

BRIEFS



WILLIAM DANIEL CENTER DEDICATED

WEST LAFAYETTE, Ind. — More than 200 Purdue alumni, friends of the Purdue Turf Program and Daniel family, and industry leaders attended the dedication of the Wm. H. Daniel Turfgrass Research and Diagnostic



Center on July 26. The center is a 22-acre research facility on the edge of Purdue University, adjacent to Kampen Golf Course.

It features research projects on many aspects of lawn, sports, and golf turf and a state-of-the-art educational facility complete with classrooms and labs. The Daniel Center is named in memory of Dr. Bill Daniel, long-time Purdue professor and one of the pioneers in the turf industry.

PA. TURF COUNCIL DONATES \$175K

COLLEGE STATION, Pa. — The Pennsylvania Turfgrass Council has allocated \$175,000 to support the turfgrass science program in Pennsylvania State University's College of Agricultural Sciences. The council designated its support for agronomy, entomology and plant pathology. The department could use the funds for staff and research support for projects designed to solve problems relating to turfgrass pests and other cultural practices used in the turfgrass industry.

NYSTA SHOW ITS 50TH

SYRACUSE, N.Y. — The New York State Turfgrass Association (NYSTA), in cooperation with Cornell University, will celebrate its 50th year at the annual Turf & Grounds Exposition, Nov. 9-11, at the OnCenter here. The conference theme is "Committed to Excellence: Plants, People, The Environment, and You." For more information, people may call NYSTA at 800-873-8873.



N.C. STUDENTS GET SCHOLARSHIPS

CHAPEL HILL, N.C. — Seven North Carolina turf students were awarded monetary scholarships from the Turfgrass Council of North Carolina for the 1999-00 school year. North Carolina State University recipients are James Herns, Casey Reynolds and Matt Fagerness. Catawba Valley Community College recipients are Jerrett Blanton and Brian Plummer. Other recipients are Sandhills Community College's John Clevenger and Brunswick Community College's David Bullard.



Under the charge of Rob Hellstrom, right, Dundarave Golf Club was finished in one season. See story on Dundarave on page 12.



Photo by Peter Blais

Hellstrom: A man for one season

By PETER BLAIS

MONTREAL — Building a golf course in a single season is almost unheard of in snow-packed areas like Canada, the Northeast and Midwest United States. But Robbie Hellstrom, a former superintendent turned golf course consultant, may be changing those expectations.

The Montreal-based, 34-year-old owner of RJH Golf Course Management Services Inc. has turned the single-season trick at two recently built Canadian courses — Le Diable in Mt. Tremblant, Quebec, and Dundarave

Former superintendent builds courses in matter of months

Golf Course and Academy at the Brudenell River Resort on Prince Edward Island (PEI).

"Now that we've done it twice, we may have started a trend that will have to be continued," Hellstrom said.

Hellstrom's firm handles everything from course construction to golf event management. He recently coordinated the Molson's Export A Skins Game featuring John Daly, Fred Couples,

David Duval and Mike Wier at Mt. Tremblant. In addition to building and maintaining the two courses at Mt. Tremblant, he was project manager at Dundarave, the new Michael Hurdzan/Dana Fry design on PEI that opened this summer. Sugarloaf Golf Club in Carrabassett Valley, Maine, also recently hired Hellstrom as course consultant.

Hellstrom started RJH Golf Course Management Services in 1996, while still working for Intrawest, a major North American ski resort operator, at

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Bugged? Try dragonflies

By MARK LESLIE

CASCO, Maine — Superintendent Gerry White had loaded Point Sebago Golf Club with bat and bluebird houses and a purple martin hotel to fight his



ON THE GREEN

insect problems. So what else could be done?

Ever hear of dragonflies? As naiads (nymphs) they prey on small aquatic invertebrates, while adults dine on midges, mosquitoes and other insects. The Audubon Society Field Guide to Insects and Spiders states: "Both naiads and adults are highly beneficial predators, destroying huge numbers of mosquitoes."



Gerry White places dragonfly naiads from a container into a pond at Point Sebago Golf Club.

Pursuing the idea planted by a golfer who observed the dragonflies naturally on his course, White set on a mission four years ago to enhance that population in the 10 ponds and various waterways of his 600-acre property. Play a round at Point Sebago today and golfers

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Digital mapping enters various course operations

By KEVIN P. CORBLEY

Unheard of on the golf course just a few years ago, digital mapping technologies are rapidly being integrated into virtually every aspect of course operations.

First, satellite-based GPS surveying was introduced to map irrigation system components, track golf car locations, and calculate yardage from player to pin. Now, superintendents are increasingly turning to another computerized map tool — known as GIS — to manage daily operations and course facilities.

Geographic information system, or GIS, technology has proven so successful at automating land and infrastructure management

FIRST OF 2 PARTS

functions in industries such as forestry, electric utilities and oil production that some firms are touting it as the future of golf course maintenance.

GroundLinkx LLC of Littleton, Colo., developer of the GroundLinkx GIS golf course management program, has formed a joint venture with IntraSearch Inc. of Denver, an aerial photography and digital mapping firm, to create fully integrated GIS software and digital map packages customized for individual golf courses. Packaged under the GroundLinkx name since 1994, the new integrated system also runs on a standard Pentium desktop computer.

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'Aerifier dolly' easily rolls around the shop

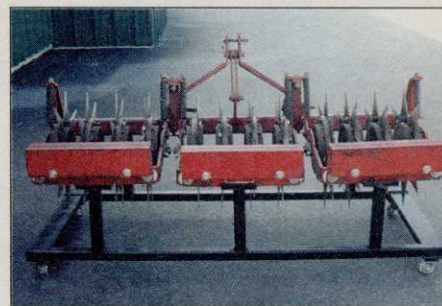
By TERRY BUCHEN

NAPLES, Fla. — Darren J. Davis, superintendent at the Olde Florida Golf Club, and equipment and shop manager Kim Ellis have designed and built an "aerifier dolly" to make their 3-point hitch-mounted aerifier much easier to move around the shop and make repairs, change aerifier tines, slicing blades, etc. without tying up tractor.



SHOP TALK

The frame and five-risers (two front;



Tractor implements can be installed on a three-point hitch easily with this mobile storage system.

three rear) are made of 2-by 2-inch by 1/4-inch square tubing. The 29-by 75-inch frame is lightweight, strong and versatile. The holder or bracket that

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Man for one season

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Mt. Tremblant. He opted to leave his position as director of golf operations with a staff of 105 at Tremblant (although he remains a consultant with Intrawest) and concentrate on his consulting business in 1997. RJH co-designed and constructed Vallee des Fort Golf Course, which opened on the south shore of Montreal in 1996. In 1997, RJH was hired as project manager at Dundarave.

While with Intrawest, Hellstrom oversaw construction of Hurdzan-Fry-designed Le Diable, which he built in a single season. He was able to duplicate that feat at Dundarave, another Hurdzan-Fry effort that took 117 days to build. According to Hellstrom, Dundarave and Le Diable are the two fastest-built courses in Canada.

"I dedicated almost 100 percent of my time to Dundarave from January 1998 to July 1999," Hellstrom said. "I'm real proud of what took place there."

The speed at which Le Diable and Dundarave were built was more a matter of circumstance than any sort of grand plan, Hellstrom said. It took Intrawest almost two years, a typical construction timetable, to build its first course at Mt. Tremblant, called Le Geant. At the time, Intrawest was adding hotel rooms faster than the amenities needed to handle the additional guests, Hellstrom said. Company officials asked him if it would be possible to build Le Diable in just six months to provide an additional amenity for its guests. With basically a five-month construction window (May 1-Sept. 30), the only way to establish grass that would be ready for play the following year was to plant seed by September, while the soil was still warm enough to support growth.

"We put the logistics together and laid out a critical path," Hellstrom remembered. "We went to the chiefs of the corporation and said, 'This is how it plays out. If it rains for three days when it's not supposed to, then there goes the schedule. How comfortable do you guys feel with investing based on this sort of a plan?' They asked me how I felt about it. I said it was a risk. But we decided it was something we could do. We got a contractor who had never built a course before, backed up by the general contractor who helped us with Le Geant. Everything fell into place. We started construction May 1 and on Oct. 11 I played 11 holes with the president of Coca-Cola Canada.

"That's why I was attractive to the developers in PEI. A lot of people thought it was a fluke, that we just got lucky and couldn't do it again. We put the critical path together at Dundarave, got a general contractor who never built a course

before, and I served as project manager for both the builder and developer. We got real lucky again with the weather. We seeded the last hole on the golf course by August 28 and the last holes on the academy on Sept. 17. I think this [building in a single season] will become more the standard because developers just don't want to tie up that much cash for that long without a cash flow."

In both cases, Hellstrom em-

ployed inexperienced course builders as general contractors. Was that helpful in getting the course built in a single season?

"There is a corporate thinking within the big contractors that their margins are built a certain way and if you build it in six months instead of 12, then it has to cost more," Hellstrom said. "But the ultimate question I ask is 'If I told you an inexperienced contractor had built this golf course, would

you have known?' That's the important element. If someone walks on your course and says 'What the heck is this?', then you've made a mistake. In both cases, we brought in shapers experienced in the business... There are advantages to hiring an inexperienced contractor, but there are disadvantages, too. You need someone who can work 20 hours a day and be in 50 places at one time."

The key to building a course

in such a short period is "that everyone understands their role," Hellstrom said. "Everyone, from the guy pushing the dirt, to the guy laying the pipe, to the guy shaping the course to the guy seeding it, understood how important it was for each guy to keep speed and keep pace with the guys in front of them."

FROM HOCKEY TO GOLF

Hellstrom never played golf
Continued on next page

SOME PROS EAGLE EVERY HOLE.



By PETER BLAIS

CARRABASSETT VALLEY, Maine — American Skiing Co. (ASC), operators of Sugarloaf Golf Course here, has hired Robbie Hellstrom as course consultant to ensure that course maintenance at the mountain resort is properly handled and to assist in developing long-range plans for the facility, which has been ranked the state's top layout for the past

Hellstrom takes Sugarloaf reins

dozen years.

Hellstrom first visited Sugarloaf last October. While pleased with its No. 1 ranking, ASC hired Hellstrom to take Sugarloaf "to the next level."

"The course is 15, 16 years old," Hellstrom said. "They asked me to focus on what they needed to do to improve the

course and change some of the operating formats they have now. It's a true mountain course built 15 years ago when many of today's efficiencies of construction were still non-existent.

"Because of its environment, there are some things that have become significant challenges, such as the bunkers. In a moun-

tain environment you get a lot of blow-out and debris, so we're looking at a program to revitalize all the bunkers. We're looking to asphalt all the cart paths. We did four holes this July.

"We'll continue to work on drainage. A lot of the cross drainage has grown in over the years... We'll do an extensive program of re-ditching those drainage areas and diverting the water

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Man for a season

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up to his late teens. He was a hockey player who was good enough to be drafted by the Montreal Canadiens in 1982. "I didn't think I would ever be good enough to play in the NHL," Hellstrom remembered. "So I decided to continue to go to school."

His father hoped he would follow in his footsteps and become an engineer. But Hellstrom preferred working outdoors and got a summer job with a landscaper while he attended college at Marionapolis near Montreal. He enjoyed landscaping and earned a certificate in horticulture from Marionapolis. He received a full scholarship from the University of Helsinki in Finland, where he had lived until his family moved to Canada when he was 12. After earning a bachelor's degree in business and an associate's degree in agronomy at Helsinki, he went to work for a water park development company north of Montreal, where he cared for the grounds and pump stations.

While at the water park, he met former NHLer Dickie Moore who owned nearby Arundel Golf & Country Club. Moore asked Hellstrom to become his assistant superintendent. Hellstrom had yet to ever swing a golf club, but took the job working under head superintendent "Buster" Cooke.

"He (Stuart) was the most incredible person I ever met and the most influential person in my career," Hellstrom said. "He was 75 years old and looked like 50. And he could out-work any 20-year-old out there... Sharing the expertise this guy had from 35 years in the business was just phenomenal. I learned more in two years with him than I did in six years of school before that."

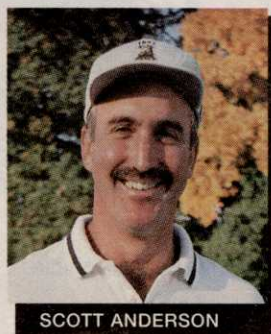
A gentleman named Houssain Soudavar was impressed with Arundel and hired Hellstrom to oversee construction of a new residential golf course he was building north of Montreal named Balmoral. "I hadn't done a full-blown course construction project to that point," Hellstrom said. "But we ended up getting the job done on time and on schedule."

Hellstrom stayed on as director of development once the course opened and became more involved with the other aspects of club operation as well — food and beverage, member services, pro shop.

Some officers from Intrawest played Balmoral in the summer of 1993 and approached Hellstrom later that year about helping develop golf at Mt. Tremblant. He was named to the board of directors in late 1993 and started overseeing development of Thomas Mc-Broom-designed Le Geant. He also worked on Intrawest properties at Mt. Stratton in Vermont and Gray Wolf in Panorama, B.C. ▶

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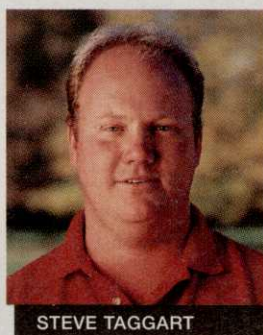
Here's what Golf Course Superintendent Scott Anderson of Huntingdon Valley Country Club in Huntingdon Valley, Pennsylvania, has to say about Eagle turf fungicide:



SCOTT ANDERSON

"As part of an IPM approach, occasionally we get caught with very active disease symptoms requiring quick action. This was the case on our newly opened third nine. Eagle did an outstanding job as part of our curative disease program – and it was not hard on the grass."

Adds Golf Course Superintendent Steve Taggart of Shawnee Inn and Golf Resort in Shawnee, Pennsylvania:



STEVE TAGGART

"It is important for us not to slow turf growth because we get a lot of play, about 300 rounds on an average day in June and July. To control summer patch on greens the past three years, we have applied Eagle three times at one-month intervals. Other fungicides can slow plants and stunt root development. We don't see that with Eagle. It has worked well."

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