Dye, Dedman the perfect match for Golf Course Expo

The funny thing about Pete Dye, who, along with his family, will key note Day I of Golf Course Expo on Nov. 9, is that almost everything that's been said about him (and there's been quite a bit) is patently false.

First of all, his given name is Paul, not Pete. Second, he is routinely termed a "radical" designer, yet the great preponderance of his so-called innovations—plank-faced bunkers, elevated greens with closely shaven approaches, pot bunkering and island greens—are huge long-standing features on "golf course" builders, owners for Pete is often chided for being too macho, for making his courses too heroic and needlessly difficult.

The Dyes' interest in public-access golf makes them a perfect match for Golf Course Expo, the only national trade show and conference for daily-fee, resort and municipal golf facilities.

Pete is often chided for being too macho, for making his courses too heroic and needlessly difficult. First of all, he designs courses with his wife, Alice. How macho is that? Further, he and Alice have pioneered the idea that courses should be designed to include multiple tees so that anyone, of virtually any skill level, can play. Indeed, the TPC at Sawgrass, with the exception of the knee-knocking 17th, is very playable and forgiving from the middle tees.

SOD VS. SEED, PART MCVI

One thing that does hold true about Pete? He doesn't do a lot of public speaking, which is why we're so pleased to have him at the Expo. I did hear him speak at a Golf Course Builders Association of America (GCBAA) function a few years back. After hearing hilarious tribute to his friend, Joe Jemsek—jumping

Letters

To the editor:

I hesitate to take exception with anything in your usually fine publication, but the June article (page 40, "The Art of Sodding") equates "huge cost savings" for superintendents, is incomplete at best, inaccurate at worst. Golf course builders and superintendents are proving what bankers have known for centuries. The return on investment is more critical than initial cost. No one can argue that 50 pounds of seed costs less than a pallet of sod. But neither can anyone play golf on that bag of seed. It will take many months and thousands of dollars of additional input costs for that seed to reach the turfgrass sod's delivered level of maturity. The superintendents, who do literally have greater player appeal, and play better while it provides the owners a faster return on their investment.

For example, let's agree it will cost $300,000 more to sod than seed a course on one; there will be more than 100 rounds played every day and $50 per round may be low. The sod cost will be recovered very quickly and continue to be more profitable than the seeded course.

In addition to the direct cost/investment return comparisons that favor sodding an entire course, there are other cost and environmental benefits such as less watering, fewer chemicals, virtually no patching of wash-outs and less equipment damage.

As far as the sod/soil interface concern raised by one of the salesmen about the field conditions when the sod has been handled, there have been no professional golf course superintendents as someone once said, "the sweetness of low price too often becomes the sour taste of mis-spent money."

We trust your readers will look beyond the initial price of seed and find those who are well-qualified, fully competent, fully knowledgeable to do a proper sodding.

Mark Leslie, managing editor

Committed, influential Foys?
Florida is blessed with two

In Gulf Nation each state should have its hero-heroin-wunderkind. Florida is blessed with several, but one who stands out this month is Shelly Foy, secretary at the U.S. Golf Association Green Section's Florida Region and wife of its director, John Foy. Shelly has turned around the Florida Junior, a project she said, that "gave me the private daydream of being in the Arthur Ashe Daydream of being a legend of American tennis."

The solution is to get the word to The People that men and women who care for golf courses are true environmentalists. As stated by the Treasure Coast GCSA: "At a time when the entire industry is struggling against mounting costs and economic realities, disseminated by ill-informed sources, it's very important that we publicly draw attention to our case so that the general public... can see how environmentally sensitive and aware our industry really is."

In Martin County, where she lives, all but two or three schools will belong to the School Program by August, she said. Although the GCSAA has just signed on to sponsor that program nationally, Florida's GCSA has been active in it for 1-1/2 years.

The Treasure Coast's Blue Pearl (that's what the earth looks like from outer space) Charity Tournament last year raised $10,000 for a wildlife hospital and this May earned $10,000 for the School Program. That's enough to adopt 10 schools and provide them with reference materials and supplies for environmental projects. The North Florida GCSA is about to adopt five schools, Shelly said. And the beat goes on.

It's a great educational tool for the students and teachers, and for their [FGCSA] members, Shelly said.

Will the helicopter drop? With the help of Greg Norman's helicopter, the Hobe Sound Women's Club raised $3,000 for the Schools Program and $3,000 for schools by selling golf balls at $10 apiece, numbering the balls, and dropping them from the helicopter, with the owner of the closest ball to the cup winning $1,000.

Held in conjunction with the Blue Pearl Tournament, $13,000 was raised in one day to educate the public on the environment. Will the helicopter drop be an annual event? "Any time you can find a fundraiser that's fun for everyone, keep it," Shelly advised.

Now, she and friends want to create a statewide resource committee for the Audubon program, disseminating helpful information. This is an idea supported by Green Section National Director Jim Snow, who said, "We will work on the idea of state coordinators. We will probably try it out."
Audubon chief speaks out on Ocean Course debacle

The following letter has been reprinted here with permission of the author, Ronald Dodson, president of the Audubon Society of New York State.

Dear Vice President Gore:
I write to you today because of an effort in which the Audubon Society of New York State (ASNY) has been involved during the past 12 months and because of your interest in the protection of the environment. During 1994, provisions of the Coastal Barrier Improvement Act (CBLA) led to the opportunity for ASNY to participate in the bidding process for the Ocean Course on Kiawah Island, S.C. The Ocean Course has received international recognition as the site of the 1991 Ryder Cup championship and because it is purported to be built in an environmentally sensitive manner.

ASNY is the creator of the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary System (ACSS). Of the various program components of the ACSS, the golf program has been the most visible and successful. To date, there are 1,600 golf courses in existence, in 50 states and several other countries have joined this program. The golf program was created because of the large number of golf courses in existence.

Details of this agreement were received and approved by not only ASNY and VIT, but by the RTC and Internal Revenue Service, independent auditors and others.

One area that was extremely important to ASNY was a provision which stated that the efforts that were being made to acquire the Ocean Course failed, but in the future VIT "acquires an ownership interest in the Ocean Course, or either of the Ocean Course Purchase Agreement or otherwise, directly or indirectly, with any other person, entity or qualified organization participating in the auction," VIT agrees to provide a grant to ASNY to conduct a study of the course property. This study would result in a complete inventory of the habitats, flora and fauna of the course, and serve as the basis for establishing the long-term management of the course and surrounding environments.

During the entire process of developing the agreement, VIT expressed publicly how much they desired to work with ASNY. Both VIT and RTC expressed in the media how pleased they were to be doing something to protect the special environment on and around the Ocean Course. As a matter of fact, it was the CBIA that set into motion the requirements under which the RTC was working with not-for-profits and governmental organizations to protect the Ocean Course.

In September 1994, ASNY was the lone high bidder for the Ocean Course. This set into motion a series of court hearings relative the bankruptcy of the Ocean Course. The RTC's attempt to sell it, and the contract that ASNY had signed with RTC. In the end, the Bankruptcy Court did not approve the sale. In the 11th hour, RTC attempted to place two additional restrictions on the operations of the course. The judge's ruling was based upon the belief that these two additional restrictions would cause the financial partners in the acquisition to fail to come forth with the funding for the purchase. Some months of work essentially went down the drain all because the RTC supposedly wanted to increase the conservation restrictions on the course even further than ASNY wanted to.

On May 18, 1995, the RTC went back to public bid for the Ocean Course. In this auction, VIT was the successful bidder. ASNY contacted VIT to gratulate them and to discuss plans for the court proceedings, closing date, and the commencement of the ASNY study period.

VIT has indicated that they do not wish to honor the terms of this agreement nor to work with ASNY. ASNY finds it very interesting that the RTC did not follow the provisions as set forth in the ASNY's most recent auction, but instead negotiated directly with for-profit entities. Now that the RTC has done this, VIT is attempting to renegotiate on a contractual obligation with ASNY, where they are to direct an immediate investigation of this sale, the motives of the RTC in regard to the apparent violation of CBIA provisions and any potential irregular connections between RTC and VIT in regard to this latest sale.

At present it is the position of ASNY that both ASNY and the CBLA were used and misused in regard to nothing more than a publicity campaign to acquire the course in the total interest of a private business and with actual disregard for the environment of the Ocean Course and the coastal environment of South Carolina. We are presently weighing our legal options, but in the meantime the proposed sale moves forward.

Ronald G. Dodson
President and CEO
Audubon Society of New York State
Selkirk, N.Y.