

Tour of Duty

JOHN FLEMING
The Olympic Club
San Francisco, Calif.
Nabisco Tour Champ'ship
Oct. 26-31, NBC

John Fleming, 51, could be the "Nature vs. Nurture" poster child. On the genetic side, father Jack Fleming came to this country as a member of Dr. Alistair Mackenzie's construction crew. In addition to becoming Mackenzie's construction foreman on the West Coast, the elder Fleming designed several of his own courses in Northern California. Clearly, son John Fleming has golf in his blood. "Unfortunately, I was dragged

out of bed every morning to pound stakes," John explains. "I was trying like hell to stay out of the business." He went so far as to take his undergraduate degree in philosophy (University of San Francisco) and his graduate degree in public administration/urban planning (Golden Gate University). But in the end, the lure of the golf course proved too much for him. He arrived at Olympic as an assistant in 1971. After being named head superintendent in 1973, Fleming has played host to a slew of prestigious events, including the

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NEIL THRAILKILL
Oak Hills Country Club
San Antonio, Texas
HEB Texas Open
Oct. 14-17, ESPN

Neil Thrailkill, 33, followed the esteemed George Frye to Oak Hill in 1984 and never left. Frye was superintendent in charge of the Jay Morrish redesign at Oak Hill — an old A.W. Tillinghast design that had fallen into disrepair — and Thrailkill traveled to south Texas as an assistant. When Frye left for Kiawah Island a year later, Thrailkill was named head superintendent. Since then it's been

a parade of PGA Tour stops for the North Carolina State grad. Thrailkill, the product of Robbins, N.C., just outside of Pinehurst, has presided over nine Texas Opens, one Vantage Cup and the very first Nabisco Tour Championship in 1987, which he calls "the highlight of my career."

THINGS TO LOOK FOR: "I really think we have a reputation for our Bermuda greens," said Thrailkill, who had just finished a day-long meeting with a PGA Tour agronomist. "One of our guys was up at Castle Rock [site of The

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GARY MYERS
TPC at Summerlin
Las Vegas, Nev.
The Las Vegas Invitational
Oct. 20-24, ESPN

Gary Myers went off to Purdue University with ideas about pursuing a career in engineering, but an experience working on a golf course in Tucson changed all that. He quickly realized golf course maintenance was the proper path, and he



enrolled in the Winter School for Turfgrass at the University of Massachusetts in Stockbridge. After graduating in 1978, he returned to Arizona as an assistant at Tucson National.

He accepted his first head superintendent's job at nearby Green Valley Country Club before moving on to the Desert Inn, where he played host to 17 PGA, LPGA and Senior tour events in eight years.

He's been at Summerlin since construction of the Bobby Weed/Fuzzy Zoeller design began four years ago. While it was being built, Myers spent nine months at Avenal and three more at Dearborn, studying the operation of TPC courses.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR: "I'm afraid there isn't anything too unique," said the 39-year-old Myers. "It's a stadium course. We just throw up some signs and ropes and have at it. We try to maintain it year 'round so we can do that."

"The mounding here isn't so severe, so it's easier to maintain than some other TPC designs. But because we're a TPC, we have extremely high, uniform standards — and that's where the degree of maintenance becomes difficult.

"We take a lot of pride within the TPC organization in competing with each other. In doing so, we've created a great situation for the player."

All TPC courses are run by PGA Tour Golf Properties, which bestows the TPC Golf Course Maintenance Operation of the Year Award.

Myers said one of his very top priorities is winning this award, earned by the TPC of Michigan last year.

MADE-FOR-TV PREPARATIONS: "We stripe our fairways throughout the year," Myers continued. "For the tournament, we create an X-pattern so the players get a uniform roll from all their shots. We don't do anything special because we try to maintain the peripheral areas as well as the playing areas."

"We just had the PGA Tour agronomist here last week. He pointed out that we could tee it up this week. And we try to keep it that way on a daily basis, all year long."

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Tour of Duty

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Fleming...

1981 U.S. Amateur, the 1987 U.S. Open and five Pacific Coast Amateurs.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR: "The shade conditions here are unique, and they make it sort of difficult at times," said Fleming. "In terms of disease problems, we've had rains in October three of the last five years. So that could be a problem for us.

"We'll just try to firm things up so these guys can't fire at the flags all day. Of course, you receive a format from the PGA that's slightly different from that of the USGA. The rough will be three inches [for the Tour Championship], whereas it's four inches at USGA events."

MADE-FOR-TV PREPARATIONS: As you might expect from the superintendent at one of America's premier golfing venues, Fleming does little to prepare for the TV cameras:

"No, it's just prep work for TV crews that come in. We're not looking at a different mowing format, or anything like that. If you're into diagonal cutting on the fairways — as opposed to up and down — we do that anyway."

Thraikill...

International] and a bunch of pros commented that we had some of the best greens on tour.

"But I taped the Nabisco a few years back, and what I noticed was that we had the most gorgeous bunkers I've ever seen on TV."

Does he enjoy working with the PGA?

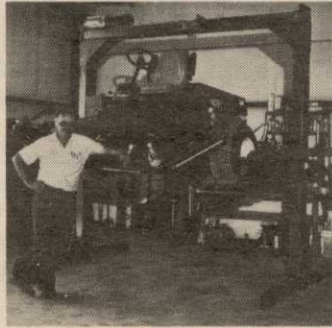
"This is my ninth one, and I know all the guys by know. We know what to expect from each other. It's real comfortable. Besides, they're traveling all over the world preparing tournament sites. I can learn something from these guys every time they come in."

MADE-FOR-TV PREPARATIONS:

"We do more soluble applications to give the fairways a bit more color. During the Nabisco, we sprayed all 18 fairways every day.

"We won't lay it on that heavy this year... Problem is, we have common Bermuda fairways which you can't stripe up real nice like you can on northern courses."

"I save an hour or more a day on maintenance time."



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Golf Course Mechanic

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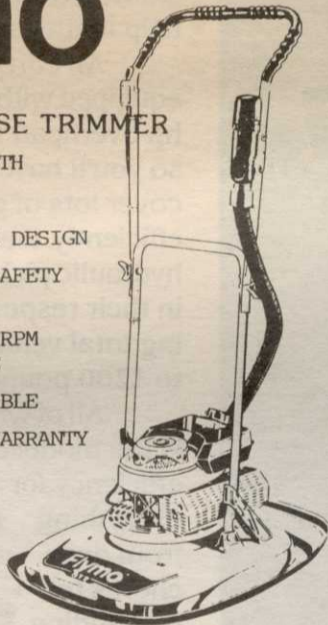
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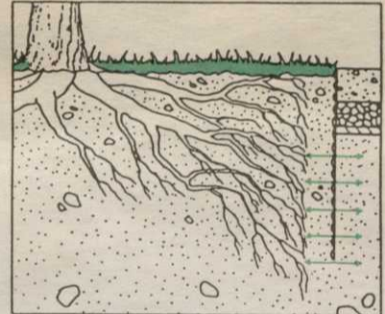
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