

BRIEFS



PAR FOR THE COURSE IN 4TH SEASON

"Par for the Course," the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America's 30-minute television show, moves this year to The Golf Channel. The production's fourth season will begin March 22, at 6:30 p.m., EST. Each week, "Par for the Course" will take viewers inside the world of golf by featuring how-to-play tips from Golf Digest school instructors, interviews with industry leaders and celebrities, site visits to top golf venues throughout the world, agronomic insights and environmental success stories.

N.Y. ASSOCIATION HELPS STUDENTS

ROCHESTER, N.Y. — The New York State Turfgrass Association (NYSTA) has awarded scholarships to Kristian Granger, Nancy Miller and Maurice Hopkins of SUNY Delhi, Eric Smith and Jonah MacDonald of SUNY Cobleskill, and Michael Friedman of Cornell University. The Fitzharris Agency sponsored a scholarship that was awarded to Betty Jean Kelly of Finger Lakes Community College.



MID-AM ATTRACTS MORE THAN 8,000

CHICAGO — In spite of sub-zero wind chills and drifting snow, 8,724 visitors attended the Mid-America Horticultural Trade Show, Jan. 16-18, at the Navy Pier, the highest recorded for any Mid-Am show except 1996. Mid-Am '97 boasted more exhibitors than any other show in Mid-Am history, with a total of 517 companies contracted to exhibit in 940 booths. Mid-Am's Career Center introduced hundreds of area horticulture students to 96 employers.

NEW YORK BEGINS REPORTING LAW

ALBANY, N.Y. — The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) is taking steps to implement the state's new Pesticide Reporting Law, according to Acting Commissioner John P. Cahill. The law became effective Jan. 1, requiring all commercial pesticide applicators and retailers to report all sales and locations of applications, by zip code. The DEC is charged with developing a computer database of all pesticide applications to help health researchers concerned with identifying possible causes of illnesses. Cornell University is charged with helping set up the database.



# Mission Hills LPGA Tour's Top Maintained

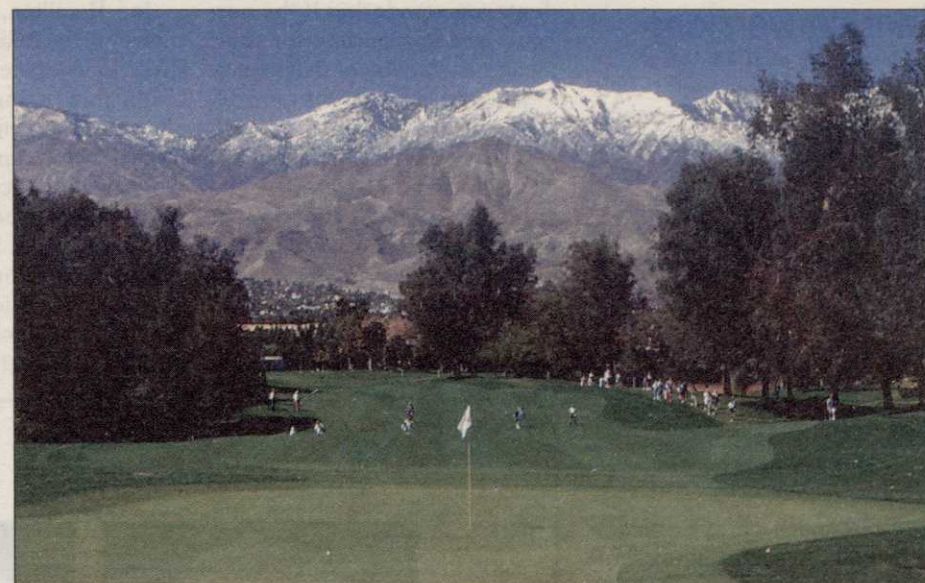
By HAL PHILLIPS

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 Hills layouts. He accepted the award during February's Golf Course Superintendents Association of America conference and show in Las Vegas.



David Johnson's Mission Hills Country Club is an LPGA favorite, for the greens and the views.

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 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

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# Variations in success reported in bentgrass conversion methods

By PATRICK O'BRIEN

As more golf courses convert their greens to the new heat-tolerant bentgrass varieties, superintendents are using a number of methods to get the job done. In some cases, it is easy, reliable, and only takes a few months, while in others the process is slow and the results are uncertain. Conversion costs are variable as well.

The most popular methods of conversion that the U.S. Golf Association (USGA) Green Section staff has seen recently are reconstruction, surface regrassing, interseeding, and Ber-



mudagrass conversion.

RECONSTRUCTION

Many older golf courses with poor root-zone conditions elect to rebuild, now that new superior bentgrasses are working successfully in the South. Obviously, this is the most expensive method, but it will provide outstanding putting surfaces for the next 20 or more years. Advances in expertise and construction equipment have decreased the amount of time required to rebuild all 18 greens. In most instances, projects begin in mid-summer and the greens reopen in late fall.

Project costs vary depending on the size of the greens, material transportation costs, and architectural fees. Sometimes new turf

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Patrick O'Brien is director of the Southeast Region for the U.S. Golf Association Green Section.

# Dr. Yelverton issues superintendents a spring wake-up call

Spring is here in some areas and many superintendents are scheduling their pre-emergence herbicide application. Much has been written about different products, application timing, and length of control. Recently, U.S. Golf Association Green Section agronomists spoke with weed science expert Dr. Fred Yelverton of North Carolina State University on this subject.



USGA: When do you recommend applying granular spring pre-emergence herbicides?

Fred Yelverton: All PRE crabgrass/goosegrass materials should be applied prior to any expected germination. Crabgrass will germinate when soil temperatures in the upper 1/2-inch of soil average about 52-55 degrees over about a three- to five-day period. An average soil temperature is the key because if you have bright sunny days in February when the air temp is in the 60s or 70s, you can easily have soil temperatures in the upper half-inch in excess of 55 degrees in the middle of the day. However, this early in the year it will usually drop down at night.

So the average soil temps over a several-day period is what you look for. Again, maximum control can only be obtained when PRE herbicides are put out and watered in before germination. If I were monitoring soil temperatures, I would start applying when soil temps average about 49-50 degrees. For a majority of courses in the Southern region, this is going to be

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VERSATILE VERTI-DRAIN

Redexim promises increased speed and aeration capacity without sacrificing quality in two new machines — Verti-Drain 7212 and 7316. Both models increase capacity up to 70 percent. The primary difference is that the 7316 has a greater working width and depth. Both are capable of coring and solid tining, as well as using the company's new needle tines which create less surface disruption. For other new products, see pages 65-66.



## Pa. Turf Council elects Zedreck

WEXFORD, Pa. — Michael P. Zedreck, superintendent at Pittsburgh Field Club, has been elected president of the Pennsylvania Turfgrass Council (PTC), succeeding Samuel R. Snyder VII of Hercules Country Club in Nottingham.

A former president the Greater Pittsburgh GCSA board of directors, Zedreck had been re-elected to a three-year term as director of the PTC in the previous elections. He previously served a superintendent at Southpointe Golf Club in Canonsburg, where he oversaw construction, and at Butler (Pa.) Country Club. A certified golf course superintendent, he serves on the U.S. Golf Association Green Section Committee.

## Mission Hills' super says being a golfer helps

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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."

Golf Course News has conducted its annual Best Conditioned Course survey since 1992, rotating each year between the PGA, Senior and LPGA tours. Desert courses don't routinely score well in the eyes of players, but Mission Hills is the exception.

Further, Mission Hills' excellence is underlined by the scope of its maintenance demands. Three are three courses at the Palm Springs resort: The Desmond Muirhead-designed Tournament course, the Palmer Course and the Pete Dye Course.

Johnson is director of maintenance for all three tracks. However, he said the award would not have been attainable without help from Dickens, the first assistant and superintendent for the Tournament course; Raul Rodriguez, service manager for equipment; assistant superintendent Felix Milward; foreman Pablo Lua; and General Manager Tom Catanzarite.

"I guess if you're watching on TV and listening for comments, you'll hear about the smoothness of our greens," said Johnson. "There's just no grain in them by the time we get done with them... I think all LPGA events have the same standards. But ours being a major, we have the advantage of having longer rough and faster greens than what they might have for a regular event.

"Also, the weather is nice in March. Everything is growing. It's the perfect time for us to host a tournament, and we take a lot of pride in trying to be the best."

Keen observers of the LPGA scene may notice a few changes during this year's tournament.

Johnson and his staff have reconfigured some of the bunkers ("They had lost their natural shape"), rebuilding some of the fingers Desmond Muirhead had originally designed.

"Also, we took out some trees to get more sunlight in weaker areas," said Johnson.

But don't expect too much change. The course will play as it always does: The common Bermuda fairways will play firmly, just as they did last year when Patty Sheehan walked away with the title; the grainless greens — 328 Bermuda, overseeded with Majestik Rye — will again be cut at 3/32.

And the players will rave.

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