Baltimore CC’s roofed rinse station raises bar

By MARK LESLIE

TOMONIUM, Md. — It’s the perfect — well, nearly perfect — equipment wash station. And its co-creator, superintendent Doug Petersan, is about to make it completely perfect.

“I probably will install some kind of elevated retractable hose, so when the guys are done washing the equipment, the hose will wind up above so it doesn’t lie on the ground,” said Petersan from his office at Baltimore Country Club here.

When the club built two new maintenance structures and refurbished an old barn and existing maintenance facility, the wash station was a key element of the plan.

“We looked at other maintenance facilities, chose things we liked and didn’t like and developed this wash area,” said Petersan, who worked with architect Jack Reinhardt of Charlotteville, Va. “We wanted it covered so we could work in it in less than ideal weather conditions. It’s lighted, too, and has a couple of hoses and a high-pressure power washer. So, when people finish working, they have a good place to clean their equipment.

The wash area is adjacent to Baltimore CC’s cold equipment storage facility in its office and shop area.

Other important aspects of the station are its dollars at each entrance ("which should be standard procedure," Petersan said) and a special drainage system for the rinsate. Rinse water, Petersan said, goes through an oil grit separator which retains any sediment, oil or fuel. The then-clear water flows to a second, swirl-and-baffle chamber, then to a water-quality lagoon adjacent to the separator.

“In that lagoon we have wetland plants,” Petersan said. “At the base of that, which is completely lined, we have a 12-inch filter bed of organic matter and sand which the water percolates through. At the bottom of the filter bed is a tile which directs the water into a second lagoon. From there it goes into the irrigation lake and back onto the golf course.”

The steel-pipe ditches, he said, are filled and cemented in place with concrete.

Petersan, who has been head superintendent at Baltimore CC for six years, was superintendent for 12 years at Prairie Dunes in Hutchinson, Kansas, before that.

Course design and maintenance a crucial marriage

By DR. MICHAEL HURDZAN

Last month I focused on the physical factors of design, and their relationship to maintenance as well as the professional relationship between designer and superintendent. Now I will address the single most important specification related to maintenance: the turfgrasses to be used. No other specification under the control of the golf course architect will dictate the overall maintenance practices, or playing conditions more than the selection of turfgrasses; and the choices are many.

A few years ago this was not the case and routine and standard specifications were acceptable. But in view of the enormous advances in turfgrass breeding and selection over the past few years, this is not the best practice. In fact, I believe that each individual golf course site should be studied for its inherent climatic and edaphic qualities, along with local environmental restrictions and attitudes, before turfgrasses are selected and specified.

Ideally, a probable maintenance regime should also be defined, with any budgetary limitations, before turfgrasses are selected. Then knowing specific site factors (drainage, soil fertility and texture, quantity and quality of irrigation water, proposed pesticide schedules, mowing equipment and height, etc.), climatic factors (wind, normal rainfall patterns, air drainage, and length of playing season), along with edaphic factors (soil chemistry, soil biology, and physical limitations), social factors, (EPA or conservation restrictions, probable total play, country club or public golf course, existing competition, etc.), and budget factors, only then should turfgrasses be selected.

Let me give you some considerations in making this selection. Few golfers would deny that the finest playing surface in northern latitudes is bentgrass and there are many to choose from. It gives you the best tee, fairway and putting surface, but in the transition and Southern areas it is less practical because of summer heat stress.

Many new bentgrasses show good potential, but they are still susceptible to many insect and disease problems, require similar fertility, water management, cultural practices, and for a much longer and intense period.

Improved bluegrasses, on the other hand, Continued on page 14

CC of Poconos, ‘a living thing,’ joins Audubon program

MARSHALLS CREEK, Pa. — Country Club of the Poconos, which encompasses 150 acres of wetlands, forest, rock walls and mountain streams, has joined the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary System.

Operating on the notion that a golf course is “a living thing that is always evolving,” superintendent Bob Meaney oversees maintenance of the property and its wide-ranging habitat.

“Our course design accommodates the natural contours of the land and preserves the wildlife habitats,” Meaney said. “But it also plays like a dream. The holes challenge golfers of every skill level, play for reasonable par, provide scenic views, and

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may not provide the beautiful color contrast or playing conditions on tees and fairways compared to bent, but they have better heat tolerance and often require less pesticides, fertility and water, and present fewer cultural problems.

The difference in maintenance budgets between bent and blue is difficult to estimate, but I believe it to be in the $80,000 range year on a good site. Naturally, the source of irrigation water — its quality and quantity — can be a major factor in this decision.

Similar improvements are being made to warm-season grasses, particularly in putting green turf, with improved winter hardness. So the distinction of where to use warm- and cool-season grasses has become blurred, which makes careful decision-making critical. Both the designer and superintendent should do exhaustive research before selecting not only the turf type, but also the cultivar. Many are interested in non-traditional golf course grasses like buffalo, balia and paspalum species, but none compare in playing quality to finer-blade turf types.

The third alternative would be a fine fescue mix which can provide acceptable playing qualities compared to bent, but require even less water, minimal fertilization, infrequent mowing, and almost no pesticides. This family of grasses (chewings, creeping red, slender creeping red, sheep and hard) has been extensively improved over the past few years and with proper selection can fit most climates and uses.

One might consider the fine fescues blended with bentgrass or bluegrass to provide the desirable playing conditions for a particular area or site.

I am not a big fan of turf-type perennial ryegrass, mainly because of its playing qualities and patchiness. Although I have played some wonderful ryegrass fairways, I feel the ball settles too deeply into the turf, it doesn’t heal quickly during stress periods, and extremes in temperatures can cause major turf loss. This is my personal bias, and I certainly would be willing to compromise that view to a superintendent who felt strongly about ryegrass on a particular site.

The point is that several choices and combinations of choices could be made concerning turfgrasses, all of which will directly impact maintenance.

The maintenance budget may range from perhaps a low of $250,000 to an excess of $1 million, depending upon which turf blend is selected for a particular site.

CRABGRASS CONTROL

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Mongoven takes over Everglades GCSA presidency

BONITA SPRINGS, Fla. — Mike Mongoven, assistant director of golf for the city of Fort Myers, has been elected president of the Everglades Golf Course Superintendents Association (EGCSA). He heads a slate of officers that includes Vice President Tad Altman of Naples’ Stonebridge Country Club, Treasurer Steve Durand of Quail Creek Country Club in Naples and Secretary Rick Tatum of Royal Palm Country Club in Fort Myers.

Gary Grigg of Royal Poinciana Golf Club in Naples was elected external vice president; and Dale Walters of Naples’ Royal Palm Country Club was elected EGCSA’s delegate to the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA). Elected to the board of directors and as committee chairmen were Walter Owisany of Audubon Country Club in Naples, membership; Jerry Belyea of Cape Coral’s Royal Tee Country Club, education/programs; Terry Wood of Naples’ Royal Wood Golf & Country Club, past president/bylaws; Brad Walters, sales manager of Golf Ventures, Inc., of Fort Myers, social and special events; and Tim Denton, sales representative of Boynton Pump & Irrigation Supply in Naples, golf.

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The above process takes time, study and understanding if properly done. However, a wrong choice can be very costly and a right choice can make a golf course spectacular. Therefore, the designer should be very deliberate and methodical in choosing turfgrass seed blends, consulting with superintendents, breeders, researchers, suppliers and users.

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Penn State University 1996

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Design/maintenance

Continued from previous page

Again, the designer and superintendent should talk about every detail of the planting specification. Even grow-in procedures should be mutually agreed upon. If the contractor is responsible for more than planting the turf, a detailed maintenance specification would be appropriate. Usually the superintendent prefers to assume this responsibility rather than worry about if the contractor is following procedures to get the quickest maturation.

Sodding the entire course, or at least sodding all bluegrass (or ryegrass or fescue) areas, is becoming more common. The reason is that sodding answers many environmental concerns, reduces the grow-in period from months to weeks, produces a better finished product, and often makes the best economic sense to the owners. Large-scale sodding of fast-germinating varieties like bentgrass, is much harder to justify because of cost, but sodding tee or green surfaces can be reasonably affordable, especially late in the planting season.

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