

Chemical exhibitors pump up the volume

Making noise is perhaps the primary objective of exhibitors at the annual Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) show. By that I mean creating some buzz on the show floor. You know what I'm saying: People talking about, making noise regarding a particular company or its products.

Without a doubt, chemical companies made the most noise in Las Vegas. This industry sector was busy on several different fronts, from new product releases, to division realignments, to distribution relationships.

Who made the most noise? It's a toss-up between Novartis — the newly merged entity comprising what were formerly Ciba and Sandoz — and Zeneca, which rolled out its highly anticipated new broad-spectrum fungicide, Heritage.

The Heritage buzz was enormous (see stories page 59). Testing has shown the product to be effective on just about everything except dollar spot. Indeed, the prospects are so good for Heritage that companies were lining up to distribute it on Zeneca's behalf. Not just anyone, mind you. But The Scotts Company, United Horticultural Supply, Lesco, Terra, Wilbur-Ellis and others. Clearly, this is a product to watch.

Another new product creating a stir, though it has yet to receive Environmental Protection Agency approval, is Mach2 — an insecticide born of the collaboration between American Cyanamid Co. and Rohm and Haas (GCN February '97). Principals in the joint venture, called RohMid, held a news conference in Las Vegas to herald the coming of Mach2, which has tested very well in the field. When EPA signs off sometime this spring, Mach2 will go directly to market.

Novartis made noise by distilling the message behind its mega-merger, which was announced last spring and finalized Jan. 1. While Novartis is Latin for "new skills," the company brings a plethora of existing skills to bear. At a news conference held in Las Vegas, Novartis formally introduced its new Head of Specialty Products, Thomas McGowan; its Director of Turf & Ornamental Products, former Sandoz employee Gene Hintze; its National Sales Manager, former Ciba employee Jose Milan; and its new Market Manager for Golf, Jerry



Hal Phillips, editor

Continued on page 10

We need another dead-ball era

Thump. Thump. Thump. The drum beat escalates, calling for a special less-juiced golf ball for the Tour. It is a call that has ramifications for all in the golf industry — a call that would "protect the integrity of our older golf courses," according to Denis Griffiths, president of the American Society of Golf Course Architects.

Was it Jack Nicklaus or someone else who began the cry for a special Tour golf ball — one that reduces the distance, say, 10 percent? At Pinehurst last spring Nicklaus declared that a 10-percent reduction in distance would return a course to the way it was meant to be played.

Now others are banging the drum. It has become a hue and cry. In Las Vegas in February the beat went on:

- Ben Crenshaw: "I'm close to agreeing with Jack. We've got to do something with the golf ball... We're at a critical red line about a lot of things with equipment."

- Griffiths: "We can look at USGA statistics all day long. But if you look at black-and-white, real-world examples of what's going on, I don't think the statistics support the way the Tour is playing."

Griffiths lamented the fact that Tour pros oftentimes need not hit their mid-irons because they can drive today's ball so much farther than was possible when the grand old classic golf courses were designed.

"Take a par-4 from 1970 on which you hit a driver-7 iron, or even driver-wedge," he said. "In 1970 the average Tour player hit the driver around 260 yards and the wedge 115 yards. That's 375 yards. Today, they hit a driver an average 280 yards. Put a wedge in their hands at 135 yards, and you're at 415. How do we put a medium iron in these guys' hands? You have to have a 500-yard hole."

Historically, a shot of under 100 yards demanded finesse — determining how much of a swing to take. It was one of the toughest shots in golf.

But in 1997, pros are carrying three or four wedges, pared off so that they can be played with a full swing from 80 to 135 yards out.

A Georgia guy, Griffiths used a NASCAR analogy. Here it goes: "Car racing and golf are very similar. They require ultimate concentration. The first thing you have to do is beat the track you're on, or the golf course you're on. The second thing is to beat your competitor. In 1969, about 175 miles per hour won the pole position at Daytona. That speed climbed — very much like our [golf's]



Mark Leslie, managing editor

Continued on page 11

Letters

A SPIKELESS BUT HARDLY TOOTHLESS REBUTTAL

To the editor:

Mr. Crist's comments on the spikeless revolution taking place now in golf ["They wouldn't let me wear my spikes, your honor", GCN January 1997] are both uneducated and that of the ambulance chasers that are lurking everywhere now.

Apparently he hasn't read about the gentleman member of a country club that just recently was awarded a large amount of money because he tripped with metal spikes and fell off the front walk of the clubhouse after consuming eight drinks. Why are cart paths finished rough or grooved? It is so golfers with metal spikes don't slip.

Furthermore, courses are not mandating "softspikes", they are mandating that metal spikes may not be worn. I think he is right in his second paragraph where he stated that he is "getting old," meaning he is unwilling to change. Of the centuries that golf has been played, spikes have only been around since the 1920s. And if he is so old he should check with an orthope-

dic doctor, who would probably recommend that spikeless golf shoes will save his feet and ankles in the future.

And to end, the traction of metal spikes are no better than tennis shoes — if you would take the lunge out of your swing.

Corey Eastwood, CGCS
Bakersfield, Calif.

GCN LINKED TO NGF DIRECTORY

To the editor:

I am happy to inform you that your company's Web site has been linked to your listing in the National Golf Foundation's online 1997 Directory of Golf. This new industry-wide directory is available on the Internet via GolfWeb (www.golfweb.com) and the NGF's own home page (www.ngf.org). Visitors to either site are now able to simply click on your Web address, which is a part of your company listing, and have direct access to your own Web site.

The reason behind this initiative is to provide NGF members with increased value. Since putting the Directory on GolfWeb's site, we've learned that GolfWeb's traffic has increased significantly.

We hope you will also benefit from increased traffic to your site and that this translates to more business for your company.

As always, we are grateful for your support of the NGF, and I welcome your input on how we can continue to improve our products, services and member benefits.

Barry S. Frank
Vice President,
Membership Services
National Golf Foundation
Jupiter, Fla.

FROM THE CYBER MAIL BAG

Ed. — The Golf Course News website, up and running for two months now, has received considerable praise from Internet-savvy superintendents. Below are a sampling of their comments. Have a look for yourself at:

www.golfcoursenews.com

Congrats to your mag and the wonderful new Website on the Internet. As a golf course superintendent in Fulton Ill., at Fulton Country Club, it is a pleasure to read such a fine magazine on the goings on in the golf course business. In reading your latest mag

I found your new website and was thoroughly impressed with layout and content. Keep up the good work and remember to think green!!!!

A. Simmons
Fulton, Ill.
asimmons@sanasys.com

I'm a golf course superintendent, just new to the web. I'm totally impressed with the job you did on the *Golf Course News* web site! As the newspaper itself is broad and diverse, your work exceeds it! As only the web can! Great job, keep up the great work. I'm currently seeking to educate myself on the environmental and OSHA laws that apply to new golf courses in Vermont. Any suggestions? I'm going searching... thanks for any or everything.

Mary P. Knaggs
knag0002@gold.tc.umn.edu.

Great! I just purchased my new office computer and added *Golf Course News* to my "favorite places" folder... Good timing. Nice addition to a good publication!

John Cummings, CGCS
Charleston, W.Va.
JCBHCCTurf@aol.com

GOLF COURSE NEWS

THE NEWSPAPER FOR THE GOLF COURSE INDUSTRY

Publisher

Charles E. von Brecht

Editorial Director

Brook Taliaferro

Editor

Hal Phillips

Managing Editor

Mark A. Leslie

Associate Editor

Peter Blais

Editorial Assistant

J. Barry Mothes

Contributing Editor

Terry Buchen, CGCS, MG

Editorial Advisory Board

Raymond Davies, CGCS

CourseCo

Kevin Downing, CGCS

Willoughby Golf Club

Tim Hiers, CGCS

Collier's Reserve

Ted Horton

The Pebble Beach Co.

Dr. Michael Hurdzan

Hurdzan Design Group

Mary P. Knaggs

James McLoughlin

The McLoughlin Group

Kevin Ross, CGCS

Country Club of the Rockies

Brent Wadsworth

Wadsworth Construction

Editorial Office

Golf Course News

Box 997, 38 Lafayette Street

Yarmouth, ME 04096

207-846-0600; Fax: 207-846-0657

hphillips@golfcoursenews.com

mleslie@golfcoursenews.com

pblais@golfcoursenews.com

ADVERTISING OFFICES

National Sales:

Charles E. von Brecht

Box 997, 38 Lafayette St.

Yarmouth, ME 04096

207-846-0600; Fax: 207-846-0657

cvonb@golfcoursenews.com

Western Sales:

Robert Sanner

Western Territory Manager

2141 Vermont, Lawrence, KS 66046

913-842-3969; fax: 913-842-4304

Marketplace Sales:

Diana Costello-Lee

207-846-0600; fax: 207-846-0657

Public Golf Forum Sales

Michael Lafaso

207-846-0600; fax: 207-846-0657

Subscription Information

Golf Course News

P.O. Box 3047

Langhorne, PA 19047

215-788-7112

United Publications, Inc.

Publishers of specialized business and consumer magazines.

Chairman

Theodore E. Gordon

President

J.G. Taliaferro, Jr.



Copyright © 1997 by United Publications, Inc. All rights reserved and reproduction, in whole or in part, without written permission from the publisher is expressly prohibited.