

The high-tech addition of the decade? Border collies

Reviewing 10 years of *Golf Course News* articles on cutting-edge technology and pioneering turf-care practices, it is fascinating that perhaps the greatest response followed a story, below left, in March 1994 on how one Connecticut superintendent, Richard Marcks, had ridded his golf course of geese with the most intelligent piece of maintenance equipment ever ... a border collie. Below right is a follow-up story.

Tac rids course of irksome geese

By MARK LESLIE

There have been dog super-heroes in the past. Timmy's Lassie. Rusty's Rin Tin Tin. Sergeant Preston's King. But today, in Greenwich, Conn., the Dog of the Hour is Richard Marcks' Tac. Tac accomplished what no human in town could do: He drove several hundred geese to a new address — out of town.

A 7-year-old border collie, Tac (short for Sharp as a Tac) has ridded Fairview Country Club of 600 troublesome geese — and enjoyed every minute of it.

"This is the hottest thing since peanut butter," said Marcks, property manager at Fairview. Twelve other area golf courses have bought border collies to rid their properties of geese since seeing Tac at work.

Buying the trained dog was Marcks' brainchild. "Within a month we had the course clean," Marcks said. Tac, fully trained to herd sheep, took quickly to the geese. Since she loves water, it was no chore for her to swim into the waterways and fetch the flock toward Marcks. Once the geese were brought in tight to him, they flew off.

"After you harass them a few times they leave," he said.

The \$2,000 price tag, Marcks said, "sounds like a lot, but you spend more

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Richard and Sandy Marcks at Crumpin-Fox with their border collies, from left, Casey, Spy, Toby and Spy's mother Boo (standing). Crumpin-Fox was home to 100 to 150 geese when the Marckses arrived. But with Casey, Toby and Spy on the job, they were soon gone.

Kick 'em out now, or watch out in the future

By MARK LESLIE

HOWELL, N.J. — David Marcks of Geese Police Inc. said golf courses and others who delay dealing with their geese problems will see those problems exacerbated.

"Is there a population problem? Absolutely," he said. "Will it double in the next five years? Absolutely. If the trend contin-

ues and you think there are a lot of geese now, just wait."

David explained that the major concern is not with migratory geese, who simply pass through on their way south or their return north. Rather, it is the resident geese.

A true migratory bird does not breed

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An entire industry has been born

By MARK LESLIE

What began humbly, with one border collie at one golf course, has mushroomed into an industry, with franchises from New Jersey and Connecticut to Long Island, North Carolina, Chicago and Seattle.

"It's turned into an unbelievable business. I never expected it to grow so fast, or get so big," said Richard Marcks, who first dreamed up the idea of sicing a border collie on the geese which had so troubled and spoiled Fairview Country Club in Greenwich, Conn., where he worked as property manager.

Marcks, who in March moved to Crumpin-Fox Club in Bernardston, Mass., saw the success of his simple idea turn into Geese Police Inc., a multimillion-dollar business servicing hundreds of corporate and municipal clients — and golf courses — whose parks, grounds, playgrounds and racetracks are beset by the messy geese.

"Actually, we only have three or four golf courses," said David Marcks, Richard's brother whose Geese Police offices in Howell, N.J., serve as the nationwide headquarters. "Most usually end up buying their own dog."

When Richard Marcks' story ran in the March 1994 edition of *Golf Course News*,

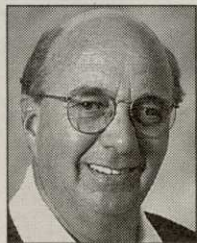
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BRIEFS



STOTTER MOVES TO JONESES' TRACK

LAS VEGAS — Southern Highlands Golf Club, the new private club co-designed by Robert Trent Jones Sr. and Robert Trent Jones Jr., has named former Shadow Creek Golf Club superintendent Riley Stottern its new course superintendent. President of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America in 1986-87, Stottern has more than 35 years experience overseeing course construction, maintenance and management. A certified golf course superintendent, he attended the University of Utah in Salt Lake City and studied turfgrass management through Guelph University in Ontario.



Riley Stottern

Kocher, Jett, people power the difference at Pinehurst #2

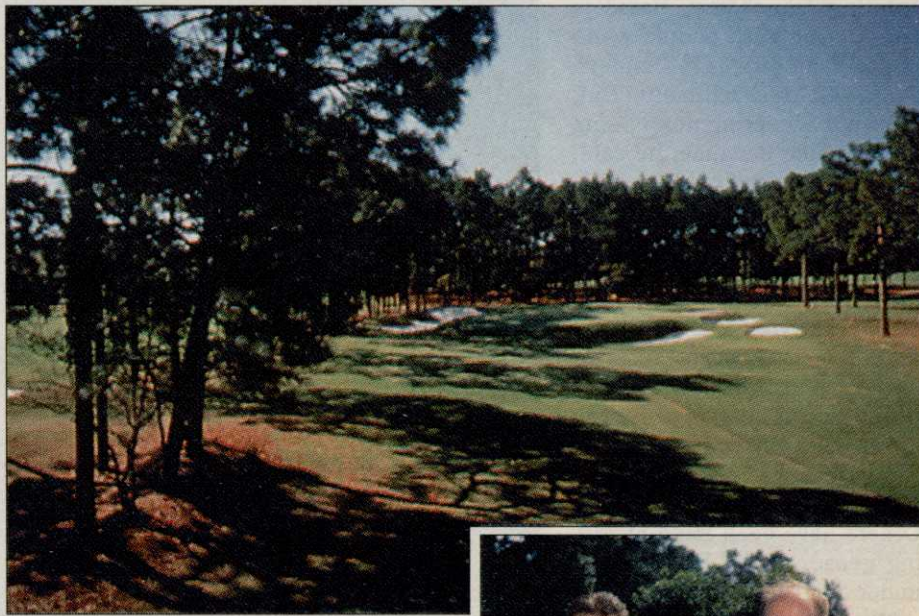
By TERRY BUCHEN

PINEHURST, N.C. — Tournament and championship veterans Brad Kocher, director of golf course maintenance, and Paul T. Jett, Course No. 2 superintendent at ClubCorp's Pinehurst are excited about this year's U.S. Open and have an able and efficient staff prepared to show off their talents.

Also a big help is Bob Farren, assistant director of golf course maintenance, who assists Kocher in his daily rounds of overseeing the maintenance of eight courses, including other many-faceted grounds operations.

"We have 24 of the best maintenance employees a golf course could ever want on our payroll, plus 14 student interns," said Jett.

So many people volunteered to work on the Open that "we had to stop all requests last October," said Jett, who kept the volunteer staff to 48. "We could have had 100 volunteers, without question, which shows the industry-wide dedication to Pinehurst and the



Photos by Michael Romney

In righthand photo, Brad Kocher, right, Pinehurst Resort's director of golf course maintenance, and Course No. 2 superintendent Paul Jett have been busy the past couple of years preparing the famous Donald Ross-designed course for this month's U.S. Open. Above is the 17th hole at Pinehurst No. 2.

U.S. Open."

A hospitality tent — complete with air-conditioning and television monitors — is set up across from the maintenance offices for staff and volunteers. Lesco will sponsor a breakfast every morning and Zeneca will go split the

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Kocher, Jett readying No. 2

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cost of dinner each night with Eastern Turf, Helena, Southern States and Wilbro.

"It is a small 'thank you' to our maintenance staff and volunteers for their tremendous work ethic, achievements and loyalty," Jett said.

Pinehurst No. 2 will be the first course using U.S. Golf Association (USGA) Championship Guidelines for a U.S. Open, where the sloped areas around all the greens will be mowed at 1/3 inch, or lower, to maintain the integrity of Donald Ross' original design.

"Any errant golf shots bouncing from our contoured greens will find the short-cut areas around them, rolling significantly away from the putting surface," said Kocher. "The players will have the option to putt, bump-and-run, or use a sand wedge or 'L' wedge to get back onto the putting surface, which should make for some exciting and dramatic short-game wizardry."

Course No. 2 is the first major championship or tournament course to use Penn G-2 bentgrass on its greens. Kocher and Jett said they keep the greens speed, as measured on the USGA Stimpmeter, for at 9 to 9-1/2 feet for members and guests. They will be rolling 10-1/2 feet on Monday of Championship Week, and tweaked to 11 feet by the weekend.

"If we got the greens any faster, with our crowned green surface design, we would the outer hole positions," Kocher said, "So we will keep the speeds in the 10-1/2 to 11-foot range and have a very fair test of golf in the process."

Pinehurst closed No. 2 to all play except from exempt players on May 27, almost three full weeks before the championship.

"This will allow the course to be in even better condition than it already is in," Kocher added.

The course will play 7,125 yards, 4th longest in U.S. Open history, playing to a par 70. Two par-5s, the 8th and 16th holes, will be played as long par-4s. No. 2 normally plays to par 72 for members and resort guests, par 71 for its other past significant championships and tournaments.

All of No. 2's tees are Tifway 419 Bermudagrass, except for three championship tees that are zoysiagrass. Its fairways are 419 Bermudagrass, which average between 28 and 30 yards in width. Those fairways will be mowed at 3/8 inch. The roughs are far enough away from the greens that when a ball rolls off a green, it will have to travel approxi-

mately 30 feet to the intermediate rough which is cut at 1-1/2 inches, and the primary rough, cut at 4 inches.

The closest any rough comes to a putting surface is 10 to 12 feet on the left side of the 9th green.

"We did not overseed any Bermudagrass areas used for the

championship," Jett said, "so we will experience a very smooth transition going into the month of June."

In six or seven places on the course the greens and tees are only 40 to 50 feet apart. Since they are outstanding visibility areas, many of the 16,500 bleacher seats will be located there.

Meanwhile, 50 "corporate village" hospitality tents (the most

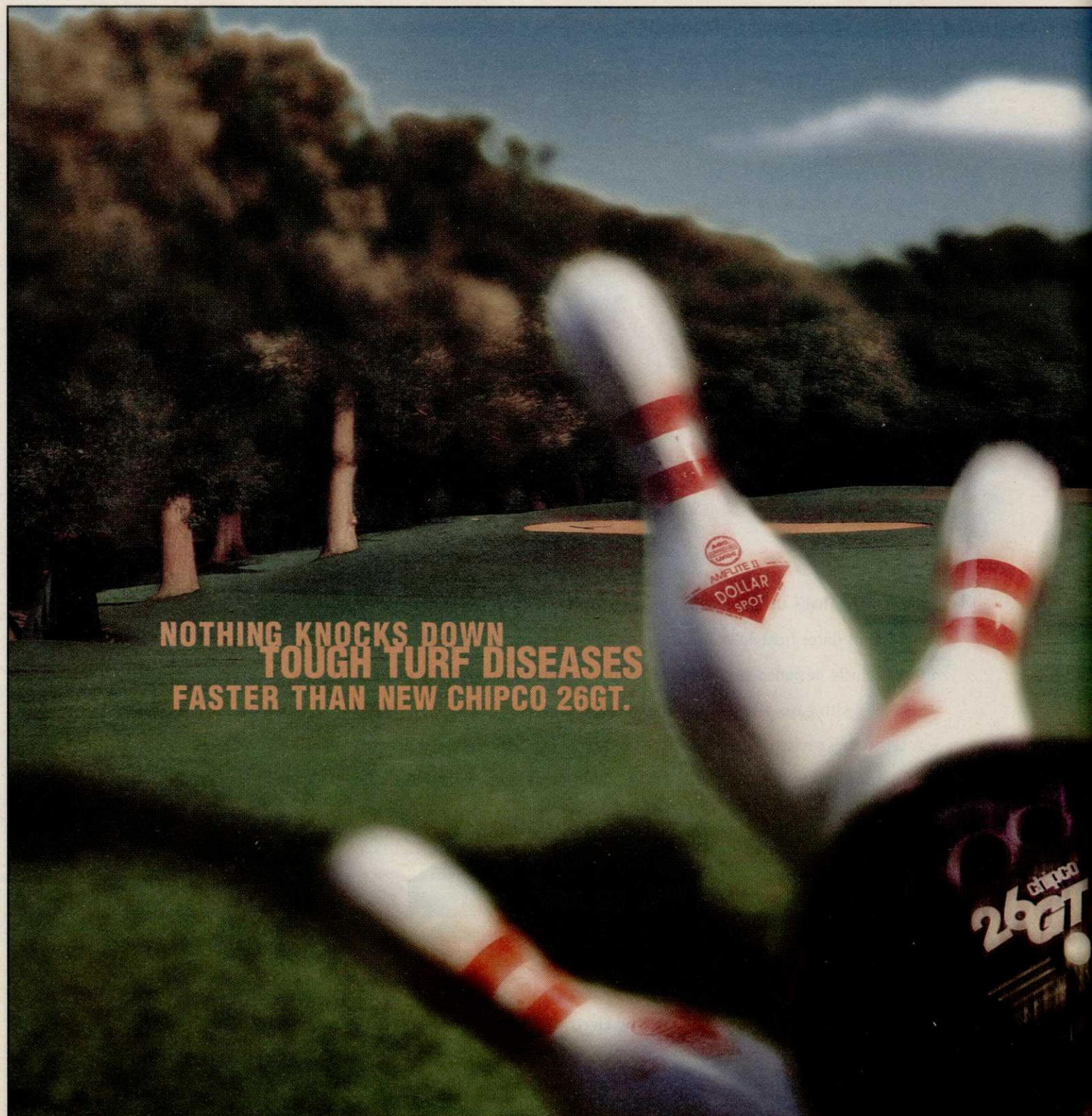
sold in U.S. Open history) will be placed on course No. 4, which is being totally redone by Fazio Golf Course Designers, Inc., using all of the 1st and 18th fairways. Courses No. 3, 5, 6, 7 and 8 will remain in open during the U.S. Open for corporate outings and membership play only.

Pinehurst and the U.S. Open will be the first to hold the Toro Championship Tournament Training Program, operated by

Toro and the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America. It is a very competitive contest for assistant superintendents and student interns who must answer the essay question: "What would working at the U.S. Open do to further enhance your career?"

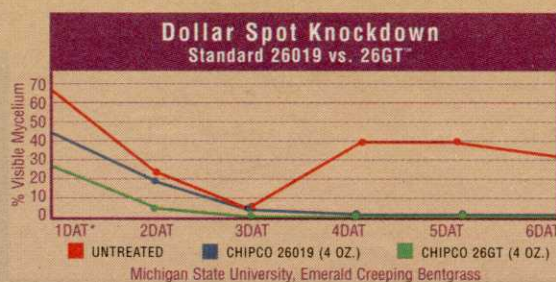
Two assistants and one student intern won the contest, and will be working at this year's

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National overseeding test planned

BELTSVILLE, Md. — The National Turfgrass Evaluation Program (NTEP), U.S. Golf Association (USGA) and Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) have agreed to cooperate on a trial to evaluate grasses for overseeding Bermudagrass fairways.

The trial will be established and evaluated on courses under actual fairway conditions. Similar to the on-site bentgrass and

Bermudagrass putting green trials now being performed at 16 sites across the United States, this trial will be limited to commercially available varieties, blends or mixtures and those very close to commercialization.

An advisory committee consisting of representatives from universities, the turfgrass seed in-

dustry, USGA, GCSAA and NTEP is discussing and refining the details of the project. Ten courses across the South will be chosen, based on their geographical location, proximity to a land-grant university turfgrass research program and willingness of the club and the superintendent to participate. Geographical areas under

consideration include Palm Springs, Calif.; Arizona; south Texas; Dallas; Mississippi or Alabama; central Florida; Myrtle Beach, S.C.; Virginia; Atlanta; and St. Louis, Mo.

Trials will be planted this fall and repeated in fall 2000. Each trial will be established and evaluated by a cooperating uni-

versity turfgrass scientist. The host club will maintain the test area in the same manner as the rest of its fairways.

Data will be collected on establishment rate, turfgrass quality, color, rate or speed of transition from Bermuda to overseeding grass in fall and from overseeding grass to Bermuda in spring.

Data will also be collected on damage from traffic, disease, insects, divoting, frost, etc.

Pinehurst #2 ready

Continued from previous page

U.S. Open. Toro is also a corporate partner and has provided back-up equipment for the staff to use as needed.

Kocher is among the top five superintendents/directors in the country in overseeing championships and tournaments. While working for ClubCorp the past 24 years, he has hosted seven Jackie Gleason Invitational Classics, one Honda Classic, one Tournament Players Championship, three PGA Club Pro's, one U.S. Women's Amateur, 14 each of Men's, Women's and Senior's North/South Amateur's, two Tour Championships in 1991-92, and the 1994 U.S. Senior Open Championship.

There will be a double festive celebration next year, at the turn of the century, when Kocher also celebrates his 25th anniversary with ClubCorp.

No. 2 staff, volunteers

Pinehurst Resort & Country Club Course No. 2 maintenance staff:

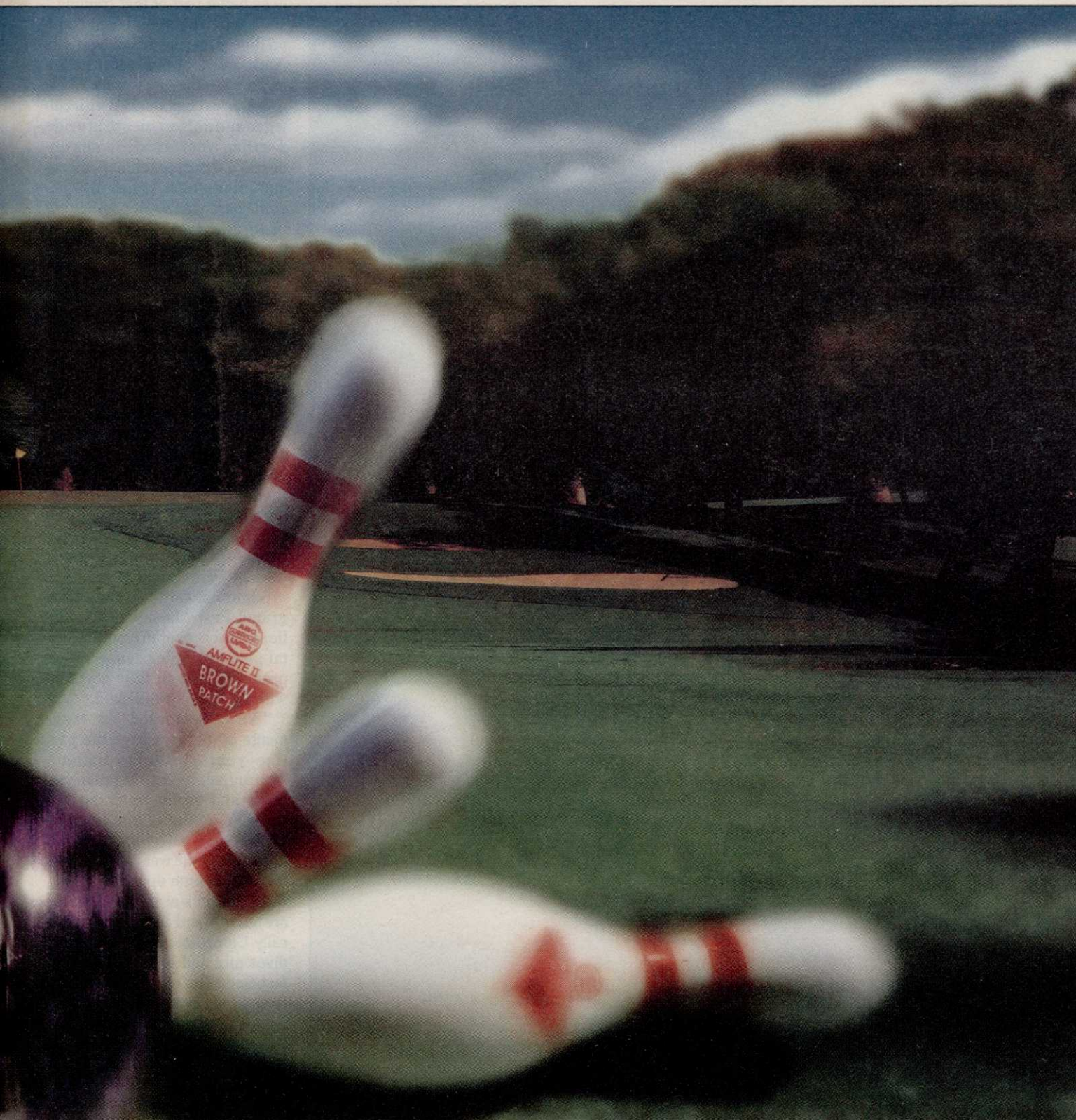
Mike Briggs, David Ashley, Bill VanDeren, Toby Lee, spray tech Steve Nagy, Steve Keenan, Matt Boyce, Joe Wilson, Scott Pollard, Gerald Lee, Carl McLeod, Leo Jones, Tim Cole, Ken Hopkins, Chuck Britt, Richard Allred, James Stephens, Floyd Marion, Anne Fountain, Jason Twigg, Steve Lassiter, Glenn Lassiter, foreman Rufus Cole, assistant/club grounds David Clem.

STUDENT INTERNS

Russ Hudson, VPI; Walter Thomas, North Carolina State; Geoff Sanders, West Texas State; Campbell Cox, Clemson; John Lowery, North Carolina State; Jason Bedenbough, Clemson; Steve Kolos, Texas A&M; Josh Quinn, Mississippi State; Bart Gregory, Mississippi; Justin Toal, Texas A&M; and international students Patrick Benneryd, Adam Lenfield, Cory Budden and John Scott.

VOLUNTEER PROFILE

Superintendents - 24
Certified superintendents - 6
Assistant superintendents - 11
General managers - 1
Industry representatives - 4
Agronomy professors - 2



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