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Spot Treatment

Mister systems address the maintenance needs of bunkers and approaches



Bunker misters can be viewed as part of a water-conservation effort. Photo: Willow Oaks Country Club

BY MARK LESLIE

The origins of bunker misters are unclear, but their effectiveness isn't. Out of obscurity, they – along with approach misters – are becoming a fixture at high-end golf facilities. This trend is acclaimed by superintendents and golf course architects.

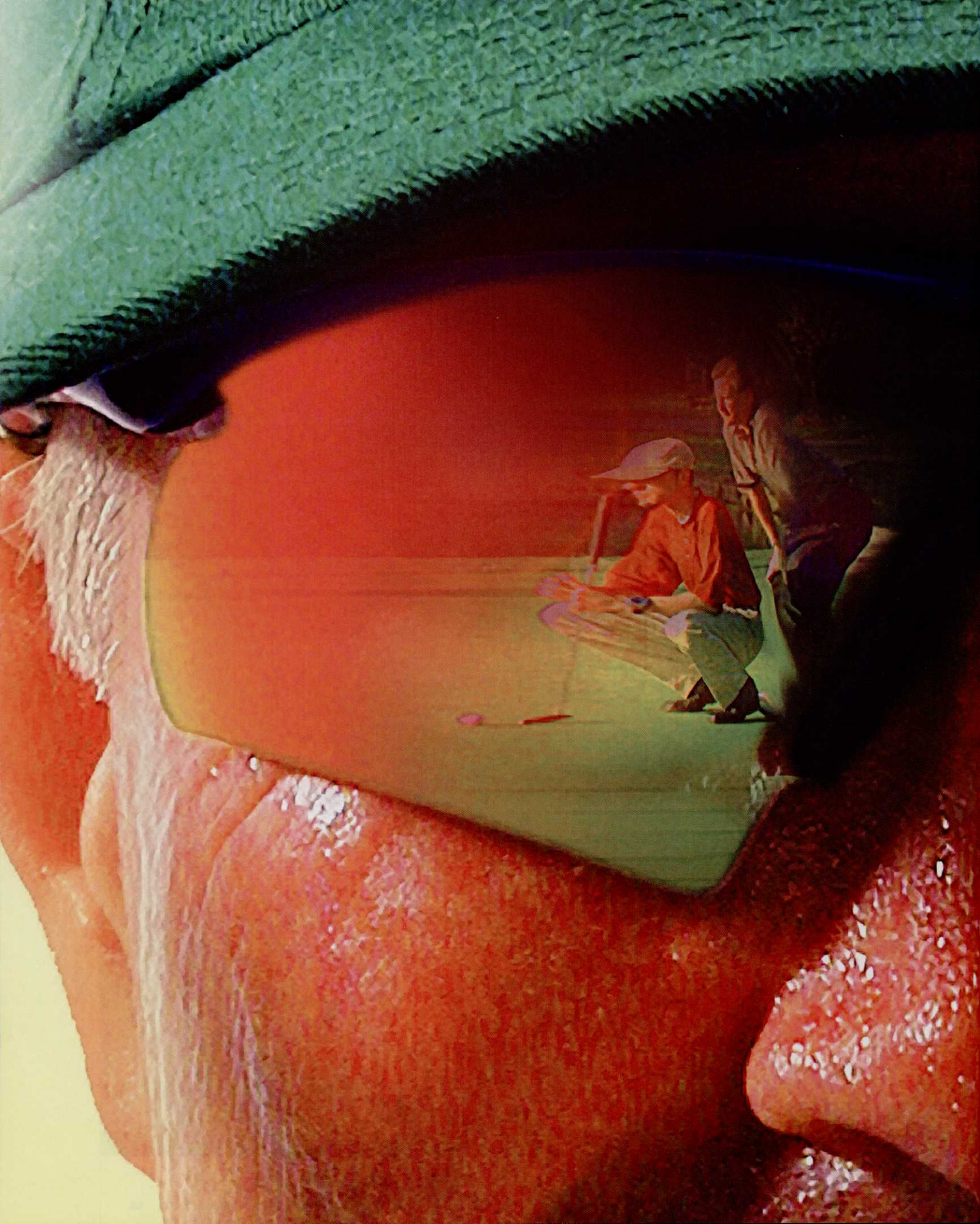
"It's a great tool many superintendents would like to have," says Craig Fuller, CGCS, of Willow Oaks Country Club in Richmond, Va.

Bunker misters are being installed at Willow Oaks as part of a considerable course reconstruction.

"I can maintain a more consistent bunker, playabilitywise, with this mist system, and I have head-to-head control," Fuller says.

Installing bunker misters at Willow Oaks makes sense to Lester George, the architect involved with the project. Misters also make sense at the Country Club of Florida, where George worked on another project.

"Bunker faces are critical to design," he says. "If they're overwatered, they're not functioning properly. If they're underwatered, they have an aesthetic problem. So it's critical to get the proper



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The use of bunker misters helps avoid flooding bunkers and overwatering green surrounds. Photo: Willow Oaks Country Club

amount of water at the right time without overwatering the green surrounds and flooding the bunker. The beauty of bunker misters is that you avoid both these problems.”

MORE CONTROL

Misters are similar to those used in standard irrigation systems in residential areas in which

pop-up heads are operated by an electric valve, which reduces pressure to the point where it will operate safely. Depending on the superintendent and bunker style, the mist might go all the way around a bunker or only along the upper portion of it.

Mike Pignato, who designed the bunker mister system at Willow Oaks, says he has used such a



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IRRIGATION MANAGEMENT

system for six or seven years, but it's becoming a standard at higher-end facilities.

"It offers a quick syringe to the bunker faces and the surrounding area and gives capes and other bunker features the ability to get enough water without soaking the sand," says Pignato, president of The Pignato Group, an irrigation design company based in Wellington, Fla.

The mist system gives the superintendent the opportunity to syringe whenever he wants to without affecting the surrounding area, says Tom

At Willow Oaks Country Club, bunker misters allow Craig Fuller, CGCS, to maintain more consistent bunkers playabilitywise. Photo: Willow Oaks Country Club



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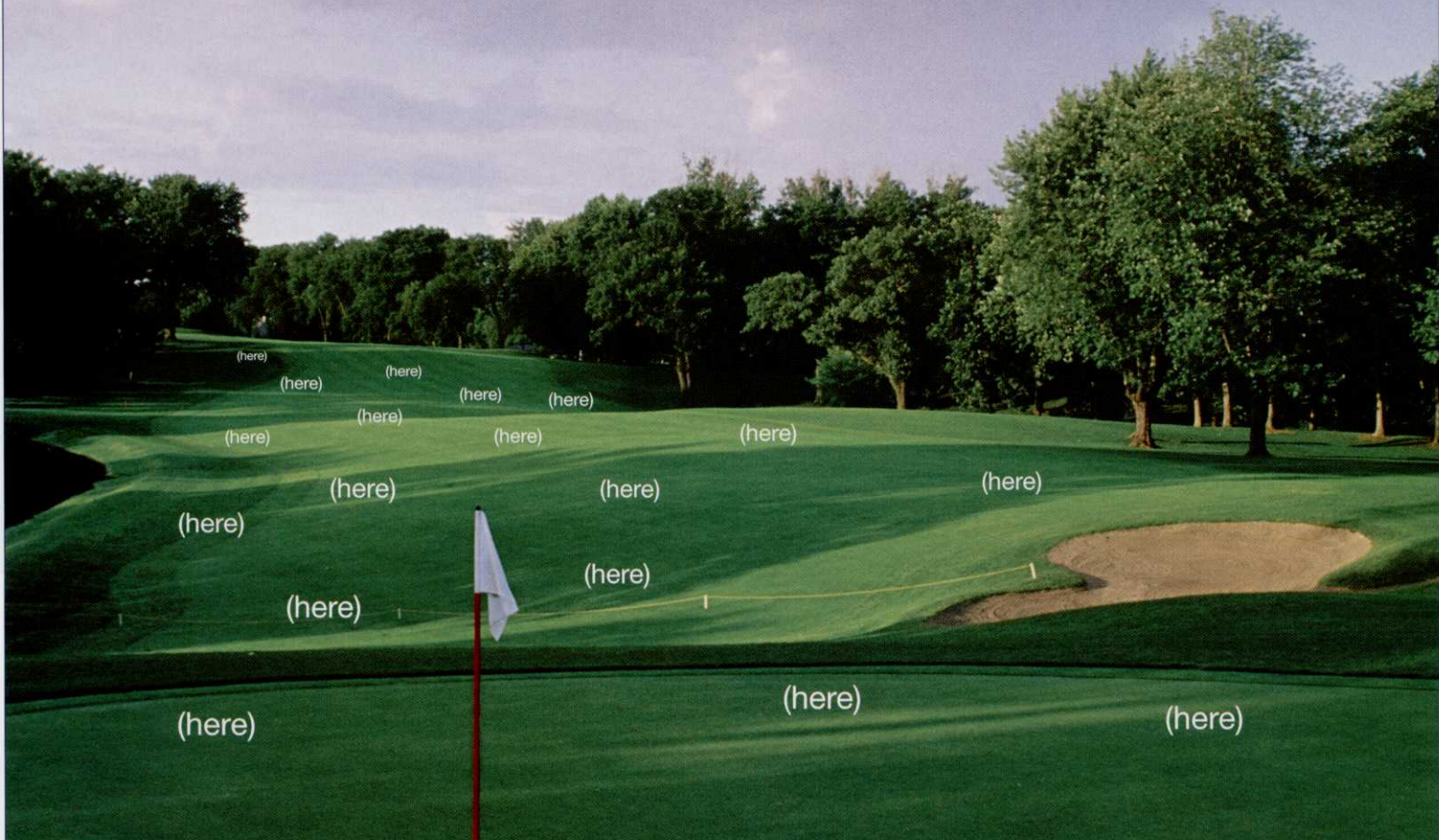
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