

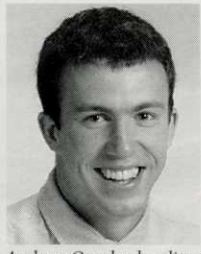
Irrigation system improvements a choice between brown and green

Brown is beautiful, but green pays. Those were the conflicting phrases facing golf course superintendents this summer as drought gripped much of the nation.

As water restrictions hit courses, difficult decisions ensued. Superintendents had to decide which parts of the course got water and which didn't, running the risk of alienating golfers who have come to expect wall-to-wall green. Of course, for many there was little choice in the matter. You either let your roughs and, in some cases, fairways go, or got slapped with fines.

Going into winter, much of the country has had some drought relief, but the effects of the dry spring and summer linger on as superintendents work to repair turf damage. However, in addition to focusing on turf recovery, industry experts say now is the perfect time to analyze irrigation systems to see how they could better perform against future drought conditions.

In this month's issue, on page 8, irrigation consultant David D. Davis outlines how superintendents can evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of their irrigation systems. He discusses what steps can be taken to make the system perform



Andrew Overbeck, editor

better under drought and other stress conditions.

The steps that may need to be taken to improve the irrigation systems range from adjusting sprinkler spacing, to replacing nozzles, to tuning-up pump stations. Davis' ideal drought-resistant system includes valve-in-head sprinklers, a weather station, a state-of-the-art central control system and field controllers and properly-sized mainlines to improve pressure control.

Davis also suggests using GPS maps to improve calculation of surface areas to maximize the efficiency of each irrigation cycle. With the introduction of LandLogic, GPS mapping technology has become, by all accounts, easier to use and more affordable. See that story on page 1.

According to the *Golf Course News* Poll (see page 8) many superintendents are already heeding the above advice and are updating their irrigation systems. Of those surveyed, 35.4 percent are planning an upgrade.

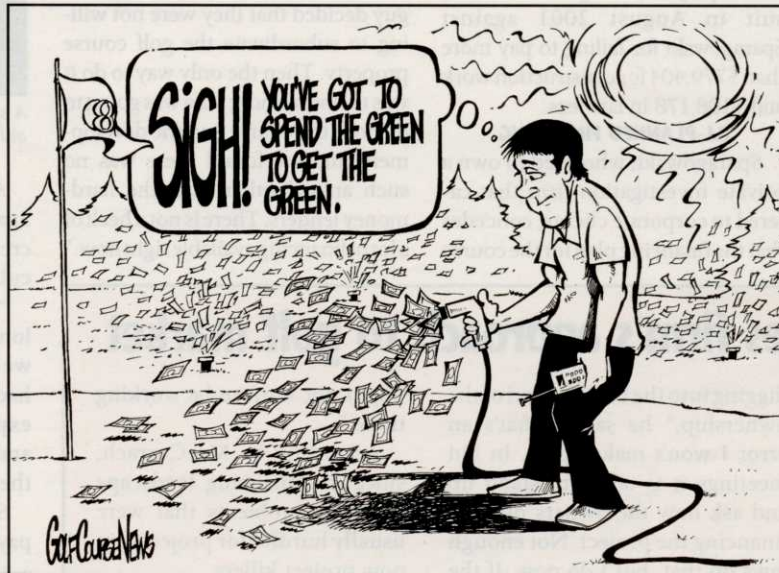
However, many are asking, "What good is a new, efficient irrigation system if I'm not allowed to use it?"

This year, courses in some areas of country were nearly cut off from irrigation altogether.

In Greensboro, N.C., the city water manager proposed cutting golf courses back to hand-watering only. After careful lobbying, local superintendents were able to convince the city water manager to institute a decidedly more measured approach. In the first stage of the restrictions, Greensboro

April 2002).

Going forward, constant vigilance will be required to keep water use restrictions from hurting the industry. However, it should be easy for courses to justify whatever investment is needed to upgrade and improve their irrigation systems now. The more efficient your system is, the less brown turf your course will have to endure when the next drought inevitably hits, keeping golfers happy



courses were allowed use 60 percent of last year's recorded amount on a month-to-month basis.

Superintendents fought and won similar battles in New Jersey and Pennsylvania this year (GCN

and your job secure.

As Davis said in his article, improved irrigation efficiency reduces operating costs, improves playability and "reduces the stress on superintendents."

POINT

Municipal golf still plays an important role in game's growth

By DAMIAN PASCUZZO, ASGCA

A friend of mine, Les Claytor, wrote a terrific master's thesis titled "The Evolution of the American Municipal Golf Course: 1895-1940." It is fascinating reading, as Les chronicles the development of the country's first public golf course, Van Courtland Park in New York, in 1895. The initial success of this nine-hole Bronx-based course encouraged the city of Boston to follow a year later with the creation of Franklin Park Golf Course. Other cities around the country were not far behind in building their own nine- or 18-hole golf courses.

Claytor's research documents how, despite primitive conditions, these courses thrived. Often people would line up for hours waiting for their turn at the first tee. By all accounts, a great many people learned to play the game on the early municipal layouts and it would be logical to assume that a fair number of these players went on to join private clubs or patronize resort courses during their vacations, all of which contributed to the growth of the game.

The early impact of municipal golf on American parks and the people who used them was best stated by a park official who in a 1927 New York Times article claimed, "I know of no enterprise of similar character that has afforded so much recreation and pleasure to so large a number of people."

It's been more than 100 years since the creation of Van Courtland Park and I have to wonder, how much has changed in a century?

Certainly we have seen golf continue to grow through the decades to the point that we have around 22 to 25 million participants. But, have we provided for everyone?

Recent research out of the Golf 20/20 initiative indicates that there



Damian Pascuzzo

Continued on next page

COUNTERPOINT

The time and need for municipal golf has come and gone

By JAY KAREN

About three years ago, an angry course owner and National Golf Course Owners Association member called asking for help fighting a proposed municipal golf course in his market. Being relatively green on the issue at the time, I asked him why he was so irate about this issue.

On the surface, it seemed to me that an owner just didn't want new competition dipping into his market share. I quickly learned there was much more to it than sour grapes. He asked me, "If you owned a bowling alley and the city opened a new bowling alley across the street, and they charged half what you charged and didn't have to pay taxes, how would that make you feel?" Good point. He went on, "Now, how would you feel if there are 10 other bowling alleys like yours in the same market (keeping in mind that the number of bowlers has remained about the same for the past five years) and the taxes you pay are subsidizing your competition?" Another good point.

There was a time in the golf industry when municipal golf courses were extremely valuable for the purpose of introducing the game to new players in an affordable fashion. While there may be small pockets in nooks and crannies around the country where municipal golf is the only incubator for new golfers, the time and need for government golf has generally come and gone.

The construction boom of daily-fee golf courses during the last quarter of the 20th century has essentially supplanted the need for municipal golf. When the free enterprise system provides ample supply of a particular desire or need, the government should take itself out of the equation. Instead, we find that cities, counties and states are building facilities as ways to fill the municipal coffers. Or worse yet,



Jay Karen

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GOLF COURSE NEWS

THE BUSINESS NEWSPAPER FOR THE GOLF COURSE INDUSTRY
www.golfcoursenews.com

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