



From Badlands...

*This huge flat bunker on the 2nd hole sports a siphon sump drain system.
Photo by Daniel Zelazek.*



to Grasslands

BY JOEL D. JACKSON, CGCS

Twice reclaimed, Grasslands is a perfect example of how a golf course makes great use of once-barren, unproductive land. Years ago the San Gully Mine ranged over the site extracting Polk County's phosphate riches.

After the mine played out, a large portion of the site became a municipal landfill. Today, a rolling 18-hole golf course provides home sites, recreation, relaxation, wildlife habitat, employment and revenue for the community.

'I have always loved the natural look and feel of the Scottish courses, and Grasslands has a lot of that flavor.'

If You're Looking for Improved Pest Control . . . Du Cor has an Easier Solution!



New Du Cor LEMWET can help improve your pesticide spray application! LEMWET is a lemon extract attractant and surfactant for use with most pesticides. LEMWET attracts nearby pests to your spray. In addition, its non-ionic surfactants improve spray penetration and bring your pesticide into close contact with pests!

For over 35 years, Du Cor has been coming up with products to fit our customers needs. From liquid micronutrients, humates and fertilizers, to specialty dyes, surfactants, odor counteractants and more, we take pride in finding special solutions that help our clients.

So if your looking for something special to attract a nuisance, or maybe just a different solution to help you grow, give Du Cor a call. We may already have just the solution you need!



Du Cor International Corporation

P.O. Box 593298, Orlando, Florida 32859
407-859-4390 or Toll Free 1-800-382-6735

Oddly enough, it is a mining company that has reclaimed the land and converted it into a viable entity.

The Drummond Company, a coal mining operation out of Jasper, Ala. has ventured into the golf development business in a very significant way. With a love for the game and a desire to diversify its holdings, the Drummond Company owns and operates three golf clubs.

In addition to the Grasslands, there are Rancho La Quinta, which hosted the recent PGA Tour Skins Game, and Old Overton in Birmingham, Ala. designed by Tom Fazio and named Best New Private Club for 1995 by *Golf Digest*.

Grasslands is getting into professional tournament golf by hosting the first Nike Tour event for 1997. The tournament week begins after the Super Bowl and runs from Jan. 30 to Feb. 2.

PGA Tour agronomist Jeff Haley has already made two visits and is pleased with the overall conditioning.

The man responsible for getting it ready is Roy Wilshire, CGCS. Roy has been at the Grasslands for four years and seems very comfortable in his role.

Keep it natural

"I have always loved the natural look and feel of the Scottish courses, and Grasslands has a lot of that flavor," said Wilshire during our December ride through of the course.

Open spaces with only a few trees, the course fits Wilshire's evolving management philosophy.

"I prefer a lean course for conserva-

(305) 581-0444

SPREAD-RITE, INC.
CUSTOM SPREADING
FERTILIZER • DOLOMITE • ARAGONITE

LAMAR SAPP

6001 S.W. 19th STREET
PLANTATION, FL 33317
MOBILE: (407) 479-9417

GEORGIA CERTIFIED TIFDWARF SOD MAINTAINED AT 1/4 INCH



PRODUCERS OF GEORGIA CERTIFIED
HYBRID BERMUDAGRASSES

Tifway

Tifgreen

Centipede

Tifway II

Tifdwarf

Meyer Zoysia

We specialize in golf course & athletic field turf installation

1-800-232-7453

PIKE CREEK TURF, INC.

ROUTE 2, BOX 376-A

ADEL, GA 31620

COVER STORY

tion purposes, and it is a more natural state for the turf. Keeping it on the leaner side makes it easier to groom. We always supplement for color, but I keep my nitrogen as low as I can for healthy turf," he said.

"Through the green, we make five to seven granular applications and only two or three of those are wall-to-wall. The rest are fairways only.

"During favorable weather we can apply two to three pounds of nitrogen with fertigation. Because of the heavy nature of the subsoil, I couldn't rely on a liquid program very much. The summer before last year, there were 60-day periods when we didn't water fairways at all.

Wilshire is just as frugal with fertilizer on his greens.

"I let weather and clippings yield dictate when we fertilize the greens," he said.

"Generally, we only apply six to eight pounds of nitrogen per year. Eight pounds is on the high side and usually means we had a tough transition and I had to push turf recovery in the spring.

"People can get caught up in Stimp-meter readings and green speeds. You need to keep the grass healthy. I will supplement with a foliar spray of 20-20-20 for color, but I try to stretch a nitrogen application as far as I can. When we do fertilize greens, it is at a rate of 0.5 pound to 0.75 pound per 1,000 square feet."

Drainage

As we rode the course, it was obvious that the Grasslands had received a heavy rain from Sunday's cold front passage through the area. Since Roy had mentioned heavy soils earlier, I asked him how the course drained.

"The surface drainage is fantastic," he said. "We can take a thunderstorm deluge and move the water off very rapidly. We do run into management concerns when it rains and stays cloudy for several days.

"The soil reaches field capacity quickly and then we have to be patient and let the conditions dictate what we can do. I have been experimenting with Primo growth regulator to help us through rainy periods to lessen the need to mow as often.

"When the mined-out areas of the course were filled and leveled, a lot of the



NEW PUTTING GREENS!

PLAYABLE IN THREE WEEKS!

HAVERLAND BLACKROCK CORP.

The innovators in Golf Course Construction can rebuild and recontour your greens and have them back in play immediately!

THE

BIG ROLL

LASER
GRADING

SOD PEOPLE

INSTALLATION:

Tees, Greens, Fairways, and Athletic Facilities

■ **USGA PUTTING GREEN RENOVATION** ■



9819 STATE ROAD 7 ■ BOYNTON BEACH, FL 33437
(561) 369-7994 ■ FAX (561) 364-1118



Roy Wilshire, CGCS

1. **Originally from:** Andover, Kansas.
2. **Family:** Wife - Sharon. Children - Tiffani (8) and Maci (6)
3. **Education:** BS in Agriculture with Turf Management emphasis from Kansas State University 1981.
4. **Employment History:** 1993 to present, Superintendent, Grasslands C. C.; 1990-92 Built course in Houston, TX. Also an executive in small management company. 1986-90 Superintendent, Lochinvar G. C., Houston, TX; 1985-86 Superintendent, Elkins Lake C.C., Huntsville, TX; 1982-85 Assist. Supt. Colonial C. C., Ft. Worth, TX. 1974-85 Summer crew member Crestview C. C., Wichita, KS.
5. **How did you get into the business?** My neighbor was going to work on a golf course. I loved golf, so I went with him. That was the summer of 1974. I knew from that point what profession I wanted to pursue.
6. **People in or out of the industry who have influenced your life and career.** My parents for allowing me the opportunity to attend college. Mr. Tom Leonard, who was truly a wise man. He would share his experiences of the ups and downs of the profession with me or anybody who needed assistance. I watched and listened and learned.
7. **Goals/Accomplishments:** Graduating from college. Becoming a certified superintendent. Being very active in all my Superintendent affiliations. Work philosophy: Utilize all you have been taught. Be consistent in your course set up. Be consistent in dealing with personnel. Mother nature always controls the game.
8. **Advice to prospective and new superintendents:** Follow the above. Be loyal to your employer and maintain the highest standards of this great profession, and play the game of golf.
9. **Professional affiliations:** CGCS member of GCSAA; FTGA; President of the Ridge Chapter of the Florida GCSA; Past President South Texas GCSA in 1991.
10. **Hobbies and interests:** They have narrowed over the years to golf and attending Daytona and Talladega NASCAR events. Helping fellow superintendent, Ray Cuzzone with his race car. Doing some landscape design work away from the course.

silts and clays from the spoil piles were used. And the back nine — where the landfill area was — is capped with soil with a lot of fines in it so we don't have great percolation.

One unique drainage feature that Roy showed me was the internal subsurface sump drain complex in the large bunker on the second hole.

"This bunker is so large that when the trucks hauled in the sand, they had to get into the bunker and they completely tore up the standard drain field. It would take six or seven hours to pump out this bunker after a heavy rain.

"Dennis Hurley of Turf Drainage of America out of Slidell, La. installed the sump system for us. It works like a water bed siphon. It is a water primed system that uses air to push water. It can even push water up hill. It is expensive, but the payback is there in labor savings and playability. I plan to do three more large fairway bunkers."

Bunker Management

Since Roy was getting ready for the Nike tournament and bunker conditioning is receiving more attention all the time, I asked him about his bunker management methods.

"We do have some steep bunker faces that I check regularly because we have to work them so often after a storm. My philosophy is to keep the sand as thin as possible to keep them firm. We add very little sand to them.

"We primarily have Standard 37M as our primary sand. I am adding a little coarser 37C from time to time for balance. We have so much fine soil from the reclamation that it migrates into the bunkers.

"Eventually, we will have to redo the bunkers. It will be an ongoing process just like the drainage."

"There is an up side to the poor soils though! The heavier soils aren't as friendly to mole crickets so we don't have to spend as much money as some sandy courses to manage them.

"We will apply Oftanol to the fairways and green and tee slopes and surfaces in the spring and then spot treat problem areas as needed. In Texas where I came from, I don't know of anyone who even



Aquatic plantings buffer the shoreline on the 4th hole. Photo by Daniel Zelazek.



Hole #16. A short but feisty par 3 on a windy day. Photo by Daniel Zelazek.

has a mole cricket program, but at last report they were moving west. When I was there, the worst areas were around the greens interfaces and then it was still a case of spot treating only.'

Florida vs. Texas

I asked Roy about comparing Florida turf management with his Texas experience.

"I am very comfortable working with heavy soils, so Grasslands was not a big transition for me," he said. "I don't know how I would have handled a sandy course. It would have been a very different experience from what I'm used to.

"The bermuda turf management is pretty much the same, especially in Houston which is almost at the same latitude.

"The biggest headache I had was trying to manage the bentgrass in the Ft. Worth area. The weather can be so severe and changeable. Bentgrass in Houston wasn't as bad because the weather was milder.

"We were talking about mole crickets



One of the indigenous live oaks on the relatively undisturbed 5th hole. Photo by Daniel Zelazek.

earlier. I think the reason they haven't taken over like in Florida is because of the weather. In the winter, the cold fronts can last seven to ten days not one or two like here. I guess they don't find it as hospitable there!"

Other challenges

Asked about any other major management challenges, Wilshire allowed that keeping sedge under control in the heavier, wetter soils was probably the biggest weed problem.

"It is a continuous program," he said. "We get good results with Image and Manage, but you can't ever totally keep it out. We will apply Barricade in the spring wall-to-wall, and in the fall we spray unseeded areas. We add some Gallery for broadleaf control in selected areas like the bunker faces.

"We do have some torpedo grass

patches in the old landfill portion of the back nine that are always tough to get rid of, but they aren't a real big problem."

And what other problems did the old landfill area present to the Grasslands staff?

Wilshire smiled and said, "Well we sometimes find some interesting things when we stick a shovel or a trencher in the ground.

I have only seen old newspapers from the 1960s. Other than being yellow like a paper left out in the sun for a few days, they are very legible. Seems odd reading about a 1965 Mustang for \$1,200. The subsoil conditions must be very anaerobic for the paper to not decay more.

The wildest story I ever heard happened before I got here. A drain crew ended up removing a swing set, refrigerator and an oven from the floor of a bunker."

Associations and professionalism

As we finished up our ride, I asked Roy about his views on the profession and association membership.

"In Texas, I served as president of the South Texas GCSA and on the board for six years. I have just moved up to president of the Ridge Chapter of the FGCSA here."

There has been a lot of editorial commentary lately about job security and association politics. I asked Roy how he reconciled his service.

"There is no question that you must respect your employer. You represent the company you work for wherever you are and no matter what you're engaged in.. You can never take that for granted.

"But I also feel there is always room for a superintendent to get involved in his professional associations. I have al-



The Grasslands Golf Course Maintenance Staff. Photo by Joel Jackson.

Grasslands Country Club

Location: Lakeland, Florida.

Ownership: Drummond Company.

Playing policy: Private.

Management Team: Club Manager, Gordon McIntosh; Head Golf Professional, Steve Knott; Green Chairman, Brant Martin; Director of Golf Operations, Drummond Co.

Designed by: Bob Cupp & Jerry Pate. Construction by: Wadsworth Construction Co.

18 holes: Championship Course = Par 72 at 7,040 yards.

Course/Slope/rating: Gold = 73.9/129; Blue = 71.5/124; White = 69.4/118; Red = 71.7/121.

Major Renovations and Projects: Ongoing drainage improvements. Tee renovation. Bunker renovation. Have installed Turf Drainage of America's Siphon System. The first all-subsurface internal sump system in a large bunker.

Acreage under maintenance: 119.7 acres.

Waterways: 25 acres.

Greens: 2.5 acres. Average size = 5,500 square feet. Turf type = Tifdwarf. HOC: .130 -.135. (At overseeding HOC = .150.) Overseeding: *Poa trivialis* @ 10 pounds and 2 pounds of bentgrass per 1,000 square feet.

Tees: 2.2 acres. Turf type = Tifway 419. HOC: .375. Overseeding = 15 pounds per 1,000 square feet of perennial ryegrass.

Fairways: 55 acres. Turf type = Tifway 419. HOC: .450 - .600. Overseeding = 450 pound of perennial ryegrass per acre.

Roughs: 60 acres. Turf type = Tifway 419 and Common Bermudagrass. HOC = 1.25" - 2.0". No overseeding.

Irrigation: Source = Surface water.

Staff: Total of 18 including superintendent. Assistant superintendent, Sean Seymour.

Special or unusual conditions: The course is built on a reclaimed phosphate mine and a portion is also on a capped landfill. Lots of clay and silt. The Drummond Co. was awarded The Distinguished Service award for Environmental Planning.

Interesting and unusual features: Changing contours from decomposition and shifting of the phosphatic clays. Sometimes we unearth unusual items when digging in the landfill portion of the course.

Mowing equipment: Greens putting surfaces and collars - Toro 1000's. Tees - Greensking IV's. Fairways - Ransome 300's. Roughs - Toro Reelsmaster and Articulator. Approaches - Toro 3100's.

Cultural practices: Aerification — Greens 3 times per year. Tees and Fairways 2 times per year. Verticut — Greens as needed. Fairways in the Spring. Fertility - Greens 8-10 pounds per year. Fairways 6 pounds per year. Roughs 4 pound per year. One to two pound of the total is applied through fertigation.

Wildlife inventory and special management programs: Alligators, bobcats, wild hogs, bald eagles, cormorant, egrets (Great White and Snowy), herons, ibis, sandhill crane, wood stork. This site is a natural habitat. We don't have any special programs. We just follow best management practices.

ways been honest and up front with my employers about how important and rewarding it is to me to be able to participate.

“You can’t get heavily involved if you don’t have their support and understanding.”

When asked why bother to get involved, Wilshire said, “There is that opportunity to help others. The sharing of ideas and experiences with your peers. I don’t expect to change the world, but maybe giving some honest input on an issue that matters will help make a difference in our business.”

We also talked about the pressures

and trends of the business. Wilshire said, “Sometimes the demands on the turfgrass are extreme and unrealistic, but I don’t know many superintendents who aren’t willing to at least try to attempt to provide what is wanted.

I think the golfers need to learn more about the limits of the grass. Television golf is great for the business but it can foster unrealistic expectations when clubs don’t have equal resources to produce the desired results.

I have gone through a time when I couldn’t abide a brown spot on the course, but I have learned to be more flexible and take what mother nature gives me to

work with. She doesn’t always play fair.

“You have to be confident in your ability. You can’t do the job from a position of fear. You have stand your ground on some issues and yet be flexible if you expect longevity in your job.

You have to understand what your boss is looking for and deliver it to the best of your ability. You must be able to accept alternatives.”

Roy Wilshire and the Grasslands are a good fit. A naturalist superintendent in charge of a course that has been reclaimed for a more natural existence. A more acceptable alternative than just a hole in the ground.



The 18th hole and Grasslands Clubhouse. Photo by Daniel Zelazek.