

BRIEFS



MAINE SUPERS HONOR HODGE

CUMBERLAND, Maine — Jim Hodge, superintendent at Val Halla Golf Course here, recently received the Maine Golf Course Superintendents Association Distinguished Service Award. Hodge is a 10-year member of the Maine GCSA and has served as the chapter's president and vice president; chairman of the scholarship and research, bylaws and turf conference committees; and Maine liaison to the GCSAA Chapter Relations Committee. Hodge received the award during the Maine Turf Conference in Rockland.

SUPERS FUND HOSPITAL GREEN

DALLAS — The North Texas Golf Course Superintendents Association (NTGCSA) will fund and maintain a new putting green at the Dallas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children. The green will serve as an outdoor area for both therapy and recreation for hospital patients. NTGCSA President Keith Ihms announced that the group's support will be in honor of Quinton Johnson, a long-time member who recently retired.

MIDWEST SUPERS SUPPORT RESEARCH

INDIANAPOLIS — Five golf course superintendents' associations gave the Midwest Regional Turf Foundation more than \$35,000 during the 1998 Midwest Turf Expo here for research and education. In turn, the foundation gave \$96,000 to the Purdue University Department of Agronomy for its turf program and another \$10,000 to the School of Agriculture for development of the Purdue Turfgrass Research and Diagnostic Center. Meanwhile, the foundation honored Jim Kenney with its Distinguished Service Award.

After the 'new' wears off

By BOB SPIWAK

COEUR d'ALENE, Idaho — While routine golf course maintenance like mowing and turf protection provide the steak for the golfer, on-and-off-course beautification adds the sizzle. And more and more courses, old and new, are adding colorful flowers and plants with pizzazz to set themselves apart, or gain a reputation.

"Augusta National is known for its azaleas," said Coeur d'Alene Golf Course superintendent John Anderson, "and we want the thousands of juniper tams and geraniums we plant every year to be identified with Couer d'Alene in the same way."

"We use a lot of color, both annuals and perennials, and this is one of the things people enjoy most about Pebble Beach," said Ted Horton, vice president of resource management for the Pebble Beach Co.

"We want this place to catch peoples' eyes," said Gerry White, the superin-



Coeur d'Alene has made beauty an asset of great proportions.

tendent at Point Sebago Resort in Maine, "and the way we do it is by being creative" — which means the use of native rocks and plantings to accent the course.

Beauty isn't always the single, overriding reason for renovations at a golf course.

Over the years, a property can begin

to show its age. Plants die. High-traffic areas turn from turf to mud. Original ideas of course design may, in use, turn out to be liabilities. In these, and many more instances, renovation is necessary.

"Many golf courses need help in renovating key landscape and

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Solving poa annua problems from El Niño

By PATRICK O'BRIEN

The abundant rains and warmer temperatures this winter from El Niño have caused a prolific growth of *poa annua* at many golf courses in the Southeast. Superintendents fear this weed grass the most, especially if it appears in putting greens. In most instances, cultural and chemical control is reliable and cost-effective on tees, fairways and roughs.

Unfortunately, battling *poa annua* on bentgrass putting greens is a complex topic.

Weed Southeastern scientists, Drs. Fred Yelverton at North Carolina State University and B.J. Johnson at the University of Georgia-Griffin Station, are trying to help superintendents control *poa annua* on putting greens with a cost-effective and reliable program. Both agree that using growth regulators is the preferred strategy on bentgrass greens.

"The Turf Enhancer (paclobutrazol) product has provided the best control and suppression of *poa annua* from our work at NCSU the past five years," said Yelverton.

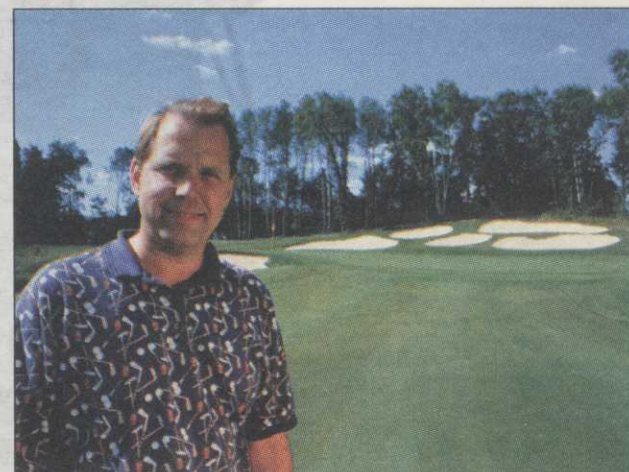
Both researchers agree on the application rates and timing for the Turf Enhancer program on bentgrass greens. They suggest fall and spring treatments at the rates of 14 pound

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USGA's Green Section splits West Region



SANTA ANA, Calif. — The U.S. Golf Association Green Section's West Region has been split. The new Northwest Region encompasses Alaska, Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Wyoming and Hawaii. The Southwest Region consists of California, Arizona, Nevada, Utah and Colorado, and is headquartered at 505 North Tustin Ave., Suite 121, Santa Ana, Calif.; 714-542-5766. Pat Gross, an agronomist for the Western Region since 1992, has been promoted to director of the Southwest Region, working with agronomist Mike Huck. Larry Gilhuly, previously director of the Western Region, is director of the Northwest Region at 5610 Old Stump Dr. N.W., Gig Harbor, Wash. 98332; tel. 253-858-2266.



Scott Hoffman at his award-winning Classic at Madden's Resort.

Hoffman turns a passion into reality

By MARK LESLIE

BRAINERD, Minn. — Scott Hoffmann was able to turn a hobby, passion and dream into not just a reality, but a national award-winning golf course.

When *Golf Digest* picked The Classic at Madden's Resort as the third-best New Upscale Public Golf Course in North America last December, it was a feather of huge proportion in Hoffman's cap. Not because he is the superintendent of Madden's four golf courses — which he is — but because he designed The Classic.

There was his name, beside such golf course architects as Tom Fazio, Pete Dye and Robert Trent Jones Jr., Yet, Hoffman shares the acclaim with others. Though he routed the 18-hole layout and designed the elements of every hole, he credits advisers including architect Geoffrey Cornish; Minnesotan and former U.S. Amateur champion John Harris; Warren Rebholz, who had just retired as executive director of the Minnesota Golf Association; and his assistant, Pat Marstad, who is now the head superintendent at The Classic.

"We had done the initial clearing through the woods.

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SUPER FOCUS

When 'new' wears off

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hardscape areas that have overgrown, or simply worn out," said Mark Sosnowitz, owner of Mark Eliot Design, Inc. in Greenwich, Conn., who specializes in renovation design, budgeting, construction management and supervision.

Working with superintendents, managers and/or greens chairmen, Sosnowitz walks through the course with camera in hand, later presenting a proposal emphasizing rehabilitation of problem areas. He examines the site at night as well as daytime in case night lighting is necessary for safety, or merely to enhance a landscape feature, especially at the entryway to the course.

Signage is considered at the entry, bag drop, tees, interiors and even trophy boards. Sosnowitz said tee areas, even slightly elevated, can pose a safety hazard with the increasing use of plastic spikes, and he recommends installing steps. In many cases, existing steps have been badly chewed up over the years and should be replaced.

"Every situation is different," Sosnowitz said, "along with every budget. Some clubs do the renovation all at once. Others work off a long-range plan."

While Sosnowitz minimizes the use of



Superintendent Gerry White makes sure Point Sebago Resort in Casco, Maine, always looks its best.

annual plants so that superintendents don't get locked into yearly planting chores, the opposite is true at the Coeur d'Alene Golf Course. Anderson said that each year 27,000 "Red Tango" geraniums are mass-planted around the clubhouse and at various places on the course "where they can be seen from three or four holes."

Even Coeur d'Alene's famous floating green sports a mass of brilliant red contrasting with green grass, blue water and white sand.

On the hilly portion of the course, thou-

sands of juniper tams, interspersed with wildflowers, carpet the slopes. Anderson said the wildflower areas are in a phase of renovation, as each year fewer of them bloom. This appears to be a problem in most places using wildflowers, which serve as an accent to the natural forest in which they are planted.

Anderson undertook other measures to eliminate vertical distractions to the beauty of the entire course. Ball washers and trash and soft drink receptacles are attached to the golf cars. Yardage mark-

ers are brass plaques set into the ground.

One person is responsible for edging the cart paths every two weeks. "With 10 miles of paths, this person is edging 240 miles a year," laughed Anderson.

The storms which pummeled Pebble Beach last month were seen by millions of television viewers, and Horton is responsible for picking up the pieces — on all 5,300 acres of the peninsula. Along with the courses at Pebble Beach Golf Links, Spyglass and Del Monte are 2,600 acres of open space, forest preserve, easements and roads. Each of the courses and resort hotels has its own landscape department, overseen by Horton.

He uses about 80 species of colorful annuals and perennials that are native to the area. The seed is gathered and propagated in the company's two greenhouses which are capable of producing 120,000 plants a year, after which, potted, they are placed into open-space storage areas.

"We have to keep adding," Horton said. "Wind blows plants out of the dunes at Spanish Bay, for example."

Half of the plants are put into rehabilitation areas, the rest into expended areas being restored. It is an ongoing process.

Meanwhile, groundskeeping crews are removing most of the non-indigenous ice plants, pampas grass and genista (French broom) from out-of-play areas, Horton said.

At Point Sebago Resort, White is still overseeing accents and plantings over

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Hoffman wins accolades in design

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They'd come over and we'd walked the golf course and talked strategy and bunker locations," Hoffman said, adding that the men visited the site as a team three to five times during the three years of "slow-track" construction. "When you do a project that size you try to surround yourself with good people, especially if you've never done it before. I was very fortunate."

In fact, the word "fortunate" frequently creeps into Hoffman's speech. He is fortunate, he said:

- "to work for an owner, Brian Thuringer, who gave me an incredible amount of trust. He was very involved as well. He set the standards, told us what kind of course he wanted and never got in our way of doing anything when it came to financial needs."
- "that God created a great piece of land. We had that going for us."
- "to attend a lot of seminars by good architects like Cornish, Mike Hurdzan, Bobby Jones, Jan Beljan, Craig Schreiner and others. You pick up a tidbit here and there."
- "to play some of the great resort courses around the country."
- "to have assistants like Pat Marstad and Tony Kramer [at the three resort courses]."
- "just to be able to do this once in my lifetime."

Indeed, he said, "If anyone is thinking of doing this, I hope they're fortunate enough to be surrounded by as many good people as I was."

He shies away from accepting credit for his nationally acclaimed design. "I'm a big believer in the hand of God helping me build the golf course," he said. "He put visions in my head that I know didn't come from anywhere else. I give Him all the credit."

To his credit, Hoffman put his knowledge of agronomy, golf and the land itself to best use.

The 1975 graduate of Michigan State's two-year turfgrass school made certain all the greens receive morning sun, there was surface drainage everywhere, the right root-zone mix and varieties of grass were used on the greens, and the best irrigation system was installed.

"The one thing I had hoped would happen," Hoffman said, "was this experience might open a door for some other superintendents to do design projects. Not that a superintendent is qualified automatically to design a golf course, but he has a lot of the qualifications. You need turfgrass knowledge as a basic."

While overseeing maintenance of Madden's Pine Beach East, Pine Beach West and par-3 Social Nine, Hoffman also spent 15 years cross-country skiing and walking the land that became The Classic at Madden's.

"I was intimate with the property," he said. "After 15 years, you get familiar with every little 2- or 3-foot rise — and I used it."

"We only moved about 50,000 yards of soil. You save a lot of money and it looks so much more natural — because it is."

A golfer, Hoffman has long studied course design, absorbing books on the topic, making it "a hobby and passion."

"I had been dreaming about this golf course for at least 10 years," he said.

Long considered the No. 1 golf resort in Minnesota, Madden's saw Grand View Lodge Golf & Tennis in Nisswa build The Pines and Ruttgers Bay Lake Lodge in Deerwood build The Lakes. All of a sudden, Madden's was pushed out of its elite position, Hoffman said, "So Brian [Thuringer] and I had a great desire to bring Madden's back to the forefront."

The Classic has done that. "The one



The 8th hole at The Classic at Madden's Resort, designed by superintendent Scott Hoffman.

missing link the owners felt they needed, and guests wanted, was a true championship-length course," Hoffman said. "That's what The Classic brings us. It gives the golfers an opportunity to see what Tour players experience on a weekly basis. It's more challenging than the typical resort course."

Playing many of the country's great resort courses was a major influence on Hoffman's own design, he said. "A highlight was playing with Pete Dye at La Romona Country Club next to Teeth of the Dog [in the Dominican Republic]. Pete probably got sick of me because I was asking a lot of questions."

What did he learn? "Use your ability to create and be imaginative and to let your mind go," he answered. "Pete is such an artist and so creative. Because we have long-standing traditions doesn't mean you can't try something new and different."

Asked which architects have most influenced his thought, he said: "As far as style of look, Tom Fazio. As far as strategic design, Alister

Mackenzie or George Thomas."

With Robert Trent Jones Jr. designing 45 holes and Arnold Palmer another 18 in the vicinity, Madden's Thuringer has spoken about building another course, this one links-style, in the future, Hoffman said. And he would welcome the opportunity to design it.

Beyond work at Madden's, he said: "The owners have told me they wouldn't mind me doing a [design] project, one at a time... I don't want to make a career out of it, but I wouldn't mind doing a project here and there if the opportunity arose."

"I feel fortunate just to be able to do this once in my lifetime," Hoffman added. "When I look back at the experience and compare it with being a superintendent, I think being a superintendent is every bit as challenging, if not more so. And the guys out doing it deserve a lot of credit. I've had the opportunity to be the general contractor, the architect and the superintendent, and being a superintendent is the toughest job of all three."

When 'new' wears off

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the 2-year-old golf course as well as other facility's other 800 acres of maintained turf. He is using native rocks left over from the course's construction.

"We contrast leafy green plants with the rock features, and use these as accents as well as for traffic control," White said.

The accent plants used are mainly perennials to minimize yearly maintenance. Expanding on this theme, White has "gone crazy with huge numbers of bulbs everywhere" in groups that will offer blocks of color through the spring into June and July.

In an effort to better steer traffic over four open golf holes, white pines were planted along with about 100 hardwood deciduous trees.

Point Sebago's tee signs are of engraved granite with floral plantings along their base, and day lilies dominate each teeing ground. Off the fairways, along the woods line, a "carpet of wildflowers" adds color and contrast.

Adding accent and beauty to golf courses also means adding time and expense. But, course operators feel the rewards exceed the visual, as satisfied players return and new ones are drawn by the course's reputation.

When players hit your course, it's only natural that they expect the greens to be, well, green. If they're not, it could be time to treat with Sprint® 330, the iron chelate micronutrient from Becker-Underwood. Sprint's strong chelates protect iron availability in soils with pH levels up to 7.5 for beautiful, long-lasting green turf. It also brings out the color in flowers, ornamentals and shrubs. For easy measuring and mixing, Sprint is available in a highly soluble, concentrated powder that offers excellent tank mix flexibility with NPK and plant growth regulators.

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