PARAMUS, N.J. — Superintendent Todd Raisch hopes to be at the top of his game when the 2001 Senior PGA Championship arrives here at Ridgewood Country Club this month.

The championship will be played over a composite course using select holes from all three nines: Center, West and East courses. The layout, which can be stretched to 7,150 yards, will play at 6,904 yards for the event.

“We’ll feature the sixth hole from the Center course, a short but devilish hole of 275 yards with a 1,700-square-foot green,” said Raisch. “It was recently ranked by Golf magazine as one of the Top 500 holes in the world.”

The 1929 A.W. Tillinghast-designed layout has fairways lined from the Center course, a short but devilish hole of 275 yards with a 1,700-square-foot green, said Raisch. “It was recently ranked by Golf magazine as one of the Top 500 holes in the world.”

The one downside is that we will still have some trouble,” Barber said. “It’s a cross your fingers "CROSS YOUR FINGERS" weather situation. The chum salmon is listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act.

"They’re forecasting a wetter-than-normal summer," said Sean Hoolehan, superintendent at Ridgewood Country Club, both in Illinois, and as assistant superintendent at Big Foot Country Club in Fontana, Wisc. He is a Class A member of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America.

Northwest drought

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NOAA acknowledged that a jet stream pattern, termed the "Omeglock," formed a barrier last December that diverted Pacific rain and snow storms from the Northwest to California and Canada. "They’re talking about the drought situation all over the West Coast," said Michael Barber, superintendent here at the Hangman Valley Golf Club. "Usually we’d get rain down here in the lowlands and the mountains would build up on snow in the winter, but that never happened this year. I’ve heard the snow pack is only 50 percent of what it should be in the mountains."

"CROSS YOUR FINGERS"

"If worse comes to worst, we could be in big trouble," Barber said. "It’s a cross your fingers and hope that you make it through the summer situation because, obviously, there is no quick fix. We irrigate the course with surface water from Hangman Creek, and we don’t have an alternative water source available here."

Typically, the Northwest helps California keep the air conditioners running in the summer. This year, however, soaring energy rates and lack of precipitation may leave the entire West Coast high and dry. Mother Nature would need to deliver precipitation in biblical proportions to help the region recover from the drought.

"They’re forecasting a wetter-than-normal spring," said Sean Hoolehan, superintendent at the Wildhorse Resort Golf Club in Pendleton, Ore. "But the drought forecasters claim that it would take at least 200 percent of our normal expected rainfall during the months of March, April, May and June to get us back to normal levels."

"SALMON OR HOT TUBS?"

Reservoirs are hitting record-low marks as California’s population and energy consumption climbs.

"There’s no question that our reservoirs are all at extremely low," Hoolehan said. "I drove to Portland recently, and I’ve seen water levels this spring lower than what I’ve seen in summers past. I work in the high desert, and we get all of our rain from October to April," he said. "We still get some rain after April, but the amounts diminish substantially."

What will be the rippling effects of this drought as summer activities approach? "I’m not sure to what extent it will effect the energy crunch in California," said Hoolehan, "but we have our own issues surrounding our hydroelectric output regaining fish and the salmon."

Spilling water over dams to generate power is likely to jeopardize stocks of chum salmon and steelhead that migrate to the ocean in the spring and summer. The chum salmon is listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act.

"We can’t afford to wipe out fish stocks just to keep California out of the dark," Hoolehan said. "That’s what the governments are doing to help the economy."

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