

Communications crucial on Japan courses

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overseeding, they simply close the zoysia and open the bentgrass green when the cold descends.

Fairways are generally zoysia and rarely overseeded. That eliminates the need for fall verti-cutting and reduces clippings. With landfill space at a premium, clipping removal is strongly discouraged, Baranski said.

Maintenance facilities are generally larger than in the United States. Office areas alone often have more square footage than entire U.S. maintenance sheds.

Japanese managers rarely have private offices, instead working in the same room with their employees. "The head guy sits at the back," Baranski explained. "The 10 guys under him sit directly in front of him. There are 10 more desks in front of them, and then 10 more and 10 more and so on.

"There are no partitions so everyone can see what everyone else is doing. If you need to talk to someone, you can walk over to his desk and solve the problem right away. It's real easy to get work done in that system."

While Baranski likes some aspects of the Japanese work system, he dislikes others. For instance, every Japanese maintenance crew member has his own desk and keeps daily records of his activities.

"I think it's a waste of time," he said. "But that's what the owner and management have requested. I try to keep their paperwork to a minimum. But they still spend 30 to 45 minutes a day recording the work they've done."

Superintendents are called "keepers" in Japan. No formal educational programs exist. But keepers read a great deal. Thirty to 40 golf publications deal with course maintenance. They are made available not only to superintendents, but also managers, directors and club members so they can become better informed.

The general manager rather than the keeper makes management decisions. The general manager hires and fires employees. Firing is infrequent. Even the least productive 18-year-old is likely to stay with the same company for life.

Compare that to the United States where a superintendent can go through 30 or more 18-year-olds before finding one with the desire and potential who justifies spending extra time and money in training, Baranski said.

"My time in Japan has changed my ideas about how to deal with employees," Baranski said. "I have to find some value in everyone who works for me because I can't get rid of them. In the past I may not have wanted to take the time to find value in an employee. In Japan, they make you take the time."

The team concept is strong in Japan, Baranski said. Older crew members take younger ones under their wings and train them.

"Some things they teach are good

and some not so good," Baranski said. "For example, when I first got there the acting keeper mixed chemicals by hand — no gloves, no mask. He just poured the mix into the spray tank. At last I got him to wear gloves, anyway."

The Japanese government severely restricts chemical use, but not necessarily in what Baranski considers the safest manner. The prefecture in which his course is located limits use to 2,000 kilograms of chemicals per year. But it doesn't restrict the type of chemicals nor is it concerned with active ingredients,

he added. Weight is the important thing.

"It forces people to use higher concentrations," Baranski said. "You wouldn't use a 5-percent granular product because it uses too much of your weight limit. You'd use a concentrate instead. The result could be a much bigger problem if there is a spill or some type of accident."

Finally, the Japanese use more hand labor than do Americans. For example, walking greens mowers are used far more in Japan than the United States, Baranski concluded.

Many appointments reported in west Texas

SNYDER, Texas — The West Texas Golf Course Superintendents Association has announced several appointments in the region.

New golf superintendent appointments in west Texas include: Lanny Ivy, Anson GC; Robert Crockett, Canadian CC; Terry Smith, Childress CC; Al Ramsey, Clarendon CC; Charles Pack, Knox City CC; Bryan Daniels, Lakeridge CC, Lubbock; Richard Piper, Paducah CC; Gary Cudney, Pampa CC; Sonny Taylor, Pecos County

Municipal, Fort Stockton; Brad Fluitt, Brentwood CC, San Angelo; Mark Hamersley, Sundown GC; Roger Ray, Tule Lake CC, Tulia; and James Hubbard, Winters CC.

Derwin Price, Fairway Oaks CC, Abilene, and John Haun, Palo Duro GC, Canyon, were appointed assistant superintendents.

Appointed pro/managers were Paul Barlett, Canyon CC; Danny Riddle, Floydada Country, and Eddie Baker, Southwest GC, Amarillo.

