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— a circle of professional friends who had the same or similar lifestyles.

“In this business you can burn out real fast or rust out if you stagnate and withdraw into your own narrow little world,” Dale says. “I can’t count the number of times a phone call or visit with fellow superintendents casually or at meetings has given me the answer or at least a better understanding of a current problem.”

This fall finds Dale passing on the gavel as president of the South Florida Chapter and accepting the same as president of the State Association.

“I will always stay involved on committees even when my official board duties are over,” says Dale.

“The excitement and motivation I get when I attend conferences and meetings helps recharge my enthusiasm for the

business. Superintending can be tough, especially in periods of bad weather. These breaks at conferences, surrounded by professionals, sharing shop talk, learning new ideas, seeing new products and techniques is like a tonic when you’re weary.”

After one conference his old adviser, Dr. Duich, asked Dale if he would return to Penn State and speak at their Annual Turf Conference. Dale was mortified at the thought of public speaking, but he owed so much to Dr. Joe he couldn’t refuse.

“How long?” Dale asked. “Oh, just an hour to an hour and a half,” said Dr. Joe. Dale’s topic was “Quality Public Golf North and South.” He survived. He had come full circle at Penn State.

He has other fond memories of Pennsylvania as he recalls Pittsburgh’s pro athletes from the Steelers, Pirates and

Penguins escaping the glare of publicity to hang out and play golf at Seven Springs. When in South Florida, they also stop by Colony West.

Dale showed me the “wall of fame” in the clubhouse lined with autographed pictures of Pittsburgh stars and said, “When Mean Joe Greene was coaching for the Dolphins, he was a regular here. Many of the former players still come by whenever they are in the area.”

Dale’s conference topic wasn’t a desperate choice to fill the time, either. Public golf is the mission of Colony West.

“We strive to provide a course that will appeal to golfers looking for high-end quality that is still affordable. The price of belonging to some private clubs is becoming prohibitive. We think we can fill a niche that is growing in golf,” he says.



View from behind the 413 yard 2nd hole. Photo by Daniel Zelazek.



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The Colony West golf course maintenance staff. Photo by Joel Jackson.

Colony West Country Club

Location: 6800 NW 88th Ave, Tamarac, Florida.

Ownership: Edward Rack Corporation.

Playing policy: Public.

Management Team: Clubhouse Manager, Norm Rack; Head Golf Professional, Craig Rack

Designed by: Bruce Devlin & Robert Von Hagge . 36 holes. Championship Course — Par 72 at 7,271 yards. Glades Course — par 65 at 4,207 yards.

Course/Slope/rating: Championship Course: Gold — 75.8/138; Blue — 73.9/135; White — 71.8/130; Red — 71.6/127.

Acreage under maintenance: 285 acres.
Waterways — 20 acres.

Championship Course/Glades Course Greens: 3.5/2.5 acres. Average size — 6,800/5,700 square feet. Turf type — Tifdwarf. HOC: Winter — .140 - .156. Glades — .170. Summer — .156" - .180". Glades — .180" - .200". Overseeding: Both — Poa trivialis @ 10 pounds per 1,000 square feet.

Championship/Glades Tees: 4/2 acres. Turf type for both — Tifway 419. HOC for both: Winter — .56". Summer — .43". Overseeding both — 30 pounds per 1,000 square feet of perennial ryegrass.

Championship/Glades Fairways: 32/45 acres. Turf type both — Tifway 419. HOC both: Winter — .56". Summer — .43". No overseeding.

Championship/Glades Roughs: 68/30 acres. Turf type — Tifway 419 and Common Bermudagrass. HOC — 1.5"

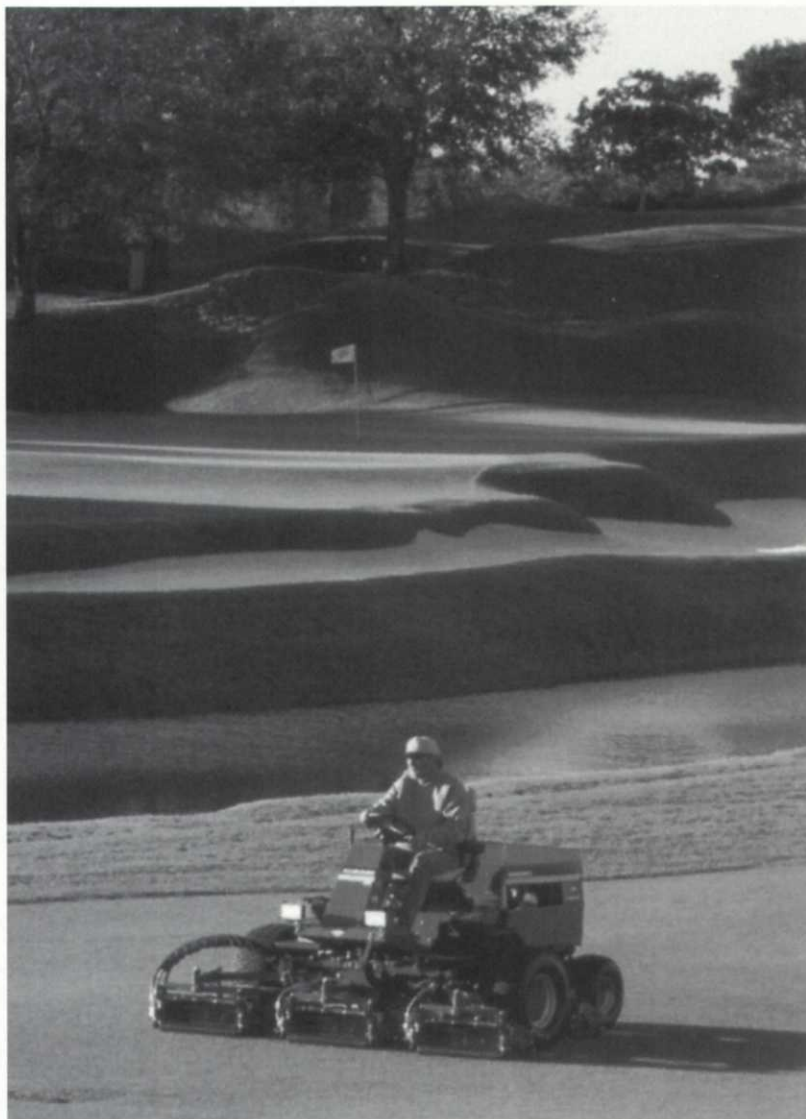
Irrigation: Source — surface water (lakes). Equipment: Championship Course — Two 100 hp vertical turbine pumps with one 25 hp jockey pump. Glades Course — One 100 hp vertical turbine pump with one 15 hp jockey pump. Controls: Championship Course — 30 Rainbird M5C Satellites. Glades Course — 18 Rainbird 15C Satellites. Rainbird Nimbus Computer 545 Central Controller.

Staff: Total of 21 including superintendent, Assistant superintendent, Gary Chaney. Head equipment technician, Duane Laney. Pest Control Techs, Dick Cline and Mike Wilson. Irrigation Techs, Steve Peraza and Brett Miller. Admin/Clerical, Cindy Kuehner and Nancy Rack.

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Avoid the bunkers on the par 3 17th hole and you're almost home. Photo by Daniel Zelazek.



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Colony West, like many public golf courses, tries to accommodate play as early as possible. With a 7:00 a.m. noise ordinance in effect, getting the course prepared for early morning shotgun tournaments requires constant and accurate communications with the pro shop!

Dale spoke about another challenge he faces managing the 285 acres under his domain.

"We are located in a Broward County well field. For the past 11 years we have undergone an annual site inspection for pesticide storage procedures. We have to submit quarterly samples from the two on-site monitoring wells. In all that time we have had one hit for arsenic levels. We initiated independent testing to find the source and the final conclusion was, 'Area soils naturally higher in arsenic content'."

On a lighter side, the Rain Bird Corporation uses Colony West as one of its Florida test sites so Dale gets his hands on new equipment from heads to controllers. We were riding around during my visit and Dale was turning zones on and off to water around golfers with his handheld unit — a new tool envied by all of us who don't have line-of-sight control of our irrigation.

Somehow we have to build a bridge to the owners over the sea of apathy that separates us so we can get their support for our lobbying efforts on behalf of golf.

On a philosophical note, Dale talked about the state of golf in Florida.

"Just look at Myrtle Beach, South Carolina! They market the entire area. They're united and it pays off.

"I don't know what it will take to be able to do something like that in Florida.

My uncle originated a First Union Bank MasterCard with golf discount privileges up to 40% in special walk-in vacancy situations and 20% in call-ahead reservations.

The clubs that initially participated couldn't even manage to train their point-of-sale people that the special existed and it never really grew into a strong marketing initiative. Somehow we have to build a bridge to the owners over the sea of apathy that separates us so we can get their support for our lobbying efforts on behalf of golf."

Dale also touched on job security.

"I realize I am in a unique position, but I am nonetheless concerned for the industry. I was talking to Tom Mascaro not long ago, and he has a long career to draw from. He sees changes more as recurring cycles that often hit the industry. Involved, dedicated, educated, progressive professionals will always have a better chance of survival no matter who is in charge of the club."

The Colony West acquisition by his family has allowed Dale to rightfully earn his spurs as a certified superintendent.

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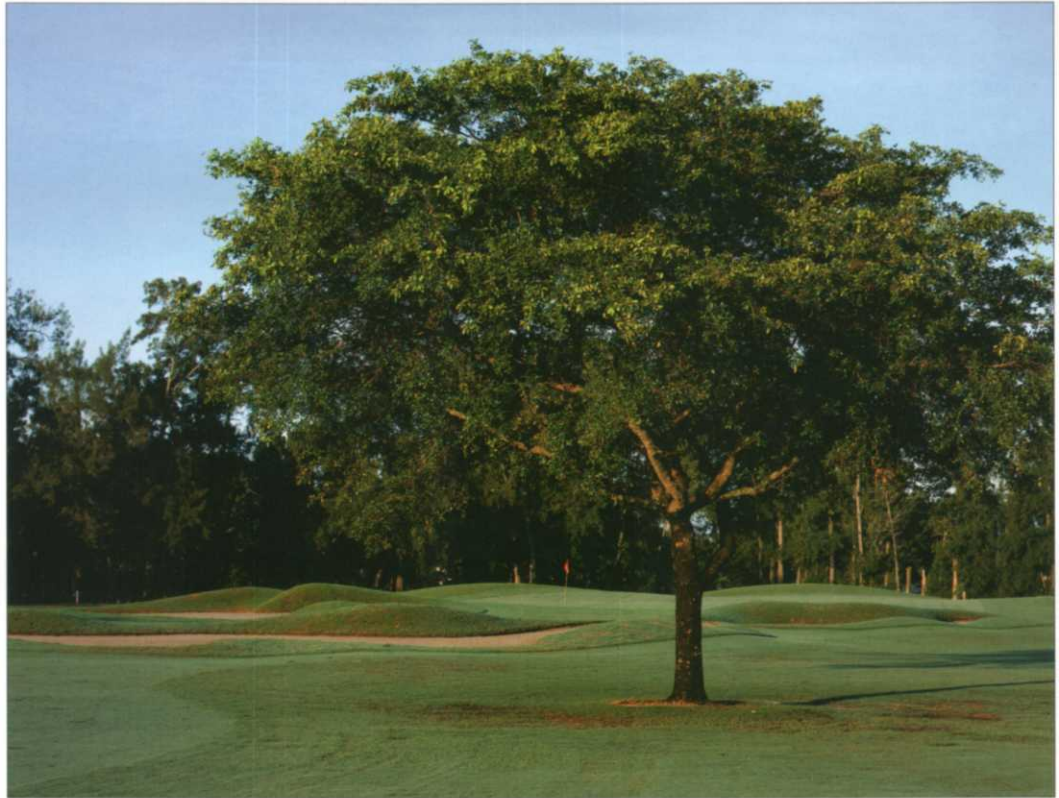
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Sometimes casual family gatherings or even holiday gatherings can turn into impromptu board meetings. But no matter what is discussed or when it is discussed, one thing is for sure. It's all in the family.



The 10th hole is the shortest par 4 at Colony West, but a sharp dogleg and green side bunkering keep applying the pressure. Photo by Daniel Zelazek.

Turf Trivia

Water Purification and Conservation

The biology of turfgrass soils makes lawns a near ideal medium for the biodegradation of all sorts of environmental contamination. The soils are active in purifying the water as it leaches through the rootzone and down into underground aquifers. Soil microbes associated with turfgrass cover help break down chemicals, including turf pesticides, into harmless materials.

As the population of an area increases, more impervious surfaces are constructed like streets, driveways, parking lots and roofs, and as a result, the rate of surface runoff increases and the time elapsed before runoff occurs decreases. A thick healthy lawn reduces runoff "to next to nothing."

A high quality turf will buffer loss of nutrients in runoff water or in the leachate. When effluent water is used on turf, the water is cleaned and this is a tremendous benefit to our environment. Ten percent of U.S. golf courses are already using effluent waste water for turfgrass irrigation. This reclaimed water by law cannot be returned to most municipal water supplies nor released into streams, lakes or oceans. Turfgrass therefore helps recycle this water into the environment.

Turf fertilization has resulted in unfounded accusations against lawns when nitrates are found in nearby ground water. Growing grass plants absorb most fertilizer nitrogen almost immediately, or, in the case of slow-release fertilizer, the nitrogen remains immobilized in the sod for gradual feed-out. Tests of water seeping through sod show that very little in the way of applied nutrients escape the grass itself.

Groundwater recharge is an important benefit of turf. An acre left in open space provides an average of 600,000 gallons of recharge per year. An average golf course of 150 acres will recharge the water table with a net of 90 million gallons of rainwater and snowmelt a year allowing for evaporation and transpiration. Consumption of water by a golf course of the same size would be about 9 million gallons.

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Equipment Maintenance Programs: People and Their Machines

Undeniably, people are the most important ingredient in a successful operation. Coming in a close second is the equipment these people use to groom a golf course. How we organize, house, purchase, operate, and care for the equipment also plays a crucial role in the overall success of our operations. I was hoping for more details on cutting-unit maintenance, but we'll visit that topic in more detail when we discuss mowing practices in coming issues. For your consideration in this issue, several superintendents and equipment managers have shared their thoughts and practices on organizing their overall programs.

Joel Jackson

Best Practices

BY JOE EAGLE

Shop Manager, Quail Ridge C.C.

Preview - I am basically new to the golf course business, although my background is in the equipment field as well as in teaching continuing education courses at Palm Beach Community College. This may sound like a strange mix. Stay with me.

I applied for the chief mechanic position at Quail Ridge Country Club in Boynton Beach in January 1995. During the initial interview I was told that they had combined the POA (Property Owners' Association) and Country Club maintenance operations, and it needed some help.

Step One - Assess the total layout and highlight inefficiencies to create a work flow. The operation was in desperate need of a complete overhaul. This is a practice that I do on a monthly basis now, just tweaking the system where needed. After developing a plan of action I spent time with the superintendent to get his views of the whole project. In addition, I welcomed input from other department heads of the POA. My plan seemed logical to me even though it appeared there were reservations on the part of most others. I wanted their thoughts, not their approval or disapproval.

Step Two - I created a business atmosphere in my office. I am there first as the shop manager — a leader for others — and last, a mechanic/technician.

Step Three - The employees of the maintenance department and I sat down

several times over the next two weeks to discuss past problems, including employees outside of the shop, department heads, spending constraints, equipment, responsibilities and my tentative plans for the future of the combined operation. Change does not come easily.

Step Four - I started putting my plans to work and kept a diary of positives and negatives for the first year. Questions and inquisitions would arise. The diary was a great source for helping department heads and employees see past situations and solutions. We moved on.

Step Five - Six months after these plans were enacted, my technicians and I had another roundtable discussion. We had worked very hard to get past attitude problems and work schedules and bring the equipment to a dependable and presentable level. All 437 pieces of it. No small task for myself and four others. We were now in a day-to-day routine that needed to move on. A PM schedule was finally hammered out and implemented. A PM schedule is simply a requirement of a good working atmosphere.

The figures justify the expenses in creating the atmosphere of fair workloads, operator comfort and eliminating over time requirements in all areas due to efficiently performing equipment. Most importantly, we got a true handle on expenses.

With the operators' needs now being taken care of at a rapid, pit stop fashion, we were able to shift a great deal of problem prevention back to the operators. Checking fluids on a per use basis, lubricating all fittings as needed on a per use