note: The PGA of America announced April 2 it has acquired Nextgengolf, effective immediately. Terms of the deal were not released.**

ancient game. The result of that junior programming is a rather immense pool of Millennial (and now Centennial) people in need of a bridge between youth golf and the golf you play when you’re off to college — and later, grown up and carrying a briefcase to work.

“Our players come to your golf course and they know the drill,” says Hart, who had one of his NCCGA

members walk on at the University of Michigan in his senior year and make the No. 3 spot on the varsity squad. “We figured we were taking a risk when we brought our national championship to Las Vegas, but over two days not one player missed a tee time. Our kids are well behaved. Playing tournament golf as a junior is supposed to instill all these values and encourage maturity — well, I can vouch for the fact that it really does those things.”

It’s often said that youth sports have become over-organized by adults, removing the need for kids to arrange their own play. No doubt that’s the case, but it does train them to respond to invitations and opportunities that come along at the right time, programmed in just the right way. **FB**

*David Gould is a Massachusetts-based freelance writer and frequent contributor to Golf Business.*



Laura Kanouse (center) from the University of Florida, after winning the 2015 NCCGA National Championship, walked onto Florida’s varsity team.



By Steve Eubanks

## How do you program to maximize revenues on repressively hot days?

**McDougall:** We treat twilight and late afternoon with a different mindset with our customers. We say to them: "Look, you might not go out until the sun gets a little lower in the sky, so enjoy your time out there without thinking in terms of a complete round. Think about the experience. We tell them, "enjoy nine holes or 12 holes as the sun is setting. Don't forget to look around and don't rush because you're trying to get in a quick 18."

**Mitchell:** We have a lot of rain in the summer afternoons, storms almost every afternoon actually. But by 5:00, they have usually blown through and it's steamy, but the sun is out. So that's when we schedule our leagues. We block off the tee sheet from about 3:00, which isn't a problem when it's raining, and we send the league players out in a modified shotgun at 5:00 for nine holes.

What we've also learned, and what differentiates us in this area, is we give a rain check based on the

number of holes you played. So, if you go out at 3:30 and get in four holes before it starts raining, we give you a credit for 14 holes. That credit is associated with your name and you can redeem it the next time you come out.

### What have you learned from your customers about afternoon play and what adjustments have you made because of what you've learned?

**McDougall:** We've adapted quite a bit based on what our guests have told us. We know what sort of food and beverage service they like later in the day and how we can accommodate them in terms of pricing. We have been very adaptive, almost to the point of being completely dynamic, in our afternoon pricing

based solely on consumer feedback and what else is going on at clubs in our area."

### "It's about playing as many holes as possible at a beautiful time of day."

**Mitchell:** We've learned that when the storms come people don't really want to go home. So we now have a performance center with Trackman simulators and a Sam putting lab. Our league players love going in there and playing simulator matches on other golf courses while it's raining. They have tables and televisions and play complete matches on the simulators. It's a high-tech world now. Weather doesn't hold people back anymore.



#### Filippa McDougall

DIRECTOR OF GOLF  
WILDFIRE GOLF CLUB, J.W. MARRIOTT  
PHOENIX, ARIZONA

#### Casey Mitchell

DIRECTOR OF GOLF  
SANDHILL CRANE GOLF CLUB  
PALM BEACH GARDENS, FLORIDA



## Innovation Insights

BY SCOTT KAUFFMAN

## Rounding up Customers with Geofencing

**H**unt Crosby jokes he's a "analog guy in a digital world" and it took years for him to give up his Blackberry device much to the cajoling of his younger co-workers. What's no joke is how Crosby is using innovative technology to market River Run Golf Club & Community in Berlin, Maryland.

Indeed, after spending a little time with the energetic general manager, it's pretty clear Crosby is somebody by no means set in his beloved "Blackberry" ways. Especially when it comes to marketing his many business interests. A lifelong PGA Professional, real estate agent and owner of his own golf travel business, Crosby is the consummate entrepreneur always learning and trying something new to stay ahead of the consumer in today's ever-dynamic technological landscape.

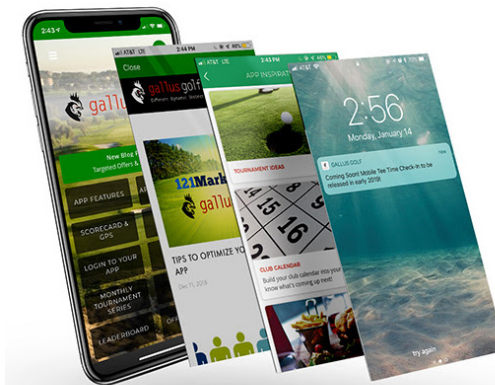
The latest tool Crosby is starting to use at his 18-hole course minutes from Maryland's famous Ocean City is a branded mobile app created by San Diego-based Gallus Golf. For Crosby, his new Gallus-designed app will initially be used as a platform for a long-desired loyalty program that will once and for all allow him to effectively capture River Run's all-important consumer email addresses.

Crosby is also equally excited about using Gallus Golf's geofencing capabilities sometime in the near future at his Gary Player-designed layout. And this is the truly innovative stuff - geofencing and even more precise beacon technology - that can catapult traditional courses to the next level of digital cloud-based marketing.

For instance, Crosby envisions the day when he is pushing out creative notifications to golfers when they arrive at the 13th tee and read one of the course signs noting Player's affinity for exercise.

"So maybe we push out a message that says, 'video yourself doing 10 pushups and post it on your Facebook page,'" Crosby says. "And you get 100 reward points for that." Or maybe it's Crosby promoting an open house one day as golfers cruise past one of the community homes.

To be sure, Gallus is just one company offering geofencing applications for golf, which allows courses to cast a message once users' mobile devices get within say 600 feet in diameter of a stra-



app, players' real-time scores and stats became available as spectators arrived in the vicinity of the player.

Now, Gallus Golf founder Jason Wilson is integrating beacon technology within his company's application program interface, so clients can market their goods and offerings with even more precision and personalization.

As Wilson describes it, picture a customer on the opposite end of a busy pro shop looking at a particular piece of equipment. Now, with beacon technology, a real-time message can be pushed out saying, "Hey, did you look at the new Taylor-Made drivers now on sale?"

Or, another valuable application is the ability to "passively" track customer traffic and/or behavioral patterns, something museums, resorts and high-end private clubs with numerous amenities are doing, according to Wilson. Of course, one reason beacon-emitting devices haven't gone mainstream - like so many other forms of early stage-technology - is cost, which can be \$20,000-\$30,000 just for the hardware, Wilson says.

"It's not for everybody," adds Wilson, whose company is trying to introduce more affordable beacon-driving technology. Crosby can't wait for that day to come.

tegic virtual location. What's new for golf is the more precise beacon technology that allows subscribers to communicate within 15 feet of their customers.

San Diego-based Piper Networks and Social Retail, a company with R&D roots in France and Israel, have beacon technology ties to golf with Social Retail's cloud-based platform that made its debut in October 2015 at the Edmund de Rothschild Israel Masters golf tournament in Israel.

In the case of Social Retail's debut, each golfer's bag was equipped with Social Retail beacons. Meanwhile, once spectators downloaded the Social Retail







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**A Fresh Start**

We Are Golf has relaunched its Get Golf Ready program featuring new resources and a revamped website that allows players to easily find a certified facility. Learn more about the program and course participation at [getgolffready.co](http://getgolffready.co).



**MCO19**

The NGCOA's annual multi-course owners and resort operators gathering is slated for July 23-24 in Monterey, California. To learn more about this event, go to [mcor-retreat.com](http://mcor-retreat.com).



**The Pillsbury Effect**

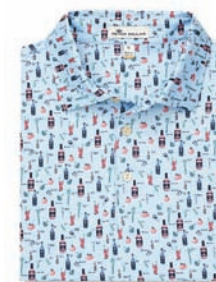
If you missed this feature from the April issue of Golf Business magazine, check online at [golfbusiness.com](http://golfbusiness.com) to learn about the evolution of ClubCorp under David Pillsbury's leadership.

**WHAT'S HOT  
In My Shop**



**Caroline Basarab-Dennison**

Director of Retail, PGA Golf Professional • Reynolds Lake Oconee, Greensboro, Georgia



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What's Hot In My Shop is produced in cooperation with the Association of Golf Merchandisers ([agmgolf.org](http://agmgolf.org))

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Rams Hill partner and chief executive Harry Turner and his team purchased the golf course in 2014.

“What we found is that if you build something of very high quality and create a wonderful, memorable experience at a fair price people will come.”  
-Harry Turner

© 2019 Photo Courtesy of Rams Hill



By Steve Eubanks

## Resurrection Is Real

Once shuttered and left to nature, Rams Hill Golf Club was revived

E

everyone in the business has seen the aftermath. A course closes and within a couple of months the place looks like the plains of the Serengeti with grass so high you could lose a golden retriever. Six months later all features that would distinguish the land as a golf course have vanished. A year later forests have popped up. Some forward-thinking planners repurpose closed courses into parks or gardens. But many let the land go to the foxes and rats.

Fortunately it doesn't always have to end that way, even in areas as arid and desolate as any in the country. Just look at Rams Hill Golf Club in what some might



call the middle-of-nowhere town of Borrego Springs, California, an unincorporated desert stop with a population of 3,500. There you will find a story of rebirth, reinvention and renewal that would read like a movie script if it weren't so implausible.

Golf began in the area in the late 1980s when money was cheap and everyone bought into the flawed idea that you could build courses forever and never go broke. Some of that money flowed into this high desert region 85 miles from San Diego and 90 miles from the Coachella Valley. Clear air, a beautiful night sky and elevation changes from the Santa Rose Mountains made Borrego Springs breathtaking. But the idea of an 800-home gated golf development with one private and one resort course seems insane in hindsight.

"Rams Hill was one of many courses that was originally constructed under an unsustainable business model," said Rams Hill partner and chief executive Harry Turner. "So many golf courses were built by developers under a housing model where the golf operation could never make it and the property owners were left high and dry."

Rams Hill was a perfect example. The string of owners and financiers included Ted Robinson Sr., a scion of Southern California real estate. Then there was Southmark, an outfit that was junk-bond financed by convicted felon Michael Milken. Charles Keating, who became the face of the savings-and-loan scandal and was convicted of wire fraud and racketeering, was also involved.

San Diego newspaper publisher David Copley owned it for a while, as did a group of swashbuckling Sherman Oaks investors who called themselves GH Capital. The latter brought in Tom Fazio to reimagine the area. As Turner put it, "There was far more optimism than there should have been."

In 2010, with the real estate market gone, debt mounting, and water in short supply, the course closed and returned almost completely to desert. More than 300 trees died. The superintendent Steve Gregory, who grew in the Fazio course, left for La Costa.

There the course sat, in limbo, for four years. But while golf courses are often works of art, they are also living organisms

with grass and trees that either grow or die depending on how they are maintained. Rams Hill died. In 2014, the current owners got it for the right price.

"The important part of this story is that at the right investment, a place like Rams Hill can be a success," Turner said. "What we found is that if you build something of very high quality and create a wonderful, memorable experience at a fair price people will come, even if you are not on any major freeways; even if you are an hour and 15 minutes from the eastern edge of the Coachella Valley and two hours by car from San Diego."

## "Rams Hill was one of many courses that was originally constructed under an unsustainable business model."

"Rams Hill is an example of that. We're still able to get many repeat customers from those markets because of the quality of the experience we provide."

In addition to the lower base price and lack of exorbitant debt, there are several operational reasons why Rams Hill owners can now focus on providing a quality experience at a fair price. For starters the club draws its water from six on-site wells. Despite restrictions and shortages throughout the region, Rams Hill has remained green. But Turner and his team have been smart about it. Gregory returned as superintendent (which gave him the distinction of being one of the only people to grow in the same course twice). He took out large quantities of native grass that required irrigation, leaving areas more native and going with more desert shrubs and grasses.

"We are in the midst of a state-mandated water reduction plan," Turner said. "Our area is going to have to deal with a lot of water cutbacks over the next 20 years. So we are being very smart with our water. In addition to reducing native grasses, we

have acquired additional water rights. We're very conscious of the grasses we plant and how we irrigate those grasses.

"But if you see Rams Hill today, you won't notice a reduction in the turf in playing areas. You will, however, see a lot of the interior slopes where native plants were down, areas where irrigation has been turned off. We also changed our irrigation methods. We're very judicious in our water usage. But the golfer will not know that by the condition of the turf grass. A lot of people come here because of the condition of the golf course. We're committed to keeping it that way but we have to be smart about it."

Certainly experts haven't noticed any reduction in quality. Rams Hill has made almost every best-places-you-can-play list in the country. The USGA recently held an U.S. Amateur Fourball Championship qualifier there. The clubhouse has been expanded and catering business is off the charts. And the course is playing north of 20,000 rounds a year, a far cry from the bad old days when it lost \$200,000 a month.

"That's what we've strived for since the re-birth," Turner said. "We were fortunate that Tom Fazio gave us an incredible golf course with wonderful bones. And we have spent the time and commitment to ensure that when people do make that drive out here, they find a course that is in pristine condition."

Turner also has cut his power bill by \$400,000 a year with an array of solar panels, which provide energy for the clubhouse, maintenance buildings and irrigation system. "We're not totally off the (power) grid," Turner said. "But the solar array certainly helps."

Those cost reductions and expanded infrastructure have allowed the staff to focus on what really matters in making a course a success.

"What I try to instill in our team here is that our customers pass by a lot of really good golf properties before they get here," Turner said. "We must make sure that the drive, the extra effort to get here is well worth it."

*Steve Eubanks is an Atlanta-based freelance writer and New York Times bestselling author.*



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Kinderlou Forest Golf Club, a Davis Love-designed course that opened in 2004.

## South Georgia Hidden Gem Relies On Word-of-Mouth Marketing Campaign

By **Steve** Eubanks

**W**e're all told that marketing is essential, a key factor in every dollar that comes in the door. Without advertising – billboards, paid Facebook promotion, banner ads on your local golf association website, targeted (and often expensive) campaigns to specific demographic groups – your course would be impossibly lost, stuck in a quagmire of low revenue and lost opportunity. The importance of marketing cannot be overstated, we are told. If you build it, they will not, necessarily, come. You have to go get them.

Then you have places like Kinderlou Forest Golf Club, a Davis Love-designed course that opened in 2004 in a pine forest eight miles off I-75 in Valdosta,

Georgia. The course is an easy hike to the Florida-Georgia line as long as you don't mind trudging through snake-infested forests where the occasional wild boar could attack. In other words, while it's not exactly in the middle of nowhere, Kinderlou Forest does not meet most experts' location criteria for a successful public golf course.

So, you would think the owners would spend a fortune advertising the place. Signs, print ads, internet campaigns, the occasional Golf Channel television spot in targeted markets. The location is so remote, they might even hire a golf clown to stand on the interstate with a big, foam arrow pointing the way. Anything to let the world know the course exists.

But the good folks at Kinderlou do none of that. They don't even have a billboard to catch the southbound traffic anymore, although they tried that for a few years.

The reason for the club's lack of advertising is simple. The golf course is one of the best in the country, a jaw-dropping gem that receives such rave reviews from everyone who plays it, that word-of-mouth works just fine.

"We don't really spend much or do much advertising at all, really," said Kinderlou Forest director of golf Bill Robinson. "What we found is that people who play here tell their friends, post their experiences on Facebook and other social media (platforms) and review us on GolfAdvisor, GolfLink, GolfNow, TripAdvisor and places like that. Because of those reviews and what people who have been here say about the place, other people want to come."

The story of Kinderlou Forest has a good bit to do with that. The Langdale family of Valdosta is one of the largest private landowners east of the Mississippi. Plywood, paper products, turpentine, furniture, window frames, paneling: if it's made from pine trees, the Langdales have a hand in it. They also own a bank and a hotel in Valdosta along with other assorted businesses. Because they owned so much land and often needed a place to entertain customers, the family decided to build Kinderlou Forest in an area with a lot of rolling hills and yawning live oaks. They hired a South Georgia native, Love, to do the design.

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**“Golfers aren’t dumb. They understand how the (ratings) game is played.**

They want to know what their buddies think; what other players think.”

- BILL ROBINSON

“We knew we had something really special,” said Mark Love, Davis’ brother and the chief designer on the project. “This was one of our early jobs and we wanted to incorporate a lot of the old architectural features that we all admire from designers like Donald Ross

and Seth Raynor. Among ourselves, we called our style ‘Rossnor,’ which is a combination of Ross and Raynor.

“When we were done (at Kinderlou) I said to people that we had done a lot of good golf courses, but this one was great.”

In the beginning, the Langdales bought into the idea that they needed to promote and market Kinderlou. So, they bought billboards to entice people off the interstate. And they put



ads in the Georgia and Florida golf publications. They also sponsored the South Georgia Classic for eight years, a Web.com Tour event that was one of the most highly regarded on the circuit.

“(Web.com) players loved it here,” Robinson said. “In fact, we still have a couple of tour players who play out of here. The facilities are as good as you’ll find anywhere.”

That great product turned out to be the best marketing arrow in the quiver.

“A lot of developers spend money bringing in (course) raters (from national magazines) and getting all kinds of publicity, trying to get on this or that ‘best of’ list,” Robinson said. “But golfers aren’t dumb. They understand how the (ratings) game is played. They want to know what their buddies think, what other players think. They want to hear from the guy who stopped and paid to play here,

the guy who has nothing to gain or lose by offering his opinion. Those are the ones with the biggest influence these days.”

And those are the people raving about Kinderlou Forest. With tees that give you the option of playing every distance from 5,200 to 7,718 yards, with bunkering and greens complexes that harken back to places like National Golf Links, Chicago Golf Club and Mid Ocean Club, Kinderlou is one that, according to multiple online commenters, “you could play every day and never grow tired of.”

“That’s our marketing campaign right there,” Robinson said. “Those comments. That’s what keeps people coming.”

Location does offer at least one advantage. If you’re traveling by car to Florida, you have to drive through Georgia or Alabama. Valdosta is a perfect stopping place: small, friendly and convenient with plenty of hotels, restaurants and even a zoological theme park called Wild Adventures. It also has one of the best golf courses in the Southeast.

“Do we play as many rounds as we could? No, of course not,” Robinson said. “If this golf course was in or near Atlanta we could double the price and fill it up almost every day. But then we would also be competing in that market. That would mean spending a lot more to get the word out than we’re spending now.

“Truth be told, the Langdales are happy with where the course is positioned,” Robinson said. “They like the number of rounds we play and the fact that it is, still, this slightly hidden gem. People who appreciate great golf, who understand history and architecture, they get it. Those are the people who come here and then tell their friends.”

*Steve Eubanks is an Atlanta-based freelance writer and New York Times bestselling author.*



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Bobby Steiner is the director of golf instruction at Horseshoe Bay Resort in Horseshoe Bay, Texas.

“You can’t color everybody with the same brush. Each golfer will tell you what he needs.”

-BOBBY STEINER



© 2019 Photo by Nina Ho



By Sally J. Sportsman

## ***Finding the Right Fit***

**Fitness Programs Fill Golf Travelers’ Needs**



**one are the days when golf required little more than equipment, a place to play and like-minded colleagues against whom to test one’s mettle.** Tournament and professional play were and remain of a different caliber, to be sure, but until recent years, golf often was considered a diversion, especially among travelers, with varying degrees of serious intent.

Today, golf increasingly is recognized as a sport requiring preparation, fitness and endurance. Although walking remains more the exception





Bobby Steiner, (right) director of golf instruction at Horseshoe Bay Resort, assists a client with his swing technique.

Photo courtesy of Horseshoe Bay

than the rule at golf resorts across the U.S., facilities understand the desire – in many cases, the need – of travelers of all ages to continue their golf-fitness regimens while on the road. In response to this growing trend, many resorts are adding golf-specific fitness programs to their array of amenities in an effort to attract and retain guests.

### Horseshoe Bay Resort: A Boost in Golf Fitness

“You can’t color everybody with the same brush,” says Bobby Steiner, director of golf instruction at Horseshoe Bay Resort, in Horseshoe Bay, Texas. “Each golfer will tell you what he needs.”

The three main elements Steiner focuses on in Fit for Golf, a personal training program he created, are balance, flexibility and core exercises. Golfers new to the program begin with a physical activity readiness questionnaire to assess skill level and prior experiences because

avoiding injury is the priority.

The golf-fitness program at Horseshoe Bay Resort, started in December 2018, is recommended to guests as a way to enhance their playing experiences at the facility, which includes four golf courses. Plans include a ground breaking in May for a state-of-the-art teaching academy, scheduled to open this year, for members and guests. Steiner plans to submit a proposal to justify adding 600 square feet to the academy specifically for golf-fitness activities, making the case of the success of his current program.

“Many of our resort guests are in the 50-to-60-year age range and want to be fit to play golf,” Steiner says. “We get all kinds of groups, including conferences and business meetings.

“Out of every 50 guests, usually about 30 play golf and are interested in sharpening their fitness.”

Steiner tailors programs to suit each golfer’s individual needs, no matter how

large the group. Many guests discover the golf-fitness program through the resort website, while others are directed to it by resort booking agents. Steiner finds that repeat guests often sign up for golf-fitness training on every visit.

Steiner’s fee is \$125 per hour for a 90-minute session. He also offers a 90-minute yoga routine that can be condensed into 25 minutes of golf-specific stretching. Winter provides more opportunity for golf-centric training; Steiner is fully booked during the off-season. He works with players of all fitness levels, from those who have never exercised before to former collegiate athletes.

Last year, according to Steiner, 90 percent of golf lessons – including golf-fitness sessions – were taken by members of the resort, 10 percent by resort guests.

“With the super increase in golf fitness,” Steiner says, “I plan to emphasize and market it more to resort guests. I will raise that ratio to about 50-50.

“I believe we can incorporate many more resort guests into our golf-fitness program – 100 percent more than in the past.”

### Sea Island Resort: A Multi-Faceted Golf-Fitness Program

While golf fitness may seem like a Johnny-come-lately phenomenon, Randy Myers has been focusing on it for 30 years. Now in his 15th year at Sea Island Resort, on Saint Simons Island, Georgia, Myers, director of golf fitness at Sea Island Performance Center, wrote his Master’s thesis in 1987 at Penn State University on golf exercise and fitness.

“I realized that every other sport had conditioning coaches, so I figured, why not golf?” Myers says, recalling his inspiration. “Golf has longevity potential for older adults, so I thought conditioning would be an opportunity that would grow – and sure enough, it did.”

Myers was inducted in November 2018 into the first class of the newly created World Golf Fitness Hall of Fame. He is the director of Nike Golf Performance Worldwide, was the 2016 U.S. Ryder Cup Team director of fitness and was a founding

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member of the Titleist Performance Institute (TPI), which is in use at Sea Island.

Many resort guests, aware that Myers trains a number of tour players and NCAA golf teams, return frequently to renew and refresh their golf-fitness routines as part of an à-la-carte menu selection – usually 40 minutes with Myers, then a round of golf, many times followed by a lesson.

Buddy golf trips and corporate groups often book fitness classes for 15 to 25 people consisting of a half-hour stretching session on the range before play.

“This is one of our most successful programs,” Myers says. “I do one hundred or more of them a year.” Some sessions have included three or four generations of a family together.

The cost of a golf-fitness session with Myers, including a take-home program, is \$200 for half an hour, \$300 for an hour, or \$350 for three half-hours. Incentive packages, offering discounts for multiple fitness sessions, can be used throughout the year. Guests can purchase golf-fitness products, such as medicine balls, elastic tubing and stability tubing, on site to take home with them.

“Our golf-fitness program has increased exponentially every year,” Myers says, “accounting for five to 10 percent of our annual growth since 2004. More than fifty percent of our golf-fitness guests come back multiple times, which is why we are able to keep our business running so efficiently.”

A new \$30-million, 18,000-square-foot fitness-training facility at Sea Island Resort is five times larger than the old one, which is being decommissioned and turned into a cottage for guest stay.

“We expect everything – including golf-specific fitness training – to escalate even more now,” Myers says.

### Destination Kohler: Sharpening Its Craft

At Destination Kohler, a golf resort in Kohler, Wisconsin, four championship courses attract players from all over the country. Jake Frias is the fitness manager of Sports Core, founded in 1979, located at the

American Club hotel at Destination Kohler. Resort guests requesting individual golf-specific workouts are assigned a personal trainer who focuses on overall health and wellness in addition to golf-fitness activities. Staff members also work with some PGA Tour and LPGA Tour players.

“Word is out all around the resort about our golf-fitness training – in the restaurants and hotel rooms, on television and the website,” says Frias.

Sports Core, a standalone fitness facility, is a popular amenity with resort guests, many who return for fitness training with each subsequent visit.

“About 15 percent of our resort guests request golf-specific workouts,” Frias says. “They work out regularly on their own but want guidance with golf fitness.”

Guests can sign up for a 30- or 60-minute golf fitness session at a fee of \$45 or \$75.

“The golf component of fitness training here at Kohler is important,” says Frias. “We consider ourselves a golf destination, so we adapt our training to that lifestyle.”

Frias estimates that the number of his clients who have requested

## Golf-Fitness Professionals Can Enhance Programs

**When golfers ponder where to go for their next vacation,** they consider numerous factors: golf courses, ease of travel, customer service, accommodations, amenities and cost. Frequently golf instruction and fitness activities are included in travelers’ choice of activities. Having certified golf-fitness professionals on staff is one way resorts can set themselves apart.

“The main reason to align yourself with a certified golf-fitness trainer is that you are trying to create a level of professionalism at your resort,” says Randy Myers, director of golf fitness at Sea

Island Performance Center, at Sea Island Resort in Georgia. “Golfers seek not only physical workouts and spa time, but also golf-specific training that will help them play their best.”

Fitness trainers and golf instructors are often interested in achieving certification as golf-fitness professionals. In many cases resorts reimburse employees seeking to earn golf-fitness certification.

Certified golf-fitness professionals earn an average of \$150-\$225 per hour for one-on-one training, Myers says.

Interested professionals can choose from a variety of certification programs. The largest such program in the



Jake Frias, fitness manager of Sports Core at Destination Kohler, says, “About 15 percent of our resort guests request golf-specific workouts.”

Photo courtesy of Sports Core at Destination Kohler

golf-specific training since he arrived at Kohler has grown over 30 percent. Today, more than 40 percent of Sports Core clients want some training to help their golf games.

Frias’s advice to resorts considering adopting golf-specific training is that it will increase business and “help you become more of a golf destination.”

Sally J. Sportsman is an Orlando, Florida-based freelance golf writer.

world is TPI (Titleist Performance Institute), according to Dave Phillips, who co-founded the system in 2003 with Dr. Greg Rose.

“A lot of golfers try to improve their games with lessons, but they often struggle,” says Phillips. “An understanding of biomechanics and movement as related to the golf swing is essential in helping golfers achieve their fitness and playing potential without injury.”

“Golfers are a pretty savvy bunch; they know when a physical trainer isn’t knowledgeable about golf. Having certified golf-fitness trainers on staff will bring more revenue to your bottom line.”

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By Sally J. Sportsman

## Program Offers Guests a Flexible Fitness Option

As golf-fitness programs grow in popularity at many resorts, the road to fitness can also offer variety for these travelers.

Golf resorts around the country are discovering that offering yoga as part of their fitness programs is an attractive option, providing another way to improve players' strength and flexibility.

"Golf resorts have an opportunity to create the hybrid that reaches into the golfing community," says Katherine Roberts, founder and president of Yoga for Golfers and the Roberts Flex-Fit Method. "Many golfers will never walk into a yoga studio, but they will participate in yoga in a golf setting, especially while traveling.

"Yoga for Golfers-certified instructors have an in-depth knowledge of the biomechanics of the golf swing and its correlation to yoga. They know how to speak the language of golf."

Roberts, who has provided Yoga for Golfers clinics and outings at resorts and other facilities all over the U.S., has appeared on numerous golf television programs. She is the author of the book *Yoga for Golfers* and the co-author, with golf instructor Hank Haney, of *Swing Flaws and Fitness Fixes*. In addition, she has served as the yoga fitness expert for such Major League Baseball teams as the LA Dodgers, Oakland A's and San Diego Padres.



Photo Courtesy of Yoga for Golfers

Besides helping people achieve maximum performance and renewed health and balance both on and off the course, Roberts is dedicated to enlightening golf course operators about the advantages of a well-planned yoga and golf-fitness program at resorts and other facilities, one that can attract new golfers and help retain existing customers while providing a steady revenue stream.

"While many golf resorts now offer yoga as part of their spa or wellness program, having a Yoga for Golfers-certified instructor on staff can be a valuable selling point," says Roberts. "We find that the golfers in our programs set aside their trepidations and derive measurable benefits, both in their golf and in their overall well-being."

Golf resorts, Roberts says, can create an entire golf-performance wellness program with yoga at the center – a weekend getaway, for example, featuring yoga, massage, fitness training, golf and dinner. Such programs can be marketed locally, regionally and even nationally to attract both small and large groups.

For resort owners, Yoga for Golfers provides a complete online marketing kit for communicating with guests and potential customers, including a synopsis of what golfers will experience, specific session details, templates for social media posts, images co-branded with each individual resort and full text. Furthermore, fitness professionals at golf resorts can become certified Yoga for Golfers instructors through an online certification program.

"We provide a unique experience for golfers that they can take home with them," Roberts says. "Our clients experience between a 20- to 40-percent increase in range of motion, which they can continue to benefit from long after their resort vacation has ended."

*Sally J. Sportsman is an Orlando, Florida-based freelance golf writer.*



BY SCOTT KAUFFMAN

# STILL PLENTY OF **GREEN** TO BE FOUND

DESPITE INDUSTRY ASSUMPTIONS,  
**INVESTORS ARE BUYING GOLF REAL ESTATE**

In the last decade, more than 1,200 U.S. golf facilities closed, according to the National Golf Foundation, and the total number of U.S. golfers dropped to 23.8 million from a high of 32.9 million in 2003. Yet, in spite of this NGF data and the not-so-

favorable mainstream media coverage that continues to perceive golf business as a non-growth industry, investors still see “green” in the underlying real estate asset class as an operating course.

At least that’s the attitude of numerous leading real estate brokers specializing in course marketing from coast-to-coast and a number of fairly new course buyers.



Scottish PGA Professional Kenny Nairn owns three Orlando-area properties — Eagle Creek Golf Club, RedTail Golf Club and King's Ridge Golf Club.



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- So say thanks to your golf course superintendent. Or make that, thanks a million.



Eagle Creek Golf Club is an upscale daily course in one of the country's top-selling master-planned communities, Lake Nona.



Courtesy of Eagle Creek Golf Club

To be sure, closed courses acquired for residential and commercial redevelopment have been – and will always remain – prime targets for real estate investors, builders and developers.

But there's a wave of new first-time buyers who keenly see opportunity or “green” when it comes to maintaining 9 or 18 holes of fairways, manicured greens and reimagined clubhouses for the modern-day club member/consumer attracted to these green-space settings. And many of these new investors are far from golf business rookies, whether it's former Yamaha national sales manager Brooks West, PGA, in Nashville; noted Scottish PGA Professional Kenny Nairn in Orlando, long-time American Golf executive Ken Hultz or career PGA Professional Rich Smith, to name a foursome of fairly new owners.

Indeed, while 1,200 courses might have closed their doors in the last decade, what's missing in that statistical backdrop is the fact there is arguably an equal number of individuals seeking contrarian strategies and actually buying courses and keeping them open.

Consider that Marcus & Millichap broker Steve Ekovich's Tampa-based Leisure Investment Properties Group secured more than 150 buyers during that same timeframe, and Jon Knudson of Scottsdale-based brokerage Insight Land & Investments counts more than 40 course transactions in the last 10 years.

Meanwhile, Adel, Georgia-based broker Hilda Allen closed on more than 40 course sales in the last five years alone (1,000-plus since 1991), and CBRE managing director Jeff Woolson of Carlsbad, California, whose Golf & Resort Properties is the leading leisure real estate brokerage firm in America with more than \$1.1 billion in sales volume since 1991, is averaging 10-15 course sales per year since 2009. And this is just a sampling of the real estate

**“IF YOU CAN PAY YOUR DEBT, THEN YOU'RE OBVIOUSLY DOING SOMETHING RIGHT.”**

**-KENNY NAIRN**

professionals in course brokerage.

Industry brokers and owners acknowledge supply and demand in the golf asset class hasn't fully recovered from the financial crisis 10 years ago, and there certainly are not as many large-scale institutional private equity-type buyers chasing investment yield in the golf space. Lack of Wall Street capital notwithstanding, golf business and its typical 100-plus acres of real property continues to attract a steady flow of interested shoppers and buyers.

“I'm not convinced that it's harder to find golf course buyers,” says Golf Property Analysts President Larry Hirsh, one of the country's leading golf course appraisers/brokers, principally focused in the Mid-Atlantic/Northeast

markets. “If the opportunity meets their investment criteria, they'll pursue it. Of course, there are still – believe it or not – some hobbyist buyers who simply like golf and have money. ... There are, in my experience, plenty of suitors for cash-flowing properties or those that have opportunity to cash flow.”

Therein explains the ongoing rush by course suitors, especially savvy golf-experienced professionals, to jump in the business. Simply put, many of these first-time buyers see opportunity to grow. Especially when the course or club is in the right place, at the right time – and equally as important, at the right price or valuation.

That was certainly the case of West, who closed last Dec. 31 on the former

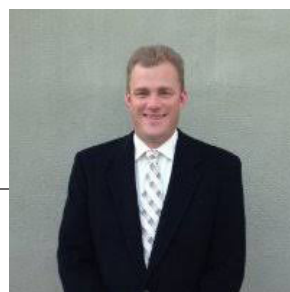


Crossing Golf Course (renamed Franklin Bridge Golf Club) in booming, affluent Williamson County outside Nashville with the help of a Small Business Administration loan and a few local investor partners. As West put it, he's either a revolutionary or just not so smart, he said with a confident smile of someone with 20-plus years in the business.

If anything, West, a graduate of Mississippi State University's PGA Golf Management program with impressive private club pedigree and strong sales experience for Ahead and Yamaha, is part of an exclusive course ownership club. According to Smith, former CEO/executive director of the PGA of America's North Florida Section and new owner of Charlotte Harbor National Golf Club at Bobcat Trail and Golf Links of Charlotte Harbor in Port Charlotte, Florida, there's probably 120 fellow PGA Professionals who own courses – out of some 29,000 members overall.

## “IF YOU TAKE CARE OF THE MEMBERS, THE P&L (PROFIT AND LOSS) WILL TAKE CARE OF ITSELF.”

-KEN HULTZ



“Twelve years ago there was way more interest in golf than there is today and there were a lot more larger companies (acquiring courses),” Ekovich points out. “What's really different is there's a lot more first-time buyers in the market and buyers new to golf because the affordability index for golf courses has totally changed. The model's changed.”

“Before, an average course that was \$4 million was out of most people's range. Now, that course, let's call it a pre-2006 property, is worth \$1.9 or \$2 million. As

a result, it opens up a lot more people. We've seen two different classes of buyers that have really come to the forefront in the last year or two. First is the golf course person with experience but working at other firms – someone seeing opportunities at courses being mismanaged by people who bought them and didn't know what they were doing, or they were in bad locations.”

The other first-time buyer increasingly kicking golf car tires these days, says Ekovich, is the “golf-passioned buyer” who believes golf's traditional ways of doing business no longer works and they can create more “EBITDA” or net income/value by adopting a more service-oriented, hospitality approach to golf. That can be everything from creating more “restaurant-type touch and feels throughout the club,” Ekovich adds, or adopting things like “internet marketing using the hotel model for tee times.”

Fueling this confluence of first-time buyer activity is the fact more courses are falling into that “affordable” \$2 million range, meaning the ability to raise capital from “family and friends” or SBA financing, for example, is more realistic. Of all the different commercial real estate asset classes, Woolson says golf and second-home developments are the only ones that haven't “fully recovered” in the recent real estate cycle or economic expansion.

“Golf is slightly ahead of second-home real estate,” Woolson notes, “But these are the two lagging asset classes for two different reasons. Second-home real estate hasn't recovered because there's a lot of people who don't want to own second homes. There's a lot of people, the Gen Xers and Millennials that are saying, ‘We don't know if we want to own a home in the mountains like our parents did.’”

“Golf, I still think, is a viable asset class. It provides great cash flow. And we've had this in our proposals a lot. We call it the tale of two cities. Some golf courses are worth a lot; some golf courses are worth nothing. And there's hardly anything in the middle. Golf course investments, and I don't mean playable wise, I mean investment wise. ... There's either really good investments or there's just really bad investments. Really bad ones are not trading and they're not doing well!”

That's not the case at Gettysvue Polo,



Golf & Country Club, situated high atop a matured affluent Knoxville, Tennessee, community that looks out over sweeping views of the Smoky Mountains. Featuring a strong membership base and great pool, tennis, fitness and clubhouse amenities, the private facility “always had my eye,” says Hultz. And Hultz knows this property well because his company, American Golf, oversaw the club prior to his scheduled closing April 9.

“Like anything, you identify areas of opportunity whenever you acquire a club or asset, and from our perspective, Gettysvue had continued to be enhanced by American Golf in every level,” says Hultz, who was buying the club with three other career golf operations professionals. “There's a better member experience, improved facilities. ... And I think myself and the friends/partners that are part of this, we all identified there's still those additional opportunities to drive membership and the member experience.”

“From our vantage point, which all of the partners feel and truly believe. If you take care of the members, the P&L (profit and loss) will take care of itself.”

Nairn, managing partner of Orlando-based CFL Golf, has been taking care of golf operations business since

2008, when he joined Celebration Golf Management after his organization acquired Celebration Golf Club near Walt Disney World. Ten years later, after his previous group dissolved, Nairn became the owner of three other successful Orlando-area properties: Eagle Creek Golf Club, an upscale daily course in one of the country's top-selling master-planned communities (Lake Nona); RedTail Golf Club, a semi-private facility in Sorrento at the doorstep of a soon-to-be-completed beltway that will encircle Orlando; and 36-hole King's Ridge Golf Club situated in an active age-restricted community.

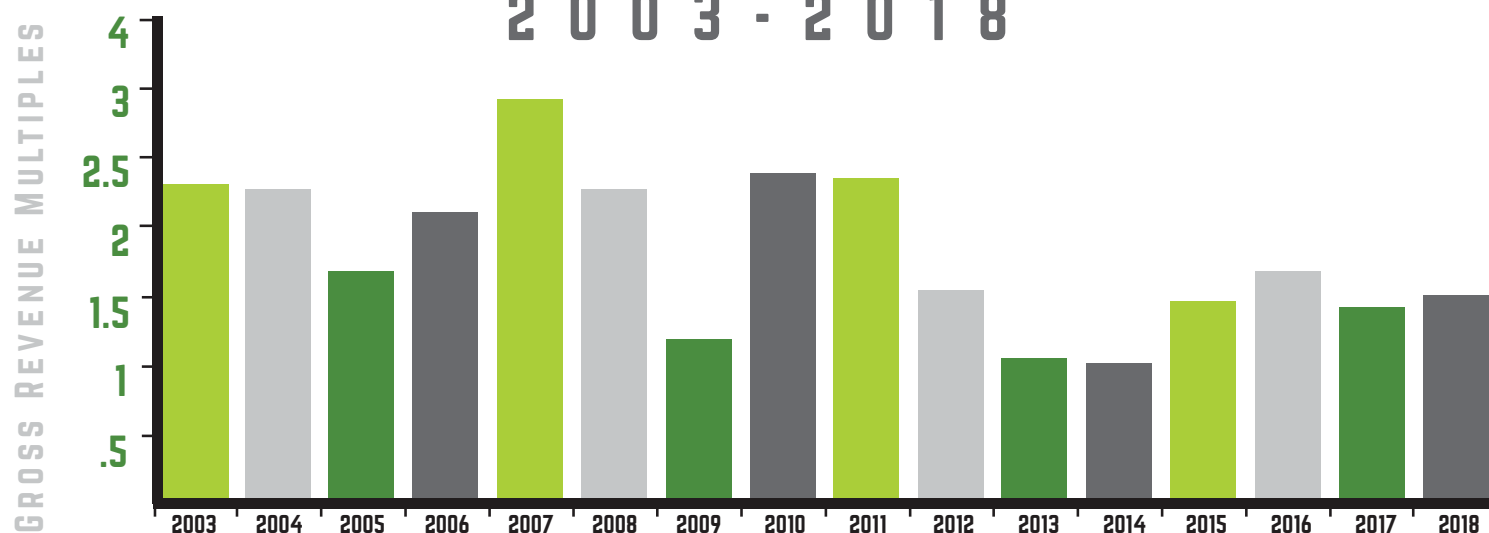
Nairn's partner in the new company is Larry Snyder, a third-generation certified course superintendent. In many respects, Nairn's adjustment in becoming a course owner has been matter-of-fact. “It's like everything,” Nairn notes. “You make a decision with all of the due diligence in advance.”

Without providing specific figures, privately held CFL Golf is successful to say the least as it enters its fourth season.

“If you can pay your debt, then you're obviously doing something right,” says Nairn, a native of St Andrews, Scotland. “And if you can pay your debt, you're usually putting some capital back

# GOLF COURSE SALES

2003 - 2018



SOURCE: CBRE RESEARCH



into the property and so forth. So, your other hat is obviously real estate. You got to buy it right. And obviously – location, location, location. I think we’ve been successful in those things.”

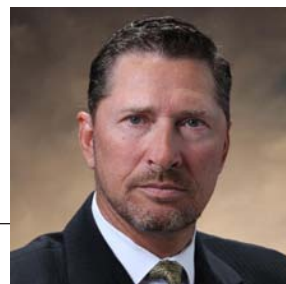
Regarding future golf property investments, Nairn, 48, says he’s not actively looking. And with his daughter beginning her last year of university, meaning “she’ll soon be off my payroll,” the Scotsman really doesn’t know what the future holds for his course portfolio and beloved game he represents so well as a member of the PGA of Great Britain & Ireland and European Golf Teachers Federation.

“From an investment perspective I can easily say I don’t know the out or the end result,” Nairn says. “I would not say we’re successful or not successful. Our doors are open; our courses are in great condition; we’ve got fantastic employees. Let’s put it that way.

“Golf is a very difficult business to be in, but I would say every business is difficult because you got to try and get

**“TWELVE YEARS AGO THERE WAS WAY MORE INTEREST IN GOLF THAN THERE IS TODAY AND THERE WERE A LOT MORE LARGER COMPANIES (ACQUIRING COURSES).”**

**-STEVE EKOVIK**



your experiences correct. You got to try and get your marketing down. I’m coming up on over 20 years in Orlando and every year I still think about marketing. OK, what did I try last year? What was my success; what were my failures? It’s working but it’s just bloody hard work.”

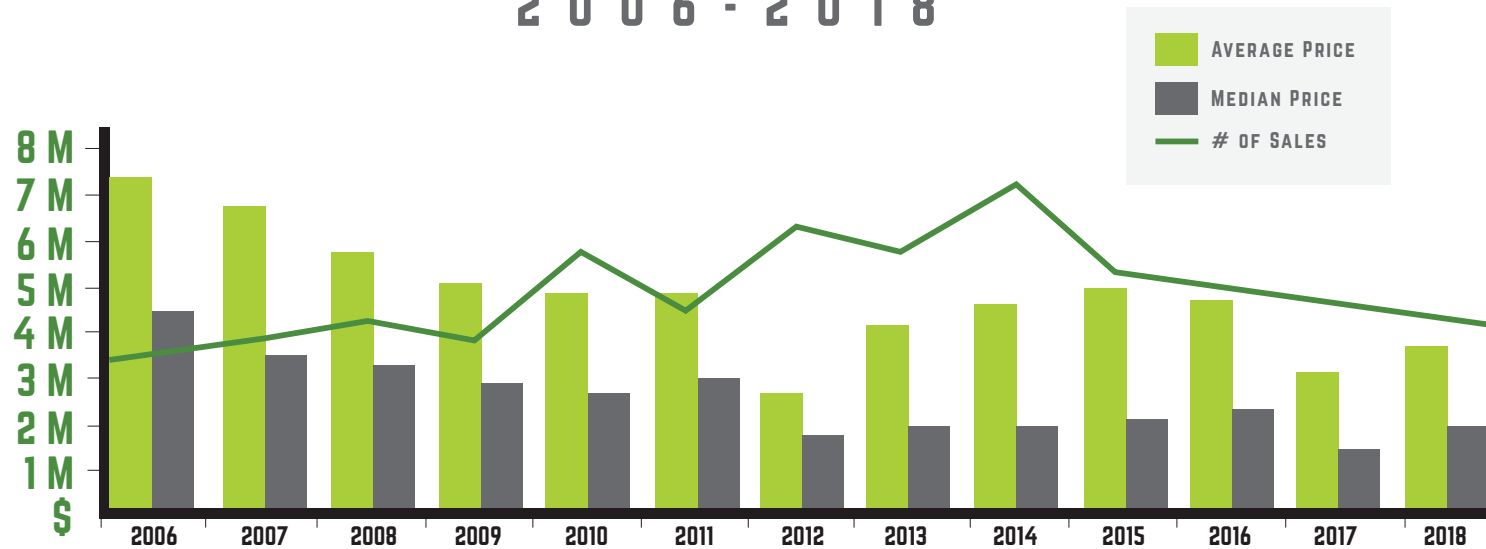
For a growing number of first-time

course owners with golf backgrounds like Nairn, it’s bloody hard work they wouldn’t trade for anything else right now. **76**

Scott Kauffman is a golf business writer and the managing director of Aloha Media Group.

## AVERAGE HISTORICAL GOLF PRICES

2006 - 2018



SOURCE: LEISURE INVESTMENT PROPERTIES GROUP OF MARCUS & MILLICAP

## New York Proposes Costly Tax Bill for Golf Courses

The New York state legislature is considering tax bills that could send golf course owners in that state into a tailspin.

The pending legislation, Senate Bill S4420 (Carlucci) and Assembly Bill A6444 (Galef), would allow municipalities to assess golf courses and clubs in New York based on the property’s highest and best use rather than its current use. The financial impact to owners would be significant, with current costs increasing potentially up to 10 times.

How golf course properties are taxed can vary widely across the country. Many are already taxed at the “highest and best” rate, so the proposal in New York isn’t unique. But for others, they may have been given special considerations as open or green space for communities, and the desired development that was often built around them.

As Larry Hirsch, Golf Property Analysts president, explained in his recent blog post, ([golfprop.com/blog/](http://golfprop.com/blog/)), “The practice of preferential assessments for golf properties provides substantial relief to golf courses and country clubs when compared to most jurisdictions, which assess based on the highest and best use of the land. In many cases, the highest and best use is for some form of alternative development that would use the land more efficiently.”



As local governments see their tax revenue belts tighten, they are looking for new ways to meet their own budgets. So even if a change in New York tax laws doesn’t seem to have any impact on a Midwest club, golf course owners need to keep their eye on this vote.

In his article about the tax proposal for Global Golf Post ([globalgolfpost.com](http://globalgolfpost.com), April 8), founder and publisher Jim Nugent wrote, “If you don’t live in New York, here’s why you need to care and pay attention: If the new tax framework works there, it could catch on elsewhere. Can’t you just see Los Angeles County trying to revalue Los Angeles Country Club in

a property tax shakedown?” Whichever way the New York legislature votes, the seeds of taxation changes continue to be planted. As Hirsch wrote, “It really comes down to what the (often politically partisan) local politicians feel is a priority – open space or tax revenue.”

Hirsch also noted in his blog there are ways to combat the higher tax assessment process, and owners need to investigate their options thoroughly.

Ronnie Miles, National Golf Course Owners Association director of advocacy, advises course owners to get out in front of the situation and make their voices heard. He says the association will continue to monitor this bill, and others like it, and assist owners when possible.

For more on this fast-moving story, see these news reports online: [golfprop.com/blog/globalgolfpost.com](http://golfprop.com/blog/globalgolfpost.com)

Larry Hirsch, Golf Property Analysts president, ([Larry@golfprop.com](http://Larry@golfprop.com)), and Ronnie Miles, NCCOA director of advocacy, ([rmiles@ngcoa.org](mailto:rmiles@ngcoa.org)), contributed to this article.



# Simulator market continues growth as product improves

BY STEVE EUBANKS

## They're seemingly everywhere now, even in the White House.

The Washington Post recently reported that Pres. Donald Trump installed a high-end golf simulator in the residence quarters complete with all the data features that consumers have come to expect from their experiences at Top-Golf and elsewhere. But the president's purchase shouldn't surprise anyone. Simulators are the hottest trend in the industry – one that is providing an alternative revenue stream to operators, especially during foul weather – and one that could become a must-have to maintain a competitive advantage.

Simulators are much more than indoor practice. The old models allowed players to video their swings and gain some data, but there was no interaction or immediate feedback. Now a TrackMan simulator will not only allow golfers to virtually play hundreds of courses, including some of the best in the world, the golfer can track club head speed, ball speed, trajectory, carry distance, spin rate, curvature, and angle of attack, all without setting foot outdoors.

"It's really cool, especially with the last few winters we have had in Montana," said Tim Moore, a PGA professional who runs a simulator center in downtown Billings. "It's great to come down and hit some balls and kind of keep your swing over the winter. When the season gets here, people are in



GOLFZON simulators are used in the company's annual tournament played around the world.

mid-season form a lot earlier, and they are ready to play and they go out and start having fun right away."

As is the case with so many innovations, the Koreans are ahead of the world on the simulator front. Simulator golf centers have become the new karaoke bars in Seoul with 40 percent of Koreans having their first introduction to the game at a simulator. Today, thou-

sands of Koreans flock to simulator bars for indoor golf and social engagement. There is even a professional simulator tour in Korea, with televised events that include commentators and caddies.

Simulators make perfect sense in places like Chicago where the temperature in February reached 30 below zero. But they also make sense at places like Bradenton Country Club in Florida, where August afternoons are akin of standing on the sun. Bradenton CC installed a simulator in what was once a storage room. It is used almost every day.

"There is a demand," said Steve Jurick, executive director of the Miami Valley (Ohio) Golf Association. "And from a golf business standpoint, it extends your revenue streams in parts of the year when you would not necessarily have it. (Simulator golf) is a wonderful supplement.

"There's technology you can use to indicate ball flight patterns for teaching," Jurick said. "Then you have the graphics and the holes and the setting that you're in. It's a lot different than the old days. The graphics are much better."

"We installed one simulator a year ago and it went so well we added two more this winter," said Tony Arrigo, general manager and co-owner of Beechwood Golf Club in Fairview Township, Pennsylvania. "If there has been a magic potion for us, it is the simulators."

Magic potion or added amenity, simulators are not going away. And as the world gets more technologically dependent, operators will either add simulators at their courses or lose business to those who do.

Steve Eubanks is an Atlanta-based freelance writer and New York Times bestselling author.

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2018	~850



# City Buys Golf Course For Future Green Space

By Steve Eubanks

If there's one thing missing in Northern New Jersey, it's green space. Yes, it's the "Garden State" in the center and west, but any area with a view of Manhattan is prime real estate. And if it isn't already covered in concrete, it's an oasis.

That's what made the West Orange Township Council's decision this past March to float a \$12 million bond to buy a golf course both encouraging and understandable. It also sets a great precedent for future golf course sales to cities or states.

The back story is all too common in our industry. Rock Spring Golf Course, a 138-acre track dating back to 1925, sold a few years ago to the Montclair Golf Club in West Orange. But property taxes, maintenance, rising employment costs, a soft revenue market and other factors kept the course from being economically viable, even though players can see midtown Manhattan from the fairways. So, Montclair put the property

up for sale with the understanding that if the city did not buy the land for \$11.2 million – far more than the cash-flow value of an old, tight public golf course, even in that high-priced area of the country – then a developer would buy it and build high-density housing.

One resident after another petitioned the town council to buy the land and keep it green. "If we lose this land, we will never recover it," West Orange

resident Mike Brick told the council. "What a developer can do to the land is not in our best interest."

The argument was not that the golf course had to be economically viable for the city. Residents made the case that the \$12 million was needed to save what little green space remained in their town.

"This is our destiny," said Council President Jerry Guarino. "It's a risk that, if we didn't take it, we would be kicking



Photo courtesy of Rocky Springs

ourselves down the road for years and years and years to come."

West Orange Mayor Robert Parisi agreed, saying, "What we lack is a lot of land. This is a unique opportunity. It creates the possibility to do a lot of things."

In the end, the council voted 4-1 in favor of the bond. Residents in attendance at the March 19 meeting erupted in cheers at the vote. The only "no" came from councilman Joe Krakoviak, who worried about the impact of \$12 million in new debt on the taxpayers.

"I'm going to have to go with my mind and not my heart," Krakoviak said.

So, what does a town council vote in New Jersey mean for the rest of the golf industry?

For starters it shows that, faced with a choice between green space and high-density development, cities will opt for the former, even if means overpaying for the land.

It also means that municipalities are softening their myopic views of golf as snobby and exclusionary; that the message of golf as a good neighbor, an employer of hourly and blue-collar people, has finally permeated the political bubble.

And it means that golf is now seen, at least in highly developed areas, as revenue-generating greenspace for all, not a taxpayer-subsidized recreational outlet for the few.

Rock Spring will remain a golf course for at least two years, at which point the West Orange council will re-evaluate. But with limited land and trees, grass and ponds in short supply, the township's newest muni could be a model for the future.

*Steve Eubanks is an Atlanta-based freelance writer and New York Times bestselling author.*

## Golf Course Operator's Bill of Rights

for Marketing and Distribution of Tee Times

1. Operator shall have total ownership of his or her tee time inventory, including the ability to share access with or restrict access to any tee time agency.
2. Operator shall have full control of all pricing for all tee time inventory across all channels of distribution and online tee time agencies, which includes retaining the right to lowest price guarantee on his/her own website.
3. Operator's tee time availability and pricing shall be accurately displayed and free from misrepresentation.
4. Operator shall receive comprehensive and transparent data related to all performance and activity with all distribution partners, agencies and affiliates, including but not limited to customer name and email address, tee time reservation data, revenue, price paid for tee times, impressions and clicks.
5. Operator shall have the option to pay cash for all technology and marketing services.
6. Operator shall retain all rights associated with his/her business brand, name and likeness, which shall not be used in marketing by any agent or affiliate without the Operator's written permission.
7. Operator shall have the right to cancel any agreement with any tee time agency or affiliate without being subject to excessive fees, penalties or evergreen terms.
8. Operator shall have the right to enforce their own policies and procedures, including but not limited to cancellation or no-show policies, when such policies are in conflict with partnered or affiliated tee time agencies.

This "Operator's Bill of Rights" is presented by the Golf USA Tee Time Coalition as a quick reference for golf course owners, golf course operators and PGA Professionals to consider when evaluating and negotiating for services related to tee time software and distribution. Consideration of the concepts articulated in this Operator's Bill of Rights will assist in positioning your facility to develop an industry leading service relationship with its providers.

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## Expand Your Employee Recruitment

More Diversity has a Big Impact on Your Success

By Jeremy Eskenazi

Is your team diverse?

Do you invest to ensure your team reflects the needs and attitudes of your customers and clients? They need to reflect the communities your employees live in, work in and provide services to.

When a lot of people think about diversity, they focus on gender, ethnicity and age. These are important to keep focus on, for sure, but there is another kind of diversity that is often overlooked. This is diversity of thoughts, background and experiences. If elements of the latter are missing in your organization, it's likely that everyone thinks the same way; and new ideas, new ways to problem solve, and innovation may be stunted. When you have employees who only follow the boss, the only ideas you have are from that one boss.

While there is no "one size fits all" playbook for attracting diversity, you will want to make your organization attractive for diverse talent. In order to effectively attract diverse candidates, here are four practices that have been effective:

**1 REFERRAL PROGRAMS.** If you have great talent on your team who are highly engaged and doing a great job, they likely have similar friends. Consider offering incentives with shorter payout times. More immediate returns can ensure your team is helping to attract people who are a good fit. You can also have them act as ambassadors in alumni groups, associations or clubs in which they take part.

**2 EARLY CAREERS/UNIVERSITY STRATEGY.** Attracting talent right out of school is often a strategy for helping shape the career of generally younger people, but is also a great place to find diversity. A strong university recruiting strategy is a terrific way to easily target diversity through student clubs and organizations. Setting up early career development programs and considering those in majors that are not what you'd traditionally look for are also good for your employer brand, and ensures your talent can develop with your business.

**3 CULTURAL AWARENESS TRAINING FOR HIRING MANAGERS.** We know this group often needs help to build relationships. While it's unwise to force training on managers (and often backfires), integrating training that helps them identify unconscious bias is an area of development that has taken off in recent years and has been effective in many organizations.

**4 WORKPLACE PREPAREDNESS.** It is one thing to say you want diversity – setting up your physical space and your benefits program to accommodate it is another. Do you offer extended maternity/paternity leave, and are your human resources policies inclusive for LGBTQ individuals? Does your gym space have areas that are exclusive for women? How is your pay equity based on gender? These are things that can help attract top talent and show you will welcome them as equal employees without singling them out, or making them feel that they won't find a sense of belonging at your company.

In addition to finding the right candidates, diversity brings several important things to your organi-

zation. Imagine if the people who applied for your job postings came in for an interview and didn't see anyone who looked like them, or if all the people who interviewed them asked the same questions in the same way. They would likely not be very interested in continuing the discussion. Your employer brand is only as good as what employees and candidates will say about you when you're not in the room. Taking the opportunity to show you are a progressive company that is investing visibly in many areas of diversity will be obvious from their first encounter with you.

While it is generally true that almost everyone values diversity, you may have noticed that many in younger generations are very vocal about their values. Moreover, many of them expect diversity and can be very outspoken about how much it matters to them in a workplace. By bringing in a diverse group of people to your organization, you will have access to broader networks, which will spur further diversity opportunities and all the benefits it brings. Think of how much more likely it is that diverse people who enjoy working at your company will introduce you and advocate for you in their circles.

While the business reasons for diversity are compelling on their own, many jurisdictions also have regulatory requirements that you have to consider as well. But don't let regulations drive your diversity efforts. Most importantly, your organization should invest in diversity because it's not only the right thing to do, but you will get much better business results. All types of diversity bring something new to the table, and who doesn't need fresh ideas?

Jeremy Eskenazi is an internationally recognized speaker, author of *RecruitConsult! Leadership*, and founder of Riviera Advisors. For more information, visit [RivieraAdvisors.com](http://RivieraAdvisors.com)

There is another kind of diversity that is often overlooked. This is diversity of thoughts, background and experiences.



# Final THOUGHTS

**Debbie Jeffries**  
Owner  
RiverRidge Golf Complex  
Eugene, Oregon



## What do you think is the main reason the number of golf course closures keeps climbing?

The short, simple answer is economics. Many suggest it is a correction due to the oversupply created by NGF forecasts in the late 1980s. It is primarily a demand issue today. I think it is the lack of precedence by the leaders of the industry (USGA, PGA, NGF) to prioritize teaching the basic skills of the game to develop new golfers. The long answer is far more complicated. The leaders of the golf industry fail to understand and embrace changes that directly impact the demand side of golf. This is not an "if you build it they will come" industry.

## How has downsizing from a 36-hole course to a 9-hole course changed the demographics of your customers?

This will be our first year. At a glance, it does not appear to change the demographics. Almost 90 percent of our golfers are within the 974 zip code prefix.

## You have a separate events center at your facility. How important is incorporating hospitality/events into your business?

It is an important option for interested groups. For example, we might have a wedding with guests that enjoy hitting on the range for the first time.

## What kind of events do you host and are they primarily related to golf?

It depends on the time of year. During the winter, most events are not golf related. This is the first full season at the new location (the building was moved from across the street), so we do not have statistics at this time.

## Do you have any programs focused on junior players or growing women's participation?

Get Golf Ready, The First Tee, Special Olympics, University of Oregon golf classes, PGA Junior Golf League and hosting high school golf teams. This past year, the PGA Junior League of our facility had four teams, creating our own league in addition to playing other teams. This is in large part due to Aaron Oakley, PGA apprentice, pro shop and event manager, who focuses on the fun as well as teaching the physical skill and growing the game.

## What is the best advice you ever got from someone about running a golf course?

We have been in the industry since 1975. Honestly, we can't remember the "best" advice. There have been many people that coached and guided Ric [Jeffries, PGA, director of golf instruction, co-owner] and me. Our advice: This industry is not for the "faint of heart" and MUST recognize growing the game is the foundation for success.

## What do you think is the No. 1 thing that golf industry organizations can do to assist business owners like yourself?

Establish the No. 1 priority as teaching the game of golf to grow the number of players.

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Are you a current member of the National Golf Course Owners Association?

Yes  No

**1) Do you wish to receive/continue to receive *Golf Business* FREE?**

Yes  No

Signature  \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**2) Which one option best characterizes your organization? (check one only)**

- 01  Golf Course Facility/Group of Facilities
- 02  Off-Course Golf Retailer
- 03  Golf Industry Manufacturer/Vendor/Distributor
- 04  Golf Course Consultant

**3) What one option most closely matches your job function/title? (select one only)**

- 01  President/CEO
- 02  Owner/Operator
- 03  Chairman of the Board
- 04  CFO/Financial Manager
- 05  General Manager
- 06  Club Manager
- 07  Director of Golf
- 08  Executive/National/Regional Director/Manager
- 09  Purchasing Manager/Buyer
- 10  Golf Professional
- 11  Golf Superintendent
- 12  Member, Board of Directors
- 13  Marketing/Sales Manager/Director
- 15  Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**4) Which one best describes the nature of your organization? (select one only)**

- 10  Private
- 11  Privately-Owned Daily Fee
- 12  Semi-Private
- 13  Resort
- 14  Municipal/State/County
- 16  Military
- 17  University/College
- 18  Driving Range/Practice Facility
- 20  Development Company
- 28  Golf Course Builder
- 21  Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- 21  Not Applicable

**5) Are you affiliated with a golf course management company?**

01  yes 02  no

**6) How many facilities, in total, are you personally responsible for?**

80  less than 2 83  10 or more  
81  2 - 4 99  Not applicable  
82  5 - 9

**7) What is the average greens fee for a typical round of golf at your facility? If you work at multiple facilities, please indicate the average greens fee across all facilities.**

- 01  nothing/private 05  \$75 - \$99
- 02  o less than \$25 06  \$100 - \$149
- 03  \$25 - \$49 07  \$150 or more
- 04  \$50 - \$74 08  not applicable

**8) What is the total annual budget or expenditures for which you are responsible?**

- 50  less than \$99,000 53  \$500,000 - \$999,000
- 51  \$100,000 - \$249,000 54  \$1,000,000 - \$2,499,000
- 52  \$250,000 - \$499,000 55  \$2,500,000 or more

**9) In which ways are you personally involved in your organization's purchasing decisions?**

- 60  Determine annual budget expenditures
- 61  Authorize final purchases
- 62  Determine needs of the operation
- 63  Specify/recommend vendors or suppliers
- 64  Specify/recommend specific brands
- 65  Evaluate brands for purchase

**10) Which products/services listed below do you specify, recommend, buy or approve the purchase? (select all that apply)**

- A  Golf Cars
- B  Turf Equipment
- C  Course Design/Construction/Renovation
- D  Irrigation & Drainage
- E  Chemicals, Fertilizer & Seed
- G  Clubhouse Design/Construction/Renovation
- H  Financial Services
- T  Legal Services
- F  Course Accessories
- J  Insurance
- U  Marketing Services
- L  Pro Shop Apparel
- M  Pro Shop Equipment
- P  Food & Beverage
- R  Computers/Technology
- V  Furniture/Fixtures
- W  Human Resources/Staffing
- K  Consulting

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# Golf Course MARKET

## Cleveland Country Club Shelby, NC

Just 40 minutes west of Charlotte, private, 1926 championship course with large southern house with pool.

**UNDER CONTRACT**

Possible lender financing available. Contact Brett at Miller Management Associates, Inc. 828-775-7765, brett@mmagolf.com.

## Confidential - Retail Store Carolinas Location

Yes, a retail store that is profitable and more than just supplemental income. Includes the business, equipment, trade name, inventory (fluctuates) Has been around over 12 years with two owners and this year is best year ever! \$145,000 plus current inventory. Call Brett at Miller Management Associates, Inc. 828-775-7765 brett@mmagolf.com.

## Crosswinds Signature Par 3 Greenville, SC

Unique upscale lighted, 18 hole Par 3 course located in incredible location in the heart of the Upstate of SC. Hot!

**SOLD**

Includes building and equipment included in this long term leasehold. Tremendous upside with addition of new revenue streams. Contact Brett at Miller Management Associates, brett@mmagolf.com 828-775-7765 for more info. \$625,000. Possible owner financing.

## Linville Falls Golf Club Linville, NC

BACK ON THE MARKET! Championship 18-hole layout designed by Lee Trevino with functional pro shop, grill, attached cart shed, driving range, Bent greens Bermuda fairways, with highway frontage on 221 to the tourist destinations of Boone, Banner Elk and Blowing Rock. Owner financing PREFERRED with solid down payment. Contact Brett Miller at Miller Management Associates, brett@mmagolf.com, 828-775-7765.

## Mount Mitchell Golf Club & Condos Burnsville, NC

NEW LISTING LEGENDARY MOUNT MITCHELL GOLF CLUB AND CONDOS - One owner (almost 50 years) and first time on the market. This stunning mountain classic sits at the foot of the largest peak in the eastern US and has the beautiful Toe River trout stream flowing beside it and just off the Blue Ridge Parkway. Bent grass greens and fairways, this championship course has always been in the rankings and on everyone's must play list. Clubhouse, restaurant, bar, grill, meeting room, 10 condos building site. Call us for more information. Miller Management Associates, Inc. Brett D. Miller, brett@mmagolf.com, 828-775-7765. In conjunction with Hilda Allen Real Estate.

## Retreat at Lake Toxaway Country Club Lake Toxaway, NC

NEW: Stunning mountain home/lodge/retreat at one of Western NC's premier communities Lake Toxaway Country Club. Incredible 60 mile mountain and lake views from all rooms in this 5700 square foot custom home. Recent reappraisal at \$1,345,000, priced now at \$849,900. Call Brett at Miller Management Associates, 828-775-7765 or brett@mmagolf.com

## Silver Creek Plantation Golf Course Morganton, NC

Western North Carolina, 18 hole championship design, rolling terrain with Bermuda fairways and bent grass greens. Includes excellent practice facility that is golf school ready, practice green, pavilion, spectacular clubhouse. NO deferred maintenance. Contact Brett at Miller Management Associates, 828-775-7765 or brett@mmagolf.com additional lots and land available. PRICE REDUCTION NOW \$1,150,000 Owner Financing Possible.

## Skyland Lakes Golf Club Fancy Gap, VA

Beautiful, rolling 18 hole course located ON the Blue Ridge Parkway near the VA/NC state line. Includes pro shop, snack bar, rec room and 6 lodge rooms in clubhouse. Also, 39 lots included!! Separate maintenance facility, includes equipment. Great owner operator option and owner finance option available. Only \$750,000. Contact us for more information. Brett Miller at Miller Management Associates, brett@mmagolf.com; 828-775-7765. In conjunction with Hilda Allen Real Estate.

## Springdale Resort Canton, NC

Stunning 388+/- acre property with development potential for a variety of uses from equestrian to Camp, winery, RV park.

**SOLD**

Includes maintenance buildings, restaurant, and water plant. This is a true opportunity in Western NC with limited golf courses and large land tracts. Close proximity to Asheville. Contact Brett at Miller Management Associates, brett@mmagolf.com; 828-775-7765.

## Waynesville Inn Resort and Spa Waynesville, NC

NEW LISTING: The iconic 1926 Waynesville Inn Resort and Spa. Located in the Blue Ridge Mountains just outside of Asheville, NC is this historic, 27 hole Donald Ross (first nine) player friendly course with 114 rooms, 6 meeting rooms, 2 restaurants, outdoor pavilion tent, spa and more. This facility has hosted Presidents, professionals, celebrities and guests from across the world. 144 gentle acres that have water, sewer, zoned R-1 grand-fathered as commercial, so endless development possibilities. Additional acreage available. Proof of funds and CA required for private showing. \$10,000,000. Miller Management Associates, Inc. Contact Brett at 828-775-7765 or brett@mmagolf.com.

## AUCTION Aspen Lakes Golf Course Sisters, Oregon

Aspen Lakes Golf Course & Development Land in Sisters, Oregon. Three (3) Lots/800+ Acres - a once in a Generation Development/Investment opportunity! One of the last remaining Parcels Zoned for a Resort/Residential Development. Bid Deadline May 28, 2019; Auction Date June 4, 2019. <http://www.keen-summit.com/projects/bankruptcy-sale-aspen-lakes-golf-course-and-development-sisters-oregon/>

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News from the National Golf Course Owners Association

# NGCOA In Action



## INDUSTRY EVENTS

### Sign onto the 2019 Veteran Golfers Association Tour

The Veteran Golfers Association (VGA) is dedicated to enriching the lives of Veterans and their family members through the camaraderie and sportsmanship of golf, and hosts more than 250 tournaments annually for its members, culminating in a VGA national championship. **Sign your golf course up today to participate in the 2019 VGA Tour season; email [info@vgagolf.org](mailto:info@vgagolf.org).**



### #inviteHER to play at your course!

The #inviteHER movement seeks to create an enjoyable, welcoming experience for those interested in trying the game or picking it back up—whether through a group lesson, complimentary clinic, driving range session or on-course experience. **Many owners/operators have committed to transforming existing women's programs into official #inviteHER sponsored events;** facilities can access complimentary programming toolkits, best practices, and marketing templates for hosting #inviteHER events of their own; **learn more about this initiative at [LPGAwomensnetwork.com/inviteher](http://LPGAwomensnetwork.com/inviteher).**

### Engage, empower and support women's golf at Women's Golf Day, June 4

Join the voices of 900 locations in 52 countries for a greater cause, affecting people around the world, and be recognized as an official participant in a growing movement that inspires women and girls to learn the skills that last a lifetime. Promoting your participation will result in more visibility and positive exposure for your course, increasing business year-round!

Register your course today at [womensgolfday.com/register](http://womensgolfday.com/register).

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JUNE 4, 2019

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OVER 50,000 PARTICIPANTS AROUND THE WORLD

MORE THAN 15 MILLION GLOBAL IMPRESSIONS TO NEARLY 10 MILLION USERS ACROSS TWITTER AND INSTAGRAM

#WOMENSGOLFDAY

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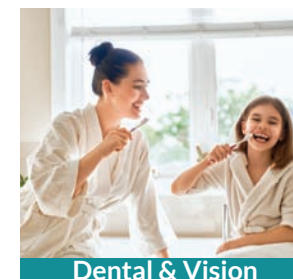
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## COMMUNITY



### What are Other NGCOA Members Talking About on Accelerate?

Did you know there are Accelerate Members-Only Communities you can join, based on your interests, needs and engagement with NGCOA? **Visit [accelerate.ngcoa.org](http://accelerate.ngcoa.org) to read more about and add to the discussion of critical issues in golf business.**

- Accelerate (General) Community for all NGCOA members
- Supplier Community for NGCOA's Corporate Members
- Advocacy Issues & Alerts
- Golf Business TechCon and Golf Business Conference for event attendees
- Trading Post where members can buy and sell used equipment

Here is a sample of recent discussions; reply to these, or post your own for member feedback!

#### Residents' Financial Support of Golf Course

“I am once again asking the residents that live around my golf course to get financially involved. Has anyone been successful in getting their Property associations involved in getting residents to contribute to the course?”

#### Semi-Private vs. Private

“I'm wondering how clubs have addressed the topic of moving from private play only to offering some level of public play (outside of tournaments)? Advantages, disadvantages, membership reactions, etc.”

#### Restaurant Leasing

“I am currently looking at leasing our restaurant...I am hoping to hear from those of you that made this work and also from those of you that this didn't work for, what you think might have helped it succeed.”

### NGCOA Member Trading Post

Did you know Accelerate Member Community has a “Trading Post” where you can buy and sell used equipment? Visit [accelerate.ngcoa.org/communities](http://accelerate.ngcoa.org/communities) and join the Trading Post community today.



**NEW! GBC19 attendees can now access speaker presentation materials and begin post-conference discussions in the 2019 Golf Business Conference community!**

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## GOLF BUSINESS PODCAST

## AFFILIATE NEWS



### Michigan Golf Course Association

#### Legislative Day

June 6  
Mi Golf Alliance “Lunch on the Capitol Lawn”  
Contact Jada Paisley at [jpaisley@michingangca.org](mailto:jpaisley@michingangca.org) or 800-860-8575



### Michigan Golf Course Association

#### MGCA Annual Golf Outing

July 17  
Bedford Valley Golf Course;  
Gull Lake View  
Contact Jada Paisley at [jpaisley@michingangca.org](mailto:jpaisley@michingangca.org) or 800-860-8575



### Midwest Golf Course Owners Association

#### 14 Annual Owners Outing and Field Day

July 8  
Windsong Farm Golf Club,  
Maple Plain, MN  
Contact Curt Walker at [mwgcga@aol.com](mailto:mwgcga@aol.com) or 952-854-7272



### NGCOA Mid-Atlantic

#### NGCOA MA VIP Reception

September 24  
Woodmont Country Club,  
Rockville, MD  
Contact David Norman at [dnorman008@gmail.com](mailto:dnorman008@gmail.com) or 804-708-9760



### Ohio Golf Course Owners Association

#### Buckeye Golf Association Field Day

July 15  
Tannenhau Golf Club, Alliance, OH  
Contact Ken Guenther at [keng@buckeyegolf.com](mailto:keng@buckeyegolf.com) or 614-563-5551



### NGCOA Mid-Atlantic

#### NGCOA MA Annual Meeting

September 25  
Woodmont Country Club,  
Rockville, MD  
Contact David Norman at [dnorman008@gmail.com](mailto:dnorman008@gmail.com) or 804-708-9760



### Ohio Golf Course Owners Association

#### Buckeye Golf Association Field Day

July 16  
Locust Hills Golf Club, Springfield, OH  
Contact Ken Guenther at [keng@buckeyegolf.com](mailto:keng@buckeyegolf.com) or 614-563-5551



### Save the Date!

#### California Golf Course Owners Association (CGCOA) Southern California Fundraiser

Monday, July 8, 2019 |  
MountainGate Country Club |  
Los Angeles, CA

Contact Marc Connerly at  
916-456-0500 or  
[mconnerly@connerlyandassociates.com](mailto:mconnerly@connerlyandassociates.com)



### Save the Date!

#### North Carolina Golf Course Owners Association (NCGCOA) Annual Meeting

October 8-9, 2019 | Pine Needles Lodge and Golf Club | Southern Pines, NC

Join owners and professionals at Pine Needles Lodge and Golf Club for a two day event of education, networking and golf. The event is open to all North Carolina owners, operators (whether or not NGCOA members at present) and their guests and/or CMAA members, Carolinas PGA professionals, CGCSA members, club reps, and vendors. Preferred rate accommodations are available on-site. Visit [ncgolf.org](http://ncgolf.org) or contact David Norman at 804-708-9760 or [Dnorman008@gmail.com](mailto:Dnorman008@gmail.com) for more information.



# NGCOA In Action

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