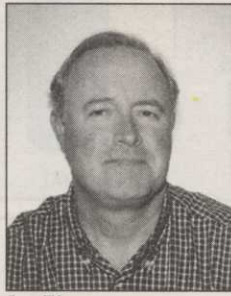


As eco-terrorists attack golf industry, proactive steps necessary

In my first month on the job here, I've been impressed by the golf industry's extraordinary commitment to environmental integrity. Superintendents have reduced water usage and are applying pesticides and herbicides more judiciously. Course architects are designing new layouts to minimize the need for chemicals. And hardly a day goes by without word that yet another course has been certified by Audubon International as a wildlife sanctuary.



Jay Finegan

It came as all the more of a shock, then, when a group calling itself the Anarchist Golfing Association launched an attack on Pure Seed Testing (see story on page one). Operating under a cover of darkness, vandals fanned out across Pure Seed's 110-acre farm in western Oregon. They systematically wrecked property and test beds, destroying plants representing up to 10 years worth of research and inflicting damage estimated at about \$500,000. Crystal Stricker, Pure Seed's director of research and new president, said

it was impossible to put a value on the lost research.

Pure Seed Testing serves as the research arm of Turf-Seed Inc., a major supplier of grass seed for golf courses and other turf projects. Its work is environmentally benign. All new grass varieties there are the result of natural selection. Tom Stanley, marketing manager for Turf-Seed, said the breeding program aims to develop grasses that are a darker green and need less fertilizer, grasses that can

survive on salt water or effluent water, and which don't need as much herbicide. "If we can accomplish that," he said, "we're making the earth a better place."

The so-called Anarchist Golfing Association, however, hit the family-owned operation under the belief that it was breeding and producing genetically modified organisms. In point of fact, Pure Seed has only a permit from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to have genetically altered bentgrass on its premises, for testing purposes.

"They shot the wrong guy,"

Stanley said. "We're doing a pollen-flow study to determine whether those genetically modified characteristics can be transferred by pollen from the host plant to other plants in the environment. We are finding that, in certain cases, yes they can. That's a dangerous situation that we want to prevent. The irony of this attack is that if they had the information we were developing, it would have been something they could have really run with for their cause."

As the attack makes clear, golf has its enemies. The Anarchist Golfing Association is believed to be a splinter group of Earth First!, an extremist environmental outfit. It's not known if the same people are behind the numerous attacks on golf courses across the country, where greens have been blown up and courses sabotaged. What is known is that the Earth First! Journal, in a 1995 article, encouraged the destruction of golf courses, starting with irrigation systems.

"When you are cutting off a course's water supply," the story advised, "think one thing: green. Your golfer can deal with faded fairways, or maybe a tan tee. If the greens are not green, the

golfers will quit coming, period."

In exacting terms, the article told how to wreck an irrigation system, urging a relentless campaign. "Hit the greens first and repeatedly," it said. "Every time the sprinklers are replaced, hit them again. Forget the fairways. Take no notice of the tees. Just nail those greens."

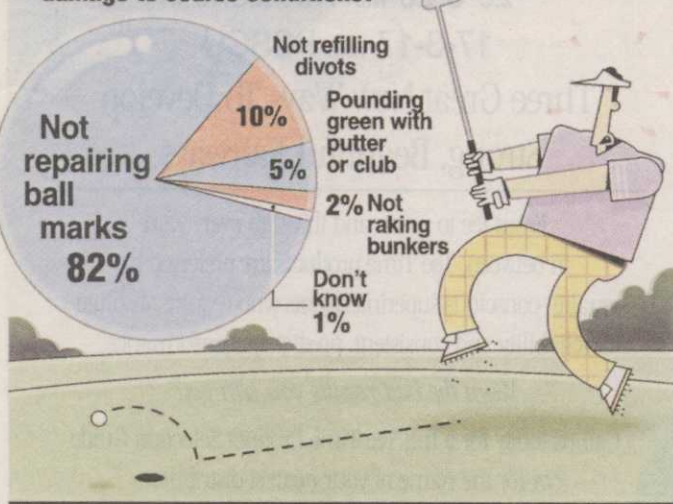
To those of us who love golf, such language sounds unbelievable and absurd. But the threat is real. With courses under ever-greater scrutiny for their chemical and water usage, and now under physical attack, it is all the more important that superintendents and club managers act as goodwill ambassadors in their communities.

If you're taking some environmentally positive steps as your club, make sure the locals know it. If Audubon International certifies your course, make it public. Write a monthly column for your local newspaper. Speak to service organizations, such as a Rotary Club or a Chamber of Commerce. Be proactive in defending your business. If you don't get your story out, somebody else is going to get a story out, and it might be damaging. Just ask the folks at Pure Seed.

Etiquette Error

Golf course superintendents across the nation were asked:

What single breach of golfer etiquette does the most damage to course conditions?



Source: GCSAA's 2000 Golf Leadership Survey

Robert Trent Jones Sr.: We'll miss you, sir

He was the dean of American course architects. During his seven decades of practice, he designed some 350 layouts in 45 states and 29 foreign countries - on every continent except Antarctica and Australia. His far-flung creations made it him to boast never sets on a Jones golf course. Jones died home in Fort Fla. He was 93.



Born in Ince, 1906, he was United States possible for that "the sun Robert Trent course." June 14 at his Lauderdale, England, in brought to the at age six by his Welsh immigrant parents, who settled in Rochester, N.Y. He learned the game as a caddie at the Country Club of Rochester, where he developed such an aptitude for the game that he became a scratch golfer in his teens.

During the building of Oak Hill in 1926, Jones met Donald Ross, the leading golf architect of the time. Through conversations with Ross and observance of his work, he decided on his career, pursuing his studies at Cornell University.

Besides his original courses, he was responsible for the redesign of approximately 150 other courses. His collective body of work includes courses that, since 1951, have been the venues of 79 national championships, including 20 U.S. Opens and 12 PGA Championships.

As one whose career spanned the transition of golf from the days of the wooden to the steel-shafted clubs, and now the use of space-age materials, Jones kept pace by fashioning courses that, despite the improved equipment and shot-making prowess of the elite players, hewed to his credo: "Every hole should be a hard par and an easy bogey."

His sons, Robert Trent Jones, Jr., of Palo Alto, Calif., and Rees Lee Jones, of Montclair, N.J., continue in his tradition. In recent years, Jones and his son Bob Jr. collaborated on golf course designs, and son Rees has renovated and remodeled work by his father.

We want to hear from you

Do you have an axe to grind? A unique viewpoint on a particular industry issue? Want to share your thoughts on a recent article or editorial? Whatever your motivation, we want to hear from you. Letters to the editor are an integral part of GCN, so let your voice be heard. Send all correspondence to:

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HOUSE OF CORRECTIONS

In the June 2000 issue of Golf Course News, the article ("EcoAegis changes modern hydroseeding rules," on pg. 1) inaccurately referred to Tom Devane as the architect of the Orchards Country Club in South Hadley, Mass. Pennsylvania-based architect Ron Prichard was the designer of that course. In the same article, Baker Hill Golf Club in Newbury, N.H. was incorrectly referred to as Lake Sunapee Golf Club in Sunapee, N.H. Rees Jones is the architect of that course.

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