

# On The Green

## 'Brooming' new grooming tool for bunker consistency at Grand Cypress

By MARK LESLIE

ORLANDO, Fla. — Want to put a nice "finish" on your sand bunkers? Check out the "broomed" traps at Grand Cypress Golf Club. But beware, warns superintendent Tom Alex, once golfers play out of them, they won't want to go back to hand-raked bunkers ever again.

Taking an idea from former assistant Steven Sorrell and

working with shop manager B.J. Spinks, Alex has modified a John Deere bunker rake, putting a weighted broom, that is hinged and floats, on the back. Voila! Sand bunkers that are consistent and without furrows.

"As a golfer you get real spoiled [by these bunkers]," Alex said. "You can really put a nice finish on them with the brooms."

The brooms, he said, "create

consistency."

The biggest problem with regular bunker rakes is the furrow they make, he said. "For one golfer, the ball might sit up and be perfect. For the next guy, the ball might be in the furrow. So you get inconsistency within each bunker."

"Also, the correct bunker is designed so balls get to the flat portion. Nobody wants an uphill lie on a steep face. So you want a

firm surface so when a ball lands in the bunker, it trickles all the way down and doesn't get hung up in a furrow."

When Grand Cypress used the brooms for the Chrysler tournament last fall, "it worked well," Alex said. "Now we've incorporated it into our maintenance practice."

The idea came about one day when Sorrell, who is now

superintendent at Colleton River Plantation in Bluffton, S.C., "was playing around with a little push broom in a bunker and said, 'Boy, that's a great finish.' We just took it one step further," Alex said.

Experimenting with brushes of different widths, Alex decided 24- or 18-inch are best. No wider, he said, "because as you work the faces, with too wide a broom you start bridges and you might be working the ends and not the middle."

It takes about the same time to groom a bunker as with a regular rake, Alex said.

The only drawback with the broom method, he said, is that some bunkers may firm up too hard because maintenance crews are working less than the top half inch of sand. "So wet bunkers, especially, can get hard," he said. "We just watch them. If they start to firm up, we go back to the regular tractor manufacturer's rake for awhile. And we hear gripes about it when we do."

Alex said the brooms can be used the majority, if not 100 percent, of the time.

"It works well in our sand. But it depends on different situations," he said. "It won't work so well in wet or powdery sand."

"In the Northeast it's a lot different. But it's easy to find out. Just experiment with a hard bristle push broom."

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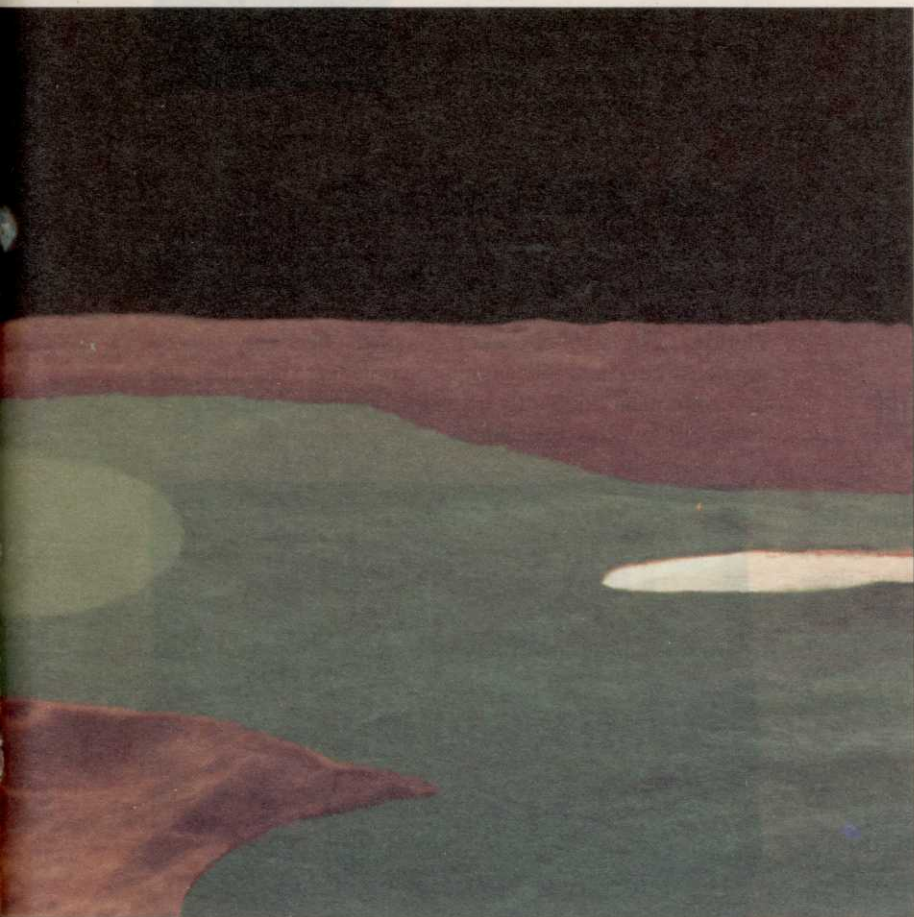
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# JACKLIN Golf

## Ponky's Tworig

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never seen the course in better shape," said one member.

"The greens are excellent," said Neville. "Rich has made it a great place to play again."

Tworig understands that money doesn't flow as freely when the state controls the purse strings as it would at a private course, where rich men will okay nearly any expenditure if it assures them pristine golfing conditions.

At Ponky, he has 11 full-time workers for 36 holes. The irrigation system needs replacing, and there's always equipment he'd like to have. His job would be easier if 700-800 rounds weren't played every day.

"It's a public course," he reasoned. "You just do the best you can. Jane has been great, and I've got no complaints."

"You don't turn around in one year and fix 20 years of neglect," said Connolly. "We want to put Ponkapoag on par with other good public golf courses, and fortunately we've been given the tools to do it."

Now, she said, 45 percent of the revenue generated by Ponkapoag will go back into the course, where before it went into the general fund — to be used for anything from pools and skating rinks to education and welfare.