

Tourney veteran Hahn prepping Oak Hill for riotous Ryder rematch

By PETER BLAIS

ROCHESTER, N.Y. — A golf course is going to suffer some damage during a major tournament. There's no way to avoid it. The key is how you deal with it.

So says Joseph Hahn, the 54-year-old head superintendent at Oak Hill Country Club here and host for September's Ryder Cup extravaganza. Hahn has also overseen the US Open and Senior US Open at Oak Hill and six LPGA events during his tenure at nearby Locust Hills.

"The biggest thing you come to appreciate about hosting a major tournament," Hahn said, "is the amount of preparation involved. Your crew, the tournament staff and outside contractors are all over your course. Everyone has good intentions. But with all that work and all those people, some damage to the course is inevitable.

"It really irritates you the first time it happens. But you finally learn that it happens every time and to everybody. The course eventually gets repaired and it's not such a big deal. It just comes with the territory."

And it's a territory the 40-year veteran of the course management

business enthusiastically enters.

"Getting ready for major events brings out the best in people," he said.

Hahn promises the East Course will be at its best when the Europeans try to wrest the Ryder Cup from the Americans in what has arguably become golf's premier event.

Course conditions will be the same as for an Open. Green speeds will be in the 10 1/2-to-11 range, up from the 9 1/2 for members. Fairway cuts will be lowered from 1/2-inch to a tournament-friendly 7/16-inch. Intermediate rough, tees and collars will remain at their everyday best, but the primary rough will better than double its normal 2-inch height to 4 1/2 inches.

Three bunkers were restored to their original Ross-designed dimensions last fall. Every bunker on the course received new sand, 1,400 tons in all, so they would play consistently throughout.

While course conditions are similar to those demanded for an Open, the extracurricular requirements are much greater than for a normal PGA Tour event, Hahn said. For example, there were 15 hospitality tents at the 1989 U.S. Open here compared to the 57



Oak Hill superintendent Joe Hahn, right, supervises as Vince Hegarty waters down a hot spot on a green.

planned at this year's Ryder Cup. More flag poles have to be planted to fly the colors of the various countries. Accommodations must be made for the gala opening ceremonies. Extra bridges have been erected for the anticipated crowds crossing Allens Creek.

"Anything moving onto the course has to go through this office," Hahn said.

But even with the additional Ryder Cup demands, most of the things any superintendent does, whether it be in preparation for a major tournament or the daily operation of the course, are a matter of successful repetition, Hahn said. That's the main thing he learned from the two men Hahn considers his mentors, Charles Ludecker and Lynn Davis.

Davis succeeded Ludecker as head superintendent at Brookfield Country Club in Clarence, N.Y., where Hahn first went to work on a grounds crew at age 14. Both men are deceased, but they were Hahn's professors in the University of Hard Knocks.

"My formal education ended with high school," Hahn said. "But they both saw I wanted something more and took me under their wings. They used to tell me something over and over, and then

they'd make me do it over and over. The repetition used to irritate me. I hated it when I was living through it. But learning to do something the right way, and then being able to repeat it again and again, is the key to being a good superintendent."

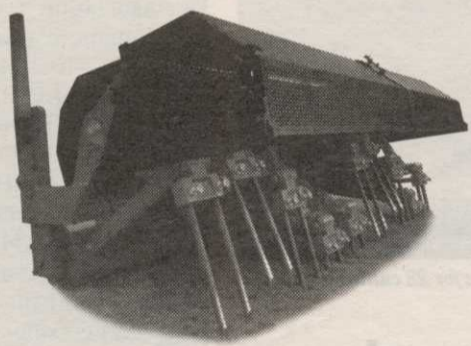
On a more personal level, Hahn credits his wife Elaine and brother Pete, a fellow superintendent who died last year, with helping him succeed.

"My wife had to put up with a lot," Hahn said. "We had seven children. Many times she ended up having to take the kids to ball games and school functions because I was tied up at the course. Now that they are all grown [the youngest is 20], I'm looking forward to spending more time with her and playing a little more golf."

Hahn also plans to continue his involvement with the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America. He has served and will continue to serve on numerous GCSAA committees, he said. He also had a brief tenure on the board of directors.

But he lost a 1994 re-election bid, in part because of his support for several con

Continued on next page



Now the monster goes even deeper - 24 inches. Nothing else even comes close.

Even Steven Spielberg couldn't dream up a more piercing scenario for knifing through turf...introducing the Model 405.250 Verti-Drain®. No other machine goes this deep and heaves the turf forward cracking the sidewalls of the core hole making it easier for air and water to penetrate. So if you have to go deep, look to Verti-Drain to get you there.



VERTI-DRAIN®
Works like a pitchfork, only better.

Emrex, Inc., Box 1349, Kingston, PA 18704 (717) 288-9360

CIRCLE #108

FREE... Turfgrass Guide Specifically for Golf Courses

What turfgrasses would work best on your golf course? The right choice now can make a big difference later. The Golf Course Professional's Guide to Turfgrass Selection will help you decide.

The free Guide is a quick, easy reference arranged by geographical areas. It suggests turfgrass species, and lists the varieties and seeding rates best suited to your locale. A separate section on southern winter overseeding details new trends, listing the advantages and drawbacks of various species. This guide is a "must" for new course construction and for renovation projects. Get your free copy today!



Lofts Seed Inc.

Bound Brook, NJ

(301) 937-9292 • (800) 732-3332

CIRCLE #109

Putting-green research priming pump for wisdom

By MIKE KENNA

FAR HILLS, N.J. — Thirty-eight preproposals were submitted to the U.S. Golf Association (USGA) Turfgrass Research Committee in response to its June 1 call for studies dealing with putting-green construction and maintenance. The USGA Green Section's "Specifications for a Method of Putting Green Construction" uses sand as the principal component of the root-zone mix to provide adequate drainage and resistance to compaction, and incorporates a perched water table in the profile to provide a reservoir of moisture for use by turf.

The goal of the new research is to identify the best combinations of construction, grow-in procedures, and post-construction maintenance practices that prevent long-term problems, reduce environmental impacts, and produce high-quality playing surfaces. At the July 20 Research Committee meeting, 18 preproposals were selected for development into full proposals.

Final selection of full proposals will be made the last week of November. Ten to 12 projects will be funded at \$20,000 per year for a period of up to five years. The Golf Course Superintendents Association of America has agreed to consider co-sponsoring a number of projects selected by its own Research Committee.

Several interesting questions are raised by the research preproposals which will directly benefit golf. Can the conditions for the removal of the intermediate (choker) layer be less stringent? How does the shape (i.e.,

angular or round) of the sand affect green performance? Why are some sands more stable than others? Can calcareous sands be used successfully in regions where they are more abundant?

The hydrology of movement of water through putting-green root zones will also be further investigated during the next five years. How does the profile design, root-zone composition,



slope of the green, drain spacing, profile depth, and irrigation protocol impact water movement and the extent of water perching in a USGA green? How do these factors change over time? How do alternative putting-green construction methods stack up to the USGA Green Section recommendations?

Beyond these questions dealing with the chemical and physi-

cal properties of root-zone mixes, how should they be grown in and made ready for play? Are the extremely high rates of nitrogen used to accelerate growth a short-term solution to meet opening day but a path to long-term failures? How can dark, organic grow-in layers be avoided? What are the criteria for allowing play on new greens?

Several projects propose to thoroughly study the microbiology of high-sand root zones. What species of bacteria are found in new greens? Where do they come from? How do microbial populations change over

time? What effect do they have on the development of layers high in organic matter? What effect do micro-organisms have on turfgrass pathogens?

These are just a few of the interesting questions that university scientists will attempt to answer during the next five years. It is important to remember that the answers will be based on thorough, side-by-side comparisons of a wide range of construction, grow-in, and post-grow-in regimes. The research will provide more sound, scientific information upon which the putting green construction and maintenance debate can be based.



Always read and follow label directions. Curalan is a trademark of BASF Corporation. © 1993 BASF Corporation. JJ8930 CR 4 006

Dr. Michael Kenna is director of Green Section research for the United States Golf Association.

Ready for Ryder

Continued from previous page
 controversial bylaw proposals involving the board's authority to set dues and establish membership classifications.

"My short term on the board was interesting, but I have no desire to run again," Hahn said. "The reorganization at the headquarters level seems to have the association generally moving in the right direction. We need to keep pushing continuing education and make certification tough enough that it still means something. But we have to diversify our educational programs to offer more for the people working for us. We [GCSAA] concentrate a lot on the superintendent and don't do much to help the mechanics and spray technicians."

As for the future, Hahn said: "I have no aspirations to move, unless the club decides I should. I like it here. We have a quality golf course, an ample budget and occasional major events. The 1998 U.S. Amateur will be held here. I don't plan on retiring until I'm somewhere between 62 and 65."

GOLF COURSE NEWS

With Curalan, Long Lasting Control Is Par For The Course.

Finally, there's a turf treatment that works as hard as you do to keep your golf course looking its best. It's Curalan™ fungicide. With Curalan you can control eight tough turf diseases including brown patch, dollar spot, leaf spot, Fusarium patch and snow molds three to four times longer than other fungicides – up to 28 days.

And that's not all. Curalan's long lasting control is specifically designed to work on any kind of turf, at any stage of its growth, as a preventive or curative treatment.

So, whether you want to keep spots, patches or molds from invading your turf, or you need to clear up an existing problem with brown patch or dollar spot, a

treatment with Curalan can do it. This year, go for a new course record in disease control. Call 1-800-878-8060.

Simple Solutions To Complex Problems

BASF