



A Name That Works

Offering an established brand of equipment was critical to a fast start for the new fitness center at one of the country's most established clubs.

By Joe Barks, Editor



Success in the club business is largely about creating habits, by putting club facilities front-of-mind for members and guests when they think about where they want to go to pursue recreational activities, eat, or socialize.

Creating those habits hinges on making people comfortable, and that can be especially challenging in the fitness realm. Home equipment, office building facilities and separate gym memberships can give members plenty of other convenient options for getting in a workout. To get them to think of the club as their primary fitness destination, everything about a club's facility has to feel right immediately—from access to atmosphere to amenities.

And, especially, equipment. Unfamiliarity with equipment, or difficulty using it, can quickly become one of the biggest deterrents to building up acceptance of a club facility as a viable fitness option. So when Mario Guaglianone took on the challenge of helping the Greenwich (Conn.) Country Club build a new state-of-the-art fitness center, he knew that his choice of not only what equipment to include, but what brand, would be critical.

As the fourth oldest country club in America, tracing its roots to when it was founded in 1892 as the Fairfield County Golf Club, Greenwich CC is certainly a place where a healthy respect for established reputations can be found. So Guaglianone knew that brand-name recognition and familiarity would be a key driver in getting the new center off to a good start. That's why he focused from the start on Cybex strength-training and cardio equipment, as he set out to outfit the club's 1,100-sq. ft. fitness area.

"I knew that most of the members who would use [the club's new fitness center] would be familiar with Cybex from using it in hotels or other gyms when they travel, as well as from separate fitness clubs they might belong to," says Guaglianone, whose company, The Salus Group, successfully bid to design and operate the new fitness center for the club on a contract basis.

"And they would not only recognize it as a quality brand," he adds, "they would also like the assurance of consistency that we could offer, by using Cybex for both strength and cardio training."

The Salus Group has developed a special niche in the club business, now also operating fitness centers for other high-end private clubs in Connecticut and New York. Through that experience, Guaglianone has learned that selecting equipment to be used in club settings is also a very specialized process.

"Without question, it's very different," he says. "You're dealing with limited space, so the emphasis has to be on equipment that can be multi-functional." Cybex offers this flexibility throughout its lines, he notes, and also meets other key tests for club-related applications: low-maintenance, durability and being



Mario Guaglianone has learned that club fitness is a special breed requiring a special brand of equipment.



PHOTOS COURTESY GREENWICH COUNTRY CLUB

able to “stand up to a lot of use.”

He also likes how Cybex offers “a ton of options and colors” that can help the equipment fit into a variety of club settings, and how the company has recognized the unique needs of club fitness centers by creating a separate Hospitality marketing and support group.

“From the start of our planning for the [Greenwich fitness center],” Guaglianone reports, “Glenn Colarossi [President of Cybex’s Hospitality Division] was good about coming out to make presentations and respond to questions from [General Manager] John Flynn and the club’s Fitness Committee.”

Cybex was also very helpful in providing valuable insights for how to design the club’s new fitness area and position equipment for maximum effectiveness, Guaglianone adds. In short, he says, Cybex quickly became a valuable partner, largely because of how Colarossi and his staff showed from the start that “they understand high-end clubs.”

The good fit between Cybex and club-specific needs has been further enhanced by its introduction of equipment with iPod docking stations (“something that club members now often specifically request,” Guaglianone says)

and by how it’s keeping pace with the continuing trend to golf-specific workouts. Guaglianone, recently certified by the Titleist Performance Institute, notes that “Eighty percent of the [Institute’s recommended] exercises are meant to be done on the Cybex FT [Functional Trainer] 360.”

The wisdom of choosing 15 pieces of Cybex strength-training equipment and eight pieces of cardio equipment for Greenwich CC was quickly confirmed, Guaglianone reports, by the fact that the club’s new fitness center booked \$250,000 in services, and showed an operating profit, in its first year.

“We’d love to get more [equipment], but we just don’t have the space,” he says. That could quickly change, though—the initial success of Greenwich CC’s fitness center already has the club considering a possible expansion. **C&RB**



The Cybex equipment [far left] in the new fitness center at Greenwich CC [above] helped the club book \$250,000 in services and show an operating profit in its first year,

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