

Management Company Update

Smaller management companies enjoying growth

Troon Golf, KemperSports and Billy Capser Golf Management are grabbing a lot of the headlines with additions to their expanding portfolios. But smaller and newer management companies are also getting in on the growth spurt, especially ones run by long-time golf executives.



Eagle Trace Golfers Club



Pete Davison



Joey Garon

Joey Garon formed a new third-party management company called New Leaf Recreation LLC, which operates courses in Louisiana and Minnesota. Garon previously ran Bonita Bay's in-house New Leaf Management, which managed 14 courses, three beach clubs, five spas and fitness centers, four kayak and canoe parks, two marinas and 10 restaurants. With Bonita Bay facing its own challenges, Garon broke off the management arm and recently added Eagle Trace Golfers Club, a semi-private facility on the west bank of the Mississippi River in Clearwater, Minn.

The par-70 layout, which opened in 1995, was designed by John Ruggieri and features a 9.4-acre practice facility and a 10,000-square-foot clubhouse.

Eagle Trace owner Bruce Gohman named New Leaf to oversee general management, operations, marketing and human resources.

Pete Davison is back managing high-

end private clubs with a contract to manage Raveneaux Country Club near Houston. After 25 years of managing the PGA Tour's TPC Network and retiring from the business, Davison started Sage Golf Group Worldwide. The three-year deal with Raveneaux covers an 18-hole course, 12 lighted outdoor tennis courts, junior Olympic-sized pool and a 60,000 square foot clubhouse that is fresh off a \$2 million renovation.

Raveneaux is located in Spring, Texas, and owned by JP Realty Partners, a diversified commercial real estate developer and investor. Sage Golf Group is looking at securing other third-party management deals while several new golf course development projects slowly go through their approval.

Escalante Golf President David McDonald secured a third-party management contract for Orchard Ridge Country Club in Fort Wayne, Ind. The Fort Worth, Texas-based golf course owner and operator now has 10 clubs in his portfolio. Escalante has acquired a number of courses over the past two years including the Country Club of the North in Beavercreek, Ohio, The Crosby National in Rancho Santa Fe, Calif., and the Raven at Three Peaks in Silverthorne, Colo. Besides Orchard Ridge, Escalante also gained another high-profile management contract at The Old American just north of Dallas.

Bob Barrett and his Birmingham, Ala.-based Honours Golf Company were selected by the City of Oxford, Ala., to manage all golf and clubhouse operations for Cider Ridge Golf Club. Located midway between Birmingham and Atlanta and minutes from Talladega Race Track, the municipal course features a par 72, 18-hole course set within a 450-home golf community.

—Golf Inc. staff

Superstition turnaround

Doc Bellitz and his OB Sports Golf Management team produced quite a turnaround for the foreclosed Superstition Mountain private golf community that was developed and formerly owned by Lyle Anderson. Two years ago, operations at the 36-hole private club that once cost \$100,000 to join, were bleeding approximately \$4.7 million. After the club's lender, Deere Credit, and Phoenix-based receiver MCA Financial gained control of the property, OB Sports came on board and helped devise a new membership plan with Superstition's existing members, that now calls for a non-refundable \$15,000 initiation fee, reduced monthly dues of \$635 from \$700 and an understanding that one of the courses will be regularly rotated as a public-access layout.

With the new Pinal County court-approved plan in place, OB Sports sold 40 new memberships, and is on track to operate in the black for the first time in history. Superstition was acquired by a resident-member for \$13.5 million at a court-approved sale and is now being held by a new ownership entity called JSH Time.

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