GOLF COURSE NEWS

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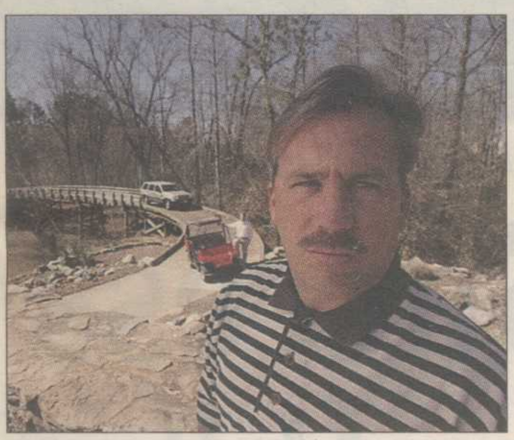
Golf Car Report
Focus on Fleet Maintenance: pp. 43-46

Super Safety Standards

INSIDE



FOCUSED ON EXCELLENCE
Randy Waldron, superintendent at the Golf Club of Georgia, is obsessed with consistency and his greens show it. See Super Focus on page 15.

NEWSPAPER

Poa triv problems widespread & serious

By MARK LESLIE

Poa trivialis infestations of "epidemic proportions" are being reported in bentgrasses and some Kentucky bluegrasses, affecting golf courses across a broad portion of the United States. The question is, has it always been present?

A rough bluegrass, poa *trivialis* is "very aggressive," said Terry Buchen, The Legends Group director of agronomy. "It will take over bentgrass. Even when the seed is blue tag-certified, it's getting through [inspections]."

"If you talk to the seed companies, the problem doesn't exist. But if you see new golf courses out in the field, it's absolutely a shame how much *poa trivialis* is there," said Stan Zontek, director of the U.S. Golf Association Green Section's Mid-Atlantic Region. "It's a huge problem. There are some supers who are fit to be tied."

"I totally disagree with Stan and his statement on [new golf courses]," said Dr. Rich Hurley, director of research at Lofts Seed and perhaps the nation's foremost expert on *poa trivialis*. "You take me to 120 old courses and I'll find *poa triv* in fairways, greens and tees. I'm not saying it can't come in the seed, but it's all over. Take me anyplace from Georgia north, coast to coast, blindfolded and I'll find it and I'll find it quick.

"It's a hysteria pointed at the seed companies when, if there is a hysteria, it should be: 'This stuff is everywhere.'"

According to Zontek, the situation

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OB Sports: Turnkey managers

By PETER BLAIS

PORTLAND, Ore. — Bringing resort golf to urban areas is the goal of O.B. Sports, an Oregon-based, full-service management firm that recently began construction of a new golf project on the western outskirts of this city.

"We're focusing on high-end, public golf," said company President Orrin Vincent. "Country clubs and municipal courses have traditionally been the only choices in Western [U.S.] cities. We want to bring that resort golf experience to the city."

The 36-hole Reserve Vineyards and Golf Club, the fifth facility in the O.B. portfolio, is a good example. The Reserve will operate under an unusual format. Alternating each day, one 18-hole course will be dedicated to public/resort play with the other course reserved for private members and their guests.

The courses, which should open in August

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The 7th green at Rush Creek Golf Club, a John Fought design located in Maple Grove, Minn. Fought's design firm is now a division of Aurora, Ore.-based OB Sports.

PUBLIC GOLF FORUM

A NATIONAL BUSINESS CONFERENCE AND EXPO FOR SUPERINTENDENTS, OWNERS, MANAGERS, AND DEVELOPERS OF PUBLIC-ACCESS GOLF FACILITIES

OCTOBER • 27-29 • 1996

Forum focus: Customer service

By HAL PHILLIPS

CHICAGO — The golfers couldn't be happier. With more than 400 new courses opening their doors each year, there's an increasing variety of playing options. It's another story for the golf course management team, however, as record development numbers mean more competition in an already tight marketplace.

Sophisticated operations that emphasize customer service, manage efficiently, market aggressively and maintain for quality will thrive in this atmosphere, while those content with the *status quo* will fall by the wayside.The application of these sound business principles to public-access course operations will dominate the four-track education conference at The Public Golf Forum, a two-day seminar and trade show sponsored by

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Participation, rounds back up, says NGF

By HAL PHILLIPS

JUPITER, Fla. — That giant sucking sound you hear is actually a collective sight of relief. According to the National Golf Foundation's (NGF) annual report on golf participation, rounds played increased 5.5 percent during 1995, pushing the total to 490 million. The report also shows the total number of golfers grew by 3 percent, pegging the current playing population at 25 million.

Following on the heels of last years study which indicated troubling decreases in both rounds and players, the 1996 report comes as welcome news to a golf industry building courses at a record pace. Four hundred and sixty-eight courses, an all-time high, opened for play dur-

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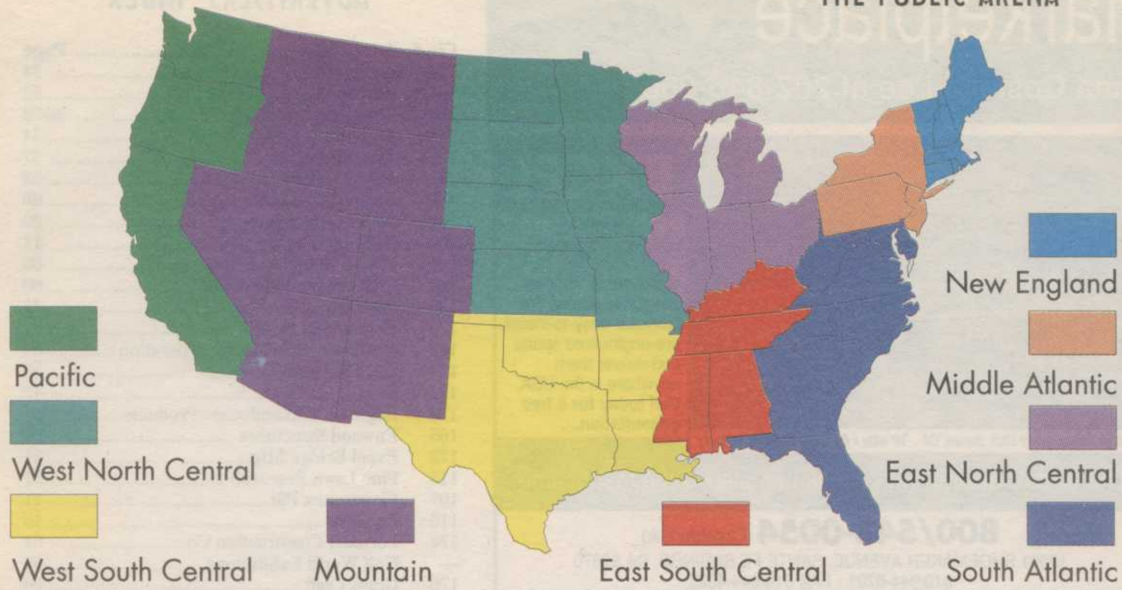

REGION	PARTICIPATION RATE	GOLFERS	ANNUAL ROUNDS PLAYED
West North Central	17.8%	2.7m	55.1m
East North Central	15.4%	5.6m	93.9m
Mountain	13.4%	1.7m	31.7m
New England	11.8%	1.3m	26.2m
Pacific	10.6%	3.3m	62.5m
Middle Atlantic	10.5%	3.4m	66.1m
South Atlantic	10.5%	4.0m	99.8m
East South Central	7.8%	1.1m	22.9m
West South Central	7.6%	1.8m	32.0m

NGF report

Continued from page 1

ing 1995. With 817 facilities under construction — 50 to 65 percent of which should open during the next 12 months — it appears demand is keeping up with supply.

"It's good news, obviously, although I wasn't surprised by it," said Dr. Joseph Beditz, president of the NGF. "You can't apply these numbers to a specific marketplace. They're designed to describe the situation in a macro sense. The whole point is to give people a general view of what the overall environment might be.

"Whether rounds are up or down is a regional phenomenon. It's difficult to have a perspective for the whole country. For example, it's been awfully wet in the upper Midwest this year, so maybe the numbers won't be quite so good at this time next year."

Some tidbits from the report, which can be obtained from the NGF by calling 1-800-733-6006:

• Healthy increases in play were turned in by core golfers (who play eight or more rounds per year) and juniors, 3.7 percent and 17.4 percent, respectively. The number of avid golfers — a subset of core golfers who average 60 rounds a year — rose by 400,000 players, from 5.1 to 5.5 million.

• The West North Central Region (North and South Dakota, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Nebraska and Kansas) boasted the highest participation rate at 17.8 percent. The neighboring East North Central Region — Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois, Indiana and Ohio — was second in participation (15.4 percent) and second in rounds played with 93.9 million. These two regions combined led the nation in golf course openings last year, indicating supply and demand are growing commensurably.

• Senior golfers currently account for 25 percent of the total golfer population; females make up nearly 26 percent of this segment. However, while the average senior player is 62 years old, that number should begin to come down as the Baby Boomers succumb to the inevitable march of time. The primacy of this demographic group should grow exponentially over the next decade.

The survey upon which this

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Golf Course Marketplace

To reserve space in this section, call Diana Costello-Lee at 207-846-0600

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NGF report

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year's "Golf Participation in the U.S." report is based was conducted for the NGF by Market Facts, Inc. of Chicago. As in past years, a total of 30,000 households were surveyed and results were weighted with key U.S. Census demographic variables to ensure their national representation. This allows the national participation rate to be estimated to within 0.2 percent with 90-percent confidence.

"On our estimates of rounds, I think we're in a 2- or 3-percent error range," said Beditz, "which is a lot of rounds when you think of it on a national basis. But we do need more accurate results. One thing to remember: These are consumer estimates from the previous year — they're not facility-based. We're working a methodology that is based directly on the turnstile.

"There hasn't been any material change in rounds played, though we have been adding 2 or 3 percent each year to the course supply. We would be delighted if we could see equal growth in rounds played. We haven't, on an overall basis. Some markets are as busy as they could be. In other areas, they may be over built and rounds are down... As all politics is local, so is rounds-played."