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Off The Fringe

Testing, Testing, Testing

A BEHIND-THE-SCENES LOOK
AT HOW CLUB CAR PUTS ITS
VEHICLES THROUGH THE RIGORS
OF THE REAL WORLD

By Larry Aylward, Editor in Chief

In a section of scenic woods, tucked
behind Club Car Inc.'s headquarters in Augusta, Ga., is a test track. It's where Club Car's creations, from utility vehicles to golf cars, go to find out if they'll make it in this wicked world of bumps and pot holes.

Phil Hines, a Club Car test specialist, helps with the evaluation procedures. It's Hines' job, so to speak, to put the vehicles through the wringer to make sure they can handle the rigors of the golf course under real-life conditions.

In essence, the test track is more like an obstacle course. It's marked with a variety of obstructions to see what the vehicles are made of, literally. There are steep slopes, brutal bumps and pitiless puddles. Often, it's Hines driving the vehicles through the stumbling blocks.

Get this: Hines says he and other test specialists put the vehicles through 10 years of life in about four weeks.

"We do two types of testing to investigate the stability," says Hines, who has worked at Club Car for about 10 years. "One test is called static stability, where we put a vehicle on the table and tilt it to find the angle where it becomes unstable. The other test is called dynamic stability testing, where we actually drive the vehicle and explore the rigors of the handling. We'll drive it and put it in conditions that no customer should ever have to do. And we'll discover what will happen when we push the vehicle further than it should be pushed."

Hines spends about half his time driving a vehicle and listening for bumps, squeaks and rattles.

"I note anything that might indicate there's an issue with the car, and then I investigate it," he says.

If the job sounds fun, it is for the most part. The best days are, no surprise here, when projects go smoothly.

"We have long hours and long days," Hines says. "But when we get to the end of a project and have a successful launch and then get rave reviews from our customers, it makes it all worthwhile."

Happy driving.

Tales from Augusta

WHAT SOME GOLF FANS WILL DO
TO SECURE A MEMORY OF THE MASTERS

By Larry Aylward, Editor in Chief

The Masters Tournament, won by Phil Mickelson in April inside the ropes, is not without its stories outside of the ropes.

Bill Bryant, president of Bryant Marketing Communications, a golf industry communications firm in Alpharetta, Ga., says he was walking out the gate at Augusta National Golf Club after the Par-3 Contest on Wednesday of the week and he casually tossed his $36 admittance badge in a trash bin.

"A couple of seconds later, a guy asked if he could have the badge," Bryant says. "He said he just wanted to get in for a few minutes to see the course. It didn't seem to matter to him that the big course was closed and the day's play on the par-3 course was nearly completed."

Bryant told the man he just tossed his badge in the trash but that the man could have it if he wanted to fish it out of the trash. "As I made my way to the parking lot, I looked over my shoulder to see the guy fishing around in the trash bin," Bryant says. "That reminded me how revered Augusta National is and what a special spot it holds in the hearts and minds of so many people."

Chuck Calhoun, superintendent of John's Island Club in Vero Beach, Calif., offers this story of a fan starstruck by PGA player John Daly. Or maybe the fan was just looking to make some money.

As Calhoun was waiting at the crosswalk in front of the No. 7 tee on Friday morning during the tournament, Daly and his group had just teed off and were walking down in front of the tee.

"Daly throws his cigarette butt down on the ground right on the edge of the crosswalk," Calhoun says. "Well, as soon as the gallery men opened the ropes, this guy runs over and snags Daly's butt and sticks it in his pocket. I haven't checked yet, but it's probably on e-bay by now."
Warm-Weather Spurge, knotweed and clover are no match for the power of new Surge® Broadleaf Herbicide For Turf. Energized with sulfentrazone, Surge has the power and speed to knock out tough broadleaf weeds fast. And it even suppresses yellow nutsedge!

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Always read and follow label directions.
Continued from page 10 didn’t used to get those (phone calls),” he said.

Less toxic pesticides and changing irrigation practices have created a more favorable environment for earthworms, which is good and bad, according to Brandenburg. “It’s good to know that we’ve kind of restored the balance in what we’re doing ecologically,” he says. “But the bad news is that you get a lot of earthworms on the putting green.”

**Moles:** The plenitude of earthworms has led to an upswing in moles. “For years and years you probably heard the message, ‘If you have moles, you have white grubs. You get rid of the white grubs, you get rid of the moles,’” Brandenburg said. “That’s not necessarily true. If you catch one of those furry, little fellows and cut it open, you’ll find that their stomachs are full of earthworms.”

**Ants:** Fire ant products work particularly well, Brandenburg says, but they’re only available where fire ants are widespread.

The dilemma in trying to eradicate ants is that many superintendents spray their putting greens, which solves the problem on a temporary basis. “The little mounds will go away for a day or two and then come right back on you,” Brandenburg says. “That’s primarily because most of the ant colonies are outside of the putting surface itself, and they send these scouts out that pop up (on the green).”

**Rove beetles:** The good news is that this insect feeds on cutworm eggs. But they still litter the course.

**Striped earwigs:** The tropical version of the earwig thrives on greens while feeding on cutworms and other bugs.

Striped earwigs dig a foot-long hole straight into the ground — you could slide a pencil into the opening — and push the soil up. Compounding the problem, birds arrive on the scene to eat the earwigs and wind up tearing up the greens. “I haven’t figured out exactly what to do with these yet,” Brandenburg says. “We’ve tried treating them with everything that’s labeled for cutworm control, and it doesn’t seem to affect them very much.”

In order to combat these insects, superintendents need to know the best time to impact a population. This revolves around knowing the life cycles of pests, Brandenburg says. For instance, he says, once grubs and mole crickets become big, they’re difficult to kill.

On the bright side for South Carolina-based superintendents, Clemson University could soon boast its own professor of entomology, Brandenburg said.

Two Clemson University professors, Bruce Martin and Bert McCarty, spoke on transition issues at the Bayer seminar.

Martin, a plant pathologist, said the same diseases that affect bermudagrass in a normal scenario affect the turf variety in the transition zones. The conditions include dollar spot, yellow patch, brown patch and fairy ring. Another disease, Rhizoctonia leaf and sheath spot, is troublesome because its symptoms closely resemble fairy ring.

The quandary general to all transition-zone diseases is what occurs when fungicide treatment is involved.

“If we’re spraying fungicides in the spring on our overseedings, what is that doing to the health of our overseedings as we’re trying to transition later on?” Martin says. “Aren’t we strengthening our overseedings and making it more competitive when we really want to be weakening and to get the bermudagrass [to take] off?”

McCarty, a professor of horticulture specializing in turfgrass science and management, spoke of the appropriate time to remove ryegrass during the transition process to bermudagrass. The latter requires night-time temperatures of at least the mid- to upper-60s to aggressively grow laterally, he said.

“It can be 80 degrees (Fahrenheit) during the day, but if it drops into the 50s at night, it won’t grow,” McCarty says. “Bermudagrass will green up, but it’s just going to sit there.”

Hence, superintendents shouldn’t apply herbicides until the temperatures reach this point. Considering bermudagrass needs 90-plus days of competitively free ryegrass-growing days, superintendents should apply their herbicides in May or early June.

“For most people in South Carolina, our bermudagrass basically shuts down the 15th of September because the days get shorter,” McCarty said. “If you’ve still got ryegrass in your fairways June 15, I would highly recommend you pull the trigger and get rid of it chemically. Hopefully you’ve encouraged it to die off before then.”

**Quotable**

“This year has been unbelievable. This has been the best winter that I can remember.”

— Jason Biddinger, the manager of Lafayette (Ga.) Municipal Golf Course, after recording 2,200 rounds played the first three months of the year, four times more than the same period in 2005. (Journal and Courier)

“If I don’t get control of my gambling, it’s going to flat-out ruin me.”

— John Daly, in his new book, on his big bets.
New Hydra-Hume from Helena can do wonders for your soil. And that can do wonders for your valuable turf. The result: Stronger and healthier turf that stands up to tough usage demands.

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Hole of the

Hole #9 | North Oaks Golf Course | North Oaks, Minnesota
NORTH OAKS GOLF CLUB GREW FROM A desire to further the community and, at the same time, preserve the natural beauty of the land that it shares with local residents. Within one month of the North Oaks Golf Course opening in 1951, the course hosted its first tournament featuring Sam Snead, Patty Berg and other premier players of the era. That tournament marked the beginning of more than five decades of great golf and fellowship.

Today, the 6,627-yard, par-71 course has matured to offer a rare blend of scenery and play that challenges and satisfies golfers of every handicap.

The ninth hole — a 503-yard par 5 — offers a potential second shot to the green from the highest point on the course. Players should be wary of the gaping bunker carved into the hillside and the deceptive direction to the push-up green that is bunkered on either side.

North Oaks' greens staff and superintendent Jack MacKenzie are keenly aware of the high standards for appearance and play that designer Stanley Thompson originally established for the course, as well as the extreme demands set by today's golfers for pristine appearance and optimum playability. MacKenzie and his crew take great pride in meeting the daily challenge of providing the highest quality playing conditions possible for the golfers who enjoy their course. Their dedication and attention to detail doesn't allow them to settle for anything less than near perfection.

Drive® herbicide plays a key role in helping North Oaks look its best by keeping its turf weed-free all season. Its postemergent control knocks out crabgrass before it can invade a green or fairway while providing a wide spectrum of control for both broadleaf and grassy weeds throughout the season.

To find out more about Drive® herbicide and how it can help you achieve postemergent control for both broadleaf and grassy weeds in a wide variety of turf species, contact your distributor sales representative or BASF at www.turffacts.com.
Fighting Politics and Perceptions

BY JOEL JACKSON

University of Minnesota, it was discovered that the nutrient loading in a local lake was reduced by 42 percent when the streets were swept once a week during the fall leaf season. Down in North Carolina, a study of a local urban lake found that the migrating waterfowl were fouling the lake with phosphorus to the tune of 27 percent.

From media accounts, you would think John Q. Public was burying his yard under tons of fertilizer. But according to a study done by the The Scotts Co.: Of the 80 million home lawns maintained by homeowners, 40 million apply no fertilizer, 18 million apply it once per year, and 10 million apply it twice per year. That leaves 1 million applying 3 times a year and another million applying 4 times a year and 10 million lawns being maintained by lawn care companies. So 85 percent of the lawns are on subsistent fertilization while 15 percent are more closely following university recommendations for healthy lawns. But you never see that in the headlines either.

A regulator recently told me that it's difficult to stop a political action once it's motivated. Regulators must take some action to satisfy the noise-makers. But since they can't stop Mother Nature from her nutrient loading, they go after the product in the bag, which is an easy target. And if they get manufacturers to sell 16-2-8 instead of 16-4-8, then they have reduced phosphorus by 50 percent by decree, even if homeowners do use less than 2 percent of the fertilizer applied each year.

If you picked No. 3, you're living in my world. Since you will be held accountable any- way, you should be politically and scientifically correct. Remember the four "Rs" of fertilizing: Right Product, Right Place, Right Time and Right Rate.

Joel Jackson is director of communications for the Florida GCSA.
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A

s if the United States Golf Association's (USGA) mad hat-
ters and Mona Lisas haven't
provided us enough course
setup headaches over the
years, they're adding another
feather in their plume of par-preserving weapons.

Or maybe not.

Either way, this time they're making it known
to the green committees who will listen: Do not
try this at home.

When Winged Foot Golf Club hosts its fifth
U.S. Open this month, the USGA will unveil a
tiered rough concept masterminded by new
course setup man Mike Davis, with assistance
from USGA agronomist Tim Moraghan, coop-
eration from Winged Foot superintendent Eric
Greytok and plenty of anxious USGA executive
committee members who will monitor the setup
closely from Quaker Ridge Golf Club, Fenway
Golf Club and ______.

The new setup wrinkle goes something like
this: fairways 21 yards to 26 yards narrow, just as
they were for the 2004 U.S. Amateur. Yes, that's
way too slender to allow Winged Foot's design
to reward drives placed on certain fairway sides.

And in fast conditions, the fairways may be too
narrow to keep most balls on the short grass.

After the fairways, Davis plans to have two
distinct cuts of primary rough. A 6-foot-wide
area off the transition cut will be cut at one and a
half inches; that's followed by 24 feet of 3- to
4-inch tall stuff, followed by 6-inch hay. And
then there will be the mashed-down gallery area.

Davis believes this will provide a 48-yard-
wide corridor for tee shots.

However, there's one hitch. On three short
holes (translation: the birdieable ones), there
will be no intermediate cut. Just the spring rye
harvest.

So much for the USGA squelching that silly
cliché that they are obsessed with par.

Something tells me Davis and Moraghan are
not behind this decision, since both are good
players who know that giving the world's best a
chance to recover from rough usually gets those
players into more trouble. Take away the heroic
recovery option, and you usually do them a favor.

Davis concedes the concept is something that
looks good "on paper," but is largely untested
and one big experiment. More importantly and
most refreshingly, he makes it clear this is not for
everyday golf.

"The whole concept is really trying to give the
guys who just miss the fairway a better opportu-
nity than in the past," Davis says. "The fact is, if
you throw aside competition at the highest level,
most people I know don't like to play with a lot of
rough. That said, the Open is the hardest week of
the year for the best in the world, but that doesn't
mean it should be emulated across the country.

"If clubs try to grow rough and narrow fair-
ways, they're not doing anyone a favor," Davis
continues. "It's a bit of a trademark for the U.S.
Open, but you almost want to do a public ad-
dress announcement saying, 'This is not to be
emulated.'"

While the tiered rough concept is a far cry
from the perspective of strategy-loving archi-
tects like A.W. Tillinghast and Alister MacKen-
zie, it does serve to eliminate one absurdity of
growing so much grass: the severe penalty for
the slight miss. And if all goes well, you'll see
players make strategic mistakes by getting
greedy out of the tall stuff.

Still, no matter how much the USGA says
you should not try tiered roughs at home, one
can already imagine the Monday-morning arm-
chair superintendents asking when you plan to
turn the holes into big dart boards, with pre-
scribed penalties proportionate to misses.

So feel free to post this column on the locker
room bulletin board (but don't let them black
out my teeth). Remind Steve McChairman that
the mastermind behind tiered rough would not
recommend it for your layout.

Unless you're hosting the U.S. Open.

Contact Geoff Shackelford at geoffshac@aol.com.