

Brickyard's Stuart beats *poa annua* invasion

By DEBBIE CLAYTON

When The Speedway 500 Golf Course opened in 1929, golfers reached the nine holes inside the brick-paved Indianapolis Motor Speedway by crossing a wooden bridge. Today, the renovated course, renamed Brickyard Crossing, features only four holes inside the track and golfers pass through a tunnel to reach them.

But the thrill of playing golf in and around the famed racetrack remains strong. The public

course hosted a Senior PGA Tour Event, The Brickyard Crossing Championship, for the third time in 1996, and averages 18,000 rounds each year, despite being closed all winter.

"We also close the course on qualification days, during the Brickyard 400 NASCAR races, and for the Indianapolis 500, of course," said Jeff Stuart, who was golf course superintendent at Country Club of Indiana for six years before

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Calif. confirms bromide restrictions

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — A report submitted to the California state Legislature by the Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) has confirmed that the department's restrictions on methyl bromide use adequately protect workers and the public from overexposure to the pesticide. The review also concluded

that sound science and methodology were used in developing the controls placed on methyl bromide.

Legislation passed last year required DPR, working with the California Department of Food and Agriculture, to review the restrictions on methyl bromide use that have been developed and implemented over the past four years.

"Although the review shows that we don't need to make substantial changes, we found that some fine-tuning was needed," said DPR Director James W. Wells. "Some changes have already been made and other initiatives are under way."

DPR and county agricultural commissioners have implemented a series of restrictions on methyl bromide use in field fumigations to protect workers and others who may be near fumigation sites. These restrictions include buffer zones between application sites and nearby homes or workplaces.

Free copies of the 18-page review are available from the DPR, 1020 N. St., Room 100, Sacramento, Calif. 95814-5624; telephone 916-324-1454. A copy can also be downloaded from DPR's Web site: www.cdpr.ca.gov.

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HERBICIDE

Iowa GCSA elects Bruns

WATERLOO, Iowa — Jeff Bruns of Sunnyside Country Club here has been elected president of the Iowa Golf Course Superintendents Association (IGCSA).

Bruns will serve along with Vice President Thomas Verrips of Otter Creek Golf Course in Ankeny, Director of Association Affairs Dennis Watters of Fort Dodge (Iowa) Country Club, and new board members Mark Henson of Ottumwa Municipal Golf Course from the Southeast District and Gerald Stover of Harlan (Iowa) Golf and Country Club from the Southwest District.

Serving the second year of two-year terms are Northeast Director Thomas Lavrenz of Ellis Park Golf Course in Cedar Rapids and Northwest Director Mark Doody of Primghar (Iowa) Golf and Country Club.

The IGCSA presented its Superintendent of the Year Award to Gary Twedt of Ottumwa Country Club and its Distinguished Service Award to Dr. Nick Christians of Iowa State University.

The Assistant Superintendent of the Year Award was presented to Kathy Christianson of Rice Lake Golf and Country Club in Lake Mills.

Stuart's method beats *poa* at Brickyard

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moving to The Speedway 500 Golf Course in January 1991.

"Sometimes it gets a little loud working so close to a racetrack, but that's the only drawback I've noticed."

Redesigned by Pete Dye and opened in fall 1993, the current course melds the mature trees

and rich natural beauty of the original course with striking elevation changes, three picturesque new lakes and myriad tall fescue spectator mounds. The predominantly bentgrass course features Pennlinks creeping bentgrass greens, Penncross on tees and Pennway on fairways. While the roughs are primarily bluegrass,

fine fescue mixtures come into play outside primary roughs.

During reconstruction, Stuart stripped the topsoil from most of the course, stockpiled it, subgraded the surface and redistributed the topsoil. But Dye liked the terrain on the 9th fairway — one of the four holes inside the track. So that fairway

was never subgraded. As a result, the fairway grew in with a 50-percent *poa annua* population the first year. Stuart began using Prograss Herbicide (ethofumesate) on the 9th fairway right after the course opened.

"We made two applications of the herbicide three weeks apart at a half-gallon per acre each,"



Jeff Stuart

said Stuart. "The treatment virtually eliminated the *poa* on that fairway and by the next spring, we had 90-percent bentgrass. Later that year, we noticed *poa* encroachment throughout the golf course and de-

cidated to nip it in the bud. So we treated all fairways and tees in 1994 and 1995 after the first frost. Depending on populations each fall, we'll continue following this program to keep *poa* in check."

Stuart noticed *poa* coming into certain areas where there are other problems. "We see it in places where we have major traffic or inadequate drainage or areas under shade," he noted. "So we try to manage the other problems to inhibit *poa* encroachment. For example, we don't aerify and spike during *poa* germination periods, and we try to keep the course on the dry side."

Since *poa* is tracked in by foot or on equipment, he plans to go further into the tee and rough areas with ethofumesate each year to keep it from spreading.

In addition, Stuart uses slow-release fertilizers, applying 4/10ths to one-half pound of nitrogen per month during the growing season. In the fall, after topgrowth has ceased but before dormancy sets in, he applies 1.5 pounds of nitrogen to help rhizomes and roots store carbohydrates through winter months. He hopes to alleviate compaction and re-establish drainage by aggressively aerifying.

"As a new course, we have 4 to 6 inches of topsoil covering the subsoil layer, and we've had some pretty severe compaction as a result," he said. "So we aerify fairways twice each year, going over them once with a 3-1/2-inch core and dragging it in. Then we deep-tine aerify to a 10-inch depth. It sounds extreme, but we've been pretty successful. Some of our problem areas now are draining down through the subgrade."

To help manage disease problems, Stuart plans to install a Bioject system this year. By injecting a bacteria through the irrigation system, he hopes to better control dollar spot, brown patch and pythium and, in turn, reduce his fungicide use. He rotates Banol Fungicide for brown patch control. Dollar spot was a problem on bentgrass last year, which Stuart primarily attributes to his slow-release nitrogen program.

"We try to stay at about 3 pounds nitrogen per year on fairways and 5 pounds nitrogen per year on tees and greens," he said. "I think fertility has a lot to do with managing disease, but there's a fine line between fertilizing enough to suppress dollar spot and fertilizing too much so that you encourage brown patch."

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