

TORO turns green with launch of Bio Diesel conversion kit

With an increasing emphasis on environmental issues across the country's courses, Toro Australia has introduced a range of Bio Diesel fuel conversion kits for its existing diesel engine range.

"These days councils and many other customers are becoming more and more aware of the environmental impact of their work," said Shaun Devlin, Toro's Commercial Spare Parts Coordinator.

"The opportunity to easily convert existing machines to bio diesel fuels and the use of other items such as low-tone mufflers, have certainly helped in this area.

"We're proud to be at the forefront of moves into helping the environment and look forward to even further news in this area."

Bio Diesel is an alternate form of fuel that contains natural substances derived from regionally-grown crops, which is both biodegradable and environmentally sustainable. In addition, it can contain animal fats, cooking oil, or other constituents such as alcohol. The concept of using vegetable oil as a fuel dates back to 1895 when Dr Rudolf Diesel developed the first diesel engine to run on vegetable oil. Diesel demonstrated his engine at the World Exhibition in Paris in 1900 using peanut oil as fuel. Bio Diesel is the only alternative fuel that can be used directly in any existing, unmodified diesel engine. Because it has similar properties



to petroleum diesel fuel, Bio Diesel can be blended in any ratio with petroleum diesel fuel making it an easy and efficient fuel alternative.

Toro Commercial Engineering advised that the company had extensively tested the long-term effects of Bio Diesel fuel and fuel-blends on product performance and durability. Four Bio Diesel conversion kits are now available for Select 2002-2007 Toro Commercial products. Using biodiesel fuels in Toro Commercial products will not affect the terms and conditions of the product warranty.

To find a Bio Diesel supplier, customers should log onto <http://www.biodiesel.org.au/gettingbiod.html>, which lists suppliers in each state, or contact their local TORO dealer.

NSWGA introduce use of measuring devices for sanctioned events

The Board of the NSW Golf Association has announced its intention to introduce a local rule permitting the use of distance-measuring devices in its events.

In a statement released in March, the Association indicated that the decision had been reached given the decreasing cost and improved availability of devices along with increasing evidence that distance measuring devices actually improve the speed of play in almost all circumstances.

The following Local Rule will therefore be in force for all future events:

A player may obtain distance information by using a device that measures distance

only. However, if, during a stipulated round a player uses a distance-measuring device that is designed to gauge or measure other conditions that might affect his play (eg, gradient, windspeed, temperature, etc), the player is in breach of Rule 14-3, for which the penalty is disqualification, regardless of whether any such additional functions are actually used.

Graeme Phillipson, General Manager – Golf Programs & Services for the NSWGA, encouraged Club Committees to consider the introduction of a Local Rule to accommodate the use of Distance-Measuring Devices.

Lind continues online expansion – from Page 9

"Buying golf clubs off the Internet is still something new and most people would probably try to find a reason why they shouldn't be buying online," says Lindenberg.

"But we are getting some good attendances at our demo nights from people who have registered through the website.

"People that wouldn't normally buy online are coming to try out the clubs and buying on the night."

While his equipment pricing is kept lower without the need for a physical retail presence, Lindenberg has made a significant investment in advertising both online and in print. In particular the 2004 purchase of

the domain name www.golfclubs.com.au, (for which Lindenberg paid \$4000 to a photocopy repairman) has proved a masterstroke.

"We generate a lot of traffic through Google's page search facility which converts really well," says Lindenberg, referring to the site's 'sponsored links' section, which appears on the right hand side of a search results page.

"We also advertise via Facebook and selected other niche golf sites across the web."

"We are now receiving more traffic from customers directly looking for Lind Golf than we do for golfers looking for Taylor Made, Ping or Callaway.

Former retail foes join forces to create new industry collective – from Page 15

"Traditional buying group models have been weighted towards the traditional owner-operated green grass Pro Shop which has excluded many professionals that are employed in other capacities.

"I see no reason why a golf club should miss out on the benefits of belonging to a centralised buying group by virtue of the fact that the Pro Shop is owned by the club itself.

"The same applies for resort-based retail operations."

Ramsey believes that with around 62 percent of Australia's golf retail product being bought off-course in 2007, the involvement of high-street stores in the group only adds to the purchasing power of the group as a collective.

"One high-street operation could turn over as much as 10 times that of a club-based pro shop operation," says Ramsey.

"By having off-course stores involved, who obviously turn over more in terms of product volume, only adds to the preferential buying power of the group which the smaller club-based stores can take advantage of.

"Overall we see the group as having a very laid-back model – members are not required to buy into a franchise agreement, are not forced to take product unnecessarily and is open to all avenues of ownership models, on the simple proviso that it's a PGA member running the operation."

The all-inclusive buying group membership model to which Ramsey refers marks a distinct shift in Australia's golfing retail market, considering that the formation of established buying collectives such as Leading Edge and On Course were originally designed to counter the effects of higher volume high-street retail stores in favour of the independent green-grass operator.

As the new kids on the block (albeit with two directors well known to the industry) Ramsey said that the response to date from equipment suppliers has been overwhelmingly positive. Among the thirty-four industry suppliers who have already signed on are Ping and Callaway, with other major equipment companies either in current negotiations or indicating their willingness to participate once a minimum number of group members had been confirmed.

"It's an untried business model so a lot of suppliers are showing a lot of faith in the past records of Ian and I to do what is required on behalf of members," he said.

"We put a lot of initial thought into whether the industry really needed another buying group and really the logical answer was 'no it didn't'.

"However we had enough people saying to us that the proposed membership model would work to convince us to proceed."

Around 28 members, including six retail stores, had joined as members of The Golf Professionals buying group as at the beginning of March. Ramsey advised that other professionals had signalled their intentions to join the new group but were waiting the expiry of contract periods with their current suppliers.

"We have encountered a few issues but they certainly aren't insurmountable," said Ramsey.

"We'll simply keep on doing what we're doing."

More information on The Golf Professionals can be obtained by contacting either Ian Sloan (0418 727 019) or Greg Ramsey (0412 246 186) or via email at info@tgp.net.au.

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