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INDUSTRY NEWS



Exclusive clubs

PGA.com's Steve Pike reports that the clubs used by actor Jim Caviezel in 'Stroke of Genius' are no Hollywood prop; top-level turnover at Top-Flite; CS First Boston downgrades its opinion of Acushnet's parent; Norman on a 'tour' ball; and more.

You can purchase a set of Limited Edition Bobby Jones Grand Slam Golf Clubs for \$3,500. (Photo: Golf Links to the Past, Inc.)

By [Steve Pike, PGA.com Senior Writer](#)
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When you see Jim Caviezel play golf as Bobby Jones in the upcoming film, "Stroke of Genius," you won't just be seeing more Hollywood magic. Caviezel played with a set of Limited Edition 1930 Bobby Jones Grand Slam Golf Clubs -- historical 14-club replica hickory-shafted clubs -- provided by Golf Links to the Past, Inc., the official licensee for Bobby Jones Collectibles.



The film, shot in Jones' native state of Georgia and at St. Andrews, Scotland, opens April 30.

The forged hickory-shafted clubs Caviezel plays are a complete reproduction of the clubs Jones carried during his 1930 'Grand Slam' run. Each club in the 14-club set was handcrafted in St. Andrews, where Jones won the 1930 British Amateur.

Want to feel what Caviezel felt as Jones? Golf Links to the Past is offering Limited Edition Bobby Jones Grand Slam Golf Clubs at retail for \$3,500 on its website, www.golfspast.com.

Meanwhile, golf car manufacturer Club Car, based in Jones' hometown of Augusta, Ga., has signed on as a national corporate sponsor and is using some innovative tactics to beat the drums for the movie.

Through its IR Media partnership, Club Car and UpLink Corp., a provider of GPS-based communications and course management software, are providing advertising materials to more than 50 golf courses across the country to display in golf cars equipped with the UpLink technology. Twice during their rounds golfers will see images from the film pop onto the screens that are attached to their golf cars.

"We've been told that there's never been a level of cooperation like this from within golf or any other sport to support this type of program," said Club Car President Phil Tralies. "The story of Bobby Jones is a story about integrity, commitment and values, and it goes a long way in explaining the respect and passion so many people have for the game."

TOP-FLITE TURNOVER: Top-Flite Golf Company continues to re-shape itself under the ownership of Callaway Golf Company (NYSE: ELY). The Chicopee, Mass., company closed its 25-year-old factory store and laid off 40 employees, including Executive Vice President of Sales and Marketing Lou Tursi; VP of Marketing Tim Seitter; and VP of Promotions Ed Several, vice president of promotions.

All three had been long-time Top-Flite employees retained by Callaway Golf when it acquired the company out of bankruptcy court this past fall.

Callaway Golf, meanwhile, has brought in James L. Bosworth as Vice-President of U.S. Sales for Top-Flite Golf. Bosworth, who started as a salesman for Callaway Golf in 2000, will oversee all of the sales activities at

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Top-Flite Golf at will report directly to Top-Flite Golf President and Chief Operating Officer Bob Penicka.

[GA Tour Notebook: Casey of England joins as a Special Temporary Member](#)

Penicka has not said how or when the marketing positions at Top-Flite will be filled.

TAKING STOCK: CS First Boston has downgraded its investment opinion on the shares of Acushnet Company (Titleist, FootJoy, Cobra, Pinnacle) parent Fortune Brands (FO: NYSE) to "Neutral" from "Outperform." The investment house cited as a reason Fortune Brands' stock price exceeding its \$76 price target, meaning it sees little more growth in the stock price.

Fortune Brands will release its first quarter numbers on April 23. Acushnet Company rival Callaway Golf will announce its first quarter numbers April 22.

OLD SOD, NEW COURSE: St Andrews Links Trust has received permission from the St. Andrews planning authorities to create a new golf course on the edge of the historic Scottish town. The new 18-hole course will be joining the Trust's portfolio of six courses, which includes the fabled Old Course. The new public course will be designed by David McLay Kidd, creator of Bandon Dunes on Oregon, and is expected to open in 2006.

According to the Links Trust, approximately 210,000 rounds are played on the six courses every year with the peak being 215,000 in 2001, the year after the Open Championship on the Old Course. The new course, the Links Trust said, is being created in response to rising demand and will ease congestion on the existing courses by offering golfers an alternative high quality course to play, with spectacular views of the town.

Sidenote: The number of golfers living outside St Andrews who are on the waiting lists for yearly tickets to play on St Andrews Links courses has reached nearly 600 compared to 280 in September 2003 when the Links Trust submitted its planning application for a seventh golf course.

Limits on the number of Links Yearly Tickets for golfers living outside St Andrews came into effect in 2000 and the maximum number of tickets available is 1,200. The waiting lists have grown since then from zero to their current level as demand has continued to increase.

SHARK BITES: Count Greg Norman on the list of high-profile players who favor a "Tour" ball for all PGA Tour events. Arnold Palmer and Jack Nicklaus also favor one "Tour" ball for all events in order, they say, to even the playing field for short hitters versus long hitters and to keep from overpowering some storied golf courses.

"I think we should keep talking about the golf ball issue. If they went back to the specifications from 1996, we'd all be happy," Norman said on a recent trip to his native Australia. "The manufacturers will be making a golf ball for us and a golf ball for the amateurs, and the amateurs will probably want to play with the golf ball we play, so they're selling more balls than what they do now.

"You've got some classic golf courses around the world that won't be able to be played by us (Tour professionals). Therefore you won't be able to compare history with great shots that have been played around here and at other golf courses."

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