

GOLF COURSE NEWS

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BEST OF THE BEST

In an exclusive *Golf Course News* poll, the Ocean Course at Kiawah, a Pete Dye creation, has been named the top public seaside course to open in the last five years. The *Golf Course News* 1992 awards section begins on page 56.

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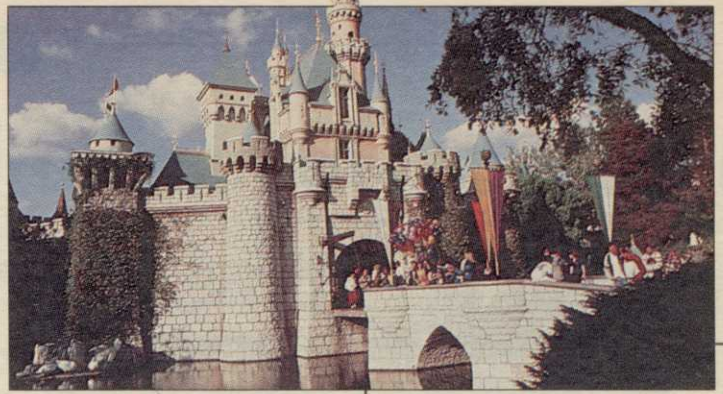
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Supers descend on Anaheim

By PETER BLAIS

ANAHEIM, Calif. — Guess what, folks. This year's winner of the GCSAA's highest honor, the Old Tom Morris Award, will be there to receive her plaque.

Business kept last year's recipient, golfer Tom Watson, away from the New Orleans ceremony. Knowing he would not be able to personally receive the award, Watson requested the association give it to someone else.

But the group decided Watson was their man and honored him anyway. Although he taped an acceptance speech shown during the annual banquet, the five-time British Open champ's absence was definitely noticeable.

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GCSAA faces opposition on proposed bylaw changes

By PETER BLAIS

This year's GCSAA annual meeting promises to be anything but a ho-hum affair. The proposed bylaw changes will see to that.

Recommendations to give the board of directors authority to set dues, get rid of delegate voting, change from a two-thirds to simple majority rule, and restructure membership classes have drawn fire and support from around the country.

The Organizational Study Committee recommended and the board of directors unanimously endorsed the changes, according to GCSAA President Bill Roberts.

Still, some board candidates, former association officers and members

have expressed reservations about the changes.

"Many people feel like these are being rammed down their throats," said board of director candidate George Renault of Burning Tree Club in Bethesda, Md. "They could all be voted down. It just stresses the need for better communication with the membership."

Board candidate Dave Fearis of Blue Hills Country Club in Kansas City, Mo., explained that the board has simply endorsed bringing the proposed changes before the membership for a vote rather than endorsing the actual changes themselves.

"Whether they pass or fail, they have the members interested and ac-

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Revised green construction specs forthcoming

By MARK LESLIE

Major changes in the U.S. Golf Association greens construction specifications, to be unveiled this month, will save developers money and time, according to USGA Green Section National Director Jim Snow.

New guidelines will be released in January following a "thorough, scientific" 18-month review of the

After an 18-month review, USGA to release new guidelines this month

USGA's controversial construction recommendations by agronomists, scientists, architects, industry personnel and soil laboratory personnel.

Snow believes golf course builders, architects and developers will be happy with the results,

which will be available in a rough version in January and in a booklet come late winter or early spring.

Central to the changes is the intermediate pea-gravel layer, known as the choker layer, which Snow termed "controversial, not in terms of agronomics, but in terms

of money."

"I believe most of the time the choker layer is left out of the construction," Snow said. "We have found good specs for determining when you need it or not" based on particle size distribution of the root-zone mix."

The recommendations place more stress on laboratory tests, especially in

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Low Country courses take proactive environmental tack

By HAL PHILLIPS

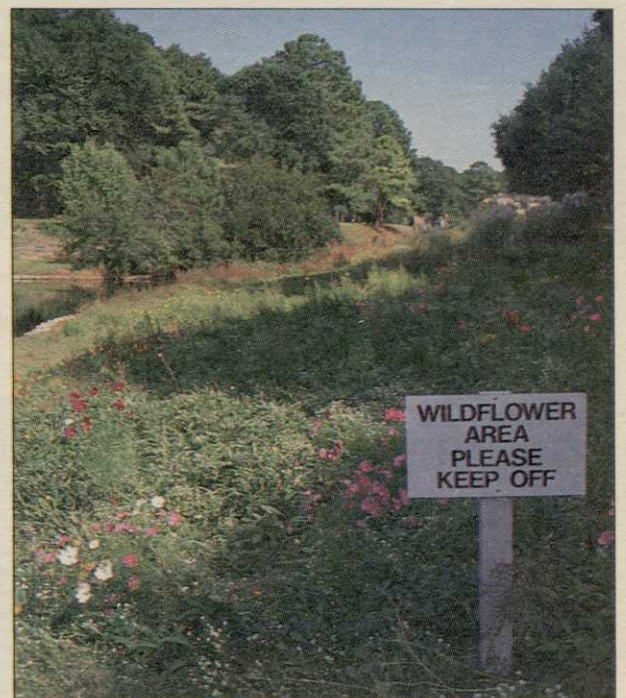
HILTON HEAD, S.C. — The words "coastal council" are enough to scare some golf course owners and developers half to death. However, a proactive approach taken in the Low Country of South Carolina has shown that regulators

and course owners can work together, to the benefit of all concerned.

Mike Tinkey is chief operating officer of Royal Golf & Tennis, Ltd. which manages 81 holes in and around Hilton Head. Since 1989, Tinkey has overseen a slew of environmental improvements: lagoon naturalization, bird sanctuaries, above-ground fuel storage, wildflower plantings, and conversion to irrigation using 100 percent effluent. All this was done with the active blessing of regulatory agencies.

"We went to the agencies and said, 'This is what we're

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Wildflower beds on the 4th hole at the Barony Course are among 4.5 acres planted on the Port Royal/Shipyard courses on Hilton Head.

Low Country

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planning to do. What do you think?" explained Tinkey, who is also president of the Low Country Golf Course Owners Association. "We have a tradition on Hilton Head of being environmentally sensitive. We wanted to continue the tradition, but at an accelerated pace.

"We want to remain on the cutting edge of environmental protection while ensuring the highest standards of aesthetics and playability for golfers and homeowners. But that's a delicate

balance."

That's why Royal Golf & Tennis (RG&T) sought help, in the form of the South Carolina Coastal Council which, needless to say, was happy to be consulted.

"They've been willing and able to work with us," explained council biologist George Madlinger. "And instead of saying, 'You can't do that,' we've been able to work out some compromises.

"I don't think it has cost them anything more. They've been able to do wonders, let me tell you."

A good example of this cooperation took place at Planter's Row Golf Course, part of Port Royal, a

54-hole complex managed by RG&T.

The track was scheduled for closing in order that all 18 greens could be replaced. While the course was under repair, 6,000 trees and shrubs were planted and the local Audubon Society helped create nesting areas. Active bird watching is now conducted on the course, and there's even a family of otters living nearby.

One of the major issues along the South Carolina coastline has been stormwater runoff. Royal Golf & Tennis has worked with the council to create vegetative buffers — especially around in-

lets or lagoons — that act as filters and provide wildlife habitats.

Todd Ballantine, principal of Ballantine Environmental Resources, worked on this natural buffer system.

"The golf course management company [RT&G] took it upon themselves to get the proper information," said Ballantine. "In the long run, I believe the aesthetics they've created have made the courses unique — and on Hilton Head, you have to be unique to survive."

At another Royal Golf & Tennis course, five acres of superfluous turf were recently replanted with

wildflowers, thus reducing the chemicals and water needed for maintenance. It's also more pleasing to the eye, Tinkey added.

"We just think it's the right thing to do," said Tinkey. "Our environment is awfully precious. We also want to be ahead of the curve on telling the public that golf courses can be a positive influence on the environment.

"That's something our industry has not done well over the years."

Madlinger, for one, sees a healthy precedent in the making.

"Hopefully we can create some sort of national trend."

Groups join forces to market Hilton Head

HILTON HEAD ISLAND, S.C. — The Hilton Head Island Visitor & Convention Bureau and the Low Country Golf Course Owners Association have started a joint marketing plan to inform golfers of the value of a Hilton Head golf vacation.

A *Golf Planner* includes information on special value packages offered at some of the region's best-known resorts including Sea Pines, Shipyard, Palmetto Dunes, Port Royal, Country Club of Hilton Head, Old South Golf Links, Hilton Head National, Executive Golf Course, Rose Hill Club, Island West and Pleasant Point.

The planner includes extensive information on the resort and public-access courses in the area.

"Many people know about the excellence of Hilton Head Island golf, but golfers today are looking for extra value as well. With the *Golf Planner*, we're offering the convenience of a handy, easy-to-use guide to help our visitors choose a quality, affordable golf vacation," said Low Country GCOA President Mike Tinkey.

The *Hilton Head Island and South Carolina Low Country Golf Planner* and a "Fast Fax" informational package are available free from the convention bureau by calling 800-523-3373 or by FAX at 803-785-7110.

Golf Resources takes over Madera Muni GC

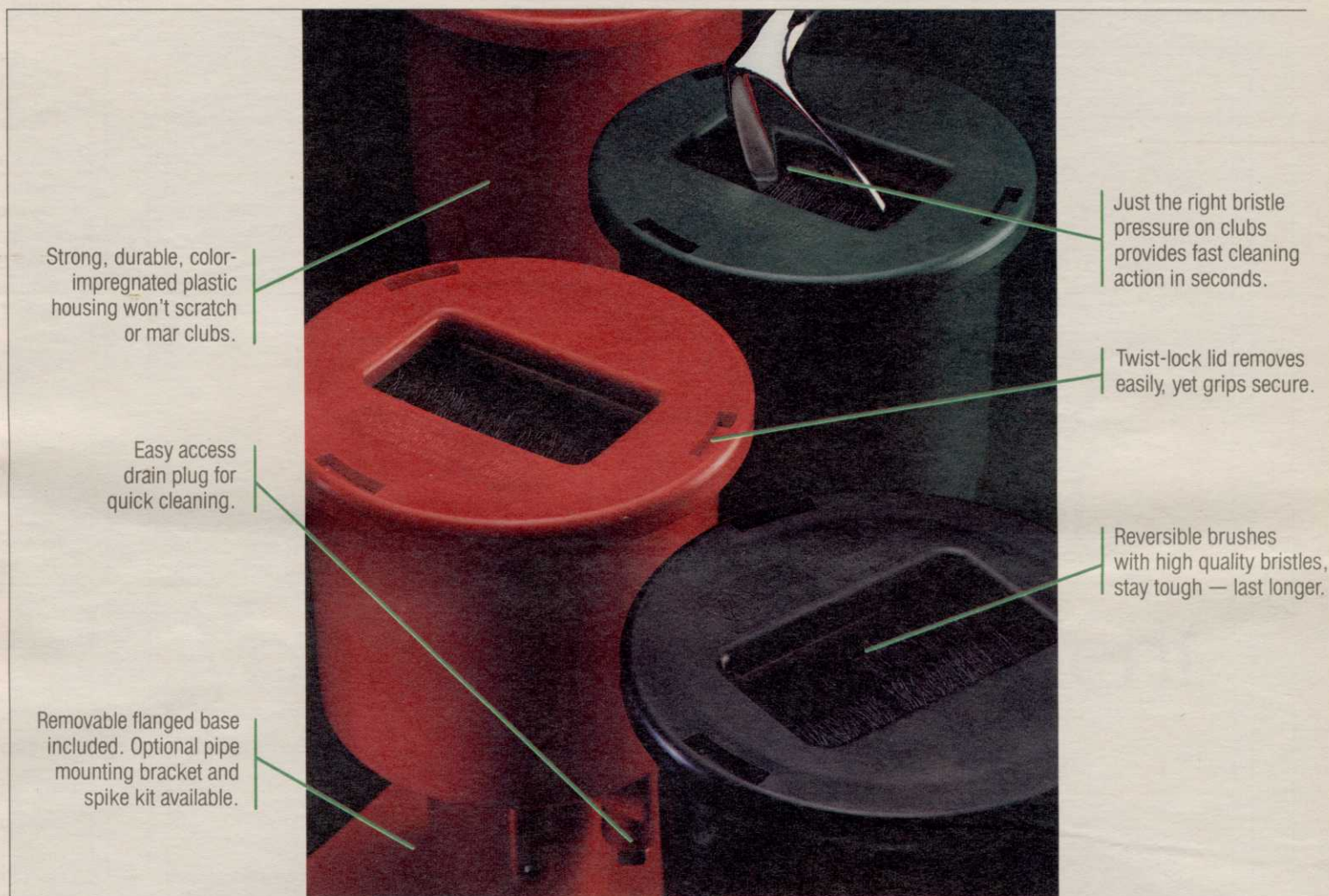
MADERA, Calif. — What the city could not do, a private company will attempt.

Golf Resources Inc. of Auburn has been awarded an interim contract to manage the financially troubled Madera Municipal Golf Course.

The City Council will pay the company \$5,000 a month for four months to manage the course.

It will pay Golf Resources an additional \$4,000 to develop recommendations on how to improve, maintain and advertise the course and operate the golf shop and restaurant at a profit.

GOLF COURSE NEWS



You're Looking at a Product That Will Replace the Golf Tee!

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