

THRU THE GREEN

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENTS ASSOCIATION OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

AUGUST 1994

THE MEETING PLACE

August 8, 1994

Saratoga Country Club

Host Superintendent:
Leon Snethen

The Course: Saratoga Country Club was built 31 years ago. The architect of record is Robert Graves, although he will not take credit for the course as it was not built to his design. Many holes were changed and the course built with no bunkers. The members then decided where they wanted bunkers and went to work building them.

A lot of improvements have been made over the last eight years. Brian Bagley,

former superintendent, convinced the board of the need for the Cambridge Drainage system, which has worked extremely well and prevented the loss of parts of the greens during rainy seasons.

Three years ago, ground was broken on a master plan to lengthen the course and increase par to 72. Two new holes and a driving range were built, a complete new Maxi 5 irrigation system with a new VSD pump station installed. The next phase was to restructure holes 7, 8 and 9. This phase was voted down by the membership as they felt 8 and 9 were the two strongest closing holes they could have. So, that project, and completion of the master

plan, are in a holding pattern while a proposal is developed for the future.

Says Leon, "I hope you enjoy the course and play well. Remember, it is very tight and unforgiving to the errant shot."

The Superintendent: Leon Snethen was born in Enid, Oklahoma, "way back in the olden days." The only one of the cousins not raised on a farm, Leon's summers were spent helping grandpa down on the farm, harvesting wheat with combines and tractors.

After graduating from high school, Leon attended Phillips University where he studied Business Administration. But after two years, Leon decided he was

smarter than the professors, and ventured out on his own into the big, bad world of business. Before he was 21 he had acquired a wife and a son. A daughter followed three years later.

The family moved to Denver and was there for over 11 years while Leon tried to decide just what *business* he wanted to be in: equipment rental, construction estimation, cable television installation. He even had his own company for a while, managing 45 employees virtually on his own (a long story).

To paraphrase a popular quote, you can take the boy off the farm, but you can't take the farm out of the boy.

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Supers and Pros Meet at the Creek

by Leon Snethen

The Superintendent/Pro Tournament was held July 11th at Silver Creek Valley Country Club with 137 superintendents, pros and guests in attendance. After a great buffet lunch, we started for the course. Host superintendent, Nick Checklenis, had the golf course in outstanding condition. He definitely had the pins in some challenging position. The 18th hole was tucked in behind a creek and waterfall, giving all of us a chance to go for the money or play it safe. It was terrific!

After much-needed cocktails, dinner was served. The food and service were excellent. Many thanks to Nick and the excellent staff at SCVCC, including **Chef Patrick Clark** for a fabulous meal.

We would like to give special thanks to the pro shop staff for their excellence in scoring the tournament. It was a very difficult scoring job, and they did it beautifully. Thank you...thank you...thank you!!

Jay Jackson, Club Pro; Duane Criswell, Asst. Pro;
Tonya Myers, Shop Staff; Bob Blasing, Club House Manager

(See Page 5 for winners)

LEON SNETHEN*Continued from page 1*

The stress got the better of him and Leon headed back to the farm: well, kind of. Maybe back to nature is a better analogy. He went to work at Saratoga Country Club in 1987 as the mechanic under Brian Bagley. Leon fell in love with the golf industry, so when Brian accepted the position at The Villages three years later, Leon applied for the superintendent position. Now, he hadn't been just sitting around tinkering with trucks for that three years. He had acquired his spray certificate and taken some turf management classes. The management at the course figured he was pretty well qualified. And the rest is history.

USGA*Continued from page 3*

or rather abuse, your power to seek revenge on fellow golfers.

The basic purpose of having bunker maintenance guidelines is that they (1) help avoid controversial ruling decisions, and/or (2) help simplify routine bunker maintenance. For example, one guideline is that the sand particle size distribution should be between 0.25 and 1.0 millimeters. This guideline excludes fine silt and clay particles that would impede drainage. Can you imagine the controversy if someone went to win a major Championship after they were granted relief in a bunker because of standing water? Ouch! This guideline also excludes small

stones and/or pebbles in the sand that, if blasted onto the putting surface, would cause damage to delicate mowing equipment.

Another important guideline is that the sand should have a blocky or semi-blocky particle shape, as opposed to a smooth, almost round shape. This guideline encourages the selection of stable sands. From a Rules of Golf perspective, stable sands withstand buried lies, thus preventing the need for golfers to literally dig for a lost ball in a hazard. Stable sands also simplify routine maintenance because they remain in place on the architecturally popular steep bunker faces. This prevents the need to shovel sand back on the faces of bunkers after golfers have

walked on them.

Practicality, that is what guidelines are for -- practicality. So far we have learned that desirable bunker sand should (1) drain well, (2) be free of large debris, (3) resist buried lies, and (4) remain in place on bunker faces. Is there more to learn? Not really, the rest is a matter of personal opinion. By nature, bunker sands are too hard, too soft, too wet, too dry, too dark, too light, too coarse, and too fine. It depends on how well, or how poorly, you played your last round. That, folks, is golf; if you do not agree, run for Green Chairperson and make your own rules. Remember, however, the home of a tyrant can be a lonely one!

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