Florida spearheads change

Summit brings all sides together

BY KIT BRADSHAW

Golf in Florida is a cornucopia, pouring $5.2 billion annually not only into the golf industry, but into resorts, restaurants, agriculture, real estate, tourism, retail sales and services. But the economic impact of golf as a business and the environmental benefit of golf courses must be recognized and understood by the public, legislators and governmental regulators. Continued on page 10

Pebble Beach course facelift going full tilt

BY FRANK POLLARD

Plagued by drought and turf problems, Pebble Beach Co. on California’s Monterey Peninsula faces an aggressive renovation program at the hands of its new owners. Prior to the billion-dollar sale of Pebble Beach Co. to Ben Hogan Properties, Inc., officials at the facility had started an extensive program to restore Pebble Beach Golf Links to its original design. At the same time, though plagued by drought, Pebble Beach was undertaking a program of additional course changes to meet the stringent requirements of the U.S. Golf Association for the U.S. Open, scheduled there in June 1992. The primary challenge was eradicating Kikuyugrass and all noxious weeds from the tees, aprons, collars, fairways and rough Continued on page 15

Flood hits Augusta National and others

BY MARK LESLIE

Augusta National Golf Club lost its entire 11th green complex, Augusta Country Club faced washed-out riprap and one-quarter inch of silt on its 8th green, and other courses in Georgia and South Carolina dealt with their own problems after receiving as much as 15 inches of rain Oct. 10-12. Tropical storms Klaus, Lily and Marco converged in a deluge creating the equivalent of 50-year floods in some areas. Many courses simply watched the heavens open for two days and waited as the water soaked into the ground. Continued on page 12

Calif. supers in suspense

BY PETER BLAIS

Californians will vote this month on two ballot questions dealing with pesticides that could greatly affect how golf course superintendents do their job. Proposition 128, commonly called the Big Green initiative, would ban 70 to 80 percent of common pesticides used in agriculture, many of which Continued on page 12

The 13th hole at Iowa Shoreline Golf Course shows how well "derelict land" can be turned into green space. Architect Patrick Wyss of Rapid City, S.D., designed the course in Carter Lake, Iowa. For more on new courses, see page 11.
Jarrell tackles Fla. issues head-on

BY PETER BLAIS

The Florida Golf Council Superintendents Association needed someone to write a course management column for the national newspaper Golfweek. It turned to Mark Jarrell.

The state Department of Environmental Regulation needed two courses where it could sink monitoring wells to test for ground water contamination. Jarrell volunteered his Palm Beach National Golf & Country Club.

“Many decisions are made on the basis of what people want instead of what can be scientifically proven. And many people are misinformed.”

— Mark Jarrell

Jarrell firmly believes golf courses benefit the environment. He considers himself an environmentalist and has little use for “so-called” environmentalists who demand zero risk, a group he and others have called “terrorists.”

Unfortunately, those are the people who get the press and often drive the decisions made in Washington, Jarrell said.

“People at the EPA have told me their agency is really a political rather than a scientific organization,” he said. “Many decisions are made on the basis of what people want instead of what can be scientifically proven. And many people are misinformed.”

Which is why Jarrell is so happy with the efforts of the Florida Golf Council to lobby the Florida statehouse on behalf of the state’s $5.5-billion golf industry and why he agreed to join the group’s environmental committee.

“I’m encouraged by what’s happening with the Florida Golf Council,” he said. “Superintendents have been the leaders in dealing with regulatory problems for years. It’s just beginning to hit home with developers, architects and owners that we all have to deal with this together.”

Jarrell speaks from almost 20 years experience in the golf business. He graduated in 1973 from the University of Florida with a bachelor’s degree in ornamental horticulture, then stepped across campus to become head superintendent at the university’s Donald Ross-designed golf course, the former Gainesville Golf & Country Club.

Florida summit

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This was the overriding message during the Florida Golf Council’s inaugural Golf Summit, Oct. 13-14 in Orlando.

It was an important enough message for Gov. Bob Martinez to take a break from his re-election campaign to speak to more than 150 attendees, telling them: “This is an industry we want to see grow.”

It was important enough for the governor to sign a proclamation during the summit declaring Nov. 20 “Florida Golf Day.”

“It was important enough for golf’s icon, Arnold Palmer, to attend and declare: ‘You in this room, and those involved in building golf courses, have the responsibility to spread the word about golf. We must provide education about golf, and the good things that a golf course does for the environment.’

“I believe in the Florida Golf Council. It’s not just in Florida that golf is important...it’s in the nation and the world.”

Florida Secretary of Commerce Bill Sutton emphasized the importance of golf to Florida: “We are a sporting state, and golf is one of the foremost industries in Florida. There are more acres of fairways than citrus land in Florida.”

And PGA of America’s Jim Atwray said, “If we don’t take action as a group to let Florida know what golf

represents to this state, then it will be relegated to just a game.”

PGA Tour Commissioner Deane Beman said the summit — governmental regulation — is a key to the continued success of golf in the state.

There must be open communication between elected officials, golf course architects and developers, Beman said. “This is essential to the future of Florida golf.”

When two days of talks were complete, a roundtable of high-minded future plans, including:

“Gathering pertinent data on golf courses and their environmental impact.”

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Florida summit

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- Disseminating this information through the council's clearinghouse.
- Developing a relationship with lobbyists in Tallahassee to monitor legislation and provide credible data to legislators.
- Communicating with the public and media.
- Developing a spokespeople bureau within the council.
- Creating strategic and business plans for the council.
- Initiating a fund-raising effort to ensure continuation of the council.

A panel of Berman and architects, including Palmer, Ed Seay of Palmer Golf Design, Pete and Alice Dye, and augmented by a phone link-up with Tom Fazio, reiterated the importance of insurance for the council.

"The environmental problems are here because we didn't deal with them in the past," Fazio said, "but they are not insolvable problems. Cooperation is important in getting these issues resolved. Environmental issues will not stop the game of golf."

Prior to this panel discussion, a group of regulatory agency representatives had delineated the laws and rules governing golf course development.

"It may also include pools and tennis courts and stables for domestic animals."

"Because of all these elements which affect the ecosystem, you must consider the future." Fazio said increased regulation is the heart of a golf development, and well-maintained turfgrass can help provide a better environment at a golf course.

"Turfgrass can produce oxygen, act as a noise buffer, help stop erosion and reduce pesticide and fertilizer runoff," Berndt said. "It can also reduce water and soil pollution and provide a pleasing aesthetic appearance. Well-maintained turfgrass can be an environmental hero."

Frank Matthews said two regulatory concerns are currently in the forefront:

- An effort to eliminate the use of potable water for irrigation purposes.
- An effort to eliminate the use of potable water for irrigation purposes.

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Pictured above: The inaugural drive at the world's first Antarctic Open.

Photo by Kit Bradshaw
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highly organized the efforts are, the more
president of the Golf Course Superintendents
against the wall by the regulations, and then
"It's a matter of enough people being put up
people have in some states/'
Concerning lobbyists, he said: "California is
have year-round golf and it's a
It's worth our time
and lobby to do it.
We have had a lobbyist for at least seven
years in Sacramento to let us know what's coming up and provide us the ability to reach
Our efforts are coordinated through that person."
Gowan said Florida's summit was "wonderfully timed."
"Everyone came to the realization that their
problems are not three or four years off.
Their problems have begun," he said. "That's very
much what happened in Arizona five or six years ago.
I think Florida has a great opportunity to
protect the industry and help it grow. And
they have the support of the governor, too,
who understands golf is an important part of
the community. It is an important part of tourism. And yet they are all also concerned
about the environment, water use, and a lot of
concerns."

He said those concerns "will have to be
jumped on quickly." In his viewpoint, the Florida Golf Council, or there will be regulations written
without their input. They can participate now or
they will be regulated without their participation.
Although helping with new development,
Arizona's lobbying efforts have been more
important in protecting the future of existing
courses, Gowan said. Legislators and the
staff at the Department of Water Resources and Department of Environmental Quality
are educated concerning "the value of golf
courses and developments in the state, both in direct
revenues and jobs created, as well as an important
topic of the tourist industry," he said.
Taxes, water and open-space legislation have been the ASA's main focus.

The lobbyist informs the association about
proposed legislation, while the ASA talks to lawmakers "to try to make sure there are no
laws written that favor one certain group over
another, like agriculture to the detriment of golf," Gowan said. "We act as an information
source for courses and developments. We give them their options for redress and how
to pursue them. We want to present a fair,
responsible position of the golf industry to
the legislature.
"We're a moderate viewpoint. We try to
present to the legislature and governmental bodies the middle-road view of what the golf
industry needs and wants. Others entice
freedom and less restriction and they put
their own lobbying to reflect that view."
Gowan suggested golf associations, or
groups of courses where an association
doesn't exist, should discuss their situation
with regulatory and governing bodies, and
"play an active role in the use of the natural
resources. That is only going to become
more critical as our population grows."
Gowan and others weren't aware of any
other states with summit or lobbying plans.
"The Florida effort was a case of people who perceived the need, wanted to be two or
three steps ahead of regulations and wanted to participate in them," Gowan said. "I'm not
sure other states are aware of the situation or
looking at it."
National Golf Foundation President Joe Bedlitz said: "We certainly hope and encour-
age other states to do the same (as Florida).
Often, facilities concerns and problems are
better solved from the state level. We can
provide the national picture, as we do at our
summit, and hope that statewide summits
can further help facilities and their processes.
Faibiel said the Michigan summit held in
the fall of 1989 has already paid dividends and
he expects biennial summits.
"Everyone is better informed," the GCSAA
president said. "It got public golf and private
golf together, brought out the environmental
and slow-play issues, brought together the
superintendents, university people, architects —
everybody. We focused on where our
efforts were going."
"We needed to get a better understanding
of best management practices, because we
didn't have that as far as maintenance goes.
And the Department of Natural Resources
did not have an understanding of what was
really needed."
The DNR, superintendents and Michigan
State experts are working to produce a manual
to show how a sensitive environmental area
"to be managed properly," Faibiel said.
He said everybody is now striving together
for some of the same goals:
• Meeting the demands of the golfer for
golf courses.
• Implementing environmentally safe
maintenance practices.
• Increasing junior golf, a "critically
important" job done well by the Professional
Golfers Association.
Florida summit

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• The Army of Engineers' position that golf courses are non-water dependent activities for dredge and fill permitting.

Other areas of regulatory concern, he added, are proposed regulations that protect species and possible changes in rules affecting wetlands for isolated wetlands.

"Those involved in developing a golf course must create a consulting team early and keep them involved throughout the approval process," Matthews said.

The approval process is difficult and without a pro-active position, it will become more difficult to build golf courses. A major problem in developing a golf course is that the approval process is multi-jurisdictional. There are too many cooks in the kitchen."

Fishkind offered some practical advice for sorting through the approval maze.

"Consider interim agricultural use for the property before you develop a golf course," he said.

"Integrate your effluent disposal and stormwater designs from the beginning of the project," Fishkind said.

He suggested that when developers present the plan for a course, they make it the initial plan, not the final one.

"The regulators want to see the steps involved in the evolution of the plan, and if you show them the steps taken to eventually create the final plan, it is much better."

Fishkind said working with local governments to create a golf course as a recreational amenity will help fill the demand for public courses while providing an economic advantage to the developer.

"A golf course can have a wonder-

Lobbying

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• Addressing the speed of play concern. "Americans do a horrendous job in speed of play. You go to any foreign country where they are walking and they'll get in 3-1/2 to 4-hour rounds like nobody's business. It's that darned cart, but the cart is a major income for the golf course owners."

• Getting industry to support research.

"We need to have a coordinated research effort, not having one state doing the same thing another state is doing. We need to make our research dollars count, because essentially they are coming out of the same pocket," Faulbel said.

Events like summits have tended to be social events, but now they are important to the industry. "It is one of the best efforts "

Events like summits have tended to be social events, but now they are important to the industry. "It is one of the best efforts to get people together."

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