Bob blasts Cape Cod courses

By Mark Leslie

It was a nightmare of force. Driven by 90- to 100-mile-per-hour winds, Hurricane Bob washed thousands of tons of sand and seaweed and as much as six feet of deadly salt water onto Cape Cod golf courses on Aug. 19, leaving them inundated with destruction.

Cleanup chores, turf treatment, reseedings, replantings and repainting kept groundskeeping and clubhouse crews busy into September.

Taking a breather 10 days into cleanup, a crew member at Fall River (Mass.) Country Club summed it up succinctly: "It's a mess." Water was five to six feet deep over parts of Kittansett Club in Marion, which sits.... Continued on page 17

EEC to intensify competition in golf industry

By Peter Blais

The European Economic Commission's efforts to create a single European market by the end of 1992 has created opportunities and intensified competition among golf course developers and industry suppliers.

The 12-member European Community, which traces its roots back to the 1957 Treaty of Rome, is debating nearly 300 legislative initiatives designed to further enhance the free movement of goods, persons, services and capital between member countries. Most are scheduled for adoption by Dec. 31, 1992.

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Golf Course Europe gaining numbers

WIESBADEN, Germany —The third Golf Course Europe Conference here Oct. 7-9 looms so large that organizers already are planning the next show in Paris late in October of 1992.

Ellen MacGillavry of Expoconsult anticipates between 400 and 450 exhibitors, including a first-ever Japanese exhibit. Shunsuke Kato is involved in a... Continued on page 27

Florida Golf Council's back to wall

TAMPA, Fla. — The continued existence of the fledgling Florida Golf Council is on the line as the state trade association conducts its second annual Golf Summit Oct. 31 in Tampa.

"There's a chance we won't be here next year," said Jack Mathis, president of the year-old association formed to promote the interests of the state's $5.5-billion golf industry to state legislators and regulators.

"I think we'll make it, but we're at a critical stage. The government is paying attention to what we're saying. But our own industry is the key."

The problem is money. Mathis said the Golf Council needs several hundred-thous... Continued on page 31

A call for data

Cape Cod Study director asks for information on independent ground and surface water studies. Continued on page 15

Laser technology

Speed and precision are Ed Connors' hallmark as he renovates tees and greens nationwide. Continued on page 46

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COURSE MAINTENANCE

UK's brain drain' to Europe said serious. Dave Portz fulfills dreams at Hummock Dunes. Regional reports filled with where's, where's... Continued on page 20

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El Conquistador conquers transformation. The Paintbrush exhibits Hurdzan's artwork. New courses approved, planned... Continued on page 25

COURSE MANAGEMENT

New NCP president to paint positive club image. Ethics, profitability exist hand in hand. Tax watchdog council formed... Continued on page 32

SUPPLIER BUSINESS

Europe a bonanza for some companies. Innovia adds infrared photography to services. New irrigation products hit the marketplace... Continued on page 39
Hurricane Bob leaves Cape Cod bent and brown; grounds crews still cleaning up

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on Buzzards Bay.

New Seabury Country Club, a week away from hosting an American Junior Golf Association Tournament, was left with as much as a foot of sand and another foot of salt water.

Hyannisport Club lost five greens to severe salt damage despite heroic — and at first promising — efforts to save them.

Thousands of trees — including 600 at Kittansett Club and 800 at New Seabury CC alone — were snapped or felled by the winds.

Woods Hole Golf Club saw almost the entire sand of trees lining the 15th hole come down.

New Seabury CC faced the most immediate problem — preparing for the tournament. The eye of the hurricane passed directly over the front nine of the facility’s famous Championship course, depositing thousands of yards of sand and pockets of water, completely covering the cart path that runs along the ocean, and changing the shape of the 2nd and 3rd holes.

The storm struck in the morning and was gone in hours. In the midst of it, superintendent Lenny Blodgett had to sort through the chaos and saw “the 2nd and 3rd fairways were now ocean, with waves crashing down. The 2nd through the 6th holes were totally inundated.”

Colombo and Danny Comin, supervisor of golf operations and maintenance director, set an emergency plan in motion.

Before nightfall, the course’s five 300-gallon-per-minute pumps were draining salt water from the 2nd, 3rd, 5th, 17th and 18th fairways. Wednesdays night a 1,200-gpm and a 800-gpm pump were pumping the ocean back into Nantucket Sound.

Assessing damage to the rest of the 36 holes with retired University of Massachusetts Professor Joseph Troll, Colombo was “kind of in shock.” They found tall pine trees toppled everywhere. The Challenger course appeared relatively unharmed, but the front nine of the Championship course needed major help. The entire front nine, except the 1st and 9th holes, was submerged. The 2nd and 3rd fairways were ruined, and the 8th green was an island.

The storm had caused an estimated $350,000 damage to the course — $122,000 on the 3rd hole alone. But the front nine was covered by a catastrophic insurance policy.

Blessed with a 100-man crew made up of waters, busboys and lifeguards from the club, local contractors and his groundskeepers, Colombo managed to neutralize the three threats to the turf — salt, sand and standing water.

At dawn the next day the crew worked to remove the water, then shoveled and bulldozed as much as two feet of salt-laden sand back onto sand dunes at the ocean’s edge.

Next, gypsum was spread over the course, helping to leach the salt through the soil profile and limit salt damage. The greens were then watered twice that day and the next. The quick work saved the greens.

In mid-September two trucks were hauling in new root zone mix for the 2nd and 3rd fairways. Sodding had been to be ready for yet another competition, the Massachusetts Mid-Amateur Tournament, scheduled Sept. 30 to Oct. 1.

Colombo said that before the storm: “I realized it (front nine) was vulnerable. Everyone always wondered what would happen if a really big storm hit. Now they know.”

Pull out material at a pretty wide space; aerated again with real fine, solid tiles to poke more holes, get more water in it and close in the big piece as a little bit.”

But, a couple of days later — “just when it looked like the course would recover” — the damage showed.

That left Passios, assistant Mark Egan and their crew working to restore the lost turf.

OTHER COURSES WERE LUCKIER

Harry Coffin III, superintendent at Sankaty Head Golf Club in Siasconset on Nantucket Island, said the handful of courses on the island were spared serious damage because they are on the high side of the island.

“We had high winds and all our trees turned brown from the salt spray. But we lost just three big pine trees,” Coffin said.

The Taunton River overflowed and submerged Fall River Country Club’s 10th fairway, half the 6th fairway, and the 3rd fairway halfway up the apron of the green.

Thomas Olson’s crew treated for salt, watered a lot, and got their hoped-for rain for two days after Hurricane Bob.

In Maine, the storm mostly left behind limbs and other debris from trees.

One major exception was Falmouth Country Club, where superintendent Kevin Ross and his crew had to contend with an overflowing Presumpscot River that inundated the green half of the 13th hole and one-third the tee half of the 14th hole.

The major financial damage, Ross said, was done to his irrigation control system. Three satellite clocks, costing $1,300 apiece, were submerged and one controller ruined.

Beyond that, Falmouth suffered severe bunkers washouts, some cart path destruction and loss of 75 to 100 trees that were snapped or uprooted.

Just when the water subsided from the fairways 48 hours after a storm, a rainstorm dropped another inch and a half of water and “compounded everything,” Ross said. “We were back in the slot again.”

He said his crews had to wash off silt from the high with high pressure hoses, then aerate heavily.

Hodge’s sole concern just prior to that terrifying experience was for the safety of his crewmen. The sky was ominous as Hodge sped out on the course to pick up his men.

Rain clouds were breathing down their necks as they raced for the shelter of the maintenance building.

There was a surefire sanctuary. A tree toppled onto the building. While the trio pondered their fate, the winds suddenly stilled.

Surveying the damage a few minutes later with course manager Bob Leighton, tourney cancellation seemed the only answer.

They reckoned without club members. The next morning, 30 volunteers showed up at daylight to begin the work of restoration. Damage was greatest on the right side of the ninth hole, about 300 trees wiped out.

Members Bob Anderson and Dane Brimington brought in heavy equipment, tractors and chain saws appeared, and tree work was cut and stumps removed.

Hodge marked off more red hazards, and a frantic 12-hour work day paid off.

Twenty volunteers Friday morning finished the cleanup job, the tourney was on, and all went well.

By comparison, Hurricane Bob was a zephyr, uprooting only 100 trees and washing out culverts and bridges.

There may be a slight bright side to the wind strike Hodge dubbed “After The Storm.” Federal disaster funds may be forthcoming.

Hodge and aides won’t soon forget, though, the “Sheet of White” rain chasing them to cover.

Nominations sought for turf awards

SAN DIEGO, Calif. — The Sports Turf Managers Association is seeking nominations for its annual awards program. Awards will be presented at its annual meeting here Dec. 4-7.

Award categories are: Football Field of the Year; Soccer Field of the Year; Outstanding Commercial Affiliate: Excellence in Research, and Lawn Ranger Award for best groomed homeowner’s course.

Sports Turf Managers Association membership is an eligibility requirement. Nominations should be submitted to Greg Petry, Waukegan Park District, P.O. Box 708, Waukegan, IL 60079-0708; STMA Awards.