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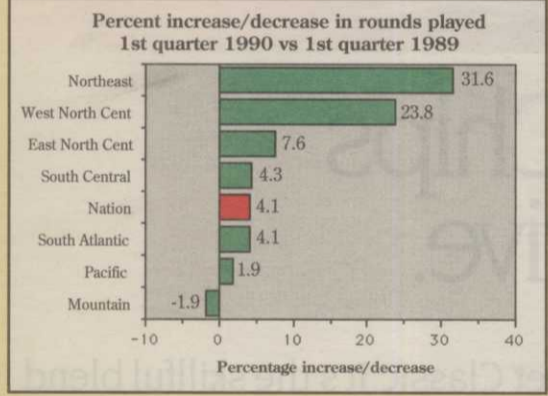
# GOLF COURSE NEWS

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## INSIDE

- 17 FIELD-BURNING** referenda fail
- 19 NATURE** more important to research
- 20 ZOYSIA SOD** popular, expensive
- 29 HANDICAPPED** course takes shape



- ### News
- Japanese firm reneges on Bay Hill buy ..... 3
  - Talks proceed on \$500M Grand Lair plan ..... 3
  - USDA honors Dr. C. Reed Funk ..... 4
  - LPGA complex gains approval ..... 5
  - Americans featured at Golf Course Europe .... 6
  - NCA announces environmental insurance ..... 7

- ### Departments
- Comment**
  - Researchers take no rest ..... 8
  - Letters**
  - Turf industry must plan ahead ..... 9
  - Super Focus**
  - Dick Bator tackles Merion challenge ..... 12
  - New Courses**
  - U.S. Open win spurs business for Irwin ..... 14-15
  - Government Update**
  - Clubs lose millions in High Court decision ... 16-18
  - Association News**
  - ASTA names executive vice president ..... 24-25
  - On the Move**
  - Murphy sales manager at Jacobsen ..... 30
  - Business News**
  - Continental buys bridge line ..... 32
  - New Literature**
  - 'A Tribute to Golf' scores an ace ..... 33
  - New Products**
  - New equipment hits the marketplace ..... 34-35
  - On the Green**
  - Future Golf removes boredom from range ..... 38



A worker at Sweetwater Country Club in Sugarland, Texas removes bermudagrass sod from a green damaged by this winter's record cold. The facility was among numerous Southern courses that suffered extensive winter kill requiring greens to be torn up and replanted. The extent of the damage wasn't known in many areas until the bermudagrass emerged from dormancy this spring.

## Kill costs courses millions

BY PETER BLAIS  
The winter freeze cost Southern courses millions of dollars, forcing many to reseed greens and some to close for as long as two months. The cold temperatures that struck in early December killed much of the Bermudagrass on courses from Texas to South Carolina. Unfortunately the problem went undetected until spring when the overseeded ryegrass began to die out and the Bermuda traditionally starts to grow. Only this time the Ber-

muda never greened up. "It just stayed dirt brown once the rye died off," said Gilbert Medrano, head superintendent at First Colony's new public course in Houston. The damage was so bad First Colony closed its doors May 29 and wasn't scheduled to re-open until July 26. It cost \$25,000 to reseed all 18 greens. Assistant pro Scott Rethlake pegged lost business at another \$180,000. Most courses were able to remain open, but had to resort to temporary

greens. Nearby Sweetwater Country Club in Sugarland was "pretty severely" damaged but continued play on temporaries, according to superintendent Todd Stevens. "We lost enough grass that we decided to replant all 27 greens to keep them consistent later on. We stripped the sod, tilled them up, fumigated, contoured and re-sprigged. We planted June 22 and they look good. They are about 80 percent covered." *Continued on page 31*

## S&L crisis hits golf

Let's make a deal goes nationwide...

BY PETER BLAIS  
Golf courses nationwide are available at bargain-basement prices thanks to a savings and loan crisis that has left several courses in the hands of the Resolution Trust Corporation. In the Phoenix, Ariz., area alone, two courses are for sale. Superstition Springs in Mesa and Happy Trails Resort in Surprise were the property of Western Savings, which was placed into

receivership May 31, according to Western Savings Vice President of Real Estate Investment and Sales Paul Timm. They are being marketed by the RTC, which was established to sell off closed savings and loan properties. Superstition Springs is a 646-acre project undertaken by Western Savings and Loan Association in the early 1970s. The 18-hole Greg Nash-designed *Continued on page 27*

## ...as foreigners, pensions pick up slack

BY PETER BLAIS  
Foreign investors and pension funds are replacing beleaguered savings and loans and commercial banks as major funding sources for existing courses and new course construction. "With the S&L crisis, those institutions are basically out of the golf course business. A lot of money used to come from the S&Ls. Now they're history," said Stanton Abrams, president of Senior Tour Players Inc., a Boston-based

company involved in golf course communities and representing many famous Senior players. "Commercial banks have had a lot of problems with bad loans. So that money has basically dried up, too." **Foreign investment**  
Led by the Japanese, foreign investors are now filling a large part of the funding void. The Japanese have bought *Continued on page 26*

## Seed harvest excellent

BY MARK LESLIE  
A bumper crop looms this month, creating good and bad news for people in the turf seed and golf industries. "This is shaping up as the best crop for a number of years," said Scott Patterson, vice president in charge of turf seed at Peterson Seed Co. in Savage, Minn. "There is a lot of acreage. We had good burns last fall. Growing conditions were excellent last winter and good growing this spring. And now they're out and dry like they need to be for harvest." Dennis Hays, executive vice president of the Oregon Seed Trade Association, whose members grow the vast majority of seed used on golf courses, *Continued on page 19*