

Massive Greens Project Underway at International Steve Nash looking forward to April 1--no joke

Golf course superintendents are accustomed to construction projects—a couple of tees a year, a new green here and there, work on the irrigation pond—but imagine the project Steve Nash is overseeing this summer: 17 new greens, making two ponds into one large one, installation of a wooden bunker around number six, two new tees, and two fairway bunkers. Except for well-kept fairways and golfers dodging dump trucks, International Country Club, Fairfax, Va. in mid-July resembled a new course under construction.

ICC, named because of its proximity to Dulles Airport, is a member-owned club opened in 1961. Approximately 460 of its 600 members are golfers, and of these, about 60 or 70 are single-digit handicappers. "They are serious!" says Steve. Still, he was surprised when they decided to "bite the bullet and do this."

"Our main objective," said Steve, "Was to get drainage and have more modern greens. Some of our greens were so undulating there were very few pin place-



Steve Nash examines an excavated bunker. In addition to the greens construction, Steve and his crew are building two new tees and two fairway bunkers.

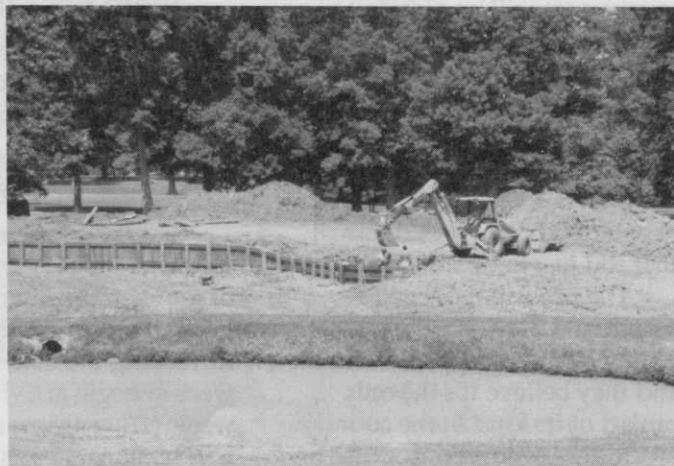
ments and we needed more because we're pushing 50,000 rounds—during peak times play would run between 1200 and 1500 rounds per week. The greens were wearing out pretty quickly. First, though, we wanted to get them so they would drain. When we got those summer thunderstorms followed by 90-degree temperatures, the greens would be like a pressure cooker—sweltering from moisture and heat."

International had been considering doing something for about three or four years. Says Steve, "As our rounds of golf increased—last year was our biggest year—the greens became increasingly worn out. It was hard to find cup placements."

About the same time the club received a substantial windfall. In 1988 Fairfax County took 13 acres from the back side of the course to build a highway. The greens

project is being financed from the \$2.25 million received from the county. The remainder of these funds will be used to improve the clubhouse facilities.

Planning began approxi-



A wood retaining wall--now almost finished--around number six at ICC is both functional and attractive.

mately two years ago. The membership told architect, Bill Love of Ault Clark & Associates, that they liked the basic character of the greens, that they wanted a few minor changes—a couple of bunkers, some mounds in front of greens flattened—but they didn't want drastic changes.

The club employed John Ponko of Virginia Beach to do the work. "His main claim to fame is as a greens shaper," notes Steve. "John himself does the actual bulldozer work around the green. One person described Ponko and his bulldozer as an artist at work, sculpting. For massive earth-moving, he has a crew who use heavier equipment, but the fine tuning is done by him with one little bulldozer with an eight-foot blade."

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The club's other major decision was to sod rather than to seed. "We decided more than a year ago on sodding in order to bring the greens back quicker.

Last September Summit Hall Turf Farm in Poolesville started our sod from seed. They are growing it on exactly the same mix that will be used to build the greens so it will be a perfect match." The seed they chose was a bentgrass blend—SR 1019/1020. "They have four acres of sod that's absolutely beautiful right now. They're just waiting for us to call." The plot is 100X1500 ft. Says Steve, "I couldn't believe we'd use all that sod just to do our greens."

The president of Seed Research told Steve it's the largest plot of his bentgrass he's ever seen and they believe it's the only project of its kind in the country.

Riding around the course one

could detect the shape of six or so of the new greens. The cavity was dug out, the bunkers shaped. Some, however, are still just mountains of dirt. Steve notes how pleased the members are now that they can envision what those six holes will look like.

Plans call for four-inch

"A few clubs put them back in play in about six weeks. They look playable, but the worst thing you can do is get back on them that soon."

drainage pipes, a four-inch layer of gravel topped with a 12-inch layer of sand mix. Egypt Farms is furnishing the materials which were to begin arriving the next week. "This means more trucks," notes Steve. "The thing about

trucks is getting them to go where you want them to. You can show them one day, but there may be entirely different drivers the next day."

Ponko will probably start laying the sod in August. All the work will be done from plywood, explains Steve, so that you never step on the mix. And when the sod is laid, it will be rolled with plywood on top so that the sod won't move and workers won't disturb the ground.

Completion date is September 26. Because the summer has been so dry, work is fairly much on schedule. After the sod is down Steve and his crew expect to put in long hours "babysitting it." He anticipates watching it from dawn to dusk.

Although the members are anxious and he *knows* how temptingly beautiful those new greens

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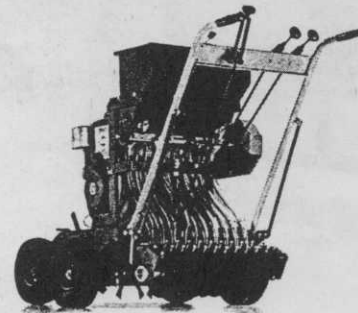
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NEW BABIES

July is always a busy month for people in the golf business. But for some MAAGCS members, July was even busier than usual. Additions to the MAAGCS family in July include:

Todd Emerson, Jr. and Lauren Leslie to **Todd** (*Turf Equipment and Supply Co.*) and **Leslie Cowing**

Timothy Alexander to **David** (*Tiscawilla West Country Club*) and **Carole Burkhart**

Michael Gregory to **Bud** (*Montgomery Country Club*) and **Gina Sweeney**

Heather Lynne to **Tom** (*Cornell Chemical and Equipment*) and **Karen Walsh**

WANTED

Drs. Kevin Mathias and Lee Hellman of the University of Maryland are looking for golf course test sites to do evaluations for insect control. They would like an area of anything from a few thousand square feet to a half acre. Research will center around the cutworm but white grub, chinch bug, billbug, sod webworm, and ataeinus beetle are also of interest. They would also like to hear about any type of activity from any other pests. Dr. Mathias can be reached at 301-405-3920.

NOTICE

Those planning to sign up for the GCSAA tourney in Florida who want to play on a Mid-Atlantic team, get in touch with Nick Vance or Scott Wagner ASAP.

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will appear in the fall, no play will be allowed until April 1. Notes Steve, "A few clubs I've talked to that sodded greens, put them back in play in about six weeks. They look playable, but the worst thing you can do is get back on them that soon. They said the longer you can keep them off, the better."

Planning for this project was thorough, and so far nothing unforeseen has happened. Last winter they moved irrigation lines so than only one had to be moved during construction and that only because they made a last-minute change. Steve was without a phone for a week when the line was accidentally cut—but in some ways, that's not all bad. Asked if he would do anything differently, Steve said he would have to wait until later to answer that one.

"It's been an education, but I'll be glad when it's over."

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