



BRIEFS

MAGNUM RESIGNS FROM GCSAA BOARD OF DIRECTORS, HEINE JOINS

DULUTH, Ga. — GCSAA president Tommy Witt has accepted the resignation of Ken Magnum from the board of directors. Magnum, first elected to the board in February 1996, will be devoting more time to his position as director of golf courses and grounds here at the Atlanta Athletic Club. Upcoming events such as the 2001 PGA Championship this August, the U.S. Junior Amateur in July 2002 and a remodeling of the Riverside course in 2003 were cited by Magnum as demanding his full attention. Witt has appointed Ricky Heine, superintendent at the Golf Club Star Ranch in Austin, Texas, to fill the position. Heine narrowly lost his campaign for a GCSAA board position last February.



Ricky Heine

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GIESELER NAMED SUPER AT BEAR'S BEST

DALLAS, Texas — ClubCorp has named Dan Gieseler, CGCS, as the superintendent at Bear's Best Las Vegas, scheduled to open next fall. A second-generation superintendent, he joined ClubCorp in 1976, serving at several of the company's country clubs in Texas and California. Gieseler is already on site at his new course, which is still under construction. The Bear's Best public access courses — another one is being built in Atlanta — have been designed specifically for group play and corporate entertainment.

SCOTT LEAVES WINGED FOOT FOR BACK BROOK

RINGOES, N.J. — Mike Scott has been hired as superintendent at the Ridge at Back Brook, a new Tom Fazio design unfolding on 300 acres in central New Jersey, northwest of Princeton. Scott was most recently head superintendent at Winged Foot Golf Club (N.Y.).

GOLFSUPERSEARCH.COM OFFERS FREE SERVICE

HARVARD, Mass. — A new Web site, designed specifically for golf course superintendents, has been launched here by Harvard Golf Partners. The site, located at www.golfsupersearch.com, offers a no-cost service to superintendents searching for new positions.

Brutal winter leaves major mess for Northeast superintendents

By JOEL JOYNER

WESTON, Mass. — A winter that came in like a lion and left like a lion has left behind a major mess for superintendents in the Northeast.

"It was a cold, cold, cold winter, a big departure from the weather experienced the past two seasons," said USGA agronomist Darin Bevard. "Winterkill probably is the biggest issue right now."

Wet, heavy accumulations of snow, well above average in most places, now bring flood worries. The concerns of snowmelt flooding have focused on areas in southern Maine, all of Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, parts of New York state along Lake Champlain and the Hudson River, northern New Jersey and northeastern Pennsylvania, according to the National Weather Service.

Moreover, prolonged ice on greens — for 60 days or more — has left courses in grim shape for the season opening. "We've had severe ice build up this year," said superintendent Jeff Corcoran here at the Weston Golf Club. "We've had at

least five to six inches of ice covering all of our greens. There's no question about turf damage."

A GUESS AND A GAMBLE

When gambling with Mother Nature, sometimes there's no escaping injury. "It's a matter of which of the two evils do



Winter projects, such as this irrigation project at Oakmont CC, in Pennsylvania, have been frustrated by harsh weather in the Northeast.

you want," Corcoran said. "Do you want ice encasement with oxygen deprivation to the plant, or do you remove it and deal with crown hydration? We decided to leave the ice on until there was a steady thaw. We were in a damned if you do, damned if you don't situation. Ice is a real big pain."

Continued on page 14

Career moves: superintendents weigh merits of 'three-year rule'

By JOEL JOYNER

FORT WASHINGTON, Pa. — In their quest for more prestigious golf courses, better working conditions and fatter paychecks, many superintendents follow the unofficial but compelling "three-year rule." Under this principle, they jump ship and switch to a fancier course every three years or so — at least until they find the perfect job.

Does the "rule" make sense in today's job market? Do loyalty or lasting relationships count for anything? Does job-hopping your way through a career look good on a resume? And finally, is money the only motivator?



Sam Hocutt

Money is not the primary key for Sam Hocutt, one of many superintendents we called to get their take on the three-year itch. Earlier in his career, he was a

true believer in frequent moves.

ENDURING THE LONG HAUL

"The three-year rule is mostly due to boredom," said Hocutt, now superintendent at the Pawleys Plantation Golf Course on Pawleys Island, S.C. "You can get a course in great shape without a hassle in that time. After that, the job seems too routine. It's not the challenge it used to be."

Hocutt is in his eighth year at the island course, after working three-year stints at Oyster Bay in Calabash, N.C., Carolina Pines in Havelock, N.C., and the Hampton Club on St. Simons Island, Ga. "When building a course, the boredom starts at or about the three-year point. I feel during this period superintendents are at peak performance," he said. "Then they want to go build another one just for the challenge."

Family responsibilities can dampen the urge to move, especially if it means uprooting kids from schools and friends, but they don't kill the drive for a better job. "There aren't many superintendents who can endure the long haul," Hocutt maintains. "As the course ages, so does the irrigation, equipment, labor, budget, members, and then yourself. It becomes tougher the longer you stay in one place."

Out of 100 courses on Pawleys Island, Hocutt knows of only four superintendents who've lasted at one place more than 10 years. "Three years is a safe bet," he said. "It's also a good step up to increase your salary."

FINDING A HOME

Vince Hankley, the 12-year veteran superintendent at the private Country Club of Petersburg, in Virginia, begs to differ. "I don't think three years is enough time to get your feet wet," he said. "Five or six years should be the minimum to build up

Continued on page 15

Huesgen and Flynn take top jobs at Pebble Beach

PEBBLE BEACH, Calif. — Tom Huesgen has been named head superintendent at the hallowed Pebble Beach Golf Links here on the California coast. He replaces Erik Greytak, who has moved on to Winged Foot Golf Club, in Mamaroneck, N.Y.

At the same time, Chris Flynn has assumed the head superintendent position at Spanish Bay Golf Club, also a Pebble Beach Co. course.

Both moves reflect the company's long tradition of promoting from within.

A graduate of Oregon State, with a degree in turfgrass management, Huesgen transferred in from Spanish Bay, where he had been superintendent since 1998. He is a member of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America as well as the Northern California Golf Course Superintendents Association.



"Tom is familiar with all of Pebble Beach Company's golf properties and is a talented and experienced superintendent," said Paul Spengler, senior vice president of golf properties. "We're confident in his ability to maintain the integrity and qualities that make Pebble Beach Golf Links one of the most famous courses in the world."

STARTED AS SPRAY TECHNICIAN

Chris Flynn, most recently assistant superintendent at Spyglass Hill Golf Course, has been with the Pebble Beach Co. since 1998. He was first employed as a spray technician at Spyglass and then promoted to assistant superintendent last August. He holds a degree in turfgrass management from the State University of New York at Cobleskill.

Earlier in his career, Flynn worked at the TPC Course at Las Colinas, in Dallas, Texas; and also at Mahopac Golf Course, Westchester Country Club and Brae Burn Country Club, all in New York.

"Chris has done a great job as assistant superintendent of Spyglass Hill and is ready to take on more responsibilities at Spanish Bay," said RJ Harper, vice president of golf operations for the Pebble Beach organization. "As with Tom Huesgen's promotion, we're delighted to have within our ranks the types of employees who can step right into leadership positions at our world-class golf courses."

Winter's mess

Continued from page 11

Corcoran, new to the club, has had a rough initiation. "Last year, members were playing golf the first week of March here. We'll be hard pressed to open at the end of April," he said. "It's been a hell of a starting year. Mother Nature has given me a pretty nasty welcome."

Old Man Winter also has taken

his toll on maintenance budgets. "Most of my guys are putting in 20 hours of overtime each week to get the course back on track," Corcoran said. "Add on equipment rentals to clear snow and ice, and you have a big impact on the budget."

AN EXHAUSTING RECOVERY

Construction projects also have suffered from the harsh season.

"It's horrible," said Paul B.

Latshaw, superintendent at the Oak Hill Country Club in Rochester, N.Y. "We're in the middle of a \$3.1-million dollar restoration project that includes the installation of a new irrigation system. If you're trying to do construction, this past winter has just been absolutely brutal. We were well above 100 inches of snow here when we usually average about 93 inches. Then, in the middle of winter, we had

thaws that would only freeze up again and again."

The construction project is in preparation for the 2003 PGA Championship tournament to be held at the Oak Hill facility. "We started construction this past September, when Landscapes Unlimited pulled in," said Latshaw. "Unfortunately, we went into spring this year with at least eight inches of snow cover."

Winterkill worries are less

pressing for the superintendent than snow mold this season. "Early spring, we only saw grass on the greens for half a day at tops," he said. "Then we'd be hit with six more inches of snow. My big concern is snow mold. We had protection down, but we weren't able to re-apply a mid-to-late winter application to get us over the hump. I know we have a lot of pink and gray snow mold in our roughs."

It will take a long and exhausting recovery effort to get the ball rolling again at Oak Hill. "Being snow covered for so long, we're going to have a lot of damage to the turf," Latshaw said. "Combined with the construction project, it's going to be like you can't imagine."

Superintendent John Zimmer, Jr., at the Oakmont Country Club in Oakmont, Pa., has also battled wicked weather undertaking the installation of a new irrigation system on the course. The course started the project on Oct. 20 last year and he hopes to be completed by the first of June. "It's been a terrible winter that has not cooperated at all," Zimmer said. "We had to run snow blowers most of the winter just to keep working."

SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM

Latshaw's father, Paul R. Latshaw, the superintendent at the Winged Foot Golf Club in Mamaroneck, N.Y., also knows the discouraging results of this past Northeast season. "The snow's off the ground," he said, "but it's like a mud hole here. Compared to last year, we're way behind to the start of the season. We've had a very severe winter."

The elder Latshaw, however, believes he has stumbled upon the solution to this havoc-wreaking weather. "This is only my second season here, and I've had enough of the winter in the Northeast. I'm retiring this year," he said, "and as I told my wife at the retirement party, 'I'm going to do some consulting work and stick south of the Mason-Dixon Line.'"

DEERE SPONSORS GCSAA IMAGE CAMPAIGN

LAWRENCE, Kan. — John Deere Golf & Turf Products will sponsor the GCSAA's image campaign for 2001, featuring superintendents showcasing their balancing of "science and art." The GCSAA is running a 30-second commercial on the Golf Channel through September. The spot shows a maintenance crew performing routine turf practices around a golf course while singing "Oh, What a Beautiful Morning" from the musical "Oklahoma." The ad will also be shown during The Masters, The U.S. Open Championship, the John Deere Classic and the Ryder Cup.

GOLF COURSE NEWS

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Our UHS Signature Brand Fertilizer "blue line" is comprised of products with the things you'd expect, such as quality and consistency. What sets these fertilizers apart is unique technologies, added performance and unmatched value.

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Our premium offering is found in the UHS Signature Brand Fertilizer "green line" bag. These products feature the best nutrient sources available and are manufactured with an uncompromising eye to consistency and performance. The green bag guarantees ultimate nutritional benefits and turf quality for your fertilizer program.



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