

Show floor agog with new technologies in turfgrass care

By HAL PHILLIPS

DALLAS—Tradeshows are meant to generate consumer interest which, in turn, generates... well, trade. And nothing generates consumer interest like a new product.

The annual International Golf Course Conference and Show is the current venue of choice when it comes to launching a new product. A plethora of innovations made their debut in Dallas this year, but only a

handful made a stir.

For those who couldn't be in Dallas, a few of these "show-stoppers" are detailed below:

- The Ransomes E-Plex electric greens mower: This product and the competing Jake model (see below) dominated many a show floor conversation. The E-Plex sports a 48-volt industrial electric motor, powered by eight, six-volt, 244 AH golf cart-style batteries. While it stays charged for up to three hours, the quiet electric

motor drew equal oohs and ahhs. Superintendents tending to development courses are well familiar with cranky homeowners complaining about early-morning greens mowing. Ransomes officials said the E-Plex should be available by this summer (see related story).

- The Jacobsen electric Greensking: Though still a prototype, Jake's electric product was the subject of similar discussion. "We have been

working on and off for quite some time on alternative power sources," explained Eric Smitsdorff, vice president of marketing at Jacobsen. "This prototype was shown at the Dallas show to solicit input on where we should be going. We had hundreds and hundreds of superintendents take our survey and offer their ideas. We received some fantastic suggestions."

- The E-Z-GO Medalist Electric: As the only new golf car

introduced in Dallas, the Medalist — in one sense — had the stage all to itself. Completely redesigned inside and out, the Medalist even sports the new-fangled DuraShield powder coat paint process, which involves electronically charging the surface before painting it. Other newly designed aspects include the steering system, accelerator pedal and the PowerWise solid stage energy control (increased

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Electric mowers said to take golf industry to grand new era

By PETER BLAIS

"A quantum leap in technology that will change the industry for years to come," is how Ransomes America Corp.'s Doug McCormick described what his company is touting as the industry's first all-electric triplex greens mower.

While such hype is to be expected from a vice president of sales and marketing, superintendents seemed generally impressed with the potential of the E-Plex, unveiled at last month's International Conference and Show in Dallas and available for purchase by late summer.

"Not having to worry about homeowners complaining concerning noise if you start mowing at 4 a.m. would remove one of my major headaches," said Pat Lucas, superintendent at Innis Arden Golf Club in Old Greenwich, Conn.

Quieter operation is one of the riding mower's major selling points. The lack of fuel emissions should be another, especially in California, where the company anticipates E-Plex will meet all future state Air Resources Board and federal Environmental Protection Agency standards.

Its minimal maintenance requirements and pollution-free operation are additional benefits.

"Because it doesn't use gasoline or diesel fuel, that means no hydraulic oil leaks," said Turf Products Manager Peter Whurr. "Superintendents have gotten fired because of oil leaks on their greens."

Eight 6-volt, golf cart-style batteries power the E-Plex. The mower can operate for three hours on a single charge, long enough to do nine to 18 greens depending on terrain, temperature and distance between holes, Whurr said.

Oil and gas savings mean the batteries pay for themselves within 175 days, he added. A superintendent can expect to get between one and two years of use from a battery.

Jacobsen is reportedly working on a riding greens mower that could be available within two years.

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Georgia walks away with team title

Virginia's ex-pro Bob Friend captures GCSAA golf crown

By VERN PUTNEY
AUSTIN, Texas — Bob Friend hugged fairway, green and par over two local courses and 36 holes to win the two-day annual Golf Course Superintendents Association of America championship in his first try.

The superintendent at River's Bend Golf Course in Richmond, Va., had 73-73 rounds at par-71 Barton Creek Crenshaw/Coore

Golf Course and par-72 Austin Country Club, the second-day site for the front-runners.

Friend, 37, a former professional who regained amateur status in 1989, battled the elements — wind, rain, sleet and snow — to post a three-stroke bulge on Randy Waldron of The Golf Club of Georgia in Alpharetta, and Doug Browne of Stephen F. Austin Country Club in San Felipe,

Texas. Waldron posted 79-70 and Browne 75-74 for their 149s.

A shot behind Waldron and Browne were first-day leader and three-time champion Roger Null, vice president and general manager at Boone Valley Golf Club, Augusta, Mo., and Jim Dusch of Atlanta National Golf Club, Alpharetta, Ga.

The Georgian entry — Dusch, Waldron, Michael Wilson of

Cannongate On White Oak in Newnan, and GCSAA immediate past president Randy Nichols of Cherokee Town & Country Club in Dunwoody — easily captured the chapter team competition. They combined for 248 points in winning their second title in three years. Waldron's second-day 70 was the tourney's low 18-hole score.

The Midwest AGCS #4 four-

some of Robert Kronn, Al Pondel, Tommy Robinson and Randy Wahler totaled 225.

Wilson shared individual sixth place at 153 with Cole McInnis of Willow Point Golf & Country Club in Alexander City, Ala.

Early the second day, Null seemed on the verge of winning the tournament with an assist from

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With All The Abuse Your Turf Takes, Who Needs Root Pruning?



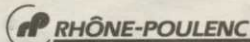
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CIRCLE #140

New technologies

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to 300 amps). Further, the key switch has been placed on a new one-piece dashboard.

- The Melex composite rim: It wasn't necessarily a free-standing product, but Melex's new plastic golf car rim — manufactured by Carlisle — set itself apart. It's lighter, meaning less compaction in turf areas. But the real benefits behind the composite rim, according to company spokesmen, are its more precise manufacturing capabilities. Less deviation in production, few leaks. Will the rest of the industry follow? Perhaps we'll know by 1995, in San Francisco.

- Sentinel Turf Fungicide from Sandoz: Fungicides aren't introduced every day — the EPA sees to that. Sentinel spent eight years in testing, not to mention an EPA-approved Experimental Use program on 45 golf courses last year. Not surprisingly, Sandoz — fresh on the heels of its Barricade launch — pulled out all the stops while introducing its first fungicide. Sentinel is designed to combat 14 turf diseases, in water-soluble packaging, and may be tank-mixed with Daconil and Chipco. If small talk on the floor is any indication, superintendents got the message.

- The Toro HC4000 Aerator: There was a time when Toro wasn't known for its aeration. Those days are gone. Smaller than the fairway job and bigger than a greens aerator, the HC4000 is the mid-sized model, designed to allow aeration in more confined areas, like greens and tees, while still handling nearly an acre per hour. In addition to the HC4000, Toro announced the true availability of its Injector Pro do-it-all spray apparatus. Introduced in Anaheim last year as a sort of tease, the Injector Pro is now ready for delivery — complete with a new self-cleaning, pressure-washing system.

- The Ferris-Reel from Ferris Golf, Inc.: Equipped with the European chevron (V-shaped) blade, the Ferris-Reel bills itself as self-adjusting and self-sharpening. Basically, the bed knife is spring-loaded so that uniform pressure is maintained between it and the reel. Wilmington (Del.) Country Club Superintendent Paul Latshaw has given the product his stamp of approval, and other supers voiced their interest.