

BRIEFS



GCSAA BACKS JUNIOR GOLF

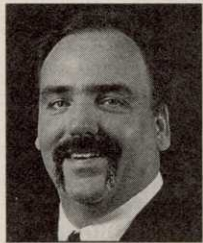
LAWRENCE, Kan. — Continuing its support of junior golf initiatives, the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) has donated \$10,000 to the American Junior Golf Association (AJGA) in support of its 1999 qualifying and tournament sites. The funds will be directed for supplies used in marking golf courses for competition. "The golf course superintendent has a strong affinity for junior golf initiatives," said GCSAA President Dave Fearis of Blue Hills Country Club in Kansas City, Mo. "A vast majority chose the profession because of positive experiences with the game and golf course in their childhood."



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REDSTONE HIRES WALKER

HOUSTON — The Redstone Group has announced the appointment of Johnny Walker as superintendent of its new project, which includes the adjacent Shadow Hawk Golf Club and The Houstonian Golf Club, two Rees Jones-designed layouts under construction in Fort Bend County. Walker has been superintendent at Inwood Forest Golf and Country Club and at Weston Lakes Country Club in Houston. He is a member of the board of directors for the Lone Star Golf Course Superintendents Association and the South Texas Golf Course Superintendents Association, where he served as president in 1996 and 1997.



Johnny Walker

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NTEP OFFERS CUSTOM ANALYSIS

BELTSVILLE, Md. — The National Turfgrass Evaluation Program (NTEP) has announced a new service, Custom Data Analysis, for its members and other interested parties. Developed at the request of many members and sponsoring companies, the service allows more specific data analysis than is currently presented in NTEP annual or final reports. Three unique data analysis options are offered. Option 1 provides a regional or local analysis of data using locations the client specifies. If the client's interest is identifying the top grasses for summer performance or other seasons, option 2 fits the bill. To compare the performance of only a select group of varieties, people should choose option 3.

USGA extends research into 21st century

By MARK LESLIE

FAR HILLS, N.J. — Buoyed by progress in "genetic transformation" of turfgrasses, discoveries on the environmental impact of golf and various other projects, the U.S. Golf Association (USGA) Green Section is preparing for another round of research funding.

Having poured \$17 million into research in the last 17 years, the Green Section Research Committee sent out a call for proposals in late May and expects to make final decisions on projects in November,

according to Green Section National Director Jim Snow.

The USGA doubled the research budget in 1990 when it added environmental projects to the mix. With many of those environmental questions now answered, the USGA will re-concentrate its efforts on "working with a lot of different grasses — including some native types that haven't been traditionally used on golf courses — and developing the grasses for the future that will require less pesticide and water use," Snow said. "Also, we're spending a fair amount of money

on genetic transformation."

The new funding will be a little different than in the past because the Research Committee will select projects for two- or three-year periods.

There is \$200,000 per year in the budget for projects that will begin next year, but more than \$500,000 per year for those starting in 2001, Snow said. Some of those studies will be renewed if necessary.

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Russell discovers: Yes, you can go home again

By PETER BLAIS

BANDON, Ore. — Troy Russell grew up on a dairy farm in the neighboring town of Coquille, four miles from Bandon Dunes. In fact, as a teenager, Russell raced motorcycles on the eventual course site, which was then called The Circus.

"Lo and behold, now I work here," said the 40-year-old head superintendent of Bandon Dunes, the southern Oregon links-style course hard on the Pacific Ocean.



The Gleneagles Development Corp. layout opened this spring to rave reviews and is expected to be among the finalists for top new course in various media polls. *Golfweek* already voted Bandon Dunes among its top resort courses and among the top 10 courses overall to open in the past 40 years.

"I'd be lying if I said I didn't feel a little pressure [to keep the course maintained in line with the accolades]," Russell added. "We just try to go out and do what we do. As long as they



Bandon Dunes was raising golfers' expectations even before it was completed.

[management] allow us to keep doing our job, we're perfectly happy."

Russell knew at a young age he didn't want to be a dairy farmer and eventually gave up motocross ("An ambulance ride ended my motorcycle career," he said.). But while he left the dairy farm and bike racing behind, he never lost his attraction to the southern Oregon coast.

"I love it here," said Russell, whose parents still live on the nearby farm where he grew up. "But when I was 18, I didn't want to farm and the only other thing here was the timber economy. I didn't want to work in the woods or mill, so I went off to pursue other things."

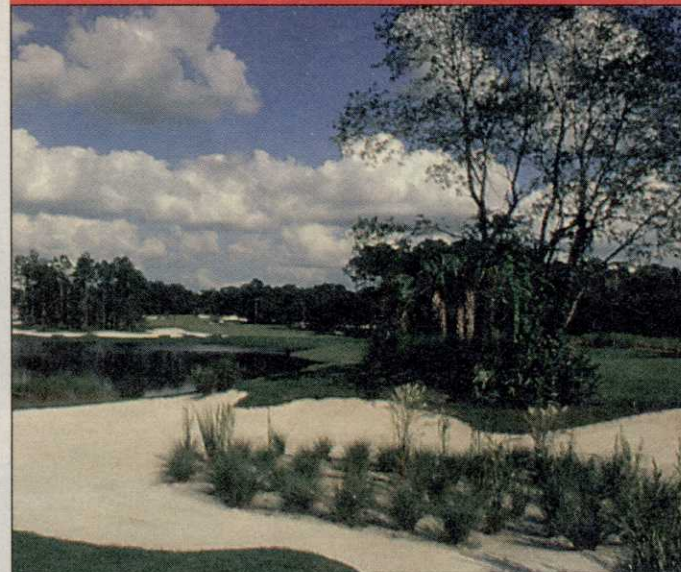


After high school, he moved to the Willamette Valley, attending Oregon State University (OSU) and eventually purchasing a Coast Range wine vineyard, which he still owns. Russell returned to OSU and received a bachelor's degree in horticulture with an emphasis in turf management in 1995.

"The first time I went through Oregon State I was in agricultural and resource economics," Russell said. "I had classes with some guys in the turf program and I always thought if I ever had a chance to go back to school, that's what I'd do. I

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GOLF AND THE ENVIRONMENT



The Legacy Club at Alaqua Lakes in Longwood, Fla., has become the third non-private course in the world to become a member of the Audubon Cooperative Signature Sanctuary Program. Taylor Woodrow Communities is the developer and operator of the golf course, which opened last Sept. 1. See story, page 15.

Flying high

Birdwatching Open looks good for golf

By JEAN MacKAY

Do golf courses provide suitable habitat for a diversity of bird species? The results of Audubon International's 1999 North American Birdwatching Open suggest that a great variety of birds can indeed be found on courses. A total of 310 different bird species were sighted in this year's one-day bird count, held May 8 to coincide with International Migratory Bird Day.

Forty-eight courses in the United States and Canada participated in the event. Because all participating courses are Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuaries or Audubon Signature Sanctuaries, the North American Golf Course Bird Watching Open generated valuable data about the types of species found on courses that are managed with wildlife and the environment in mind.

For the second year in a row, The Club at Seabrook Island in South Carolina soared to the top of the list of participants,

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Focus on Russell

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had a window of opportunity to go back to school when I first got married. I did it and the payoff was pretty quick."

Russell did his internship at Illahe Country Club in Salem and worked briefly as the second assistant during construction of the Oregon Golf Association's course in Woodburn. He also

did a short stint in sales with J.R. Simplot, the fertilizer company.

"I was in a computer class reading *Golf Course News* when I saw a two-paragraph story on a course this greeting card magnet was going to build north of Bandon. I knew that property from my moto-cross days... I started bird-dogging the project after that," he recalled.

Russell contacted the county planner and county attorney,

which led him to Gleneagles. While he was still with Simplot, Bandon Dunes contracted him to put in test plots. A year later, September 1997, he was hired as assistant superintendent. Mark Shepherd, now of Aspen Lakes in Sisters, was the head superintendent at the time.

Construction started immediately. The back nine was completed by December and the front nine by mid-June 1998.

The shaper was Jim Haley, who had worked with Rees Jones and Pete Dye, and is now on his own. "It was a good fit," Russell said.

"We have built things differently here," Russell said. "We don't have USGA greens. They are sand on sand. The sand for tees and greens we mined from a dune on site. There is no under-drainage, just 18 inches of uniform sand source. There is a big network of under-drainage, but

not under the greens. The whole course drains very well.

"The construction crew basically maintains the course now. A bunch of local guys who had never seen a golf course are our crew. They are doing a good job. We brought in a shaper and irrigation contractor. We installed everything else, including drainage."

The course, which is planted in a mixture of 20 percent colonial bentgrass and the remaining 80 percent a blend of three fine fescues, had almost a year to grow in before opening May 1. "It has a mature look you don't see on most new courses," Russell said. "The mixture does not produce a lot of thatch, which was one of our major criteria."

Weekends have been booked solid since the course opened. Rounds are capped at 160 per day to protect it from overuse. The course was originally budgeted to handle 12,000 rounds this year, although 14,000 have already been booked through Oct. 31.

"We could do more, but it's nice that it's capped at 160 rounds a day," Russell said. "We run the course pretty lean. It's links-style, and with this mix of grasses, it doesn't heal real readily."

The course sits on a 90-foot plateau overlooking the Pacific Ocean. "We sample everything and go out in a pretty light-handed manner," Russell said. "The last time we fertilized was last fall. We spoon-feed tees, greens and fairways. We're a little off color. But we're supposed to be, we're a links course."

Pesticide use is also minimal. "We live in a part of the world where there are few pests," said Russell, who has taken courses in Integrated Pest Management to become specialized in environmental management practices by the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America.

"It's a great area to grow grass. We use some pesticides, but as little as possible. We spot spray when we need to."

Water is supplied from wells that empty into an irrigation lake, the only body of water on the course. "But you'd have to hit two truly horrendous shots on the 11th hole to get into it," Russell said. "Lakes were thought to be unnatural on a course like this, and I'd have to agree."

Watering through the course's four-row irrigation system is kept to a minimum to keep the links feel and look to the grasses. A large, 2,300-gallon-per-minute pump station was required because of the occasionally strong winds that limit the size of the irrigation window.

The 21-person crew walk-mows tees and greens. The putting surfaces average 8,300 square feet.

Russell uses greens triplexes for trim mowers. He sends them out in tandem, sometimes three abreast, creating wide bands on fairways rather than a checked pattern. "It's a look that fits well on this golf course," he said.

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Variety	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	
Midnight	1	2	4	1	1	2	1	3	2	1	1	1	2	2	1	
Blacksburg	← NO PRODUCTION →				2	1	2	1	1	91*	3	2	1	3	8	
Unique	←				NO PRODUCTION				→		2	10	15	10	24	1

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