Field Days: Seed quality put to the test

By MICHAEL LEVANS
CORSVALLIS, Oregon — With field burning severely cut back and three mild, very wet winters behind them, Oregon-based seed growers are facing what is perhaps the heaviest onslaught of Poa annua, Poa trivialis and native bentgrasses contamination the industry has seen.

According to regional seed growers, the problem has been mounting over the past five years and is affecting species across the board — even species that are traditionally Poa-free.

“We’re basically starting to see the effects of five or six years of no burning,” said Glenn Jacklin, senior vice president of production and grower services at Jacklin Seed Co.

The past three mild winters haven’t helped either. Due to higher than normal temperatures and extensive rains, growers aren’t getting the necessary activity out of standard chemical practices.

This year we’re seeing Poa annua in production areas that we traditionally don’t see because of the winters,” said Jacklin. “With El Nino, we had a pretty light winter in all our production regions.”

The work now rests on the shoulders of seed farmers. The seed cleaning process has slowed considerably while, in many cases, farmers have added costly machinery upgrades to

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Childs play: Kids Course a new first

By MARK LESLIE
LAWRENCEBURG, Ky. — A “kid’s course” built within the existing layout may prove a key option for golf facilities around the country, now that Bob-O-Link Golf Course has pioneered the concept.

On Father’s Day, Bob-O-Link opened its Kids Course within the 22-year-old track, thanks to owner Jack Ridge, who is also a golf course architect and president of a children’s golf-product company, Club Pro Products in Louisville.

“Golf has missed the boat,” Ridge declared. “Everybody’s mindset has been junior golf — teenagers — but no one has thought of kids up to 10 years old. That’s what separates this course.”

The idea for the Kids Course, he said, stemmed from parents who bought

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and Augusta National Golf Club, The First Tee has raised awareness of the need to make golf available and affordable for children of all races and economic backgrounds and others who have largely been unable to experience the game.

Numerous people in the industry have stepped forward with ideas to create new facilities or add to existing ones under the umbrella of The First Tee. Many others — from golf course architects and builders to Tour professionals — are volunteering their time and talents to various projects.

At this year’s Public Golf Forum, the Golf Course News sponsored conference and expo for developers, owners, managers and superintendents of public-access golf facilities, you can share these new ideas with a specially designed General Session.

The First Tee General Session will follow PGA pro and course designer Greg Norman’s keynote address on Oct. 27.

First Tee Executive Director Tod Leiweke will speak, joined by Program Director Dedric Holmes and Richmond (Va.) First Tee Foundation founder Fred Tattersall, who organized a First Tee facility being built in Chesterfield County, Va.

Leiweke, 38, was chosen to head the program due to his extensive background in the world of sports. He was executive vice president for two years of Orca Bay Sports & Entertainment in Vancouver, British Columbia, which owns and manages the Vancouver Grizzlies of the National Basketball Association (NBA), the Vancouver Canucks of the National Hockey League, and the 20,000-seat General Motors Place arena.

He had two tours of duty with the NBA’s Golden State Warriors and was president of the Houston Rockets of the NBA in 1993-94.

His previous experience with the PGA Tour was as vice president of marketing from 1991-93.

Leiweke will present an overview and update of The First Tee and advice to potential partners. Having gone through the process, Tattersall will present the real-life issues of such a project.

The First Tee Oversight Committee consists of PGA Tour Commissioner Tim Finchem, U.S. Golf Association Immediate Past President Judy Bell, PGA of America CEO Jim Awtrey, LPGA Commissioner Jim Ritts, and Augusta National Golf Club General Manager Jim Armstrong. The honorary chairman is former President George Bush.

For more information on Public Golf Forum, contact United Publications at 207-846-0600.

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