



# CLUB MANAGEMENT UPDATE

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## Golf Course Renovations

# Changes to the "Ocean Nine" at CWB

*The Clearwater Bay Golf and Country Club is currently undergoing historic renovations to its golf courses (Ocean Nine, Highland Nine and Executive Nine) to meet its vision of becoming one of the top 500 golf courses in the world. The renovation work on Phase I (Ocean Nine and Executive Nine) began in February 2005 and at the time of publication the Ocean Nine will be fully opened on permanent greens and tees.*



**Club Management Update conducted an interview with Kenneth Fan, General Manager of Clearwater Bay Golf & Country Club**

**CMU:** How did the Club reach the conclusion that it was time for a course improvement programme? How did the Club develop the scope of work to be undertaken?

**KF:** The rationale behind these changes is simple: the grass that has been on the greens since the course first opened in the early 80s started to mutate resulting in greens that are difficult to maintain and not suitable for a world class golf course. In 2002 it was obvious the Ocean Nine and Highland Nine were suffering from this mutation so the Club felt it time to speed up certain aspects of the Master Plan. Devised in 1993, the Master Plan set goals and objectives for the golf course, most notably its continual improvement and future redesign. Two years ago, seeing that the turf needed replacing due to mutation, management and committees took this as an opportune time to assess and plan the design of all 27 holes (Ocean Nine, Highland Nine and the Executive Nine), and determine the work that would be required.

**CMU:** How was the course architect selected?

**KF:** The Master Plan was established in conjunction with Thomson Perrett, a world-renowned golf course design firm from Australia. Over the years the Club has built a strong relationship with

**The signature third hole Before**



**The signature third hole After**



Thomson Perrett who have worked on many of our smaller projects, e.g. fairway re-turfing, drainage replacement, etc. To meet our vision of becoming one of the top 500 golf courses in the world, it was a natural move to award them the project of redesigning the 27 holes.

**CMU:** What was the role of the Project Team and the Course Superintendent?

The Project Team acts as the key liaison point for Club members for any enquiries, questions, comments or suggestions

pertaining to the renovations. The team is also responsible for reviewing and commenting on the design of the course as well as monitoring the progress of the renovations.

The Golf Course Superintendent, Darryl Koster, is the representative of the Club for the entire project and liaised with the Club's committees, designers and contractors.

**CMU:** Was the course playable through the improvement programme? How did you accomplish this?

**KF:** The Phase I renovations which began in February 2005 resulted in the closure of the Ocean

Nine and the Executive Nine. The Ocean Nine was reopened in June on temporary tees and greens, but due to high rainfall in May and June, management consulted with Thomson Perrett and Heritage Golf

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(the contractors) who suggested monitoring the playability of the course on a daily basis.

At the time of publication the Ocean Nine will be playable on permanent tees and greens, enabling golfers to fully appreciate the changes and improvements to their golf course.

During the Ocean Nine's closure, the Highland Nine remained open and operated on a repeat-play system. This system required golfers to complete nine-holes, return to the clubhouse and request a repeat-play. Depending on the golf course traffic, requests were generally approved and golfers wishing to play 18 holes could do so.

The Executive Nine however has been closed since February 2005 and should be opened for play by mid-October.

**CMU:** *What was the members' response during the construction phase and upon completion? What sort of communications programme was in place throughout?*

**KF:** A substantial amount of time was spent constructing a communications plan that would enable the Club to communicate thoroughly, regularly and honestly to its members regarding the renovations. The following tools were used to keep communication flowing freely:

- The Club's monthly magazine, *By the Bay*, acted as the main point of reference for updates, in particular the Chairman's Column.

- A mini-website was constructed with a link to our members' access website,

which, according to traffic reports, has proved to be one of the most popular ways of accessing latest updates.

- Exhibition panels in the golf clubhouse continue to be used to provide members with news and information – initially the panels were host to a complete rundown of the proposed changes, including a video of the Director of Golf, Peter Downie, discussing the changes and rationale behind the renovations from the golf course. They are now host to a pictorial progress report that has enabled members to view the renovations as they unfold via regular photographs of the work.

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- Artists Impressions – these were commissioned to allow members to visualize the changes and have supported subsequent articles about the improvements.

- Feedback forms – to keep information flowing in both directions, feedback has always been welcomed and to facilitate this forms were printed and left in the golf clubhouse. In fact, most feedback came directly to senior management from members face to face, on the telephone and via email.

The Phase II communication plan has been devised to follow on from the communication strategy of Phase I to provide a consistent and smooth transition.


The members' response during the construction work has been very positive. On the whole, thanks to a well-established communications plan, the majority of our members have been very supportive of these changes, understanding the benefits both for themselves as members and for the Club as a whole.

**CMU:** *Did the Club achieve all of its goals through the course upgrade?*

**KF:** Although still too early to assess whether or not the Club has achieved all of its goals through the course upgrade, we remain positive that on completion of both phases, members and golfers will appreciate the changes to the golf courses. These renovations have been a positive step forward for the Club and we continue to work on our members' behalf to provide products and services that exceed their expectations.

Local and regional press are already showing a high level of interest and we look forward to that excitement spreading across the golfing fraternity.

**CMU:** *What advice would you give a golf club manager undertaking a similar project?*

**KF:** The most important piece of advice we can give to those wishing to undertake a similar project is this: ensure you have the full backing of management and committees before you proceed, without which projects are unlikely to succeed. 



### Hole 3 (formerly Hole 14)

The signature hole is even better. Bunkers and Pandanas grass on the left have been removed. Golfers now face a tough shot to an elevated green surrounded by nothing but nature and the ocean below.



### Hole 9 (formerly Hole 18)

Aesthetically, Hole 9 is another hole that has significantly improved with the opening up of the green and removal of the cart path. The fairway has been moved more to the left, with bunkers positioned down the right side. The green has been moved back 35 yards to where the turnaround used to be positioned. The green has also been widened, with another bunker positioned on the front right. With the back tee being moved back some 20 yards, this hole is now far more demanding.

# Golf Trends

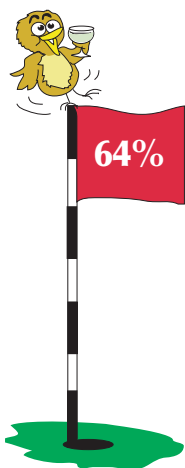
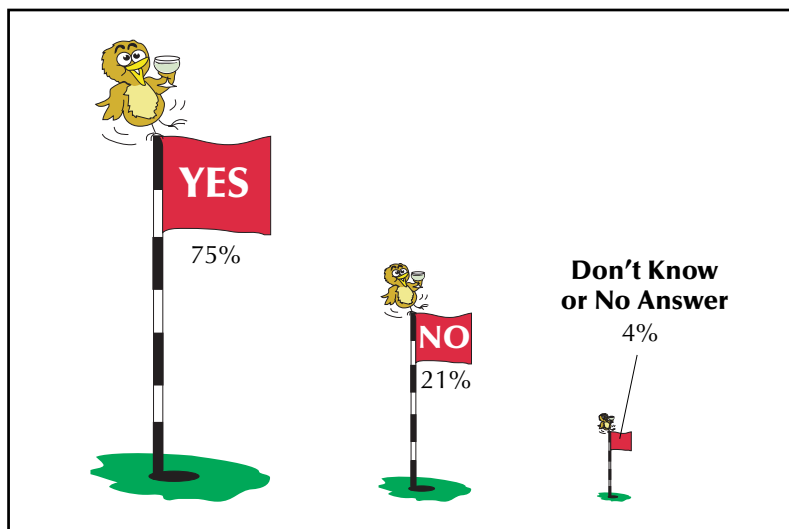
## Survey Highlights

From the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America

### Course Overhaul?

GCSAA golf course superintendents were asked:

*Has or will your course be renovated or remodeled solely to compensate for changes in golf ball and club technology?*



Not repairing ball marks



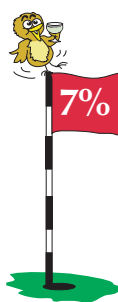
Not fixing divots



Lack of knowledge of golf rules



Not raking bunkers



Cheating on scoreboard



Using cell phones during play



Walking in players line



Talking when someone is driving or putting

### Etiquette Error

GCSAA golf course superintendents were asked:

*What breach of etiquette is most common on your golf course today?*

### 2005 GCSAA Leadership Survey

The 2005 GCSAA Leadership Survey, a real-time, computerized opinion pool conducted online in conjunction with the 2005 GCSAA Education Conference and Golf Industry Show in Orlando, examined the opinions of superintendents on a number of timely issues. For other survey highlights, please visit <http://www.gcsaa.org/news/leadership/2005/survey.asp>.

## Golf Rounds Played Essentially Flat in US

A recent survey by the National Golf Foundation and the Club Managers Association of America shows that rounds played in the US increased only marginally (0.2%) in June 2005 versus June 2004. The year-to-date total shows a decrease of 1.1 percent versus last year. The CMAA has recently launched an initiative to "grow the game" in concert with other industry groups.

# Ten Steps for Successful Clubhouse Planning: Strategic Planning

By Glen A. Selligman, AIA, Director of Club Architecture, McMahon Group

This is part two of an ongoing series featured in *The McMahon Report*.

With membership input available from Step One, completing a member survey and/or focus groups, the club's Board and management should know what the

is not a group of members who are architects, contractors or developers. A good planning committee is composed of eight members/spouses from the membership-at-large (persons from all age and use groups who use the club and are well respected) and four board members

the final plan with assistance from the planning consultant. Once the clubhouse plan gets approved, the construction specialists are needed to implement the final plan with the help of the club planning consultant as called for in Step Nine.


## Strategic Club Planning

Before the planning committee starts thinking of specific clubhouse improvements, it must understand the club's mission; i.e., its purpose. Other questions to consider are:

- What are the club's goals that the clubhouse can help achieve?
  - What quality level is wanted by the membership?
  - Who are the members today, and who will they be in the future?
- The answers to these types of questions must be understood before architectural programming and planning begin. Simply put, the planning committee must understand the club before it can design a clubhouse for it.

## The Strategic Planning Session

Each planning committee member should read the complete membership survey report. Then a strategic planning session should be moderated by the club planning consultant so that the club's strengths, weaknesses, key success factors, mission and goals are identified. The club goals that address having high-quality facilities, and in particular a good clubhouse, are the goals that the planning committee should be responsible for achieving.

With a clear understanding of the club's mission, the planning committee is ready to proceed on to Step Three, "Clubhouse Space Programming and Developing Planning Criteria." 

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## The Edge Fitness Center at the American Club's Country Club Location

By James Di Renzo, General Manager of the American Club

The Center includes state-of-the-art Technogym equipment for strength and aerobic training, a 40-foot climbing wall and "cave" for bouldering, indoor soccer, floor hockey and an evaluation room for fitness assessments. This is Phase I of three phases of work at Tai Tam. Phase II will include a new ballroom for 300+, an additional tennis court, lengthening the swimming pool and a general renewal of the pool areas. Phase III is in the development stage and current discussions include a bowling alley, mini cinema, golf simulator rooms, game rooms, adult and children's libraries and other facilities. The renovation of the Town Club will begin in March. We look forward to updating you further in future issues of *Club Management Update*.

membership wants in its club. They should know the satisfaction and dissatisfaction level members have with all facilities and also have a sense of the strategic issues facing the club; i.e., the club's mission, the quality level desired, emphasis on particular activities/facilities, family orientation, membership, etc.

## Appointing the Planning Committee

Assuming the survey research shows a need to improve the clubhouse, the second step in clubhouse planning starts with the appointment of a club's planning committee. The ideal planning committee

(usually the vice-president, house chairman, treasurer and grounds/green chairman). The planning committee should primarily be a consumer-oriented group of good club users. In addition, the club president, general manager and club planning/architectural consultant should be ex-officio committee members. The outside club planning consultant should have extensive clubhouse architectural experience, be a consensus builder and be able to sell the plan to the members. Usually, the club's board selects the planning consultant prior to the committee's formation. The committee's prime purpose is to help develop and sell