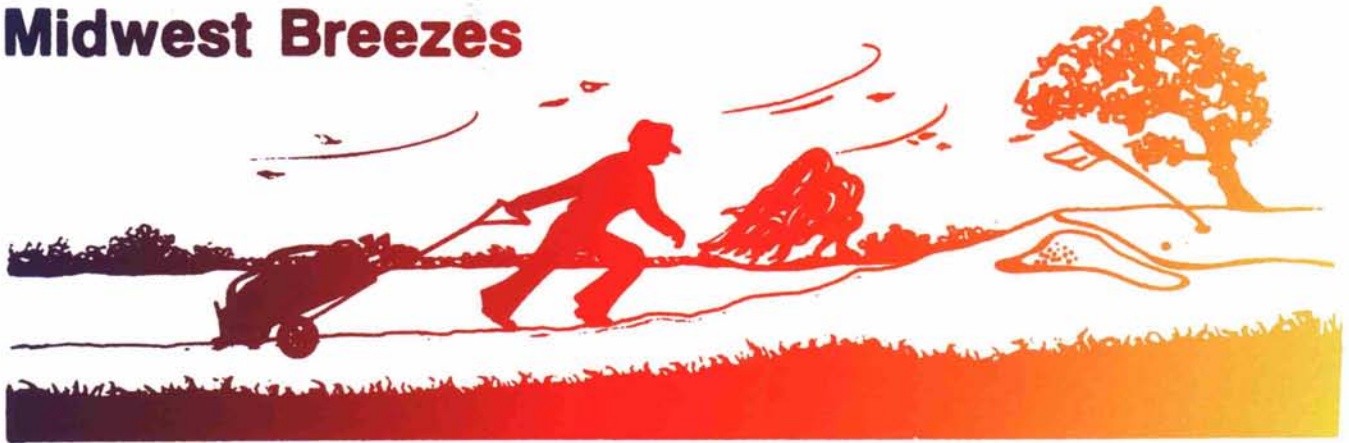


Midwest Breezes



Bon Vivant Country Club Remodels Course and Clubhouse

When Mike Vilendrer, CGCS, became the golf course superintendent for the Bon Vivant Country Club in 1996, he was confident that his turf management experience at Redtail G.C., Mount Prospect G.C. and White Mountain G.C. would serve him well in maintaining Bon Vivant's 36-hole track. What he didn't expect was to add the title "general contractor" to his resumé.

Bon Vivant is in the process of constructing a new clubhouse this winter, and Mike has found himself overseeing the entire construction process in his role as owner's representative. The project, which ultimately will provide Bon Vivant with a brand-new 16,000-square-foot clubhouse with banquet facilities for 250 golfers, pro shop, bar, meeting and locker rooms, is scheduled to open

July 1. According to Mike, everything is going FINE! (which is Mike-speak for "ask me again when the project is done").

Bon Vivant is a privately owned public golf course located in Bourbonnais, IL. The owner was so pleased with last year's tee renovation project (six acres of tees on the championship course regrassed to Penneagle bentgrass), he put Mike in charge of the clubhouse project. The championship course now plays to 7,565 yards with a course rating of 76.2 and a slope of 135.

Ouch.

—Fred Behnke, CGCS
Mount Prospect G.C.

Debuting a New Look for No. 3 at Cantigny Woodside

In November 2004, Cantigny Golf and Tennis in Wheaton, IL completed the renovation of par-3, hole no. 3 on the Woodside course. In preparation for the upcoming 2006 Western Junior Amateur and 2007 U.S. Amateur Public Links championships, Cantigny wanted to create a more challenging and aesthetically pleasing hole. The project guidelines included retaining all yardages and the existing green, yet called for recontouring the surroundings, improving irrigation and drainage AND adding four

strategically placed bunkers. The original green approach was increased from 3,000 to 25,000 square feet, and a triple-row irrigation system was installed. Doug Myslinski from Jacobson Golf Course Design, Mike Riorden from Riorden Renovations, and Liebold Irrigation Co. assisted in the completion of the project.

—Josh Murray
Cantigny Golf



Hole no. 3 at Cantigny Woodside: before and after renovation.

(continued on page 22)

Geneva Golf Club to Update the "3 Ts"

Geneva Golf Club will be celebrating its 105th anniversary this year. To commemorate this momentous occasion, the membership will shortly vote on a massive course/clubhouse renovation project. Ed Braunsky, CGCS, superintendent of the club, informs "Midwest Breezes" that the proposed project began as a "smallish" upgrading of the "3 Ts": trees, turf and traps, and grew into a full-blown master plan, including a new clubhouse to replace the aged existing facility. Dave Esler of Esler Golf Designs prepared a plan that will be voted on by the membership in January.

Esler's striking work at the St. Charles Country Club was on display recently at the Illinois Professional Turf Conference (IPTC), where Dave and several fellow golf course architectural firms, including Lohmann Golf Designs and Martin Design Partnership, gave a presentation on golf course renovations.

Three words for Mr. Braunsky—Flymos with ropes.

—Fred Behnke, CGCS

Mount Prospect G.C.

A Ditch's Transformation to Meandering Creek at Twin Orchard Country Club

Dave Blomquist, CGCS, started his new position at Twin Orchard C.C. on October 18, 2004. On October 19, he submitted a proposal to renovate an existing ditch that runs through the west side of the golf course, quickly putting his permanent stamp on the property.

The goal of the project was to eliminate the unsightly drainage ditch and create an aesthetically pleasing waterway with a positive clear-water flow. The ditch is a major focal point of the course as it runs a good distance across both layouts. Two large stone walls will be built to give the existing bridge a more impressive appearance. The cart path over the bridge will be done with orange crushed granite. Renovation of the ditch will create a

meandering creek that will give the illusion of being present before golf was ever played on the site. The creek will vary from ten feet wide to one to two feet wide, and will be lined intermittently with outcroppings of stone at the architect's discretion. The project also involves construction of two other bridges, one full-scale and one walking bridge. Installation of an irrigation tap that can be controlled both manually and electronically will enable a consistent water flow. The project began in late October and Dave and his staff expect to have it completed before play begins in the spring. The estimated cost is \$30,000.

—Brian Baker

Chicagoland Turf



An unsightly drainage ditch undergoes transformation to a meandering creek at Twin Orchard C.C.

Tweaking the Greens' Fertility Program at Hilldale Golf Club

First things first—Bryan and Julie Widmer are adjusting to life with a beautiful new daughter. Congratulations on the birth of Heleyna Elizabeth, born on November 27. She will take precedence over any new plans and changes Bryan wants to make in his work life. On that front, however, Bryan plans to make some changes to his greens' fertility program. The greens have been great during his first two years at Hilldale and his course puts a high value on the condition of the greens in marketing Hilldale. Although Bryan is reluctant to tinker with success, he nonetheless feels like he will recognize some savings by switching foliar fertilizer products, while still complementing his biostimulant use. This may include small amounts (0.05-0.1 lb. N/m) of ammonium

nitrate. He also plans to try the new wetting agent technology (Revolution from Aquatrols), which seems to be getting a lot of attention.

Second—and the sense is palpable that Bryan has really learned a lot about his property during his short tenure—Bryan wants to rely a bit less on his past experience when making decisions. To elaborate, he wants to make sure he continues to investigate all options and seek opinions, within his staff when appropriate, before making a judgment. In short, he wants to slow down, think things through, avoid anxious decisions and jumping into the next problem. That's certainly good advice for any of us!

—Brian Bossert, CGCS

Bryn Mawr C.C.

Inverness Golf Club Builds New, Flatter Practice Putting Green

One of Mike Bavier's first orders of business in 2005 will be a spring grow-in of Inverness Golf Club's new practice putting green. The construction work was done this past fall and now Mike is preparing for the bulk of the grow-in.

The Inverness membership had been considering rebuilding the practice green for quite a while. The majority of the greens on the course are severely sloped, some as much as 4.5%. The old practice green had been built in the same fashion. The feeling among the membership was that it was good for warming up before a round, in that it gave you a chance to practice the kinds of putts that you would encounter out on the course. However, since there was hardly a flat spot to be found, it did not accommodate the golfer who was just looking to work on his/her putting stroke.

During a conversation this past fall with Brent Wadsworth, the realization occurred that Wadsworth Construction Company had an opening in their schedule that could allow them to accommodate the project. With enough money left in the annual budget, the club decided that there was no time like the present and made the decision to begin construction imminently.

The membership had two main goals for the project. First, they wanted to incorporate a greater amount of flat area into the new green while still including some contours. With that in mind, the club enlisted the help of Doug Myslinski with Jacobson Golf Course Design to design the new green. Doug's proposed design called for approximately 60% of the new green to be relatively flat and the remaining area to include contouring between 1.5 and 3%.

The second goal was to have the finished product putt the same as all the other greens on the course. The majority of these greens are original push-up greens and the bentgrass on them consists of Penncross and some of the other older varieties. Mike and Doug decided that seeding with Pennlinks would provide a suitable putting surface, while still mimicking the quality and typical green speeds of the existing greens. As for the root-zone material, a 70% sand/20% peat/10% compost mix was chosen. They believed that the higher organic-matter content of this mix was more consistent with the native soil in the existing push-up greens. Additionally, the decision was made to leave out an underlying gravel blanket as none are present in any of the other greens.

Mike's staff then stripped off the existing turf on the putting green and surrounding areas and completed all of the prep work before Wadsworth's arrival. On October

29, construction began. From coring out the existing soil to seeding, it took four actual working days to finish the job. However, due to some untimely rains, the construction was not completed until November 13. That obviously left little time for any kind of seed establishment. In the hope of encouraging at least some germination and to protect the green over the coming winter, it was covered with two types of mats. First, workers laid Futerra blankets out on the green to help keep the seed in place. Then, they placed an Evergreen cover on top to aid in keeping the Futerra blankets in place and to further protect against any type of winter damage. The plan is to remove the Evergreen cover at the first sign of warmer spring weather. The netting on the Futerra blankets will be removed right before the first mowing.

Mike is happy to report that due to some late fall rain, along with a couple of short warm spells, a fair amount of germination has already taken place. The bulk of the grow-in, though, will take place in the spring and early summer of 2005. While Mike is hoping for a cooperative spring, he is also preparing for the many possible scenarios that he could soon be facing as unpredictable spring weather patterns take their course.

In addition to the grow-in, Mike plans a couple of other projects to tackle in the spring as well. First, an alternate practice putting green requires establishment. The plan is to convert the chipping green into the temporary putting green. The chipping green is normally maintained at 0.156". Mike believes that by slowly dropping the cutting height down to 0.125", along with applying some regular topdressing, the area will soon provide a putting surface similar to those on the course. Also, an existing asphalt cart path adjacent to the new putting green will be widened and redone with paver bricks to match the other nearby cart paths around the clubhouse area. The paver brick installation will be contracted out. Finally, construction of and landscaping around a stone knee wall in the area between the new putting green and the main parking lot is on the docket. This addition will improve the aesthetic appeal of the area and also help screen out the adjacent parking lot.

August 1 is the tentative opening date for the new practice putting green.

—Brian Mores
Inverness G.C.



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