

MAINTENANCE



BRIEFS

SHIELDS JOINS WESTON HILLS

SAN DIEGO — Heritage Golf Group has named Tighue Shields superintendent of Weston Hills Country Club in Weston, Fla. The club, featuring two 18-hole golf courses designed by Robert Trent Jones Jr., has hosted several major golf tournaments. Shields brings more than 28 years of golf course maintenance and management experience to Weston Hills and most recently was vice president of golf management operations with Starwood Hotels and Resorts Worldwide.

JACOBSEN OFFERS CREDIT CARDS

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Jacobsen has introduced an exclusive revolving credit card program developed jointly with Conseco Finance. The private-label Jacobsen credit cards will be available to superintendents through authorized Jacobsen dealers. The credit cards can be used to purchase Jacobsen, Cushman and Ryan equipment, parts, accessories, service and extended warranties on new equipment purchases.

CONDON MOVES TO THE DUKE

MARICOPA, Ariz. — OB Sports has named Chris Condon golf course superintendent for The Duke at Rancho El Dorado. The David Druzisky-designed layout opened Jan. 31. Condon joins The Duke after more than nine years of experience at a variety of golf clubs. He has worked for OB Sports at The Reserve Vineyards & GC in Aloha, Ore., and Ironwood CC in Palm Desert, Calif.

IGM ON BOARD AT DATE PALM

CHAMPIONSGATE, Fla. — International Golf Maintenance (IGM) has signed a maintenance agreement with Date Palm Country Club in Cathedral City, Calif. IGM inherited the incumbent golf course maintenance staff, including Bobby Reyes, superintendent at the course for the past 12 years. Date Palm is an 18-hole, semi-private executive course designed by Ted Robinson.

Drought could threaten Colorado courses in '03

By ANDREW OVERBECK

DENVER, Colo. — Much of Colorado and the Mountain West remains in the grips of an extreme drought that some scientists say is the worst in 350 years.

Drought began hammering the area last summer, causing widespread water restrictions and has shown no sign of letting up this winter. While storms finally hit Denver in February, the area received no measurable precipitation in December and January.

Four City of Denver courses, which usually stay open throughout the winter, have closed due to the dry conditions. Other courses across the region that usually stay open have had to restrict golf cars to roughs and paths or ban them altogether. Courses on the Front Range that traditionally close because of snow cover stayed open longer than ever this year because winter weather did not arrive.

'JUST HOPING TO BE IN BUSINESS'

While the warmer and drier than normal winter is damaging now, many superintendents are increasingly concerned about the impending

water shortages and restrictions that could severely impact the upcoming golf season.

Since many courses get water from irrigation canals that run out of the mountains, concern is justified. According to recent reports, snowpack is at about 75 percent of normal and would need to be 125 percent to 150 percent of normal in order to fully replenish the depleted reservoirs.

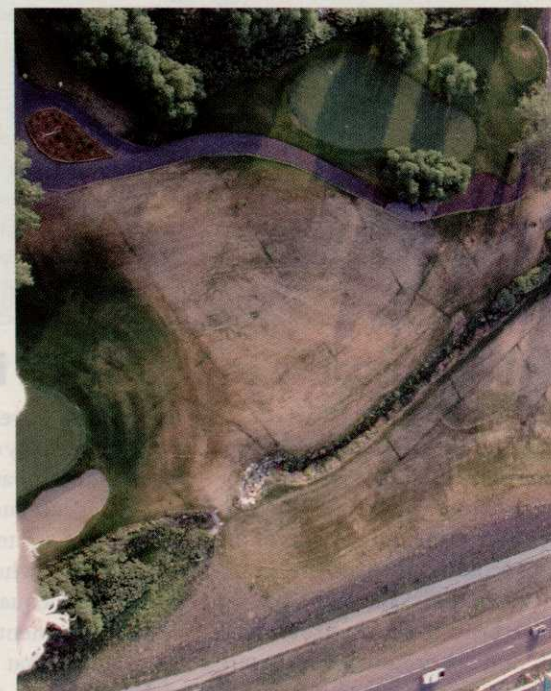
"One hundred percent of our water comes from irrigation ditches," said Lee Terry, superintendent at Pinehurst Country Club in Denver. "Right now it is running 20 to 30 percent of normal and last year it was dry by the fifth of June.

"I have enough water in my lakes to irrigate the golf course twice, but that's it. I have to wait until they turn the ditches back on or make a special arrangement to get them turned on early," he added. "We are just hoping to be

in business at the end of the year."

Wellshire Golf Course is the only 18-hole course run by the City of Denver that is still open.

"We have a well and a 15-acre lake that collects stormwater from streets and a surrounding housing development," said superintendent Gregg Blew. "Without that I would be shut down just like all the other city courses. They had to close because they use potable



Deer Creek closed Dec. 16 and is looking for new water sources.

water and were restricted to irrigating tees and greens."

Continued on page 8

Rocky Mountain GCSA to hold drought seminar

LITTLETON, Colo. — The Rocky Mountain GCSA will host a drought seminar during the USGA Green Section's regional conference here March 25 at Lakewood Country Club.

Superintendent Gregg Blew, immediate past president of the Rocky Mountain GCSA, is putting together the program that will feature numerous speakers and water experts. USGA regional agronomist Matt Nelson will start the

session off by discussing proper cultural practices to use during drought conditions. Officials from the Denver Water Board will address ground water rights and surface water rights, and another speaker will cover conservation measures and future water restrictions.

For more information, contact Gregg Blew at 303-692-5635.

— Andrew Overbeck

True North first Silver Signature course in Mich.

HARBOR SPRINGS, Mich. — True North Golf Club is the first golf course in Michigan to become a member of Audubon International's Silver Signature program.

True North founders Jeff Brown and Brad McGinnis hope enrollment in the Audubon International program will underscore the club's commitment to environmental excellence.

"Every new venture in northern Michigan needs to consider water and ecological issues," said Brown. "Our association with Audubon International will allow us to make the best use of our natural resources while preserving their sanctity."

When completed, True North will consist of a championship golf course designed by Jim Engh, a practice facility, a clubhouse and 72 single-family home sites.

Courses now have to compete for interns

By KEVIN J. ROSS

It wasn't long ago that the hiring process for turfgrass student interns was a relatively easy task. However, with more and more clubs developing internship programs the demand for interns is at an all-time high. What was easy in the past now has turned into an all out recruitment war.

Today, many clubs are battling each other for the top interns in the country. Recruitment used to involve interns coming to the clubs. Now, more and more clubs are visiting colleges and universities to interview interns.

How has competition come



As the job board at Iowa State shows, the competition for interns is hot.

of workers they couldn't find. Even though the present economy has softened and there are more workers available, clubs recognized the benefits of turfgrass interns and have kept their programs intact. This has led to an amazing demand for students. The top turfgrass universities in the United States

estimate that 400 to 500 internship announcements are received and posted by the schools each year.

With high demand, students have many more options available. Many have also realized that

Continued on page 20

Colo. supers search for drought solutions

Continued from page 6

Restrictions have been in place since July when Denver Water mandated a 30 percent reduction and subsequently restricted irrigation to greens and tees only on Sept. 1. The other city courses will remain closed until March 1 when the city will re-evaluate the drought situation. Blew is preparing for the worst.

"If we don't get a good snow," he said, "we will be starting with greens and tees only in the spring. It will take a lot of moisture to heal those cracks in the fairways. Some of them are so wide you can lose a ball in them."

SEARCHING FOR SOLUTIONS

Terry and other area superintendents have already formulated plans to deal with the continuing drought.

"Our problems started back in 2000 when we had to use water rights to pull water out of reservoirs that were miles away in order to irrigate the course in the summertime," said Terry. "We bought more water rights three years ago, got well drilling permits and put in a new irrigation system so that we can reduce consumption. We also eliminated ryegrass overseeding in favor of bluegrass because it is more drought-resistant. And we improved our cultural practices. That is about all we can do."

Terry said the course is in the process of drilling another well, and he expects to have more water available than he did last year as long as the state does not revoke the course's water rights.

Other courses are busily working to piece together more reliable and consistent sources of water.

Dan Hawkins, superintendent at The Ridge at Castle Pines in Littleton, is hopeful that the development's effluent system will be up and running by spring. The course, which will eventually be surrounded by 2,900 homes, was originally designed to use effluent.

"We have been on wells and city water," he said. "Water in this area is becoming a scarce resource. You need to have another means of water versus wells or canal water from the mountains. We are supposed to go on effluent in May because there are enough homes now where we can get good flow."

Dennis Lyon, who oversees the City of Aurora's seven courses, is drilling more wells, converting courses to effluent water and buying more water rights to ensure a steady irrigation source this season.

"The drought in Aurora has been very bad. We have had three inches of snow this winter," he said. "Three of our courses, however, are on reclaimed waste water and we don't use potable water on any of them. The others are tied into the water storage system, so we are in a holding pattern on those.

One of them is having a well drilled, another will be on reclaimed waste by May 1 and another is working on improving water rights. It is a tough situation but I think we will be in good shape this season."

One situation is so dire, however, that corralling the necessary water will require renovation work. Deer Creek Golf Club in Littleton was forced to close

Dec. 16 because of it had insufficient water storage. The owners are considering a redesign of the four-year-old Scott Miller-designed layout to improve both irrigation efficiency and water storage capacity.

According to former Deer Creek superintendent Scott Phelps, the course got slammed earlier than most last year.

"We were irrigating greens and

tees in May," he said. "By the middle of July we were completely dead, there was nothing left."

Phelps has since moved to Arrowhead Golf Club in Littleton, but is not any more optimistic about the upcoming season.

"All of us are going to be faced with same [drought] situation this summer," he said. "It is hard to say if any place in the state is better off than any other." ■



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