



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 rainfall 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

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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."

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Caddyshack III: Superintendents' 'Revenge Day'

By ANDREW OVERBECK

GUANGZHOU, China — Superintendent Keith Pegg here at Guangzhou Luhu 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 Luhu, 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."

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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.



Eagles nest in ponderosa pine next to the 10th fairway

"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

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Eagles dare

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activity. Reports are evaluated each week by the town of Aspen Glen and the Colorado Division of Wildlife.

An eagle's nest can reach nine feet in diameter and weigh up to two tons. Disturbing a nest can lead to its abandonment. It's estimated that there are 50,000 bald eagles in the United States, mostly in Alaska. A bald eagle can live for 30 years and produce offspring every year after maturing at age four.

TROUT-SPAWNING CHANNEL

The second major project that helped the course earn Audubon certification was the creation of two trout-spawning channels on the property. The layout straddles the Roaring Fork River, with the front nine on the west side and the back nine on the east.

"We created these two huge channels from the river in order to create as much trout-spawning habitat as possible," Eide said.

Working with a wetlands consultant from Boulder, Colo., and the Colorado Division of Wildlife, Aspen Glen spent roughly \$100,000 on the channels as well

as a stabilization project involving 400 feet of river bank.

The larger of the two channels, extending a quarter-mile, lies adjacent to the river and the 18th fairway. The second channel runs beside the seventh green and the eighth tee complex.

"The tee on eight was redesigned several times in the field to best accommodate the spawning channel," said Eide. "Logs were also sunk deep into the channel bank to provide reinforcement."

CLUBCORP'S ROLE

Both projects have been big successes for Eide and the club. "Our maintenance

staff has shown a strong commitment to our environmental program here," said general manager Steven Held. "Their efforts were key to providing a successful sanctuary for wildlife on the property."

The facility is owned and operated by Dallas-based ClubCorp, a strong proponent of environmental responsibility.



Trout-spawning channel built at Aspen Glen

"Without their support, I wouldn't have been able to do anything," said Eide, a 17-year veteran of the company. "ClubCorp not only encourages involvement with Audubon International. They insist on it." ■

Revenge day

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- Play a par-3 or a par-4 50-percent shorter by moving tee markers into the fairway.
- If you have a weak green, give it some rest and don't mow it at all.
- Place pins on side hills, or a foot away from the edge of the green.
- If maintenance is needed on a hole, close it and give an "automatic par."
- Put in a cup with no pin, so golfers will have no idea where to aim shots.
- On the whole course, place all tee markers on the same tee to give other tees a rest. Mix it up so some holes play longer and others play shorter. ■

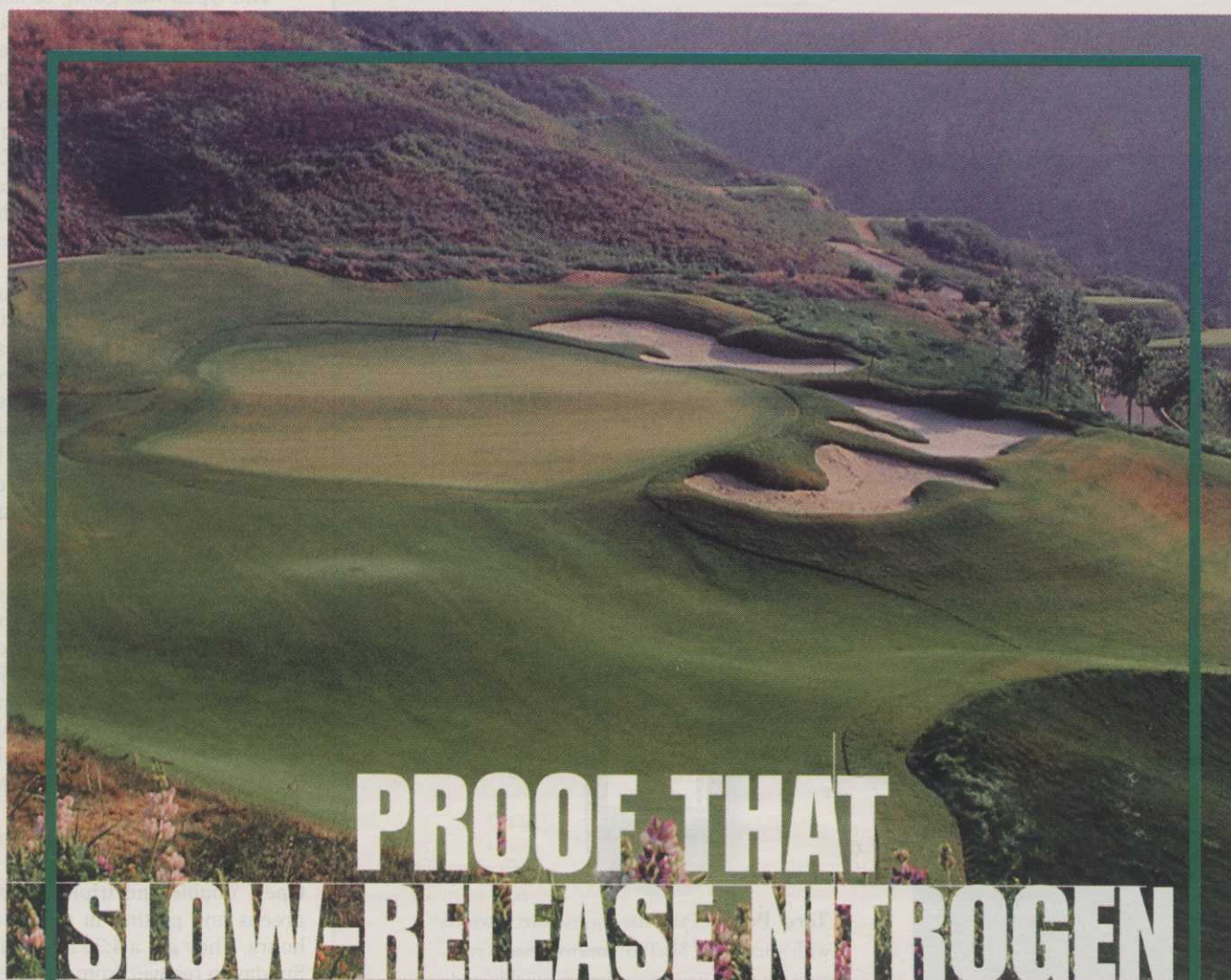
Softspikes brand 'wins' U.S. Open

TULSA, Okla. — Softspikes brand plastic cleats led the field at the U.S. Open, played here at Southern Hills Country Club in June.

In the field of 156 players, 79 wore Softspikes, including 75 opting for the company's popular Black Widow cleats.

Fifty-nine players sported metal spikes, and the remaining 16 wore plastic cleats on shoes by Champ, Nike, Adidas or Green Keepers.

This marked the third straight year that Softspikes brand cleats were preferred over metal spikes by U.S. Open contestants.



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