

## **PREPARING FOR THE 1997 RYDER CUP**

**Jaime Ortiz-Patiño  
Valderrama Golf Club  
Sotogrande, Spain**

It is a pleasure and an honor to address those of you present here today and to share this platform with such a distinguished panel of speakers.

Further to being owner, President and Golf Course Superintendent at Valderrama, I also take a strong interest in ecology. I am profoundly convinced that a good golf course, designed as such and not built mainly for the purpose of selling real estate, can and should be an asset from an ecological point of view, and a haven and refuge for wildlife and plant life. Later I shall describe briefly the wildlife at Valderrama.

Now for the Ryder Cup. At Valderrama we are resolved neither to disappoint the Ryder Cup Committee, who have entrusted us with the 1997 event, nor the millions of TV spectators that will be following the matches. We are told that 400 million people watched the last Ryder Cup. Whereas in other tournaments you can always improve the organization the second time, the Ryder Cup will not, in normal circumstances, return to Spain before the year 2035 as it is held only once every 4 years in Europe and will have to visit France, Germany, Italy, Sweden, The Netherlands, Ireland and Scotland, as well as England and probably other countries, before returning to Spain. Therefore, this is a unique event which we must get right the first time and which is totally different from normal PGA tournaments.

It is important that the sponsoring authority - that is, Ryder Cup Ltd - should set out precisely, as early as possible, the Host Club's sphere of responsibility.

I propose to divide this paper into three parts. First I shall cover the revenue-producing side of things. Surpluses accruing to Ryder Cup Ltd. from this unique event are important to the well-being of golf, and we must therefore go all out to maximize these revenues.

The second part of my paper covers the non-revenue-producing side, such as infrastructure, traffic control, medical facilities, etc.

The third and final part is concerned with how we normally prepare the golf course and how we prepare it for a major tournament.

### **HOW TO MAXIMIZE REVENUE FOR THE RYDER CUP COMMITTEE**

#### **TELEVISION**

The most highly-g geared income-producer is television. Competition for the Ryder Cup television rights has increased enormously and is still increasing, which is not surprising with a potential audience of over 400 million.

The Club must provide adequate sites, 10,000 m<sup>2</sup> (2 ½ A), for the great quantity of equipment, and install cable ducts covering each hole and the perimeter of the golf course. All of which has already been done out of Valderrama.

In addition, for the parking and ancillary requirements of the TV crews we have an area of 4,000 m<sup>2</sup> (1 A), hidden by trees just behind the 12th green, situated outside the golf course and fronting the main road to be used for catering and other storage requirements of the TV crews.

#### **THE TENTED VILLAGE**

The Host Club's job is to provide an ideally-located site. This is vital, as a poor site can jeopardize the success of all the Village activities. We have allocated 15,000 m<sup>2</sup> (3 ¾ A) of level ground to the right of the existing

Club parking area. This area will accommodate up to 64 corporate hospitality units for 25 people each, 2 VIP units for 400 people each, the PGA tent, the Past Players tent, two catering units of the highest quality, a small merchandise tent and services such as banks and pharmacy.

### **MAIN ENTRANCE AND PARKING**

The main public entrance area includes some important revenue generators. We have allocated an area of 16,000 m<sup>2</sup> (4A) to the right of the 4th fairway, adjacent to the 3-lane public road that leads from the dual-carriage motor way three kilometers away. Close by, and with direct access from the public road, there will be parking for 11,000 cars and buses.

### **MERCHANDISING**

This main entrance area will include a large exhibition tent housing the main merchandising operations, as well as food stalls for fast-food services. There will also be a DHL office for the dispatch of Ryder Cup merchandise to friends worldwide, and a safe-keeping area to hold visitors' purchases while they follow the matches. A limited range of Ryder Cup merchandise will also be on sale at various points on the course.

### **PUBLIC CATERING FACILITIES**

The main public catering area is another source of important income and will be to the right of the 7th fairway, where a 10,000 m<sup>2</sup> (2 ½ A) site is available. There will also be a number of small kiosk-type facilities between the 11th and 16th fairways, which are furthest from the main catering areas. The number of tents and their size should provide a range of food and refreshment to suit all pockets and most tastes.

The break between morning and afternoon matches creates a surge of demand which does not occur at normal PGA tournaments and which often takes caterers by surprise.

### **PROMOTING THE RYDER CUP TO VISITORS FROM ABROAD**

Accommodation and travel packages will be put together to suit all purses, therefore hotels, house rentals and apartments should be reserved as early as possible. All visitors will be offered playing facilities at other golf courses. With the cooperation of the 36 golf courses on the Costa del Sol, within an hour's drive of Valderrama, we intend to set up a computerized service allowing visitors to play as much as possible.

In general, we shall try hard to ensure that the first-time visitor will carry home a favorable impression to his golfing friends of his experience at the 1997 Ryder Cup and will himself want to return to the Costa del Sol.

### **NON-REVENUE PRODUCING INFRASTRUCTURE**

We all know that events like the Olympic Games and the World Cup require a major investment by the host country. On the Costa del Sol, we are fortunate in that only a slight upgrading of the infrastructure will be required. Valderrama has more than adequate capacity in water, sewage and electricity.

The cost of this type of infrastructure is generally the responsibility of the host country. However, even when this is clearly understood, there can be "who-pays-what" disputes between public agencies that lead to crippling delays. Fortunately, with the support of the Ministry of Sport, a National Committee for the organization of the Ryder Cup has been appointed to bring together representatives of all the relevant government agencies.

This Committee, which will also include representatives of the Club and the Ryder Cup Ltd., will deliberate on such matters as exactly what ought to be done outside the perimeter of the golf course and which should be done by public entities, such as: who will organize the police and fire brigade; the improvement to access roads; public transportation; increase the telephone capacity; install in our ducts, fibre optic cables for retransmission of TV signals; security and protocol.

### **PARKING**

The biggest problem for any major sporting event today is traffic flow and parking. At Valderamma we have managed to cope quite well with seven successive Volvo Masters tournaments, but we recognize that already

on the last weekend of the 1994 Volvo Masters, the parking and traffic began to become a serious problem. In 1997, the volume will be about five times larger than anything we have had to cope with before.

The area covers 300,000 m<sup>2</sup> (75 A) and will accommodate 11,000 cars or a combination of cars and buses and fully comparable with the total parking accommodation at previous Ryder Cups. We can also provide a further 4,000 parking spaces on the fields of the Sotogrande Polo Club 10 minutes drive from the golf course, with a minibus shuttle service along the private roads of Sotogrande.

There will be parking for 500 VIP cars at the bottom of the steps leading to the Tented Village, with access to the course. There will be a taxi drop-off point and taxi rank at the main entrance to the course, with bus-parking also very close at hand. Finally, next to the main car park there will be an industrial area for the use of contractors, with direct access to the public road system.

The Press tent and compound will be on a 3,000 m<sup>2</sup> (¾ A) site next to the Clubhouse, at present used as the Club car park. This area will accommodate lounges, working and dining facilities for at least 1000 journalists and cameramen.

## **SPECTATOR FLOW AND VIEWING**

Attendance, which should total 27,000 daily, will vastly exceed anything previously experienced on the Costa de Sol, and for that matter in Continental Europe. Furthermore, the match-play format will concentrate the spectators at a small number of holes instead of spreading them evenly around the course, as in a stroke-play tournament.

At the previous Ryder Cup, we had a detailed survey of spectators behavior analyzed. To our amazement, we found the following: 10% of the public never saw the golf course. They stayed in the Hospitality units or in the Public Catering area watching it on TV but had the satisfaction of saying they had been to the Ryder Cup. 30% ran around the golf course trying to follow the match of their choice, in practice they had difficulty seeing much as all vantage points were taken up by other spectators before they arrived. In reality, they saw little more than the 10% who had the benefit of the TV screens. 20% of the public went to just one vantage point during each segment of play and watched the matches go by and then worked their way back towards the catering area and the tented village. Finally, 40% came to two vantage points, waited for the matches to come by their first point before rushing to a second point where they watched the same matches pass by for the second time. They repeated this during each segment of play choosing different vantage points. This is definitely the best way to watch the Ryder Cup.

At Valderrama, the two most powerful magnets by far will be the 18th green, where we shall have a grandstand accommodating 3,000 spectators and the 17th green, which is backed by a large amphitheatre with on the right of the fairway a magnificent stepped gabion wall, which together form a great natural area for 10,000 spectators.

The 17th hole, a Par 5 with a lake in front of the green, is a natural crowd-puller. We will install a jumbo TV screen on the left of the fairway, highly visible to all the spectators, who will be able to watch not only the 17th hole but also observe the action in other matches on this TV jumbo screen. Other grandstands will be placed at strategic viewpoints at the right of the 4th green and behind the 7th, 9th, 11th, 12th & 16th greens, giving us a total of more than 8,000 grandstand seats plus three natural amphitheatres at the 14th, 15th and 17th.

To give spectators better sight-lines and easier movement from hole to hole, removal of some trees and flower beds will be necessary; these will be replanted after the Ryder Cup.

Further to good signage throughout the course, there will also be a plan of the course on the back of each draw sheet, with suggested routings and crossing points. The plan will also indicate public toilets, telephones, catering and merchandise areas.

## **CLUBHOUSE**

The Valderrama Clubhouse, completed less than three years ago, will be placed at the disposal of the Ryder Cup Committee from 07.00 to 17.00 each day. Valderrama members will have access to a large two-story hospitality tent accessible through the Clubhouse, and they and their guests will be able to use the Clubhouse from 17.00 onwards.

Other organizations - such as the Fire Brigade, Police, Marshals' HQ, Observers, Referees and so on - will need air-conditioned Portakabin offices, and will be allocated space on the 9 hole Par 3 Course, adjacent to the 9th fairway. The opening and closing ceremonies will be held on the practice ground.

## **MEDICAL, EMERGENCY AND SECURITY SERVICES**

Our central medical area will be immediately behind the Pump House near the 11th tee. We expect to have at least five doctors on duty at all times. There will be at least one or two subsidiary medical centers, probably in the main catering area and at the main public entrance. Our helipad will also be transferred to the Par 3 course.

Security is greatly assisted by the fact that the golf course is located within the Sotogrande Estate, which is itself a secure area, completely ring-fenced and with manned road barriers at every entrance.

## MAINTENANCE OF THE GOLF COURSE

Difficult, time consuming, costly and disruptive to membership and visitors is the preparation of any golf course for a major tournament, unless it is not soundly maintained day-in, day-out throughout the year.

At Valderrama we are blessed with an excellent climate. The temperature never falls below 0° Celsius and the maximum is around 35° Celsius, when it is very hot it is dry and we nearly always have a breeze from the East or the West. The warm season grasses grow from March to the end of October. The cool season grasses grow all year.

Annual maintenance is carried out each year for 4 weeks between 15 May to 15 June with 9 holes closed at a time.

Our main concern is to keep the course free of Poa Annua. Aerifying and verticutting at the wrong time of the year facilitates the introduction of Poa Annua.

Unquestionably, Jacobson, John Deere and Ransomes provide excellent golf course equipment. However, we have formed a close association with TORO and all our equipment is from that firm and our irrigation system is the latest TORO Network 8000.

Outside of the maintenance period and during the growing season for the bermuda the course can be brought to championship standard with one week of preparation.

The grasses on the tees and fairways at Valderrama are bermuda Tifway 419. Tees are cut with walk-behind TORO 1000 Greensmaster at ¼" (6.25 mm). Fairways are cut with TORO 3000 Greensmasters at 3/8" (9.5 mm). The semi-rough the width of one TORO Reelmaster 216-D is cut at 1" (25mm).

Clippings are collected from tees, fairways and semi rough. Tees are topdressed regularly and the fairways and the semi rough heavily once a year with 1,500 m<sup>3</sup> (1.900 cubic yards) of sand.

The rough in all open areas is the same bermuda and is cut with TORO Reelmaster 4500-D at a height of 1 ½" (38 mm) normally and is allowed to grow to 2 ½" (64mm) for tournaments. It takes approximately six weeks in the growing season to reach this height.

In shaded areas and under the trees where the Bermuda will not grow we have seeded a mixture of Hounddog tall fescue and Valda hard fescue in the proportion of 95% Hounddog and 5% Valda at a seeding rate of 10 kg/100 m<sup>2</sup>. We find that this grass grows very well in the shade.

During the growing season, the tees and fairways are cut 3 times a week. The rough twice a week.

In an area of about 10,000 m<sup>2</sup> (2 ½ A) around each green we have seeded in lieu of the bermuda a mixture of ryegrass and creeping bentgrass. The ryegrass being PhD perennial ryegrass, a mixture of Derby, Regal and Gator. Seeding rate 6 kg/100 m<sup>2</sup>.

Except for the Volvo Masters, the ryegrass is cut at a height of 1 ½" (38 mm) with a TORO Reelmasters 216-D. We cut a strip of semi rough around the collar of the green with the TORO 3000 Greensmaster at a height of 3/4" (19 mm).

The aprons, collars and the greens themselves are pure Penncross creeping bentgrass. The aprons and collars are cut with walk-behind TORO 1000 Greensmasters at a height of 5/16" (8 mm).

The greens are cut on a normal basis each day, except Mondays, unless we have a tournament, with walk-behind TORO 1000 Greensmasters at 0.170" (4.3 mm) and Thursday clippings are not picked up. The clean-up lap is only cut once every day and unless there is an important event, we cut the clean-up lap before the green to avoid this area being trampled down by the mowers in the course of their normal cutting.

To eliminate grain on the greens we are brushing once a week all the greens with barn brushes by hand, brushing against the grain. This has to be done by hand as the nap on the greens will vary from one area of the green to another. After each brushing of a green we cut it with the walk-behind TORO 1000 Greensmaster. We have found this treatment extremely effective and gives us a much better surface to putt on.

We top-dress the greens lightly and regularly every six weeks. We aerify the greens only once a year during our maintenance period.

We are rebuilding greens progressively approximately two per year to USGA specifications with a top mix of 80 % sand and 20 % peat. These greens are much firmer and drain better than the original greens. We have also rebuilt the drainage in all our bunkers around the greens. Bunkers are a continuous problem as tournament players

and professionals want them firm and hard whereas our membership would like them soft. We tend to keep them firm. We are continuously checking the depth of the sand and try and keep this at 4" at the bottom, with 2" on the side. We do not line bunkers although I know this keeps the sand cleaner.

The basic crew working a five day week is made up of 18 men. We also have 2 weekly crews of 6 men that look after our cool season grasses around the greens. They work 7 consecutive days and then take 1 week off. In this manner, we have a crew working on and around the greens 365 days a year. We have an administrative foreman, 2 senior supervisors and an Assistant Golf Course Superintendent. The supervisors alternate working 5 days consecutively and then take 4 days off. Our total workforce for the championship course and the 9 hole Par 3 course is therefore 34. We also have 8 gardeners. I act as Golf Course Superintendent.

This or the Volvo Masters, in view of the standard of the course all year round we only have to close the course one week before the event. Over the preceding six weeks we let all the bermuda rough, hard fescue and perennial ryegrasses grow to 2 ½" (64 mm). During this period we also progressively lower the height of cut on the greens. During the week before the Volvo Masters when the course is closed we cut at a height of 0.155" (3.9 mm), double cutting the greens at 90° each morning. The fairways are double cut in X as are the aprons. The championship tees are cut daily perpendicularly toward the fairways. During the week of the tournament we cut the greens always in the same direction perpendicular to the center of the fairway, always going over the same stripes. This to accentuate the striping of the creeping bentgrass for the TV cameras although it would be bad to do this for too long a period.

For just one week it does not nap the grass and makes a much more attractive pattern. It is difficult to cut, especially as we work in the dark with flood lighting on 12 greens and all triplexes have lighting installed, but my men, who have been with me for nearly 10 years, are now accustomed to it. During the 2 week period, all our work force work the following schedule: 5.00 until 11.00 a.m. and again in the afternoon from 4.00 to 7.30 p.m. It is day light from 7.30 a.m. until 7.00 p.m. During the Volvo Masters we cut some greens three times and some only once. The third time is generally in the afternoon. We aim for a stimpmeter speed of 11'4" with a tolerance of 3" either way. We always stimpmeter from the same position.

It will be essential during the Ryder Cup for the Captain and the Ryder Cup Committee to specify in advance the height of cut for the rough and the stimpmeter speed they wish to have the greens at. Our greens have quite a lot of borrough and slopes and at stimpmeter speed of 12 feet or thereabouts the ball has a tendency in some areas not to remain stable on the greens. Therefore, we do not recommend a stimpmeter speed much in excess of 11'6".

## **IRRIGATION**

Irrigation is our weakest link. Although we have a TORO Network 8000 system, in Spain, as we have an abundance of water which is a very rare commodity in this otherwise very dry country, the men feel that the more water they put on the course, the better it will be. Obviously, this is not so and in order to control the quantity of water put on the golf course, I have had to prohibit the use of irrigation during the night except during the very hot summer months and insist on the irrigation being done during the working hours when we can watch very carefully how much water is being put on. We do a lot of hand irrigation during the summer. We are fortunate that we have very few rounds of golf each day and therefore can proceed in this manner.

## **FERTILIZERS**

We regularly fertilize greens, collars and aprons with a mixture of 1.5 kg Ammonium Sulphate (21% Nitrogen) and 1.5 kg Potassium Sulphate (52% Potassium) per 100 m<sup>2</sup> and water in thoroughly. We will fertilize these areas 6 times between 1 November and 15 May.

This year we are adding Sulphur to the greens. This also helps control *Poa Annua*. The applications of 283 ml per 100 m<sup>2</sup> of 80% AI. We will have treated the greens with Sulphur six times between 1 November and 15 May.

We fertilize, the creeping bentgrass-ryegrass, semi-roughs and roughs with 2 kg Ammonium Sulphate (21 % Nitrogen) and 1.5 kg Potassium Sulphate (52% Potassium) per 100 m<sup>2</sup>. Alternating with a complete fertilizer such as 11-5-5 at 5kg per 100 m<sup>2</sup>. These areas were fertilized in November and will be again in March, April and May.

The bermuda grass, fairways, tees, rough and tall fescue are fertilized 4 times between 1 November and 15 May with 115 kg of Urea (46% Nitrogen) per 10,000 m<sup>2</sup> (2 ½ A).

## **FUNGICIDE**

Further to the above we use a fungicide Chlorothalonil as a preventive treatment for Dollarspot. We use Daconil 2787 at 55 gm per 16 litres of water per 100 m<sup>2</sup>.

## HERBICIDES

For the control of Poa Annua on Bermuda grass, fairways, rough and tees we use Simazine a selective herbicide. In our case Gesatop 50% AI, produced by Ciba-Geigy at the rate of 3 litres per 10,000 m<sup>2</sup>, is more effective and much cheaper than Kerb.

For the Poa Annua control on greens, collars and aprons (creeping bentgrass) and in semi-rough and rough (creeping bentgrass-ryegrass), we use another selective herbicide Ethofumesate. As we cannot obtain Progress from Nor-Am we use Trammat 50% AI, from Schering. We spray the greens and their collars every five weeks until May at the rate of 20 ml of 50% AI in 20 litres of water per 100 m<sup>2</sup>. This should not be applied to any freshly seeded areas for at least eight weeks after seeding. We also apply Trammat to the Rye-Creeping Bentgrass semi-rough and rough areas as well as Creeping Bentgrass aprons at the rate of 40 ml of 50% AI in 6 litres of water per 100 m<sup>2</sup>.

The grass must be moist before spraying and no irrigation for 48 hours.

One should be extremely careful at using any Ethofumesate as damage can be done if excessive amounts are used. We have been experimenting with Trammat for 5 years and have never burnt a green which are now totally free of Poa annua. I believe we now have the correct doses and the proper frequency. We do not use Trammat in June, July and August due to the excessive heat. ETHOFUMESATE is also unquestionably a growth regulator and regular checks on the root growth of the plant are necessary. As soon as the roots show sign of weakness the programmed application should be skipped. This has occurred only once in the years we have been treating the greens and happened last September after an extremely hot and relatively humid summer. As the roots were suffering we skipped the September treatment for Poa annua and in the few places where the Poa annua started to appear on the greens we took the plants out by hand-weeding. However, from October on we have been treating at regular, 5 week, intervals with Trammat and the root structure is not suffering. The greens are firm, free of Poa annua and very fast. The greens are presently running at 10'2" to 10'6" on the stimpmeter.

We spot treat in November and January with a herbicide, Trimec, made by PBI Gordon, for broad leaf weeds including clover. Thanks to our favorable climate we have very little disease, with the exception of Dollarspot. In the nurseries we have tried other types of creeping bentgrasses, but it would appear that in our area Penncross is more resistant to Dollarspot and tolerates the regular application of Ethofumesate. We also have periodic invasions of cut worms and treat these with Sevin now that the use of Chlordane is no longer possible. We are also invaded, from time to time in some areas of the rough, with mole crickets and are eagerly awaiting for someone to find a cure to rid us of these very unpleasant species.

## ECOLOGY

I am a strong believer in the benefit of turfgrasses and therefore golf courses for the protection of the environment as well as their benefits to humans. At Valderrama we are very conscious of the environment and of the necessity to protect the quality of the wildlife that lives within the perimeters of our property. I repeat, within the perimeters of the property because outside Valderrama there are nothing but barren hills and a few cows grazing on the weeds and grasses that grow naturally. There is no wildlife to speak of except a few rabbits. Birds have nowhere to rest or nest and other forms of animals are non-existent.

Whereas at Valderrama, because we have water, because we have natural areas of forest and undergrowth you find a variety of wildlife and a haven for migrating birds on their way to and from Africa. We have an abundance of fish in the lakes, mostly carp which both our Heron and the Otter seem to enjoy as their main food. Luckily we have a substantial stock of fish. We have badgers, foxes, rabbits and a multitude of butterflies, dragon flies and a vast quantity of birds, the largest species such as the buzzard and the eagle owl each require areas of tranquillity before they can establish territories and breed.

The buzzard and the eagle owls have been spotted since 1989 and it would appear that they have found an attractive home for their breeding. The presence of standing dead trees encourages hole-nesting birds such as the Wryneck, Great Spotted Woodpecker and Spotless Starling and should not be removed. The list of birds is quite impressive as are the records of flowers and plants that we have throughout the golf course and its vicinity.

I also have available for anyone who is interested a report of an ecological survey at Valderrama Golf Club done late in 1993. Following this report Valderrama applied to the Audubon Society of New York to form part of the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Golf Courses and I recommend all golf courses to join this program.

I will now show you a few slides showing the natural areas of the golf course which exist between various fairways as well as slides of how we transport large cork trees which we have and a picture of the Eagle Owl which broke its leg and after it was fixed returned to its habitat. It is now living happily in the ravine to the right of the 11th hole.

Finally, I would recommend to all of you to read the excellent paper prepared for the USGA, entitled "The Role of Turfgrass in Environmental Protection and Their Benefits to Humans" by James B. Beard and Robert L. Green and with that I conclude my presentation. Thank you.