

Different clientele meant course changes at El Conquistador

Continued from page 23
for mass mowing."

- Cutting heights were lowered—fairways from 3/4 to one inch down to 5/16; and roughs, from three inches to 1-1/4 inch. Greens are being cut to a scant 9/64 of an inch and tees to 3/8 of an inch.

This is a challenge when temperatures soar to 120 degrees in June. But brown spots are hard to spot, thanks to crew vigilance.

A labor-intensive mowing schedule includes split shifts, seven days a week.

- "We're also vigilant considering dawdling players," Wells said. "We have a ranger for each course. Our rangers are experienced golfers who can politely tell a foursome (including hotel guests) they have to speed up."

Wells said the skilled diplomats have limited ruffled feathers, and playing speed is maintained.

- The grounds crew makes sure golfers can play through, no matter how busy they are. They cut engines while golfers prepare to stroke the ball.

"Courtesy is more important than five minutes of lost working time," Wells said.

Sheraton has not finished with improvements.

The director of golf emphasized, "We still have five years intensive work ahead of us."

Officials want to add shrubbery and trees, and to upgrade bunkers to provide consistent play.

"We also want to improve the desert garden appearance," Wells said.

Then there are cart paths, restrooms, and food and beverage outlets to consider.

While Hardin's design and Wells' maintenance practices are cutting playing time, irri-

gation specialist Mike Britt trimmed the water bill 15 percent, or \$70,000 annually.

The savings came by correcting sprinkler placement.

When built as a development course, only the center of the fairway was to be watered. As a semi-private course, the fairway is kept green wall to wall.

Some heads had to overwater in order to lay down enough liquid along the rest of the line.

Britt will oversee an upgrade in the irrigation system to further improve water use.

Wells and his 43-man crew face many challenges maintaining the 45 holes in the desert heat and fast-play environment.

With tee times seven minutes apart, it is more difficult to mow, or apply darkening agents, surfactants, or even to overseed.

"You have to be careful with transition," Wells said. "We overseed in late September-early October so we're ready to play intensively by Thanksgiving, when most of our winter visitors return. By then the course is in picture postcard condition."

"We plan as far out as three years, but keep flexible so we can make changes as quickly as in just one week."

Wells' three assistant superintendents—Jim Heath, Darrell Lewis and Ernie Guadarrama—keep atop potential problems so they can act rather than react.

For example, if weather conditions indicate the possibility of a pathogen problem the next day, they won't wait for pythium to show but will make a preventive spray that day.

When it rains in Tucson, water is a problem. Storms are generally short, intense and complete with lightning and eroded slopes.



Marty Wells, left, discusses turf conditions with assistant Ernesto Guadarrama at Sheraton Tucson El Conquistador Golf & Tennis Resort.
Photo by Lynn Tilton

Crews must act quickly once the rain stops.

"We handle July with a lot of shovels, rakes and backhoes to clean up rocks and dirt washed into playing areas," Wells said. "Our goal is simple: Lose no grass."

Despite the 320-plus days of sunshine, Wells keeps a daily weather and temperature log, evapotranspiration rates, and other data to ensure the course stays in good condition.

"We've had no serious pathogens hit the course in the past two years. We had a little

fairy ring last year. That's a water issue, and always a problem in desert areas," Wells said.

Meanwhile, developers of the surrounding housing project have also benefitted with the change in management.

When they were responsible for the 45 holes, the average new homeowner built a basic 1,600-square-foot house that retailed for around \$150,000 to \$160,000.

"Now," Wells said, "some homes are in the \$300,000 neighborhood."

Newly planned U.S. courses

Location	Contact	Louisiana	Contact
California		Goodbee	Stephen Rusbar
Auburn	Mike Fluty	Michigan	
Clovis	New Cities Dev. Corp.,	Southfield	LoPatin & Co.
Escondido	David Rainville	West Branch	Robert Stuart, Cilo
Fairfield	Flint GC Const.	Minnesota	
Oceanside	Lightfoot Planning Group	Winona	James Carlson
Pleasanton	Mayor Ken Mercer	Nebraska	
San Diego	Scott Miller	Papillon	Mayor Goodman
San Diego	Ted Robinson	Nevada	
San Marcos	Ted Robinson	Reno	Robert Helms
Colorado		New Jersey	
Canon City	Gordon Hecker	Lawrence	Hopewell Twp. Planning Bd.
Dacapo	Jack Finley	Newark	Brian Silva
Florence	City Council	Vineland	Planning Board
Connecticut		New York	
Ridgefield	Peter Friedman	Croton-On-Hudson	Robert T. Jones Sr.
Seymour	Chris Bargas	North Carolina	
Florida		Gastonia	1st Colony Investors
Bradenton	University Commons	North Dakota	
	IP, Sarasota	Fargo	THK Assoc.
Melbourne	Coy A. Clark Co.	Oregon	
Melbourne	Tara Group	Hillsboro	Meriwether Nat'l GC
Orange Cnty.	Vista Group	Portland	John Green, Springfield
St. Augustine	Jim Davidson	Pennsylvania	
Georgia		Limerick	David Platt
Atlanta	Woodbine Dev. Corp., Dallas	South Carolina	
Macon	Cnty. Comm. Joe Allen	Spartanburg	City Mgr. Bowers
Hawaii		Texas	
Honolulu	Y.Y. Valley	Baytown	Blue T Golf Inc.
Illinois		Utah	
Waverly	Gary Delaney, Jacksonville	Clearfield	Redevelopment Auth.
Winfield	Klein Creek Corp.	Washington	
Indiana		Sedro-Woolley	State Gen. Administration Div.
Fort Wayne	Colonial Dev. Corp.	Wisconsin	
Kentucky		LaCrosse	LaCrosse CC
Henderson	City Commission	Racine	Cnty. Planner

Golf Course News is publishing these lists monthly. The list below includes courses that have been approved around the country in the past month. The chart at left contains the sites and contacts for new courses and renovations in the planning stages. When those courses are ready to begin construction they will be listed again in this "Courses newly approved in the U.S." chart.

We would appreciate your help in updating this section. To contact us call 207-846-0600 or write *Golf Course News*, P.O. Box 997, Yarmouth, Maine 04096.

Under "Type"—D= Daily Fee; P= Private; and M= Municipal.

Courses newly approved in U.S.

Location	Course Name	Type	Holes	Address	Architect/Contact
California					
Merced	Merced Community GC	D	18	Bellevue & Lake Rds.	Ken Dye/Golf West
Palm Desert	Altamira CC	N/A	18	Hwy. 74	Jim Hayhoe
Vallejo	Blue Rock Springs GC	M	18	N/A	Robert Muir Graves
Georgia					
Acworth	Lake Acworth GC	M	18	4190 Ragsdale Rd.	Ken Dye/Golf West
Albany	Twisted Pines GC	D	18	N/A	Donald Cottle Jr.
Idaho					
Blackfoot	Blackfoot Golf Assoc.	N/A	9	Teeple Dr.	Gary Baumgartner
Iowa					
Pella	N/A	D	18	N/A	City Council
Missouri					
St. Louis	St. Peters GC	M	9	Salt Lick Rd.	Alan Ollar
New York					
Lockport	Lockport Town & CC	P	9	N/A	Harry Bowers Assoc.
New Hempstead	New York CC	P	18	Union/Brick Church Rds.	Rockland Dev. Corp.
Oregon					
Albany	River Oaks GC	D	18	Riverside Dr.	Randy Tripp
Pennsylvania					
Wilkes-Barre	Huntsville Golf Club	P	18	Lehman Twp.	Rees Jones
Wisconsin					
Lisbon	Songbird Hills	D	18	Hwy. J	Hal Hoffman, New Berlin