

Tifton Lab earns A2LA accreditation

TIFTON, Ga. — Tifton Physical Soil Testing Laboratory, Inc. became an accredited laboratory on Feb. 4 by the American Association for Laboratory Accreditation (A2LA) for technical competence in the field of Geotechnical (Putting Green Materials) Testing.

The A2LA is a non-profit, scientific, membership organization dedicated to the formal recognition of testing laboratories and related organizations which have achieved a demonstrated level of competence. Accreditation demonstrates ongoing competency by the lab in per-

forming the required tests specified by the U.S. Golf Association (USGA) for Putting Green Construction Recommendations.

The USGA recommends that only A2LA accredited laboratories be used for testing and analyzing materials for building greens according to specific guidelines.

The company's president and owner, Powell Gaines, served on the review panel and offered much technical expertise to the USGA in writing the 1993 revision of the USGA Green Construction Recommendations.



The 3rd hole at Sugarloaf Golf Club, Maine's top-ranked golf course, under Ed Michaud's care.

Focus on Michaud

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information most of the winter. It would be nice to work 30 or 40 hours a week during the winter after working all those hours in the summertime, and have some time to myself.

"But I do enjoy the snowboard end of it. Those kids are so grateful for whatever you do for them. I swear I could just push up a pile of snow and drop my tiller to smooth it out, and they'd think it was great."

Nevertheless, "the more you deliver, the more the guests expect the next year," he said. "Instead of grooming the pipe three days a week, now they want it groomed five days a week. Next year it may be every day.

"Basically each year the challenge now is to keep wowing them, keep dazzling them."

"We wrestle every year with that on the golf course," he added. "They expect a great-conditioned course, smooth cart paths and everything we've done so far."

The new "wow factor" this year, he expects, will be a GPS (Global Positioning System) on the golf carts.

Which of the two "careers" came first is hard to figure. Michaud earned a college degree in forestry, then found himself running heavy equipment.

During the winters for many years, he worked as a groomer and became manager of the Sugarloaf USA grooming department.

When Jones and golf course builder Greenscape started to build Sugarloaf Golf Club, Michaud was on an earth-moving machine. Superintendent of construction Fred Downs liked

Michaud's work ethic and hired him to help finish the golf course, installing the irrigation system, seeding and as a shaper.

When the work was done, Michaud stayed on to operate the complex irrigation system, and when superintendent George Howe left in 1989, Michaud was hired as head superintendent. He attended the University of Massachusetts' Winter School for Turfgrass Managers and dropped his management position in the grooming department, although continuing to work for it.

Still, the two jobs overlap.

"Last year we skied until June 1," he said, "and we had two weekends of 'Ski and Tee,' so imagine what kind of shape I would have been in running both those departments."

Which of the jobs does Michaud prefer?

"Both have good and bad points," he said. "The snowboarding job in the past was more relaxed and the expectations were less; but as I get more involved in national events and national championships, the pressure is on and the expectations are about the same as with golfers.

"The snow is not living. If it gets icy, you can push snow on top of it, groom out, and it's fixed. You don't have a soil profile and micro-organisms working for or against you. Snow doesn't get thirsty or sick... You don't worry about an outbreak of snow mold.

"On the other hand, you don't get the feeling of satisfaction that you get from looking at the golf course at peak foliage. It may be the best pipe on the East Coast, but it's not alive and living and depending on you to feed and water it and give it medicine when it's sick."

Softspikes continues suit parade

ROCKVILLE, Md.—Softspikes, Inc., has filed separate lawsuits against four manufacturers of alternative golf cleats, claiming violation of intellectual properties against patents the company holds in Canada. The four manufacturers are Green Keeper, Flatspikes, Smart Spikes and Gripper Golf Cleats.

"These lawsuits are a continua-

tion of an aggressive position the Softspikes, Inc., has taken, and will continue to take to vigorously protect our intellectual properties," said CEO Jon Hyman.

Softspikes has 12 issued patents in the United States, with 12 more patents pending. In addition to Canada, Softspikes has other patents issued in the United Kingdom, Japan and Australia.

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