

STMA LAUNCHES MIDWEST SPORTS TURF INSTITUTE

The Sports Turf Managers' Association hopes to attract professional turf managers from all across the Midwest to its first Midwest Sports Turf Institute, June 26, at the College of DuPage in Glen Ellyn, IL.

The show is being modeled after the successful Sports Turf Institute held for the past three years at California Polytechnic University in Pomona, CA. That event combines a half-day of seminars on field construction and care with an afternoon trade show. More than 400 turf managers from six states attended the Cal Poly event this year.

STMA executive director Kent Kurtz says the Midwest Institute will include a "hands-on" demonstration of baseball infield preparation in addition to the seminars, show and lunch. "The idea is to gather the best speakers on athletic field care and make them available for everyone involved in sports turf management to hear, from the school superintendent to the mower operator," says Kurtz. "Many people responsible for sports turf just haven't seen the techniques, machinery and products that can make a huge difference in the condition of their fields. At the Institute they can see demonstrations and speak with other field managers about common problems."

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The College of DuPage fields will be used for demonstration and an outdoor equipment show. Manufacturers and area turf supply dealers will be able to show their equipment in use on athletic fields instead of in a showroom or exhibit hall.

The cost for the one-day event will be \$35 or less says Kurtz. Interested sports turf managers can contact Susan Benson, manager of the Business and Technical Institute, College of DuPage, (312) 858-2800, ext. 2196, or Kent Kurtz, 1458 N. Euclid Ave., Ontario, CA 91764, (714) 869-2176.

TORO INVESTS IN OLATHE MANUFACTURING

Olathe, a privately-held manufacturer of sports turf maintenance equipment in Olathe, KS, has sold a minority interest to The Toro Company. Steve Rogers, president of Olathe, said under the agreement his company will develop and produce accessories for Toro products and Toro will provide marketing and distribution support for Olathe.

Kendrick Melrose, Toro president, said, "In reviewing business opportunities in the turf maintenance areas, Olathe was the perfect match. Olathe produces a full line of turf care equipment accessories that will complement and round out our product line. The joint arrangement will enable us to focus our engineering design efforts on major development products in addition to unique attachments for the commercial product line."

Olathe was founded in 1971 by Buck Rogers, chairman, and Steve Rogers. It currently produces commercial seeders, spreaders, chippers, aerators, debris removal equipment, and mower accessories. Before the agreement, Olathe supplied accessories to Toro.

Melrose says a majority of Toro's distributors carry Olathe products and Toro expects more of them to take on the Olathe line. Toro plans to undertake export distribution for Olathe and offer a financing program to back up the products.

AMERICAN GOLF CLUB OFFERS ENTICEMENTS

In just two years, American Golf Corporation's "Club" has grown to more than 15,000 members in nine states, largely by a program of membership incentives. The 1986 incentive package is enough to make nearly any duffer join.

The original concept was American Golf Club members were permitted special privileges at any of the company's 40 plus golf courses across the west. You might be out of town, but you could get preferred starting times at a local course if it was operated by American Golf Corp. It was like being a member at many clubs at the same time for a single membership fee.

That incentive package has grown proportionately to American Golf's acquisition of golf courses. For this year, a \$55 membership fee will provide the following:

—28 free introductory rounds of golf and discount green fees at designated American Golf public courses.

—A USGA-approved computerized handicap service.

—A \$20 gift certificate for merchandise at pro shops and a golf cap.

—Reserved weekend starting times and weekday and weekend tournaments.

—Special tournaments at courses such as Pebble Beach, Spyglass Hill, Riviera, Pasatiempo, Sahara, Yorba Linda and others.

—A newsletter and special golf vacation packages to Hawaii, Scotland, Spain and other exotic locations.

Bill Brown, vice president of marketing for American Golf Corp., adds that AGC chapters are being organized to plan local tournaments and other activities. "This gives golfers the opportunity to schedule the types of tournaments and activities they want at the course level," Brown states.

American Golf operates courses in California, Arizona, Nevada, Florida, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Texas and Virginia. It is based in El Segundo, CA.

GOLF COURSE BOOM EXPECTED TO CONTINUE

Golf course construction and remodeling, which accelerated rapidly during 1985, will continue to increase this year according to John Watson, president of the American Society of Golf Course Architects.

Watson says pent-up demand and lower interest rates have created conditions right for the expansion of the game. He indicated some projects have been delayed for the past five years waiting for interest rates to drop, especially at resorts, municipalities and real estate developments.

"The momentum will continue for the next few years," Watson states. The trend of remodeling older courses will not only continue, Watson said, but will accelerate in 1986. "Courses built more than 25 years ago are outmoded in most cases. Today's high-performance golf clubs and balls enable the better golfers, for whom the hazards were designed, to avoid them and score too well. These hazards are also causing poorer golfers to score higher than they should. Therefore, golf course architects are developing master plans to phase in new tees and greens, reposition bunkers, and add water retention ponds for both aesthetic and preservation purposes."

The game is attracting more seniors, especially in the Sun Belt, Watson reveals. More executive courses are being built in the Sun Belt to accommodate players who are no longer able to hit the long ball. Shorter courses are also needed for the increasing number of women and junior golfers.