Golftech develops greens usability mapping system

By Andrew Overbeck
CANTON, Ohio — Golftech has developed a greens analysis mapping system that helps courses determine the usability of their putting surfaces. The high-tech maps use GPS and robotic technology to quantify the relationship between slope and speed on a given green. The process identifies what percentage of the green can be used for hole locations.

The system, which has been evaluated by the USGA and used by several courses including Oakmont (Pa.) Country Club and Baltimore (Md.) Country Club, is particularly useful for helping older courses with contoured greens deal with increased green speeds.

"This is high-tech meets hole locations," said Golftech principal Steve Hatfield. "Courses can find more hole locations and then we give them a map that shows hole locations as a percentage of greens area."

The accurate maps are a result of Golftech's wheeled robotic total station, which collects data every foot.

"At the second hole at Oakmont, we found that less than two percent of the green was playable," said Hatfield.

"Once the USGA takes away the 12-foot inside perimeter on a green, they have less than one-half of a percent of the green that is usable for hole locations. They have three options: play it and deal with the consequences, or revitalize the green or slow it down."

While no action was taken as a result of the test at Oakmont, the technology has been embraced at Baltimore CC, where architect Keith Foster and builder McDonald and Sons used it to scale back slopes on three greens without altering their original character.

"We had three greens that had severe slopes where we didn't have any pin spots," said superintendent Tim Kennedy about the 1926 A.W. Tillinghast-designed layout. "We had 9,000 square-foot greens that only had Continued on page 25

Eastman adds new hover model, wheeled mowers

By Andrew Overbeck
PORTLAND, Maine — Eastman Industries has expanded on its Hover Mower product line and made its first entry into the wheeled mower category with two new models.

The company has been a strong player in the floating mower market since being bought in 1999 by local businessman and former nuclear engineer Nicholas Nikazmerd. At that time, the company was known as Grass Craft, but Nikazmerd re-engineered the mowers and changed the name to Hover Mower.

"We started from new," said Nikazmerd.

"We redesigned the deck and impeller. About the only thing we didn't modify was the engine mount."

There are now three Hover Mower models, the newest being the model HM 19H4 that features a 5.5-hp 4-cylinder Honda engine and a 19-inch deck.

"This engine was specifically engineered for Continued on next page