

**COBBLESTONE MAKES FIRST GA. BUY**

SNELLVILLE, Ga. — Cobblestone Golf Group, Inc. has purchased The Champions Club of Gwinnett near Atlanta. Cobblestone operates 24 golf properties located in California, Texas, Arizona, Virginia, Florida and Georgia. This is its first Georgia acquisition. The Champions Club of Gwinnett is an 18-hole facility designed by Steve Melnyck.

**Movin' on up**

Continued from page 51  
in the South."

Schulz credited Lords Valley superintendent Levi Travis, who died five years ago, with teaching him most of what he knows about growing bentgrass. After a year at Lords Valley, followed by a brief stay with the Fairfield Corp. building a Joe Lee-designed course in Crossville, Tenn., Schulz went to work for pro Cotton Berrier at Gatlinburg (Tenn.) Country Club. Schulz thanks Berrier for teach-

ing him the pro shop side of the business.

Schulz was runner-up among 250 applicants for the head superintendent position at Atlanta Country Club in 1984. Two weeks after the members of the greens committee made their selection, their top choice died in a plane crash and they offered Schulz the job.

"It was an eerie situation," Schulz recalled. "I talked to Cotton, Nancy [his wife] and my dad. Cotton said it was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and I accepted the job."

Schulz spent five years in Atlanta, up-

dating much of the course and particularly the turf-care facility, formerly a 106-year-old barn where the chemical storage room opened onto the employee lunchroom. He formulated 10- and 20-year plans, which are still guiding maintenance efforts at the nationally ranked club.

Schulz had several opportunities to move on before finally deciding to leave Atlanta CC. "In 1989, a group asked if I'd design, build and operate this course. They offered to make me a partner and give me a maintenance contract on the facility. We started Nov. 1 and opened the following August, which meant we made the incentive clause to open the course within 12 months. That's when I found out the partners had no money left. The next two years were hell."

Schulz petitioned the bankruptcy court to allow him to manage the facility. His plan was scrutinized against those presented by some major management companies, he recalled. The judge eventually awarded Schulz the facility and granted him a year to put a reorganization plan in place. It took Dick and Nancy seven months to free The Oaks from reorganization. The course greeted its 300,000th customer in February.

"I'm a risk taker," Schulz explained of his success. "I like to dream about something and then put it into action. But for every dream you must have a back-up plan."

"Nancy is the detail person on our team. She can translate a dream and put it on paper in a way that makes sure everyone can follow what is going to happen. None of this would have been possible without her."

The Oaks sits on 260 acres. Schulz plans to add nine and possibly 18 more holes in the near future. He is also considering purchasing two or three more courses in his market area, within a two-hour radius of Atlanta.

"The golf industry needs to give the average golfer something better for his money," he said. "Most good public courses in the Atlanta area are charging \$80 to \$100 a round. We're getting \$25 to \$39. Seventy percent of our customer base drives 30 or more miles to play here. We give people great conditions and friendly employees for that price. We could easily go to \$50 to \$60, but we won't do that. If I could cookie cutter this operation, I could build three or four more courses around here and take a big chunk of the daily-fee market."

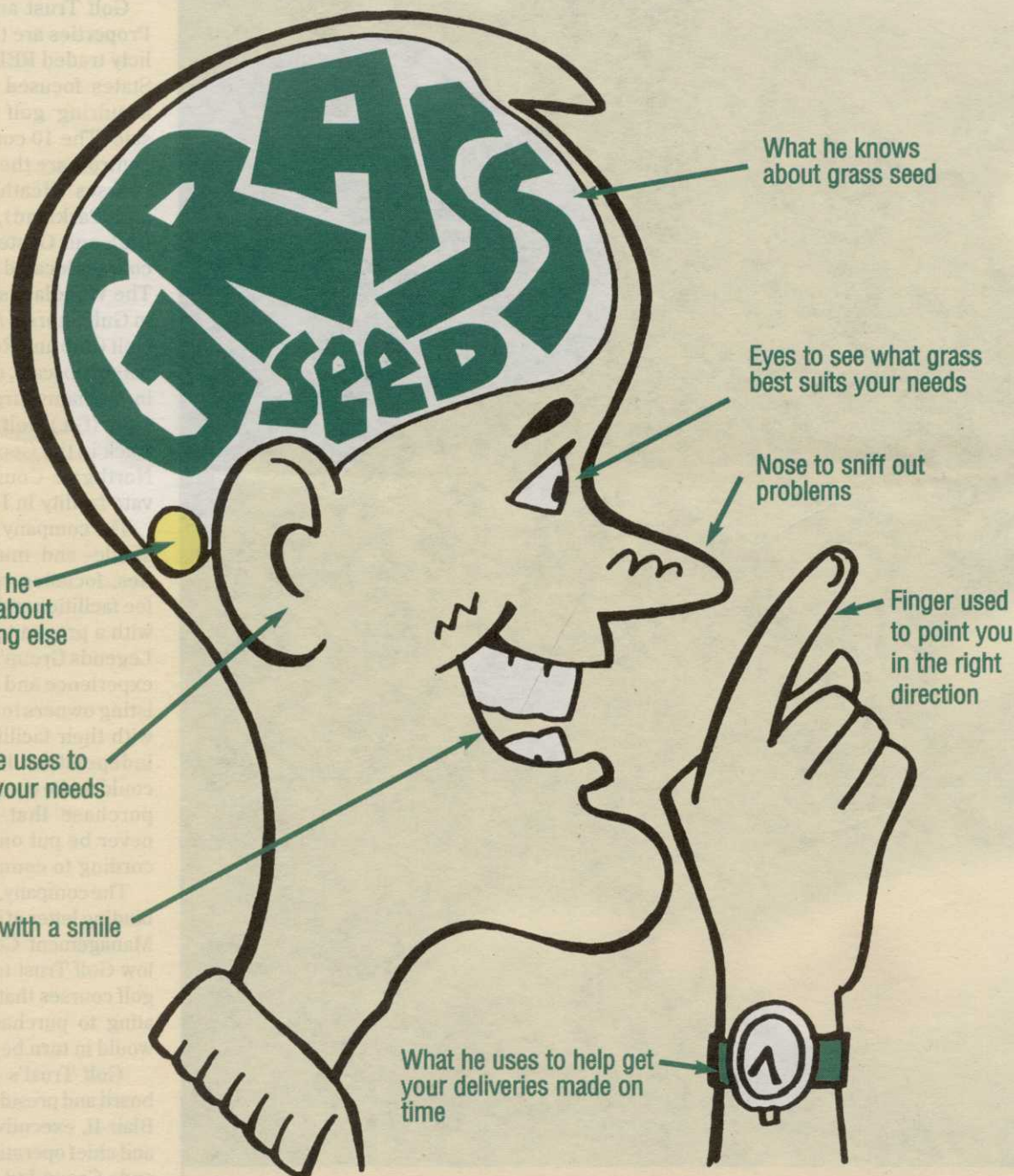
Schulz is considering buying another Atlanta-area course that is going through reorganization. "We'd need to do something to set it apart," he said. "Putting in bentgrass would make it an ideal facility."

What would be his advice to other golf course superintendents who want to become course owners?

"If you are putting up your own money, be very careful of the pie-in-the-sky syndrome," he advised. "You don't have to have everything state-of-the-art right from the start. There are always two or three unexpected things that come up and you'll need the money to take care of that."

"If you're part of a group, check out your partners' financial strengths and character references. Do your homework and stick to your plan. If it's a good plan, it will see you through."

**YOUR PENNINGTON TURF SPECIALIST**



As you can see, our turf specialists have what it takes to make sure you get the right kind of grass seed at the right time. They spend their time answering your questions about turf requirements, introducing new grasses and delivering seed. They know just what type grass will work best for you and will make sure you get your seed when you want it. And they do it all with a smile on their face. So the next time you need a specialty turfgrass, call Pennington Seed — because nobody beats us on our turf.

**PENNINGTON**  
For details call: 1-800-277-1412  
Web site: <http://www.penningtonseed.com>