Tour of Duty

MARK KUHNS
Oakmont Country Club
Oakmont, Pa.
U.S. Open
June 16-19, ESPN/ABC

Mark Kuhns is a Keystone Stater, through and through. A native of Ligonier, Pa., he matriculated to Penn State, where he earned his turf management degree in 1977. He stepped right into the head superintendent’s position at Ligonier Country Club, then moved to nearby Laurel Valley where Kuhns worked under its longtime super, Art Zarneczki. Growing up, Kuhns had been a kid in my neighborhood who liked mowing the lawn. “I love the close camera shots. During the Open this year, I think people will notice the guys standing over putts, pukering a little bit. The severity of some of the slopes here is amazing. Our greens will be between 11 and 11.6. Our normal speeds are 11 and we approach 12 for some [club] tournaments.”

MADE-FOR-TV PREPARATIONS: “Not much,” Kuhns explained. “Everything we’ve done has been mainly to restore our course to its original architectural layout. It was built as a very penal course. ‘Basically, we’ll increase mowing a little bit to increase the density. Fairways at 7/16. Tees and collars at 3/8 of an inch. Rough will be very dense. It’s been well fertilized. Everything’s looking good. We had a little ice damage on two or three greens, but they’ve come around pretty well.”

KEVIN GREENE
Senior Open at Laurel Valley and the Women’s Open at Oakmont ‘78

THINGS TO LOOK FOR: Alonzi is amused by the players’ aversion to up-and-back mowing patterns on the fairways.

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MARK STODDARD
TPC at Avenel
Avenel, Md.
The Kemper Open
June 2-5, USA/CBS

This year’s Kemper Open will be a true test by fire for Mark Stoddard, who arrived at the Tournament Players Club at Avenel in late March. With two months under his belt and the course recovering from its worst winter in 20 years, Stoddard is working overtime to prepare for his first PGA Tour event and his first televised tournament. “I’m having fun already, he said with a trace of sarcasm and trepidation. Stoddard, 37, hails from Charleston, S.C., and earned his four-year degree in turf management from nearby Clemson University. Upon graduation, he went straight to Fishburn where he served as an assistant superintendent. When Avenel beckoned this past winter, he was head superintendent at Swan Point Yacht & Country Club in June, Md. “The boomers,” said Stoddard. From the boomies to the bighitters in one fell swoop.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR: Stoddard explained that Avenel sports an interesting mix of turf: zoysia fairways, Penncross greens, bent/zoyisa tees and fescue roughs. This year’s harsh Eastern winter had a particularly bad effect on Mid-Atlantic courses, and Stoddard was not spared. The zoysia fairways were particularly hard hit.

“Basically, all the shaded and low-lying areas have been slow to come back,” Stoddard explained. “The high and dry spots did fine. The zoysia just didn’t look ready on [holes] 10 and 12, so we overseeded with perennial ryegrass. “We also paid close attention to the

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Great expectations for Kansas’ new research funding method

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of raising large sums of money.”

“By now, it’s an easy way for all golfers to participate in making the game better by doing their part to support research,” he added.

There are a number of avenues to raise these moneys, he said, adding: “We’ve talked about soliciting donations club-by-club; or the Arizona method [assessing golfers 10 cents per round for research]; simple voluntary donations at clubs; or tacking on a fee at tournament activities.”

Early indications of Kansas’ success will come soon.

The last of three mailings alerting clubs and superintendents of the fund-raising program went out with the GIN Handicap billing in early May. “I believe by mid-June we will have a feel for the participation,” Stuntz said.

“If we can develop a high percentage of response, perhaps the KGA the following year would be willing to make it [2] mandatory... The whole idea behind this is that the cost gets passed on to the golfer—the guy who gets the benefit from the research.

“If you tell them exactly where the money is going, I believe a lot of people would support it.”

The major obstacles to the Kansas process, Stuntz found, were:

• There is no access to individual GIN users (“And that’s the same in every state”).

• And, when the bill goes out, “who’s going to be aware of it and who’s going to make the decision? Maybe the wrong person is getting the mailing. We have no way of knowing. So the superintendents’ support is crucial.”

TOCA gives scholarships

RALEIGH, N.C. — The Turf and Ornamental Communicators Association has awarded scholarships totaling $2,500 to college students at its recent meeting here.

Winning $1,000 scholarships were Sally Moore of Michigan State University and Nicole McCarren of Ohio State University. Christopher Hart-wiger of North Carolina State University was given the newly established $500 TOCA Essay Scholarship.

Lab tests off on pH

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protocols are being followed by everyone — so testing is uniform.

In addition to soil characteristics, the USGA also kept track of how long labs took to process samples, and how much they charged. Though he noted that some labs are quite large and handle all sorts of business, while others are smaller and deal only with golf courses, the charge for identical testing procedures varied from $200 to $650.

“I've had a path this year. We also sodded an area where members wore a path through the grass and it looked awful. So we moved the rakes this year. We also sodded an area where members had worn a path coming off the 13th tee.

"Any traffic areas we can’t help, we’ll dye. And we’ll lay on fresh wood chips in the flower beds a week before the tournament.”

Stoddard

bunkers. We capped them with an inch or two of new sand, cleaned up the edges and gave them proper lips.”

MADE-FOR-TV PREPARATIONS: Despite his inexperience playing to the camera, Stoddards insisted he and his crew made no extraordinary preparations.

“Nothing special,” he said. “We’ve just tried to pay attention to detail: trim work, grooming. Little things: take care of the guy. The bunkers, the rough and the greens.”

“Nothing special. No special striping.”

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