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# GOLF COURSE NEWS

THE NEWSPAPER FOR THE GOLF COURSE INDUSTRY

VOLUME 2 NUMBER 9  
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A United publication

## INSIDE

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### Types of courses by length

Length	Type			Total
	Daily fee	Municipal	Private	
Regulation	5,349	1,887	4,998	12,234
Executive	492	129	158	779
Par 3	455	150	120	725
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,296</b>	<b>2,166</b>	<b>5,276</b>	<b>13,738</b>

Source: NGF

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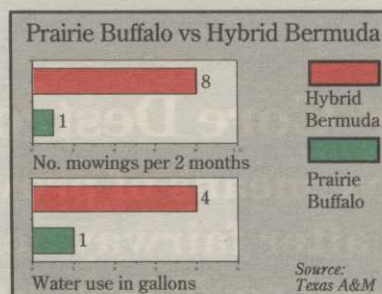
## Beating the heat

### Buffalo billed as wonder grass

BY PETER BLAIS

Barton Creek Country Club in Austin, Texas, is experimenting with two varieties of buffalograss that will eventually be available nationwide and could save the golf industry millions of dollars annually in water, fertilizer, pesticide and mowing expenses.

Prairie buffalograss developed at Texas A&M University was introduced



to the perimeter rough and along steep bunker faces of the new Ben Crenshaw-designed course beginning in late June. *Continued on page 24*

### Isolite expected barrier-breaker

BY MARK LESLIE

Isolite is no panacea, Lou Haines is quick to say, but it could lower the body count in impending water wars.

Haines, the technical services director of New Golf Concepts, Inc., of Westminster, Colo., is optimistic that tremendous inroads will be made into America's golf courses by Isolite, which

*Continued on page 26*



Water comes into play on several holes, including this one, at Jack Nicklaus' latest design — the private Governors Club in Chapel Hill, N.C. Nicklaus and club pro Ronnie Parker played the inaugural round at Governors Club on Sept. 5. The par 72

layout plays from four tees — the shortest over 5,267 yards and the longest 7,085. See pages 12-13 for more information on new courses proposed and approved around the United States.

Photo by Chip Henderson

## UK is definitely no U.S.

BY BRADLEY S. KLEIN

A revolution in golf course maintenance in the United Kingdom has begun at the same time its greenkeepers are being lured to Continental Europe.

The culprit causing an Americanization of greenkeeping is television, according to Brits in the industry. The pull to Europe, where 300 courses are under construction, is salaries that are double and triple the \$15,000 to \$22,000 earned in the United Kingdom.

British and International Golf

Greenkeepers Association Chairman Ivor Scoones acknowledged the "brain drain" is a living force between England and the continent.

Budget troubles at home tend to magnify the difference between tending a course in one place or the other.

BIGGA Executive Director Neil Thomas said greenkeepers in Great Britain, who historically have had low maintenance budgets, now "have to deal with public perceptions about how a golf course should look."

Many British golfers have turned their back on "the links model" and become fascinated by what might be called "the Augusta model," he said.

The role of televised tournament golf cannot be overestimated. Club members, having watched The Masters on the tube, ask their club secretary why their greens and fairways aren't picture perfect, lush and plush, he said.

Greenkeepers explain that even Augusta National is timed to peak at

*Continued on page 22*

## Discrimination stops at supers' desk

BY MARK LESLIE

Discrimination doesn't exist on groundskeeping crews at country clubs around the nation — even those that exclude certain people as members, according to superintendents surveyed.

"Segregation and integration are just not an issue (on grounds crews)," said Gerald Faubel, president of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of

America and superintendent at Saginaw (Mich.) Country Club. "I have never seen any discrimination whatsoever with regard to race or sex on a grounds crew."

Faubel's remarks followed the debacle at Shoal Creek Country Club in Birmingham, Ala., in which the club's discrimination against blacks threatened to prevent the PGA Champion-

ship from being played.

"If you found any segregation in grounds crews it would really surprise me," Faubel said.

James Singerling, executive vice president of the Club Managers Association of America and a former club manager, said clubs "never have a hiring policy."

*Continued on page 19*

# Buffalograss

Continued from page 1

according to superintendent Tim Long. All 18 holes should have some Prairie by late fall.

Prairie will be commercially available on a limited basis this fall, to a greater degree next spring and in full production by 1992, according to Texas A&M Associate Professor Milt Engelke.

Buffalograss 609 developed at the University of Nebraska will be placed in additional rough areas this fall, said Associate Professor Terry Riordan. It will be available on a limited basis the next two years and in full production by 1993, said Riordan.

While buffalograss can be clipped and prosper as low as the 3/8-of-an-inch common on many fairways, it is being bred for the rough.

"Some of the grasses we're developing could be used in fairways," said Riordan. "But that's not our goal. We want to use them in low-maintenance areas.

"They'll never replace bentgrass or Bermuda greens. Genetically, it's just not the same grass. But it could function that way. It's certainly better than bare ground."

Added Engelke: "You won't find it going into the fairways at expensive, private courses. But there are

a lot of courses out there with \$100,000 maintenance budgets where it could prove popular. It's a very acceptable product that can be maintained well with little water, mowing or pesticides."

Compared to hybrid bermudagrass, which dominates Southern courses, Engelke said Prairie buffalograss:

- requires one-fourth the water;
- thrives on one-third the nitrogen, one to two pounds annually per 1,000 square feet compared to four to six pounds for Bermuda;
- is more resistant to turf diseases and insects so requires less pesticides, fungicides or herbicides;

• can be mowed as infrequently as once every two months as opposed to once a week for Bermuda.

• leaves fewer clippings to dispose of after mowing;

• has slightly better shade tolerance and requires an average of just two to three hours direct sunlight;

• tolerates severe cold having survived minus-43 degree temperatures last winter while bermudagrass was dying throughout the South;

• greens up earlier and goes dormant later, and;

• resists soil compacting better and is well suited to heavy traffic

areas like cart path aprons.

But all is not roses. There are drawbacks.

The major one is availability. With only 100 acres currently in production, Prairie sod's price of \$3.50 to \$4.50 per square yard is double hybrid Bermuda's \$1.50 to \$2, Engelke said. That should change as production increases.

"Prairie will be about the same price as Bermuda within a couple of years," the Texas A&M professor predicted.

Prairie doesn't turn the dark green of Bermuda, although that can be helped along with additional nitrogen. On the other end, when it goes dormant, Prairie turns a deep golden color that Engelke said is "quite pretty."

"Buffalograss may not be a panacea. But it's certainly an alternative for today's environment-conscious courses," said Engelke.

## Barton Creek's experience

The Crenshaw course at Barton Creek, scheduled to open next spring, was a logical initial site for buffalograss since Crenshaw Douget Turfgrass Inc. is licensed to market Prairie and 609.

"We put it (Prairie) in the buffer and transition zones from the native areas," said Long, whose new course is planted primarily with Bermuda 419. "It's adjacent to critical environmental features (primarily Barton Creek) because it has low fertilizer requirements. And we shouldn't have to mow it after the first year."

Prairie grows to a height of six inches.

"The ball is still playable even at that height. And Crenshaw likes its aesthetic value as a transition to the taller native grasses...It has kind of a feathery look and waves in the wind," Long said.

Barton Creek is in a semi-arid area, receiving an average 32 inches of precipitation annually.

"Hopefully we'll just have to water it once a week or so in summer to maintain its color," said Long. "We water the Bermuda five or six times a week from May through September.

"It has great cold tolerance, too. All the courses planted in Bermuda around here really suffered last winter. But a small plot of Prairie we had came through just fine. I understand they can grow it well into Canada."

Whereas Bermuda can only be planted about six months a year, Prairie's cold tolerance allows it to be planted basically year-round. That will allow Barton Creek developers to continue planting Prairie along roadways and in residential areas this winter, Long said.

"If they don't have to irrigate those areas it will mean a considerable capital expense savings," the superintendent said. "And they shouldn't have to mow it more than once or twice a year."

Buffalograss is a dense-growing turf with an extensive root system, helping it stabilize and control erosion along steep surfaces. Extreme slopes and bunker faces were the first places Long installed the Prairie sod. Sprigging the remaining

Continued on page 25

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A worker installs prairie buffalograss alongside a bunker at the 17th hole of the new Ben Crenshaw-designed course at Barton Creek Country Club in Austin, Texas. This Texas A&M-developed buffalograss is one of the new semi-arid grasses being developed around the

Continued from page 24  
rough started in August.

**The future**

"Over the next six to 10 years perceptions about buffalograss will change dramatically," Engelke said. "Buffalograss is at the same stage as tall fescues were in the early 1960s. Over the next decade, tremendous advances were made in tall fescue color, mowing heights, water usage.

"Comparing buffalograss to other turf types is like comparing the Model T to today's cars. But in 10 years you'll see similar changes to those we saw with tall fescues. It's a tremendous plant for the future. But we're just opening the door. Buffalo and zoysia will be the dominant warm-

climate grasses of the next decade."

One of the major changes will be the availability of buffalograss seed. Prairie and 609 are both vegetative-type grasses, meaning they are available only as sod, plugs or sprigs.

"We're working with companies that hope to have buffalograss seed available within a couple of years," said Riordan.

Prairie and 609 were both bred for Southern courses, said Riordan, who is taking over much of Engelke's buffalograss research allowing the Texas A&M professor to concentrate on bentgrass and zoysia.

But buffalograss will eventually be available throughout North America. Experimental

plantings have thrived from British Columbia to Florida.

The next wave of buffalograsses, some of which will be released next spring, will be better suited to Northern Plain and Western courses where Kentucky bluegrass dominates, Riordan

said. The new buffalograsses will require 50 percent less water, fertilizer, pesticides and mowing than bluegrass, he added.

"It will be valuable anywhere water and environmental issues are important. It's much more adaptive than we ever thought," Riordan said.



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# Isolite

Continued from page 1

is formed from diatomaceous earth and processed at more than 1,800 degrees.

A former golf course superintendent, Haines said Isolite (pronounced ees-o-lite) has "uncountable applications" for his ex-colleagues.

"From a both a technical and practical standpoint, it's going to be a big, big product because there are many, many different things you can do with Isolite," Haines said after his firm introduced the Japanese product to the United States at Sadona (Ariz.) Golf Resort, the site of several tests.

"It has tremendous water-saving capacity, especially with the sand greens we're growing grass on now, and these sandy soil areas where water percs right through the sand profile," Haines said.

"We're going to have a lot of wars in the very near future on water use. You realize in talking to people in California, Arizona and Nevada, that water is getting to be a very, very serious thing.

"We hope this will be a solution."

Seth Hunt, president of Foremost Solutions environmental consulting company in Denver, Colo., and former personal assistant to the Environmental Protection Agency in Washington, D.C., is one of many who believe it will be a solution for many areas outside golf courses.

A member of New Concepts' board of directors, Hunt said research and development scientists at the EPA are interested in investigating Isolite.

"Everyone on the environmental side is excited about it," he said. "Scientists hear of it and immediately their minds get in gear and they think of new ideas for it."

Hunt said Isolite has "no environmental liabilities. It's an asset to the environment. It reduces fertilizer use. It reduces pesticide use. It has no toxic byproducts."

One of the more interesting ideas for its use was as a layer above a hazardous waste site.

Meanwhile, Haines said Isolite also saves in fertilizer costs, holding fertilizer so it doesn't leech through the soil.

Haines said Isolite has no similarity to polymers. "Imagine holding a sponge in your hand. The sponge absorbs the water because the pore spaces fill with water. Isolite is the exact same thing as the sponge except it is hard. It will neither contract nor expand. It's a hard sponge full of pores that fill up with water. You can't wring out the water out like you can a sponge but the grass roots can extract that water from the Isolite particles."

He added that Isolite also "holds air in some of the pore spaces and provides an ideal environment for the micro-organisms that we must have in the soil in order to grow grass," he said. "Where do the roots grow in the plant? They grow in the pore space between the soil particles. That's where the fertilizer, water and air and everything else are... So the more porosity we can provide, the more friable our soil is, the better plants we can grow in it and the better things we can do

with it."

New Golf Concepts President William D. Leary says, "The benefits in water conservation and environmental enhancement which Isolite can provide to America are phenomenal."

And the firm's publicity claims Isolite "has the ability to reduce water usage 50-65 percent."

But Haines moderates that statement.

"You might save that much under an ideal situation, but I don't like to say that," he said. "In the real world I think we're looking at savings closer to 25 to 40 percent, depending on the soil type."

He said Isolite has applications

**'From a both a technical and practical standpoint, it's going to be a big, big product.'**  
— Lou Haines

on both ends of the soil scale from a tight clay to an open sand and pretty much everything in between, depending on what you want to do.

Meanwhile, a note of wariness about any new product on the market was added by Bill Bengeyfield, recently retired national director of the U.S. Golf Association Green Section.

Bengeyfield said "legitimate research" must be done by scientists independent of the company.

"There are so many slips twixt the cup and the lip... Independent research just has to be done on it... The company's tests don't count in the world of science," he said.

Indeed, New Golf Concepts plans other tests besides the one at Sadona.

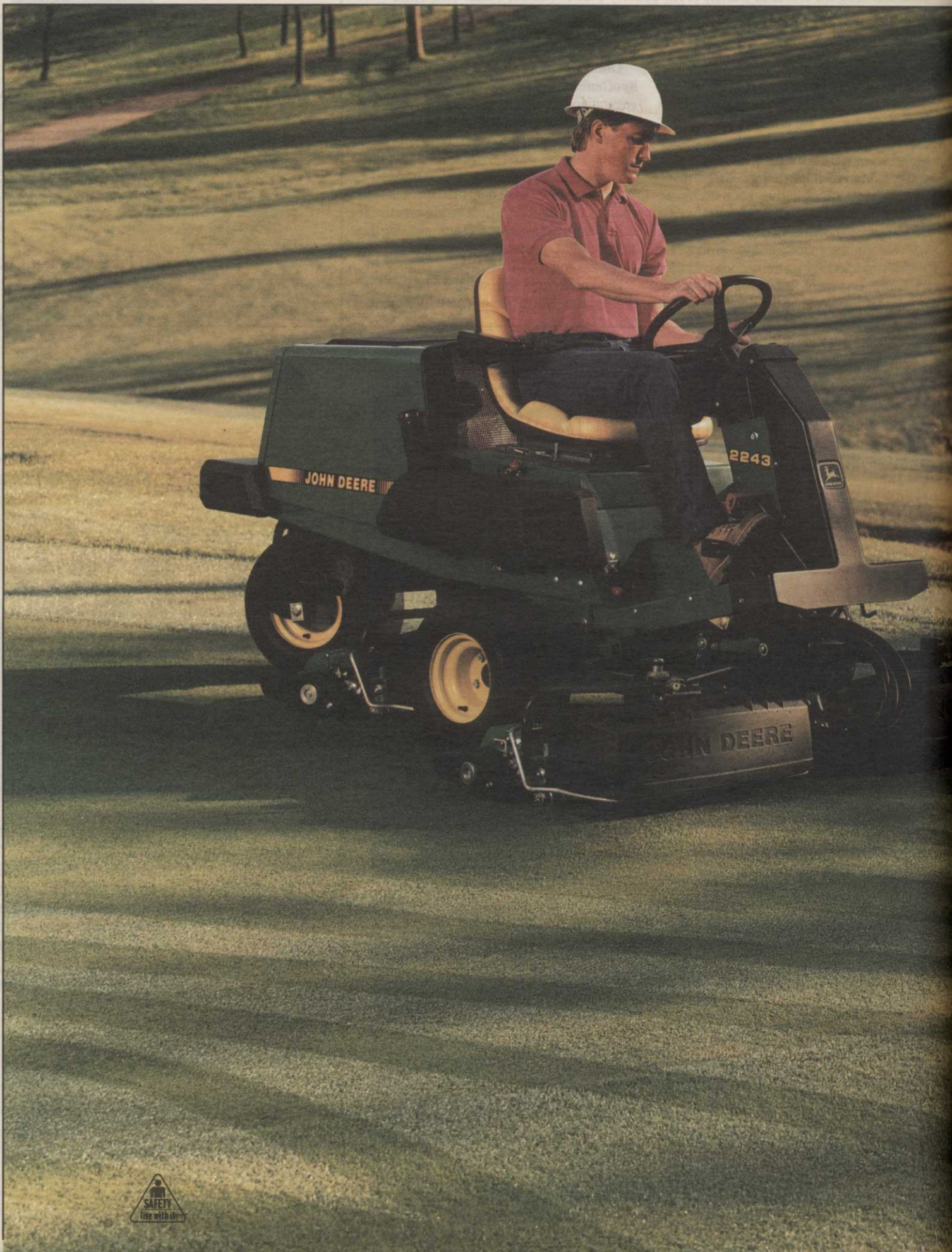
Haines projects that Colorado State University will apply Isolite to a USGA-spec sand green; a replica of a bentgrass fairway; and to clay soils "to see how well we can open

up clay to increase porosity and percolation and prevent compaction... which is one of the main nemises on the golf course where there are cart paths and high-traffic areas."

He said the company is also negotiating with other universities to perform tests in other areas of the country.

"We want to get testing established in different soils and climatic conditions," Haines said. "We will have some excellent results by this time next year from our Colorado State studies. For the other studies, it will depend on how quickly we can get them started."

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## Isolite

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"It will take a year for meaningful and objective results to report. But at the same time we are getting more and more information from the Japanese studies. The Tokyo Agricultural Experimental Station results will be in hand in August."

Isolite is being used on 15 percent of the 1,500 golf courses in Japan, where it has been developed for nine years. The results there reportedly have been "dramatic," according to New Golf Concepts.

Isolite is incorporated into the ground through aerification, verticutting, and slit-trench machines. But Haines said it is ideally added during construction when it is tilled

into the top six to eight inches of soil.

"There is no such thing as a panacea," Haines said. "As a former superintendent I know that. We've just got a good, practical product that is going to help superintendents solve a lot of problems."

"And you can't go wrong with it. It is basically an inert product. You can't burn with it, or change soil pH with it. There's no chemistry to it. You're just putting a bunch of sponges in the soil."

It's cost?

"It's a little high right now, but I think we will get a price reduction soon," said Hunt. "We will pass any price reduction on to the end user."

## GCSAA board to play Canadians

The board of directors of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America will play its Canadian counterpart in the first of what will hopefully be an annual tournament, according to GCSAA President Gerald Faubel.

The Americans will tee off Sept.

27 at Club de Golf Cedarbrook in St. Sophie, Quebec, against the team from the Canadian Golf Superintendents Association/Association Canadien Superintendents de Golf.

Faubel issued the challenge to the Canadians, and the GCSAA is providing the trophy — the Board

of Directors Cup.

Faubel said the winners will hold the cup for one year.

He hopes the Canadians will accept an invitation to play in the United States in 1991.

He was unsure what format the tournament will take.

## Oakmont CC lures Latshaw back

Paul Latshaw, the only superintendent to host three of golf's four major professional championships, will be returning to Pittsburgh's Oakmont Country Club in early 1991.

Latshaw was head superintendent from 1975 to 1987 at Oakmont,

site of the 1978 PGA Championship and 1983 U.S. Open. From 1987 to 1989 he was in charge of Augusta National Golf Course, home of the Masters.

Latshaw has been head superintendent at Wilmington (Del.) Country Club since May of last year.

Oakmont will host the women's 1992 U.S. Open and the 1994 men's U.S. Open.

"He missed the challenge of big tournaments. He likes that arena," explained Latshaw's wife, Phyllis, of her husband's decision to leave Wilmington.

Oakmont general manager Pat LaRocca said he expects Latshaw to arrive in Pittsburgh around Jan. 1.

"He's the greatest guy in the world," said LaRocca. "I have a lot of respect for him. When the situation arose, he was our first choice."

## Stonecreek clubhouse open this fall

Stonecreek, The Golf Club, broke ground on a new 17,000-square-foot clubhouse in late spring and is scheduled for completion this fall at the Paradise Valley, Ariz., course.

The two-level clubhouse will overlook the first tee and will eventually be surrounded by the Paradise Valley Urban Village. The facility includes such features as a 120-seat restaurant, a golf shop, state-of-the-art golf instruction facilities with classrooms and video screening areas, men's and women's lockers, shower facilities, underground golf car storage and a snack bar.

The clubhouse was designed by Cornoyer-Hedrick Architects & Planners, Inc. and Huntcor is serving as the general contractor on the project.

## Florida firm gives away 10,000 trees

AmerAquatic, Inc., of Deerfield Beach, Fla., which is involved in lake and wetland management, has donated more than 10,000 red maple seedlings to a number of south and central Florida environmental and agricultural organizations, according to President Thomas Latta.

AmerAquatic has initiated an extensive research project at its Sarasota, Fla., facility to propagate a selection of indigenous wetland trees from seed and introduce them back into their native environments.

Due to the high yield and abundance of the red maples, AmerAquatic donated the seedlings, on flats, to the Broward County Extension Service, which distributed the plants to organizations in Broward, Palm Beach, Lee, Martin and Sarasota counties. Many of these recipients have either redistributed the trees to private groups or citizens or are nurturing the seedlings in pots until they are ready to be established in-ground in wetland zones.

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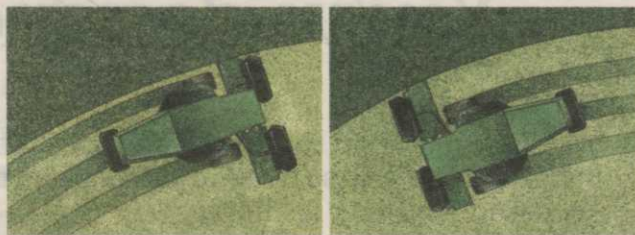
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