Hiers urges architects: Pay attention to maintenance complex

By MARK LESLIE
SAN FRANCISCO — Saying the maintenance complex is the most crucial element in a golf community and that it has been overlooked for decades, Tim Hiers called on golf course architects to "pay attention to that."

"Some architects have taken the lead in explaining to owners the importance of the maintenance complex. But there still are not enough who do," the superintendent at Collier's Reserve in Naples, Fla., told an audience at the International Golf Course Conference and Show here. "Architects, if you have a better maintenance complex and you come back in five years, you will see a better maintained golf course."

As an engine is to a car, so is the maintenance complex to a golf course, Hiers said and then proceeded to pound home hints on improving equipment care, personnel management and environmental awareness.

Key to the entire operation, he said, is a clean, well-kept complex — not only for its effect on the crew but club members as well.

"If the shop is immaculate and good-looking you will see a direct relationship to the golf course maintenance," Hiers said. "Our [club] members even bring friends over to see our maintenance complex. Their pride carries over to us. It can change the patterns of ways employees work on the course."

"You'll find that members will take the time to understand the maintenance operations. If they do, you get a better car, a better chance of more funding."

Asking how the shop helps course maintenance, Hiers said, "You do less work on the shop and more on the course."

Collier's Reserve spent $600,000 on its 10,000-square-foot maintenance complex, and 12,000 square feet would have been perfect, he said.

Hiers urged his colleagues to "engineer out potential problems" when possible. "Don't treat symptoms, address problems. A problem can go away. But if you have a symptom you are going to address it forever," he said.

Among his comments:

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• Overhead fans in building housing equipment. Every time equipment is used, it is washed, waxed and hand-dried. You can't get into the seams to dry them, so at night the fans are turned on to take away excessive moisture.

• The mechanic's shop has floor painted grey where people are allowed to walk.

• Anything that could leak on the property has a container.

• The mechanic shop is designed with lifts so he does not have to lift anything, reducing

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Barker repeats Dad's feat: wins GCSAA championship

By PETER BLAIS
MONTEREY, Calif. — "Just play good," was the advice Vaughan Barker offered his son, Todd, prior to the 1995 Golf Course Superintendents Association of America Golf Championship held recently here.

The younger Barker had reason to listen to his father, who won the annual event when it was played here in 1977. And he listened well.

The head superintendent at Fore Lakes Golf Course (GC) in Taylorsville, Utah, Todd put together a two-day total of 144 over the Bayonet and Poppy Hills courses to win the overall championship by a resounding seven strokes over his nearest competitor, Paul Jett of Duke University Golf Course in Durham, N.C.

"I was only two shots ahead after the first day," recalled Barker, who used his 3-wood off the tee over the tight Bayonet course to fashion a two-under 70 on the opening day. "Paul shot a 72, but had some problems the second day on the first few holes at Poppy Hills. I just played very steady after that and ended up with a 74 at Poppy Hills."

Barker, a top amateur in Utah, was one of 400 members and affiliates in 11 flights competing in the warm-up event to the annual International Golf Course Conference and Show held two hours north in San Francisco. The Golf Club at Quail Lodge, Old Del Monte Forest GC and Rancho Canada GC's West Course were the other tournament locales.

Barker was also part of a Utah team that captured third place in the Chapter Team Gross competition behind Jeff's Carolinas A team. Joining Jett on the winning team were Andy Campbell of Brook Valley Country Club (CC) in Greenville, N.C.; Chuck Green of Florence (S.C.) CC; and Chandler Masters of Talamore at Pinehurst in Southern Pines, N.C.

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