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# GOLF COURSE NEWS

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## INSIDE

### PGA West

Annual rainfall is less than two inches, summer temperatures hit 110, so courses using heat- and drought-hardy vegetation ..... 22-23

### Chicago hot

Land of golfing tradition busts out in renewed building binge. .... 30-31

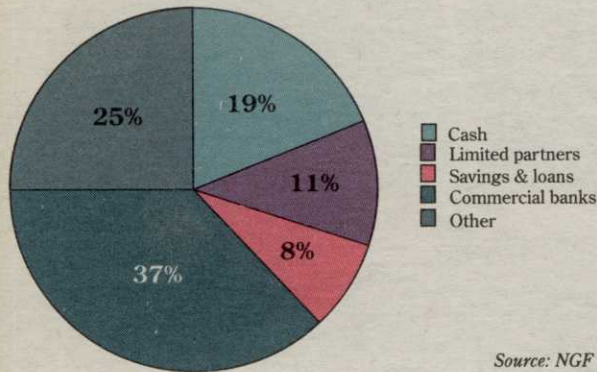
### Greens mowers

Greens more and more pampered by precision equipment ..... 32-34

### Father of invention

Pop Erswell was the first in a long line of innovative golf-lovers. .... 42

### Daily fee golf course funding sources



Source: NGF

### COURSE MAINTENANCE

USGA honors Dr. Troll ..... 21  
Jackson speaks out on need for fungicides ..... 21  
Bill Emerson a pioneer in reconstruction ..... 24

### COURSE DEVELOPMENT

Indians hold up Early Winters progress ..... 37  
New technology can 'see' underground ..... 37  
Course projects number in hundreds ..... 38-39

### COURSE MANAGEMENT

Tournament preparation often requires experts ... 45  
Nicklaus, Marriott ink agreement ..... 45

### SUPPLIER BUSINESS

PGA show draws record crowd ..... 49  
Exhibitors use show to build business ..... 49

## International Conference and Show Coverage

For detailed news stories on the 62nd annual event, see pages 10-17

# Japanese firms stay active

By Mark Leslie

Cosmo World, Nitto Kogyo America and Sports Shinko lead the "players" in the Japanese surge of megamillion-dollar buyouts of premier U.S. golf properties.

According to a report prepared by Mead Ventures, Inc. of Phoenix, Ariz.,

the Japanese search for long-term return on investments and their love for golf are keeping real-estate brokers busy in the United States.

The Japanese interest to buy, coupled with a growing willingness of American course owners to sell, have created an active marketplace.

"Over 100 golf course owners have contacted me to find buyers or joint venture partners — looking for financial relief some way," said Donald Wizeman, president of the U.S.-Japan Golf Association based in Myrtle Beach, S.C. "Sellers are from all over the country. I probably

Continued on page 28

Seven Bridges, the centerpiece of a major development in Woodbridge, will open in July as the latest in a number of new golf courses around Chicago. (See story on page 30.) The view from the 5th green over the 6th tee to the 6th green shows the edge of the DuPage County Forest Preserve in the background. Designed by Dick Nugent, Seven Bridges will be a high-end public 18-hole course. Residential units, a hotel, commercial center and offices are planned for the project. It lies between Naperville and Lisle.



Photo by Miles Lowry

## Builders' new director puts priorities in place

Philip Arnold takes charge of association

By Mark Leslie

LAS VEGAS, Nev. — The new executive director of the Golf Course Builders of America wants to develop an association that can guarantee credibility in construction, educate potential lenders, and join with other groups on the environmental front.

Philip A. Arnold, who was approved Feb. 11 to succeed the late Don Rossi, said: "I'm continuing what Don wanted to do — to give our members more. I want to deliver substance, not just form, to this group."

Perry Dye, re-elected to a third term as president of the GCBA, said: "We tried to mix Don's vision with the talent that is on the market. We found Phil."

Vice president of the National Golf Foundation for the past 2-1/2 years, the 44-year-old Arnold said he will present to the GCBA's August meeting a plan to certify all members of the association — from builders to blenders.

"Each of our seven categories of members will have a certification process to go through," Arnold said. "We



Continued on page 16

## Surviving the California drought

By Peter Blais

With some creative course management, California golf courses are managing to survive the six-year drought that has plagued that state, according to Dr. M. Ali Harivandi.

Most of California depends on melting winter snows for summer irrigation. With snowpacks way down, golf courses will likely experience an upcoming summer of even tighter watering restrictions, the University of California Cooperative Extension researcher said

Continued on page 17

## USGA funds standardized lab tests

By Peter Blais

A Cornell University professor will spend the next year standardizing the laboratory test procedures used to determine whether putting green soils meet United States Golf Association specifications.

Dr. Norm Hummell will devote his one-year sabbatical to the effort beginning in July, although he has already done some preliminary work, according to USGA Green Section Director Jim Snow. The Green Section will

pay Hummell's salary.

The turfgrass extension specialist will meet with representatives from soil-testing labs, universities and companies in the golf course development business.

Continued on page 17

# Courses a target for Calif. water conservationists

Continued from page 1

during February's International Golf Course Conference and Show in Las Vegas.

Water supply and usage are imbalanced in California. Most of the water is located in the north and east. But the heaviest use is in the south and along the coast.

Drought conditions have varied throughout the state. One of the hardest hit areas has been the San Francisco Bay area, Harivandi said. The Bay Area has been in a drought since 1984, averaging between 10 and 12 inches of annual rainfall. Some areas are running upwards of a 50-inch deficit in rainfall over the past five years, Harivandi said.

In response to the dry conditions, many communities have devised strict water conservation strategies.

"There are many regulations saying 'Thou shall not do this and thou shall not do that.' That's very appropriate considering the conditions," the UC California researcher said.

Golf courses have been severely affected and suffer a public image problem with people who don't play the game or see it as a luxury.

"In years when there is no water, they become a target. People wonder why golf courses can irrigate 150 acres a day when they can only get 50 gallons for their lawn," Harivandi said.

Harivandi surveyed Bay Area courses to discover what they were doing to cope with the dry condi-

tions. The most frequently mentioned activities were:

- Re-educating staff to think about ways to conserve water.
- Increasing communication with course members to let them know what is happening and why parts of the golf course are brown.
- Employing more people to oversee irrigation.
- Stopping irrigation of roughs, driving ranges and non-play areas.
- Increasing use of aeration, wetting agents and soil conditioners to retain water.

• Manually irrigating trees, a big water user on automatically irrigated courses.

• Using more pond, reservoir and well water where city water is limited.

• Utilizing reclaimed water if it is available.

"Those courses that started using reclaimed water years ago are in the best shape," Harivandi said. "Many have tried to start using effluent in the past two to five years."

While superintendents have been resourceful in saving water and maintaining their courses as

normally as possible, rationing has had negative effects, Harivandi said.

Home sales around courses are down partly because the brown rather than green conditions at some courses are not aesthetically pleasing to potential home buyers.

Water costs are up. "One superintendent told me in the last five years his water bill went from \$35,000 to \$200,000 annually. And that's with a 25 percent water usage reduction," Harivandi said. Labor costs have also jumped with the need to do more watering manually.

Other problems include decreased water quality, chemical build-up in the soil, pest infestation, the loss of trees and the need to rebuild greens.

Despite the problems, some positives have emerged from the drought, Harivandi said. Superintendents have become more aware of the need for water conservation; found efficient ways to maintain healthy turf with less water; improved communication with members on water issues; increased the use of reclaimed water; and removed trees unsuited to the dry climate.

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## USGA

Continued from page 1

His goal is to develop a set of standards for testing greens that will eliminate "confusions and misunderstandings" regarding test procedures and can be used by labs anywhere in the world, Snow said.

No one has addressed the issue of standardized testing procedures in 60 years, even though the Green Section has received frequent requests that such procedures be established, Snow said.

Once established, any lab that follows the standardized procedures when testing a soil sample should come up with the same numbers, Snow said.

"With standardized procedures you should get the same three numbers at seven different labs," the Green Section director said.

Hummell will also look at the USGA specifications themselves to see if any changes are needed, Snow said.

"He will have the top researchers and technicians to help him. Any changes will be based on solid science," Snow added.

Having different specifications in different regions of the country has been discussed, but Snow said he doesn't anticipate that recommendation being made.

Snow said Hummell established USGA laboratories at Iowa State University and Cornell and has been testing USGA greens for 15 years.

"He's down-to-earth. He does not have a big ego and is very knowledgeable. He should do a great job," he said.

