



## BRIEFS

### PINEHURST PROMOTES KOCHER, FARREN

PINEHURST, N.C. — Brad Kocher has been named vice president of golf operations here at The Pinehurst Company, the resorts division of ClubCorp. Kocher has overseen course maintenance at Pinehurst's eight courses, including the prestigious No. 2 layout, since ClubCorp first purchased the facility in 1984. His expanded responsibilities also include long-term planning and oversight at: The Homestead in Hot Springs, Va.; Barton Creek in Austin, Texas; Daufuskie Island on Daufuskie Island, S.C.; and Palmilla in Los Cabos, Mexico. Bob Ferran Jr., assistant director of golf maintenance for the company since 1986, will take on Kocher's former position as the new director.

### AUNGST NAMED SUPER AT STONERIDGE

PRESCOTT VALLEY, Ariz. — StoneRidge Golf Course, SunCor Golf's new 18-hole daily-fee club here, has named Cheryl Aungst as head superintendent. Aungst becomes Arizona's second female superintendent of a full-length facility. A zoology graduate of Northern Arizona University, and a member of GCSAA, she has more than 14 years' experience in course maintenance and management at some high-profile layouts, including Troon North Golf Club and Sedona Golf Resort, both in Arizona. StoneRidge's 7,005-yard track is carved in the heart of Prescott Valley's stone ridges and boulder outcroppings, providing some 350 feet of elevation change.

### PSU AGRONOMY DEPARTMENT RENAMED

UNIVERSITY PARK, Pa. — The agronomy department at Penn State has updated its approach at student recruitment by becoming the department of crop and soil sciences. "We made the change for the sake of clarity," said A.J. Turgeon, professor of turfgrass management and interim department head, who said the move might attract more undergraduates. "Agronomy has always been about crop production and soil resources, but it's an older term that a lot of people don't often recognize," he said. "Our research and extension activities in production agriculture, environmental stewardship and land use policy won't change," said Turgeon.



## Houston courses struggle to recover from monster storm

By JOEL JOYNER

HOUSTON — Randy Dayton could scarcely believe his eyes on Saturday morning, June 9, when he gazed upon the devastation wrought by Tropical Storm Allison. Much of his golf course was under water.

The Houston area got three feet of rain-fall from Allison before it moved northeast. Weather experts calculate that the storm dumped enough rain to supply the nation's water needs for an entire year.

Dayton was in his seventh week as superintendent at Northgate Country Club here when the monster storm struck. "We got hit Friday night," he said, "and by Saturday morning everything was flooded. We're not certain what our total rainfall was — our gauge overflowed."

Dayton's Northgate facility sits along Cypress Creek. "When I stand on the course and look down at this creek, it normally sits 30 feet below in a canyon,"

he said. "It's hard to believe it came up over the banks. The water rose so quickly."

Allison has now been pegged as the most costly tropical storm in U.S. history. At least 50 deaths are blamed on the



Receding waters left heavy silt deposits at Northgate Country Club.

tempest. Thousands of people have been left homeless. And federal disaster officials estimated damage at more than \$4 billion in Texas alone.

### SIX FEET OF SILT

Allison skipped the tropical depression stage and went straight into a punishing tropical storm, with winds reaching 60

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## Maintenance firms: superintendents' friend or foe?

By JOEL JOYNER

CALABASAS, Calif. — Are maintenance companies big bad corporations that run roughshod over superintendents as they gobble up contracts? Or are they a relief to courses in need of professional care?

Surprisingly, the companies and superintendents tend to agree.

"Superintendents are our friends," said Terry McGuire, Environmental Golf's director of business development. "We're made up of superintendents. We're not the bad guys. We're not the management company by type-cast. We want to be the most superintendent-friendly company in the business."



Greg Plotner

### RETAINING EXISTING STAFF

There are some 45 superintendents within the organization. "We hire on as many of the employees as possible with a newly contracted course," McGuire said. "We place them on probation for about 90 days. It provides an opportunity for them to get to know us and for us to get to know the employee."

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## Caddyshack III: Superintendents' 'Revenge Day'

By ANDREW OVERBECK

GUANGZHOU, China — Superintendent Keith Pegg here at Guangzhou Luh Golf and Country Club has come up with an ingenious method of getting course projects done without making them seem so disruptive to golfers.

"We call it Superintendent's Revenge Day," explained Pegg. "It is a day that the greens staff gets to have a little fun, and the golfers enjoy it also. We take advantage of these different scenarios in order to get project work done."



Keith Pegg

"For example, if I have a drainage project or work on a hole that will get in the way, I will move the tee markers up into the fairway and shorten the hole so people do not have to play in the construction area," he said.

Pegg uses the system practically but also has some fun with it. "Sometimes we'll just take all the tee markers on a hole and aim them into the woods," he said. "We do it one time each month and try to keep the golfers guessing."

CCA Int'l, which manages Luh, has embraced the idea and may use it at its other clubs in Asia and Europe.

Below are some of Pegg's favorite ploys, both practical and maddening:

- Have no hole and no pin on the green; have a sign reading "automatic two-putt."

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## Eagles dare at Colorado's Aspen Glen

By JOEL JOYNER

CARBONDALE, Colo. — The private Aspen Glen Golf Club, set in a spectacular Rocky Mountain region near Glenwood Springs, takes uncommon pride in its roosting bald eagles and two trout-spawning channels.

Now it's got the official credential to prove its environmental zeal — certification in the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary System. It's the 15th course in Colorado to win the coveted designation.

Every year, anywhere from one to three bald eagles visit Aspen Glen. The club, opened in 1997, has a "protection zone" around a nest that has been at the site since the 1940s.

"The eagles reside seasonally on this prominent 150-foot ponderosa pine that's adjacent to our 10th fairway," said superintendent Richard Eide. "Whenever an eagle is present, we shut down the hole."

### 'A 17-HOLE GOLF COURSE'

Play is limited by the birds' presence, but the nesting site is a bonus for the club. "We simply play as a 17-hole golf course when the eagle is around. Sometimes players will decide to play the first hole twice," said Eide. "But it's gone from a concern to, basically, a really big draw here."

The Aspen Glen bald eagles arrive in early November. The course closes for the season shortly thereafter. The eagles, recently upgraded from endangered to threatened, typically migrate in April, only two weeks after the course opened for play this season.

"We've seen as many as two eagles in the area more than once," said the superintendent. "There haven't been any fledglings at the nest yet, but there will be another whole set of rules to follow if they breed. We might have to shut the hole down for the entire season."

### TWO-TON NEST

Aspen Glen started monitoring the nest in 1994, prior to course construction. The club hires a bird-watcher to observe the nest and document all eagle

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Eagles nest in ponderosa pine next to the 10th fairway



## Houston storm

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mph. With the floods came silt – thick deposits of it – at the Northgate course.

“One cart path had six feet of silt,” Dayton said. “We carved a way through it, but it was higher than the carts. On one of the holes, a par-5, half of the fairway was covered in six inches of silt. We ended up moving the tee markers to the 150-yard range and turned the hole into a par-3.”

Dayton’s clean-up process started with the greens. “It took about four hours for each one,”

*‘Nine of my fairways were under water for five days.’*

– Mike Rhoden

said the superintendent, whose crew worked with high-pressured hoses and squeegees. “There were six greens we had to work the silt off.”

On some of the tee boxes, the silt was so deep it had to be shoveled off before hoses and squeegees could do any good.

The pump house was also hit hard by the flooding. “Fortunately, I was given the advice not to turn the pumps on,” said Dayton. “They were completely submerged. It took a while for it to be dry enough to pull the pumps out and have them serviced.”

### HORRENDOUS STENCH

Dayton’s bunkers never stood a chance in the torrent. “They’re gone,” he said. “The flood washed them right down to the drainage pipes. In some places, even the piping was carried away.”

And that wasn’t all. “The flood washed away every trap rake, trash can, and anything that wasn’t tied down,” Dayton said. “And the smell – I just couldn’t handle the smell. Who knows what was coming down that creek. It smelled like a grandmother’s wet basement.”

Much of the storm’s damage will be delayed-reaction, according to Dayton, who said he’ll be watching for weeds and insects for the rest of the summer.

### NINE FAIRWAYS UNDER WATER

Douglas “Mike” Rhoden, superintendent at the Deerwood Country Club in Kingwood, about 20 miles north of Houston, got only 11 inches of rain. But massive downpours further north ended up submerging his course.

“What hurt us so badly was the water from Conroe,” he said. “They got about 25 inches up there, and that just rushed down the San Jacinto River and backed up on us. Nine of my fairways were under water for five days.”

Deerwood is managed by ClubCorp, which also operates



Bunkers were completely stripped of sand as Allison deluged Houston with three feet of rain in two days.

the Kingwood Country Club, located just a mile down the river. “They’re still hurting over there,” said Rhoden. “It will be a while before they’re back to normal. Some of the clubhouse flooded. They had two to three feet of silt in certain areas, and they lost some greens.”

On top of everything else, Allison also created fertile conditions for insects. While most of the grass is bouncing back,

the possibility of a mosquito outbreak continues to worry communities. “We’re fogging big time,” said Rhoden.

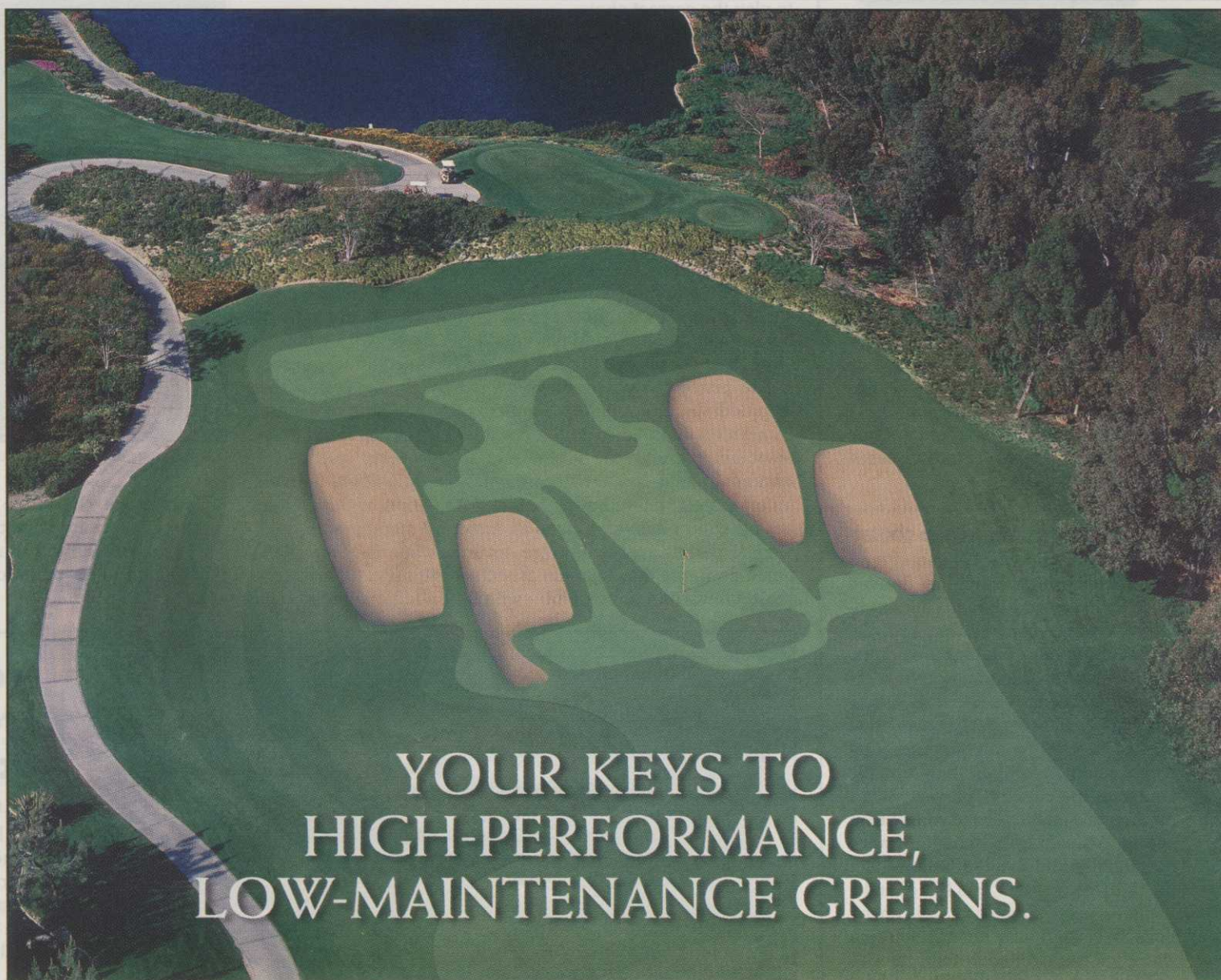
### CLEANING UP DEBRIS

River Bend Country Club in Sugarland, just south of here, received 16 inches of rain and had to postpone a U.S. Senior Open qualifier.

“We were shut down for four days,” said superintendent George Cincotta. “I had four

greens under water. Cleaning up the debris was probably the most challenging part. There was minimal silt, and we washed off the greens with a squeegee and our quick-coupler irrigation system.”

The River Bend layout is located along Oyster Creek. “I’ve heard some courses really got hammered,” said Cincotta. “It just came so fast. If you take three feet of rain in two days, you’re going to flood.” ■



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