Pedaling to par
Airplane mechanic takes mountain bike technology onto the golf course with a pedal-powered golf car.

**Supers’ 10 deadly problems**

By Peter Blais

Inability to communicate is the major sin committed by those involved in golf course maintenance, according to United States Golf Association agronomists.

Agronomist James Connolly of Willimantic, Conn., gave a talk entitled The Top 10 Sins of Golf Course Maintenance during the recent Maine Golf Turfgrass Conference and Show in Portland.

The Top 10 list resulted from a survey of USGA agronomists conducted last year at the request of a group of golf course owners. Twelve of the 14 USGA Green Section agronomists responded.

Architectural comments were eliminated from the survey. But Connolly conceded architectural shortcomings — both outright architectural errors and outdated features like too-small greens or tees — were among the major problems superintendents face daily. Architectural errors would have ranked somewhere in the middle if they had been included.

The responses were regional. Western agronomists sometimes saw problems where their Eastern counterparts said none existed.

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**Water tax may cripple Florida courses**

By Peter Blais

A water tax proposed by the Florida Legislature would have a "staggering" effect on the state's golf industry, according to Bob Young, head of the Florida Turfgrass Association.

The proposal calls for a 10-cent tax on every 1,000 gallons over a water user's allotment, with the money funding water conservation studies and practices. Courses using effluent would not be affected.

Emerald Dunes Golf Club owner Raymon Finch said the bill is aimed

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**Tight money dampens optimism**

By Mark Leslie

A "tremendous surge" of interest in golf course development is being met by a cautious, stand-pat attitude by banks, according to industry sources.

"There has been a tremendous surge of new business since Jan. 15, with people going forward planning their projects," said Jim Applegate, president of Gary Player Design Co. of Palm Beach Gardens, Fla. Jan. 15 was the deadline for

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**USGA to fund final research projects**

By Peter Blais

Studies on golf course wildlife and the psychological benefits of the game's playing fields are being considered for the final $300,000 in funding from the United States Golf Association's $2.8-million environmental research project.

The USGA will act by July on proposals concerning the effects of golf course maintenance on wildlife, managing wildlife on the course and the psychological impact of courses on people, according to Mike Kenna, research director for the USGA Green Section.

Studies on the psychological effects of courses have

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The 1990 PGA Tour stop at Sawgrass’ Stadium Course at Jacksonville, Fla., is remembered most fondly for the “Playing of Fred,” a public pillorying by the media of the golf course superintendent.

The 1991 version will be recalled as “Kudos for Klauk” long after Australian Steve Elkington’s victory is forgotten.

Fred Klauk and his crew of 52 accomplished perhaps the biggest course turn-around in tour history.

Last year, the pros heaped scorn on the course and Klauk, for conditions admittedly on the ragged side. Mother Nature had sabotaged the course, but the pros were not inclined to forgive.

They were similarly outspoken on the eve of this year’s event. They went public as loudly, not to bury Klauk, but to praise him.

Sessions with PGA Commissioner Deane Beman, intense preparation, a two-week pushback in tournament dates and a break from the weather paid off handsomely.

Though Klauk felt players were overly critical in 1990, given winter wind and storm troubles, he took the heat. He didn’t duck an NBC interview with Bob Costas in which difficulties appeared magnified.

Greens 1 and 2 were unquestioned rough spots and, yes, there were other areas of concern. Instead of hiding his head in the sand, Klauk stood his ground and said his mission for 1991 was to make the course the best ever.

He set the goal — and delivered.

First step was to huddle with Beman and define needed changes. It was agreed that an earlier end to daily play was necessary prior to the tournament.

The course was closed in the fall for overseeding. This procedure became 80 percent poa trivialis of the sabre variety and 20 percent bentgrass, instead of the other way around. The week’s shutdown permitted uninterrupted germination.

A tree-trimming program meant more course sunlight.

Three months before the tournament, preparations were intensified. Two or three persons were added to the work force.

A key element was shutting down the course the Monday prior to tournament warmup action. Players reporting Saturday before Thursday’s opening-day round were amazed at the playing surfaces that loomed like huge carpets fit for a king’s royal entry.

In what was believed an unprecedented effort, ball marks on all greens had been seeded. A fairway divot couldn’t be found. A soil mix quickly cured the post-tourney divot blues.

Klauk, staff and tour officials have reviewed the tourney. A few minor adjustments are planned next year.

Despite the 1990 media battering, Klauk enjoys excellent press relations. He pointed out that the print media were most favorable from 1987 through 1989.

Klauk works at media exposure. He’s friendly with the press and the players.

“I am aware of the temptation by the press to create controversy, and that it might be the supers’ lot that tourney players and members might say, ‘What have you done for me lately?’ That goes with the territory.”

“The big thing is that the public now has a better perception of how important the superintendent is to the success of the PGA Tour and golf in general.”

— Fred Klauk

The recent PGA Tour stop at the Tournament Players Club of Sawgrass in Jacksonville, Fla., drew rave reviews from competitors for course conditions. Much credit goes to the golf maintenance management staff.

Left to right are Mark Sanford, chief mechanic; Bob Clarkson, assistant superintendent; Stadium Course; Cathy Macormic, office manager; Gene Baldwin, assistant superintendent; Valley Course; Lee Rowe, landscape assistant, and Fred Klauk, superintendent.

Rocco Mediate, Sawgrass resident and the Tour’s leading money winner, best expressed fellow pros’ feelings during a practice round. Attached to his bag was a button reading “Fred Knows Greens.”

Maintenance staff members also wore these buttons, supplied courtesy of Don Kepler, Klauk’s junior high school coach in North Palm Beach, and former high school teammate Larry Mueller.

Greens 1 and 2 were no longer verbal targets. They matched the others in immaculate grooming.

Greg Norman, perhaps the No. One course critic in 1990, summed up the 1991 layout in one word — “perfect.”

Eldrick said of Sawgrass: “I don’t think there’s a harder course in the world to play than this one when there is this kind of wind (42 miles per hour the second day), but course conditions couldn’t be better.”

Sawgrass’ reputation as a destroyer of titlehope was shattered.

Klauk’s junior high school coach in North Palm Beach, and former high school teammate Larry Mueller.

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