

Championship cut

Chambers Bay is pleased with the results of its grinders.

BY ALYSE LAMPARYK

For superintendent David Wienecke, the quality of a clean cut is important as he prepares his facility for the U.S. Amateur Championship this August. In turn, the grinder he uses to maintain his mowers' blades is just as critical.

Chambers Bay Golf Course in University Place, Wash., has been open since 2007, but Wienecke purchased the grinders for the public 18-hole course in February 2006.

"We actually looked at three different manufacturers' grinders and tried them out and talked to people that used them and came up with Foley after that experience," Wienecke says, adding he purchased the Foley United ACCU-Master spin grinder and an ACCU-Pro bedknife grinder for just under \$52,000.

Wienecke had used Foley United grinders for 20 years, but he listened to his mechanic and did his due diligence about the product options in the market before making that purchase.

Four years later, Wienecke is still pleased with the grinders and their consistent performance and believes he has received a solid return on his investment.

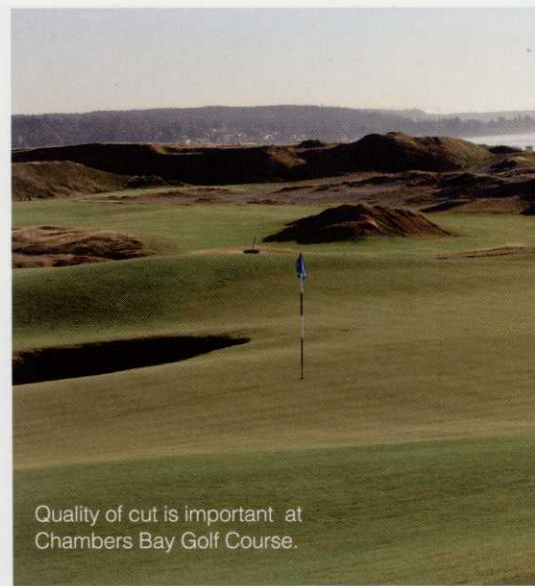
"There's no way that we could produce the quality of cut that we demand and that our golfer's expect and that the championships will need to have without having the quality of cut that we're able to achieve," Wienecke says of his grinders.

Considering it is the first public-access golf course to host a U.S. Amateur, appearance and cut are essential. Along with hosting the 2010 Amateur Championship in August, Chambers Bay Golf Course will be the site of the U.S. Open in 2015.

With about 30 staff members and a \$1.5 million annual maintenance budget, Wienecke does not seem unsettled by the upcoming high-profile events.

"We're really oriented towards a very high-quality of cut and so we use our grinders all the time," Wienecke says. Two of the employees work solely with the grinders, a skill that takes time to acquire.

"In terms of learning the operation of the machine, I think if you know how to use a grinder and how to set up reels then the learning curve is fairly easy, but the process of learning how to set up proper release angles



Quality of cut is important at Chambers Bay Golf Course.

and other things take time," Wienecke says.

In anticipation of the Amateur, Wienecke has asked Foley for a whole new set of grinders to help them continue to keep the course in top condition. Wienecke experienced some problems with the computer-control components. The course's grinders are used at least once a week, year-round, so wear and tear happens.

While at the Golf Industry Show in San Diego last month Wienecke spoke with Foley representatives who assured him they were working on straightening everything out. The only concern Wienecke had with the repair process was on the local level.

When it comes down to it, he is pleased with Foley United products. "I have had no problem, no concerns with the equipment and our service level from the manufacturer has been great. I'm fully satisfied with that," Wienecke says.

For now, the Audubon International Silver-Certified course will prepare for its national debut. As a public course it has high standards to live up to, but Wienecke is not worried.

"We act like and are maintained like a private golf course. So our standards are private, country club level," Wienecke says. **GCI**

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The University Place, Wash.-based course is preparing for the U.S. Amateur Championship in August.

