

Etchells takes Golfturf division independent from the Nicklaus Companies

TEQUESTA, Fla. — Ed Etchells, who ran the Golfturf division of the Nicklaus Companies, has taken the operation private and created his own agronomic consulting and turfgrass maintenance firm, Greens Management Co., LLC.

"This is an exciting opportunity for the team I have assembled, and for me, personally," said Etchells, who will serve as CEO and president of Greens Management. "I'm grateful for the many years I have been associated with Jack Nicklaus and Nicklaus Design, but this is an opportunity for me to grow something of my own."

The Golfturf division of Greens Management will become the preferred vendor of

Nicklaus Design and will assume all the current maintenance consulting contracts, but they also will market their services to other design firms and groups.

"We will actively engage other architects and expand our consulting role with other clubs, while still servicing Nicklaus Design clients throughout the world," explained Etchells. "We also will continue to service the European PGA Tour and keep other corporate marketing relationships intact."

Among those relationships to be contin-

ued is exclusive support of Nicklaus Designs partnership between Textron Golf, Turf & Specialty Products — a partnership which began in 1991 and will continue through at least 2005.

For the past 20 years, Etchells has been president of Golfturf, a division of Nicklaus Designs. He has consulted for more than 75 clubs worldwide. Joining Greens Management will be long-time agronomists David McIntosh and Ed Hodnett.

Greens Management specializes in de-

veloping and implementing grassing plans, irrigation plans, golf course improvement programs and pest management programs. The company's services include: planning and development; agronomy, construction and planting; maintenance and grow-in services; and golf course improvement.



Bay Hill

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to the soil right away. We were able to open the first nine holes for play in just three weeks," said Anderson.

"The greens are doing very well," he continued. "The ceramic soil amendment helps resist compaction and aids in retention of water and nutrients to keep the grass healthier. It seems to help grass respond quicker after stress, such as a wet spell or really dry conditions."



The old sod was shaved off and the top four to five inches of soil was dug out.

Using the Profile product isn't new for Bay Hill. They used the soil amendment six years ago when the nine-hole Charger Course was rebuilt. "It was still kind of a new concept, but we wanted something that kept the greens looking better," Anderson said. "We had used peat before, but that was about the extent of our experience with soil amendments. We decided to try the inorganic material."

While the sand/peat mix improves water and nutrient retention, chemical and physical changes that develop in the soil over time can cause new problems, including a build-up of "black layer" that inhibits water percolation and soil oxygen levels. Inorganic soil amendments do not break down over time, nor do they cause chemical changes in the soil make-up.

The product worked well enough that Bay Hill crews continue to use 10 percent Profile in their greens topdress mix after every aeration. "We incorporate it into all of our construction projects now, whether its tees, bunker faces, or new drainage ways," said Anderson.

While the initial investment was significant, Anderson believes it has paid off in the long run, by improving the root zone and the entire soil profile. "Analyzing both costs and benefits, it is our opinion that the product has paid for itself," he said. ■

Gary Burchfield is a freelance writer living in Lincoln, Neb.

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