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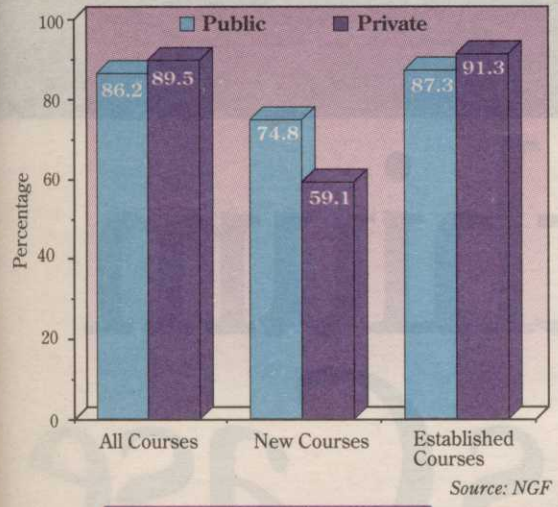
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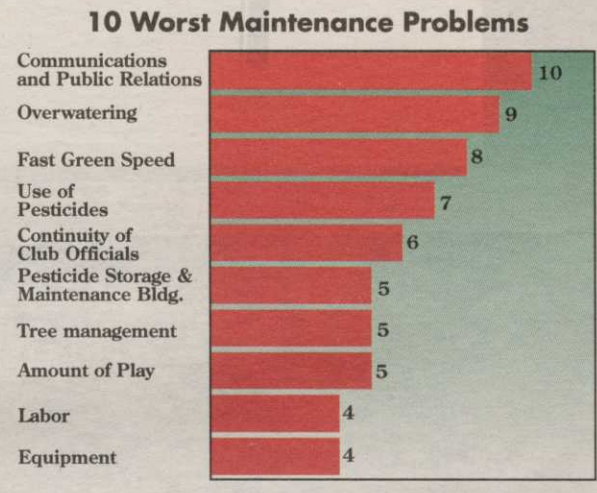
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Pedaling to par
Airplane mechanic takes mountain bike technology onto the golf course with a pedal-powered golf car.
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Supers' 10 deadly problems

By Peter Blais
Inability to communicate is the major sin committed by those involved in golf course maintenance, according to United States Golf Association agronomists.
Agronomist James Connolly of Willimantic, Conn., gave a talk entitled The Top 10 Sins of Golf Course Maintenance during the recent Maine Golf Turfgrass Conference and Show in Portland.
The Top 10 list resulted from a survey of USGA agronomists conducted last year at the request of a group of golf course owners. Twelve of the 14 USGA Green Sec-



These 10 worst problems are listed according to the times they were mentioned by 12 of the agronomists with the United States Golf Association Green Section. Communications was listed the most times — 10 — and labor and equipment the least — 4.

tion agronomists responded. Architectural comments were eliminated from the survey. But Connolly conceded architectural shortcomings — both outright architectural errors and outdated features like too-small greens or tees — were among the major problems superintendents face daily. Architectural errors would have ranked somewhere in the middle if they had been included.
The responses were regional. Western agronomists sometimes saw problems where their Eastern counterparts said none existed.
Continued on page 24

Water tax may cripple Florida courses

By Peter Blais
A water tax proposed by the Florida Legislature would have a "staggering" effect on the state's golf industry, according to Bob Young, head of the Florida Turfgrass Association.
The proposal calls for a 10-cent tax on every 1,000 gallons over a water user's allotment, with the money funding water conservation studies and practices. Courses using effluent would not be affected.
Emerald Dunes Golf Club owner Raymon Finch said the bill is aimed
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A golfer tees off at a unique hole at Venice (Fla.) Golf and Country Club, designed by Ted McAnlis of North Palm Beach, Fla. Venice G&CC has received high marks since opening Jan. 12. For more information on new course development, see pages 29-31.

Tight money dampens optimism

By Mark Leslie
A "tremendous surge" of interest in golf course development is being met by a cautious, stand-pat attitude by banks, according to industry sources.
Whether their optimism springs from

the quick resolution of the Persian Gulf War, lower interest rates, improving demographics or other reasons, developers and buyers are actively looking to move forward on projects.
"There has been a tremendous surge

of new business since Jan. 15, with people going forward planning their projects," said Jim Applegate, president of Gary Player Design Co. of Palm Beach Gardens, Fla. Jan. 15 was the deadline for
Continued on page 40

USGA to fund final research projects

By Peter Blais
Studies on golf course wildlife and the psychological benefits of the game's playing fields are being considered for the final \$300,000 in funding from the United States Golf

Association's \$2.8-million environmental research project.
The USGA will act by July on proposals concerning the effects of golf course maintenance on wildlife, managing wildlife on the course

and the psychological impact of courses on people, according to Mike Kenna, research director for the USGA Green Section.
Studies on the psychological effects of courses have
Continued on page 21

Proposed water tax would put squeeze on Florida courses

Continued from page 1

primarily at the agricultural industry, the state's biggest water user, but will cost most Florida courses an additional \$20,000 to \$30,000 annually.

Supporters hope to have the tax in place by July 1992. But that is unlikely since the bill was still in the committee process and wasn't expected to be ready for a full legislative vote before the Legislature adjourned in April or early May, said Bob Brantley, executive director of the Florida Golf Council, the trade association representing the state's \$5.5-billion golf industry.

The Legislature could take it up if a special session is called this fall, although it probably won't be addressed again until the next regular session begins in March 1992, he added.

Still, like most states, Florida is in a financial squeeze. The bill would raise money and the Legislature could try to rush it through, Brantley said.

"We're opposed to the bill as it stands," he said. "The bill's supporters hope the tax will encourage golf courses to speed up the process of hooking into reclaimed water systems.

"We want to do everything we

"We want to do everything we can to help conserve water. But we don't want the state mandating that everyone use reclaimed water when there isn't enough available."

— Bob Brantley

can to help conserve water. But we don't want the state mandating that everyone use reclaimed water when there isn't enough available. It's not fair to begin taxing courses if the reclaimed water isn't there."

The Florida Golf Council favors further study on the availability of effluent use before imposing any new taxes. At the very least, Brantley expects the state's four water districts to soon begin requiring courses to use reclaimed water where it's available. A new tax, while not a certainty, is a definite possibility, he added.

Finch and Brantley fear any new tax would not stay at 10 cents for very long.

"I was in the Legislature for eight years and served as lieutenant governor for four," Brantley said. "In my experience, it's very rare that a tax is ever replaced or reduced. Once it's on the books, the only way it usually goes is up."

The Florida Golf Council and the regional superintendent, sod grower and athletic field associations are committed to working with the state to find an equitable way to conserve water, agreed Brantley and Young.

"We need to conserve water," Young said. "We don't oppose a tax as long as it is equitable."

Making the tax equitable requires taking a course's seasonal watering needs into consideration, Young said. Monthly allotments should be higher when courses traditionally need more water — during the summer, while overseeding or when growing in a new course — and lower when the need drops, he said.

The state's four water districts and the Legislature have been very cooperative, Young said.

"We've met many times. It's a foregone conclusion we must consider something like this to con-

serve water," the FTA official said.

Florida's water shortage resulted from several successive drought years.

Heavy spring rains might help Orlando, Young's home area, reach its average 60-inch annual rainfall this year, he said. But if the rains stay away this summer, as they have the past several years, the spring downpours will be of little value, he added.

"The weather patterns have changed the last few years," Young said. "The timing isn't what it used to be. We haven't been getting the

rain when we need it."

Non-golfers are generally unsympathetic to the turf industry. Many view it as wasteful in times of drought, Young said.

"But the golf industry produces a lot of revenue. People are starting to realize the importance of golf to the state. We want to be viewed as part of the solution, not the problem," Young said.

Toward that end, the FTA is helping finance a 31,000-square-foot, \$700,000 environmental research facility being built at the University of Florida, Young said.



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Graduates: One job apiece, instead of two

Continued from page 19

busiest golf development state.

"It's a little slower than last year," said the chairman of the school's Division of Golf Course Operations. "But I'm sure we'll have 100-percent placement, just like the past 24 years."

Piersol blamed the slowdown on the effects of the savings and loan crisis on new course construction and negative attitudes about the economy.

"When people are uncertain about the economy, they may hold off hiring someone right away," he said. "But the sluggish economy is overemphasized. Overall, the golf industry is in good shape."

The only students having problems finding jobs are those restricting themselves to certain geographic areas, according to Pennsylvania State University's Don Waddington.

"There seem to be more job openings for assistant superintendents in eastern than western Pennsylvania," the soil sciences professor said. "Those limiting themselves to a certain locality are at a disadvantage. They are much better off if they can remain mobile."

While more 1990 Lake City graduates (17 of 42) wound up in Florida than any other state, many found jobs in Georgia and the Carolinas, Piersol said.

"We have graduates working in Finland, Japan, Thailand, Indonesia. It's hard to go anywhere in the world without running into a Lake City grad," he said.

Educators report starting salaries for novice assistant superintendents remain in the \$18,000 to \$28,000 range, with a full range of benefits from health insurance to vehicle allowances.

"Students aren't even looking at jobs without those types of benefits," Rogers said.

The recession hasn't slowed the

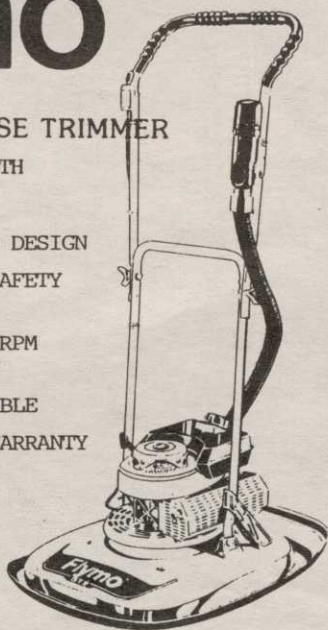
pipeline flowing into turf management programs. Michigan State, Penn State, Lake City and Texas A&M all reported waiting lists to enroll in their turfgrass programs.

"We limit enrollment in our two-year program to 40 students," said MSU's Rogers. "We have 85 applicants wanting to get in. That's even a little higher than last year."

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