Spotlight on Asia
Is the Philippine golf industry poised for a rebound? Overbeck takes a closer look 

Battle for Atlanta
North and South American superintendents take on the world in October's Hayter Cup.

Field Days: Seed quality put to the test
By Michael Levans
Covallis, 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 it 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

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 county, 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 a new first

Intrawest continues move on South
By Peter Blais
Vancouver, B.C., Canada — Vancouver-based Intrawest, one of the largest ski resort owners in North America, has moved further into the warm-weather resort market with its recent purchase agreement to buy Florida's Sandestin Resorts for $130 million. Sandestin is a 2,400-acre golf course resort with 63 holes of golf and a residential community located between Pensacola and Panama City.

Tom Richardson, chief financial officer of American Skiing Co. (ASC), also a large owner/operator of ski resorts and golf courses throughout the country, said of the Sandestin deal: "It has a lot of condominium management opportun-

— The First Tee takes first strides —
General Session set for national forum
Palmsprings, Calif. — The First Tee program, an initiative that is sweeping the country to draw new people, especially children, into golf, will be the focus of the General Session at this year's Public Golf Forum here, Oct. 26-27.

Created by the World Golf Foundation, PGA Tour, LPGA, PGA of America
First Tee breaks ground — literally

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Officials of Chesterfield County, which borders Richmond to the south, voted 4-1 on May 27 to accept the Richmond First Tee Foundation's proposal to build an 18-hole golf course designed with youths in mind, along with a practice range and three-hole "tot" course. It will occupy 140 of the park's 360 acres and will be leased for 20 years to the foundation, with two successive 10-year renewals. Chesterfield County's approval of the project follows an attempt by Richmond First Tee Foundation to build the facility within city limits. Organized by Richmond native Fred Tattersall, the foundation hoped to open by Memorial Day 1999 and be the nation's initial First Tee. But when talks with city officials bogged down and threatened that early opening, Chesterfield officials came forward.

Frankly, we've been through such a battle to work a public-private partnership that we've lost a little interest in whether we're first in the country," said Tattersall, an investment counselor and money fund manager. "We just want to build it."

"What sold this course is that it's designed to teach youths how to play and it will be good for senior golf," said Chesterfield County Parks and Recreation Department Director Mike Golden. "I like the idea it's in line with the other youth sports facilities we have. A kid can go and play golf, soccer, football, baseball, or tennis. It might be one, one day and one the next. Or a family can go and one or two play golf, while the rest are at soccer practice. It's uncommon for that to happen in other ways now."

Iron Bridge Park, Tattersall said, "is everything you would hope for in a park."

Besides that, it is located in seemingly a perfect position. Last year 440,000 people came to the park during the year. More than 1,100 youths live in the neighborhoods next to the park. There are 11 elementary schools, eight middle schools and four high schools within a 7-mile radius. And reportedly there are 4,000 people living in the poverty level in Chesterfield County.

"We think we've tapped into a great location," Tattersall said. "It's not an issue of moving to the wealthy suburbs of Richmond."

Richmond, meanwhile, was listed in July's Golf Digest as the worst of 509 small, medium and large U.S. cities for golfers because of its lack of facilities.

"It's going to be a spectacular project," said Tod Leiweke, executive director of the national First Tee program. "We have a deeply committed group there who have fought through an arduous public process, they're doing it for the right reasons and they're well organized."

Leiweke could not say whether Richmond's will be the first "from-scratch" facility to open. "We have 11 facilities that are extremely active," he said. "They are a mixed bag — a couple existing facilities to expand, a couple that are smaller, etc."