

Return to 'traditional' course design

It was exciting to watch the British Open this year.

The nearly flawless play of Nick Faldo was most commendable. However, the more I learn about golf course design, the physical make-up and layout of a golf course attract my attention more than the great play of world-class professionals.

The Old Course at St. Andrews is truly what golf was meant to be played on. I believe a return to the more traditional designs is at hand.

PGA Commissioner Deane Beaman even admitted that he now feels the TPC course at Ponte Vedre, Fla., is too extreme and that, basically, it's time to rethink



golf course design. I couldn't agree more!

I believe most of the architects and designers today agree that a

less extreme, less radical design is the future.

Jack Nicklaus commented recently that many of his designs come as a result of the developer/owner's request. They tell Jack they want a "top 10" golf course. Today, many feel that to be the best it's got to be long and play like U.S. Open conditions.

I disagree. Just play a Donald Ross course and you'll get the feel of what golf was meant to be and, in my opinion, will return to.

This month's editorial feature takes a look at the seed and sod industry, focusing particularly on Zoysiagrass sod.

I recently got a first-hand look at the great Northwest seed and sod business when visiting a few of our good friends in the Willamette Valley of Oregon.

If you've never had the opportunity to visit a seed farm or seed research facility, it's a tremendous learning experience.

My experience came courtesy of Turf-Seed Co. Bill Rose and

company were kind enough to include me in the rehearsal of their field day event. As a result I'm planning a return trip to attend a few of the field days that are held annually in June in the Northwest.

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Sincerely,
Charles E. von Brecht
publisher

Researchers know Solomon was right

BY MARK LESLIE

Pests and diseases, droughts and floods, extreme cold and extreme heat. All could endanger quality turf — the kind that golf courses absolutely need.

But **could** is the operative word here. For as the battle for survival is being waged where our feet tread, the war may be won in far-off laboratories and test fields.

That is where turf scientists at universities and private companies ply their trade, where they strive to breed the best turf available, to conquer whatever might attack their charges.

Sound overstated?

Perhaps. But golf is a mega-industry that makes billions of dollars a year for the courses and the businesses surrounding them, from resorts to restaurants and hotels.

And crucial to the golf industry



is healthy turf.

As environmentalists push to outlaw chemical treatment of turf and field burning

where turf seed is grown, seed producers and others must look ahead. Indeed, they are looking ahead, getting a jump on possible legislation that would imperil them.

King Solomon wrote:

"A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest — and poverty will come on you like a bandit and scarcity like an armed man." (Proverbs 6:10-11)

And again in Proverbs 13:24, he wrote:

"Diligent hands will rule, but

laziness ends in slave labor."

As evidenced at field days held this summer in the Northwest, the seed industry is not slumbering.

It is taking a lead position — for survival reasons as much as humanitarian.

Research is paying off.

Jacklin Seed Co. and Turf-Seed Inc. unveiled turf seed varieties that grow well even when the growing fields are burned each year.

Most likely, other companies are doing the same.

Turf Merchants has bred a dwarf fescue that it says produces minuscule amounts of clippings. With many landfills banning grass clippings, this will be a critical advancement for many golf courses.

Other company and university researchers are daily working to

produce grasses that require less water, or that grow more slowly and thus need less mowing, or that are more tolerant of heat or cold.

Whatever problem might exist out there in the Land of Turf, be assured turf experts are advancing the cause of turf survival. It's no little matter — in quality of play for golf courses and in dollars for the turf seed industry.

The bottom line is, he who produces the best of a product lives to produce yet another day. He who dallies, perishes — left behind by his customers as well as his competition.

As American essayist Logan Pearsall Smith wrote early this century:

"How can they say my life isn't a success? Have I not for more than 60 years got enough to eat and escaped being eaten?"

COMMENT

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