

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

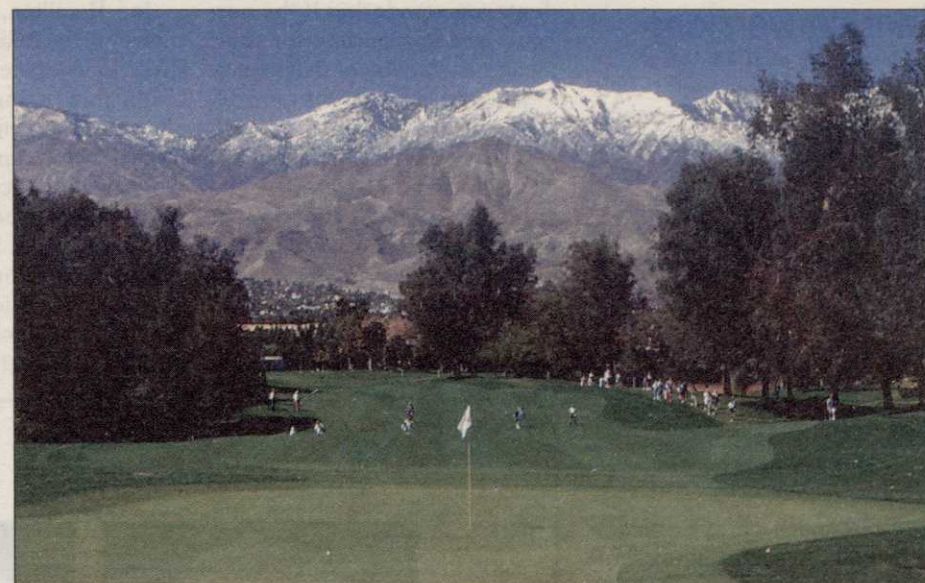
By HAL PHILLIPS

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.

Bent conversions

Continued from page 13

equipment and other tools to help keep the turf healthier, such as fans, irrigation upgrades, etc., must also be added to the cost. Seeding rather than sodding is the preferred method to establish new bentgrass varieties following reconstruction.

Pinehurst #2, Charlotte Country Club, Idle Hour Club, Colonial Country Club and East Lake are a few notable clubs that have upgraded in this manner recently.

SURFACE REGRASSING

If root-zone conditions are acceptable, many clubs are electing to eliminate a Penncross putting surface and re-establish the greens with an improved variety. Druid Hills in Atlanta was one of the first clubs to use this method to establish its greens with Crenshaw. Atlanta is a competitive golf market and many courses already had improved varieties on their greens.

Steve Wilson, superintendent at Druid Hills, set his standards high and proposed surface regrassing with Crenshaw. After club officials agreed, Wilson developed a program to resurface the greens. The first step involved fumigating the greens with methyl bromide. Afterwards, Wilson decided not to remove the old bentgrass stubble, but instead chewed it up with aerators and vertical mowers. This process created a seedbed into which he planted directly. Today, Druid Hills has putting surfaces that compete with any course in the Atlanta area.

INTERSEEDING

Virtually every club in the South with Penncross greens now interseeds either in the spring or fall with a new bentgrass variety in an attempt to slowly change the genetic population. Will this work? Right now nobody has an answer.

The U.S. Golf Association Green Section and the Carolinas Golf Course Superintendents Association are co-sponsoring research at North Carolina State University that began last fall. Dr. Dan Bowman is investigating various seeding techniques and varieties in an attempt to convert Penncross plots to a new variety. If this method does work over time, it will become the most cost-effective and least-disruptive conversion method. I am a skeptic at this point. I have never seen anyone over the last five years prove they have converted a Penncross green to a new variety.

BERMUDAGRASS CONVERSION

These new bentgrasses have also caught the attention of superintendents with Bermudagrass greens. Many are tired of the annual fall overseeding and the battle each spring to regrow the Bermudagrass and eliminate overseeding. These superinten-

dents are wondering if the new bents are appropriate for their locations. Maybe or maybe not.

The new bentgrasses were developed for areas of the South where Penncross has always struggled. They were not intended to extend the movement of bentgrass deeper into the South. However, in special instances with low play, good root zones, and a highly motivated superintendent, it may be done.

Joe Hamilton, owner of Lake Spivey in the Atlanta area, was the first to oversee conversion to Crenshaw using this method. Anyone who played golf at Lake Spivey before and after the conversion has noticed the major improvements in the putting greens.

Mike Carn at Bear Creek was the first on Hilton Head Island to change over Tidwarf Bermudagrass to a heat-tolerant bentgrass last fall. Instead of overseeding

last September with poa trivialis, Carn used Crenshaw bentgrass. By the end of February, Carn had almost total coverage of the bentgrass.

To enhance bentgrass performance, Carn implemented a new management program, as well as renovating the existing putting-green irrigation system. Fans were installed at sites with poor air movement and trees were removed as needed. The Crenshaw

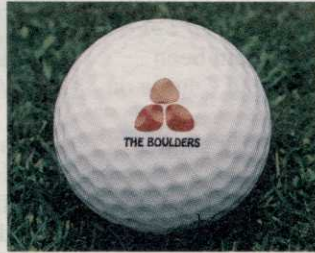
survived the summer of 1996 and Carn became the first man ever to hold bent on this resort island.

Even with these plant genetic advances, best results are achieved with good management. There are no shortcuts to good agronomics.

Daily management decisions that benefit these bentgrasses are vital keys. There is no question that more conversions will take place in 1997.



Grand National
Auburn/Opelika, AL



The Boulders Resort
Carefree, AZ



Grayhawk Golf Club
Scottsdale, AZ



Four Seasons Resort Aviara
Carlsbad, CA



Keystone Ranch Golf Course
Keystone Resort, CO



Jupiter Hills Club
Jupiter, FL



Lake Nona Club
Orlando, FL



Pine Tree Golf Club
Boynton Beach, FL

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Greensboro, GA



Ivanhoe Club
Ivanhoe, IL



Bryn Mawr Country Club
Lincolnwood, IL



Glen Oaks Country Club
West Des Moines, IA



Lassing Pointe Golf Course
Union, KY



Bethesda Country Club
Bethesda, MD



Poquoy Brook Golf Club
Lakeville, MA



High Pointe Golf Club
Williamsburg, MI

A golf course's biggest asset is its grass. Fast greens, luxurious fairways, and thick roughs leave lasting impressions with every golfer.

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growth of grass, for a thicker, more compact stand, more root mass, and ultimately, better-looking grass.

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