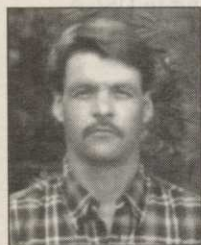


Priest euphoric in 'game I love' as he grows in Zoeller track

CABLE, Ohio — "Supervising a top-notch golf course is not a nine-to-five job; it's an obsession for perfection which lasts 10 to 12 hours a day, seven days a week," says Tom Priest. That attitude is perhaps the reason Beaver Creek Golf Club, under



Tom Priest

construction here, has hired Priest as golf course superintendent, persuading him to leave Zanesville, where he headed up maintenance at one of the top three public courses in the United States, Eaglesticks.

"My love for the game of golf makes this the perfect occupation for me," Priest said. "And coming to Beaver Creek, which has the potential and credentials to open as the number-one public course in the country, is a dream come true."

A scratch golfer with 14 years of



The 18th hole at the Fuzzy Zoeller-designed Beaver Creek.

greens maintenance experience, Priest held management positions with Wyandot Golf Course and Bent Trent Golf Club in Columbus as well as Tournament Players Club at Sawgrass in Florida.

"With Tom's experience and proven track record, we wanted him involved with Beaver Creek from 'dirt' — the very beginning," said the club's developer Bill Parker, president of Midwest Golf Group. "Despite the bad weather recently, we've been able to keep course construction on schedule. Tom Priest's presence will ensure we open next summer with nothing less than perfection."

Priest is consulting with the course designer, PGA Tour pro Fuzzy Zoeller,

and architect Brian Huntley, on irrigation and other issues. Seeding of the 7,000-yard track will begin in August or September, and it is expected to open next June.

"When you come in after grow-in you see things that could have been changed," Priest said. "If you need a triple-row of irrigation heads instead of a double-row, that sort of thing can be done. With the architect not being on site every day, and me being an avid golfer, I can see if we need a tee block or bunker raised or lowered. I make that move and it makes Fuzzy's and Brian's job that much easier."

Maintaining a golf course after it is



grown in is actually more difficult than growing it in, Priest said. "The grow-in, to me, is the simplest part of all. It's a lot of long hours. You never let your guard down. You're always double- and triple-checking."

What can go wrong? "Mother nature is your worst enemy. Once you're up and seeded, you've got young grass that is vulnerable to gully-washers and to Pythium diseases. Personally, drought would be the best thing for grow-in."

Priest employs a unique method to effectively manage his courses. Besides an assistant and equipment technician, he will add nine employees to Beaver Creek's grounds crew, and each person will be given charge of two holes for the year. "Therefore, there is no discrepancy about who was supposed to do this or that job. It's really quite amazing how much work you can get done when you send nine guys out there and specify the jobs to do that day."

"Then, I give a monthly bonus to the guys I think did the best job. If you have

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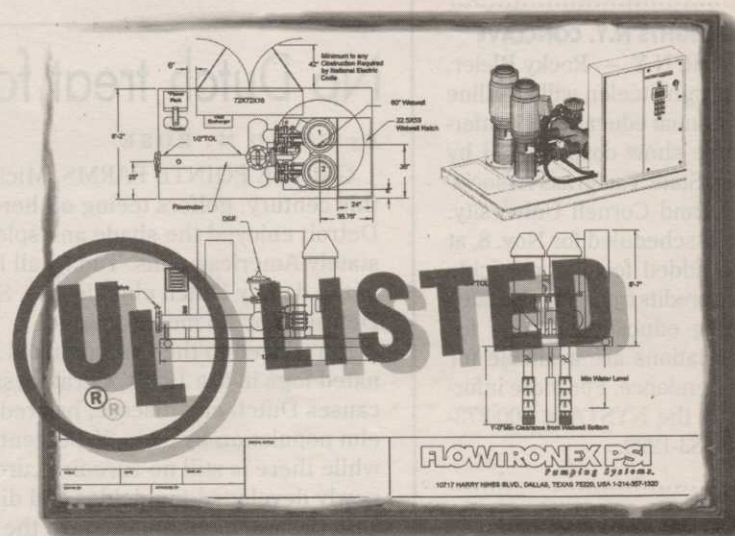
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CIRCLE #111

GOLF COURSE NEWS

NIGHT CREATURES

UKentucky researchers delve into life of black cutworms

By MICHAEL KENNA

Dr. Dan Potter and graduate student Chris Williamson of the University of Kentucky have been examining and probing putting greens at all hours to discover more about the behavior of black cutworms.

These thick-bodied caterpillars are from 1 to 2 inches long when fully grown. The night-flying, female adult moths, with a wing span of 1-1/4 to 1-1/2 inches, lay eggs on grasses. Larvae feed at night and hide in holes, under debris, or in the thatch and soil surface of the ground during the day. Breeding continues throughout the warm months of the year, and there may be several generations per season.

One of the experiments determined the behavioral response of larval cutworms to aerification and/or top dressing. Half of each plot received a different treatment, such as aerified or not aerified, with or without sand top dressing. The two management regimes, or "choices," were enclosed with galvanized steel driven into the bentgrass green.

Thirty cutworms were added to each enclosure and could choose the turf featuring either management treatment. After the cutworms were allowed to establish burrows in the turf, a soap drench was used to bring them back to the surface. The number of cutworms choosing each management regime, and the proportion occupying aerification holes was determined.

Contrary to their expectations, Potter and Williamson found the cutworms showed no preference between aerified and non-aerified areas in the green. This was also true when both aerified

and non-aerified areas were top dressed with sand. However, of those cutworms that became established in the aerified plots without top dressing, 61 percent were in the aerification holes. When aerified plots were top dressed with sand, the cutworms preferred the non-aerified, non-top dressed turf. Cutworms also preferred plots that were aerified only over those that were both aerified and top dressed.

Potter and Williamson also

documented where the female moths lay their eggs and how routine mowing affects egg distribution. Greenhouses and field studies indicate that a single egg is laid on the terminal end of bentgrass leaves mowed at 1/8 or 3/16 inch, or not mowed at all. More important, mowing removed 90 and 81 percent of the eggs laid on the 1/8- and 3/16-inch high bentgrass, respectively. They concluded that most of the eggs laid on golf greens

are mechanically removed by normal mowing practices.

If cutworm eggs are removed by mowing, then where do the cutworms found on greens come from?

Potter and Williamson believe the cutworms migrate from the higher mowed turf areas on the putting greens during the night. Their research efforts this year will focus on the number and size of cutworms that invade putting green turf from the surrounds. If



this type of migration actually occurs, then a reduced amount of insecticide could be used on smaller larvae hatching in the green surrounds. Until then, remember to fill those aerification holes with sand top dressing!

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Tom Priest

Continued from previous page

three or four guys doing well, we have a pizza party for everybody. If you get that person involved, those are 'his' holes."

A native of Johnstown, Ohio, Priest played in two U.S. Open qualifying rounds. He feels superintendents should golf. When they do, he said, they see the course from a player's standpoint. "You spot things that can speed up play and get the golfers around and make it as simple as you can for everybody."

"My theory is that the course should be the same condition every day, whether Fuzzy's here playing or some guy is coming out and paying \$45 green fees."

A nine-year member of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America as well as its Central Ohio chapter, Priest plans to move with his wife and two children here in the coming year.