

Experimental Bent Proves Successful

In 1975 Owatonna Industries commissioned Brauer and Associates of Eden Prairie to design a 9-Hole golf course in Owatonna. The course was to measure from 2,982 yards for ladies to 3,411 yards from the men's championship tees. When Mike Klatte, then the golf course superintendent at Owatonna Municipal, found out that a course was to be constructed, he suggested that they contact Dr. Joe Duich of Penn State and perhaps they could seed the greens with Dr. Duich's new experimental variety of bent grass known as PSU-PBCB. Mike was a former student of Dr. Duich. The suggestion was a good one and the nine greens averaging over 6,000 square feet were seeded in the fall of 1975. The course opened for play in July 1976 and was inspected by Dr. Duich in July of this year. Brooktree was the name selected for the golf course.

Dr. Joe Duich did his undergraduate and graduate work at Penn State University. He studied under and worked with H. B. Musser. Upon graduation, Dr. Duich began teaching in Penn State's Department of Agronomy and doing research work on turf grasses. After H. B. Musser's retirement, Dr. Duich continued and expanded many ideas and programs Musser had started. Dr. Duich has become a well known and respected authority on turf grasses, both nationally and internationally.

Dr. Duich is deeply involved in Penn State's two year Training Program for Golf Course Superintendents and many of this country's finest Golf Course Superintendents have graduated from this program.

Dr. Duich has been involved in the introduction of a number of improved turf grasses including Pennfine Perennial Ryegrass, Pennstar Kentucky Bluegrass and his latest development, PSU-PBCB.

PSU-PBCB is the code name for a new variety of bent grass that Dr. Duich has been working on since 1960. This new bent grass has been tested on various greens around the country and appears to have excellent potential. At this point it appears this new bent grass will be named and released sometime in 1978.

In an interview at Brooktree in Owatonna after an inspection of the course, Dr. Duich made the following comments:

Q. Dr. Duich, how long have you been working on this new variety of grass for putting greens?

A. I have been working on this grass since 1960 in various forms, but I believe we have finally arrived at the final product. We would feel this new grass will be released by Penn State University within the next twelve months.

Q. What do you feel makes your new variety of grass distinctive?

A. The basic objective was to develop a putting green grass that can be planted from grass seed. For many years, putting greens were vegetatively planted, this one type of grass that was propagated by runners. This has the gross disadvantage of being a single genetic type and you, figuratively speaking, have all your eggs in one basket. When conditions were right, these vegetative strains performed well. Under adverse conditions, they might all suffer, and being genetically uniform one could have a gross "wipe out". As many turf people know, this has happened. When we go to seeded roots, which is much cheaper to establish and you always have a source of seed for repair work, we as breeders have certain problems to overcome. The principal one probably is to be able to reproduce from seed and have what we call a non-segregating surface. For many years the limitation of seed was that you would plant it and you might have a small percent of the population that was stronger and patches would

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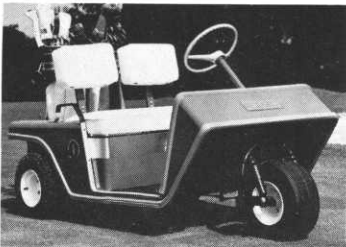


INSPECTION TEAM

LEFT TO RIGHT, DR. JIM WATSON OF THE TORO COMPANY; ROGER KISCH, SUPERINTENDENT SOUTHVIEW COUNTRY CLUB; DR. JOE DUICH, PENN STATE; GARY GLIENKE, BROOKTREE PRO SHOP MANAGER; RANDY NELSON, SUPERINTENDENT OWATONNA COUNTRY CLUB; MERLE BROICH, BROOKTREE MANAGER; GERRY PIRKL, BRAUER AND ASSOCIATES COURSE ARCHITECTS; AND SCOTT AUSTIN, HOST SUPERINTENDENT BROOKTREE GOLF COURSE.

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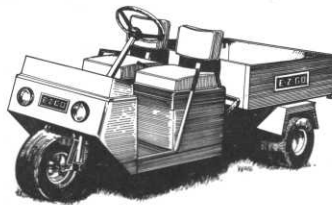
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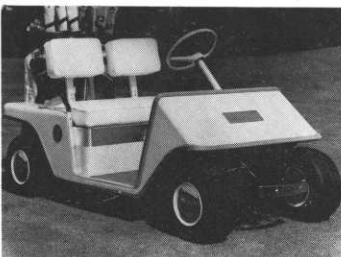
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develop that grow bigger and bigger. They would have a different grain to them and different growth habit, they do not putt as well and they end up looking like spotted leopards. As breeders then, we must develop something that is uniform, but with a very broad genetic base. This particular bent we have here has four basic parents. The objective is to be able to grow this bent grass wherever bent grass is grown; the U.S., Canada, higher elevations, Southern areas as well as European countries.

- Q. Will the golfer playing here at Brooktree notice any difference from other greens?
- A. I think compared to a lot of putting greens, yes, they should notice a finer texture, a very tight bent, these greens (particularly for their age) putt very true and they are fast. In the future they will probably putt even faster. They will also notice the absence of Poa Anua, the natural invader of putting greens.
- Q. What improvements do you see that have to be made here to make Brooktree a championship quality golf course?
- A. They have a very well designed course and one that was constructed properly. Just like good wine, a little time and maturity is all they will need.