

GCN JANUARY



BALL MARK MAYHEM

A plethora of tees (634 in all) spot unrepaired ball marks on a North Shore CC green.

Shamed golfers repent — for now

GLENVIEW, Ill. — When the number of unrepaired or ill-repaired ball marks on the putting greens became abominable, North Shore Country Club superintendent Dan Dinelli took an action that paid

dividends — for the course, golfers and grounds crew alike.

At one of the greens, Dinelli placed a golf tee in every visible ball mark (634 tees on a 6,300-square-foot green). There were so many tees that

it was difficult to putt from one part of the green to another.

Dinelli then enlarged a photograph of the hole to poster size, framed and hung it in the clubhouse next to a United States Golf Association poster about ball marks.

Seeing the damage on one green struck home with members of this private club, convincing them to repair their ball marks.

The USGA poster said: "A fresh ball mark repaired by a player takes only five seconds. A freshly repaired ball mark will completely heal in 24 hours. A fresh ball mark left unrepaired for only one hour requires 15 days time before the ugly scar has satisfactorily healed. Please repair all ball marks and divots."

"We went spikeless this year and it was a big success. The only problems on the greens now are these ball marks," Dinelli said.

The poster "worked," he said, "at least for awhile."

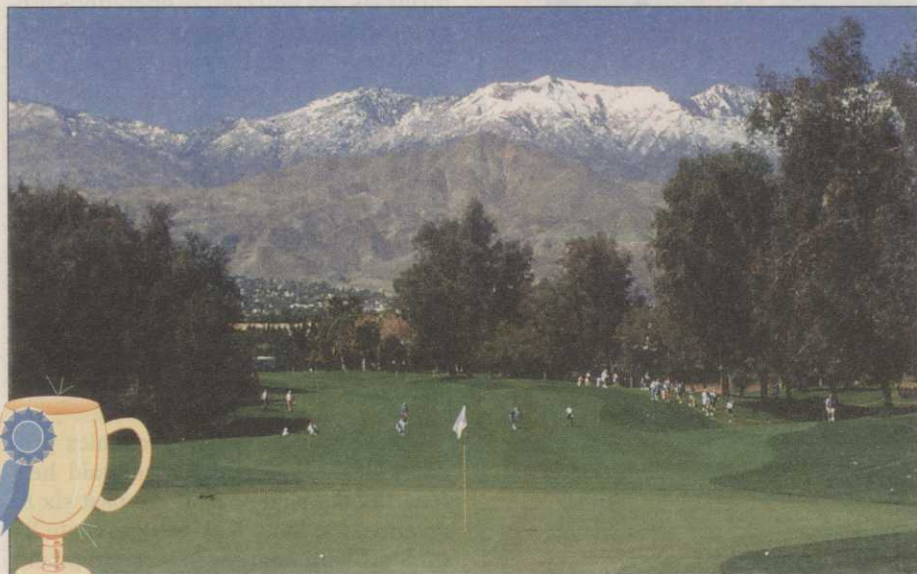
'Spikeless' soars as phenomenon

NORTH BARRINGTON, Ill. — When Wynstone Golf Club here banned metal-spiked golf shoes in April 1994, superintendents nationwide held their breath, anticipating who-knows-what reaction from golfers. Three years later, and 45 years after the United States Golf Association (USGA) first called on golfers to forsake their metal spikes for more turf-friendly footwear, the revolution is on.

The driving force behind this trend? The golfers themselves.

"I'd like to say the Green Section has the influence to accomplish this. But we tried in the '40s, saying spikes were terrible on the turf, and that did nothing," Snow said. "No, the impetus for going 'spikeless' is the golfers. It has nothing to do with research, or the USGA touting alternative spikes, or anything else."

He explained that golfers have become accustomed to faster, smoother putting services since Stimpmeter use became prominent in the mid-1970s, and spike marks "are more annoying to golfers than they were 20 years ago."



Mission Hills Country Club is an LPGA favorite, for the greens and the views.

Mission Hills LPGA's top-maintained track

By HAL PHILLIPS

PALM SPRINGS, Calif. — The LPGA's first major of 1997, the Nabisco Dinah Shore Championship, will be contested later this month here at the Mission Hills Country Club. In an agronomic sense, it's all downhill from there.

Following an exclusive poll of LPGA Tour players, conducted by *Golf Course News*, Mission Hills has again been named the Best Conditioned Course on the circuit for 1996. Mission Hills was similarly singled out for excellence in 1993.

David Johnson is director of maintenance for all three Mission Hill layouts. He accepted the award during February's Golf Course Superintendents Association of America conference in Las Vegas.

More than 60 LPGA players responded to the GCN survey. Mission Hills finished first, followed by Columbia Edgewater Country Club in Portland, Ore., home to the Ping Cellular One LPGA

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Golf Championship. The new Rees Jones-designed LPGA International course, home to the Sprint Championship, finished third.

"We start planning for the next tournament right after the previous one ends — making changes to the course, trying to improve," Johnson explained. "We focus in on the Tournament course so it's the best it can be for the ladies. I play golf and my assistant, Nancy Dickens, plays golf. So we have a good feel for what the players like."

Judging from their comments, Johnson and his staff know how to keep the LPGA happy.

"There are other courses that are as well conditioned in certain years," said Beth Daniel, "but year in and year out, Mission Hills is the best."

"Always a joy to play," agreed a fellow competitor. "They obviously have a great deal of pride in their course."

"The tees, fairways and greens were great," raved Suzanne Strudwick. "They always are."

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