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GOLF COURSE NEWS

THE NEWSPAPER FOR THE GOLF COURSE INDUSTRY

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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
Total	6,296	2,166	5,276	13,738

Source: NGF

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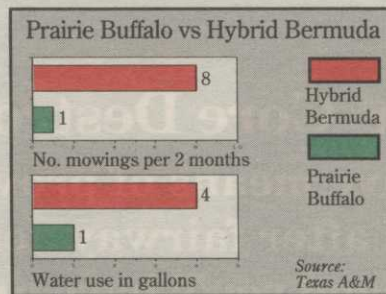
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Beating the heat

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.
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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
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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

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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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