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## TREE TALK

The PGA Tour Barclays was awarded to Ridgewood Country Club in New Jersey at the last minute, leaving Todd Raisch, CGCS, little time to accomplish a great deal of work. One concern was clearing trees and limbs necessary to erect tents and staging operations to allow the gallery to see the best players in the world.

Because tree removal is a sensitive subject, Raisch contracted a qualified tree service company, Tree-Tech of Mount Freedom, N.J., with extensive golf course experience to assist him with a thorough review and preparations. The following are thoughts about superintendent/tree service relations from Tree-Tech's owner, Rob Finnesey.

**Q** What are the benefits for a superintendent to contract a tree service company to assist the host club?

**A** We'll review a number of concerns with the golf course superintendent, including everything from sun/shade studies to safety. For the best results, a tree service company should be contacted at least two years before the event to form and execute a plan that includes:

- Reviewing tree safety issues that could injure the gallery, spectators in the grandstands or under trees, or impact moving vehicular or pedestrian traffic.
- Removing any root encroachment in high-play areas such as primary rough grass landing zones, bunkers and brush along a water hazard so the competitors won't injure themselves.
- Understanding the superintendent's agronomic issues with all playing surfaces. We'll conduct a sun/shade study, identify root intrusion for gallery and players, reduce any overplanting concerns, thin canopies, root prune and remove any tree that affects the setup of the golf course inside and outside the ropes.
- Evaluating playability concerns, including sight lines from teeing grounds, tree/

limb intrusion into the intended line of play and removal of trees that affect shot options (such as a tree planted behind a bunker creating a double hazard). If there's an architect involved, we'll help him to create the proper sight lines to enhance design features with proper tree planting or removal.

- Reviewing the safety issues of multiple-trunk trees, hanging limbs, surface roots and thorn-producing species to reduce any legal liabilities.
- Working with the television crews well in advance of the event to selectively remove any tree, limb or other obstacle that might intrude the camera's view.
- Reviewing the type of weather expected to identify additional opportunities for damage or injury in the case of a sudden storm.
- Clearing any area designated for an operational or vendor compound.

**Q** What can a superintendent do to ease your staff's efforts?

**A** Prioritize the work he wishes the tree company to accomplish. This would include:

- Receiving all as-builts, maps, site documentation, irrigation line and other golf course information so the tree service doesn't add additional work for the superintendent.
- Locating and tagging all suspect and hazardous trees for removal or pruning.
- Getting involved with any golf course renovation efforts by the club. It's better to prune trees and remove them and clear them during a renovation, limiting the extra work required of the grounds staff.
- Checking with all the subcontractors to investigate their needs and what trees might hinder them when accomplishing their tasks.
- Attending any organizational walk-throughs to identify all gallery paths, service roads, walking spectator sight lines, proposed parking lots or other areas where

a tree might clutter the routes.

- Contacting local traffic authorities to identify their routes for buses, large trucks, and police/fire and emergency vehicles to allow easy and unencumbered entry and exits in case of a medical or other emergency.
- Assisting when grandstands, tents, concessions and lavatory facilities are placed to identify what trees should be removed.
- Having an emergency crew on call 24/7 before, during and after the event.

**Q** How can tree services assist a superintendent?

**A** A quality tree service can advise the superintendent about:

- Identifying and removing any miscellaneous or nonindigenous trees affecting turf health, light penetration, air circulation and prolonged shade impacts.
- Supporting the club when selecting the best species for the location and growing environment. Choose trees that don't have surface roots, pest concerns or fruit droppings. Look for those with moderate growth rates, brilliant fall color and quick leaf drops.
- Evaluating and removing any underbrush (which might affect pace of play), identifying out-of-bounds and locating the proper boundaries of water hazards.
- Evaluating the tree lines along the teeing ground perimeters to widen the line of play and lift up intruding limbs, especially for left-handed players. Many times tree intrusion will cause the misalignment of a teeing ground to a point other than the intended landing zone.
- Eliminating any poor-quality trees that affect the growth and health of the primary species being highlighted.
- Removing any trees that frame a green, landing zone, teeing ground or encroach into a line of play, create a backdrop or overhang a golf hole.
- Reviewing the three forms of pruning with the superintendent: canopy or the thinning of the interior profile; root pruning, which will prevent a tree from robbing water and nutrients from the turf; and basal pruning. **GCI**