

Snow takes Green Section into age of ecology

BY PETER BLAIS

Jim Snow has a father's desire to leave the Earth better than he found it for his children, a trait that should help him as the new national director of the United States Golf Association Green Section.

"The environment is the hot topic everywhere you go," said 3-1/2-year-old Kevin Snow's dad. "We have to think about the environment in everything we do while maintaining our courses.

"The environment was barely an afterthought when I first got in the business. But we can't ignore it now. Golf will be trampled if we do."



Jim Snow

Snow, who joined the Green Section in 1976 straight out of Cornell University's graduate school, has been tied up with environmental matters since taking over from the retired Bill Bengyfield April 1.

In his dual role as chairman of the USGA Turfgrass Research Committee, he has been seeking proposals from 180 researchers to quantify how golf courses affect the environment. Snow planned to present those proposals in early June to the Green Section's executive committee, which will then determine what to fund from the \$750,000 research budget.

The committee will use that information to develop a "best practices manual" describing the best methods for maintaining a golf course while minimizing environmental impact.

"The GCSAA (Golf Course Superintendents Association of America) will incorporate the manual into its seminar program. It should be very helpful," said Snow.

Snow grew up on his family's fruit farm in Trumansburg, N.Y., 12 miles northwest of Ithaca. His first golf course experience was working summers helping to build Trumansburg Golf Course. That

piqued his interest in course maintenance and led him to take turfgrass courses at Cornell.

Snow worked summers at Trumansburg GC throughout his undergraduate days, spending one summer as superintendent.

"That title is a little misleading, though. There were just two of us on the grounds crew," he said.

After graduating with a masters degree in ornamental horticulture and joining the Green Section in 1976, Snow spent the next six years as an agronomist, including a stint under Bengyfield, who was then the Western region director.

"Bill was kind of a father figure. I've learned so much from him," Snow said. "He's taken us (USGA agronomists) to task on some of our recommendations over the years. We tended to get a little defensive at first. But he'd say 'Just look at it this way for a minute.' Then we'd take what he said into the field and find out he was exactly right."

Bengyfield, 67, was a father figure and his word the final one to most of the Green Section agronomists, said Snow, who is 39.

"How will I be different than Bill? I guess the biggest difference is that the people on the staff are my peers in terms of age. I guess I'll be more of a brother figure," said Snow.

As national director, Snow will oversee a staff of 15 agronomists spread across the Green Section's seven regions. That's twice as many agronomists as the Green Section had in 1976.

Research money has also grown, from \$45,000 in 1976 to \$750,000 this year. It will escalate to more than \$1.5 million in 1991.

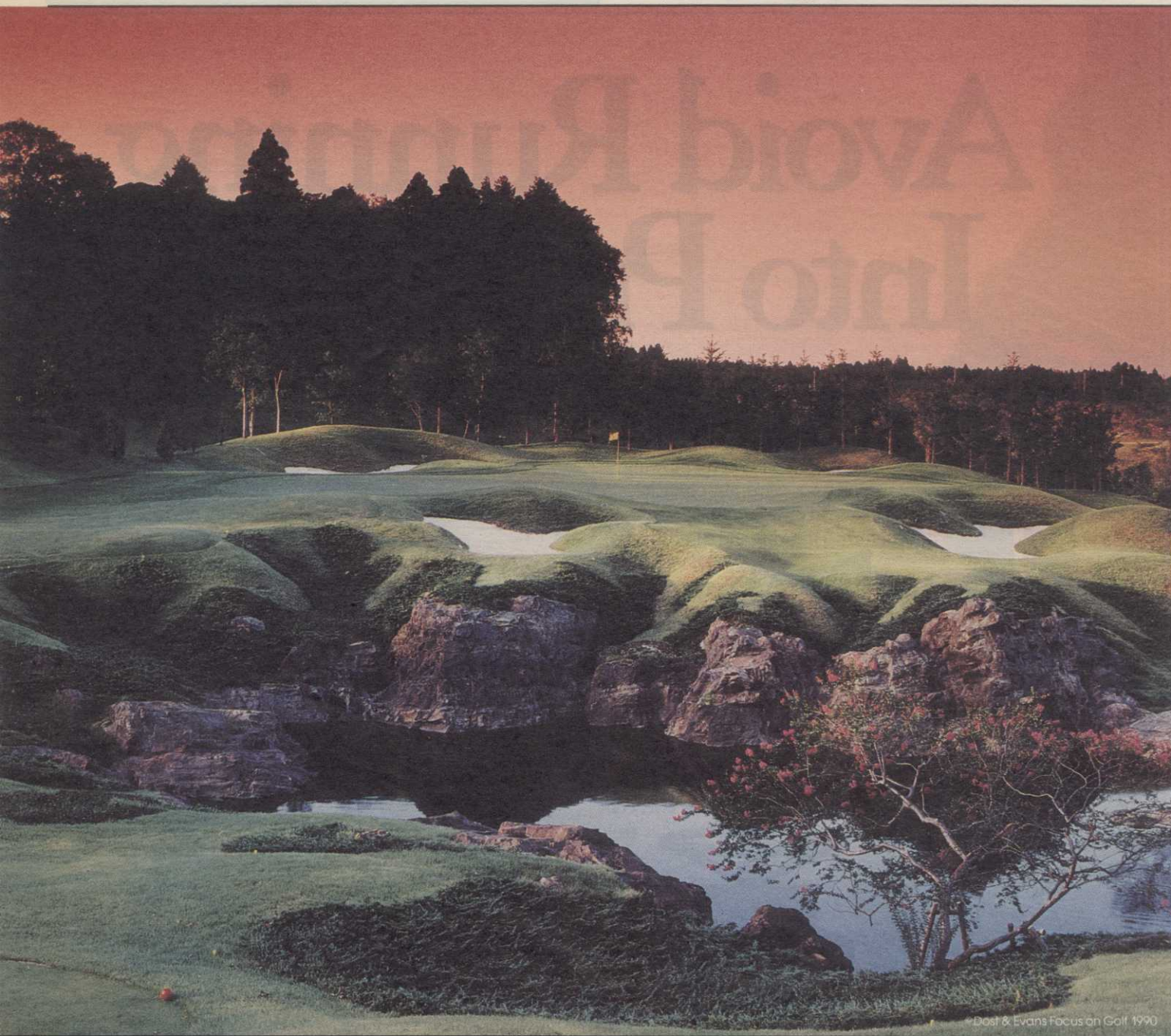
"There's a lot more attention paid to the Green Section than there used to be," said the new national director. "There's more emphasis on turf problems and more respect for the Green Section, superintendents and environmental problems."

The cost to have a Green Section agronomist visit a course ranges from \$600 to \$750 for a half-day and \$900 to \$1,050 for a full day. Despite the cost, superintendents are more receptive than ever to what the Green Section has to offer, as evidenced by the jump from 800 course visits agronomists made in 1982 to the 1,600 they will make this year, said Snow.

"Superintendents are more educated than ever and they realize the benefits we have to offer," he said. "The ones that have been using our services don't mind the expense. Some think it's ridiculously cheap. Others say they can't afford it. It depends on how you view consultants and their value. We believe we can help develop a scientifically based program that will help save a course money."

The agronomists' written report can run to 12 pages, particularly on a first visit. Superintendents

Continued on page 25



Di Giacomo with insight, combines the dynamics of nature, with innovative construction techniques to construct rock formations worldwide.

Representative Projects: Dove Canyon Country Club, Jack Nicklaus Golf, Orange County, CA • Tomisato Golf Club, Narita, Japan and Imperial Wing Country Club, Nagoya, Japan, J. Michael Poellot Golf Design Group • Kinojo Country Club, Robert Trent Jones II, Okayama Japan • Wood Ranch Country Club, Simi Valley, CA • Palm Valley Country Club, Palm Desert, CA • Art Lake Golf Club, Golf Plan Incorporated, Osaka, Japan

di Giacomo

DI GIACOMO
INCORPORATED

612 SOUTH DUGGAN AVENUE AZUSA, CALIFORNIA 91702-5138 (818) 334-8211

TOMISATO GOLF CLUB, NARITA, JAPAN • J. MICHAEL POELLOT GOLF DESIGN GROUP
For free information circle #123

Renovations

Continued from page 16

members the greens and drainage problems, did "a total, total re-do — tear-up and reroute and clear and grub and irrigate and drain and excavate lakes and lagoons."

Time and acceptance

Walker's comprehensive remake of San Jose took 10 months to complete. While it was being done, members worked a deal with a nearby course and played there.

Hills closed Anasazi in June 1988 and the new Stone Creek opened in January 1989.

"A lot of clubs have a big question on timing," Walker said. "Anybody undergoing a renovation program struggles with the idea: Do you do three holes now and three next year, or do you close down nine and do nine this year and nine next year?"

"Ideally, the best way to do it is to bite the bullet, shut it down, get in there one time and knock it out. It took us 10 months at San Jose; it was a really big project. But for some clubs they could make quite a bit of improvements in a short amount of time, depending on if they are in the North or South. In the South we could do the work in six to eight months. In the North it may make sense to do nine holes at a time."

Snow

Continued from page 24

have used it to justify major capital expenditures or the need for more labor. But its most important function may be dousing fires.

"We're fire fighters," said Snow. "One club may be having a problem that we've already seen at 20 or 30 other clubs. This year's winter damage is a good example. It was extensive throughout the northern part of the country. But people at one club may not realize other courses are having the same problem. It's a relief to the membership, and particularly the superintendent, to know that."

Snow rarely visits a course now, something he misses. Still he enjoys his new responsibilities, which include editing the Green Section Record.

"I'm going to be requesting a technical editor/writer to help with that," said Snow.

Mike Kenna, the recently named director of Green Section research, has helped remove some of the burden in that area.

Still, Snow admits to being "a bit overwhelmed" by his new position and having gained a new respect for what his predecessor accomplished.

"Maybe I came at this job from a naive standpoint. I didn't realize how much administrative detail there would be. If it were just a matter of editing the Green Section Record, chairing the Turfgrass Research Committee and overseeing the staff that would be OK. But with all these other things..."

"Like a reporter calling for a 10-minute interview that ends up dragging on for 45?" he was asked.

"Yeah, like that," he answered with a chuckle.

In the final analysis, a project's success is measured by the response of the golfers.

Reports at those courses seem to support that more play is a norm after remodeling.

Walker said the response from members at San Jose has been "overwhelmingly positive. That's been the most gratifying and rewarding aspect of the entire project."

Ankrom said he remodeled the North Course Ft. Lauderdale (Fla.) Country Club, and now 75 percent of the play at the club is on that course. "And some of the 25 percent of play on the South Course is because people can't get onto the North Course," he said. "Now they've offered me twice

'Why remodel? Because you should try to make a golf course the best it can be.'

— Brian Silva

as much for South Course remodeling."

DeLozier at Stone Creek said: "We're extremely happy with the results. It has been very well received by the local golfer, plus we're getting considerable business from area resorts."

DeLozier said a key to success is

having "a very clear-cut objective that ... everyone has bought off on."

"The people at Westcor very clearly understood what they wanted the end result to be. As a result, Hills, Wadsworth and our company were all able to deliver it."

Who's a target?

Meanwhile, clubs should closely analyze whether they actually need a renovation project.

Silva relates this story:

"One Boston area course wanted to renovate. I told them they had a great example of the 1960s-style cape and bay bunkers and they had done a wonderful job of maintaining them. 'Why do you want to rebuild them?' I

asked. Their answer was 'Because everyone else is.'

And yet, "there is a significant number of candidates worthy of renovation work," Silva said. "Young players want to do a lot — some of it radical. Older ones don't want to do that much. Probably the best place is right in the middle."

"I hear people say, 'Let's put in some railroad ties' and 'I saw a bunker on a course that was 20 feet deep; can we put one of those in here?' and 'Can't we put in the church pews?'"

"I just say, 'Let's just try to make it appropriate to this club.'"

Silva added: "Why remodel? Because you should try to make a golf course the best it can be."



Pythium control is easy when you build your program on Chipco® Aliette®.

The key to a successful, season-long Pythium control program is the foundation you build it on. And you can't buy a better foundation product than CHIPCO® ALIETTE® brand fungicide. CHIPCO® ALIETTE® brand is unlike any other disease control you have ever used. Its true systemic action spreads protection throughout every blade of turfgrass, including the roots. Protection that lasts for up to 21 days from a single application. Then, the unique chemistry of CHIPCO® ALIETTE® actually stimulates the natural ability of turf

to fight off infection. So you get two-way protection other fungicides just can't match. Plus, CHIPCO® ALIETTE® prevents Phytophthora and Pythium on a wide variety of ornamental and landscape plantings. So it's easily the most versatile fungicide you can buy. This year, build your Pythium control program on the solid foundation of CHIPCO® ALIETTE® brand fungicide. The one to start with.



Chipco® Aliette®
Brand Fungicide

