

Annandale's OVERHAUL

Billy bunkers and hybrid bluegrass highlight
the refurbishment of the old California course

BY PETER BLAIS

Great comedic actors such as Jim Carrey occasionally leave their comfort zone and try a love story. Best-selling authors such as John Grisham sometimes venture from the mystery novel to pen a work of nonfiction. The same can be said for golf course architects. So one shouldn't be surprised when an East Coast architect such as Brian Silva spreads his wings and flies west.

Architect Brian Silva recreated the distinct edging on the Billy bunkers, saying it was an important step to complete the traditional look and play characteristics of the course. Photo: Tommy Naccarato



AT A GLANCE Annandale Golf Club

Web site: www.annandalegolf.com
Location: Pasadena, Calif.
Type of project: Reconstruction
Cost: \$7.9 million
Construction started: January 2007
Course reopened: November 2007
Architect: Brian Silva
Builder: Landscapes Unlimited
Golf course superintendent: Ed Kutt
Project superintendent: Rob Christie

Years ago, a nearby freeway crowded some holes and shortened others, leaving an awkward configuration of five par-3s. Photo: Annandale Golf Club

aging course variety and leaving Annandale with the somewhat awkward configuration of five par-3s. It was these and several other wrinkles Silva planned to iron out.

Golf course superintendent Ed Kutt and project superintendent Rob Christie of Landscapes Unlimited thought Silva did an excellent job working within the existing routing while dramatically improving shot values.

"Players have a lot more options now when attacking pins while dealing with the occasional false front," Kutt says. "The course is a lot more challenging yet still very playable."

COMPREHENSIVE OVERHAUL

Working with Kutt, Christie and several Annandale grounds committee members, Silva directed a comprehensive overhaul of the course. The team:

- Redesigned then rebuilt all 18 greens.
- Restored 75 bunkers in Bell's style, then added a dozen more in that same style.
- Regrassed the fairways with Bermudagrass.
- Sodded 47 acres of rough area with a new strain of bluegrass.
- Added tee complexes.
- Created a short-game practice area.
- Installed an updated irrigation system.
- Regraded and equipped every fairway with extensive new drainage capabilities.

Construction started Jan. 2, 2007, and culminated with the course reopening Nov. 2, exactly 10 months later. Everything went pretty smoothly from a construction standpoint, Christie says.

"We enjoyed a dry winter, which was fortunate because the previous year we had a record amount of rain," he says. "We took a road re-

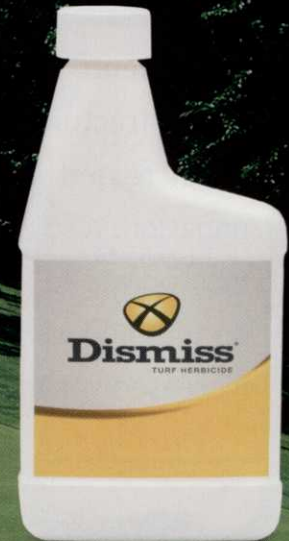
The New Hampshire-based renovator of classic designs such as Donald Ross's Seminole Golf Club in North Palm Beach, Fla., and Seth Raynor's Country Club of Charleston (S.C.), recently completed his first West Coast project, a \$7.9-million refurbishment of Annandale Golf Club in Pasadena, Calif.

"For about seven months during 2007, I was here every week," Silva says. "But the Annandale project was special because it was my first job on the West Coast. My 'one visit per week' mantra was all the more appropriate."

Founded in 1906, Annandale, one of the oldest clubs on the West Coast, is a Willie Watson design where George Thomas collaborator Billy Bell served as caddymaster before putting his own stamp on the course in the 1920s. Bell's role at Annandale illustrates the extent of his influence in West Coast design circles for 50 years. In 1918, Colorado Boulevard (where the Rose Parade begins) was extended, splitting the original Annandale routing in two. Eventually, the club moved its course entirely to the north side of Colorado.

It was then, in the mid-1920s, Bell redesigned the bunkers and built the "canyon holes" – 14, 15 and 16 – to account for holes lost in the move. Forty years later, erection of a nearby freeway crowded some holes and shortened others, dam-

The best short game on sedges.



Trust Dismiss® turf herbicide for fast, reliable results on yellow and purple nutsedge and green kyllinga. Dismiss works on contact for fast visible results above ground. Dismiss is translocated below ground, where it is absorbed by nutsedge tubers, preventing new sedge growth and providing long-lasting control.

For more information visit
www.fmcprosolutions.com.

Dismiss. Results Without the Wait.

Always read and follow label directions. FMC and Dismiss are trademarks of FMC Corporation. © 2008 FMC Corporation. All rights reserved. FSP-077301 03/08NK


Dismiss
 TURF HERBICIDE

MULTI-TINE AERA-VATOR

“The MULTI-TINE AERA-VATOR is great for overseeding tees, fairways, and localized dry spots. The patented vibrating action fractures the soil for increased seed germination. Also used to incorporate top dressing on tees and fairways for increased versatility.”



164 Oakridge Rd.
Tifton, GA 31794

Wats: 1.800.363.8780

Phone: 229.382.4768

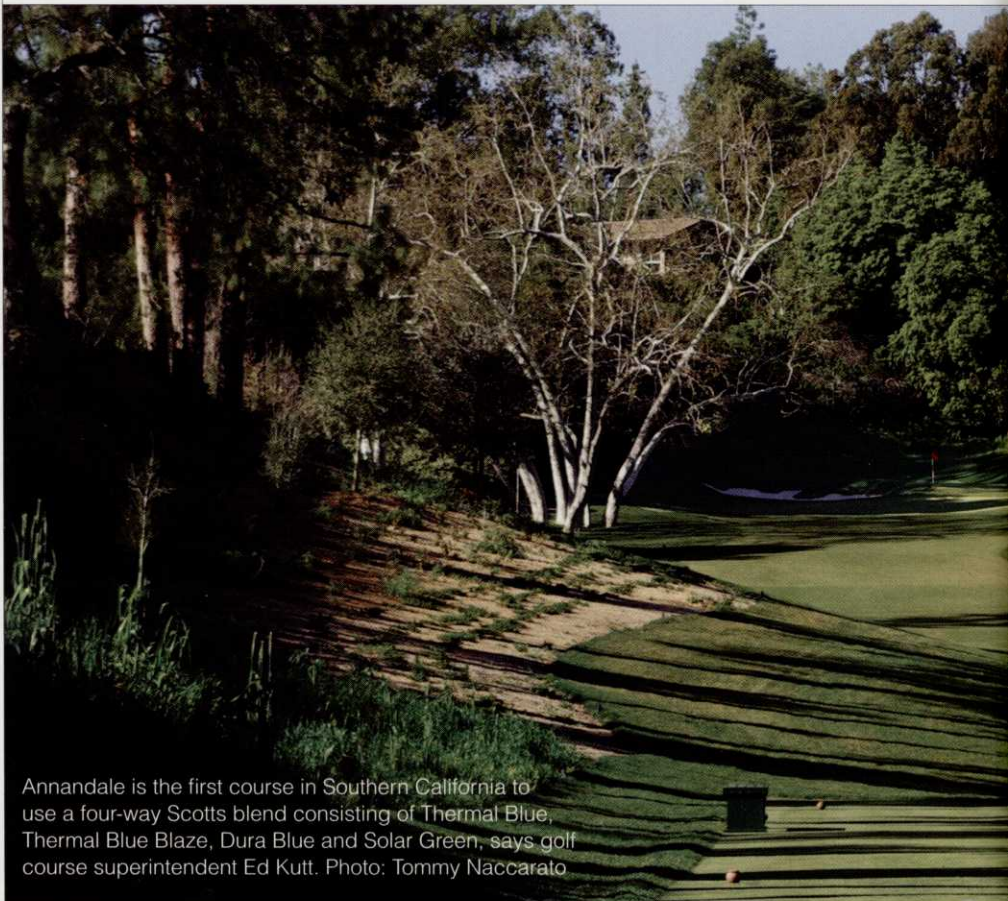
Fax: 229.382.0506

email: sales@1stproducts.com

www.1stproducts.com

www.golfcourseindustry.com/readerservice - #42

COURSE CONSTRUCTION



Annandale is the first course in Southern California to use a four-way Scotts blend consisting of Thermal Blue, Thermal Blue Blaze, Dura Blue and Solar Green, says golf course superintendent Ed Kutt. Photo: Tommy Naccarato

claimer, sort of a giant rototiller, sprayed Round-up all over the course and rototilled everything. It was a little unsettling not knowing exactly what we would come up with 12 to 14 inches down, but there were no major surprises.”

Some areas are steep, such as the tees on No. 16 that sit atop a hill, but there were no environmental constraints. Although homes are nearby, most sit far back in the hills. There are only a few houses close to the course, which meant the team couldn't start construction before 7 a.m. But that didn't present any considerable problems, Christie says.

To address the five par-3s configuration, Silva transformed one par-3, the 17th, into a drivable par-4 and converted the 470-yard sixth hole from a short par-5 to a demanding par-4. His alterations were well received.

“That's my favorite, No. 6, where the new green complex has no bunkering at all,” says Mark Sarkisian, a longtime member of the grounds committee at Annandale. “It's surrounded by tight chipping areas a la Pinehurst and Augusta National.”

BILLY BUNKERS

Architecturally, one of Silva's major themes was

evoking the Billy Bell feel with the bunkering without any specific restorative goals on the greens.

“The reason behind this was simple: We had period photography showing the distinct bunker style,” Silva says. “That's what was restored in the existing bunkering and mimicked on the new bunkers.”

Recreating the distinct edging on the Bell bunkers was an important final step to complete the traditional look and play characteristics. Being on site once a week was critical to the finished product.

“I got two or three cracks at every single bunker with the paint gun, when they were initially roughed in, then again in the dirt before they sodded the edges, then one last time – a touch here and there – before the sodding took hold,” Silva says.

While Silva dove into the Bell tradition, Kutt and Christie immersed themselves in the technical aspects of bunker construction. The hazards were a style known as Billy Bunkers, not named after Bell but after former Augusta National superintendent Billy Fuller. The bunkers consisted of drainage, topped with a 2-inch gravel layer and a layer of geotextile with sand over the top.



All the bunkers were done that way.

“It helps reduce washouts,” Kutt says. “We’re in a canyon and get a little more rain than surrounding areas during the rainy season. That led to occasional problems with washouts and contamination. Billy Bunkers might be overkill in a normally dry area like this, but they work well.”

HYBRID BLUEGRASS

Silva and Kutt also worked closely on another of the project’s key creative aspects – the sodding of a hybrid bluegrass in 47 acres of rough area. This turf choice was an unusual one for the West Coast, but this particular strain was bred to survive hot summers, and its visual contrast with Bermudagrass provides definition of the fairways and greenside features.

“People are drawn to the bunker work and the angles Brian created coming into these new greens, but it’s amazing how the definition helps you see the line of play,” Sarkisian says. “People ask me, ‘What were your expectations?’ I have a pretty good imagination, but I’m amazed by the difference that grassing decision has made and what Brian accomplished here overall.”

Annandale is the first course in Southern Cali-

fornia to use a four-way Scotts blend consisting of Thermal Blue, Thermal Blue Blaze, Dura Blue and Solar Green, Kutt says.

“Most courses don’t sod roughs, but we were really up against it with our soil conditions and topography,” he says. “And we needed some sod anyway for the green and bunker surrounds. With the slow germination of bluegrass, it made sense to bite the bullet and sod 100 percent of the roughs, too.”

Sod installation started around April 1 and finished in the middle of July.

With the help of turf consultant Andrew Curtis, Kutt contrived a preplant fertilizer to ensure the early establishment of the bluegrass sod and stolonized fairways. It consisted of a stabilized nitrogen source (Nutralene), pasteurized poultry manure (Bio Basics 4-2-3 composted chicken manure), Mycorrhizae fungi and seaweed extract. The goal of the blend was to give short-, mid- and long-term release of nutrition to increase rooting significantly and aid the development and promotion of strong soil microbial populations.

EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS

Annandale’s greens were constructed using an

Hit Pythium in the sweet spot.



Segway™ fungicide provides unmatched control of a variety of Pythium diseases, including Pythium blight and Pythium root dysfunction on greens, tees and fairways. With its unique mode of action, Segway stops Pythium spores from germinating, effectively controlling all stages of Pythium growth. And as the only fungicide in FRAC Group 21, it’s ideal for a rotation program. Control Pythium problems before they take control of your golf course.

**For more information visit
www.fmcprosolutions.com.**

Segway. Pythium Control Starts Here.

Always read and follow label directions. FMC is a trademark of FMC Corporation. Segway is a trademark of Ishihara Sangyo Kaisha, Ltd. © 2008 FMC Corporation. All rights reserved. FSP-0731 04/08NK

SEGWAY™
FUNGICIDE

improved USGA root-zone material, although they still met all the specifications for a USGA green. Peat moss was omitted and replaced with high-quality chicken manure because of its nutritional content and ability to provide adequate water holding for the grow-in.

The final mix consisted of 80 percent locally mined sand, 17 percent Rhyolite – a product imported from Las Vegas that improves the air porosity and infiltration rate of the mix while holding nutrients with its high cation exchange capacity – and 3 percent pasteurized poultry manure.

The bentgrass on the greens is Dominant Xtreme, a Seed Research of Oregon blend combining the cold-weather performance and disease resistance of Providence SR1019, the fast-establishing and putting quality of SR1119 and the darker color of SR1120 bentgrass.

“The grass performed extremely well during

grow-in and, as it matures, it appears to be exceeding all expectations” Kutt says.

A MORE NATURAL STATE

The construction team removed numerous trees and planted others during construction, encouraging areas of formerly manicured turf to return to a more natural state. Stress on the golf course increased infestation of numerous Canary Island Pines by an insect called an ips beetle, a type of engraver beetle. Workers removed many of those trees and planted more native trees such as oaks, sycamores and California buckeyes, as well as low-growing ground cover.

Kutt is overseeing the return of about 15 acres to a more natural state. The contractor planted an eight-way seed blend – four varieties of warm-season grass and four varieties of cool-season grass – on the inside natural areas, and a chaparral mix of shrubbier plants lending



The hybrid bluegrass in the rough provides a contrast with the Bermudagrass fairways. Photo: Annandale Golf Club

SUPERIOR TURF MAINTENANCE EQUIPMENT... ENGINEERED FOR PROFESSIONALS



CUT, RAKE AND ROLL!



dynaBLADE

Our unique tungsten carbide tipped blades are designed to outperform and outlast conventional products. Available for most OEM greens, fairway, grooming and spiking mower applications.



FDS 9200

A new level of dethatching. Our proven turf dethatching technology is engineered for durability and efficiency. Free floating sections conform to undulations. Hardened steel construction means extra durability.



greensIRON 3000

High performance turf-roller system. Superintendents trust the greensIRON 3000 to achieve consistent, championship putting greens. Add our Turf Ventilator and Turf Broom attachments to create the ultimate greens maintenance system.

Call Toll Free: 1-800-661-4942 for more information or visit www.woodbayturftech.com

a more desert-like appearance on the outside natural areas.

"We expect to see a maintenance and water savings there over the long haul," Kutt says. "Trying to get those areas to look consistent will be a

challenge. You often get contamination from the true native grasses and Bermudagrass."

Christie estimated the course part of the renovation cost about \$6 million, which he says is pretty typical for that part of the country.

CONSIDERABLE SAVINGS

Adapting to the bluegrass rough will be one of Kutt's primary challenges in the future.

"The grass selection certainly has caused discussion and is providing challenges, but there were no realistic alternatives that anyone could sell me on," he says. "The issue was some rust we spotted heading into last fall. I didn't feel it was appropriate to spray. With the help of some added fertilizer and micronutrients, the grass bounced back rapidly.

"We're trying to balance our soils the best we can to prevent that again. In this instance, they might have been low on copper, and that likely had something to do with the occurrence of rust. But the rapid recovery has shown me that the turf selection has some merit, especially with its contribution to the aesthetic value of the course."

The new irrigation system coupled with encouraging more natural areas should increase watering efficiency. It's too early to tell exactly how much water will be saved because additional water still is needed to grow in the native areas to the desired look and consistency. Ultimately, Kutt expects to reduce his water use by at least 10 percent compared to prerenovation levels. Labor also should decline with fewer manicured acres to maintain.

Water and labor are Annandale's two largest budget items, with less than \$300,000 projected annually for water and more than \$1 million annually for labor. Considerable savings in those two areas would be significant to the club's financial health.

A SILVA LINING

Even though Silva is new to the West Coast, he made friends and supporters during the project.

"I give the committee a ton of credit," he says. "It took them several years to get this project approved, and when we wanted to do a little more once the project was under way, they went for the changes with enthusiasm. As a result, the good folks at Annandale ended up with a course they're intensely and justifiably proud of."

The feeling is mutual.

"We interviewed several architects whose names you could say were more prominent, but Brian overwhelmed us with his ideas and enthusiasm," Sarkisian says. "He's so hands on. He was here once a week for 25 to 30 straight weeks. No one else does that – maybe an assistant, but not the architect himself. Brian handcrafted our course." **GCI**

www.golfcourseindustry.com/readerservice - #46

www.golfcourseindustry.com/readerservice - #45