

THRU THE GREEN



September, 1996

The Golf Course Superintendents Association of Northern California

GCSANC Members Preview San Juan Oaks at September Meeting

In one of the rarest of opportunities, San Juan Oaks Golf Club will play host to the September meeting, slated for Thursday the 12th. The GCSANC membership will enjoy the privilege of playing this brand new facility before its scheduled opening date of September 30th.

Under the guidance of Project Manager, Scott Fuller, course designers, Gene Bates and Fred Couples and Golf Course Superintendent, Brad Langley, what was once fields of onions and garlic has now been transformed into one of the finest public facilities in Northern California.

San Juan Oaks has gained instant notoriety as a result of the Bates, Couples collaboration, only the second of their new found association. The design incorporates much of the natural terrain of the area, working its way in amongst the hills above Hollister. Key features include five lakes connected by a series of man made creeks, and the use of native vegetation and grasses which come to play throughout the course. A feature of most contemporary design, each hole contains a selection of five tees playing into large greens.

No corners were cut on this project. In addition to the impressive design and layout the facility offers a spacious clubhouse, state of the art practice facility and a maintenance facility that would make any superintendent envious. Included are separate storage building for chemicals and fertilizers, a wash pad capable of recycling waste water, bulk storage bins and believe me much, much more.

Course superintendent, Brad Langley beams with pride when he talks about the project and indeed he and his staff have much to be proud of. Brad began his career in Turfgrass Management in 1985 at Poppy Hills Golf Course, where he gained valuable grow-in experience. His tenure at Poppy Hills continued as a member of the maintenance staff, and in 1990 he was honored to be selected into the NCGA Intern Program. Under the tutelage of Poppy Hills Superintendent, Manny Sousa, Brad completed the Internship Program in 1992. Along the way, Brad honed his turfgrass skills while attending horticulture classes at Monterey Peninsula College.

It was shortly after the completion of the Internship Program in 1992 when opportunity came knocking once again. This time Brad landed the Assistant Superintendent position at the prestigious California Club. During the 3 years he spent in South San Francisco, Brad, under former Superintendent, John Martin, gained some additional construction experience. While battling

nematodes provided enough of a challenge, the staff at the California Club was also rebuilding several tee complexes and renovating bunkers. Valuable experience that no doubt assisted in Brad's selection as the Golf Course Superintendent at San Juan Oaks on August 1, 1995.

Although the challenges over the past year have been many, Langley, a member of GCSANC since 1991, expresses concern over two problems that would make any superintendent a little nervous. Last winter runoff generated from the hillsides above the property caused flooding of the creeks and resulted in the overflow of several of the lakes. When the water receded, the silt left behind in the low lying areas was most troublesome and forced the construction of off site retention ponds designed to slow the movement of water onto the course. Only this years rains will determine their success. With winter's troubles tucked away for the time being, this summer brought four fires which ignited vegetation in the natural surrounding. The problem has been deemed so serious that management is exploring the option of banning all smoking during the summer months.

In spite of the push to ready the course for its scheduled late September opening, Langley is excited to play host to his peers. "It's an opportunity to showcase our course that so many have worked extremely hard to create," Langley says. "We're all very proud of what we have accomplished."

Editor's Note: The GCSANC Board of Directors extends their sincere thanks to the management and staff of San Juan Oaks Golf Club for affording the membership the opportunity to preview their facility

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