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GOLF COURSE NEWS

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INSIDE

Jones Trail Shuffle

Ownership of the Robert Trent Jones Trail in Alabama has been transferred to the state pension system, which provided the project's \$100 million funding 4

Just Fine, Thank You

Tough and environmentally friendly, fine fescues have carved themselves a niche in northern golf industry circles, above the transition zone 22-24



STILL GOING...

Geoffrey Cornish — seen here (left) conferring with Fred Licht, wetlands expert at a Cornish project in Bath, Maine — is still cranking out golf courses and literature. For a Q&A with one of architecture's grand old men, see page 25.

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Mississippi flooding leaves cruel legacy

Slow, arduous recovery foreseen

By HAL PHILLIPS

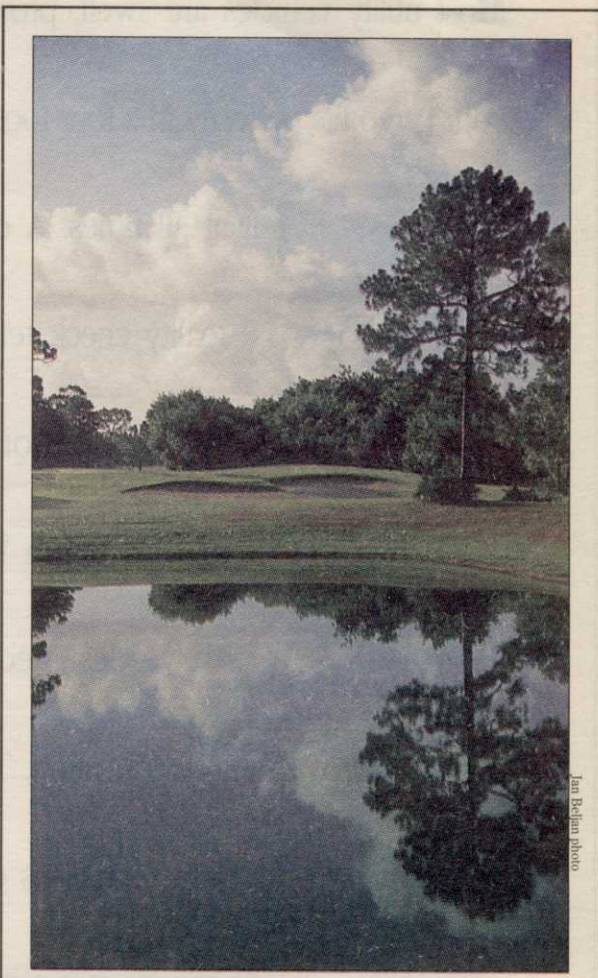
DAVENPORT, Iowa — Long after the rains have stopped and the flood waters subsided, superintendents in the upper Mississippi River basin will be dealing with the lingering effects of the heaviest summer rains since 1965.

"We get one day of sunshine and three days of rain, and that's the way it's been for three weeks," explained Tim Westland, superintendent of Thunder Hills Country Club in Peosta, Iowa. "I've been in this business for 22 years and I've never seen anything like it."

Hardest hit were river-side golf courses in the Quad Cities area of Iowa and Illinois. As thunderstorms swelled tributaries in Wisconsin and Minnesota, levies were pushed to their limits further downstream. As flood walls gave way and creeks swelled over their banks, fairways sat beneath several inches of muddy water which, after it receded, left thick layers of silt.

Though the river peaked somewhere around July 11, many superintendents in the region are now faced

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Jan Reijnen photo

EXECUTIVE REFLECTIONS

Once hailed as golf's hot, new design trend, executive courses — like Tom Fazio's River Bend Golf Club in Tequesta, Fla. (above) — seem to have lost their appeal. Why? Experts agree that much of the problem has been poor perception and even worse marketing. For a special report on executive courses, and how they might be saved, turn to page 31.

Turf experts: 'Advances on all fronts!'

By MARK LESLIE

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. — Major progress has been made on many research fronts but additional, more thorough studies are needed in such areas as biorational insecticides and integrated control of turfgrass diseases, according to scientists gathered here from around the world.

While research studies gave golf courses high grades for environmental soundness, farms and homelawns didn't fare as well, according to the 11 keynote addresses, 15 symposia and 121 papers presented at the 7th International Turfgrass Research Conference held in late July.

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Auctioneer Don Kennedy recognizes an early bidder during the proceedings on Carmel Valley Ranch.

Newcomer KSL Recreation the big winner at Landmark auction

By HAL PHILLIPS

DALLAS — The long-awaited Landmark auction proved a coming out party for the year-old KSL Recreation Group Ltd., a Colorado-based management firm that snapped up the two most expensive properties up for bid here at the Fairmont Hotel.

In purchasing PGA West for \$140 million and La Quinta for \$136.4 million, KSL — backed by the Wall Street firm of Kolhberg, Kravis, Roberts & Company (KKR) — made an impressive debut in golf industry circles. KSL further enhanced its standing less than a week before the July 14 auction when it purchased the troubled Fairway Group, the nation's fourth largest operator of golf facilities (see story page 35).

In other sales, Club Corp. of America paid \$35.6 million for Mission Hills Country Club in Rancho

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Budget squeeze takes toll on hardware sales

By MARK LESLIE

Whittled-down capital budgets, the sluggish economy and increasingly specialized, expensive new equipment are causing golf course superintendents to hold onto their hardware longer and rush for parts to keep it tuned.

"A lot of superintendents are under budget constraints. They are holding onto equipment a little longer than they'd like," said Steve Nelson, Jacobsen Textron's manager of parts and accessories and supply. "And that's good for parts sales."

Most experts agree the recession has caused clubs to postpone capital purchases and to buy parts instead. While Jacobsen, Toro and other major manufacturers report positive sales in new equipment and parts sales, golf course superintendents say they're keeping used gear longer simply because their budgets are smaller.

"There's no question people are buying fewer

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