

GOLF COURSE NEWS

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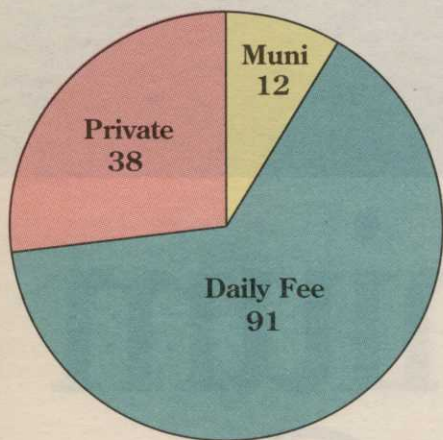
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Types of university-affiliated golf courses in the United States. Total = 141 Source: NGF

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USGA promises another \$4.1M

Executive Committee promises continued support through 1997

By Mark Leslie

The U.S. Golf Association Executive Committee has approved another \$4.15 million in funding for research projects.

Revealing the decision made on June 10, USGA Green Section National Di-

rector Jim Snow said he was excited at the committee's high level of support for the research program.

The committee this winter allotted \$3.8 million to 18 research projects through 1992. That will complete the 10-year program that began in 1983.

This new infusion of funds will carry research from 1993 to 1997, Snow said.

Accomplishments so far have consisted mostly of findings that set the foundation for further studies, Snow

said. He cited the Turfgrass Information File at Michigan State University, which "is a tremendous resource for the entire industry and is just now catching on"; development of NuMex Sahara bentgrass and 609 buffalograss; and investigation of breeding improvements such as screening for salt.

"These are things you can't visually see, but that were important research," he said. "We're at the point now where

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The University of Wisconsin has joined the growing ranks of universities with affiliated golf courses. This is a view of its new Robert Trent Jones Jr.-designed course, which officially opens in July. See a story on university courses on page 33.

Winter whacks Washington courses with winter kill

By Bob Spiwak

Yoyo-like winter temperatures caused winter kill that devastated greens on northern Washington State courses, costing tens of thousands of dollars in repair bills and lost revenues.

The Spokane area, which boasts some of the nation's best municipal courses, was hit the hardest. Indian Canyon, perennially listed among the

top U.S. venues, counted at least half its greens this spring as "browns." And it was not alone.

In fact, courses that fared best had newly planted bentgrass, or were blanketed with snow throughout the winter. Most severely damaged were courses with incursions of poa annua (annual bluegrass) and little or no snow

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Mass. enacts new pesticide mandates

By Vern Putney

The Massachusetts Department of Food and Agriculture will require all private and commercial pesticide applicators to file an annual report listing specific pesticide use information based on previous year records beginning in 1992.

The records will be made available to the 351 cities and towns in the Bay

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Seed scientists making great strides

By Mark Leslie

While plant breeders are making extraordinary advances in turfgrasses, scientists are probing and developing other improvements using nature's endophytes and nematodes and new

See related stories p. 20-26.

techniques like seed priming and coating.

"A lot of very bright and talented young people are going into turfgrass research," said Dr. Reed Funk

of Rutgers University, an expert in cool-season grasses. "They will do a lot of things that haven't been done.

"Priming," he added, "could be developed to be a delivery system for micro-

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Briefs



CADMIUM REVIEW CANCELED

The Environmental Protection Agency has announced termination of a special review on the fungicide cadmium chloride (Caddy, Liquid Cadmium Turf Fungicide) because of voluntary cancellation of the only remaining cadmium chloride pesticide registration by its producer, W. A. Cleary Corp.

According to EPA, "No cadmium chloride product may be sold, distributed or released for shipment by the registrant after July 31, 1991, and no cadmium chloride product may be sold or distributed by a retailer, dealer or any person after Dec. 31, 1991.

"Golf courses or end-users may not obtain or take possession of cadmium chloride product after Dec. 31, 1991. Supplies in their possession as of that day may be used until exhausted."

LEAK DETECTOR DEADLINE EXTENDED

The Environmental Protection Agency has extended to Sept. 22 the deadline for installing automatic leak detectors in underground storage tanks that have pressurized piping systems.

The extension applies only to installation, on underground pressurized piping systems, of leak detectors that meet EPA's minimum performance requirements.

CHEMICAL REGISTRATION MAY BE CHANGED

The Environmental Protection Agency's new four-year strategy recommends establishing slow and fast tracks for processing chemical registrations.

Under the EPA Office of Pesticide Programs recommendations, "safer pesticides" would be allowed on the "fast track," insuring quicker release to the marketplace.

More hazardous pesticides would be put on the slower registration track.

The strategy also calls for increasing availability of information and public awareness concerning pesticide risks, effectiveness of pesticide management programs, and the options for pest control.

RINGER RECALLS GRUB ATTACK

Ringer Corp. has announced voluntary recall of its Grub Attack product which employs bacillus popilliae (milky spore disease) and is used for the control of Japanese beetle grubs.

Grub Attack is marketed only in the northeastern United States and is the only product sold by Ringer which uses bacillus popilliae.

SORENSEN HEADS BIOTECH PANEL

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Dr. John Sorenson, executive director for Vegetable Research for Asgrow, is the chairman of the American Seed Trade Association's recently formed Biotechnology Committee.

Voc-tech school starts maintenance course

By Thyra Porter

WINTERGARDEN, Fla.— With more than 1000 golf courses located in the state, Florida educators have realized that golf course maintenance skills can help high school students find jobs, and perhaps careers, after graduation.

Now the first vocational-technical school to offer turfgrass operations courses to Florida high school students plans to gear those courses to adults already working in the field.

Mike Armbruster, instructor of turfgrass operations courses at Westside Vocational Technical Center, said the school has offered the courses to high school students for the past four years. Seventy percent of the graduates go on to find jobs in the field, Armbruster said.

While adults can enroll in the courses offered to younger students, Armbruster said most classes are held during the day, making it difficult for those already holding down jobs to attend.

Still, Armbruster noted, many golf course workers would benefit from adding additional skills.

"We're not trying to train superintendents here. We're trying to train people who work below superintendents," Armbruster said. "We're looking to train good employees."

Under Armbruster's program, adult students get on-the-job training during the day, working out a schedule with their employers to ensure varied experience through the work day.

"We want to make sure they get exposure to each of the elements," Armbruster said.

Though a worker may have a primary responsibility, instructors want to introduce other aspects of greens care over the length of the course. "We don't want someone locked into the weedeater for a year," he said.

Steve Wright, superintendent at Alaqua Country Club in Longwood, Fla., is trying to help Armbruster line up superintendents to teach night courses at Westside VoTech. Wright said offering turf operations courses to students and adults ultimately helps managers, by providing a more skilled labor pool.

"It's hard to find workers for the lower-level starting positions with any skills," Wright pointed out. "Everyone said 'I've mowed lawns before,' which is great, but it doesn't pertain to this."

Both high school and adult students receive certificates of completion, Armbruster said. The turfgrass operations year (two years for high school students who attend classes for half the day) covers a nine point program of goals set by the Florida Department of Education.

Armbruster said students learn to maintain greens, tees, fairway roughs, and traps; repair and service turf equipment; fertilize turf and control turf pathogens; plant and maintain grass, trees, flowers and shrubs; keep records; and demonstrate proficiency in the basic math, science and communications skills needed in agricultural problem-solving.

Kishwaukee adds golf horticulture

MALTA, Ill. — Kishwaukee College has expanded its horticulture course offerings to include classes in golf course management.

The community college's horticulture instructor, Larry Marty, foresees a great employment future for students who study greens care.

"It's an exciting career," he said, citing a study by the National Golf Foundation that predicts more than 30 million golfers in the United States by the year 2000. To accommodate those new golfers, the study found that 4,000 additional golf courses will need to be built. That translates to jobs for workers of all ages, Marty said, not just the traditional college student summer job.

Marty's students study golf course design, pesticide safety, equipment maintenance, computers and landscaping.

"The golf course superintendent today needs to be more than a grass cutter. He must manage his people, the budget and the environment," Marty said.

To help students along, Westside is planning to build what Armbruster calls a "par three, par four golf green," with two sets of
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Washington supers scramble vs winter kill

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cover, as in Spokane.

In the Spokane suburb of Cheney, the Fairways course had no damage at all on its renowned Pennncross bentgrass greens, even though, as a prairie course, it is susceptible to high winds and cold temperatures.

Two hundred miles east, in the Cascade Mountain foothills, Bear Creek, with predominantly Pennncross greens, suffered only in areas where poa annua had invaded. But Bear Creek also had a blanket of snow more than a foot deep.

Along the Columbia River, which enjoys milder temperatures, Lake Woods and Lake Chelan, snowless in March, suffered extensive damage.

All was fine in the Northwest until an unseasonable thaw in February sent temperatures rising across the state. The grasses awoke in the warmth and were promptly blasted by a killing March freeze. Poa, being shallow-rooted and not at all cold-tolerant, died immediately. Most of the greens on the Spokane municipal courses are heavily weighted to the annual bluegrass.

Fairways superintendent Chris Becker said he monitored his greens daily during the thaw and subsequent freeze. There was no snow cover at the course, and he was concerned with desiccation (in which case he applied water to the surface) and disease.

But, Becker "... put the turf to sleep for the winter in an unstressed condition. We applied the proper nutrient and fungicide applications in the fall, along with raising the height of the cut," he said.

The assaulted putting surfaces meant lost revenue to the city of Spokane as well as the pro shops. Revenues were down about 30 percent at Indian Canyon, Downriver and Esmeralda.

Play in mid-May was running 15,000 rounds



Bob Spiwak photo

A golfer checks a lie on a Spokane course green which is mostly dirt.

behind 1990 as golfers sought a better venue on which to putt — places such as Robert Muir Graves' Meadowood, a 3-year-old county course with bentgrass greens; Painted Hills; and Fairways.

All are 5 years old or less and essentially devoid of poa.

A case in point is the private Manito course on Spokane's South Hill. Five of the greens were rebuilt a few years ago and seeded with bentgrass. They emerged the winter unscathed, while the other greens, largely poa, were extensively damaged.

Indian Canyon head pro Gary Lindeblad, who hosts the prestigious Roseaur's Spokane Open in July, said the Canyon was considering applying one of the new pre-germinated seed formulas on the greens.

"They claim the greens are playable two weeks after application," he said.

Golfers in the area are not abashed at placing the blame on the city Parks Depart-

ment, which oversees greenskeeping at the municipal courses.

"They are civil servants," said one. "They get a check every 40 hours. What do they care about the greens? And look at the cart paths. They're a mess."

The cold spring weather did not help efforts to get the courses back in shape. Cold nights retarded germination of new seed, and above-average rainfall also slowed recovery and added to compaction.

City officials point out that increased numbers of players have heightened stress on courses, which were not designed for the heavy play they have been getting.

To prevent lost greens in the future, officials are considering blankets that cover the entire green, and mulching with straw. But, the huge blankets make mowing and maintenance difficult, and use of straw, some agronomists claim, is an invitation to a host of diseases.