Poa triv problems widespread & serious

By MARK LESLIE

Poa trivialis infestations of “epidemic proportions” are being re-
ported in bentgrasses and some Kentucky bluegrasses, affecting golf
courses across a broad portion of the United States. The question is,
has it always been present?

A rough bluegrass, poa trivialis is “very aggressive,” said Terry Buchen, The Legends Group direc-
tor of agronomy. “It will take over bentgrass. Even when the seed is
blue tag-certified, it’s getting through [inspections].”

“If you talk to the seed companies, the problem doesn’t exist. But if you
see new golf courses out in the field, it’s absolutely a shame how much
poa trivialis is there,” said Stan Zontek, director of the U.S. Golf
Association Green Section’s Mid-Atlantic Region. “It’s a huge prob-
lem. There are some supers who are fit to be tied.”

“I totally disagree with Stan and his statement on new golf courses,”
said Dr. Rich Hurley, director of re-
search at Lofts Seed and perhaps the nation’s foremost expert on
poa trivialis. “You take me to 120 old courses and I’ll find poa triv in fair-
ways, greens and tees. I’m not say-
ing it can’t come in the seed, but it’s all
over. Take me anywhere from Geo-
rgia north, coast to coast, blindfolded
and I’ll find it and I’ll find it quick.

“It’s a hysteria pointed at the seed companies when, if there is a hysteria,
it should be: ‘This stuff is everywhere.’”

According to Zontek, the situation
Continued on page 30

OB Sports: Turnkey managers

By PETER BLAIR

PORTLAND, Ore. — Bringing resort golf to ur-
ban areas is the goal of O.B. Sports, an Oregon-
based, full-service manage-
ment firm that recently be-
gan construction of a new
golf project on the western outskirts of this city.

“We’re focusing on high-
end, public golf,” said com-
pany President Orrin
Vincent. “Country clubs
and municipal courses
have traditionally been the
only choices in Western
[U.S.] cities. We want to
bring that resort golf ex-
perience to the city.”

The 36-hole Reserve
Vineyards and Golf Club,
the fifth facility in the O.B.
portfolio, is a good ex-
ample. The Reserve will
open in August
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COURSE MAINTENANCE

New ryegrasses put the old models to shame ...

Saving money through safety? It’s true ...

COURSE DEVELOPMENT

Williamsburg christens another four courses ...

Comment: Everyone needs an irrigation plan ...

Architect Ray Hearn, on his own ...

COURSE MANAGEMENT

TPCs slated for Myrtle Beach? Not so fast ...

Llama caddies: A money-making novelty ...

New Feature! Man(ager) on the Street ...

SUPPLIER BUSINESS

Novartis assembles management team ...

GCSSA announces changes in show format ...

Bayer realigns sales force; offer fax service ...

FOCUSED ON EXCELLENCE

Randy Waldron, superintendent at the Golf Club of Geo-
arium. It obsessed with consistency and his greens show it. See Super Focus on page 15.

PUBLIC GOLF FORUM

A NATIONAL BUSINESS CONFERENCE AND EXPO FOR SUPERINTENDENTS,
OWNERS, MANAGERS, AND DEVELOPERS OF PUBLIC-ACCESS GOLF FACILITIES
OCTOBER 27-29 1996

Forum focus: Customer service

By HAL PHILLIPS

CHICAGO — The golfers couldn’t be hap-
pier. With more than 400 new courses open-
ing their doors each year, there’s an in-
creasing variety of playing options. It’s another
story for the golf course management team, how-
ever, as record development numbers mean more
competition in an already tight marketplace.

Sophisticated operations that emphasize cus-
tomer service, manage efficiently, market aggres-
sively and maintain for quality will thrive in this
atmosphere, while those content with the status
quo will fall by the wayside. The application of
these sound business principles to public-access
course operations will dominate the four-track
education conference at The Public Golf Forum, a
two-day seminar and trade show sponsored by

Participation, rounds back up, says NGF

By HAL PHILLIPS

JUPITER, Fla. — That giant sucking sound you hear is actually a collec-
tive sigh of relief. According to the National Golf Foundation’s (NGF) annual report on golf participation, rounds played increased 5.5
percent during 1995, pushing the total to 490 million.

The report also shows the
growth in casual play, with more than 2 million casual players added to the game.

Non-golfers who haven’t experi-
enced golf in the past cannot
be counted on to continue play-
ing at the same rate.

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AURORA, Ore. — O.B. Sports has named C.A. Roberts III director of business development. Roberts spent the past six years as director of development for the Atlanta-based American Junior Golf Association.

In his new role, Roberts will promote O.B. Sports on a national basis and seek new opportunities for growth.

O.B. Sports is a course development, design, and operations company specializing in upscale public/resort facilities in the Western United States. Among its properties are Angel Park in Las Vegas and Langdon Farms in Portland, Ore.

C.A. Roberts

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CIRCLE #141

GOLF COURSE NEWS

...Continued from page 1

1997, were designed by former partners Bob Cupp and John Fought, Fought, a U.S. Amateur champion and two-time winner on the PGA Tour, recently merged his design practice with O.B. Sports, giving the company the ability to bring a course from the visionary to the fully operational stage.

"We strive to do the whole thing — design, build and operate a golf facility," Vincent said. "We're not into buying or managing distressed properties like the many consolidators out there. We prefer to start from ground zero and build something, rather than inherit someone else's problems." O.B. Sports' other properties are Angel Park and The Legacy in Las Vegas, Stevinson Ranch in Modesto, Calif., and Langdon Farms in Portland. Fought designed Langdon Farms and The Reserve, O.B. had construction supervision responsibilities at The Legacy and Stevinson Ranch and the firm has performed some revisions at Angel Park. The company owns Angel Park, Langdon Farms and The Legacy while it manages The Reserve and Stevinson Ranch. "We'd like to strike a 50-50 balance between ownership and management contracts," Vincent said.

After a brief fling on the PGA Tour in 1968-69, Vincent and Director of New Operations Bob Marshall (the B in O.B. Sports) started the firm in 1972. Among the courses the company has been involved with are Edgewood and Incline Village in Lake Tahoe, Calif.; Torrey Pines in San Diego; Teton Pines in Jackson Hole, Wyo.; and Toano Vista Golf Course in Wendedo, Md.

In addition to its existing, five-course portfolio, O.B. is considering other half-dozen projects in various stages of planning. It hopes to officially announce a handful within the next 12 to 18 months.

"We've stuck to our guns about staying near the city in each case," Vincent said. "For example, it's been eight years on the three sites we're working on in Seattle. We could have done projects 60 to 90 minutes outside the city long ago. But that's not the way we want to operate. Staying close to strong demographic areas is important.

"If you are prudent about selecting your market area, there's still room for many more courses to be built. But it's getting so difficult to get permitting, and land costs are so high, that the temptation is to look outside the cities. Those developers are taking a big chance that development will eventually follow them out to those areas. But if it doesn't, they are in big trouble." O.B. Sports seeks a theme at its courses. Langdon Farms, for instance, carries an agricultural motif throughout the operation. The archway over the entrance resembles that over a Western farm with a sign reading "Public Only." The snack bar is a mock feed store; driving range stalls look like stables; the administration offices are located in a farm house. The cart path along the eighth hole passes through a 1918 barn and shots to the green may actually pass over the structure.

The Reserve will feature its own vineyards with a winery theme throughout the property. The chateau-style clubhouse will have a wine-tasting station at the concierge desk promoting The Reserve's own private label.

In addition to bringing resort-type golf to the city, the other thing that distinguishes O.B. Sports from other management firms is its emphasis on golf and the golfer, Vincent said. All of O.B.'s top executives are accomplished players. Vincent and Fought are both former PGA Tour players. Director of Operations Ed Francese, Chief Financial Officer Jamie Cook, Southwest Agronomic Director Ed Hodnett, Northwest Agronomic Director Billy Campbell, investment banker Peter Kosman and Marshall are all low-handicap or scratch players.

"We know what the golfer is looking for," Vincent said. "If a facility doesn't work from a golfing sense, we aren't interested. We won't use housing to subsidize golf."

AURORA, Ore. — O.B. Sports on a national basis and