

Communication, integration the keys to creating profitable developments

By SAM SWANSON

In today's sophisticated golf industry, it is more and more apparent that continuity and coordination in the planning, design, construction and management of golf course properties is more and more desirable. The control of costs and expenses are paramount to today's developers.

Many owners envision their golf course to be the next Augusta National or Pine Valley. While this attitude is admirable, it is probably unrealistic. Whose job, then, is it to advise and consult with the owner to produce the best available facility for the allotted budget? We at Golf Resources, Inc. feel it is the entire team that will be working on the project that needs to address these issues with the owner in developing a plan for the development and construction process to provide him the best available product for the dollars invested.

The golf course architect, agronomist, and management company should jointly be involved in initial planning of golf course design. It is extremely difficult for each individual area of expertise to work autonomously without the others' input and create an efficient, functional facility. The design affects the maintenance as it relates to ease and cost of maintenance, playability, maintainability, etc. The design also affects the functionality issues, whether it be country club, resort, or daily-fee golf facility. Unfortunately, we all have budgets we have to work within, and by these experts working together on the front-end, along with other subconsultants, a continuity and consensus for the overall theme and operational philosophy of the property can be achieved.

In the initial planning stages of any course, it is imperative that these three disciplines identify the owner's goals and objectives. Is the goal to make this the hardest course in the country? Should there be a PGA Tour stop there? Should it be public, private, semiprivate or resort? Will it be a "cart mandatory" course? Will there be a complete food and beverage operation or just snack operations? Does residential real estate surround the property, or will it be a stand-alone operation? How do the financial projections reflect the amount of money available for ongoing maintenance? What is the construction budget? Is the irrigation budget sufficient? Where is the maintenance facility going to be located? Where will the cart staging area and cart barn be? Do the 1st and 10th tees both start at the clubhouse?

These questions need to be addressed and answered before any plans are drawn or a bulldozer is put on the property. Not only should substantial cost savings be recognized throughout construction, but also ongoing operational savings should be achieved throughout the life of the project. There will always be changes to the facility because patrons' needs and habits change constantly, and remodel-

Sam Swanson is president of Golf Resources, Inc., a Dallas-based golf architectural, management, agronomic and brokerage firm.



Sam Swanson

ing is an ongoing issue at any golf course or club.

However, you want to minimize those costs. Once the facility is open for play, the operations people, along with the agronomist, must work hand-in-hand in providing as much quality throughout the golf course and clubhouse as possible. This involves not only course conditioning but also service as it relates to food and beverages, golf shop operations, client relations, etc.

The golfers who have a wonderful time playing on beautifully manicured tees, fairways and greens but do not receive excellent service for food in the clubhouse may complain about their day.

On the other hand, the food and

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1983-93: Seed Research turns 10

By SKIP LYNCH

CORVALLIS, Ore. — In an age when four of five businesses fold within three years, and nine of 10 companies go out of business within their first 10 years, Mike Robinson has beaten the odds. August 1993 marks the 10th anniversary of the Robinson's American Dream: Seed Research of Oregon.

Opportunity knocked for Robinson in the summer of 1983. When a cool, wet summer decimated the Oregon bentgrass crop and a large supply of Merit Kentucky bluegrass appeared, Seed Research got its running start. Working with Rothwell Seeds of Ontario, Canada, and Full Circle Incorporated of Madras, Ore., Robinson turned Prominent creeping bentgrass and Merit into money makers.

But selling other people's varieties was not his goal.

"We knew that we would need to market other company's varieties until we were able to collect our own germplasm and produce our own varieties," he recalls. "It was a necessary evil of starting up."

He then set out a strategy he believed the market was bound to follow: Endophyte-enhanced turfgrasses and varieties bred primarily for golf course use.

Although the harmful effects of the endophytic fungi were well known within the livestock industry, research in the 1980s was just beginning to prove the beneficial side of the endophytes in turf. Endophytes were being shown to be very effective natural insecticides while providing a great deal of disease resistance. Robinson, with the invaluable help of Dr. Reed Funk of Rutgers University, set out to develop high endophyte levels in every variety that could be infected.

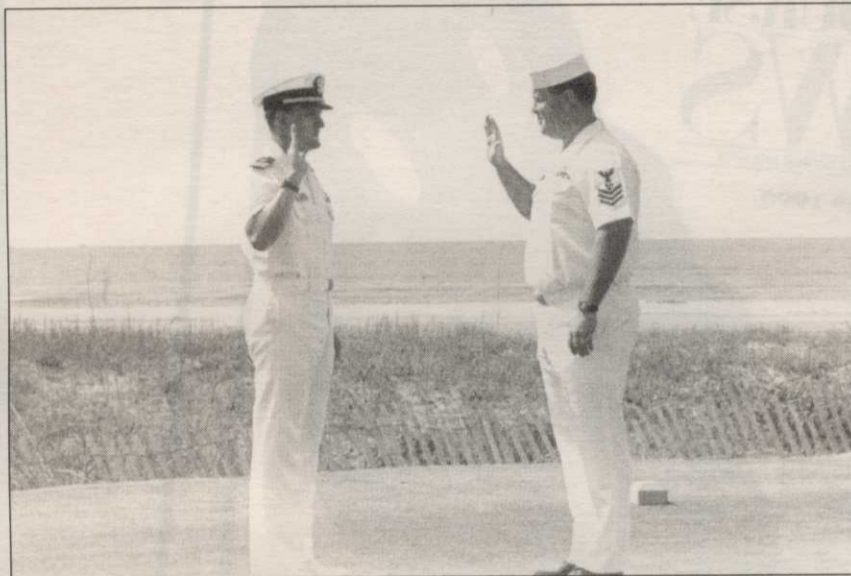
The first Seed Research of Oregon endophyte-enhanced varieties went into production in 1985. SR 4000 perennial ryegrass, SR 3000 hard fescue, and Titan tall fescue came to market in 1986. SR 3000 remains one of the highest rated fine fescues in the NTEP trials. Today, varieties such as SR 4200 perennial ryegrass, SR 5000 Chewings fescue and SR 82000 tall fescue are the beneficiaries of Seed Research's commitment to endophyte research and genetic superiority.

The other direction Robinson wanted to take his company was into the lion's den that is the bentgrass market. He realized there were few choices in the creeping bentgrass market, and one variety seemed to have the market cornered.

Recognizing that marketing meant nothing without quality, Robinson purchased the germplasm rights to Dr.

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Skip Lynch is national sales manager for Seed Research of Oregon.



ANOTHER TOUR OF DUTY?

Some guys just can't get enough golf: MMI (ss) John L. Heyer Jr. (right) chooses the 17th tee at Pete Dye's Ocean Course on Kiawah Island to re-enlist in the U.S. Navy. LCDR Tim Disher performs the ceremony.

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4516 E. Kinsey Road
Avon Park, FL 33825
1-800-422-1187

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