

Supers contend with runaway fires threatening California

Continued from page 3

Hood. "We had a voluntary evacuation and closed the whole operation for a day," said Hood, who had seen a similar fire brush up against his facility five years earlier. "We had a little ash on the course, but that's about all."

Nearby Dove Canyon was never in real danger, but served as the staging area for two strike teams — six-engine fire companies designed for rapid deployment.

"We were a holding point for fire equipment, a place where firefighters could eat and shower," said superintendent Eric Lover. "We didn't close the course, but we were on alert for a voluntary evacuation."

THOUSAND OAKS HIT

The Malibu fire, as it has come to be called, started in a recreation area behind the 16th green at Los Robles Greens Golf Course in Thousand Oaks.

"It never touched the golf course," said assistant pro Henry Jacques. "They still don't know how it started."

What is known is that the Santa Ana winds quickly pushed the flames away from Los Robles and toward the coast.

"We thought it was going to pass south and west of us," said Duane Koyano, landscape foreman at Sherwood Country Club. "But the Santa Ana winds died down, the ocean breeze came up and started pushing it slowly toward us."

The fire passed through much of Sherwood owner David Murdoch's land. It destroyed homes and trees outside the Sherwood complex and licked up against the edges of holes 14, 15 and 16.

"When we saw it coming over the hill we turned on the sprinklers," Koyano remembered.

The water kept the fire at bay. The water came from an effluent-containing pond. But as the reclaimed water level dropped, so did the pressure. Fortunately, the winds shifted again and the fire traced a path along the edges of the course, doing no further damage.

"Several trees, some native grasses around the tees and the rough areas were singed. We had to resod a few areas. There were a couple melted sprinkler heads, and some Maxi wire for the computers was damaged. We replaced a couple of irrigation clocks. But that was about it," Koyano said.

The fire closed within 400 yards of the maintenance shed. As a precaution, superintendent Bill Hamilton's crew moved most of the equipment out of the facility and onto the practice range.

Murdoch's home construction crew was working nearby. They cleared brush and dug trenches to serve as fire breaks, helping

minimize further damage, Koyano said.

During the PGA Tour's Franklin Funds Shark Shootout held just two weeks after the blaze, Murdoch went on television and explained what had been done to the course and surrounding area.

"You could see the blackened hills behind him. But the course was in excellent shape," Koyano said.

Golf hole target undergoing tests to determine legality

In the wake of a decision that its golf hole target violates the Rules of Golf, U.S. Golf Hole Target, Inc. is having independent tests done on the product.

John Matheny, director of operations for the U.S. Golf Association, has reported that the USGA Rules of Golf Committee ruled that if the golf hole target is installed in the manner recommended, it violates the Rules of Golf.

Featured in *Golf Course News*' On the Green feature in September, golf hole target is a cup liner

manufactured by U.S. Golf Hole Target. The manufacturer recommends that the liner should be installed within 1/4 inch of the surface. But if it is moved down to 1 inch from the surface, it would be OK, Matheny said.

"Sometimes, white paint is used, but we've never allowed a material to be installed closer than 1 inch to the surface," Matheny said. He said the fear is that rigid hole liners might interfere with the ball going into the hole.

After the Rules Committee made the initial decision, the company

appealed the ruling. That appeal was reconsidered, and upheld, last October.

Noting that independent tests are being done, Matheny said: "We are willing to reconsider after evaluating their test results."

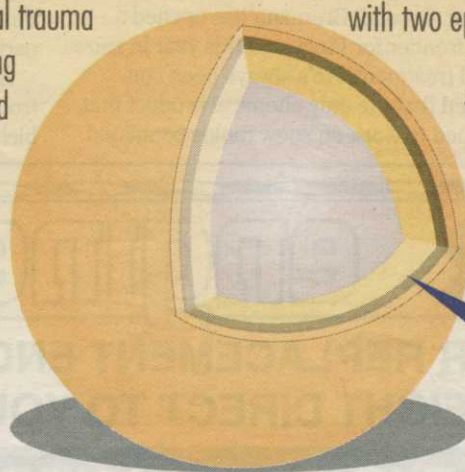
Meanwhile, the USGA Handicap Committee considered the situation at its fall meeting. Matheny said: "We have said that as far as casual play is concerned...if people have chosen to use it [the golf hole target], we won't penalize a golfer using a score on that course for his handicap."

NEW!

FINALLY, A LESS BREAKABLE POLY-SCU BREAKTHROUGH.

Sulfur coated ureas have long been noted for their cost-effectiveness compared to other forms of slow release nitrogen. Yet, the primary drawback of poly-SCU technology still remains the brittleness of the sulfur component. The physical trauma of blending, bagging and spreading often fractures many of the coated granules, allowing the release of their precious contents with the first little shower.

Pursell's TriKote™ Technology is a unique three-tier coating process specifically designed to minimize breakage during handling. After an initial layer of sulfur, the granule is then simultaneously coated with two epoxy-like polymers, creating a more durable bonded coating. Therefore, fewer breaks. Therefore, more slow release. Therefore, the longer your turf will stay green. And that's a breakthrough you'll like.



**UNIQUE
TRIPLE COATING
PROTECTION**

For more information about TriKote Technology, see your fertilizer supplier or call 1-800-334-8583.

TriKote™
TECHNOLOGY

PURSELL
INCORPORATED 1904