



BRIEFS

FRIEDEMANN NAMED SUPER AT BALI HAI

LAS VEGAS, Nev. — Bali Hai Golf Club, a new 18-hole daily-fee course located on the famed Las Vegas "strip," has named Richard Friedemann as head superintendent. A graduate of Oklahoma State with a degree in agronomy, Friedemann has over 25 years of management experience in the golf industry, overseeing construction and maintenance at such courses as Sycamore Ridge in Kansas City and the Badlands in Las Vegas.

When it opens in November, Bali Hai will be a 7,050-yard, par-72 tropical-themed course reminiscent of the South Pacific. Highlights will include an island green, thick stands of towering palms, and numerous large water features. Volcanic rock outcroppings will add to the island atmosphere. Bali Hai is owned and operated by Walters Golf, a Las Vegas-based golf course management company.

MENDENHALL NAMED SUPER AT THUNDERBIRDS

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — Western Golf Properties, a golf course development and management firm based here, has named Scott J. Mendenhall as construction manager and superintendent for the Thunderbirds Golf Course, in Phoenix. A graduate of Michigan State, with a degree in agriculture, Menhall previously worked for Landmark National at Lost Canyons Golf Club in Simi Valley, Calif., and North Ranch Country Club in Westlake Village, Calif. The 18-hole Thunderbird GC is currently closed for a redesign by PGA Tour Design Services, Inc. The facility is owned by the Phoenix Thunderbirds.

SCHREINER FINISHING UP JOHN'S ISLAND

VERO BEACH, Fla. — Golf course architect Craig Schreiner is overseeing the final stage of reconstruction of John's Island Club's South Course, the culmination of a three-year community drainage and course remodeling program. Improvements on the Pete Dye-designed layout include construction of a large storm water and irrigation lake, redesign of fairways, tees, bunkers and 16 green complexes. "We're thrilled to have chance to work with such a committed membership and green committee," said Schreiner. "The membership believed in this project from the beginning and have been extremely supportive of the big picture." The John's Island Club is a private, 54-hole facility.

Superintendent salaries now averaging over \$57,000

By JAY FINEGAN

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — The average base salary for golf course superintendents rose this year to \$57,057, according to a survey by the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA).

Half of all superintendents earn more than \$50,000 a year, 25 percent make more than \$68,000, and 10 percent pull down more than \$88,000. The salaries represent a seven percent increase from the average base salaries in 1998, or an annualized average increase of 3.6 percent.

For assistant superintendents, the average base salary rose to \$29,638, up from \$27,981 in 1998 — a six percent jump. Some 77 percent of assistants are salaried employees; the remainder are paid hourly.

The 2000 "employment profile" by GCSAA also shows an average age of 41 for all superintendents, while the median experience level is 11 years, up from 10 in 1998. The data show that, on average, superintendents take their first position as head super at age 30, with 15 percent of them still in the profession at age 50.

In education, the profile showed that nearly 80 percent of all superintendents

hold a minimum of a two-year certificate, an associate's or bachelor's degree, or a graduate degree.

The results of the survey, based on 3,527 responses, show a modest rise in the number of golf facilities run by professional management companies — 14 percent this year, versus 13 percent in 1998. Much of the increase, the report said, appears to have come from an increase in the numbers of relatively small management outfits.

Other findings from the study include these:

- The median budget managed by superintendents is more than \$550,000, including maintenance, capital equipment and payroll. Median crew size checked in at 17.

- As in 1998, less than a third of superintendents indicated a desire to become a general manager (GM). Superintendents most often report to GMs (29 percent), the survey found, followed by green committee/board of directors (19 percent) and directly to course owners (18 percent).

- Nearly 75 percent of survey respondents worked at 18-hole courses, with 41 percent of them private, 38 percent daily-fee and 12 percent municipal.



ON THE GREEN

Saving the turf on bunker edges

By MARK LESLIE

BEALLSVILLE, Md. — Tearing, bruising and scalping were the havoc that rotary mowers and hover mowers wreaked on the tall fescue bunker edges at Four Streams Golf Club here. Then superintendent Ray Viera went on a crusade and discovered a solution: a hedge trimmer mounted on the end of a 4-foot arm.

"Those 4-inch-high bunker edges are a unique signature for our course," Viera said of the Steve Smyers-designed track. "I can't think of one other that has the edges of the bunkers like this."

Therefore, they were worth extra care, but Viera found that the tearing cut from rotary mowers and hover mowers caused bruising that encouraged disease.

Researching in catalogues and

magazines for a less abrasive alternative to rotary blades and string trimmers, he decided to try a hedge trimmer.

"Getting on your knees to trim was too labor-intensive," he said, "but we did find that its scissor-type action solved our problem."

Further research discovered an extended hedge trimmer manufactured by Stihl. "It's on the market, only I'm using it for a different purpose," Viera said. "We are using this on our tall fescue, but it could be applicable for any grass."

"Most people use FlyMos on their bunker edges," he added. "They

work, but scraping the bunkers and grinding the edges down to dirt is a common problem. This alleviates that problem."



Ray Viera with his unique grass trimmer

After wet summer in N.E., supers still battling moss

By JOEL JOYNER

FALMOUTH, Maine — Head superintendent Scott Cybulski at the Falmouth Country Club has been fighting moss growth for a number of years, but this year it has presented "a drastic problem" in Maine.

"The combination of constant wet weather and golfers wanting us to shave the greens down resulted in a lot of high undulated areas going to moss," Cybulski said. "Aggressive aeration and heavy top dressing have suppressed the problem for now, but the weather and level of play restricted our opportunities to top dress earlier this year, which allowed the moss problem to develop."

Cybulski has controlled the moss with a heavy top dressing of an "iron sulfate and straight-up sand" mixture. Metallic-based fungicides have been the traditional method for moss control, but better sense prevailed in eliminating the spraying of mercury, zinc, and even lead (back in the 50s and 60s)

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Gray leaf spot forces mass regrassing at Philadelphia CC

By JOEL JOYNER

GLADWYNE, Pa. — Do Pennsylvania superintendents remember the gray leaf spot devastation of 1998? You bet they do.

On certain golf courses in the region, turf damage amounted to as much as 90 percent. At the private Philadelphia Country Club, opened in 1930, head superintendent Michael McNulty knows quite well the constant struggle to maintain ryegrass fairways against gray leaf spot.

The club installed ryegrass on its fairways in 1982, and McNulty first noticed gray leaf spot in 1994. "We've been successful using Heritage and Daconil," McNulty said about the fungicides used to control the problem. But now, ryegrass vulnerability to gray leaf spot has prompted a more financially prudent approach.

As one of the last remaining courses in the Philadelphia region to offer ryegrass fairways, this year will mark the beginning of the club's conversion to bentgrass. The 27-hole layout will regrass nine holes at a time, hoping to complete the first nine by early next spring. For the initial phase, McNulty killed off the rye by gassing it with methyl bromide and by laying down the granular product Basamid on the fairways and tees.

"We're also taking the opportunity to change over our greens to Penn A-1 bentgrass at the same time," McNulty

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Philadelphia CC regrassing

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said. "The greens have already come in. We've just started to mow and they look beautiful."

WHITFORD CC ALSO REGRASSED

After experiencing a similar situation at Whitford Country Club, in Exton, Pa., head superintendent Chris Givens is satisfied with their regrassing last year. Using the L-93, Crenshaw, and Southshore bentgrass fairway mixture instead of the previously laid perennial ryegrass, Givens claims the bentgrass has "performed better than I ever thought it would."

The 1998 outbreak of gray leaf spot damaged roughly 75 percent of the turf at Whitford, but the new bentgrass fairways, Givens said, "are perfect – a little brown patch earlier in the season and some dollar spot just starting to show now. But with the type of weather conditions we've had this year, it has worked out well."

Philadelphia's warm, humid summer created ideal conditions for the gray leaf

disease to explode, disseminating spores by wind, water, animals, shoes and equipment. Other factors contributing to gray leaf development, typically, are new turf, shaded areas, high nitrogen levels from fertilizers and any other general strain on the grass. The gray leaf spot, also known as "blast," often strikes with an unusual outbreak cycle of every two to three years. It may attack one year, be dormant or mild for the next couple of years, and then destructive the next.

Remembering the 1998 outbreak, courses in the Philadelphia area aren't likely to take any chances with another overwhelming eruption of the blast disease in 2001. They also don't relish the prospect of draining their maintenance budgets in the future with multiple applications of fungicides.

For its conversion to bentgrass, Philadelphia CC brought in Joe Duich, Ph.D., former head of the Penn State turf grass program. Duich also developed some of the most disease-resistant new bentgrasses available in the turf industry, such as the Penn 'A' and 'G' series for greens. Using grass seed mixtures typically provides some defense against turf disease. Three varieties – L-93, Crenshaw

and Southshore – seem to work effectively together in the Pennsylvania area. Disease resistance is the L-93's most distinctive feature, whereas the Crenshaw provides a strong heat tolerance and the Southshore rounds out the mixture for balance.

Though creeping bentgrass is not completely invulnerable to gray leaf spot, it is more resistant to the disease. Using bentgrass in Pennsylvania will also be environmentally beneficial – smaller amounts of fungicide will be required to maintain the attractiveness and health of the course.

Enough is enough for superintendent Michael McNulty at Philadelphia Country Club, who hopes to match the success that Givens has had at Whitford. ■



Laser mower debuts in Europe

COLOGNE, Germany — Makers of traditional lawnmowers, Wolf, have developed a mower that makes the use of blades obsolete. Chopping the grass into a fine mulch, maintenance workers will simply be wiping off the "eye" of the laser after each mowing.

The designer has attached the new laser mower onto the chassis of a Mercedes Smart Cabriolet, a two-seat convertible. The machine, powerful enough to be registered for road use, is estimated to cost \$30,000. The price is expected to go down as the models go into production, starting in 2002.

AGRONOMIST JIM BAIRD JOINS USGA GREEN SECTION IN NORTHEAST

EASTON, Pa. — Jim Baird, a Ph.D. agronomist, has joined the Green Section of the U.S. Golf Association. He will be taking over for Matt Nelson in the Pennsylvania office and visiting golf courses in the New York and New Jersey area. Nelson will remain with the Green Section as the agronomist for the Northwest Region. This year Nelson will be visiting courses in the

Northwest, Northeast, Midwest, and Southwest.

Baird received his undergraduate degree from Colorado State University and his M.S. and Ph.D. from Auburn University. He spent four years on the Oklahoma State University faculty staff and the past three years on the faculty staff at Michigan State University.

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