

BRIEFS



HILLS REBUNKERING LINKS COURSE AT HALF MOON BAY

HALF MOON BAY, Calif. — The Links Course at Half Moon Bay Golf Links south of San Francisco continues its renovation program under the direction of noted golf course architect Arthur Hills. Improvements to the back nine were completed in January 2000 with the front nine work set to begin this month and finish in November.

An entire new irrigation system is being installed throughout the course and enhancements to the drainage on the course are also being made. The project includes rebuilding bunkers, moving some fairway bunkers and the shifting of some tees. No changes are being made to the green surfaces.

Hills, who designed the widely acclaimed Ocean Course at Half Moon Bay that opened in 1997, talked about the objective of the Links course efforts. "The goal is to make the Links course equally strategic, beautiful and fun to play," he said. "The new carefully placed, sculptured bunkering does much to achieve that goal."

The improvements to the Links course are being done in conjunction with the planned opening of The Ritz-Carlton at the Half Moon Bay Resort. Hotel guests will have the availability of two golf courses of the highest quality to choose from. The courses at Half Moon Bay Golf Links are also available for public play.

PENN STATE LAUNCHES TURF WEB SITE

UNIVERSITY PARK, Pa. — Penn State's center for Turfgrass Science recently developed a web site for program information. The site contains educational program information, research reports, outreach activities and faculty, staff, and graduate student contact information. The address is [turf.cas.psu.edu/](http://turf.cas.psu.edu/).



In conjunction with Ohio State University, Penn State has also published a new bulletin entitled "Factors Affecting Green Speed" for golf course managers and golfers alike. This publication covers management practices that impact ball roll on putting greens. The authors, Patty Sweeney, George Hamilton, and Karl Danneberger, incorporate research data in an easy-to-read format.

Customized Toro Workman allows on-course equipment repairs

By TERRY BUCHEN

PALM BEACH GARDENS, Fla. — Equipment managers go out on the golf course to monitor the operation of any given piece of equipment and to make repairs to implements that must be taken care of out in the field. In more serious situations, the implement must be brought back to the maintenance building.

The latest golf course management trend is to have a separate vehicle that is equipped for easy and quick repairs by equipment technicians. One such specialty equipment mechanic's vehicle located here is state of the art, with the proper tools needed to do the job right.

The Frenchman's Creek Country Club is a private 36-hole residential golf community where F.W. "Chip" Fowkes III, superintendent, is very aware of the best ways possible to make his preventive maintenance operation a complete success. What better way than to have former helicopter mechanic, Mike Gatch, on his equipment maintenance team as the head mechanic.

"We have a Toro Workman 3300-D Turf Vehicle that is equipped with a PTO dual-cylinder air compressor for air tools and for tire repairs. This is for the exclusive use of the head mechanic and assistant mechanics. There is a large tool box for all mechanical tools and a small tool box for jumper cables and chains, spare fuel containers, a single point hookup for

jumper cables and a hydraulic remote system," Gatch said.

The Toro Workman mechanic's vehicle also doubles as a tow truck. It has a 1,000-pound capacity 12-volt winch, with forward and reverse capabilities. Gatch said it uses aircraft wire rope, 20 feet in length. Two-inch tubular steel was



"Tow truck" attachment to the turf vehicle comes in handy for those unexpected towing situations.

welded together to a thick steel plate that is bolted to the vehicle's dump body floor. All this customization was done in-house.

"We use our tow truck quite a lot to pop the bead on a flat tire, tow in equipment that

must be returned to the shop for more specialized repairs, and even for the occasional member's golf cart that unfortunately goes into the golf course lakes," Fowkes added.

With all of the specialized and frequently more sophisticated golf course maintenance equipment being used more often, it makes a lot of sense for equipment managers to have their own properly equipped vehicle that can be put into action quickly instead of waiting for another turf vehicle to return to the maintenance area. Many times, the equipment mechanic can fix the problem on the spot, saving time. And if more extensive repairs are required, this type of innovative vehicle can tow it back to the shop quickly, efficiently and easily.

Bear Trap Dunes, growing to 27 holes, wins Audubon nod

OCEAN VIEW, Del. — At Bear Trap Dunes Golf Club here, crews have broken ground on Rick Jacobson's third and final nine holes, complementing his 18 championship holes that opened last year to rave reviews. The new nine, opening next year, will share design characteristics with the existing course, where Jacobson employed a dunes concept to give a piece of flat farmland the look of the coastal Delaware landscape. The new holes are expected to open next year.

The layout is a par-36, measuring 2,450 yards to 3,400, depending on which of four tee boxes golfers use. It features six lakes, which will operate not only as hazards but as part of the local storm water management system. The native sand used to create the dunes was excavated in the process of creating the lakes.

The Bear Trap course also has received certification in environmental planning from the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary System (ACSS), administered by Audubon International and sponsored in part by the United States Golf Association. Through the program, the course



Architect Rick Jacobson has turned farmland into beach-like landscape at Bear Trap

will be involved in projects that enhance habitat for wildlife and preserve natural resources.

"There is much more to a golf course than green grass," said superintendent Tim McMahon. "We're committed to responsible stewardship of the land, and in conjunction with the ACSS, we hope to bring the golfer and nature closer together."

Audubon-related projects that have been implemented so far at Bear Trap

The changing times of topdressing

By KEVIN J. ROSS

The cultural practice of top dressing has changed significantly over the past five years. The principle remains the same: coating the green surface with a thin layer of sand or high sand-content mix. But the methods of material application and brushing, that I and others have developed, are changing rapidly.

First, we must understand the basic principles for top-dressing sand particle size. You must try to achieve a match that is close to the existing root zone in sand particle size. Also consider the particle size distribution of that sand or sand mix.

How is this best done? I send all my top-dressing samples to an independent lab to be analyzed.

If you try to have your top dressing on hand a minimum of seven days in advance of use, most labs can have the information back to you within three to four days upon receipt of the sample.

Why do this analysis? Incorrect matching can result in layering, which can destroy the performance of a properly constructed golf green. I would also not rely on previous tests that have been done, then photocopied and given to you by a sand supplier. The U.S. Golf Association has accredited seven labs, which can be found on the USGA's web site: [www.usga.org](http://www.usga.org).

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Dunes include: building and placing nesting boxes for cavity-nesting birds such as bluebirds and swallows, regular monitoring of pest incidents and population, establishing wetland shrub borders throughout the golf course, and completion of Audubon's environmental audit.

The 27-hole complex is the centerpiece of a neo-traditional 700-home residential community called the Village at Bear Trap Dunes, being developed by Carl M. Freeman Associates, Inc.

## Maple Ridge renovation complete

COLUMBUS, Ga. — Extensive improvements over the past two years have transformed the semi-private Maple Ridge Golf Club into one of west-central Georgia's top layouts. Former Masters champion Larry Mize and architect Craig Schreiner teamed up to transform the already-formidable layout into a strategically

challenging but highly playable course.

Phase two improvements called for the complete removal of the 11th hole, a short downhill par 3, and adding a new par-3 16th hole. Phase Two improvements also included the remodeling of the former par-3 14th hole, the reshaping of five fairways, four new green complexes

and additional teeing complexes.

"Eliminating one hole allowed us to improve the back nine tremendously," said Schreiner. "Not only was the playability and strategy of the golf course enhanced, several new residential building lots with golf course frontage were created. Removing one mediocre golf hole really gave us an opportunity to enhance the golf course."

Mike McCollum, director of golf, was concerned about retaining the membership level during the renovation. As a result of the renovation, however, membership grew by over 50 members. Heartland Golf Construction of Little Rock, Ark., completed the work in the off-season to allow the golf course to remain open with minimal disruption to play. "Heartland was great to work with," McCollum

said. "The support and expertise they exhibited was beyond compare."

"With the completion of Phase Two and the initial response to the additional course improvements," he added, "we have reason to believe that membership at Maple Ridge Golf Club will be closed out before the end of 2000. This will allow us to become a private, restricted-access facility."

# BUT HOW ARE YOUR BUNKERS?

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## Topdressing

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### METHODS OF APPLICATION

It seems that most superintendents have adopted the light top-dressing program, with applications every 10 to 14 days.

The biggest change in the application method has been the use of hand-push rotary-type fertilizer spreaders. We use this method at the Country Club of the Rockies and have been very impressed with its advantages. This method works best with dried sand. The drying of the sand at plants is becoming more and more common, and some suppliers also bag it. This makes the operation very similar to fertilization.

Calibration is as simple as just eyeing the amount on a nursery green. I strongly suggest using the wheel-to-wheel method and applying in two directions to achieve uniform coverage.

Once the material has been applied some superintendents are simply syringing the material in and not brushing at all. This method works quite well.

At the Country Club of the Rockies we have adapted the Fly-Mo technique for working the sand into the turf canopy. Our method works as follows: cut the greens, apply the sand with Lesco spreaders in two directions, then a team of three with Fly-Mo's follows each other, going over the green in two directions. That evening we water heavily to help work the sand into the canopy.

This season we also tried a few top dressings using the same method, except with green-colored sand. The results were remarkable. Many of our members said they didn't even realize we had topdressed. You know that old saying, "Out of sight, out of mind."

This season we plan to use colored sand during our peak season for all top dressings. It adds to the cost, but the advantages offset the additional dollars.

*Kevin J. Ross is director of golf course management at Country Club of the Rockies in Edwards, Colo., and president of Ross Agronomy in Eagle, Colo.*