

# GOLF COURSE NEWS

THE NEWSPAPER FOR THE GOLF COURSE INDUSTRY

A UNITED PUBLICATION  
VOLUME 8, NUMBER 4  
APRIL 1996 • \$4.50

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#### ALL IN THE FAMILY

Robert Trent Jones Sr. (left) has teamed with elder son Bobby to form a new architectural entity, RTJ Golf Ventures. For story, see page 37.

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PLAYERS SURVEYED ON SUPERS' ROLE

## Image enhanced but golfers insist on 'green' look

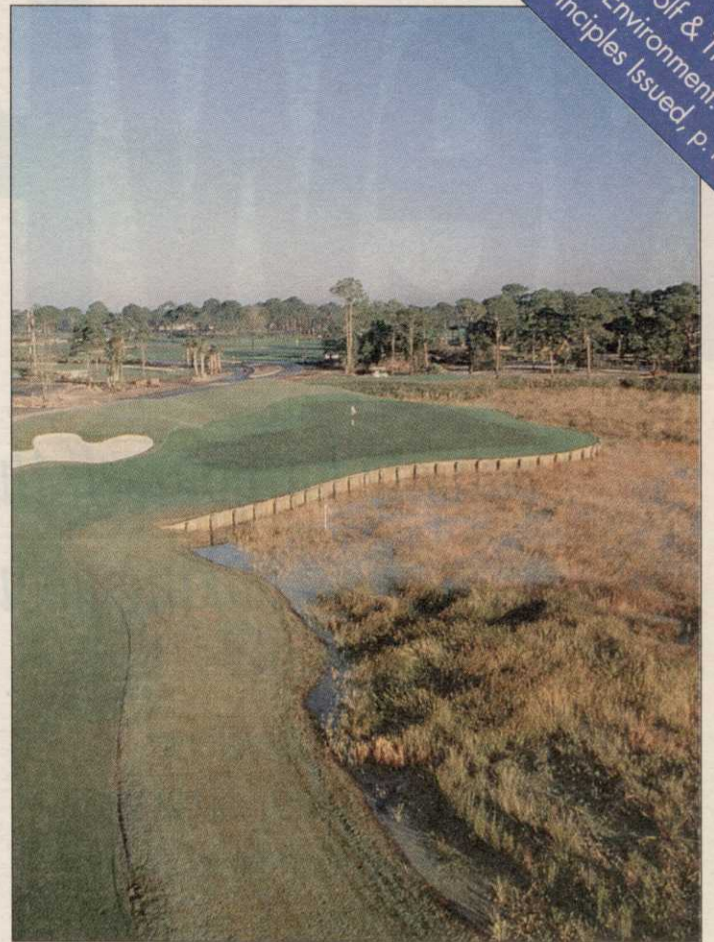
By PETER BLAIS

ORLANDO, Fla. — Most golfers view superintendents as trained professionals and the person most responsible for course conditions — news course managers should find encouraging considering national efforts to elevate their image.

Disturbingly, however, few golfers recognized the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) as the superintendents' national organization. Also troubling was the unwillingness of most golfers to accept poorer playing conditions in exchange for reduced chemical and water use on their courses.

According to a recent survey of golfers conducted by the National Golf Founda-

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#### SENSITIVE STROKES

Architect Ron Garl worked sensitively around wetlands at the newly opened Indian River Club. Located in Vero Beach, Fla., Indian River is only the third course in the world to be granted Audubon Signature status. The course also embodies the Environmental Principles for Golf Courses recently issued at the conference on Golf & The Environment (see page 16).

STUDY SHOWS:

## Name designers pull higher dues and green fees

By PETER BLAIS

HARRISBURG, Pa. — Private courses designed by signature architects command higher initiation fees and monthly dues while signature architect-designed daily-fee facilities charge higher green fees, according to a preliminary review of a study performed by a Pennsylvania course appraiser and a graduate business student.

The point of the study is to eventually help developers determine the potential benefit of hiring or not hiring a signature architect in specific markets, and perhaps the difference in hiring one signature ar-

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## Griffiths, Brauer face off on course costs

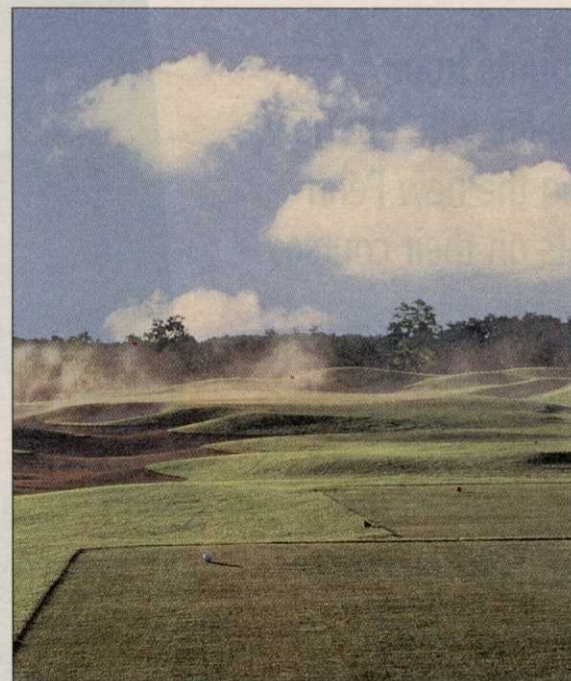
By MARK LESLIE

Worried the cost of golf is starting to drive people from the game, the incoming and outgoing presidents of the American Society of Golf Course Architects have presented arguments that would lead developers to make harsh choices about their projects.

Picking sides in a point-counterpoint atmosphere, Past President Jeff Brauer of Golfscapes in Houston and new President Denis Griffiths of Braselton, Ga., agreed construction costs have escalated too high but disagreed over the cure.

"Ten years ago there were few upscale daily-fee projects," Griffiths said. "Everyone today is doing

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Shiun Golf Club in Nigata, Japan, a new design from incoming ASGCA president, Denis Griffiths.

## Ciba-Sandoz deal creates new firm: Novartis

By HAL PHILLIPS

Consolidation in the chemical trade continues apace, as Des Plaines, Ill.-based Sandoz Agro and Greensboro, N.C.-based Ciba — both divisions of enormous Swiss-owned pharmaceutical and life sciences conglomerates — have agreed to join forces, creating a \$6 billion agrichemical giant.

The new entity will be known as Novartis, providing Bill Liles, head of Turf & Ornamental for Ciba, his fourth corporate identity in a decade. First it was Geigy. Then came Ciba-Geigy, fol-

lowed by Ciba. Now, it's Novartis.

"I've got a lot of business cards," Liles said with a laugh. "But people have to realize, these mergers always take more time than you would expect. The Ciba-Geigy mergers took three years. From the Ciba side, we will be there to service our products and we will have the product there to serve the marketplace. It will be business as usual."

Ciba products include Banner fungicide, Primo plant growth regulator and

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# Superintendents' image a winner among golfers, says NGF survey

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tion (NGF), 56 percent viewed superintendents as facility managers and 88 percent knew the superintendent was the main person in charge of course maintenance.

"Since superintendent traditionally has not been an up-front, visible position with the general public, it might have been reasonable to assume most golfers weren't aware of the position or its importance," said NGF Vice President of Consulting Rick Norton. "But most golfers apparently realize the superintendent oversees a big budget and many people. That's a very positive sign."

Among the other findings in the NGF

questionnaire were:

- 76 percent viewed the superintendent as the person most responsible for the condition of the golf course;

- 62 percent perceived the superintendent as the person best equipped to instruct golfers about the ecology and condition of the course;

- 38 percent said they had met the superintendent at their course and a smaller percentage said they knew him/her by name.

Golfers said course conditioning—the superintendent's primary responsibility, Norton noted—was among the three most important considerations when they chose a place to play. Cost was the most

important item, followed by the availability of tee times.

Golfers said unrepaired ball marks on greens concerned them most about course conditions. Worn tees, limited availability of drinking water and poor bunker and sand trap conditions followed in that order. Many female golfers also mentioned unfilled ball washers among their major pet peeves, Norton said.

Golfers (79 percent) said the superintendent's skill was the main factor determining course conditions. Other factors they mentioned were weather (72 percent), maintenance budget (59 percent), quality of turf equipment (58 percent), and the superintendent's formal

education (41 percent).

"It's good for the profession that the public recognizes superintendents and their skill level as well as these other factors as having an impact on course conditions," Norton said.

Golfers are an environmentally conscious lot, according to the survey. Ninety percent said they believe in the need to protect the environment (compared to 87 percent of the general public). Forty-eight percent said they had donated money to environmental protection causes (compared to 38 percent of the general public).

"The industry says golf is good for the environment," Norton said. "Yet we know there is a large percentage of the population that has a negative opinion about golf's environmental effects or has no opinion at all. The obvious implication is that, with the superintendent viewed as an expert by the golfer, there is a tremendous opportunity for superintendents to reach those who don't know about golf's positive side."

Although most golfers realized the important role played by the superintendent, few were familiar with the profession's major organization, the GCSAA. Only 10 percent knew what the GCSAA was, although those who recognized the association had an even loftier view of the superintendent's role than those who did not.

Superintendent and GCSAA board member Scott Woodhead said the study pointed out the major roadblock keeping superintendents from reducing chemical use on their courses. Asked if they would accept somewhat poorer playing conditions in exchange for reduced water and chemical use on their golf course, less than 40 percent of golfers said they would be willing to make the sacrifice.

"That's the main problem right there," Woodhead said.

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## Texas institutes certification change

AUSTIN, Texas — The Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) has instituted a significant change to its certification program for most pesticide applicators. As of Jan. 1 all licensed and certified pesticide applicators recertify by self-certification. Self-certification will allow the licensees and certificate holders to be the manager of their own continuing education requirements.

CEUs will continue to be required for license and certificate renewal, but applicators will need to collect and keep certificates of completion distributed at accredited courses. The TDA will conduct random audits of applicators applying for recertification.

### CITY HONORS RETIRED SHIELDS

TOPEKA, Kan. — For the first time in 35 years, Jim Shields will not be the on-the-job superintendent at the Topeka Public Golf Course.

Shields officially retired last June after 35 years of service at the Topeka course, but he has been retained as a consultant.

He had been superintendent at Topeka Public GC since 1980. Shields was recognized by city officials last fall for his long years of service and even had "Jim Shields Day" declared in his honor on Oct. 13.