

Superfocus

Canada's best: Wayne Brown earns Super of Year accolades

By MARK LESLIE

RED DEER, Alberta — Not content with the status quo, Reed Deer Golf and Country Club superintendent Wayne Brown is always looking for improvement at his golf course — adding a forward tee here, refining a bunker there. But Brown's vision is not limited to Reed Deer. Indeed, it encompasses all of the Province of Alberta, and farther, and

therein lies the substance of why he has been honored as the Canadian Superintendent of the Year.

"I think I won the award for an accumulation of efforts, not 1994 in particular," Brown said. Deferring credit to others, he added: "I wouldn't have gotten it without the support of my fellow superintendents. It's a group effort. We all help each other. I may have received the award,



Canadian Superintendent of the Year Wayne Brown of Red Deer Alberta (above) and the green at his Red Deer Golf & Country Club's 9th hole, a 436-yard par-4 (at left).



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but it reflects on the Alberta GCSA [Golf Course Superintendents Association] as much as anything. I don't think one person can do it by himself."

While Brown has overseen maintenance of Red Deer G&CC since 1974, he also helped found the Alberta GCSA in 1987, serving as vice president in 1987-88 and president in 1989. He has been integrally involved with the Alberta Turfgrass Research Foundation, handling presidential duties since 1993.

The work and educational activities of associations, he feels, are vital to the growth of superintendents, especially in the 1990s. "As a group we are more aware, better educated," Brown said.

"In our Alberta association we are very concerned with environmental issues. To belong, we must have a pesticide application license. We're on top of issues and try to be

proactive instead of reactive.

"Superintendents are eager for information, going to seminars, etc. We have a seminar every year in Red Deer and sometimes people attend from as far away as 400 to 500 miles."

Agreeing that it is more difficult to be a superintendent today than 10 or 20 years ago, Brown said: "But, by the same token, while there is more expected of you and there is more you have to know, a better-educated person is coming into the workforce and that helps compensate."

"In a lot of ways, the superintendent coming out of school now is better prepared. And there are tools we didn't have available to us [years ago]."

Brown's education has been on the golf course — first as a teenager from 1967-74 under Canada's first Superintendent of the Year, Sid Puddicombe, at Mayfair Golf and Country Club

in Edmonton.

He has taken that knowledge to new heights at Reed Deer G&CC, hosting many tournaments including the Canadian Junior, Canadian PGA Tournament, Alberta Open, Alberta Amateur and other provincial and nationally sanctioned events.

"You get a chance to strut your stuff," he said of the tournaments. "I enjoy it. It gives you the chance to do that little extra."

"Our members don't like giving up the golf course for a week. But they are very proud of it, so they welcome the opportunity to show it off. It's also increased pride in the maintenance people working here. They take pride in what they do."

When not preparing for a tournament, Brown for more than a decade has devoted time to carrying out a master plan for the course.

"For the last 15 years we've been gradually improving the entire course — new and bigger tees, and bunkers," Brown said.

With a crew that runs from four in the winter to 16 in summer, he works closely with course architect Bill Robinson of Florence, Ore. Robinson in 1976 renovated Red Deer, which was established in 1922.

"This year," Brown said, "we're just doing a few short tees. We hope to have a new master plan in place by this fall and to start construction in the fall of 1996. We host the Alberta Amateur next summer and want to have that under our belt before we start construction."

"First, we will rebuild one or two greens. They are [native soil] and we will make them close to the USGA [U.S. Golf Association] specs."

Interestingly, at Red Deer, poa annua turfgrass is "the playing surface of choice among our members," Brown said. "When we build a new green, they want it to be like the others — all poa. We tell them, in three or four years, it will get there."

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