

JIM McPHILOMY
 Riviera Country Club
 Pacific Palisades, Calif.
 Nissan Los Angeles Open
 Feb. 25-28, CBS

As a youngster, Jim McPhilomy, 27, and his older brother spent summers and school vacations working for their father, who was head superintendent at Denver's Valley Country Club. "I spent a lot of time riding around the course with Dad, even in grade school," he remembered. Jim eventually graduated from Pennsylvania State University's two-year turf management program, spent a year as assistant at Glenmoor of Cherry Hills (Colo.) and became Riviera's head superintendent in 1989. His brother works for a Toro distributor in Denver.



Jim McPhilomy

Things to look for: Eradicated at Pebble Beach for last year's U.S. Open, kikuyugrass dominates tees, fairways and roughs at Riviera. "Kikuyu had taken over 50 percent of the course back in the 1940s, so members decided to encourage it," McPhilomy said. "It's very coarse with thick blades. It's great in the fairways, but questionable in the roughs. Until last year we were mowing it every day. But it was so thick, we scalped it a lot. Now we mow it three days a week in the spring and summer. Then we lightly verticut the fairways every other week and the aprons every week. That's reduced the scalping and we don't have to mow as often."

Made-for-TV preparations: During the summer when the kikuyu is thick, McPhilomy cuts roughs at 1-3/4 inches. But during winter he lets the thinner blades reach 3-1/2 inches for the tournament while the grass is still semi-dormant. "We haven't mowed the rough since early November," he said.

Greens are predominantly poa and will all be converted to bentgrass by next year's tournament. In the meantime, "we'll single cut then roll them every day during advance week and double cut them during the tournament, if necessary," McPhilomy said. "We'll try to get the speeds up around 9-1/2 or 10. But we'll concentrate on smoothness ahead of speed. If it rains and the greens get bumpy, we'll keep speeds down. We want the players to have a chance to make some putts."

Tour of Duty

JOHN WALTER
 Torrey Pines Golf Courses
 San Diego, Calif.
 Buick Invitational
 Feb. 18-21, NBC

John Walter, 48, has been with the city of San Diego Recreation Department for 22 years, mostly involved with ballfield development and facility acquisition. He took over Torrey Pines 4-1/2 years ago on a temporary basis. As golf course manager, he oversees maintenance, pro shop and administration at the North and South courses as well as 27-hole Balboa Golf Course. His non-traditional turf background started with a bachelor's degree in history during the height of the Vietnam War followed by entrance to the Army's Officer Candidate School. A self-confessed "golf rat" since first setting foot on a course at age 11, his familiarity with the game landed him his first golf assignment, course manager at Fort Polk, La.

Things to look for: "We've spent a lot of money the past four years. We redid all the bunkers in conjunction with architects Halsey Daray Golf Inc. The clubhouse is new. We installed cart paths and a new irrigation system on the South course that will reduce water use 25-30%."



John Walter

Made-for-TV preparations: "The striping is the most noticeable thing. We were doing just the greens four years ago. Now we do collars, aprons, fairways and steep cut into the rough. We started using smaller mowers before the tournament last year to give the striping more definition. We have a 25-person crew and put in about

1,600 hours of overtime the two months before the tournament. The two courses get about 200,000 rounds of public play a year, meaning we have to do a lot of repair work — filling in ruts, overseeding areas, encouraging players to replace divots and working the bunkers."

STEVE KUHN
 Doral Country Club (Blue Course)
 Miami, Fla.
 Doral Ryder Open
 March 4-7, CBS

Last Labor Day weekend was the toughest test for Steve Kuhn, 43, during his 6-1/2-year tenure at Doral. That's when Hurricane Andrew ripped through the resort, taking out half the trees on the 770-acre property. Five days later, 18 holes were ready for play. Within two weeks, all 81 had reopened. "It was a pretty remarkable effort," the head superintendent said. Kuhn also hosted a PGA Tour event, the Tallahassee Open, while at Killearn CC during the early 1970s. He is a graduate of the University of Florida's four-year ornamental horticulture program.



Steve Kuhn

Things to look for: "Half the trees on the Blue course tipped over or broke off. We propped up as many as we could, but had to cut a lot back to make them less top-heavy. New leaves are already growing, but they aren't as thick as they used to be. We resodded the damaged areas of the rough and overseeded many areas with ryegrass to get things green again. But tee to green, there is little difference from before and after the storm. The Blue course is pretty wide open, anyway. The roughs and out-of-play areas were the most affected." Doral also has 6-foot-wide walkways from greens to tees that are mowed around 1/2-inch. "Some of them are 100 yards or longer. I hate those things," he laughed.

Made-for-TV preparations: The PGA requires an intermediate fairway strip extending from the edge of the rough 7 feet inward toward the middle of the fairway, Kuhn said. Fairways will be cut about 1/2-inch, intermediate strip 1-1/4 inches and rough 2 inches. "They don't like that harsh transition from fairway to rough," Kuhn explained. Doral also overseeds greens with bentgrass in November, slowly cutting them back to 1/8-inch by tournament time. "We're the farthest south course in the country with bentgrass greens," Kuhn said. "Speeds never dropped below 12 during last year's event. Some players said they were the best putting surfaces they'd seen all year."

Editor's note: "Tour of Duty" is a regular feature this year in Golf Course News. It is designed to celebrate the PGA Tour's unsung, underpublicized hero: The superintendent.

➤ ➤ ➤ INTRODUCING!

A
 Breakthrough
 in

Thatch Control



Twice as Effective as Aerifying

Thatch-X granular produces impressive reductions in thatch — nearly twice as much as aerification.

Field trials conducted on golf course greens, fairways,

athletic turf and commercial sod production facilities show that following treatment with Thatch-X, areas with serious thatch problems consistently show dramatic thatch reduction.

- A single application of granular Thatch-X at the recommended rate reduced thatch almost twice as much as aeration — 36.8% compared to 19%.
- Thatch-X at the recommended rate reduced thatch up to 50% when combined with aeration.

Laboratory analysis confirmed that 3 months following Thatch-X application, microbial population was 10 times greater in the treated areas.

Thatch-X is a carefully formulated blend of food and feed grade organics, coldwater sea plants, enzymes and selected microorganisms that dramatically accelerates thatch reduction. It is based on a unique formula and a proprietary delivery system that extends the viability of the microorganisms under a wide range of environmental conditions and cultural practices.

Spring is the optimal time to apply Thatch-X, so call us toll-free today.



Emerald Isle, Ltd.

1-800-628-GROW