

THRU THE GREEN

March, 2000

The Golf Course Superintendents Association of Northern California



Stanford's Williams Is Truly Home On the Farm

By Bob Costa, CGCS

Any mention of Stanford Athletics quickly brings to mind the recent and past success of the football, baseball and basketball programs, each producing its share of prominent male and female athletes. Included amongst its rich sports traditions are the unheralded accomplishments of Tiger Woods who made Stanford Golf Course his home from 1994 thru 1996.

In 1995, halfway between Tiger's freshman and sophomore years at Stanford and making a much less auspicious debut in the athletic program was San Diego native and current golf course superintendent Ken Williams, CGCS. Williams, now in his 5th year at Stanford, is remarkably only the fourth superintendent since the George Thomas/Billy Bell Sr. design opened in 1930. "I've followed some great people and I'm honored to have this opportunity," remarked the easy going Williams when asked about the amazing longevity of the course's superintendents.

Overseeing a course rich in tradition, and one of the peninsula's finest, Williams timed his arrival on the "farm" perfectly. In 1994, golf architect John Harbottle was putting the finishing touches on an 18-hole green and bunker restoration project. Under Williams' capable leadership, he quickly established a goal of minimizing the Poa annua invasion of the Dominant bentgrass greens and implemented a program, which includes no time

aerification or verticutting and a minimal use of fungicides. Asked about the success of the program, Williams' hedges for a moment. "Without hand picking, I don't think you can ever completely prevent Poa invasion." "Our course is 70 years old and Poa is predominate throughout the golf course." "We have a much tougher battle slowing the Poa than the new courses." "In the spring, the Poa population in the greens increases to about 25%, by summer it's less than 10%." Not bad for a course that played 72,000 18-hole rounds last year.

In spite of the heavy traffic, Williams, his assistant Ruben Silveira and his staff of 12 full time employees regularly maintain the course to highly competitive standards. With a golf program of Stanford's caliber, producing recent all American's Woods and Joel Kribel, this is not a task to be taken lightly. Williams' success at Stanford can be credited in part to his management style, which includes grabbing a shovel when necessary. "Over the years I've learned in order to be successful it's important to hire good people, delegate and hold them accountable," Williams says. In addition, Williams aspires to a theory that the learning process never ends. He is considering adding more courses to his degree from Cal Poly Pomona by taking a few courses at Stanford. Says Williams, "In golf course management, I think it is impor-

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- March 6
Stanford GC - Etonic Seminar
"Enhancing Your Job
& Securing Your Future"
- March 23
USGA/NCGA at Castlewood CC
- April 10
Media Forum
- May 1, 2
CGSA State Meeting - San Diego
- May 22
Superintendent's Field Workshop
Ruby Hill Golf Club
- June 26
Superintendent - Pro Tournament
Green Hills CC

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Tiger Wins 6th Straight in Monterey

Tiger Woods overcame multiple obstacles to win the AT&T Pro-Am in Monterey. He survived fierce wind, rain, fog, losing the head off his driver, six-hour rounds, Tom Smothers' yo-yo antics and a Monday finish to outlast 180 professionals at the event. His final round 64 included an eagle on the par 4 15th hole. This was Tiger's six straight PGA Tour win bringing him within five of Byron Nelson's all time record of 11.

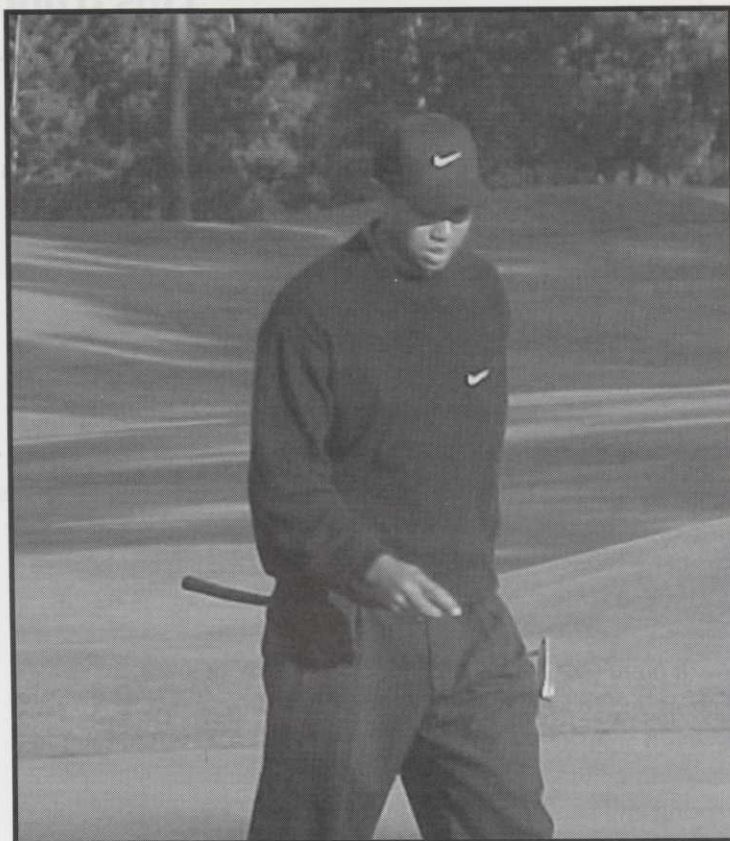
Tiger's \$720,000 victory check brought him to within \$40,000 of the PGA Tour's career earnings record held currently by Davis Love III. The event was contested over GCSANC member Manny Sousa's Poppy Hills GC, Eric Johnson's Spyglass Hill GC, and Mark Michaud's/ Eric Greypok's Pebble Beach Golf Links. Congratulations guys for a well run event! /

Home On The Farm (Cont'd)

tant to be conservative in your approach but at the same time explore new alternatives".

In an era when job related stress finds most superintendents relishing the opportunity to "get away" at day's end, Stanford's Williams makes his home right on the golf course. "It has its advantages," says Williams, a devoted family man. "It's given me greater flexibility to spend time with my kids, particularly when working the weekends." The home, which was originally constructed in 1877, sits amongst what was once Leyland Stanford's stock farm, where at one time over 300 horses roamed. Some horse stables still remain and are located adjacent to the golf course. Its occasional aroma is a constant reminder to Williams of Stanford's equestrian heritage.

In spite of the challenges of managing a university golf course and raising a young family, Williams has found the time to make an impact within the association, serving as a Director in '98 and '99 and as the newsletter editor since last spring. Williams was also instrumental in developing the highly successful Turfgrass Field Day, which debuted last May at Crystal Springs and will travel to Ruby Hill this year. On March 6th, Williams and Stanford will play host to the first in a series of GCSANC educational meetings that will feature a four-hour Etonic seminar followed by afternoon golf. "Our staff is excited and very much looking forward to hosting the GCSANC and the Etonic Seminar series" says Williams, an education advocate whom you could say is truly at home, down on the farm. /



Tiger strides toward victory at Monterey

*"Don't lose hope —
when it gets darkest, the stars come out."
—Unknown —*

GCSAA Develops Limited Budget Outreach Program

GCSAA is asking local chapters to identify limited budget golf facilities in their area. They will then match those facilities with local superintendent members who are willing to serve as mentors and provide assistance. The overall mission of the program is to help and enhance course conditions in order to help grow the game of golf, thereby fostering increased golfer enjoyment and participation in the sport.

This outreach program will promote communication and technical information transfer between experienced superintendents and those individuals in charge of maintenance at limited budget golf facilities. The program is geared to utilize existing relationships as much as possible and would use a non-threatening approach. Look for more information in the coming months in GCSAA's Newsline. /