Rainbird’s Krueger: shortages will spark wars over water

**By TREVOR LEDGER**

FRANKFURT, Germany — Warning that there is no replacement for water and that costs for the essential resource are rising annually, Rolf Krueger of Rainbird Europe sounded an ominous note at the Golf Course International 2001 conference here in Frankfurt. “We see wars fought over oil,” Krueger told his audience. “We will see more and more fought over water.”

Against that backdrop of limited water confronting a global population surging out of control, Krueger urged the golf industry to emphasize conservation. Indeed, at every conference or gathering of those in the golf industry, water and its use is of primary concern.

But Krueger seemed unconcerned that the issue has gotten so much play. He launched into a lecture on water management which covered all the bases and then added one more that might just break the mold. “I don’t want to be revolutionary,” he said, “but perhaps the old idea is more environmentally suitable. When new greens are constructed we should look very closely at water retention. The best way to achieve this is through bowl-shaped greens made out of soil, not sand.”

Having created a standardized model for the construction of golf greens with the ubiquitous USGA specifications, Krueger’s suggestion that perhaps we should revert to the pre-irrigation design of the early 20th century is likely to raise eyebrows — if not hell. But the thinking behind such an observation is irrefutable. Although 71 percent of the earth is covered with water, less than one percent of it is potable.

**CLAY BOWL GREENS**

Green construction was but one area where Krueger felt that golf courses could reduce the need for water use. Saltwater-resistant grass strains — Paspalum vaginatum, for example — need to be explored and developed, he said, alongside improved desalination plants.

Grand Strand’s River Club reopens after extensive greens renovation

**PAWLEYS ISLAND, S.C. —** The River Club, a favorite along the Myrtle Beach “Grand Strand” and a top Litchfield Beach and Golf Resort layout, has reopened after a million-dollar reconstruction project.

The refurbishing involved shelling out all of the greens and installing a sub-air drainage system, which will improve the greens by pumping cool air into them during the hotter months of the year. Bunkers also were shellacked out and white sand was added to improve the playability and visual appeal of the course.

Greens were planted with A-1 bentgrass to improve the putting surface and increase heat tolerance. The bent was provided by Stormy Acres, a New Jersey-based company, and is the same grass that has been sodded into some of the greens at Augusta National.

The “A-1 has added to both the playability and quality of the course, offering a premier golf experience as one of the only bentgrass courses in Pawleys Island and Litchfield,” said Jim Woodring, director and general manager of golf operations for the Myrtle Beach National Co., which manages the club. “The finished product has made for a fabulous golfing experience.”

All of the work has been done according to USGA specifications, he added. Golf architect Tom Jackson, who created the original design, supervised the renovation.

The daily-fee River Club is one of the premier plantation courses in the Myrtle Beach area. It features water on 15 of its 18 holes and more than 100 sand traps and bunkers.

Myrtle Beach National has evolved into one of the leading golf management operations in the Southeast, featuring some of the most respected names along the Grand Strand. The company was formed in 1971 with the construction of the Arnold Palmer-designed original 54-hole golf complex, which includes the West Course, Southcreek and King’s North.

Since then, the company’s portfolio has grown to include the Robert Trent Jones-designed Waterway Hills, Jack Nicklaus’ Long Bay and Aberdeen Country Club, Dan Maple’s Willbrook Plantation and Willard Byrd’s Litchfield Country Club. All are signature courses in the Myrtle Beach area.