

BRIEFS



NEW ENGLANDERS UNITE

The New Hampshire Golf Course Superintendents Association, the University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension and the Golf Course Superintendents Association of New England have decided to join forces in hosting the Massachusetts Turfgrass Conference and Trade Show. This new conference will be held in January, in Boston, Mass., and will combine the New Hampshire Turf Conference and the University of Massachusetts Turf Conference into one large show.

JARRELL HONORED IN FLORIDA

TAMPA, Fla. — Palm Beach National Golf and Country Club superintendent Mark Jarrell was presented the Wreath of Grass Award for outstanding contributions to the turfgrass industry at the Florida Turfgrass Association's (FTGA) conference and trade show at Tampa Convention Center. New FTGA President Gerry Millholen oversaw the event at which members



Mark Jarrell

presented \$70,000 to the FTGA for turfgrass development. Research donations in the state in 1995 have exceeded \$100,000.

RUTGERS HONORING ALUMNI

NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J. — The Rutgers Professional Golf Turf Management School will hold its sixth annual Alumni Awards Banquet on Nov. 4, 1995, at the Douglass College Center on the Rutgers University campus.

The banquet will feature certificate awards and scholarship presentations by the Rutgers Professional Turf Management School, the Rutgers Turfgrass Alumni Association, and the New Jersey Turfgrass Association and Turfgrass Foundation. For more information, contact Missy Marciante by telephone at 908-932-9271, or by fax at 908-932-1187.

OTF SHOW PLANNED

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Drs. Jim Beard and Tom Morgan will keynote the Ohio Turfgrass Foundation (OTF) Regional Conference and Show at the Greater Columbus Convention and Visitors Center here, Dec. 5-8. A retired



Texas A&M professor currently with the International Sports Turf Institute, Beard will speak on turfgrass benefits and environmental issues.

FRIENDLY FIRE

Competition in Columbus brings out the best in supers



The 11th hole at Ohio State University's nationally ranked Scarlet Course.

6:15 a.m.: At Ohio State University golfers are lining up to tee off at 7. A few miles away at Double Eagle, the course will host six foursomes today.



By MARK LESLIE

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Truth be told, you need only turn around and you can play another great golf course in this city. Five of the country's top 100 courses, according to one poll, operate here. So how do the superintendents — and their clubs — respond in the face of such stiff competition? Thrive or die?

"I don't want to sound boastful, but I don't think you can go anywhere in the country and find golf courses as well conditioned as we have right here," said Mark Yoder, superintendent at private Scioto Country Club in the near west end of Columbus. "Frequently, guests come in and say, '[They're playing] The Golf Club yesterday, Scioto today, Muirfield tomorrow, then Double Eagle...'"

Indeed, Golf Magazine's latest top 100 poll, released in October, ranks Muirfield Village Golf Club in nearby Dublin 19th in the United States, The Golf Club in neighboring New Albany 20th, Scioto 29th, Double Eagle in the suburb of Galena 41st and the public-access Ohio State University Scarlet Course a few blocks from Scioto 81st. The five superintendents are comrades-yet-competitors-in-arms.

"We're all proud to be on those ['best-of'] lists," said Terry Buchen, superintendent at the ultra-exclusive, ultra-condi

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Muirfield Village Golf Club

Type: Private
 Rated by *Golf Magazine*: 19th U.S.; 32nd world
 Rated by *Golf Digest*: 16th in the nation
 Maintenance staff: 9 full-time; 16 seasonal
 No. of Holes: 18
 Members: 200 local; 200 national
 Rounds per year: 20,000
 Green fee: \$125
 Stimpmeter readings: Not applied
 Height of cut in inches: greens 1/8; tees 1/4; fairways 7/16

No. of tee markers: 3
 No. of sand bunkers: 70
 Metal spikes: Banned



Super Mike McBride

Architects: J. Nicklaus & Desmond Muirhead

The Golf Club

Type: Private
 Rated by *Golf Magazine*: 20th U.S.; 34th world
 Rated by *Golf Digest*: 28th in the nation
 Maintenance staff: 7 full-time; 17 seasonal
 No. of Holes: 18
 Members: 150 (+75 non-residents)
 Rounds per year: under 10,000
 Green fee: \$40
 Stimpmeter readings: 9.4
 Height of cut: 9/64-5/32 greens; 3/8 tees; 7/16 fairways

No. of tee markers: 4
 No. of sand bunkers: 52
 Metal spikes: Mandatory



Super Keith Kresina

for members
 Architect: Pete Dye

Scioto Country Club

Type: Private
 Rated by *Golf Magazine*: 29th U.S.; 48th in world
 Rated by *Golf Digest*: 36 in nation
 Maintenance staff: 6 full-time; 25-30 seasonal
 No. of Holes: 18
 Members: 325
 Rounds per year: 20,000
 Green fee: \$60
 Stimpmeter readings: 10
 Height of cut: greens 1/8 greens; 3/8 tees; fairways 7/16

No. of tee markers: 4
 No. of sand bunkers: 78



Super Mark Yoder

Metal spikes: Banned
 Architect: Donald Ross

Double Eagle Club

Type: Private
 Rated by *Golf Magazine*: 41st U.S.; 74th world
 Rated by *Golf Digest*: Too young to be ranked
 Maintenance staff: 11 full-time; 14 seasonal
 No. of Holes: 18
 Members: 47 local; 126 national
 Rounds per year: 5,000
 Green fee: N/A
 Stimpmeter readings: 11
 Height of cut: 1/8 greens; 5/32 tees; 3/8 fairways
 No. of tee markers: 4
 No. of sand bunkers: 83
 Metal spikes: Not banned (free rubber spikes)



Super Terry Buchen

Architects: Jay Morrish & Tom Weiskopf

Ohio State University Scarlet Course

Type: Public
 Rated by *Golf Magazine*: 81st in U.S.
 Rated by *Golf Digest*: N/A
 Maintenance staff: 5 full-time; 4 seasonal
 No. of Holes: 36
 Members: 1,500
 Rounds per year: 100,000 (50,000 per course)
 Green fee: \$10 students; maximum \$25
 Stimpmeter readings: 8-1/2
 Height of cut: greens 3/16; tees and fairways 1/2

No. of tee markers: 3
 No. of sand bunkers: 105
 Metal spikes: Not barred



Super Gary Rasor

Architect: Alister Mackenzie

HEAD OF THE CLASS

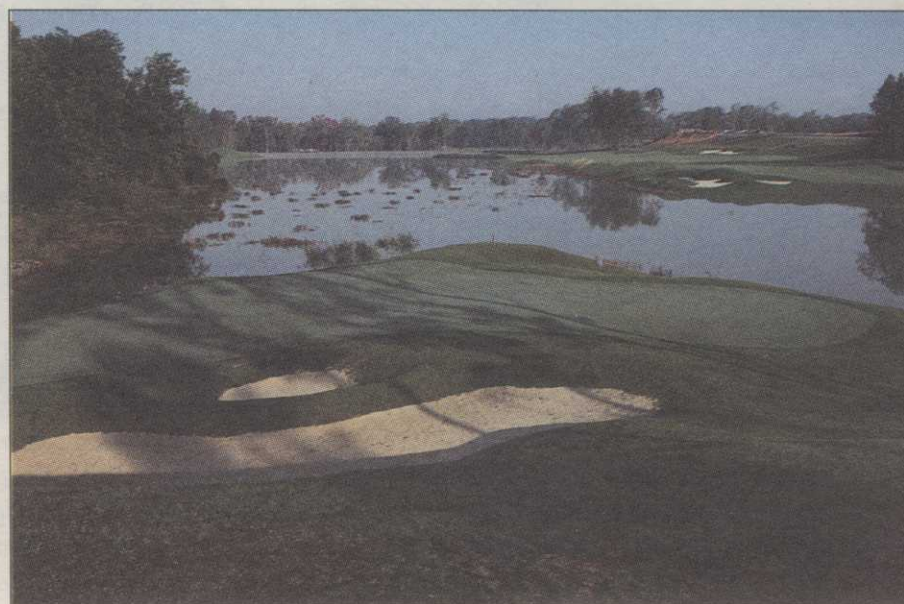
TPCs take Audubon challenge to heart

By CHRIS SMITH

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — The Tournament Players Club network has taken an aggressive approach toward the Audubon Society of New York's (ASNY) Cooperative Sanctuary Program, seeking to reinforce the notion that golf courses can and should benefit the environment.

The TPC at Southwind here recently became the fifth member of the TPC network to receive certification in the stringent Sanctuary Program. It closely follows certification of the TPC at Piper Glen in Charlotte, N.C., and TPC at River Highlands in Cromwell, Conn.

"We are the first course in Tennessee to be certified, which falls in line with what we have tried to be for many years — leaders in the golf industry," said General Manager John Huggins, promising



TPC at Piper Glen takes special care of its environment, such as the wetlands on this 17th hole.

to "truly work diligently over the next several years to actively build wildlife on the course and make it something special, unique to this area. We want to get

more members and homeowners involved."

"Our superintendent, Stewart Richards,

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Columbus composite: competition & camaraderie

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tioned Double Eagle, whose tees would putt faster than many greens around the country. "But there is a competition like in any kind of business. Deep down inside, we want to be number one in town, whether we admit it or not. A lot of members play all the courses, and we're always hearing comparisons."

"There is certainly camaraderie, but there's competition as well," agreed Yoder.

"We all motivate each other to do better," said Keith Kresina, superintendent at The Golf Club. "With members who play all the courses, you strive for perfection because you know they can see it at another course right down the road."

"I've never felt pressure," said Mike McBride, putting a different spin on it from his office at Muirfield Village. "It's like we're helping each other out. I've known Mark forever and Gary [Rasor of OSU] for many years. And Keith used to work for Mark and me both."

Tending the lone public-access course among the five, Rasor's battle for equal conditioning is more uphill.

"It's hard to compare Scioto or Muirfield to OSU," said Yoder. "Gary gets twice the play we get, and Double Eagle doesn't get much play at all."

Indeed, Rasor's Scarlet and Grey courses at OSU host 100,000 rounds a year, compared to around 20,000 at Scioto and Muirfield, under 10,000 at The Golf Club and 5,000 at Double Eagle.

"What's put before me is to give people the best round of golf for their money," Rasor said. "With the other guys, money may not be the issue because they want the best regardless of what it costs. We try to do some of the things that they do, but we realize we can't do everything."

There are certain corners Rasor can cut. For instance, he uses triplex mowers on his greens. When he rolls greens, he does so with a roller-mounted triplex. He allows the grass to grow a little higher and was one of the first to use a growth-retardant program.

And, right, money is not a problem at



A view from behind Muirfield Village's 9th green back down the manicured fairway.

the other courses.

"Budgets," said Yoder, "are whatever you need."

"We don't spray as much as we used to because we're better educated today and we have better fungicides that last longer. But, at the courses we're talking about, if there is a product we need, we'll get it."

"I have a few more people working," said McBride, "and there are a few things that take a higher priority here than elsewhere — whether it's how many man-hours you put into bunkers throughout the week, or some of the more detail-oriented jobs we do on a weekly basis that maybe some golf courses only do once a year."

"It's very difficult," Rasor admitted. "For example, with fungicides you start out in June and you [can afford] X number of sprays. Come August you hope the weather will give you a break. Primarily, you plan to spray every two weeks. Whereas if I had an unlimited budget and got into a crisis situation — say, with five days of 95 degrees and 60-percent humidity — instead of waiting 14 days I could get out there in eight. I don't have that choice."

Manpower is another factor. Rasor employs five full-timers and four seasonal workers for his entire 36 holes, plus five putting greens. And he cringes when those "seasonals" are taking their final exams and can't work. At the other end of the spectrum, Double Eagle enjoys 11 full-timers and 14 seasonal employees and Scioto has six full-timers and 25 to 30 seasonals.

Even though OSU was hosting the NCAA championships last fall, "the rough area and some of the trimming work was let go," Rasor said.

Scioto in September announced plans for a \$1.5 million renovation of the course, including dredging a lake, a new irrigation system, creek walls and rebuilt walls on an island green.

When Muirfield had problems with poa annua, McBride stripped the greens and laid down new bentgrass sod. He is now adding irrigation and renovating his bunkers. Could Rasor be envious?

"There again, their demand is such that that's one of the only choices they have," Rasor said.

Asked if the competition makes the superintendents better at their crafts, Buchen

replied: "I think so. The biggest thing besides the individual competition in trying to be the best superintendent you can be, is that it helps your budget a lot of times. We call and compare budgets."

"Mike has helped me with my wages and benefits, especially the first couple years I was here. We can take advantage of the competition being so keen and the golfers playing each course. When they're talking amongst themselves, we can inform them that the other courses have this budget or that equipment... It can help you get that other mower you need."

In spite of — and perhaps because of — their deep pockets, the four private clubs have worries that don't plague Rasor. They don't worry about keeping up with the Joneses. They are the Joneses. But there are other concerns — mainly, the comparisons.

"We're a highly manicured golf course. Everything inside the wall basically is manicured," Yoder said. "In 1991 we regrassed with Pennlinks. It's worked out real well. A lot of new clubs have good new pure bentgrass greens, so we felt we had to do something."

"Mike [McBride] doesn't have the luxury of being able to close the course in the fall to reseed. If he could reseed he'd be better off [than sodding]."

Memorial Tournament host Muirfield, by its reputation, poses other challenges.

"Normal for us is Memorial Tournament conditions," McBride said. "When people come through the gates here, their expectations are extremely high as to what they want to see. It's my job to create this almost fantasy land. They want to see what they see on television during the tournament."

"Since we have the Memorial in late May or early June, we bring the course up to the conditions of the tournament and maintain it at that level the rest of the year. The only thing we do differently is not maintain green speeds of 13 on the Stimpmeter."

Meanwhile, comparisons add pressure, Buchen acknowledged. "It's interesting to hear the members. Many times they are not totally accurate about some of the things they find. They might say the greens are real slow at one of the other clubs when, in fact, they are not; they just feel slow or were not mowed on the Monday that member played. We hear many exaggerations, especially negative ones. Maybe they are trying to make us feel good [in comparison]. You have to consider the source a lot of times."

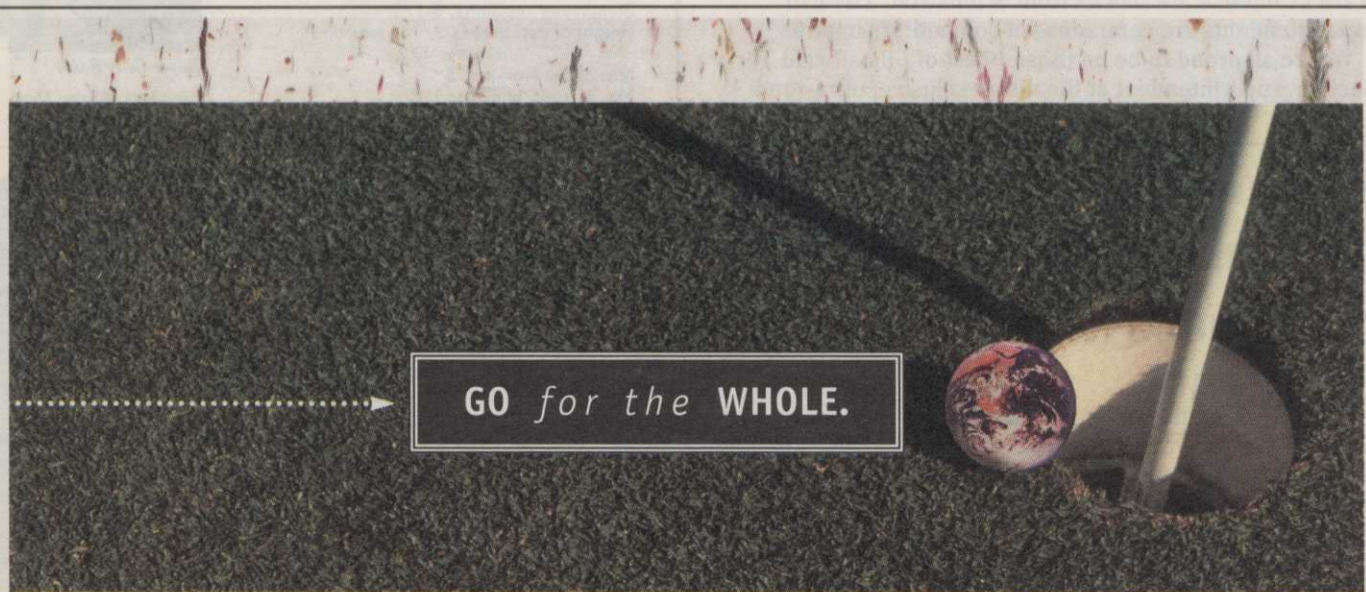
Yet, the friendship factor overrides the competition.

"We all talk a lot on the phone about what each other is doing — especially Mike and I," Yoder said. "No one can appreciate what you're going through except another superintendent. We call each other and cry on each other's shoulders."

"We do help each other out with advice," Buchen agreed, "sometimes to see if a problem is widespread or not. Also, we all have to stick together — let each other know if we hear something about their course, or to form a common opinion about a controversial matter."

"Without question, we rely on each other to find out who has what and what to look for," said Kresina, who worked summers for Yoder and McBride while an OSU student.

"Mark and Mike gave me the opportunity to work in the field. I appreciate the things they've done for me and I'll do anything for them to repay the favor. Without them letting me be on their staffs, I might not be where I am today."



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