

# 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.

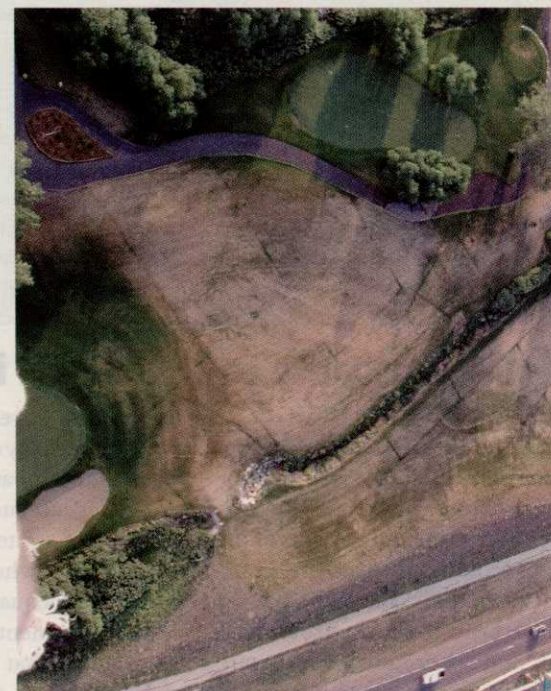
"One hundred percent of our water comes from irrigation ditches," said Lee Terry, superintendent at Pinehurst Country Club in Denver. "Right now it is running 20 to 30 percent of normal and last year it was dry by the fifth of June.

"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."

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## 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

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## Roundup Ready bentgrass forges ahead

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turfgrass.

None of these issues, however, seem to phase officials from Scotts and Monsanto.

The companies are moving forward with plans to produce Roundup Ready turfgrass seed at their 11,000-acre control area in Oregon this summer. Dr. Bob Harriman, vice president of biotechnology for Scotts, said the possibility of gene escape is narrow because of its extensive stewardship plan.

"What we are doing is good sound stewardship," said Harriman. "We have gotten permission from the Oregon Department of Agriculture to have a dedicated biotech area and we have notifications in place with USDA's Animal Plant and Health Inspection Service (APHIS) that it will go to flower and seed. We are bringing it through this process to demonstrate the process will work and with low risk."

According to Rose, the risk is still too great because pollen from the

control area could spread and contaminate other fields.

"If they don't mow that production field this summer it will contaminate the whole production area," he said. "It is unavoidable."

However, Harriman not only doesn't see an advantage to male-sterile varieties, he also said the possibility of gene escape due to pollen drift is nearly impossible.

"Gene escape in male-sterile varieties is still possible because you still have fertility, gene flow and sexuality in half the system. It doesn't make it an ounce safer," he said. "[If pollen contamination] was the case, then you would have to assume that every variety of Penn A4 and Penncross that has been produced is not worth anything. If people are still selling certified seed, I don't see how you have your cake and eat it too."

When it comes to certain weeds becoming resistant to Roundup, Monsanto officials said the problem was limited, especially as it

relates to use on golf courses.

"What you have seen is a pocket of isolated resistance to one or two difficult-to-control, agricultural weeds," said Monsanto spokesman Brian Hurley. "The golf landscape is quite different. The weeds on courses are not as difficult to control and the practice of weed control is different. Golf courses kill weeds when they are young and easier to control."

According to Harriman, the lawsuit filed by ICTA is also unlikely to cause any problems.

"The merit of their lawsuit is that bentgrass is a noxious weed," he said. "But it is not a noxious weed, it provides plenty of benefits and it is not on any weed labels for corn or soybeans or any other row crop."

Going forward, Harriman said Scotts and Monsanto will resubmit their application for approval to APHIS this spring. Rose and HybriGene are pushing ahead as well and plan to apply for an APHIS permit to grow male-sterile glyphosate tolerant plants in field trials. ■

## Intern competition

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their internship(s) is the first true stepping-stone toward their future marketability as an assistant. There have also been many horror stories exchanged through the years concerning internships at various clubs. Interns want internships that offer a strong educational opportunity. Clubs that have the reputation among students as offering the "Weedeater Intern Program," whereby interns run a weed trimmer all day and don't learn anything, are avoided by students.

As the recruitment process continues to be difficult, clubs have had to up the benefits. Hourly wages for interns have increased drastically from \$8 to \$9 an hour to \$10 to \$12 an hour. Along with the wage increase, clubs have started providing housing and other perks, such as food allowances/meals, performance bonuses, scholarships, uniforms, golf shop discounts and travel/moving assistance to lure interns.

The old style of advertising has also been shown the door. A single-page job announcement on plain paper doesn't draw much interest these days. This is obvious when looking at the placement boards of major turf universities. Videotapes, CD-ROMs and colored brochures that describe intern programs have rapidly replaced the basic one-page announcement sheet.

Some clubs don't even send advertising anymore, they make personal recruiting visits to the universities to promote their program and conduct interviews. This year Dr. Nick Christians of Iowa State University said nearly a dozen superintendents have made recruiting trips.

It appears recruiting process will only become more difficult and superintendents will have to develop and promote a top-notch internship program to lure students. It will also require more thought in the recruitment process. The days of sending a one-page announcement that would guarantee the number of interns you needed are long gone. ■



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