



BRIEFS

PINEHURST PROMOTES KOCHER, FARREN

PINEHURST, N.C. — Brad Kocher has been named vice president of golf operations here at The Pinehurst Company, the resorts division of ClubCorp. Kocher has overseen course maintenance at Pinehurst's eight courses, including the prestigious No. 2 layout, since ClubCorp first purchased the facility in 1984. His expanded responsibilities also include long-term planning and oversight at: The Homestead in Hot Springs, Va.; Barton Creek in Austin, Texas; Daufuskie Island on Daufuskie Island, S.C.; and Palmilla in Los Cabos, Mexico. Bob Ferran Jr., assistant director of golf maintenance for the company since 1986, will take on Kocher's former position as the new director.

AUNGST NAMED SUPER AT STONERIDGE

PRESCOTT VALLEY, Ariz. — StoneRidge Golf Course, SunCor Golf's new 18-hole daily-fee club here, has named Cheryl Aungst as head superintendent. Aungst becomes Arizona's second female superintendent of a full-length facility. A zoology graduate of Northern Arizona University, and a member of GCSAA, she has more than 14 years' experience in course maintenance and management at some high-profile layouts, including Troon North Golf Club and Sedona Golf Resort, both in Arizona. StoneRidge's 7,005-yard track is carved in the heart of Prescott Valley's stone ridges and boulder outcroppings, providing some 350 feet of elevation change.

PSU AGRONOMY DEPARTMENT RENAMED

UNIVERSITY PARK, Pa. — The agronomy department at Penn State has updated its approach at student recruitment by becoming the department of crop and soil sciences. "We made the change for the sake of clarity," said A.J. Turgeon, professor of turfgrass management and interim department head, who said the move might attract more undergraduates. "Agronomy has always been about crop production and soil resources, but it's an older term that a lot of people don't often recognize," he said. "Our research and extension activities in production agriculture, environmental stewardship and land use policy won't change," said Turgeon.



Houston courses struggle to recover from monster storm

By JOEL JOYNER

HOUSTON — Randy Dayton could scarcely believe his eyes on Saturday morning, June 9, when he gazed upon the devastation wrought by Tropical Storm Allison. Much of his golf course was under water.

The Houston area got three feet of rain-fall from Allison before it moved northeast. Weather experts calculate that the storm dumped enough rain to supply the nation's water needs for an entire year.

Dayton was in his seventh week as superintendent at Northgate Country Club here when the monster storm struck. "We got hit Friday night," he said, "and by Saturday morning everything was flooded. We're not certain what our total rainfall was — our gauge overflowed."

Dayton's Northgate facility sits along Cypress Creek. "When I stand on the course and look down at this creek, it normally sits 30 feet below in a canyon,"

he said. "It's hard to believe it came up over the banks. The water rose so quickly."

Allison has now been pegged as the most costly tropical storm in U.S. history. At least 50 deaths are blamed on the



Receding waters left heavy silt deposits at Northgate Country Club.

tempest. Thousands of people have been left homeless. And federal disaster officials estimated damage at more than \$4 billion in Texas alone.

SIX FEET OF SILT

Allison skipped the tropical depression stage and went straight into a punishing tropical storm, with winds reaching 60

Continued on page 13

Maintenance firms: superintendents' friend or foe?

By JOEL JOYNER

CALABASAS, Calif. — Are maintenance companies big bad corporations that run roughshod over superintendents as they gobble up contracts? Or are they a relief to courses in need of professional care?

Surprisingly, the companies and superintendents tend to agree.

"Superintendents are our friends," said Terry McGuire, Environmental Golf's director of business development. "We're made up of superintendents. We're not the bad guys. We're not the management company by type-cast. We want to be the most superintendent-friendly company in the business."



Greg Plotner

RETAINING EXISTING STAFF

There are some 45 superintendents within the organization. "We hire on as many of the employees as possible with a newly contracted course," McGuire said. "We place them on probation for about 90 days. It provides an opportunity for them to get to know us and for us to get to know the employee."

Continued on page 10

Caddyshack III: Superintendents' 'Revenge Day'

By ANDREW OVERBECK

GUANGZHOU, China — Superintendent Keith Pegg here at Guangzhou Luh Golf and Country Club has come up with an ingenious method of getting course projects done without making them seem so disruptive to golfers.

"We call it Superintendent's Revenge Day," explained Pegg. "It is a day that the greens staff gets to have a little fun, and the golfers enjoy it also. We take advantage of these different scenarios in order to get project work done."



Keith Pegg

"For example, if I have a drainage project or work on a hole that will get in the way, I will move the tee markers up into the fairway and shorten the hole so people do not have to play in the construction area," he said.

Pegg uses the system practically but also has some fun with it. "Sometimes we'll just take all the tee markers on a hole and aim them into the woods," he said. "We do it one time each month and try to keep the golfers guessing."

CCA Int'l, which manages Luh, has embraced the idea and may use it at its other clubs in Asia and Europe.

Below are some of Pegg's favorite ploys, both practical and maddening:

- Have no hole and no pin on the green; have a sign reading "automatic two-putt."

Continued on page 12

Eagles dare at Colorado's Aspen Glen

By JOEL JOYNER

CARBONDALE, Colo. — The private Aspen Glen Golf Club, set in a spectacular Rocky Mountain region near Glenwood Springs, takes uncommon pride in its roosting bald eagles and two trout-spawning channels.

Now it's got the official credential to prove its environmental zeal — certification in the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary System. It's the 15th course in Colorado to win the coveted designation.

Every year, anywhere from one to three bald eagles visit Aspen Glen. The club, opened in 1997, has a "protection zone" around a nest that has been at the site since the 1940s.

"The eagles reside seasonally on this prominent 150-foot ponderosa pine that's adjacent to our 10th fairway," said superintendent Richard Eide. "Whenever an eagle is present, we shut down the hole."

'A 17-HOLE GOLF COURSE'

Play is limited by the birds' presence, but the nesting site is a bonus for the club. "We simply play as a 17-hole golf course when the eagle is around. Sometimes players will decide to play the first hole twice," said Eide. "But it's gone from a concern to, basically, a really big draw here."

The Aspen Glen bald eagles arrive in early November. The course closes for the season shortly thereafter. The eagles, recently upgraded from endangered to threatened, typically migrate in April, only two weeks after the course opened for play this season.

"We've seen as many as two eagles in the area more than once," said the superintendent. "There haven't been any fledglings at the nest yet, but there will be another whole set of rules to follow if they breed. We might have to shut the hole down for the entire season."

TWO-TON NEST

Aspen Glen started monitoring the nest in 1994, prior to course construction. The club hires a bird-watcher to observe the nest and document all eagle

Continued on page 12



Eagles nest in ponderosa pine next to the 10th fairway

Friend or foe?

Continued from page 8

There is an evaluation period in every contract written when the company wishes to employ the existing maintenance staff. "Some superintendents may not want to work for an outsourcing company," he said. "We also need that time to determine if we need to supplement the staff or, hopefully not, replace them."

"Typically, our agreements are to take over the total maintenance operations of a golf course," McGuire said. "That's everything from cutting the grass and planting the flowers to maintaining the equipment. We're aggressively marketing this year to set up as the superintendent-of-choice company."

OUTSOURCING GROWING

Only a small number of courses are maintained by outside companies, but the business is growing rapidly. International Golf Maintenance, already with 80 contracts, expects to hit 100 by the end of the year.

"There seems to be an acceptance of outsourcing in the golf course maintenance field," said Greg Plotner, vice president of Florida operations for IGM. "We're not the type of company that comes in and cuts salaries or replaces staff with lesser paid people just to meet the bottom line."

Newly recruited superintendents may expect certain procedures to be followed. "If there's a superintendent already at the course, and the owner is happy and we're happy with the course conditioning, then we want the employee to stay on at the club," Plotner said.

"If they can accept the concept of transition and working with a management company, then we'd give them some on-site training and review any programs they have in place," he added.

INCENTIVE PROGRAMS

IGM also provides other incentives to encourage company growth and superintendent recruitment. "We have an internship program as well as a management-trainee program that we're constantly developing," said Plotner. "We're always looking to recruit students from technical universities and turf schools."

IGM has recently secured agreements in Florida with the Sabal Point Country Club in Longwood, Winter Springs Golf Club in Winter Springs, the Pionciana Golf & Racquet Resort and the Boggy Creek Racquet Resort, near Orlando.

SERVISCAPE SYSTEM

ServiScape currently has nine contracts, with the Harborside International course in Chicago as one of their recent acquisitions. "We started off by meeting with the greens committee and board of directors," said Max

Barrick, vice president of marketing and sales. "They wanted to keep all their staff, so we hired them all and started rolling."

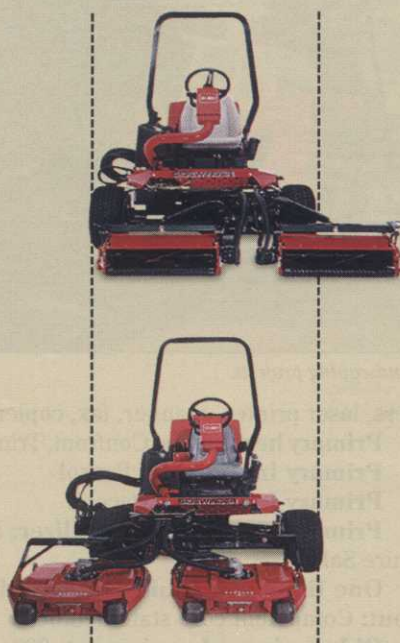
"That's the way we work," he said. "You want to hire the existing people, obviously training them in our system and methods. The existing staff already knows the idiosyncrasies of the property - where the hot spots are, what burns up first, and dis-



View of IGM-managed Pine Barrens Course at World Woods Golf Club

ease areas."

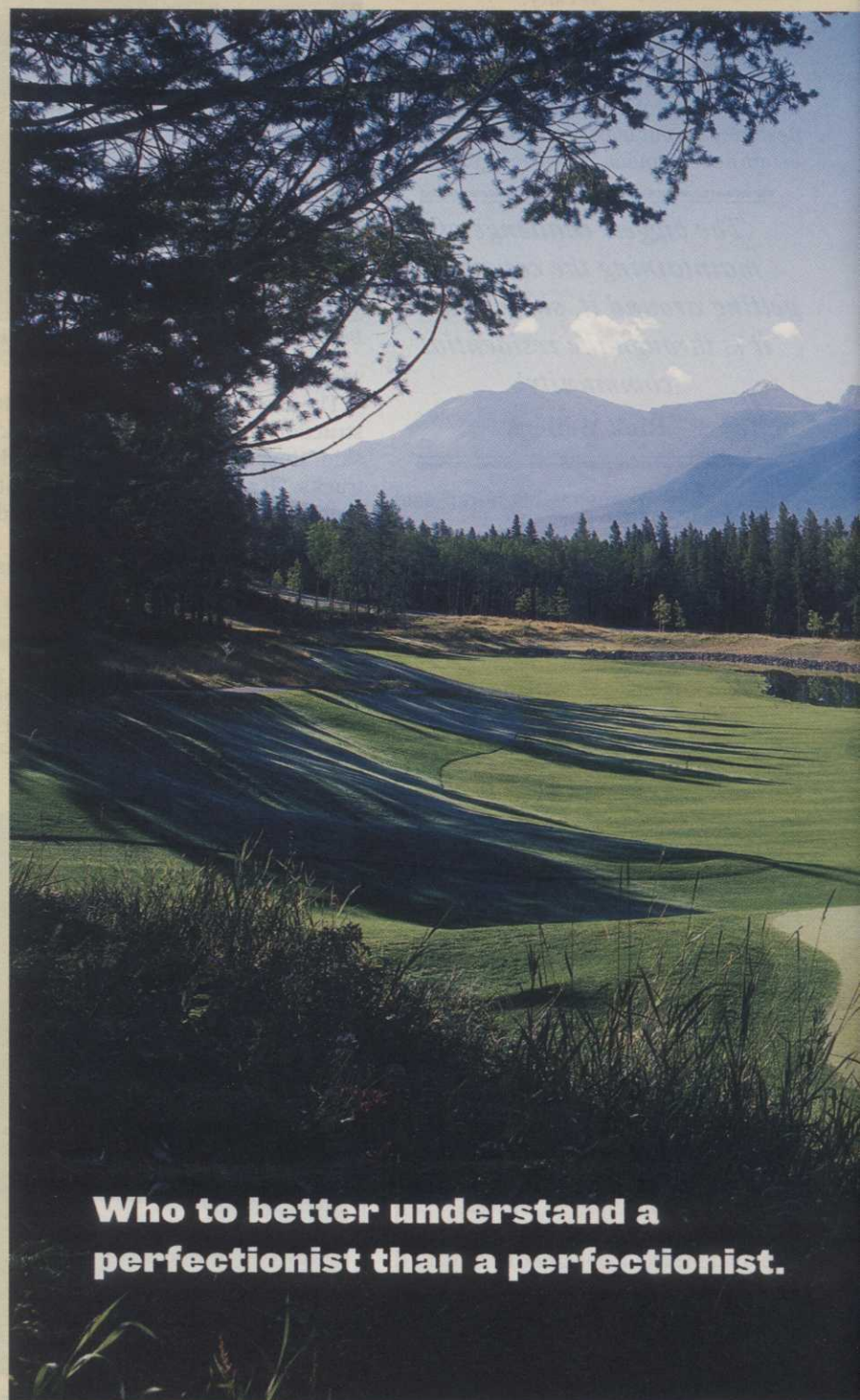
Team management plays an important role in continued growth. "We take new recruits through an orientation program detailing our methodology," Barrick said. "Then there's an ongoing training program where we bring our superintendents together on a monthly basis to discuss common problems and solutions." ■



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