

BRIEFS



NICKLAUS PICKS SORRELL

HILTON HEAD, S.C. — Steve Sorrell of Colleton River Plantation has been selected Superintendent of the Year by GolfTurf, a division of Golden Bear International. GolfTurf President Edward A. Etchells cited Sorrell for doing “an absolutely phenomenal job in completing the grow-in stage and developing the maintenance operations.” Sorrell joined Colleton River in 1993 after serving as superintendent at Grand Cypress Resort and Metro West Country Club in Orlando, Fla.

MINNESOTA CLEANUP IN FRONT

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's Leaking Underground Storage Tank Program leads other Midwest states in cleaning up tank leaks, according to figures released by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The EPA reported that in Minnesota, more than 42 percent, or 1,837 of the 4,337 confirmed leaks had been cleaned up by the end of the 1993 fiscal year. That compares with 25 percent of the 50,000 known releases in all the EPA's Midwest states. Those figures do not include tanks with less than 1,100-gallon capacity.

OHIO LANDFILL DELAY

Lack of funding has forced Ohio to postpone its ban on dumping yard wastes in landfills. Expected to go into effect last Dec. 1, the ban has been delayed until as late as July. The Ohio Environmental Protection Agency said staff shortages prevented it from writing rules the state Legislature approved four years ago.

RESEARCH FUNDS RAISED

DENVER — A silent auction at the Rocky Mountain Turf Conference and Trade Show provided \$4,000 toward the Jackie Butler Memorial Endowment Fund. Money earned through the conference will be donated to the Rocky Mountain Turfgrass Research Foundation.



SCIENTIST-AUTHOR SPEAKING IN NAPLES

NAPLES, Fla. — Dr. Michael S. Coffman, author of two books and former professor of forest science at Michigan Technological University, will conduct a six-hour seminar on environmentalism on May 13 at Naples Beach Club. The president of Environmental Perspectives, Inc., in Bangor, Maine, Coffman will explain how to handle environmental extremism on the local level. To register, people should contact David Court, director of education for the Florida Golf Course Superintendents Association, at 407-482-5000.

Water-recycling, chemical-free, tackling difficult issues, Pheasant Run was...

Ahead of Its Time



S T. CHARLES, III. — Whether it was foresight or visionary, long before it was politically expedient — or even recommended — Pheasant Run Resort Golf Course was chemical-free and recycling its own water.

In the early 1960s, McArdle Enterprises President Ed McArdle stood on 160 acres of Illinois prairie 40 minutes west of Chicago and envisioned a resort and convention center where a dairy farm then stood.

When Pete Mirkes Jr. took his first supervisor's position with McArdle, in February 1963, he faced major challenges.

“From Day One, we knew we had a challenge in front of us,” Mirkes said. “The property literally was tree-less, and had no

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Dr. Danneberger: 'Don't give up on IPM' too soon

By MARK LESLIE

R OCKPORT, Maine — Integrated pest management (IPM) plans are fun to discuss in the off-season, but oftentimes “come July, they're the first thing out the window when the spray tank starts up,” said Prof. Karl Danneberger.

Urging his Maine Turfgrass Conference audience to develop — and not abandon — IPMs at their facilities, Danneberger said: “If you're doing good practices ... they get better each year. If it is sound practice but doesn't work well the first year, don't throw it out the window.”

The concept of IPM is minimal disturbance, he said. “You will do as little, under optimum maintenance, as you can. That doesn't just mean reducing pesticides. Cultural practices can cause disturbances. Anyone who has dropped a height of cut on a green for a term knows that.”

The Ohio State University professor said the technical approach to IPM strategies involves cultural and biological practices, resistant cultivars and chemicals.

By using IPM, “you're hitting [application] rate with cultural practices, number with biological control, and resistance with chemical control,” he said.

“Most of our problems relate to resistance,” Danneberger said, explaining that the more a chemical is applied the faster pests develop resistance to it. “Fungicides are applied more often and that is why we experience more resistance with them,” he said.

Danneberger said superintendents should “quantify what you have on the course. If you have data you have knowledge. And if you have knowledge you have power.”

Having that data as a baseline makes it possible to gauge effectiveness of a maintenance program into the future.

“If you're doing good cultural practices you will see a lot

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Walter Woods makes mark far beyond bounds of St. Andrews

Walter Woods is head superintendent at St. Andrews Links in Scotland, the holy Mecca of golf. Woods has been the links supervisor the past 20 years. He consults worldwide and is past chairman of the British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association. Contributing Editor Terry Buchen interviewed him during January's British Turfgrass Management Exhibition Seminar '94 in Harrogate, Yorkshire, England.

**Golf Course News:** How has the golf course changed over the past 20 years?

**Walter Woods:** We have had many [British Open] championships and that has improved us. To deal with the top players playing our courses I had to get more education. I did that by going to America. Your education system had a lot to offer and I was able to incorporate what I learned into the conditions we find here. I think we've improved St. Andrews because of what I learned in America combined with what we knew about British conditions.

**GCN:** Have British and Scottish courses evolved toward what we find on American courses?

**Woods:** I think they have. Despite the romantic things they say, I don't think golfers today would want to play courses with the conditions we had 20 years ago. We fertilize more than we used to. We're cutting fairways with triplexes rather than the gang mowers we used to use. During



In preparation for the 124th British Open Championship next year, St. Andrews is refurbishing its famed sod-wall bunkers — the Hell Bunker on the 14th hole, above, and Shell Bunker on the 7th, below — worn by the wind and golfers' sand blasts.

the Open, greens are cut two or three times a day because the pros demand putting conditions be faster.

Nowadays we would never succeed by closing our courses in winter. During the winter we expect people to play golf, use the gaming machines, buy food and drink. Therefore it's important we have a 12-month season. That's another reason education is so important.

**GCN:** Sundays are interesting at St. Andrews.

**Woods:** We've always closed Sundays. Many people have suggested we stay open to get the extra revenue. But Old Tom Morris said many years ago that if people don't need a day of rest the golf courses still do. We've always stuck by that. People are allowed to walk the golf course Sundays. You see couples and children and people with babies in their arms. It's more recreation. And then on Monday, it's back to golf again.

**GCN:** What time does your maintenance staff start work and golfers begin playing?

**Woods:** In Scotland we have long nights

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Terry Buchen photos



Super Focus

Canada's Super of the Year

# An aquarange in summer, ski trails in winter — Palmer has it all

By MARK LESLIE

Twenty-eight years ago the city of St. John, New Brunswick, asked Blake Palmer to operate its nine-hole Rockwood Park Golf Course for one year. He had no turfgrass knowledge, no managerial experience — and no budget.

Today, Palmer's 2,000-acre Rockwood Park boasts 18 holes of golf, an aquatic driving range that was one of the country's first, and something that truly sets his facility apart — more than 50 miles of cross-country ski trails.

And in March, the Canada Golf Superintendents Association named Palmer its Superintendent of the Year. That one-year appointment back in 1966 has reaped benefits for St. John — and proven a challenge to the 57-year-old Palmer.

Faced with keeping grass alive, the St. John native studied turf management at Nova Scotia Agricultural College in 1975-76; tapped his colleagues for all the knowledge he could; and succeeded in earning his way onto the CGSA board as Atlantic director in 1984, enroute to the national presidency in 1990-91.

In the meantime, play at Rockwood Park Golf Course rose continually until it built the aquatic driving range in 1980 and hired architects Geoffrey Cornish and Bill Robinson to design a second nine holes in 1983 — a job finished in 1987.

The 16-bay driving range has been a money-maker since Day One, staying open until 10:30 p.m. from mid-April to mid-October, Palmer said. "We keep it lit up at night, which is when we get most of our clientele."

A pontoon boat with a funnel in the front floats over the balls and picks them up. A boom keeps the balls in the driving area so they don't float out into the 10-acre lake.

Reflecting on his CGSA presidency, Palmer said: "It was a great experience. The only problem is, you don't prepare yourself for when you come off the board and there's that time to fill. 'Personal time' is once again truly personal."

Yet, even during the winter, there is plenty to occupy Palmer's work time. Fifty miles of cross-country ski trails beckon him and his crew for grooming. And the summertime golf pro shop has become a "viable operation" as a ski shop, he said.

While Palmer and Rockwood Park Golf Course have met success at every turn the last two decades, he fears the Canadian economy may imperil the sport.

"If I have a concern about the industry as a whole," he said, "it's with the public and municipal golf courses. There has been a lot of talk of budget cuts and even privatization of golf courses, and if that hap-



*'Golf once again may become available only to the elite. The public and municipal courses have made golf available to the blue-collar worker.'*

— Blake Palmer



pens, we could be going backwards.

"Golf once again may become available only to the elite. The public and municipal courses have made golf available to the blue-collar worker."

Palmer said evidence of that has already been seen in Atlantic Canada. "There are only rumbles now, but it might become reality in a few more years. I don't think it's a question of making money. Rather,

government simply wants to get out of entrepreneurship and turn it over to the private sector.

"The golf industry is probably going to have to come in with some counterproposals, or try to win public support."

Born and bred in the world of agriculture, Palmer has seen many changes — "technology in general" — in his current world of turfgrass management.

"When I came here, we were watering by hand," he said.

"Now it's fully automatic and computer-operated. This is the way of the '90s. A lot of the chemicals we used years ago are now restricted. It's been 13 years since we've had a new fungicide registered for turf in Canada. All our chemicals have to be approved by Agriculture Canada. And Health and Welfare plays a part as well."

Palmer said Integrated Plant Management [IPM] is the key to drive the greenkeeping engine now, and in the future.

Will the role of superintendents change?

"The younger generation has a lot going for them, educationwise," he said.

"Certainly, IPM is going to have a dramatic effect on how we manage our golf courses in the year 2000. The way we're faced with recession and cutbacks, a lot of guys will operate with smaller crews. But the technology out there will take up the slack."

## Ahead of its time

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water to speak of. To create the type of course we envisioned — a park-like, recreational course — was going to take considerable effort."

Some of their solutions could be models for many golf courses today, including a water-recovery system that ties together rainwater roof run-off, surface water, ground water and six manmade lakes.

### RECYCLING WATER

From the beginning, Mirkes and his crews were concerned about developing methods to maximize available water to maintain and irrigate the property. They turned to recycling natural resources.

"There were no natural lakes on the property when we began development... We knew that eventually there would be a limit to the availability of water. So we turned our attention to recycling what we did have."

Mirkes' crews developed a network of underground tiles and built the lakes, which average a half acre in size and are four to 12 feet deep. Three of the lakes are interconnected.

"Our system is built to recycle and re-use our own water," Mirkes said. "Rainwater from all roofs on the property is caught and retained, as is water from air-

conditioning units and the pools. We then use this water to irrigate the hotel property and golf course."

Mirkes' concern for natural resources extends to the manner in which the property is tended. "Throughout the property, we considered the various uses and demands that would be placed on the grasses, including the demands placed on natural elements," he said. "Illinois seasons — both summer and winter — can be harsh on tender foliage. That's one of the reasons we selected bluegrass — for its resistance to drought. It gives us the durability for both weather demands and foot traffic."

### CHEMICAL-FREE AND TREE-LINED, TOO

Near the start of opening the course, Mirkes also decided to use no pesticides or chemical enhancements, striving "to control weed growth through healthy grass and proper cuts ... to maintain natural treatment and spot treat trouble areas."

Mirkes said Pheasant Run has also returned to lighter, smaller equipment "that doesn't damage the grounds, plant life, or our ability to do our jobs."

Meanwhile, while there were "exactly 38 trees" when the 7,100-yard track was built, Mirkes has planted more than 1,000 maple, locust and crabapple trees over the years — a couple of hundred a year for the first few years.

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