

Dye, Dedman the perfect match for Golf Course Expo



Hal Phillips,
editor

The funny thing about Pete Dye — who, along with his family, will keynote Day I of Golf Course Expo on Nov. 9 — is that almost everything that's been said about him (and there's been quite a bit) is patently false.

First of all, his given name is Paul, not Pete.

Second, he is routinely termed a "radical" designer, yet the great preponderance of his so-called innovations — plank-faced bunkers, elevated greens with closely shaved approaches, pot bunkering and island greens — have been long-standing features on "traditional" British courses for 150 years.

Pete is often chided for being too macho, for making his courses too heroic and needlessly difficult... First of all, he designs courses with his wife, Alice. How macho is that? Further, he and Alice have pioneered the idea that courses should be designed to include multiple tees so that anyone, of virtually any skill level, can play them. Indeed, the TPC at Sawgrass, with the exception of the knee-knocking 17th, is very playable and forgiving from the middle tees.

The elder Dye has also been tagged with a big-budget label; one who moves lots of dirt and spends lots of the developer's money. Well, close scrutiny would show that Pete's fees are often a fraction of what some big-name architects charge. His early designs were very modest and many of his masterpieces — Blackwolf Run, Casa de Campo, Kingsmill, PGA West, Harbour Town, Eagle Creek, The Ocean Course and Kearney Hill Links, among others — while high-end, remain open to the public. Indeed, his sons, Perry and P.B., have made their careers catering to the ever-growing numbers of municipal and daily-fee developers.

The Dyes' interest in public-access golf makes them a perfect match for Golf Course Expo, the only national trade show and conference for daily-fee, resort and municipal golf facilities.

One thing that does hold true about Pete? He doesn't do a lot of public speaking, which is why we're so pleased to have him at the Expo. I did hear him speak at a Golf Course Builders Association of America (GCBA) function a few years back. After paying hilarious tribute to his friend, Joe Jemsek — jumping

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Committed, influential Foys? Florida is blessed with two

In Golf Nation each state should have its hero-heroine-wunderkind. Florida is blessed with several, but one who stands out this month is Shelly Foy, secretary at the U.S. Golf Association Green Section's Florida Region and wife of its director, John Foy. Every time I turned around the last few weeks, someone mentioned Shelly Foy. It was Shelly and the helicopter drop... Shelly and the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program (ACSP)... Shelly and the School Program... Shelly and the Hobe Sound Women's Club...

So I called Shelly. Call it curiosity.

Why, and how, can she devote so much time and effort into advancing the public awareness that golf and the environment are co-friendly?

"I've been in this job 10 years; these people [superintendents] are like family to me," Shelly said. "And I'm tired of seeing my friends take a beating in the media."

The solution is to get the word to The People that men and women who care for golf courses are true environmentalists. As stated by the Treasure Coast GCSA: "At a time when the entire industry is struggling against misinformation and half-truths, disseminated by ill-informed sources, it's very important that we publicly draw attention to our case so that the general public ... can see how environmentally sensitive and aware our industry really is."

Testament to this comes from the thousands of superintendents involved in the ACSP, Audubon Signature and Audubon Heritage programs. Add the new Schools Program, sponsored by the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA), and the Backyard Program and "it goes full circle in your community," Shelly said.

In Martin County, where she lives, all but two or three schools will belong to the School Program by August, she said. Although the GCSAA has just signed on to sponsor that program nationally, the Florida GCSA has been active in it for 1-1/2 years.

The Treasure Coast's Blue Pearl (that's what the earth looks like from outer space) Charity Tournament last year raised \$10,000 for a wildlife hospital and this May earned \$10,000 for the School Program. That's enough to adopt 10 schools and provide them with reference materials and supplies for environmental projects. The North Florida GCSA is about to adopt five



Mark Leslie,
managing editor

schools, Shelly said. And the beat goes on.

"It's a great educational tool for the students and teachers, and for their [FGCSA] members," Shelly said.

Ohhh, the helicopter drop? With the help of Greg Norman's helicopter, the Hobe Sound Women's Club raised \$3,000 for the Schools Program and \$3,000 for scholarships by selling golf balls at \$10 apiece, numbering the balls, and dropping them from the helicopter, with the owner of the closest ball to the cup winning \$1,000.

Held in conjunction with the Blue Pearl Tournament, \$13,000 was raised in one day to educate the public on the environment.

Will the helicopter drop be an annual event? "Any time you can find a fundraiser that's fun for everyone, keep it," Shelly advised.

Now, she and friends want to create a statewide resource committee for the Audubon program, disseminating helpful information. This is an idea supported by Green Section National Director Jim Snow, who said: "We will work on the idea of state coordinators. We will probably try it out."

Continued on next page

Letters

SOD VS. SEED, PART MCV11

To the editor:

I hesitate to take exception with anything in your usually fine publication, but the June article (page 26) claiming, "Seed vs. sod equals 'huge cost savings' for superintendents," is incomplete at best, inaccurate at worst.

Golf course builders, owners and superintendents are proving what bankers have known for centuries. The return on investment is more critical than initial cost. No one can argue that 50 pounds of seed costs less than a pallet of sod. But neither can anyone play golf on that bag of seed. It will take many months and thousands of dollars of additional input costs for that seed to reach the turfgrass sod's delivered level of maturity. The sodded course will open earlier, have greater player appeal, and play better while it provides the owners a faster return on their investment.

For example, let's agree it will cost \$300,000 more to sod than seed a course. If the sodded course opens just 60 days earlier, with only 100 rounds a day at even \$50 per round, the entire investment is recovered. In reality, there probably won't be a \$300,000 sod vs. seed cost spread; the sodded course will

open more than 60 days ahead of a seeded one; there will be more than 100 rounds played every day and \$50 per round may be low. The sod cost will be recovered very quickly and continue to be more profitable than a seeded course.

In addition to the direct cost/investment return comparisons that favor sodding an entire course, there are other cost and environmental benefits such as less watering, fewer chemicals, virtually no patching of wash-outs and less equipment damage.

As far as the sod/soil interface concern raised by one of the seed salesmen your article quoted, millions of square yards of sod, installed on hundreds of thousands of sites every year, prove that's not a real problem for a homeowner, let alone a professional golf course superintendent. As someone once said, "The sweetness of low price too often becomes the sour taste of mis-spent money."

We trust your readers will look beyond the initial price of seed and realize the vast potential available to them through sodding.

Douglas H. Fender, CAE
Executive Director

Turf Producers International
Ed. In the context of our story — that is, establishing a playing

surface — seed is cheaper than sod. However, as Mr. Fender points out (and as Golf Course News has reported many times in the past), an earlier course opening means the earlier onset of cash flow. Obviously, seeding and sodding have their benefits and disadvantages. In the end, superintendents, owners and developers must decide between seed and sod based on their particular needs — most critically, how quickly the start-up debt need be recovered.

TO GET IN TOUCH...

To the editor:

Thank you for the opportunity to share with your readers some of the examples and trends in cooperative marketing and purchasing that I have seen and been associated with recently [Guest Commentary, July 1995]. Strength in numbers does pay exponentially.

I inadvertently left out my phone and e-mail addresses when I sent in the material for the guest commentary. Thank you for running them.

Mike Tinkey
National Golf Course
Owners Association
Mt. Pleasant, S.C.
803-881-7736, 803-881-9101
mtinkey@awod.com,

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Editorial Director
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Hal Phillips

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Editorial Office
Golf Course News
Box 997, 38 Lafayette Street
Yarmouth, ME 04096
207-846-0600; Fax: 207-846-0657
hphillip@gcn.biddeford.com

Advertising Office
National Sales:
Golf Course News
Box 997, 38 Lafayette Street
Yarmouth, ME 04096
207-846-0600; Fax: 207-846-0657

Western Sales:
Robert Sanner
Western Territory Manager
2141 Vermont
Lawrence, KS 66046
913-842-3969; fax: 913-842-4304

Marketplace Sales:
Diana Costello-Lee
207-846-0600; fax: 207-846-0657

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Douglas Oakford
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Audubon chief speaks out on Ocean Course debacle

The following letter has been reprinted here with permission of the author, Ronald Dodson, president of the Audubon Society of New York State.

Dear Vice President Gore: I write to you today because of an effort in which the Audubon Society of New York State (ASNY) has been involved during the past 12 months and because of your interest in the protection of the environment. During 1994, provisions of the Coastal Barrier Improvement Act (CBIA) led to the opportunity for ASNY to participate in the bidding process for the Ocean Course on Kiawah Island, S.C. The Ocean Course has received international recognition as the site of the 1991 Ryder Cup championship and because it is purported to be built in an environmentally sensitive manner.

ASNY is the creator of the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary System (ACSS). Of the various program components of the ACSS, the golf program has been the most visible and successful. To date, over 1,600 golf courses in all 50 states and several other countries have joined this program. The golf program was created because of the large number of golf courses in existence,

the substantial number of acres and space utilized by courses, and the ASNY mission statement which is "to work toward the improvement in the quality of the environment by involving people in programs and projects that will benefit the quality of the environment." It is common knowledge that golf courses use chemical products and water in quantities that should be of concern. ASNY has developed the golf program to allow us to determine what that level of concern should be, and to offer alternatives to management of courses that will benefit the environment and wildlife.

Because of our programs and international experience with golf and the environment, Virginia Investment Trust (VIT) sought ASNY out in an effort to establish a "partnership" toward purchase of the Ocean Course, through the Resolution Trust Corp. (RTC) and in accordance with the provisions of the CBIA. A legal agreement was set in place between ASNY and VIT stipulating the terms of the partnership and the short-and long-term environmental conservation goals for the property. The financial and legal



Ronald Dodson

details of this agreement were received and approved by not only ASNY and VIT, but by RTC the Internal Revenue Service, independent auditors and others.

One area that was extremely important to ASNY was a provision which stated that, if the efforts that were

being made to acquire the Ocean Course failed, but in the future VIT "acquires an ownership interest in the Ocean Course either pursuant to the RTC's Ocean Course Purchase Agreement or otherwise, directly or indirectly, with any other person, entity or qualified organization participating in the auction," VIT agrees to provide a grant to ASNY to conduct a study of the course property. This study would result in a complete inventory of the habitats, flora and fauna of the course, and serve as the basis for establishing the long-term management of the course and surrounding environments.

During the entire process of developing the agreement, VIT expressed publicly how much they desired to work with ASNY. Both VIT and RTC expressed in the media how pleased they were to be doing something to protect the special environment on and around the Ocean Course. As a matter of fact, it was the CBIA that set into place the requirements under which the RTC was working with not-for-profits and governmental organizations to protect the Ocean Course in this manner.

In September 1994, ASNY was the lone high bidder for the Ocean Course. This set into motion a series of court hearings relative the bankruptcy of the Ocean Course, the RTC's attempt to sell it, and the contract that ASNY had signed with RTC. In the end, the Bankruptcy Court did not approve the sale because, in the 11th hour, RTC attempted to place two additional

restrictions on the operations of the course. The judge's ruling was based upon the belief that these two additional restrictions would cause the financial partners in the acquisition to fail to come forth with the funding for the purchase. So, months of work essentially went down the drain all because the RTC supposedly wanted to increase the conservation restrictions on the course even further than ASNY wanted to.

On May 18, 1995, the RTC went back to public bid for the Ocean Course. In this auction, VIT was the successful bidder. ASNY contacted VIT to congratulate them and to discuss plans for the court proceedings, closing date, and the commencement of the ASNY study period.

VIT has indicated that they do not wish to honor the terms of this agreement nor to work with ASNY.

ASNY finds it very interesting that the RTC did not follow the provisions as set forth by the CBIA for the most recent auction, but instead negotiated directly with for-profit entities. Now that the RTC has done this, VIT is attempting to renege on a contractual obligation with ASNY. We urge you to direct an immediate investigation of this sale, the motives of the RTC in regard to the apparent violation of CBIA provisions and any potential irregular connections between RTC and VIT in regard to this latest sale.

At present it is the position of ASNY that both ASNY and the CBIA were used and misused in regard to nothing more than a publicity campaign to acquire the course in the total interest of a private business and with actual disregard for the environment of the Ocean Course and the coastal environment of South Carolina. We are presently weighing our legal options, but in the meantime the proposed sale moves forward.

Ronald G. Dodson
President and CEO
Audubon Society of New York State
Selkirk, N.Y.

Leslie comment

Continued from previous page

Three cheers for this Foy of Florida!

We've got an Evans in Maine we'd like to clone, too. That's Kyle Evans, the superintendent at highly rated Waterville Country Club. Evans has taken up the call to public education, arming himself with an array of slides, stories and vast knowledge and speaking to various civic organizations and school audiences.

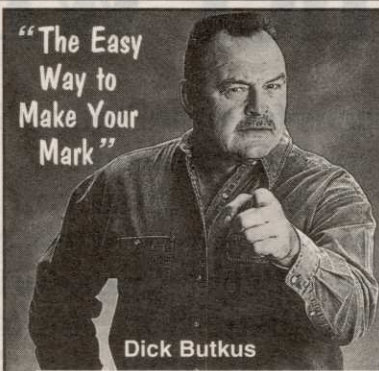
Hail to another one of my fellow Mainers, superintendent Dick Fahey of Poland Spring Country Club, for a great environmentally and financially sound idea. Fahey deals with cutworms in a way that eliminates an insecticide application. When they become a problem, he sends a headlight-equipped triplex out in the wee hours to chop up the worms while they are actively feeding.

Stop the impeachment! Odd that a couple of years ago Vice President Al Gore said sayonara to a Tom Fazio-designed putting green that had been installed at the behest of his predecessor, Dan Quayle. Now President Clinton has restored a green built for President Eisenhower in the 1950s. Guess our two top honchos will never be playing partners (see page 3)

As for his part, course architect (and, you'd think, political creature) Robert Trent Jones Jr., who oversaw the restoration, stayed out of the politics. Saying he donated his efforts not for the president but for "the peoples' home," Jones added: "It is a great honor. I've always been a dedicated public person. It's important for people to donate their time and energies whenever they can and in whatever public service they can. And in this case it was my pleasure to restore something that belongs at the White House."

Our Q&A subject for the month (see page 29), Ron Forse, a fan of the classic old-time designers, on controversial modern-time architect Pete Dye: "He is the best at making good golfers think. He's a genius."

Greg Norman reportedly has agreed to represent the Audubon Society of New York in public service announcements saying, roughly: "Golf is trying hard to do its part to protect the environment and preserve our resources. Schools and corporations, you should follow our lead. Join the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary System."



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