

## Have Riviera's greens finally turned corner?

LOS ANGELES — The ongoing saga of the Riviera Country Club's greens may finally be winding down.

The controversy started last August when the club hosted the PGA Championship. The newly-sodded greens were rushed into play because members wanted to play as soon and as often as they could leading up to the tournament.

As a result, the root structures were poor and the greens took a beating once the professionals arrived for the week-long major tournament. Spike marks and holes were everywhere on the greens, as television commentators and competitors repeatedly criticized the conditions. Golf course superintendent Bill Baker was fired in December.

The club recently issued a press release stating the greens have shown "excellent progress" under the direction of consultant Bill Bengeyfield, who has been working with Riviera's new superintendent, Dan Vasquez. Riviera's greens were aerated, top dressed, overseeded and fertilized. Bengeyfield said root structures are now five inches deep. Two other factors have also helped: a warm California winter and the ban of metal spikes at the club.

Of course, there was still the possibility for more problems at press time. A PGA Tour official reportedly inspected the course in January and expressed some concerns about their playability for the now-completed Nissan Open, which is held each February at Riviera.

## Colo. town goes totally spikeless

FORT COLLINS, Colo. — Fort Collins has become a cutting-edge kind of place, at least as far as golf goes.

As of June 1, golfers won't be allowed to wear metal-spiked shoes at any time at Fort Collins' three muni courses — City Park Nine, Collindale and SouthRidge. By banning metal spikes, and eliminating the wear and tear they cause, city golf officials said they are certain daily conditions at the courses will improve.

The city had implemented a ban on metal spikes for two straight winters, but only for five-month stretches from November to March. Now the city wants golfers to go without metal spikes all year. They can still wear ceramic or plastic cleats however.

The private, 18-hole Fort Collins Country Club won't allow metal spikes starting this year. And the Colorado Golf Association and the Colorado Junior Golf Association will ban metal spikes at all of their tournaments.

## Bay area to address golf dearth?

PLEASANTON, Calif. — A long-lamented shortage of public golf holes here could be solved by two proposed 18-hole courses — one on the San Francisco-owned property along Interstate 680 and the other in south Pleasanton.

As of now, the city only has a 9-hole public course at the Alameda County Fairgrounds.

Owners of 300 acres in South Pleasanton have

agreed in principle to sell their land to make room for a city-owned course southeast of the intersection of Alisal Street and Happy Valley Road. There's also a plan, forwarded by the city of San Francisco, to build up to 1,900 homes and an 18-hole course on 508 acres south of Bernal Avenue.

City officials have said they have concerns about whether the market exists for two courses.

## Enormous project okayed in Calif.

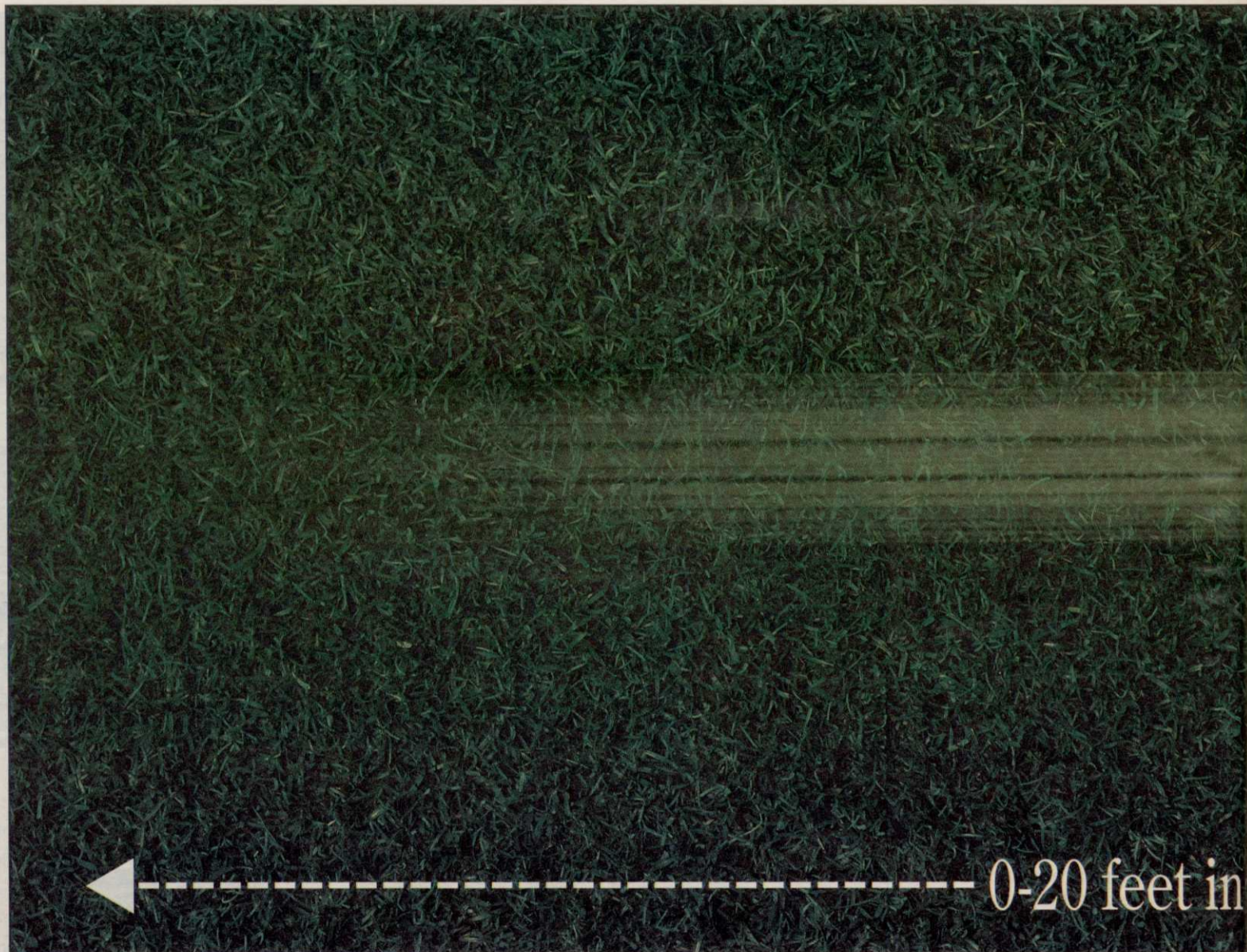
MONTEREY, Calif. — Monterey County supervisors have approved an ambitious 20,000-acre subdivision, located south of Carmel Valley, that will include an 18-hole championship golf course.

The proposed Santa Lucia Preserve will be built on land now known as Rancho San Carlos. The plans call for about 18,000 acres of open space, 300 upscale homes, 50 employee homes, the golf course, a 110-room hotel, a wastewater treatment plant and other buildings.

The project has generated a considerable amount of opposition from local residents and some environmentalists. One resident has pledged to challenge the project in court.

Construction could begin later this year and is expected to take as long as 15 to 20 years to fully complete.

The developers will be required to meet a list of more than 200 conditions that county supervisors generated through the various stages of review and hearings.



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