

GOLF COURSE NEWS

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INSIDE

Asian Market Wrap-Up

Intrepid traveler Andrew Overbeck summarizes the Asian golf market's most tumultuous year 7

Golf's High-Profile Investors

Trump, Huizenga and Fireman ready to sink big bucks into golf development 5



PRESIDENTIAL SWINGER

President Bill Clinton (left) receives some tips from Maroon Creek Club (MCC) Director of Golf Todd Williams during a presidential visit in August to the exclusive Aspen, Colo., golf facility. Photo by Dick Durrance II.

COURSE MAINTENANCE

New tools for supers 9
Universities step up research 9
Notable quotes from top superintendents 9

COURSE DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT

Audubon cracks down 15
Estate courses gaining popularity 15
Builders looking to go with flat pipe 17

COURSE MANAGEMENT

Intrawest advances on Southern U.S. 21
Medallist Troon aggressive in Australia 22
Environmental Golf seeks acquisitions 24

SUPPLIER BUSINESS

Deere purchases GPS system 25
Single-rider cars gaining market share 25
Canadian currency woes worry suppliers 25

GCN JANUARY • DEVELOPMENT

The First Tee takes a giant step forward

By MICHAEL LEVANS

ST. AUGUSTINE, Fla. — The First Tee, launched in November in a national publicity wave headlined by George Bush and Earl Woods, has managed to pull together the golf industry's heaviest hitters in what is being called the most significant concerted initiative to create accessible golf facilities for minority and junior golfers.

According to The World Golf Foundation, The First Tee's founding organization, the initial focus will be on developing financial support to acquire locations for the facilities. To supplement

Continued on page 30

Ice-laden limbs and entire trees crashed to the ground on the fairways of Springbrook Golf Club in Leeds, Maine.

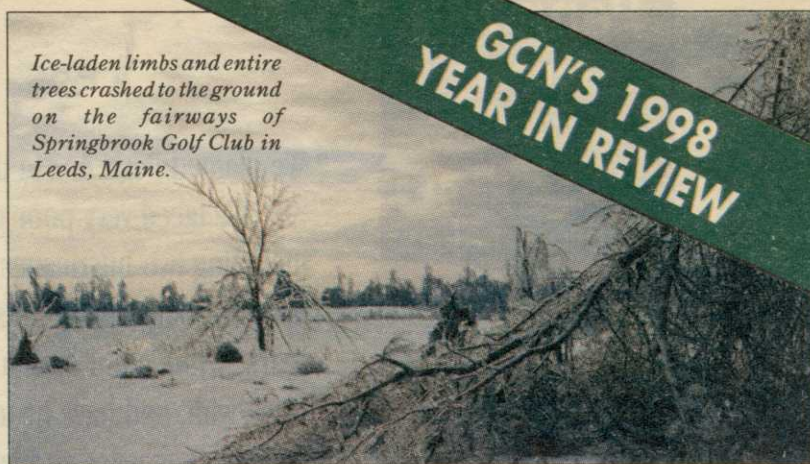


Photo by Jammie Golden

Access to the 15th tee at Pebble Beach Golf Links is destroyed as a result of the El Niño-driven storms in early February.



Photo by Dave Wilber

1998: El Niño takes its toll

April: California golf courses take a huge hit

By DAVID WILBER

The winter's intense El Niño-driven storms have hammered California golf courses, highlighted in early February when a series of weather-related records were broken. Several areas of the state recorded the lowest barom-

Continued on page 30

April: Rains, tornadoes wreak havoc in Florida.

By JOEL JACKSON

Florida's golf courses escaped El Niño's big wind, but the rains are causing serious problems.

A winter storm attributed to El Niño raced across central Florida in the early morning of Feb. 22, unleashing a cluster of tornadoes that

Continued on page 30



PHOTO OF THE YEAR: Golfplan will design 18 holes here at the Sparreboosch Clifftop Estate in Knysna, South Africa.

GCN MARCH • SUPPLIER BUSINESS

Textron/Ransomes: The dust settles, new structure emerges

By TREVOR LEDGER

IPSWICH, Suffolk, England — Now that the dust has settled on Textron

Inc.'s takeover of Ransomes PLC, a clear picture of the group's strategy and structure is emerging.

The new company is called Textron Turf Care and Specialty Products and is headed up by the former president of Ransomes, Peter Wilson. As president of the new worldwide organization, Wilson is based in the company headquarters here in Ipswich. The

Continued on page 26

GCN NOVEMBER • MANAGEMENT

KollStar plans to double size by 2000

By PETER BLAIS

NEWPORT BEACH, Calif. — KollStar, a major operator and developer of golf courses, has acquired seven courses on the southwest coast of Florida, giving the Newport Beach-based firm a dozen courses nationwide.

KollStar purchased six of the courses from National Fairways Ltd. The acquisition includes Sunrise Golf Club (GC), Rolling Green GC and Sarasota GC, all in Sarasota; Hibiscus GC in Naples; Port Charlotte GC; The Tides GC in Seminole; and Eagle Ridge GC in Fort Myers. Each is an 18-hole,

Continued on page 24



The First Tee

Continued from page 1

these acquisitions, The First Tee plans to provide, through the help of participating organizations and individuals, expertise and consulting advice, land-planning services, course design and other assistance that will help reduce the cost of the project.

Fifteen developments have been identified as meeting The First Tee criteria thus far, including renovation of Detroit's

Belle Isle course made possible by a \$2 million donation by Ford Motor Co. The First Tee plans to have 100 courses in the program in the next two years.

Service and expertise commitments have been made by the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA), American Society of Golf Course Architects (ASGCA), National Golf Foundation, American Junior Golf Association, Tiger Woods Foundation and National Minority Golf Foundation.

El Niño: California

Continued from page 1

barometer readings ever in February.

California courses found that no amount of installed drainage could handle the rains since they began on already wet ground. El Niño was not choosy about the golf courses it attacked as rivers, streams, drainage and retaining walls statewide reached their limits.

The Monterey Peninsula re-

ceived no mercy. "We had the highest tide and the biggest swell ever recorded in Stillwater Cove," said Mark Michaud, superintendent at Pebble Beach Golf Links. "If we hadn't put in the new seawall on the 18th hole, I'm sure we would have had some major damage."

"I cannot imagine how bad it would have been. Some comments during the TV coverage of the AT&T said the wall was making the waves break more violently. But the reality was that the old seawall might have been gone."

Some erosion has also taken place off the cliffs on Nos. 9 and 10. "It's not the big concern right now," Michaud said, "but all the sand is gone from Carmel Beach."

The damage at Pebble Beach was not only right next to the ocean. "We lost cart-path access from the 5th tee to the 5th green and access from the 15th tee to the 15th green."

El Niño: Florida

Continued from page 1

that touched down in Kissimmee, Winter Garden and Sanford near the middle of the state and in Ormond Beach on the East Coast. Forty people were killed and hundreds of families left homeless as the twisters targeted several residential areas.

"We were very lucky," said Kissimmee Bay Country Club Superintendent Jim Moulton. "The tornado that did all that damage to the Ponderosa Park mobile homes touched down only three-tenths of a mile from here. The irony is that we were going to be sweeping and vacuuming the course for all the fallen oak leaves, and the next day after the tornado, they were gone — sucked up by the tornado."

Kissimmee Bay was without power for six days and managed to stay open by renting eight portable generators to operate the clubhouse facilities and charge the carts. As a result, the club will be installing a large emergency generator for future back-up.

Duane Petersen at nearby Meadow Woods Golf Course also dodged the bullet on that fateful morning. "We were in the path, but it skipped over us," he said. "Our problem has been like everyone else's in the state: lousy growing conditions."

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