

Muirfield selected as best conditioned on the Tour

Continued from page 1

Muirfield superintendent Mike McBride credited his staff with keeping the 7,116 yards of bentgrass greens, tees and fairways in peak condition the entire season.

"They're very proud of the course," said McBride of his 20-member crew, which swells to 30 during tourney week. "I have a great crew that really takes pride in having the best-conditioned course on the Tour."

As tourney time approaches, McBride takes on extra responsibilities, not the least of which is

coordinating television coverage.

Muirfield began installing underground television cables in 1976, McBride said. The course is underlaid with wires from holes five through 18 and could have complete coverage in time for the 1992 U.S. Amateur, he added. That means no unsightly wires or radio-frequency cameras marring the scenery.

Muirfield also has specially built television towers on hand, eliminating the need for scaffolding.

"The course was designed with the tournament in mind," McBride

said. "We want the television audience and the spectators to have a great view of every shot and to keep things as tidy as possible."

Being named the top course by such a discriminating panel is no small feat, especially considering the heavy rains and occasional snow that frequent the Columbus area when the pros visit in mid-spring.

There was snow on the ground the day before the tournament started two years ago, McBride said. Last spring the Memorial was shortened to 54 holes for the first time in its history when heavy rains forced can-

cellation of Sunday's final round.

"We don't have June, July and August to prepare the course like other tournaments do," McBride said. "We have to utilize every moment of sun in the spring to get ready."

While McBride tries to peak the course for the Memorial, the season doesn't end there. Only \$150,000 of his \$750,000 annual maintenance budget is devoted to the tournament. The rest goes to keeping the course in shape for the locals.

"We try to maintain it at tournament level all year," McBride said. "We don't have different standards for

the pros and our local players. We might not mow quite as often. But cutting heights stay the same. The grooming everywhere stays the same."

Many of the pros had a difficult time choosing between Muirfield and Butler.

"It's not fair to have to select one over the other," said more than one.

"Butler is always perfect," said Joey Sindelar.

"It's too bad we're going to lose it," added Bill Buttner, referring to the club's decision not to hold future Tour events rather than open its membership policies to Tour scrutiny in the wake of Shoal Creek.

Caves Valley developer draws fire

Heavy summer rains and insufficient safeguard by a new private golf course developer may have combined to "drown" in a sea of mud a natural trout stream in northwest Baltimore County.

County officials have directed Whiting-Turner Contracting Co., the firm building the Caves Valley Club, to restore the unnamed meandering tributary of the north branch of the Jones Falls.

Robert W. Sheesley, county director of environmental protection, cited failure of developers to maintain sediment and erosion controls for six to eight inches of mud that blanketed nearly a half mile of the stream.

The silt from the golf course construction covered the gravel bottom that trout need to lay their eggs.

Sheesley said stream damage could be corrected easily by removing the silt.

Leslie B. Disharoon, who is overseeing the \$32 million project, wouldn't discuss stream damage or anything related to the course.

William Pistell, former local president of Trout Unlimited who lives near the project, blames the stream damage on extensive land-clearing for the golf course. He said 174 acres were bared. Gas and power line construction also contributed sediment to the stream bottom, Pistell said.

Hopes stirred for muni course

BRIDGEWATER, Mass. — There yet may be an 18-hole municipal golf course here.

A reorganized Bridgewater Golf Study Committee chaired by Dennis Weingartner is seeking new proposals for a course on the town-owned Chaffee Farm off Vernon, Pine and Spruce streets.

Focus will be on a course with a modest clubhouse facility, practice range and putting area.

Weingartner said, "It is our hope to generate additional revenue to the town." Last year, plans for a course were dashed by the economic downturn.



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