AVON, Colo. — Shane Nelson, superintendent here at the Beaver Creek Golf Club, came very close to spending his life mining for gold. Instead, he’s maintaining for golf.

Growing up in nearby Leadville, about 40 miles to the south of here, Nelson was to be a seventh-generation miner after studying industrial arts at a junior college in his hometown. His family had operated several gold and silver mines in the area for decades.

“After the metals crash of the early ’80s, I realized that a career change was in order,” Nelson said. “That’s when I came to work for Vail Resorts in 1984 as a snowcat operator in the winter. I also worked on a golf course during the summer for a few years.”

Nelson eventually took a full-time position at the course as a mechanic. Four years later, he was pulling double duty as the assistant superintendent and mechanic. In 1992, he was promoted to superintendent.

Nelson expanded his knowledge of turf from on-the-job training and attending GCSAA seminars at the national conferences. “All of the supers in the Vail Valley attend every year,” he said.

“IT'S A GREAT LEARNING EXPERIENCE FOR ME.”

LOYALTY

One of the greatest rewards for Nelson at Beaver Creek is the relationship he’s established with his staff. “I always credit my two assistants, Jerry Glissman and Bob Johnson,” he said. “They grew up on farms, and their common sense approach and work ethic are something that I couldn’t live without.

“It seems so uncommon in the profession today to have the kind of loyalty that I enjoy here,” said Nelson. “There are not many superintendents that can say that his first assistant has been with him for 17 years, his second assistant for 12 years, greenkeeper for 14 years, flower person for 18 years and so on like I can.”

E-SERIES OSMAC IRRIGATION SYSTEM

The Robert Trent Jones, Jr.-designed layout at Beaver Creek, opened in 1980.

“It’s 6,784 yards of fun golf,” said Nelson about the Rocky Mountain track. “The first three holes are as breathtaking as any in golf.”

Nelson and his team have been going all out this summer, installing Toro’s narrow fairways and elevated greens was originally designed by Jock Ingle in 1903. The course underwent a redesign by John Lafoy in 1987, and greens were changed from bentgrass to TifEagle Bermudagrass in 2000.

“Right now, we’re involved in improving the conditions of the course following our capital renovation project that was completed in the fall of 2000,” said general manager Bruce Szafran. A new irrigation system, pump house, and new cart paths were also installed.

UNDERNOURISHED TURF

IGM superintendent Paul Haines found turf conditions to be undernourished at the club and will be making agronomic adjustments. “We’re working to get the turf color and health up to provide a better playing surface and help create visual height dis-

MONTGOMERY, Ala. — International Golf Maintenance has entered into a maintenance agreement with The Montgomery Country Club here.

The private, Southern-style Montgomery layout with tree-lined fairways and elevated greens was originally designed by Jock Ingle in 1903. The course underwent a redesign by John Lafoy in 1987, and greens were changed from bentgrass to TifEagle Bermudagrass in 2000.

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