

MAINTENANCE

Tools of the Trade...at Steve Cook's Oakland Hills CC

BLOOMFIELD HILLS, Mich. — The Oakland Hills Country Club's South Course, called the "monster" by Ben Hogan when he won the 1951 U.S. Open, was to have played host to the 2003 Ryder Cup. Since the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks against the United States, the PGA of America decided a shift in scheduling was in order for future Ryder Cup matches. The event was postponed until 2004.



Steve Cook

"We don't know the dates yet, sometime between mid-September and early October of 2004," said Steve Cook, superintendent. "Our renovation projects are still going through, and we'll finish the projects we had going this fall. The 2002 U.S. Amateur we're hosting will proceed as planned."

The club has hosted two PGA Championships — 1961 and 1972 — and six U.S. Opens with the latest in 1996. It will be the first Ryder Cup match here for the Donald Ross-designed layout. "Our Ryder Cup committees are still meeting and planning," Cook said, "and the PGA representative is on-site. Instead of being here two years, he'll be here three years now."

Earlier this year, Cook distinguished himself by becoming one of the 31 worldwide certified Master Greenkeepers with the British International Golf Greenkeeper Association. Today, Cook is wrapping up a \$2 million renovation project at Oakland Hills. A new irrigation system was installed, green banks and surrounds were regrassed, and all the bunkers were renovated with new drainage and sand.

Preparations for the opening and closing ceremonies of the Ryder Cup included finding seating for 15,000 people. "We decided to use the first hole on our North Course — which serves as the driving range when we host the U.S. Open — and ended up doing some remodeling work there," said Cook. "We built a new tee for the players, added new bunkers and regrassed everything. The bleachers will sit on the regular tee box area and surround the new tee in a horseshoe-shaped seating area."

Next year's U.S. Amateur will be a nice trial run for the Ryder Cup event at the club. "There won't be as much activity as there will be for the Ryder Cup," said Cook. "Postponing the Ryder Cup to 2004 will probably



Oakland Hills' greens are well maintained to keep a 10 foot normal green speed.

be a positive thing for the club. Members will now get the course back for a year or more with no disruption. For my staff and I, we get a chance to take a breather, refresh, and absorb what lessons can be learned from hosting the Amateur."

In 2008, the club will again be hosting the PGA Championship. "With ball flights these days, we may need to look at making some changes to the course down the road to toughen it up a little bit," said Cook.

COOK'S TOOLS

GREENS MOWERS: 17 Toro 5000, 21"
TEE MOWERS: 5 Toro
FAIRWAY MOWERS: 12 Toro — 8 3200s, 4 5100s
ROUGH MOWERS: 4 John Deere 5111
RIDING BUNKER RAKE: hand rake only
TURF UTILITY VEHICLES: 22 — Carryall II, Toro Workman
VERTI-CUT REELS: 3
AERIFIERS: 6 — Ryan Greensaire, Cushman GA 60, John Deere 1200
TOPDRESSERS: 3 Toro
GROOMING REELS: 6
TOURNAMENT SPEED ROLLER: 1 Salsco
REEL GRINDER: 1
BEDKNIFE GRINDER: 1
IRRIGATION PUMP STATION: Flowtronex, 2,100 gpm

IRRIGATION SYSTEM: Toro SitePro
GOLF CAR FLEET: EZ-GO, electric
FLAGSTICKS: Standard Golf, 7' white
COMPUTER & ACCESSORIES: Pentium 4
PRIMARY HERBICIDE: Confront
PRIMARY INSECTICIDE: Turcam

PRIMARY FUNGICIDE: Chlorothalonil
PRIMARY SLOW-RELEASE FERTILIZER: Andersons SCU

**COOK CANNOT LIVE WITHOUT:
A GOOD STAFF**

CAN NOT LIVE WITHOUT: A good staff
OLDEST PIECE OF EQUIPMENT ON COURSE: Ford 4630, year unknown
TOTAL SQUARE FOOTAGE OF MAINTENANCE BUILDING(S): 13,500 sq. ft.
ANNUAL ROUNDS OF GOLF: 50,000
NORMAL GREEN SPEED: 10'

IGM super receives GCSAA certification

LAKELAND, Fla. — Michael J. Swinson, the Brooksville, Fla. regional superintendent for International Golf Maintenance, has earned an environmental certificate from the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America for completing a specialization program in golf course development.

Swinson is participating in the GCSAA's Environmental Management Program, a training program encompassing five key areas: Integrated Pest Management (IPM); Employee Safety and Right-To-Know; Water Quality and Application; Golf Course Development

and Storage; and Disposal and Recycling. He received certification in the IPM portion of the program back in 1998.

"I've always felt that it's important to stay abreast of any changes in our industry," said Swinson. "I try to take advantage of the courses offered by the GCSAA. The golf course development program helps me make decisions in the purchasing of alternative turfgrasses for tough conditions."

Swinson was promoted to a regional superintendent position this past July and takes responsibility for a total of 111 holes including the four courses at World Woods, and Brooksville Golf & Country Club.

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