

Tee time with 8AM Golf

Often flying under the radar but flying fast, 8AM Golf has grown to include 14 companies, and CEO Hoyt McGarity says there are no plans for slowing down.

BY MICHELLE WEYENBERG

A star-studded lineup of notable figures from sports, entertainment and music came out for the 8AM Invitational hosted by Justin Timberlake at the Wynn Las Vegas in April. The annual celebrity golf tournament, organized by 8AM Golf, not only showcases golfing talent but also serves as a networking opportunity.

Its success signifies the growing appeal of such events, which merge sports and entertainment, bringing golf to a broader audience.

8AM Events is just one part of the 8AM Golf portfolio, which includes an integrated collection of brands such as GOLF Magazine and Golf.com, Nicklaus Cos., True Spec Golf, Miura, Club Conex, Golf Logix, Fairway Jockey and Chirp Golf. 8AM Golf has a hand in almost all sectors of the game, including merchandising, events, travel, design, technology and entertainment.

The idea for 8AM Golf emerged from Chairman Howard Milstein's passion for the game and his recognition of the benefits of early morning golfing. Milstein, a businessman, philanthropist and golf entrepreneur, wanted to cultivate a com-



3's is one of 8AM Golf's newest ventures, spearheaded by Justin Timberlake and focused on the par-3 golf space.

munity in which like-minded individuals could enjoy the serenity of the course at dawn while fostering connections.

"We want it to be the place where we're

building partners or raising capital," said Hoyt McGarity, president and CEO, who has played a pivotal role in shaping the organization's vision and growth.

During the pandemic, the company slowed down on acquisitions and concentrated on its existing brands. It then entered into the hospitality sector with events such as the 8AM Invitational and the Bridges Cup. Timberlake became an investor and partner in 2020.

Initially, company leaders did not think of 8AM Golf as a brand, McGarity said, but now they have seen it grow and leaned into it.

Milstein originally partnered with Jack Nicklaus back in 2007 to help expand the Nicklaus brand. Nicklaus Design has cre-



Hoyt McGarity,
president and CEO



Howard Milstein,
chairman



Justin Timberlake,
partner



The 8AM Invitational, organized by 8AM Golf and hosted by Justin Timberlake, included a star-studded lineup of notable figures to the Wynn Las Vegas in April.

ated more than 400 golf courses around the world. But meanwhile, McGarity said, the real business is the licensing side with \$150 million a year in sales of apparel and accessories.

“Growing that is important to us,” he said.

In 2018, Milstein bought GOLF Magazine and its website, golf.com, as well as True Spec, a premium club fit-

ting service with more than 35 locations globally. And through the years, the 8AM portfolio has continued to expand.

Other 8AM brands include Chirp Golf, a gaming platform; Miura, a luxury brand known for high-quality irons and wedges which maintains strong partnerships with professional golfers; and Fairway Jockey, an online platform for custom golf club purchases, which McGarity said is poised

for significant revenue growth.

“Fairway Jockey has the ability to be our largest revenue over the next five years,” he said.

Another one of 8AM’s outstanding companies is GolfLogix, a leading GPS app with 6 million downloads, which continues to grow year over year, McGarity said.

Business opportunities

Looking ahead, 8AM Golf plans to be more active in acquiring and expanding businesses, striving to enhance the value of its synergistic holdings.

“We aim to be the first point of contact for entrepreneurs seeking strategic partnerships or investment to elevate their businesses,” McGarity said. “I love meeting people and hearing ideas, and for us it comes down to the people.”

It’s a tricky business, McGarity said.

“We invested a lot of money from 2017 to 2019 in this sport, and then reaped the benefits after COVID,” he said. “I think we have a unique business, and we’re seeing some new things come through, which is exciting.”

A significant step is the opening of T-Squared Social Club, a 22,000-square-foot venue in Manhattan co-owned by 8AM Golf, Tiger Woods and Timberlake. They hope to attract a diverse audience with an eatertainment concept, featuring golf simulators and other entertainment beyond traditional golf.

McGarity said they are already getting inquiries about expanding into cities such as Toronto, downtown New York City, London and Berlin.

“It’s a different [type of] investment for us,” he said.

One of 8AM Golf’s newest ventures is 3’s, spearheaded by Timberlake and focused on the par-3 golf space.

3’s was founded in 2019 by restaurant and hospitality specialist Davis Sezna, with the first location opening in Greenville, South Carolina, in 2020. It features lighted, 12-hole, par-3 golf with adjacent practice areas, an 18-hole put-

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ting course and other golf-related attractions, along with food, drink and music.

3's is working with local partners across the U.S. to bring its innovative concept to major metro areas, McGarity said.

"It's a great fit for the company as we continue the move into hospitality and entertainment," he said.

He expects two more 3's to open in major markets in the next two years.

"The first one was inherited," McGarity said. "We're very bullish on that space in general and looking at a 2.0 version for the next ones."

Another new venture is 8AM Travel, set to launch in 2025. It is being designed to redefine the essence of luxury travel, offering exclusive, story-worthy journeys that include unparalleled access to the world's most coveted golf courses. Real



T-Squared Social Club, a 22,000-square-foot venue in Manhattan co-owned by 8AM Golf, Tiger Woods and Justin Timberlake, opened this past year.

estate investor Simon Holt is a partner in this endeavor.

"We always wanted to be in the travel business," McGarity said. "We want to cater to people who want to do the best around the world."

8AM Golf was meant to be a holding company, he said, but it has grown into a

respected brand, and it's poised for expansion, focusing on integrating its various brands and capitalizing on new opportunities within the golf industry.

"We remain committed to fostering relationships and exploring innovative avenues to enhance the golfing experience for all," McGarity said.

An advertisement for Thompson Golf Management (TGM). The top left features the TGM logo, which consists of the letters 'TGM' inside a green circular graphic. Below the logo, the text reads "MANAGING THROUGH THE VISION OF OWNERS". Underneath this, a dark blue box contains the text: "Thompson Golf Management combines ownership insight with expert management to provide tailored owner-centric solutions." At the bottom left, a green box provides contact information: "CONTACT US: (480) 716-8199 info@thompsongolfmanagement.com" and "LEARN MORE: thompsongolfmanagement.com". The background of the advertisement is a photograph of a lush green golf course with a flag on a green, set against a backdrop of mountains under a clear blue sky.

