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1994

BEST KEPT COURSE ON PGA TOUR

McBride, Muirfield Village earn players' approval

By HAL PHILLIPS

DUBLIN, Ohio — Before the start of the 1994 Memorial Tournament, superintendent Mike McBride consulted the National Weather Service, hoping for clear skies and a rare measure of reassurance.

In each of the previous three years, during tournament week, the heavens had dumped untold gallons of water here on Muirfield Village Golf Club, site of the prestigious Memorial. But the 1994 forecast looked very promising, meaning a lack of precipitation.

"I overruled the weather pattern and made a little wager with Jack [Nicklaus]: \$10 bucks that it wouldn't rain that week," McBride explained. "Jack laughed and gave me 10:1 odds.

"Turned out this was the first Memorial Tournament when we didn't have any rain from Monday through Sunday... So Sunday night at the winner's reception, I got a \$100 bill from Jack."

A rain-free week was all McBride and his staff needed to impress the players, who voted Muirfield Village 1994's Best Maintained Course on the PGA Tour in an exclusive survey of PGA players conducted by *Golf Course News*.

Another Jack Nicklaus design — Castle Pines Golf Club in Castle Rock, Colo., site of The International — finished second in the voting, while Westchester

Country Club in Rye, N.Y., host of the Westchester Classic, finished third.

"We try to keep the course as close to tournament conditions as we can every day," said the 40-year-old McBride, a native of nearby Worthington. "When you're dealing with 120 personalities, you're not going to please everybody. We do take recommendations and the feedback seriously. But if the guy shoots 66, let's face it: He loves the golf course. If he shoots 81, he might use the course as an excuse.

"I think the key to any 18-hole event is consistency from one

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A wee burn guards the 11th green at Muirfield Village Golf Club in Dublin, Ohio, site of the Memorial Tournament. Under the stewardship of superintendent Mike McBride (at left), Muirfield was named the PGA's Best Conditioned Tour stop in an exclusive Golf Course News poll. Said Curtis Strange: "Year after year, with all the courses in such immaculate condition, Muirfield always tops my list as the best conditioned." Added Tom Lehman, "Muirfield can be tied, but not beaten." As the 1994 Memorial winner, Lehman's comments are understandable.

Muirfield Village Golf Club Dublin, Ohio

...

Head Superintendent:
Mike McBride

Assistant Superintendents:
Steve Logan, Chuck Barcroft

Service Manager:
Louis Haveisen

Horticulturist:
Steve Clapp

General Manager/
Tournament Director:

John Hines

Designer:

Jack Nicklaus (1974)

Senior Agronomist:
Ed Etchells

BUILDER OF THE YEAR

Clute & Associates gets the better of past winners

By MARK LESLIE

HARTLAND, Mich. — Once a rock picker, now the Golf Course Builder of the Year, Paul Clute has come a long way since 1965.

Chosen Builder of the Year in *Golf Course News'* annual poll, Paul Clute & Associates of Hartland, Mich., will be honored at the annual banquet of the Golf Course Builders Association of America in San Francisco during the GCSAA International Golf Course Conference and Show.

Clute attributed his success to his personnel and the firm's attitude toward business. "Bulldozers, equipment and materials are available to us all. It's the people who make the difference — in supervision, equipment operation, drainage and

irrigation," Clute said. "We've been able to find, train and keep good people. And we've tried our best to stress our overall company goals, our perspective on doing business: the balance of giving good service to the owner and architect on each project and still trying to survive profit-margin-wise.

"We're also in it for the long term. And when you are, you make the right decision more often. You may suffer profit-wise at any given moment, but in the long term it pays off."

This is the first time Clute has won the 6-year-old award. It was captured by Wadsworth Golf Construction Co. of Plainfield, Ill., the first three

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Paul Clute

The right people on the right projects at the right time. That is the key to success for Paul Clute & Associates, owner Paul Clute said.

"We don't have a real rigid company structure — enough to stand up straight but flexible enough to meet the needs," said Clute.

Among them are project supervisors Bill Stevenson, Kevin Sitz, Tim Cockerill, Bob Kirkwood, Glen Kein, Randy Ruth, Barry Trueblood and Scott Robinson. He also mentioned Bob Steele and Bob Trueblood, who assist Clute in traveling and coordinating the projects from the home office in Hartland, Mich.

Clute named Builder of the Year

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years and by Landscapes Unlimited, Inc. of Lincoln, Neb., the past two. Selection of the winner was based on nominations from course architects, followed by surveys of the nominees' 1994 clients, who were asked to rate construction based on quality, budget, deadlines, personnel, and the end result.

Clute, Wadsworth and Landscapes all received extraordinary marks again, as did Central Florida Turf, Inc. of Avon Park, Fla.; Fairway Construction of Temecula, Calif.; and Niebur Golf of Colorado Springs, Colo. Indeed, on a scale of 1-10, clients gave Clute an overall rating of 9.66.

"They don't come any better [than Clute]," said Bob Barrett, director of golf operations for all Drummond Co. golf courses, including Old Overton Club in Vestavia Hills, Ala., named Best New Private Course by *Golf Digest* in December. "His guys are so dedicated to getting it done right and have such a good feel for the earthmoving."

Clute & Associates was "very professional and did the work as planned, if not better," said John Redford, president of Vacation World and golf course manager at Thousand Hills Resort and Golf Club in Branson, Mo. "Paul has a tremendous amount of integrity and professionalism — a very honest, straightforward guy... And we worked very well together with them and the architect [Mike Reilly of Robert Cupp Design]."

Clute's rise to the heights of the golf course construction field began while studying at Indiana University when he got a job on one of Wadsworth's finishing crews. "The application screening is not too stringent for that job," he joked. He changed majors from the sciences to business at the University of Illinois' Chicago Circle campus and, he said, "I don't know if I'm out [of school] yet."

Upon graduation, Clute worked for a couple of companies in the early 1970s, and returned to Wadsworth in 1973, working his way through the ranks from equipment operator to foreman and into administrative duties. In 1980 he joined Jack Nicklaus Design and Construction Management as president of its operating arm, GolfForce. Then, in 1984, he started his own company.

Course construction in 1994 compared to 1965, or even 1975, is like night and day, Clute said. "It's no longer a walk in the park with a bag of seed over your shoulder.

"The demands are so much greater. Your on-site staff has to have much more experience, talent and capabilities because you're handling so many more people and so much more detail.

"The level of detail we applied

to the golf complex 20 years ago has probably expanded by four or five times in area. Where once it was 20 acres, now it's 80 or 100 acres."

Whereas 20 years ago, builders concentrated on greens and tees, and to a lesser extent the landing area and bunkering, "we now apply that detail to almost the whole golf course — meaning, irrigation, surface and sub-surface drainage, contouring, grass selection, sodding..." Clute said. "Twenty years ago, you accepted everything else as

it was — both its grade and drainage. If there were naturally slow-draining wet spots, you lived with that. If water moved across the golf course from housing areas and made it less than desirable during the rainy months, you lived with that.

"Today, there is the tendency to spend the money to put it underground and carry it to a pond... so that the playing conditions are superior over a greater area for a higher number of months."

All this detail work translates into greater expense.

A second factor in escalating

construction costs, Clute said, is that "owners want to shrink the maturation period down to as short a time as possible. Fifteen or 20 years ago, people knew it would take five, six, seven years for the course to mature to a high degree. Now we're installing more sprinklers, drainage and sod, so that the year a course opens it is more mature. That is because of the price golf is bringing and its importance to an operation. Plus owners are looking to generate revenue and compete with neighboring facilities that have been open 30 or 40 years."

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Golf Course News 1994 Awards



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American Colloid buys German firm

ARLINGTON HEIGHTS, Ill. — American Colloid Co. has announced the acquisition of certain assets and intellectual property related to the operations of Wennigsen, Germany-based Piepho Abwassertechnik, a specialist in wastewater treatment technologies.

Piepho was the originator of the technology American Colloid and its Colloid Environmental Technologies Co.

(CETCO) subsidiary used in developing CETCO's clay-based waste-water treatment chemical flocculants, now sold under the trade name RM-10.

"The German operation will be known as Colloid Abwassertechnik and will be managed through our Volclay Ltd. subsidiary located in Wallasey, England," said John Hughes, American Colloid president and chief executive officer.

CARB emissions

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their area as one that needs the air cleaned up. Either they clean it or lose highway funds or something like that. The California regulatory community has no choice."

Indeed, the new CARB emission standards have been welcomed by some in the industry, as they give manufacturers a glimpse of where the country is heading with regard to regulation. Performance has also been enhanced, said Doug Podevels, senior principal design engineer

at The Toro Company's Commercial Products Division.

"Long before these standards there were requests for better fuel efficiency," said Podevels. "So I think it's positive. We've seen already that our products are more reliable and fuel consumption is down. We've seen it happen with our 3100 Greensmower. Customers like it better."

"People must understand, however, that you have to give the engine-manufacturer the opportunity to say, 'Is this profitable?' Engine manufacturers are working with EPA to determine what's feasible. Do you test now-

ers like cars, on a regular basis? They're trying to address it from a practical, technical aspect. And that's a better approach than what's going on in California."

Podevels noted that it can cost the manufacturer \$40,000 to conduct an emissions run on a single engine model. Chemical manufacturers may scoff at that figure, especially compared with what it costs to register an herbicide these days. But the regional nature of CARB standards make it a tough call for engine manufacturers.

And, as Podevels pointed out, "They haven't even addressed the diesel issue yet."

The CARB has addressed the golf car issue. No gas-powered golf cars will be sold in California following Jan. 1, 1997, though existing vehicles will be grandfathered until they fall apart or die.

Clute & Associates

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Clute pointed to The Quarry course in Palm Desert, Calif., on which the entire playing surface was sodded. "We started construction in June and they played Jan. 22. That is phenomenal," he said. The Clute crew on that job, excluding sub-contractors, was normally 70 to 80 people, and sometimes soared to 200.

Asked what factor he would give prime importance in construction if he were the developer, Clute said: "The schedule, from planning through construction. It is far more important than what many people recognize. The jobs that are well planned and allow enough time to do each phase properly — land planning, golf course designing, etc. — have the highest probability of getting the best product and at the best price."

"When you compress schedules, it becomes riskier and one thing or another happens [to add cost]."

Planning, design, permitting and financing often take far greater time than the owner anticipates, Clute said, adding: "Then they try to compress the construction schedule to hit the same opening date. That generates difficulties. People get shortsighted and try to move too fast."

Often, the fallout is that the course builder — at least in Clute's case — must overstaff "to catch up to the time these people have burned," he said. "I would like to have more time to do our work. We could do a better job. It would be less stressful on our people. And we could maximize the results for the owner, the architect, and everybody. And we might even make some money on some jobs."

Yet, Clute is leaving happy customers. Echoing the feelings of others from the city of Rome, Ga., to LaQuinta Golf Properties in Palm Desert, Calif., Redford said, "I would definitely want to use them again."

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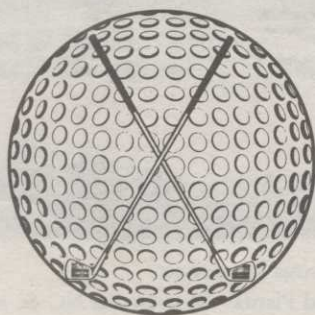
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