

# GOLF COURSE NEWS

THE BUSINESS NEWSPAPER FOR THE GOLF COURSE INDUSTRY

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## Velocity kills Poa dead

By ANDREW OVERBECK

EAST LANSING, Mich. — Managing Poa annua has traditionally been an inexact science, but researchers here at Michigan State University (MSU) along with chemical maker Valent USA, said they have discovered a postemergent herbicide that controls Poa and certain broadleaf weeds in bentgrass and ryegrass fairway turf.

"Velocity controls Poa," said Jason Fausey, field market development specialist for Valent. "We are used to managing it, so this is a different approach."

Valent acquired rights to Velocity in the turf and ornamental market from Kumiai Chemical. The Japanese chemical maker has rights to the agricultural market where the herbicide is currently registered for use on rice to control barnyard grass. Velocity's active ingredient, bispyribac-sodium, inhibits the enzyme acetolactate synthase, which plants require to produce three key amino acids.

Valent submitted its approval package for Velocity to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in April. Company officials said

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## Management cos. buck bum economy



The slumping economy has helped ClubCorp, which owns Pinehurst No. 2 (pictured above), focus on lowering overhead costs.

By DEREK RICE

With rounds played numbers down, revenues flat and an economy suffering through ups and downs, there is little doubt that now is a difficult time to be a golf course owner or operator.

For management companies, the challenge of staying afloat is multiplied by the number of properties they either own or operate, each of which comes with its own set of issues and competition in a particular market.

Perhaps surprisingly, many management companies are not

only surviving this economy, but they are actually thriving. The reasons for this are as varied as the companies themselves, but it would seem that a down time is a good time to be in the management business.

John Beckert, president and chief operating officer for Dallas-based ClubCorp, said his company has been able to hold its own for a number of reasons, including the sheer size and scope of its portfolio.

"One of our biggest advantages as a management company is our

size," he said. "Because we have almost 200 other golf and business clubs and three marquee resorts, when we go in and associate with a new club on a

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## Editorial Focus: Utility Vehicles

### Competition expands utility vehicle choices

By ANDREW OVERBECK

With new players on the scene and a bevy of new product introductions slated for the next six to 12 months, competition is heating up among utility vehicle manufacturers. Never before have superintendents had this many utility vehicles to choose from.

Yamaha Golf Car, E-Z-GO and Jacobsen all have new utility vehicles coming out this summer, and both John Deere and Kubota will unveil plans for new vehicles this fall. Toro said it will add an electric version of its Workhorse

utility vehicle line in early 2004.

This spring, Club Car introduced the Carryall 272XL, Lesco rolled out its first utility vehicle and Polaris came to market with an entry-level product to fill out its line.

#### YAMAHA'S NEW LINE

A year after opening its \$31 million manufacturing facility, Yamaha Golf Car (YGC) is set to introduce a new lineup of utility vehicles June 7. In a move to bring



A spy photo of Yamaha Golf Car's new utility vehicle

a consistent look across all  
Continued on page 19

## The First Tee shows major gains in '02

By DEREK RICE

ST. AUGUSTINE, Fla. — In its fifth annual review, distributed in late April, The First Tee reported revenue of more than \$6.8 million in 2002.

The unaudited review reports that 52 percent of the organization's revenue came from oversight organizations, 42 percent from fundraising and 6 percent from sponsorship. After factoring in expenditures, the organization ended up with a cash surplus of nearly \$400,000, bringing its total cash on hand to nearly \$6.7 million.

The numbers seem to support what The First Tee

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## POINT

Jim Koppenhaver of Pellucid and M.G. Orender of the PGA of America weigh in on strategies to grow golf.

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## COUNTERPOINT



## Valent's Velocity to offer courses Poa control

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Velocity's low use rates, favorable toxicology profile and the fact that it is already approved for use in other markets should speed the EPA approval process.

Velocity is approved for use under special local needs in

Georgia, Florida and South Carolina to control *Poa annua* in overseeded ryegrass fairways. A special local needs label for Michigan is currently pending.

Velocity has a wide application use since most courses across the country view *Poa annua* as a nuisance.

"Bentgrass and ryegrass are very tolerant overall," Fausey said. "There is some potential for slight discoloration, but what we have seen is very slight."

*Poa annua*, on the other hand, is not tolerant at all. Growth usually stops three to seven days after treatment and *Poa annua*



MSU's Ron Calhoun (second from left) gives researchers a tour of test plots

Photo: Andrew Overbeck

turns yellow or brown within three to 14 days after treatment. It dies approximately 21 to 28 days following treatment.

### SOBER ASSESSMENT REQUIRED

Since Velocity effectively eliminates *Poa annua*, leaving bare earth behind, application rates and timing will depend on the goals of each individual course.

"A sober assessment of *Poa* populations is required," said MSU research specialist Ronald Calhoun. "On the label it should say 'Caution: this will work.'"

Initially, Velocity will be labeled for fairway use between June 1 and Sept. 1. For courses with a high percentage of *Poa annua*, Calhoun said two applications at a rate of 30 grams on Aug. 15 and Sept. 1 would be the best fit for most courses trying to control *Poa annua* in their bentgrass fairways. A late-season application allows for reseeded bentgrass at a time when the level of play is lower.

According to Fausey, a new course that has 5 percent *Poa annua* can take more of a maintenance approach.

"A new course could go in with a higher rate at one to two applications a year and control *Poa*," he said. "The percentage of turf that is removed will be filled in quickly so it won't be as noticeable."

### RESEARCH ON GREENS APPLICATIONS ONGOING

Calhoun and Fausey are continuing research on how best to use Velocity on greens.

"We are taking more of a transition approach," said Fausey. "We have had good results with low rate applications through the summer months and we are getting 50 to 60 percent control in the following year. But we need to do more research to get more comfortable with greens use."

In addition to working on plots at MSU, Calhoun has been doing work with area golf courses to get a better sense of how effective Velocity is under the daily stress of traffic and compaction.

Research work on postemergent goose grass control and crabgrass control is also continuing. ■

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