

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Pollock staying on top of Eagle Run and Stone Creek courses

By ANDREW OVERBECK

OMAHA, Neb. — Richard Pollock, CGCS, came on board during the construction of Eagle Run Golf Club here in 1989 and has not stopped building since. In addition to Eagle Run, the superintendent oversees the 27-hole Stone Creek Golf Club and a new 270-acre lake project. Local real estate developer Horgan Development Co. owns all three properties.

Eagle Run is a nine-hole executive course and a nine-hole par-3 course built within a housing development. The course was developed jointly by owner Bob Horgan, architect Jeff Brauer and builder Bill Kubly.

"It was a matter of coming up with the lots that you needed to have to make the project profitable," said Pollock. "We sent the maps to the engineers, they laid out the housing and we built golf on what was left."

After nine years running that facility, Horgan came to Pollock with the plans for the Grant Wencel-designed Stone Creek.

"He handed me a set of plans and asked me if I thought I could build this," Pollock said. "I said yes and we started moving dirt in May of 1999."

Pollock acted as the general contractor and hired sub-contractors to complete the job. The course opened for play in 2000.



Richard Pollock

"I hired a shaper and an irrigation installer and we did a lot on our own," Pollock said. "It was my first shot out of the bag for construction management, and getting everyone to work together was the biggest challenge. If you don't keep everyone getting along, you don't move forward very well. It took a while because we had to put in 782 house lots."

The 596-acre project has more than 200 houses already and another 150 under construction. The golf course takes up 221 acres of the property.

"This is high-quality affordable golf," noted Pollock. "Everyone deserves a quality round and Grant [Wencel] went back and forth with our engineers to make sure the golf course would fit."

GOOD SUMMER, GOOD STAFF

Both courses have bluegrass and rye fairways and fescue and ryegrass roughs. Eagle Run features Pennncross greens and Stone Creek has L-93 greens. While a large part of the country battled drought damage, Pollock said the course benefited from the hot, dry conditions.

"Hot and dry conditions actually help," he said. "We have had a lot of wind, so I have sprayed fungicides on the greens only one time this year. We have plenty of water from three wells out here."

The two courses are two miles apart and Pollock has two assis-

tants who split time at each facility.

"I am over at Eagle Run at least two times a day," Pollock said. "They bought me a new truck a couple of years ago and I already have 60,000 miles on it."

Between the two courses, Pollock has seven full-time employees and his staff peaks in the summertime at 39. Pollock, who also fills the mechanic's shoes, attributes much of his success to maintaining a consistent staff.

"My average turnover is five to six years," he said. "I keep a blend of college kids and retired folks so I am never without staff that doesn't know anything."

Pollock attributes his low turnover rate to treating his employees like family.

"I treat them well because they take care of me," he said. "If they have a problem they can come to me and I help them solve it. I have a great team here."

MORE ON HIS PLATE?

In addition to thickening turf in the roughs and on lake banks and fixing wet areas that have settled out, Pollock has been busy supervising the construction of a lake at Horgan's Newport Landing.

"We built a recreational boating lake behind a dam," Pollock said. "I picked out the material for the sea wall, put in the pumping system and we are putting water in it now."

More projects could be on the way for the busy superintendent.

"Horgan is still building," he said. "There will be more to come."

POLLOCK'S TOOLS*

GREENS MOWERS:

4 Jacobsen Greens King IV

TEE MOWERS:

3 Jacobsen Greens King IV

FAIRWAY MOWERS:

2 Ransomes 250, 2 Jacobsen LF-100

ROUGH MOWERS:

1 Jacobsen 9016, 1 Jacobsen 5111, 1 Jacobsen 528

RIDING BUNKER RAKE:

3 Cushman Groom Masters

IRRIGATION SYSTEM:

Toro Osmac

GOLF CAR FLEET:

110 Club Car gas

FLAGSTICKS:

Par Aide

COMPUTER & ACCESSORIES:

1 Gateway

PRIMARY HERBICIDE:

Drive

PRIMARY INSECTICIDE:

Merit



The sixth hole at Stone Creek Golf Club in Omaha, Neb.

TURF UTILITY VEHICLES:

4 Cushman 658 Trucksters, 8 E-Z-GO Workhorses, 2 Kawasaki Mules

VERTI-CUT REELS:

Jacobsen

AERIFIERS:

3 Ryan GA-30, 1 Ryan GA-60

TOPDRESSERS:

2 Cushman TD-1500, 1 Turfco SP 1530

GROOMING REELS:

Jacobsen

TOURNAMENT SPEED ROLLER:

Jacobsen

IRRIGATION PUMP STATION:

Flowtronex, 3,100 gpm

PRIMARY FUNGICIDE:

Banner Maxx

PRIMARY SLOW-RELEASE FERTILIZER:

SCU

PRIMARY WETTING AGENT:

Canteen

CANNOT LIVE WITHOUT:

Mustang 2070 skid loader

TOTAL SQUARE FOOTAGE OF MAINTENANCE BUILDING:

11,200 sq. ft.

ANNUAL ROUNDS OF GOLF:

50,000

NORMAL GREEN SPEED:

8.5' - 9'

* Equipment listed is for Stone Creek GC only

Editorial Focus: Winter Preparation

California courses take different overseeding approaches

By ANDREW OVERBECK

PALM DESERT, Calif. — As golf courses up north shut down for winter, courses in the Sun Belt are gearing up for more play by overseeding their soon-to-be dormant bermudagrass turf.

While every course that overseeds does so to provide green turf for winter play, approaches and techniques are different depending on locations and microclimates. Nowhere is this fact more evident than in Southern California.

Mike Kocour, superintendent at The Springs Club in Palm Desert, Calif., takes a more aggressive approach to overseeding than do the courses closer to the coast.

"We verticut it and scalp it with flail mowers to get the ryegrass seed down in there," said Kocour.

Taking this approach in such a dry area creates dust problems, so Kocour makes sure to water lightly to stay within the state's PM 10 air pollution regulations.

"We have found that a little bit of



A flail unit scalps the fairway at The Springs Club in preparation for overseeding.

watering before sweeping and before mowing and dethatching reduces PM 10 issues by 99 percent," he said.

Kocour will close the course for the entire month of October this year. He starts the process in mid-September by shocking the bermudagrass into dormancy. The course will re-open Nov. 5 with a mixture of Palmer, Prelude and Paragon perennial ryegrass in the fairways.

KEEPING UP WITH THE COMPETITION

Like an increasing number of inland courses, superintendent Kent Davidson at Industry Hills Golf Course in La Puente joined the overseeding ranks last year. Previously the course had only overseeded its tees and allowed its bermudagrass fairways to go dormant. The change was made to increase revenues in the winter season.

"With thin and muddy conditions January through March, we

decided to make the change and last year was very successful," said Davidson. "The cost of the labor, seed and time was offset by increased play and the satisfaction of our existing players. It is a competitive thing, you have to follow suit if the course down the street is doing it." Davidson estimated that 50 percent of the courses in his area are currently overseeding.

With two courses, Industry Hills has an advantage over other layouts because it can close one down while working on the other.

"We do one course in late September and the other course in mid-October," said Davidson. "The key for us was to minimize our turf renovation. We did just enough to get a good seed bed and get good germination. But we didn't do so much that we damaged the bermudagrass to the point where it won't recover the following year."

OUT ON THE PACIFIC COAST

Courses on the Pacific Coast face a similar situation. With daytime temps in the mid-60s most of the year, bermudagrass at Pelican Hill Golf Club in Newport Coast never really gets that strong. As a result, superintendent Steve Thomas treats

it lightly during overseeding.

"We don't get as aggressive as they get in the desert, because if we do it affects our spring transition. We don't want to knock it out," he said. "We scalp it lightly and cut the water back and put on plant growth regulators before we put the ryegrass seed out."

Thomas' main concern this year is lack of precipitation. Since he has clay soils that don't drain well and he irrigates with effluent, salts build up quickly.

"We are coming off the driest year in California history and we need rain to flush our soils because the salt levels in these soils are off the charts," he said. "I am contracting a company to come out and spread gypsum wall-to-wall, which is the best thing we can do right now."

Thomas also has two courses to help in the overseeding process. He closes the South course in September and the North course at the end of October. Each course is closed for two weeks, and then golf cars are restricted to paths for a month. Once the South course is back to normal, he gets to work on the North course.