



BRIEFS

BEYERS TAKES OVER AT RED HAWK

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — Western Golf Properties (WGP) has promoted Timothy J. Beyers to course superintendent at Red Hawk Ridge GC, in Castle Rock, Colo. Prior to joining WGP, Beyers was assistant superintendent at Arrowhead GC, in Littleton, Colo.

John Carson, director of operations for WGP, said Beyers has “the knowledge and determination needed to maintain the immaculate course conditioning and uphold the reputation that Red Hawk Ridge has quickly established in the Colorado golf market.” The course, an 18-hole layout designed by Jim Engh, features bluegrass fairways, dramatic elevation changes and superb views of the Rockies.

Beyers is currently attending Front Range Community College in Colorado, studying urban horticulture.

ENVIRONMENTAL ENTRIES DUE

LAWRENCE, Kan. — Entries are due Oct. 2 for the ninth annual Environmental Steward Awards, which recognize superintendents and golf courses for their work towards a clean environment. The awards are sponsored by Novartis Turf and Ornamental Products, Rain Bird, Textron Golf & Turf, and Pursell Technologies. Applications are available on the the GCSAA web site or from the GCSAA service center at 800-472-7878.

GCSAA RECEIVES SCHOLARSHIP PLEDGE

WAYZATA, Minn. — The Trans-Mississippi Golf Association, based here, recently signed a three-year agreement to fund \$8,000 in scholarships for the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America’s (GCSAA) Footsteps on the Green program. The scholarship program provides aid to the children and grandchildren of GCSAA members.

Eligibility is limited to full-time college students studying for careers as course superintendents. Applicants are evaluated based on academic achievement, extracurricular activities, and community involvement, which may include membership in one of GCSAA’s 50 student chapters.

The scholarships range from \$3,500 to \$500, and the awards are administered by the GCSAA Foundation.



Scientists make breakthrough in drought-resistant tall fescue

By JAY FINEGAN

GRIFFIN, Ga. — University of Georgia turfgrass scientists have developed a new drought-resistant strain of fescue that promises to be a boon to golf courses. The so-called Southeast Tall Fescue is the first release to emerge from the university’s fescue breeding program, started in 1992. The seed is expected to be marketed by Landmark Seed Co. and available sometime next year.

Ronny Duncan, Ph.D., professor of breeding and stress physiology in the department of crop and soil sciences, headed up the painstaking development project. His search for grass samples that could be used in the experimentation took him to South America, Africa, the Bahamas and all over Georgia.

Duncan’s colleague in the fescue breakthrough, Bob Carrow, Ph.D., professor of turfgrass science, said the new variety will likely see duty on golf courses as rough and fairway framing and on clubhouse grounds. He said recommended mowing heights — two inches in southern



climates, an inch and a half in more moderate regions — would bar fairway use.

When the breeding program began, the goal was to develop turf-type tall fescues with the attributes necessary to persist under Georgia conditions. The primary goal was to come up with a fescue that could withstand drought, acid soil complex, and high soil temperatures, while generating enough carbohydrates — plant food produced by photosynthesis — to maintain strong roots during hot summer months. Additionally, the scientists sought a fescue strain with good turf quality, in shoot density, color and growth rate, and which would exhibit pest-resistant qualities and strong seed production.

BOOT CAMP FOR PLANTS

It took eight years, but finally Duncan and Carrow produced a strain, through natural selection, that met the criteria. “Southeast Tall Fescue,” Carrow said, “is very, very drought resistant.”

The scientists subjected their various experimental strains to severe stress and water deprivation during a “plant boot camp” that killed between 95 and 99 percent of them. “That’s the only way you can identify the ones that have super

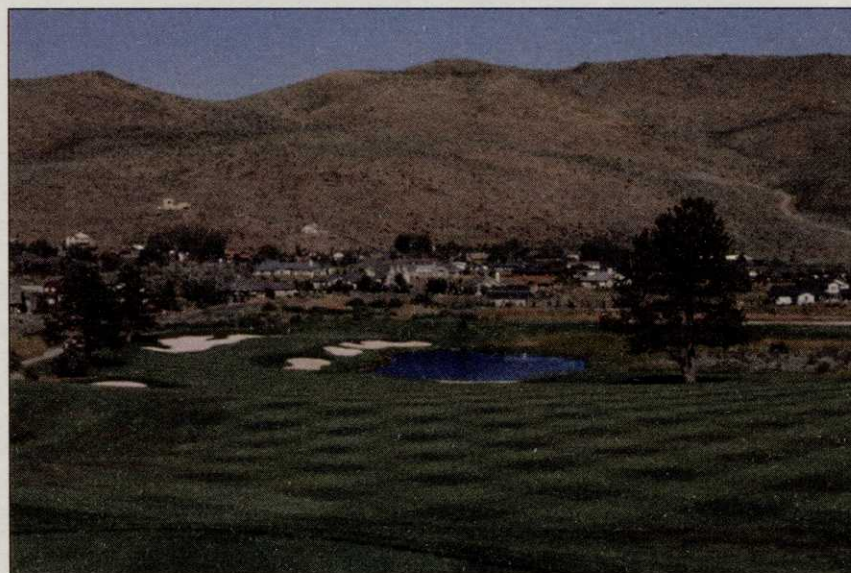
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Supers rate Audubon program highly

SELKIRK, N.Y. — A survey by Audubon International has found that taking part in the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for golf courses (ACSP) brings verifiable environmental benefits. When queried on a number of measures to improve wildlife habitat, protect water quality and reduce chemical use, ACSP members — primarily course superintendents — reported significant improvements in their environmental management practices. They also reported that they sacrificed little if anything in terms of playing quality or golfer satisfaction.

Audubon International launched the ACSP in 1991, in conjunction with the U.S. Golf Association, as an environmental education program designed to help golf courses enhance and protect wildlife habitat and natural resources. Today, 2,140 courses in the United States are enrolled in the program, and

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The par-4 fourth hole at Montreux Golf and Country Club, site of the Reno Tahoe Open

At Montreux, Heinricks thrives on annual Reno Tahoe Open

By DOUG SAUNDERS

RENO, Nev. — The long, hot, sunny days of Nevada summer never come quickly enough for Doug Heinricks, head superintendent here at Montreux Golf and Country Club.

The Iowa native is in his second year caring for the bentgrass fairways of this massive Jack Nicklaus-designed golf course on the eastern slope of Mount Rose, just south of Reno — “The Biggest Little City in the World.” His challenge is nurturing lush, consistent fairways and greens, not only for the discerning members of this private facility, but also for the recently held Reno Tahoe Open, a PGA Tour event.

“I love it when the warm weather sets in, because I need to have my soil temperatures come up in order to stimulate microbial activity and root growth,” he said. “The soil at the base of the mountains is decomposed granite, which makes it easily compacted and hard to penetrate. Irrigation water seems to run off rather than soak in. But it is a challenge that I am glad to take on just to be in this region.”

Montreux opened in 1997 in the midst of a golf construction boom in these parts. More than 140 holes have been built in four years. Montreux has established itself as the premier private club on the eastern slope of the

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ISTRC adds new greens unit

OLATHE, Kan. — International Sports Turf Research Center (ISTRC), based here near Kansas City, recently created a second company, ISTRC NML, to provide physical properties analysis for the construction and reconstruction of greens.

ISTRC developed the first ISTRC system of physical properties analysis mainly for existing golf course greens. Their system of undisturbed core analysis has produced data from thousands of cores that has resulted in the guidelines for new bent and Bermuda grasses that refine U.S. Golf Association (USGA) specs.

ISTRC NML (New Mix Lab) was created to conduct tests required to meet USGA Green Section guidelines for new construction and reconstruction of greens. ISTRC NML qualifies for USGA recommendation by meeting the criteria and earning the accreditation of the American Association for Laboratory Accreditation (A2LA).

Dave Doherty, founder of both companies, said that ISTRC NML is a natural extension of the firm’s capabilities. “Imagine the benefits of the data that we have already compiled when applied to New Mix Lab technologies. As the only company with two labs, one for existing greens and one for new construction, we have combined an operation that will be an invaluable asset to the new course from inception through maturity,” he said. “We’re excited about all that we can offer our clients today.”

In 1990, Doherty and Leon Howard, who wrote the original USGA specs, began to monitor sand-based greens, a task which no one had then bothered to do. “When we first started this company, we were really just out to grow grass on athletic fields for kids,” Doherty said. “But now we do about 40 of the top 100 courses in the country.”

Tahoe Reno

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Sierra. But with so many new courses in the region, a strong identity for the club was essential to develop the prestige that leads to strong sales of memberships and house lots.

When the PGA Tour began to look for a new event to fill the void of the August date that coincided with the NEC World Series of Golf, Reno entered the competition against such cities as St. Louis, Seattle and Portland, Ore.

To some, Reno was a surprise choice over cities that had hosted major championships in the past. Tour officials were satisfied that Reno, which hosted a PGA Event in the 1940s and a Senior Tour stop in the early '80s, could once again fill the need, as well as come up with the required \$2-million franchise fee.

BENTGRASS IN THE SNOW

The success of Nicklaus's Castle Pines Country Club in Colorado, which also hosts an annual PGA Tour event, led the designer to the choice of bentgrass for the Montreux course. The decision promoted a lot of consternation from local superintendents. This region sees plenty of weather cold enough to hinder the warm soil temperatures that bentgrass needs to thrive.

Doug Heinrichs came to Montreux in January 1999 after working nine years in the Palm Springs area. The 32-year-old Iowa State grad has been working around golf courses since he was 15. "When the Montreux opportunity presented itself, I was excited to come to a mountain region just to be able to enjoy seasonal weather again," he said.

In Palm Springs the weather pattern is warm, hot and hotter. Around Reno, on the other hand, the thermometer can shoot into the high 90s during summer, but winter temperatures dip into the 30s. Snow is not unusual in February, but Heinrichs still works to keep the course open year-round. He combats the cold and compaction by doing an early aerification and closely monitoring his watering.

"We have bentgrass fairways but bluegrass rough," he said. "I have to really control my irrigation patterns to get a consistent look to the course. In the end, though, it is the warm days, especially warm days early in the spring, that are my best friend."

SPECTACULAR LAYOUT

Montreux is a huge golf course, with over 45 acres of fairways. Located at 5,000 feet at the base of statuesque Mount Rose, the bold layout shares two dis-

tinct landscapes – rolling high-desert land, and thick pine forests. Nicklaus used the best of both terrains to create a stunning course that measures 7,552 yards from the tips and features dramatic elevation changes. The 17th hole alone features a 130-foot drop from the tee to the slender fairway below.

Heinrichs and his summer-time staff of 35 endeavor to keep the course in tournament shape at

all times. This plan pays off when he sets about preparing the course for the annual PGA Tour event, where the most critical things are consistent lies on the fairways, the condition of bunkers and green speeds.

Heinrichs felt that his course provided a fair test last year during its inaugural Tour run. PGA green specs were easily met, as Heinrichs usually mows his greens lower than the Tour re-

quires.

"I mow during the summer at 120/1000 and raise up to 125/1000 [1/8 inch] for the event," he said. "We have the green speeds stimping at 10 in advance of the tournament, and with double mowing we get the speed up to 10.6. We work so hard to get the course ready for the PGA Tour that you hope all of your effort is appreciated."

Still, he would not trade the

experience for anything. "Few superintendents get the chance to host a Tour event, with all the energy and excitement that surrounds it," Heinrichs said. "Even fewer have the opportunity to work on a course that is willing to spend the money necessary to provide that type of conditioning every day for its membership. I'm fortunate to be here at Montreux and have that chance." ■



THERE'S A REASON
YOU'VE NEVER HEARD OF A
ROTARY
TRIMMOWER.

UNTIL NOW THERE WASN'T ONE.