

BY JOHN WALSH

## The little things count, too

An accessory upgrade is part of an overall course improvement project in Nebraska

Prairie Hills Golf Course in Pleasanton, Neb., had seen better days. The condition of the course has declined during the past few years, but Nick Erdman, co-superintendent at the public 18-hole course, and his family are changing that. They're improving the course in many ways, including upgrading accessories.

The course hadn't been run correctly, Erdman says, adding it had several owners during the past five years. Erdman and his in-laws, who live in the area, bought the course in June 2007 from the previous individual owner, who also managed the course.

"The course was in pretty bad shape," he says. "We're putting a lot of money into it. Although new sprinkler heads were installed by the previous owner, we put money into every aspect – equipment, fertilizer, irrigation, cups and the two-level, 5,000-square-foot clubhouse. We spent \$5,000 on accessories, including flagsticks, tee markers, fairway markers and cup cutters."

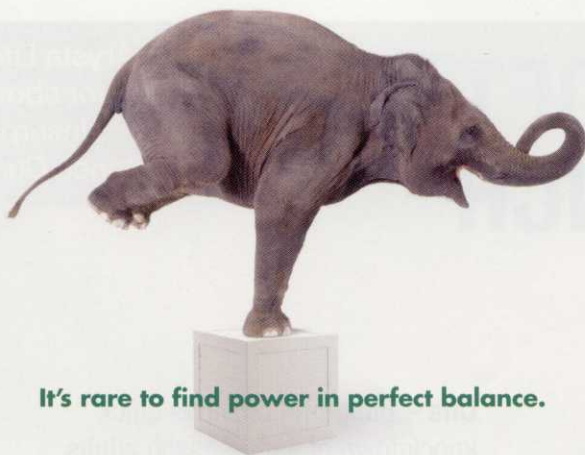
All of the new accessories were purchased at the same time last year.

Going forward, Erdman budgeted \$2,500 a year for accessories.



Nick Erdman spent \$5,000 on accessories as part of an overall improvement project at Prairie Hills Golf Course. Photos: Nick Erdman





**It's rare to find power in perfect balance.**

**Quincept** With its ideal ratio of active ingredients, new Quincept has more than enough power and flexibility to control crabgrass and other tough grasses, as well as over 200 broadleaf weeds. Get Quincept in the 64-oz. squeeze and measure jug, or the "no-glug" 2½ gallon size.

For more information, contact a Nufarm representative or your local distributor today.

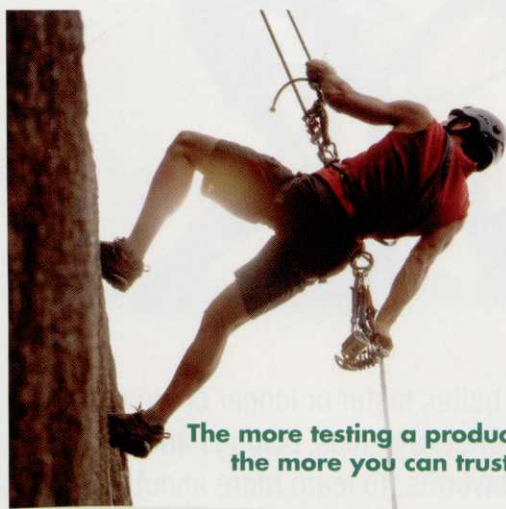
**800-345-3330** [www.nufarm.com/usto](http://www.nufarm.com/usto)

™ Quincept and The Formulation Innovators are trademarks of Nufarm Americas Inc. Always read and follow complete label instructions.

**Value with a difference.**



[www.golfcourseindustry.com/readerservice](http://www.golfcourseindustry.com/readerservice) - #60



**The more testing a product gets,  
the more you can trust it.**

**Mallet 2F** stands tall against even the best-known imidacloprid insecticide. Tested extensively and proven in the real world, Mallet 2F works on contact and ingestion to control white grubs and other key pests. For the results you expect, get Mallet 2F.

For more information, contact a Nufarm representative or your local distributor today.

**800-345-3330** [www.nufarm.com/usto](http://www.nufarm.com/usto)

™ Mallet is a trademark of Nufarm Americas Inc. Always read and follow complete label instructions.

**Value with a difference.**



[www.golfcourseindustry.com/readerservice](http://www.golfcourseindustry.com/readerservice) - #61

## ACCESSORIES

This spring, he's looking to purchase and install granite hole markers as part of the course improvement.

Erdman and family chose to purchase their golf course accessories from Standard Golf, after they compared prices and products in several catalogs from different companies that offer accessories.

"We're happy with the products," he says. "We spent a little more, but we know they'll last."

Erdman likes Standard Golf's local service, too. He works with the distributor Van Wall Turf & Irrigation in Omaha.

Accessories are important to Erdman because he wants Prairie Hills to look nice. He wants to provide a quality product for golfers through his high standards. For example, customers can tell the quality of a flagstick when they pull it out of the hole, he says.

Erdman plans to upgrade other accessories as part of the overall improvement of the course. He intends to purchase new ball washers in the next year or two and improve the water stations by building a platform on which the water container can sit. Erdman also plans to



At Prairie Hills Golf Course, Nick Erdman plans to upgrade the ball washers and water stations, as well as purchase more directional signs, hazard markers and out-of-bounds markers. Photos: Nick Erdman





buy a few more directional signs, hazard markers and out-of-bounds markers. There are some markers on the course, but he wants to upgrade them and purchase more.

Prairie Hills' customers comment on the quality of the accessories and link that to the overall improvement of the course. Word of mouth about the course improvement is spreading, Erdman says.

Currently, there are 75 members of the public course, a significant decline from the 400 who were members 10 year ago. Erdman's goal is to increase membership to between 250 and 300 people.

"We should attain that pretty easily in two years," he says.

Right now, Erdman and staff are planning for the 2008 season. They'll make purchases in late February and early March for all aspects of the course.

"We want everything in place before we head outside for the season," he says.

Erdman's father-in-law and mother-in-law, who had never lived in Pleasanton, moved there from Wyoming to help manage the course. Erdman and his family have no previous golf course maintenance experience, however, he says they all golf and grew up on a farm. Farming has similarities to golf course maintenance, he says. Erdman and his family rely on one of the course's young maintenance workers whose grandfather built the golf course in the early 1980s.

"We lean on him at times," Erdman says. "We also look at other golf courses. We know what looks nice."

It will take another year to get where Erdman and his family want the course to be conditionwise.

"It will never be perfect," he says.

Last year the course generated 6,000 rounds from June through December. The goal is to get to 15,000 rounds annually.

"We're trying to be realistic," Erdman says. GCI



**ProDeuce saves you both.**



**ProDeuce**

Spend less time and money on weed control with the pre- and post-emergent power of ProDeuce. Prodimine and glyphosate combine to eliminate weeds in cracks, crevices, tree rings, mulched beds, foundations and gravel areas. This season, take advantage of the double impact of ProDeuce.

For more information, contact a Nufarm representative or your local distributor today.

**800-345-3330** [www.nufarm.com/usto](http://www.nufarm.com/usto)

\*ProDeuce is a trademark of Nufarm Americas Inc. Always read and follow complete label instructions.

**Value with a difference.**



[www.golfcourseindustry.com/readerservice](http://www.golfcourseindustry.com/readerservice) - #62



**RAZOR BURN**

With the complete control of glyphosate and the quick burndown of diquat, Razor Burn delivers visible results in 24 to 48 hours. So you'll eliminate weeds as fast as you'll eliminate complaints about slow progress. For fast-acting broad spectrum control, Razor Burn is a cut above.

For more information, contact a Nufarm representative or your local distributor today.

**800-345-3330** [www.nufarm.com/usto](http://www.nufarm.com/usto)

\*Razor Burn is a trademark of Nufarm Americas Inc. Always read and follow complete label instructions.

**Value with a difference.**



[www.golfcourseindustry.com/readerservice](http://www.golfcourseindustry.com/readerservice) - #63



## ACCESSORIES

BY JOHN WALSH

## A small but important aspect

Quality accessories reflect the overall operation of a golf course in Minnesota

For Paul Diegnau, CGCS, it's the little things that separate a golf operation from the competition. Little things such as accessories: flags, sticks, cups, tee markers, bunker rakes, ball-mark repair tools, yardage markers, hazard stakes, ball washers, etc.

Diegnau, superintendent at the public 18-hole Keller Golf Course in Maplewood, Minn., views accessories as an important aspect of a golf course.

"If you have poor-quality accessories, it's a reflection on your operation, and golfers notice those things," he says. "They say things like, 'Oh, you got new flagsticks."

They look nice.'"

The parkland-style Keller Golf Course, which opened in 1929, is county owned and was renovated last in 1990. Another large-scale renovation might occur in the near future.

During the season, Diegnau's staff consists of about 15 workers, varying by a couple people each season. His assistant, the mechanic and two foremen are union employees for the county, but Diegnau, who isn't a union employee, and the mechanic are the only full-time employees of the course. The two foremen and the assistant work at ice rinks during the winter.

Because the course is a municipality, the budget is somewhat different than other golf

course operations. Diegnau, who has been at Keller for the past 12 years as superintendent, has a \$540,000 maintenance budget, which has been flat the past several years except for wages. Diegnau has no specific line item for accessories, but spends between \$1,500 and \$2,000 on them annually. Accessories include: flags, sticks, cups, tee markers, bunker rakes, ball-mark repair tools, ball washers, yardage markers, traffic control signage/markers and hazard stakes.

"We always have fresh flags every year," he says. "We also paint the flagsticks every year, unless they're too beat up, in which case we replace them."



At Keller Golf Course, Paul Diegnau, CGCS, spends between \$1,500 and \$2,000 on accessories annually. Photo: Keller Golf Course



## ACCESSORIES

Accessories need to be durable to withstand the rigors of golfers' behavior. The paint on the Par Aide satellite tee markers, which are composed of plastic resin, are taking a beating because golfers at Keller are hitting them with their clubs, Diegnau says. Keller's clientele is a blue-collar crowd with a large percentage of single-digit handicappers with high expectations. Diegnau refurbishes these markers every year, but within several months, they're beat up.

Theft also plays a part into the type of accessories Diegnau purchases. He uses checkered flags on the course without the course's logo on them.

"We're in a suburban setting, and if we put a logo on things, they tend to disappear," he says.

Diegnau purchases as many accessories as he can from Minnesota-based Par Aide partly because he believes the company has high-quality products. He has also purchased accessories from Standard Golf and other companies who send him various product catalogs.

"I used to purchase flagsticks and bunker rakes from Standard Golf but have now switched to Par Aide because I like supporting local companies," he says.

Diegnau prefers bunker rakes with fiberglass handles. He used to have a difficult time keeping the rakes looking nice after they sat in the sun all summer, so he put heat-shrink plastic covers on all the rake handles.

"Throw some Armor All on the heads, and they look new," he says.

Generally, Diegnau purchases all accessories in February or early March before the season starts and as needed during the season. When it comes to flags and flagsticks, he purchases enough to replace those that are stolen or broken. Sometimes golfers and/or vandals throw the tee markers into the woods and ponds, so he keeps extras on hand in case that happens.

Diegnau also uses HIO cup cutters, which are hammered into the ground, not twisted,

so it's easier for smaller, lighter people to push into the ground.

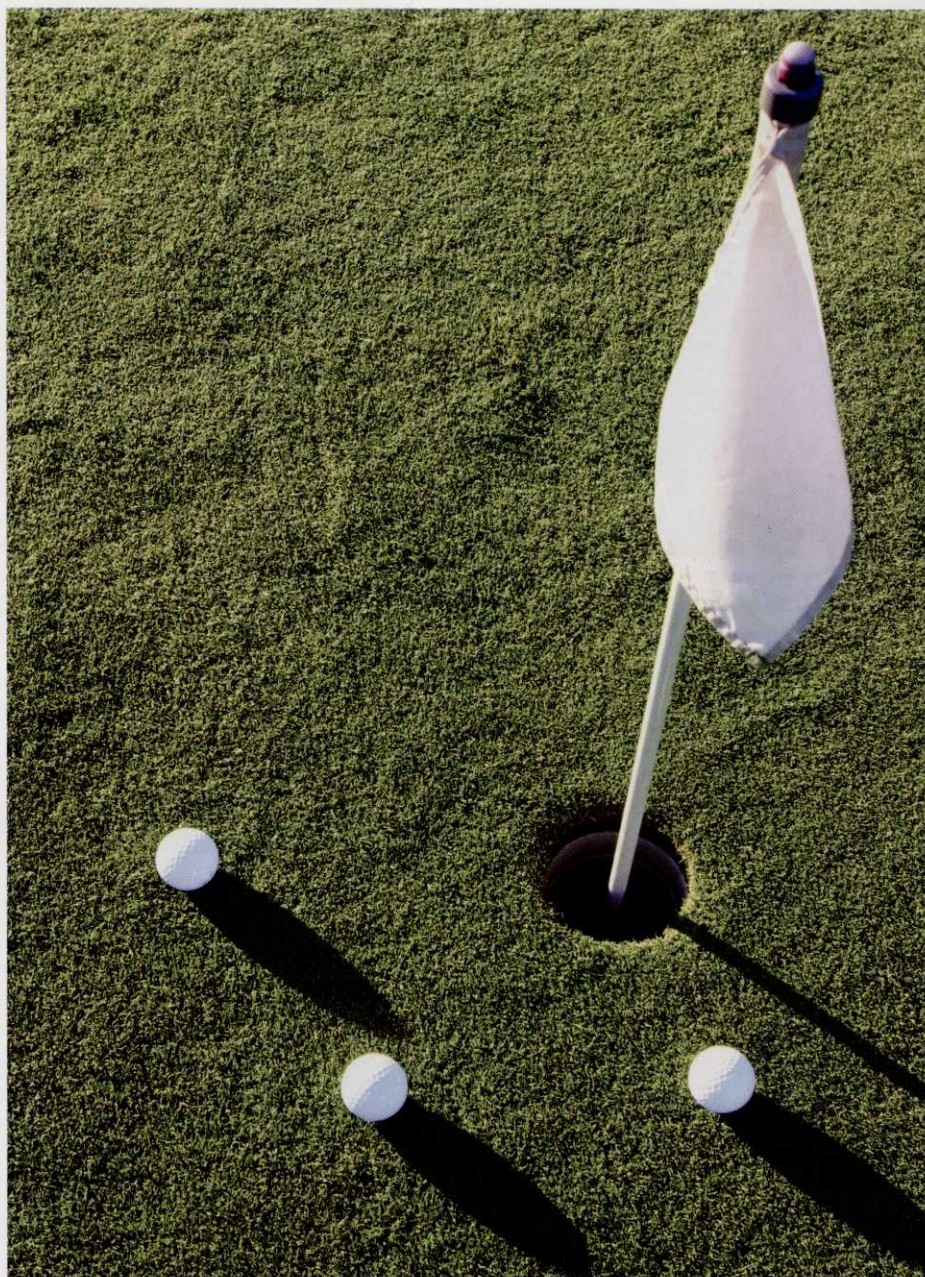
Yet, there's one accessory that eludes Diegnau: the perfect ball-mark repair tool. Currently, he's using a product called the Klaw from Eagle One Golf Products, but it wears out quickly and is expensive to rebuild.

"I've tried most versions on the market and have yet to find the perfect one," he says. "Par Aide has a new one, but we haven't bought it yet. I'm looking for something that lasts a bit

longer and doesn't need to be repaired as often. More importantly, it has to do a good job of repairing ball marks on the green. Some of them don't even do a good job of that."

One of the jobs of the cup cutters at Keller is to repair ball marks.

"If the repair tool is three- or four-feet long, they're more likely to repair more ball marks because they don't have to bend over," Diegnau says. "I'm always trying to minimize ball marks." **GCI**



Accessories are an important aspect of a golf course and are a reflection of how one is operated, says Paul Diegnau, CGCS, at Keller Golf Course in Minnesota.