Ten years later, Squaw Creek still largely chemical-free

BY DOUG SAUNDERS

OLYMPIC VALLEY, Calif. — When the Resort at Squaw Creek opened in 1992, it was hailed as one of the first largely chemical-free golf courses in the country. The course was built during an era when golf courses were under intense scrutiny and suspicion as being toxic polluters, and these concerns around golf development in California to a standstill.

The Resort at Squaw Creek became a test course for new ideas to control the use of chemical applications as well as promote new course management techniques. To obtain final approval, the developers and governing agencies attempted by compiling a Chemical Application Management Plan (CHAMP) that spelled out a specific turf management program for the golf course to follow. Today the course still functions under these restrictive policies under the direction of superintendent Mike Carlson, who is only the second superintendent to care for this mountain course.

"I had very good knowledge of the course as I profiled its strict environmental policy and approach in my master's thesis at the University of Wisconsin. The last seven years have been very challenging, but also very rewarding," said Carlson, who came to the course in 1993 from Butler.

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Editorial Focus: Winter Preparation

East Coast courses face winter prep challenges

BY KATHY ANTAYA, CGCS

Maintenance activities on golf courses throughout the Northeast and parts of the Mid-Atlantic states this fall will be doubly focused on recovery from summer stresses and preparations for winter survival.

The extended drought (with attendant water restrictions) and high disease incidence this summer have dramatically increased the need for regrassing and turf recovery work. Unfortunately, many municipalities face continued water-use restrictions. Without regular fall rains, these ongoing irrigation limitations will compromise superintendents' efforts to recover turf density and quality.

Alternative agronomic strategies, flexible plans, and good communication with course officials will be needed to accomplish crucial winter prep chores. Some drastic measures may be necessary, some work will have to wait and compromise will be key.

BEATING THE DROUGHT

Although drought restrictions vary by locality, some regulations provide for supplemental irrigation and, in some cases, the use of recycled water.

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If you can't beat Poa annua, imitate it

BY KEVIN J. ROSS, CGCS

Successful sports teams analyze the strength of their opponents and make adjustments to eliminate or minimize that strength. In turfgrass management, we also use that philosophy. We look at diseases and the strength of their opponents and make adjustments to eliminate or minimize that strength.

Poa annua, however, has a primary disease that makes it very difficult to eliminate or minimize. In this case, we need to think outside the box and imitate it.

What makes Poa successful is its amazing ability to produce seed, even at extremely low heights of cut. Bentgrass does not possess the ability to seed at the desired heights of cut used in golf course management. But what if it did have the ability to seed? Would this ability make it more competitive against Poa annua? It seems logical that it would.

Then again, the seeding of Poa annua is also a drawback when it comes to consistent putting surfaces. It makes sense then not to breed bentgrass to have the ability to seed at low heights of cut.

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Air Boom sprayer
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the largest tomato farmers on the East Coast," said Marohn. "When I saw what one of these sprayers could do, I contacted Dale Schaal and asked if he could develop one for use on turf."

The Air Boom turf unit has 14- to 18-foot spray booms and features a low-volume five- to 50-gallon tanks. As the chemicals are sprayed they are positively charged with copper ions to improve efficacy and aid in keeping the tank, nozzles and lines clean.

Air Tech manufactures a trailer type, three-point hitch for tractors and a skid mount unit for utility vehicles. A 24-hp Honda engine powers the utility vehicle unit. The Air Boom retails for around $23,000, although Marohn is cutting deals to get more units in the market.

LESS IS MORE
"The unit is twice as expensive as conventional sprayers, but it will save you 40 to 50 percent in reduction of chemicals and labor," Marohn said. "You can fill up one tank and do seven acres, and it is designed to spray from one to 10 miles per hour."

Superintendent Fred Biggers at the 27-hole Wintergreen Resort in Wintergreen, Va., started using an Air Tech Air Boom on his course this year.

"I have nine holes that are all bentgrass," said Biggers. "We used to stretch fungicide spraying intervals to three weeks, but I'd get hammered in the third week. Now I have tightened that to two-week intervals at half rates and I have gotten wonderful control."

Biggers especially likes the speed.
"It has been easy to mix because it is low-volume and uses less water," he said. "We can go five miles an hour and spray fairways in five minutes. Spraying is a pain and you need to get out there before the golfers get out there. The faster you can do it the better."

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