

# GOLF COURSE NEWS

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SUPERINTENDENT FOR THE "BIG DIG"

After roaming the globe building golf courses most of his life, Massachusetts native Gary Kessener, 42, has returned home to oversee construction of one of the most ambitious golf projects ever undertaken in the United States - Quarry Hills Golf Course. The John Sanford design is taking shape just outside Boston. The story begins on page 13.

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### PERIODICAL



BAY CREEK GOLF CLUB STRIVES FOR AUDUBON'S SILVER SIGNATURE STATUS. SEE STORY PAGE 3.

## Secondary turf equipment market facing growing pains

By ANDREW OVERBECK

With the popularity of leasing turf equipment surging over the past five years, the market for used equipment has expanded as well. Industry insiders estimate that the used market now exceeds \$90 million in annual sales and will continue to grow as more equipment comes off leases.

Sales figures, however, do not tell the whole story. The industry is still learning how to approach the secondary turf market. While high residuals make leasing



A three- to four-year-old John Deere ProConditioned 3235 fairway mower (left) retails for around \$22,000, compared to \$36,000 for a brand-new 3235B model. It comes with a one-year warranty.

packages more attractive, they make it more difficult for dealers and wholesale brokers to unload used equipment at a reasonable profit. In order for leases to grow, there

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## Chicago credit giant to finance golf

By JAY FINEGAN

CHICAGO — A new source of capital has entered the golf industry, and this one comes with deep pockets.

Heller Financial, a \$20-billion credit firm, recently established a golf lending group with plans to fill some of the void created when Bank of America abandoned the golf-financing field last fall.

Ironically, two of the key players in the new Heller golf brain trust have sailed in from Bank of America. Rick Nekoroski, who completed \$275 million in golf course investments for Bank of America, will handle the eastern half of the country from Boston. And John Seeburger, a West Coast loan officer for B of A, will take charge of the action in the western United States from his office in Costa Mesa, Calif., south of Los Angeles. Both men will hold the title of vice president and investment officer.

Real estate specialist Christy Lockridge, an 11-year Heller veteran, has been named product manager for the golf lending group. She will direct the



Christy Lockridge

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The third hole at Wolf Creek GC, 80 miles north of Las Vegas

## Wolf Creek offers high drama in Nevada desert

By DOUG SAUNDERS

MESQUITE, Nev. — The fairways of the recently opened Wolf Creek Golf Club pour through the stark desert terrain like green lava flowing through the landscape. Their stunning contrast against the multi-colored sandstone cliffs creates a spectacular setting that begs a golfer to come out and play in this high desert setting in southeastern Nevada.

Your first thoughts are: how could a  
Continued on page 24

## Drought-stricken N'west faces dry summer

By JOEL JOYNER

SPOKANE, Wash. — The Northwest is confronting record-low water levels that may result in some severe shortages this summer. The drought also has potentially serious implications for energy-starved California, which relies on hydroelectric power from the Northwest.

In March, Washington Gov. Gary Locke declared a drought emergency for the state. According to Scott Gudes, acting administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the Northwest is the most drought-stricken region of the United States.

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## Tools of the Trade...at Todd Raisch's Ridgewood CC

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 with 100-year-old oaks. "This is by far our biggest maintenance challenge," said Raisch. The large oaks deprive the poa annua greens, tees and fairways of vital sunlight, water and nutrients. "Trees are a very emotional issue at our club, and in the past you could have been hung for suggesting that a tree be removed," he said.

Three tees were rebuilt this past fall and will be included in the tournament. "It was not part of the tournament preparation," Raisch said, "but rather an ongoing

project to increase the size of our tees. We're currently in the design phase of a master plan with architect Gil Hanse."

A Memorial Day fire sparked by a cart charger back in 1997 has led to the construction of two new maintenance buildings. "We now have a 6,000-square-foot equipment storage facility and a new 4,200-square-foot employee/administration building complete with bedrooms for student interns," said Raisch.

The superintendent is building toward peak conditions for

**A 1958 RYAN SODCUTTER IS THE OLDEST PIECE OF EQUIPMENT IN RAISCH'S INVENTORY**

the championship. "You would be hard pressed to find a better week on the calendar to have a major championship in northern New Jersey," Raisch said. "The one downside is that we will still be in the window of opportunity for poa annua to seed, albeit near the end. It will be critical for us to nail the timing of our Embark applications."

**Greens mowers:** 11 John Deere 220A

**Tee mowers:** 10 John Deere 220A

**Fairway mowers:** 7 LF-128 Jacobsen

**Rough mowers:** 2 John Deere 1600, 2 Lastec 475MD

**Turf utility vehicle:** 10 Cushmans, 6 John Deere Gators,



Two new John Deere 1600 rough mowers in Raisch's maintenance building

**6 EZ-GO Workhorses**

**Verti-cut reels:** 6 for John Deere 2500 Triplex

**Aerifiers:** 2 John Deere 1500, 3 Ryan Greensaire 24

**Topdressers:** 1 Cushman

**Grooming reels:** 7 for John Deere 220A

**Tournament speed roller:** 3 Salsco

**Reel grinder:** 1 Foley Accupro

**Bedknife grinder:** 1 Foley

**Irrigation pump station:** 1200 GPM Flowtronex PSI

**Irrigation system:** Toro Osmac

**Golf car fleet:** 60 EZ-GO electric

**Flagsticks:** Par Aide 8' yellow

**Computer & accessories:**

Dell Inspiron 50,000 notebook, Palm Vx

**Primary herbicide:** Primo

**Primary insecticide:** Merit

**Primary fungicide:** Daconil Ultrex

**Primary slow release fertilizer:** Plant food 20-0-0

**One thing you could not live without:** My wife Susan and daughter Elly

**Oldest piece of equipment:** 1958 Ryan sodcutter

**Total square footage of maintenance building(s):** 19,200 square feet

**Annual rounds of golf:** 35,000

**Normal green speed:** 10'

Tom Prichard named superintendent at new Fazio course

NORTHBROOK, Ill. — Tom Prichard has been named superintendent of The Glen Club, an 18-hole layout in Glenview, Ill., being designed by golf architect Tom Fazio. The course is scheduled to open in July.

Prichard, who has been with KemperSports Management since 1991, has been managing the grow-in of The Glen Club since last August.

"Tom has an outstanding track record with our organization and is accomplished in all areas of turf grass maintenance and management," said Steve Lesnik, KemperSports CEO.

Two years after joining the company, Prichard was named superintendent for two of KemperSports' Chicago-area facilities: Royal Melbourne, the Greg Norman-designed private club in Long Grove, and the nine-hole Vernon Hills Golf Course. In 1998 he assumed additional responsibilities for the company as a regional agronomist providing consulting services to other KemperSports properties in the Midwest and West.

Before coming aboard at KemperSports, Prichard served as superintendent at Lakewood Golf Club and Woodstock 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.

## New Tricks for Our Trade

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## Northwest drought

Continued from page 1

NOAA acknowledged that a jet stream pattern, termed the "Omega block," 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 bulk 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 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 regarding 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, the tribes and the

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## N'west drought

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power utilities are attempting to work out now, to make sure that all needs are balanced and maintained as much as possible."

"It's not fair to us in the Northwest, when somebody wanting to turn on a hot tub in California does it without fear of paying increased costs," said Rep. Jennifer Dunn, R-Wash.

### 'DOMINO EFFECT'

As golf course superintendents in the Northwest fire up their irrigation systems full steam for the peak summer season, California superintendents are awaiting to see how their own operations will fare this season. The Bush administration has rejected the idea of placing price controls on wholesale electricity sold to western states.

"As far as Bush saying that

California can take care of their own problems, well, we can," said Ken Schwark, superintendent at the Roddy Ranch Golf Club in Antioch, Calif. "We have the money. But the thing is, people need to realize that if California goes under because of this energy crisis, so goes the rest of the nation." California is a vital part of this nation, he said, with its agriculture, business, technology, and even Hollywood. ■

## Bentgrass

Continued from page 17

GCSAA and NTEP. This research endeavor has set up test greens at 16 locations throughout the United States. There are eight test greens set up in cool-season locations that focus on bentgrass only. There are also eight other test green locations, which are set-up in warm-season/transition zone areas. Of

these eight, five areas include bentgrass test plots.

A total of 18 bentgrasses are included on each of these test putting greens. The greens are in use as practice putting greens, so they get some traffic. These greens are not used as part of play, so factors such as ballmarks are not evaluated. One of the main goals of this research is to compile regional data that will help in the selection process.

### TEST GREENS

What else can be done to select the proper bentgrass for your site? If you have time, set up your own test green. The best example I've seen was at the Vintage Club in Palm Springs, Calif.

In 1996, while I was in the process of bentgrass selection, I visited Doug Anderson, superintendent at the Vintage, to discuss his selection of Penn A-4. Doug had set up a test practice green and watched the performance of eight different bentgrasses over a one-year period, before making his final selection.

The advantages of building a test green are numerous. First, you get to watch it under your exact conditions. You also get to dictate the maintenance regimen. Things such as cutting height, watering practices, traffic, fertilization and topdressing can all be tailored to the desired level of turf quality. Also, you can evaluate the putting quality.

### OVER-WINTERING IN COLORADO

In my selection of Penn A-4, I was concerned with its ability to survive the tough winters in Vail, Colo. I ran my own winter survival test on two test plots, each 10 feet by 10 feet.

In the first test plot we shoveled all snow off throughout the winter as a desiccation test. On the second plot we poured on water and built an ice layer about 10 inches thick to test for ice-related injury.

The following spring we were able to evaluate how Penn A-4 would over-winter in our climate. With no turf setback that spring, this was the final piece to the puzzle in selecting this grass for our course.

With the greater popularity of these new bentgrasses, we now have many real-life experiences to examine. When I selected Penn A-4, there were only a half-dozen golf courses using it at the time.

The combination of the NTEP data, research greens, superintendents' experiences and some testing on your own can insure you of a proper bentgrass selection for your situation.

Kevin J. Ross is director of golf course management at the Country Club of the Rockies and a regular contributor to *Golf Course News*.



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