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# GOLF COURSE NEWS

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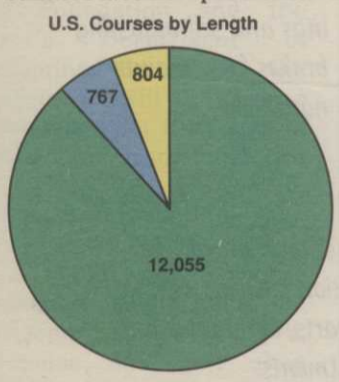
## Recovering from Hugo

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takes design back to the future

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Hurricane struck Carolina courses in random fashion

BY TOMMY BRASWELL  
With Staff Reports  
Some greenskeeping and tree-company crews in the Carolinas continue to clean up golf courses that, in the wake of Hurricane Hugo's 135-mph winds, looked like a giant game of Pick Up Sticks.

Of the \$4 billion trail of destruction Hurricane Hugo left as it hammered the region from Charleston, S.C., to Charlotte, N.C., on Sept. 21, millions of dollars of damage were done to golf courses.

Courses from Charleston to the Grand Strand as well as some 200 miles inland were closed — for days, weeks, months, and some for as long as a year — because of the devastation  
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Photo by Tommy Braswell  
A boat rests on the 12th green at Wild Dunes' Harbor Course on Isle of Palms, South Carolina.

## Europe opens arms to golf experts

BY JAN BELJAN  
Countries from Spain to The Netherlands and from Sweden to the United Kingdom are hoping to go "golf crazy," yet are engulfed in the same mass of red tape that faces golf course builders in the United States, according to experts speaking at

Golf Course Europe '89.  
The exhibition and conference in Wiesbaden, West Germany, in October drew some of the top names in the golf industry from around the globe, and in concert they agreed the opportunities in Europe are great.

"There is a pent-up demand for golf in Europe," said Michael Redd, president of Team Plan, Inc., in Florida. "The opportunities for American professionals are great, but along with them come some constraints — elaborate language, time, working conditions."  
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PGA World Golf Hall of Fame Shrine Gardens honor superintendents.

## Garden honors supers

Shrine Gardens, recognizing golf course superintendents' service and contributions to the game, have been dedicated on the grounds of the PGA World Golf Hall of Fame located in

Pinehurst, N.C.  
Developed by founding sponsor The Toro Co., the landscaped gardens are located at the entrance to the shrine  
*Continued on page 18*

## Supers' needs foster inventions

By PETER BLAIS  
A Florida company has developed a long-sought solution to the problem of fairway grass encroaching into greens and tees.  
Boca Raton-based DonuTTrimmer Inc. has installed the \$50,000 system on an experimental basis on four Southern courses.  
Despite the hefty price tag, company officials claim Greens Encroachment will pay for itself in labor savings within two years.

"It will really be a big thing for the golf course industry in the coming years. It's something we've needed very badly and should become very popular," said Wilmington (Del.) Country Club's Paul Latshaw, one of the country's best-known superintendents.

The Greens Encroachment product is the brainchild and the latest in a string of labor-saving turf  
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# Hugo

Continued from page 1

left by the Force 4 hurricane.

Hugo snapped 100-year-old pine trees like toothpicks, uprooted many majestic oaks and left its own indelible imprint on one of the country's major golf destinations. One course received an estimate of more than \$300,000 for tree removal alone.

Huge tidal surges, reaching as high as 19 feet, cut their own trail through some of the golf courses, exposing irrigation lines, undermining cart paths, leaving a 32-foot boat perched on a green, washing away dunes and removing part of the 17th green and tee at one course with surgical precision. Some of the millions of trees left standing are "in shock" and it may be a year before golf course superintendents will know if those trees will indeed survive the root damage and possible rot or disease infesting their broken limbs.

Much of Hurricane Hugo's fury hit two Tom Fazio-designed courses at Wild Dunes Resort on the Isle of Palms, just a few miles north of historic Charleston.

The seaside 17th and 18th holes of Wild Dunes' world-ranked Links Course were severely damaged, and there still remains some question as to whether the holes can be rebuilt because of the state's recently enacted Beachfront Management Act.

Already, Fazio has visited the course to survey the damage and begin formulating a plan for rebuilding.

The damage estimate on Wild Dunes alone may run more than \$2 million. The irrigation system received severe damage. Pump stations were submerged in saltwater and now are useless. Many of the control boxes were uprooted and almost all were submerged. Much of the irrigation pipe itself remained intact and is expected to be salvageable.

Many bridges on the Harbor Course also were destroyed in the hurricane, some of them washing across the Intracoastal Waterway onto neighboring Goat Island.

Cleanup efforts began almost immediately, but greens superintendent Mike Fabrizio was forced to search throughout the island for maintenance equipment, which had been commandeered by National Guard troops protecting the island while martial law was imposed for more than a week after the storm.

Wild Dunes laid off all but 62 of nearly 500 employees in the aftermath of the storm. Director of golf Terry Florence, Links Course head professional Steve Behr and Harbor Course head pro Tommy Young remained on staff, but the rest of the assistant pros, shop personnel and others were laid off.

Fabrizio and about half of his 24-man grounds crew were retained.

"We're going to rebuild, but we have to see what we can do," Florence said. "With the exception of the trees, we can strengthen the golf course. We have to do something to overcome the loss of the trees."

Fabrizio estimated that well over 50 percent of the course's trees had been destroyed, trees that cannot be replaced. In addition to the replacement of the trees, he faces another, more immediate problem: how to dispose of the downed trees. He hopes he will be allowed to burn the trees, for trucking the debris off the island will be an expensive and time-consuming process.

A tree service has been consulted and soon will begin a renourishment program for the remaining trees.

Fabrizio said he is uncertain what will happen with the par 4 17th hole, where both the tee and green were claimed by the ocean. Enough remains of the par 5 18th that it can be rebuilt.

Both maintenance buildings received heavy damage, and most of the equipment, too, will have to be replaced.

A reopening date has not been set, although Florence said he hopes to put together 18 holes, probably in some combination from the two courses, for play by spring.

Some 3 1/2 miles inland of Wild Dunes, across the massive but shallow expanse of Gray Bay, lies Charleston National Country Club, which was scheduled to open just a week after the storm. Charleston National is planned as an equity membership club, and club officials are still striving to retain that format as they dig deeper into their pockets to keep things going for an opening delayed some six months.

The course, designed by Rees Jones, received little structural damage. The 18 holes are intact, although there was one small breach that allowed saltwater to intrude into one of the lagoon systems. Heavy rains after Hurricane Hugo helped leach the

# Hurricane Jerry easy on Texas

Most golf courses in the Galveston, Texas, region escaped heavy damage from Hurricane Jerry, which touched down about 9 p.m. Oct. 15 and was gone three hours later.

While superintendent Hank Rhodes of South Shore Harbor Country Club next to Clear Lake reported "significant tree damage," spokesmen in the maintenance departments at a number of other courses said Jerry did little harm.

"The eye passed right over us," Rhodes said. He said his course lost about 100 pine, oak and Chinese tallow trees, mostly 6- to 8-inch diameter, costing about \$50,000 in tree damage, he said.

The storm also leveled four partially built homes in the golf course community, including two in the \$500,000 range that were framed.

Rhodes' 11-man crew was cutting and hauling the downed trees.

He said that although the area had received 25 inches of rain in a

tropical storm in July and 22 inches from Hurricane Chantal in early August, the 2 1/2 inches from Jerry put a welcome end to a dry spell.

A spokesman said Bay Forest Golf Course in La Porte lost about 25 trees, following the 45 it lost in Hurricane Chantal.

Elsewhere, spokesmen at Golfcrest CC in Pearland, Clear Lake CC, and Galveston CC all said the worst damage they suffered was a few lost trees.

saltwater, which covered seven or eight of the marsh-side holes, from the soil.

No equipment was lost to storm damage. The heavy equipment had been moved to the highest point on the golf course — the middle of the fifth fairway — and escaped the saltwater and falling trees.

Jones visited the course after the storm and said the damaged trees would actually open the marsh vistas on some holes. Charleston National official Tom Dyer said nine holes would reopen within a couple of weeks and the club planned to hold its first member-guest tournament before Christmas.

The devastation of Hurricane Hugo was random. Patriots Point Golf Links in Mount Pleasant, a public course that overlooks Charleston Harbor, was the first Charleston-area course to reopen, 2 1/2 weeks after the storm. The green on the par 3 17th at Patriots Point sits out in the marsh on the edge of Charleston Harbor, but according to golf professional Dave Nelson, the green apparently was covered by the tide before the storm surge hit, protecting the green. The heavy rains helped leach the salt from the soil.

Most other Charleston-area courses received heavy tree damage. The three courses at

Kiawah Island had lots of downed trees. A spokesman for the resort said reopening the resort was being delayed until all the cleanup work had been finished "in order not to compromise the guests' stay."

Osprey Point was to reopen Nov. 1 and Marsh Point a couple of weeks later. Turtle Point will remain closed while some renovation work, including expanding some of the greens, is taking place.

A spokeswoman for Landmark Land Co., which owns the Kiawah resort, said the Pete Dye-designed course being built for the 1991 Ryder Cup Matches has few trees and was unhurt by the storm and construction resumed after just one day.

Courses further south of Charleston received only minor tree damage and reopened almost immediately.

Hope Plantation on John's Island near Kiawah and Seabrook Island resorts, kept its early November opening on schedule.

"We were extremely fortunate not to have sustained any real damage from the storm," said Hope Plantation head golf pro John Roperta.

Haig Point on Daufuskie Island, S.C., also escaped tHugo's wrath and expected to open its third nine on schedule in late fall.

Other courses in the golf-happy Grand Strand region received minor damage and most were reopened within a few days after Hurricane Hugo, although they are battling an image problem painted by the national news media which led people to believe the entire South Carolina coast was leveled.

Debordieu in Georgetown received extensive saltwater damage and some downed trees, but general manager Wallace Street said the course would reopen within 45 days, even if some of the greens had to be resodded.

Pawleys Plantation also received some damage and was temporarily closed, but reopened in mid-October.

The Dunes Club in Myrtle Beach received some saltwater damage on three holes and was closed for a couple of weeks.

Other courses in the Grand Strand actually benefitted from the respite in play, which allowed superintendents to get them in the best condition they've been in for several years.

Charlotte hurting  
But 200 miles away, Charlotte courses were heavily battered.

Perhaps worst hit was Myers Park Country Club, where, according to superintendent Dave Powell, 800 to 1,000 trees were

Continued on page 35



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# DonuTTrimmer

*Continued from page 1*  
management inventions by company founder Thomas Wait. With tongue firmly planted in cheek, Wait claims the concept for Greens Encroachment, like his other inventions, took root in his own laziness.

"Anything I can find to make my job and others' easier intrigues me," he said.

The need for a more efficient way to maintain some of the Sunshine State's median strips led to the company's flagship product — the DonuTTrimmer edging blade.

In talking to course superintendent and partner Joseph DeMino of Rochester, N.Y., Wait discovered the circular blades (which come in diameters of 3, 4, 5, 7 and 8 inches) could also be used to edge around sprinkler and mist heads, bunkers, cart paths and sidewalks in a fraction of the time and cost. Wait and DeMino determined there was a need for the product after attending the 1988 GCSAA International Golf Show in Houston, Texas, and they patented the blades.

To gain exposure, they volunteered to detail the courses at several tournaments including the 1988 Honda Classic held at TPC at Eagle Trace in Coral Springs, Fla., and other 1988 and 1989 major tournaments.

Their efforts were well received by course superintendents attending those tournaments. The response was overwhelming in April 1988 when the first advertisements for the blades appeared.

"Our marketing company told us a new product did well if it got eight to 10 responses a month from a single ad," said Wait. "We were getting that many a day."

Meanwhile, the second product was invented by a local

superintendent and was developed and marketed by DonuTTrimmer.

The Aqua-Quick is a disc made of solid aluminum that can instantly turn any Toro or Rainbird valve-in sprinkler into a 1-inch water source. It can be used with a standard swivel or quick coupler valve. It can also be used directly for syringing greens, tees, hot spots or connecting a temporary sprinkler.

"We had the drought last summer, so it was a good time to be introducing a product like that," said Wait.

Meanwhile, Wait was devising two other products — the Level-Eez and Greens Encroachment.

The Level-Eez allows the superintendent and his staff to drastically cut the time to complete one of their distasteful tasks, raising sunken valve-in-head sprinklers, quick coupler valves and valve boxes. The everything-you-need kit reduces the time to raise a sprinkler head from about 90 minutes to as little as 5 without digging. The stainless steel and aluminum kit raises the object by forcing water around it and pulling it upward with a platform puller. This procedure does much less cosmetic damage than the traditional method of digging and setting the object being raised.

"It looks like your course is full of potholes when the sprinkler heads sink," said Wait. "Carts and mowers are always running over them and can be damaged. Also, a golfer can twist an ankle in one of them. Raising a sprinkler head is one of the worst jobs on a golf course. This makes it a lot easier."

As useful as the other three products are, they don't compare to the possibilities of Greens Encroachment, according to Latshaw, the only superintendent to oversee three of the four major tournaments, the 1978 PGA



Paul Latshaw, right, oversees Greens Encroachment installation.

Championship and 1983 U.S. Open at Pittsburgh's Oakmont CC and the 1987-89 Masters at Augusta National. Latshaw became a consultant and stockholder with the company last June 1.

Fairway grass encroaching on greens has been a problem that has long defied solution. It has been particularly troublesome on Southern courses where the typical bermudagrass fairway chips away at the size and quality of the typical bentgrass and bermuda greens.

The idea for Greens Encroachment came, oddly enough, while Wait was peeling the top off a 12-pack of chewing gum. It occurred to him that a device that would lift an offending grass off the course, like the string lifted the top off the gum package, might do the trick.

He devised a two-piece plastic border, about 8 inches in depth and 1/2 inch in width, that is buried about 1 inch below ground level around the fringe of the green. A manual edging device that fits in between the track is pushed around the green, lifting out the encroaching grass including the stolons that try to root themselves

to the putting surface.

The product will come two ways, the first being a complete package including material, installation equipment and training so the superintendent and crew can install it themselves. The company will also install it, bringing in a four-man crew to put the border around all 18 greens (and tees and other areas if necessary) of an average course in about 20 days, without interrupting play and leaving little or no evidence of the installation.

The cost of the procedure will start at \$50,000 for an average 18-hole course. Greens Encroachment will pay for itself in labor savings within two years based on replacement costs of contaminated sod, Wait predicted.

The company and products were introduced formally at February's GCSAA annual convention. Lines formed at the DonuTTrimmer booth to get a look at and discuss Greens Encroachment, Wait said. The response was so great that Wait and DeMino had to take names and telephone numbers and promise to call back.

The product is currently installed on a test basis at Carolina

Country Club in Spartanburg S.C., Plantation CC in Ponte Verde, Fla. and Loxahatchee CC in Jupiter, Fla.

"That's where we are with it right now," said Wait, who has begun marketing Greens Encroachment and the other three products vigorously in preparation for February's annual superintendent's show in Orlando, Fla., his home state.

He predicts DonuTTrimmer 1990 revenues will exceed last year's 70-percent increase, mainly because of Greens Encroachment.

But Wait said he'll be looking for more ways to make his job, and those of other people in the turf profession, a little easier.

"I've got another five ideas or so rolling around in my head right now," he said, "but our company's goal is to market these four products so everyone in the turfgrass industry can take advantage of these labor-saving devices. I think the industry focuses on safety first, budget second and product performance third. I know our products fit into these categories."

## Hugo

*Continued from page 34*

uprooted or broken to the ground.

"I've never seen any storm of this caliber in my life," said Powell, who has been the club's superintendent for 20 years. "There are huge haps where trees once stood. You could call it a major thinning."

Some of the trees were 90 or 100 years old, Powell said, estimating their value at \$250,000.

The timber company contracted to remove the debris was expected to be 4 1/2 to five weeks on the job.

Powell and his 15-man crew opened the front nine on Oct. 14 and the opening of the back nine hinged on the Greens and Ground Committee's decision on whether to wait for the trees to be hauled off.

Powell attributed much of Hugo's damage to soft ground, saying he thought many of the big trees would not have been uprooted if the summer had been drier.

A few miles away, Quail Hollow CC was in "perfect" condition on the eve of the Senior Tour's Payne-Webber Invitational when the storm tore into town. The result: a canceled tournament and more than 700 down or damaged trees, according to assistant superintendent Mark Harris.

"The press tent was demolished and everything went down," Harris said, but the overall look of the course has not changed because most of the larger trees that fell were along the tree line of the tees and fairways.

The clubhouse also lost part of its roof, but head superintendent Ray Avery's 22-man crew had the front nine holes open seven days later and the back nine open in two weeks.

*Tommy Braswell is a golf writer for the Charleston (S.C.) Post-Courier papers.*



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