



BRIEFS



FAIRY RING DATABASE SOUGHT

DALLAS — Dr. Phil Colbaugh of Texas A&M University is collecting and cataloguing the fungi associated with fairy ring. This will be used to develop an identification database for future research. Colbaugh is asking superintendents across the United States to send samples of fairy ring fungi to him at Texas A&M University at Dallas, Research & Education Center, 17360 Coit Rd., Dallas 75252; telephone 972-231-5362.

NEVADA SUPERS RAISE FUNDS

LAS VEGAS — The Southern Nevada Golf Course Superintendents Association (SNGCSA) will host its annual golf tournament for its scholarship and research fund at Painted Desert Golf Club here on Nov. 11. People may contact Dave Reich at 702-737-0272 for tournament details.

DAR HONORS RYBICKI

PANAMA CITY, Fla. — Ted Rybicki of Panama Country Club has been cited by the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) for his distinguished conservation record. The DAR cited his conservation work over the years and his effort in having Panama CC designated, in May 1997, as a Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary by Audubon International. John Spivak is superintendent at the club. Rybicki has been involved in the preservation of the Florida environment since 1961. Since 1992 he has served on the board of the Bay County Audubon Society and has been chairman of the Panama Country Club Environmental Committee.

N.Y. TURF CONCLAVE PLANNED

SYRACUSE, N.Y. — The New York State Turfgrass Association (NYSTA), in cooperation with Cornell University, will hold its annual Turf and Grounds Exposition, Nov. 10-13, at the OnCenter here.



The conference will feature more than 80 business and technical sessions. Speakers will include Bob Alonzi of Winged Foot Golf Club; Joe Hahn of Country Club of Rochester; Dr. Norman Hummel of N.W. Hummel & Co.; Jim Moore of United States Golf Association Green Section; and horticulturists from Hershey Park. For more information call NYSTA at 800-873-8873, 518-783-1229 or write NYSTA, P.O. Box 612, Latham, N.Y. 12110.

GOLF COURSE NEWS

Study gives fungicides 'green light'

By DOUGLAS PAGE

Fungicide use on golf courses, long suspected of contaminating into surface- and ground-water runoff, has been given a green light by a Purdue University environmental study.

Four years of research at Purdue's Turfgrass Research Center found that fungicides do not seep into surface-water runoff or leach into ground water as previously feared.

"In terms of golf course superintendents, what we've shown is that they can use the chemicals without fear of

huge negative impact on the environment," said Ronald Turco, professor of agronomy and director of Purdue's Environmental Sciences and Engineering Institute. Fungicides, he said, do not present a problem to the environment if they are applied according to the manufacturer's recommendations.

"The reality of any fungicide application to dense turf is that most of the fungicides do not reach the ground," said Turco. "About 90 percent of the fungicide remains on the grass leaf blade, where it is absorbed by the plant within 48 hours."

While fungicides make up less than 10 percent of all the pesticides used in the United States, they are used on many types of plants, including vegetables and fruits. By far their most popular use is on golf course greens and tee boxes. Extensive use in such small areas led to the concerns.

Fungicides are known to cause birth defects and sterility in laboratory animals. Their long-term consequences on plants and animals are unknown. According to recent estimates, homeowners and lawn-care companies apply as much as 70 million

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Merrill 9 joins Ross in Maine



Brian Merrill

By PETER BLAIS

LOVELL, Maine — Just in case architect Geoffrey Cornish and *Golf Digest* architectural editor Ron Whitten are interested, here's a new listing for their much-heralded book "The Golf Course."

**Lake Kezar Country Club
Lovell, Maine
Donald Ross**

**Lake Kezar Country Club (A. 9)
Lovell, Maine
Brian Merrill**

Donald Ross, who designed the original nine at Lake Kezar near the New Hampshire/Maine border back in 1923, is a name most in the golf business likely recognize. But Brian Merrill, who designed the adjacent nine-hole addition that opened this summer, is probably a tad less familiar.

Merrill has served as superintendent of the Western Maine golf club for the past dozen years and it is his new holes that have received considerable acclaim from golfers, the press and his fellow superintendents this summer.

With legendary architects like Ross and Alister Mackenzie placed on such lofty pedestals that golf societies have been



The 16th hole of the Brian Merrill-designed second nine at Lake Kezar Country Club.

formed to protect their works, did Merrill feel any added pressure in designing a new nine next to a Ross original?

"A few of the older members that really hold Ross in esteem would joke about it," Merrill acknowledged. "But there really wasn't much said."

Besides, as with many courses that survived the Depression and the labor shortage created during World War II, the original nine at Lake Kezar has lost several of its Ross-designed features. An abandoned tee next to the No. 2 ladies tee is still visible, but it is impossible to tell which hole it served. Another abandoned tee adjacent to the 3rd green once served either the 4th or 5th hole, "but no one knows for sure,"

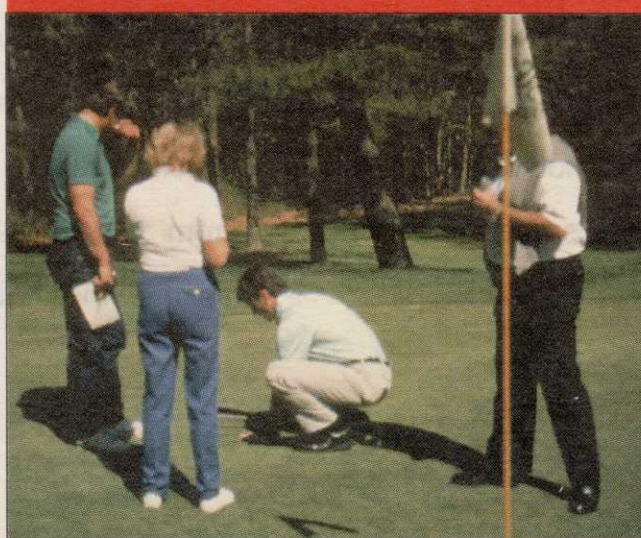
Merrill said. The green on the par-4 6th has obviously been moved back and to the right of its original location. And the putting surface on the current 18th hole, formerly the 9th, was also relocated to make the one-time par-4 into its current par-5.

"The original nine holes are certainly a Ross design, but they have changed over the years," Merrill said.

While Merrill may be a neophyte in the world of golf course design, this isn't the first time he's entered a domain with which he was unfamiliar. He had no formal agronomic training when he made his initial foray into golf course maintenance in 1982.

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GOLF AND THE ENVIRONMENT



U.S. Golf Association turf visits check agronomic issues.

There are 'standards,' and then there are standards

By RON DODSON

Setting standards for protecting the environment is a challenging process, and no less so for golf courses. Generally, no matter what environmental standards we discuss, some people demand the highest standards; others claim that if standards are set too high, they will not be economically feasible; and then of course, others believe environmental standards are not necessary at all.

Personally, I'm uncomfortable with the word "standard" and particularly "minimum standard." Why shouldn't we try to do the absolute best we can rather than establish the least we can do? But, even more important, how do we measure our environmental "best," and how do we balance economic concerns with environmental concerns?

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Merrill focused

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"I just stumbled into it really," he recalled. "I was out looking for a job and I ended up getting one working for Paul Perry at Bridgton [Maine] Highlands Country Club.

"I worked for Paul for four years. In that fourth season, some Lake Kezar members who had played Bridgton and thought it was in great shape called Paul and asked

if he knew anyone who could bail them out of the situation they were in [a course that was in rough shape and needed attention]. Paul told them about me and I ended up going there."

Merrill took over Lake Kezar in 1986 and got the Ross nine back in shape in short order. "It was just a matter of having a lot of drive and a little knowledge," he said.

Lake Kezar, which celebrated its 75th anniversary earlier this

year, had purchased enough land years ago to build an additional nine. The club's 30 stockholders had long discussed the possibility before seriously researching the feasibility of the project in the late 1980s.

After completing the wetland mapping, several architects submitted routings for the new holes. Some suggested changing the existing Ross layout, something the stockholders vehemently op-

posed, Merrill remembered. "They wanted to keep the layout they had, or at least change it as little as possible," he said.

A new president assumed control of the club and invited Merrill to become more involved with the process. Merrill drew up a couple layouts on his own. The board of directors met, discussed the various proposals and selected one of Merrill's.

In addition to overseeing the

existing nine-hole track, Merrill became the point man in dealing with the state Department of Environmental Protection and other local, state and federal agencies that needed to sign off on the project.

"Revisions were made right up until we broke ground," Merrill said. "The changes were not so much in the layout, but in things like sediment traps and things like that."

Construction of the new holes began in late 1995. Four holes were completed in 1996 and the other five in 1997. The new holes eventually covered 60 turfed acres.

Garland Lumber did the clearing and stumping. Green Links Construction of Manchester, N.H. was the course contractor. Bennett & Sons provided the greens and tee mix. Merrill served as the project manager.

After studying Maine and New Hampshire Golf Course Superintendents Association-funded turf plots in Amherst, N.H., Merrill developed his own seed blends for the addition.

"For the tees and fairways," he said, "we used two Colonial and two creeping bentgrasses. The Colonials were Highland and Bardot. The creeping bents were Southshore and Putter. Colonials require less maintenance and don't require as much fertilizer. The creepers provided the best quality playing surface, and since I didn't know which would do best with our climate and cultural practices, I used both. We used a creeping bentgrass, four-way mix on the greens — Providence, Cato, Southshore and Putter."

Lack of labor was the biggest headache Merrill faced during the design and construction process. "I had four people working for me who were mainly devoted to taking care of the existing nine. We had to take care of everything — both the old and the new course. Having to maintain a [existing] nine-hole course and take care of numerous things with a staff of four as construction of the new nine was going on was very difficult. A 14-, 15-hour day was pretty standard. And that went on for two years."

The biggest battle Merrill is waging on the new nine involves dollar spot, which can thrive on creeping bentgrass. "I don't use any fungicides to control diseases on the fairways," he said. "It's all cultural practices. I don't have as much of a problem on the old nine because there is a smaller percentage of creeping bentgrass. The old fairways are kind of a Heinz 57. It's quite a variety out there."

But the toughest challenges should be softened by the knowledge his name will be found next to Donald Ross as co-designers of Lake Kezar.

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