Miles ready for Women's Open

GURNEE, Ill. — When The Merit Club plays host to the 55th Women's Open Championship, which opens July 20, Head Superintendent Oscar Miles won't look back on three or four years of major tournament preparation. The process has actually been more than a season, which opens July 20, 1998, and with the club president and golf instructor Ed Oldfield to design the course. Yet Miles joined the development team in 1989, following a long tenure at another Chicago-area club, Butler National Golf Club.

The Merit Club, Miles—working closely with Oldfield, Lohmann and a host of others—would build championship playing conditions into the course itself from the outset.

"It was my responsibility," Miles explained, "to draw up the specifications for construction, the grassing plan and the in-house landscaping plan. I was also responsible for formulating all those budgets."

By bringing the superintendent on board prior to construction, Oldfield and owner Bert Getz gave Miles an enormous level of input and control.

The rewards were immediate. The Merit's original land plan, for instance, was designed to accommodate a 25-year flood frequency.

"After looking at the [Merit] plans, I could see we needed better flood management. We hired Lindley & Sons out of Hinsdale [III.], They took the original plan, did a cad-cam on it, and studied the flow and drainage. Lindley came back with a new plan that gave us a 100-year flood capability."

Prior to its development, the Merit Club parcel was 300 acres of natural prairie. Seeding and studying the land in this state helped Miles formulate grassing and tree-management plans that best preserved the landscape's character.

"I knew we were going to be involved with Audubon, so I took classes on how to

Continued on page 11

Supers communicate through club-owned TV stations

BY TERRY BUSCHEN

BOCA RATON, Fla.—Superintendents like to communicate to the golfing elite through face-to-face contact, newsletter columns, meetings, direct club mailings, locker room bulletin boards, speeches, magazine articles and so on. They want to help players understand what they and their crews are doing on the course and why they are doing it.

Communication between golfers and superintendents has never been better, but there is always room for improvement to get the word out in a completely thorough and correct manner to eliminate gossip and misinformation.

In southeast Florida, superintendents at two elite private clubs have taken the process one step further through the use of their club-owned and operated television stations.

"Our private television station Channel 63 is piped into all of our homes for all types of communication that are part of our country club community, as our members must for the most part live here to be a member," said Kenneth G. Orender, superintendent at the St. Andrews Country Club here.

Orender participates in a weekly television show entitled "Golf Course Maintenance Updates" during the winter golfing high season and monthly during the summer off-season to communicate directly with his members.

"We can post closings of either of our 18-hole courses for specific maintenance operations and current or upcoming maintenance practices, by explaining when and why we are performing them, and what to expect on the golf course on a daily basis, if necessary," Orender added. He is constantly on videotape to explain anything and everything about what to expect now and in the future of all golf course maintenance and renovation techniques taking place.

Orender has videotaped sessions on how to fix a ball mark, how to fill a divot, and he is working on a show explaining proper adherence to the 90-degree rule. His shows are replayed on a regular basis. He uses the television-style interview as a tool to educate.

Continued on page 12