

HITTING HARD 10: A DECADE OF VEGASGOLFER RELIVED

VegasGolfer

THE **10**th

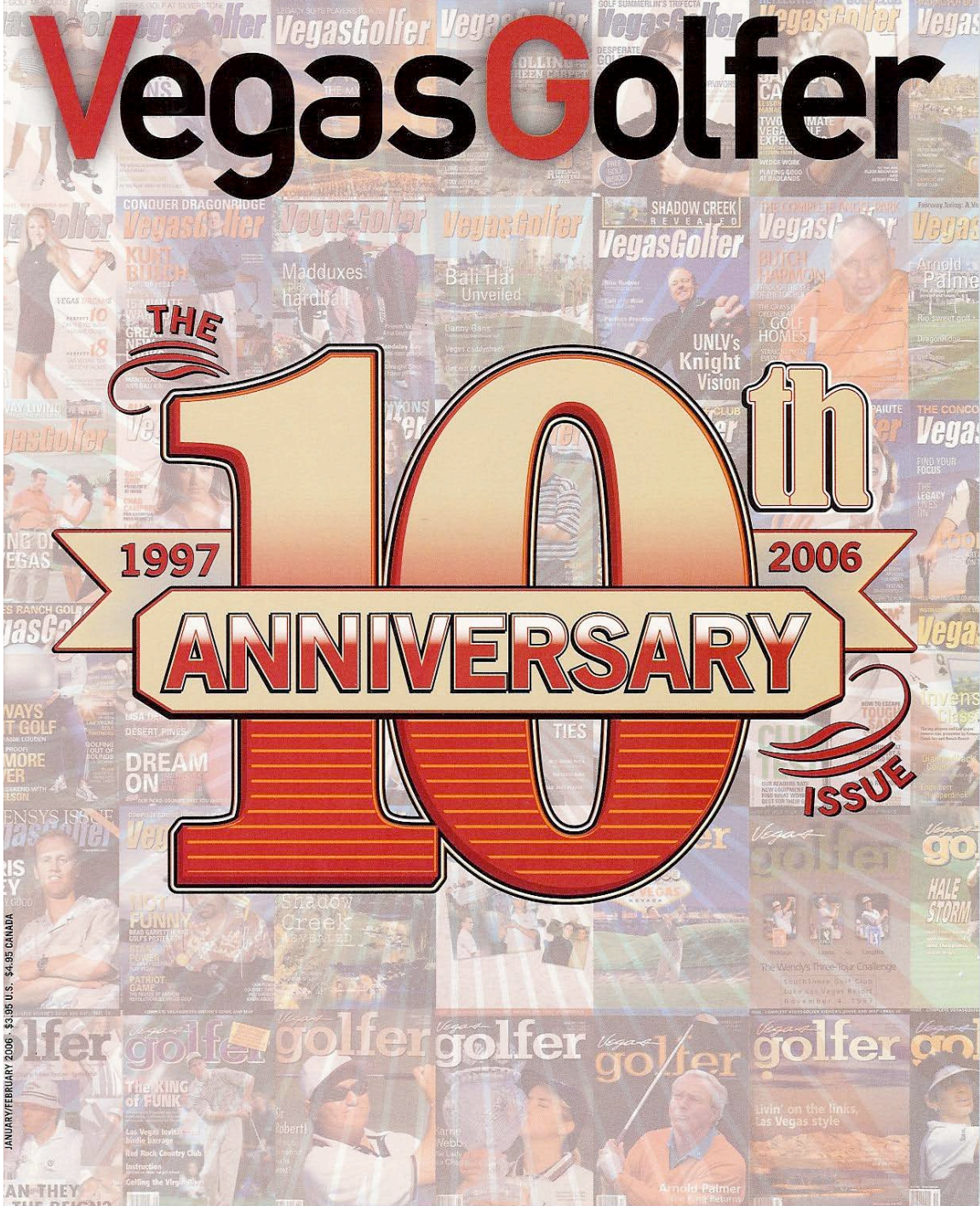
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CLASS ACT: Christopher Cain, PGM Director, Barbara Hermes, PGM Administrative Assistant, Christopher Brown, PGM Internship Coordinator, Nolan Halterman, Jay Childers, Austin Kingsley, Jonathan Merry, Tyler McManus

Grass Roots Effort

UNLV set to graduate its first PGA/PGM students by Richard Matthews

There was a time when your local golf pro didn't do much. All he did was open the shop, fill out the tee sheets, mow the golf course, weed and seed and aerate it, change the pin placements, give some swing lessons, run a junior golf program, serve some snacks and refreshments, fetch your clubs from the shed, load them onto your cart and point it to the first tee. In short, he was a slacker. Today, he's executive material who hires others to do those jobs. Just kidding, of course.

The fact is that the golf professional's job, never easy in the first place, has become, if anything, even more demanding with the increasing sophistication and competition of the worldwide golf industry. To answer that demand, 16 colleges across the country offer professional golf management programs. In Las Vegas, UNLV started its own PGM program four years ago, and it now stands poised to bear its first fruit.

The first five graduates are scheduled to complete their academic requirements by spring 2006. The program currently enrolls 65 students. Each needs to complete 124 credits; a 16-month internship; PGA checkpoints one, two, and three; and the PGA Playing Ability Test to graduate with the PGA/PGM designation.

"Graduates can run a club or become a general manager or take any one of a number of other positions in the golf business," explains program

director Chris Cain, a PGA member with a Masters Degree from Penn State (in Recreation and Tourism Management) and five years of experience as a club manager.

Students take Professional Golf Management concentration classes, which include hospitality, accounting, golf management, turfgrass fundamentals, hospitality marketing, hospitality finance, club, food and beverage management, retailing and merchandising, facilities planning management. They also go through a player development program, run locally by award-winning Las Vegas-based instructor Mike Davis.

"The mission here is to give the students as much information as possible so they can be ready for those expanded career paths," says Cain. "Not only just being an assistant golf professional or teaching professional or a head pro at a club, but being able to expand their horizons and maybe even work for a major retail company like Titleist or TaylorMade or Callaway and become a sales representative, or become a general manager at a golf course, or work for a management company like a TPC, like a Marriot Golf, like American Golf, get into more of the corporate side, and that's what these PGA programs are trying to prepare students for. They may be great for the traditional (golf pro) role, but they can also expand students' horizons and help them become more marketable in the industry."

With 60 plus golf facilities right here in the valley, those horizons are looking broader all the time. ☞