

# Some courses profited, others hurt from quake

In the Northern California golf industry, "location" took on a new definition in the weeks following the Oct. 17 earthquake. Was your course above Highway 17 — the freeway from San Francisco down to Silicone Valley — or at the end of 17?

If a course was unaffected by Highway 17 traffic, it fared better than normal because golfers couldn't travel the freeway south to the Santa Cruz area courses.

Aptos Seascape Golf Course, just east of Santa Cruz, suffered severely.

"Business is really down," said superintendent Mike McCraw.

"The highway is closed. People from Silicone Valley who get here on Route 17 can't get here. A lot of people have left Santa Cruz. Its beautiful old main street with old brick buildings that withstood the 1906 quake didn't withstand this one. A lot of people are

really hurting. The houses of some of my crew were destroyed."

DeLaveaga Golf Course superintendent D. Campbell Turner said play was down 30 percent at that Santa Cruz course because of the Highway 17 closure.

Dean Gump at Pasatiempo in Santa Cruz said: "The whole community was upside down... No one wanted to come out to play anyway and it was difficult for people to

get over the highway here. The road will be open Thanksgiving."

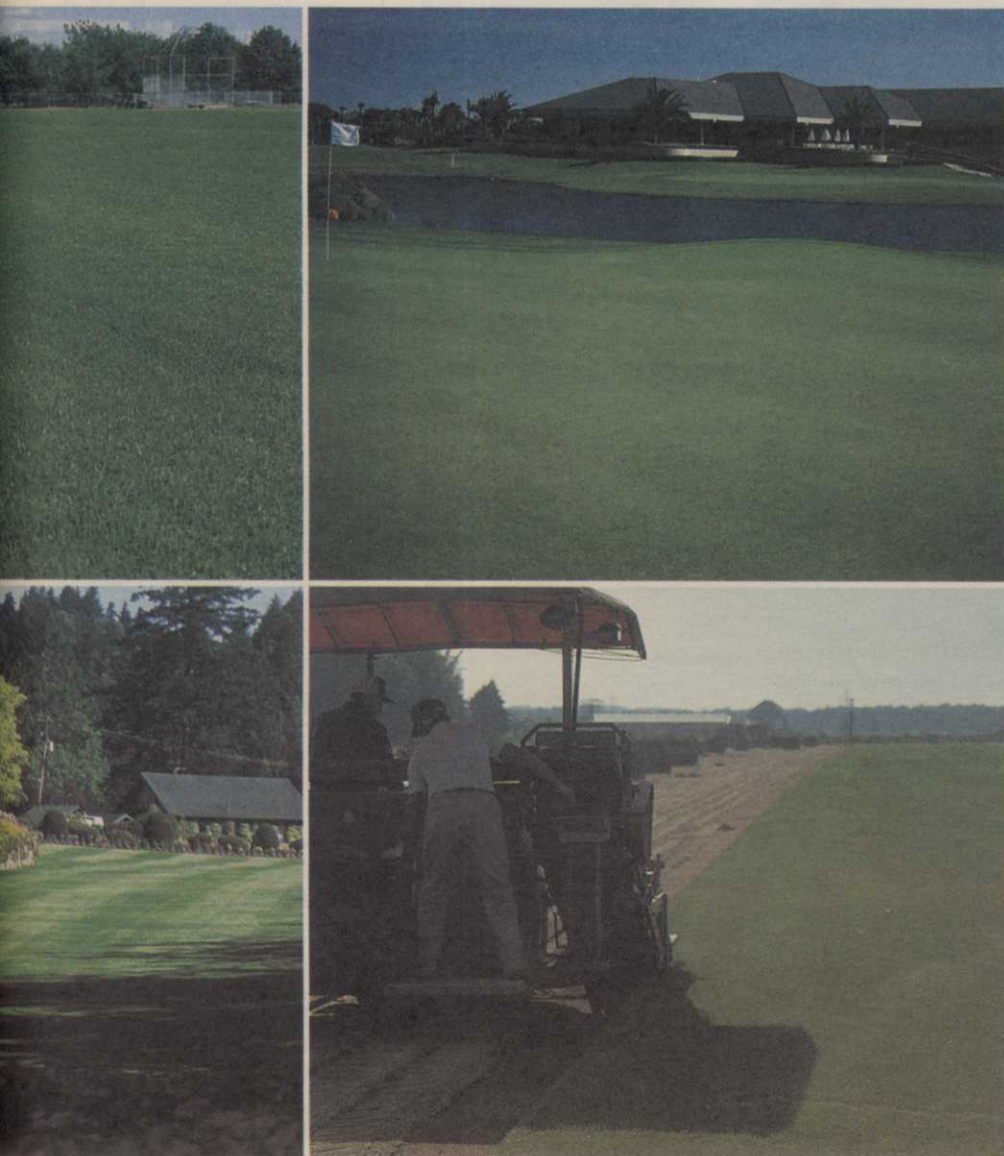
Yet at the other end of Highway 17 the story was different.

"Business has picked up because people can't get to Santa Cruz. It's now a four-hour drive instead of one hour," said superintendent Cliff Rourke at Riverside Golf Course in San Jose. "Our course was open the next day (after the quake). When it hit

people just played out their round. Quakes are not new to this area, though the magnitude of this one was different."

And at Los Altos Hills Golf and Country Club, superintendent Mike Simpson reported that, although the clubhouse was closed a couple of days, members were out on the course the next day "and wondering why there was no detergent in the ball washers."

# ty of reasons.



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## Quake

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At other effected courses, irrigation systems took the brunt of the quake's damage. Although Los Altos Hills Golf and Country Club sustained a "sizeable split right down the middle" of one green, superintendent Mike Simpson said five breaks in his main line were his greatest concern.

Cracks and splits in the cement pipe system required that sections of pipe were cut out and new ones installed. Four of the breaks were three to four feet down in the ground, but the fifth was 10 to 15 feet below the surface, Simpson said, and it was still being worked on in mid-November.

Superintendent Cliff Rourke at Riverside Golf Course in San Jose said his 35-year-old steel irrigation system sustained a dozen main line breaks.

"It's real brittle and the quake wrinkled it enough to cause a problem," Rourke said.

All the pipes around the greens are PVC, so the damage was confined to fairways, and Rourke said, "The final effect wasn't really so bad because it exposed deteriorations in the system sooner than normal.

"The breaks were three to five feet deep; we dug down and welded them."

Yet a universal case against old irrigation systems could not be made. Aptos Seascape's McCraw reported that his 30-year-old asbestos concrete system "came through with flying colors."

The earthquake had one positive effect in that golf course officials were forced to re-examine their quake preparedness programs if they hadn't already.

DeLaveaga's Turner said a preparedness training seminar was held shortly before the quake hit. "The main thing as far as the course is concerned is that you've just got to react," he said.

When that time came on Oct. 17 it was after 5 p.m. and the DeLaveaga maintenance staff was gone for the day. But the golf course marshal was on hand and he turned off the electricity while someone else turned off the gas — the two vital moves.

Pasatiempo's Gump said, "We make sure everyone knows how to turn off the electricity, gas and water."

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