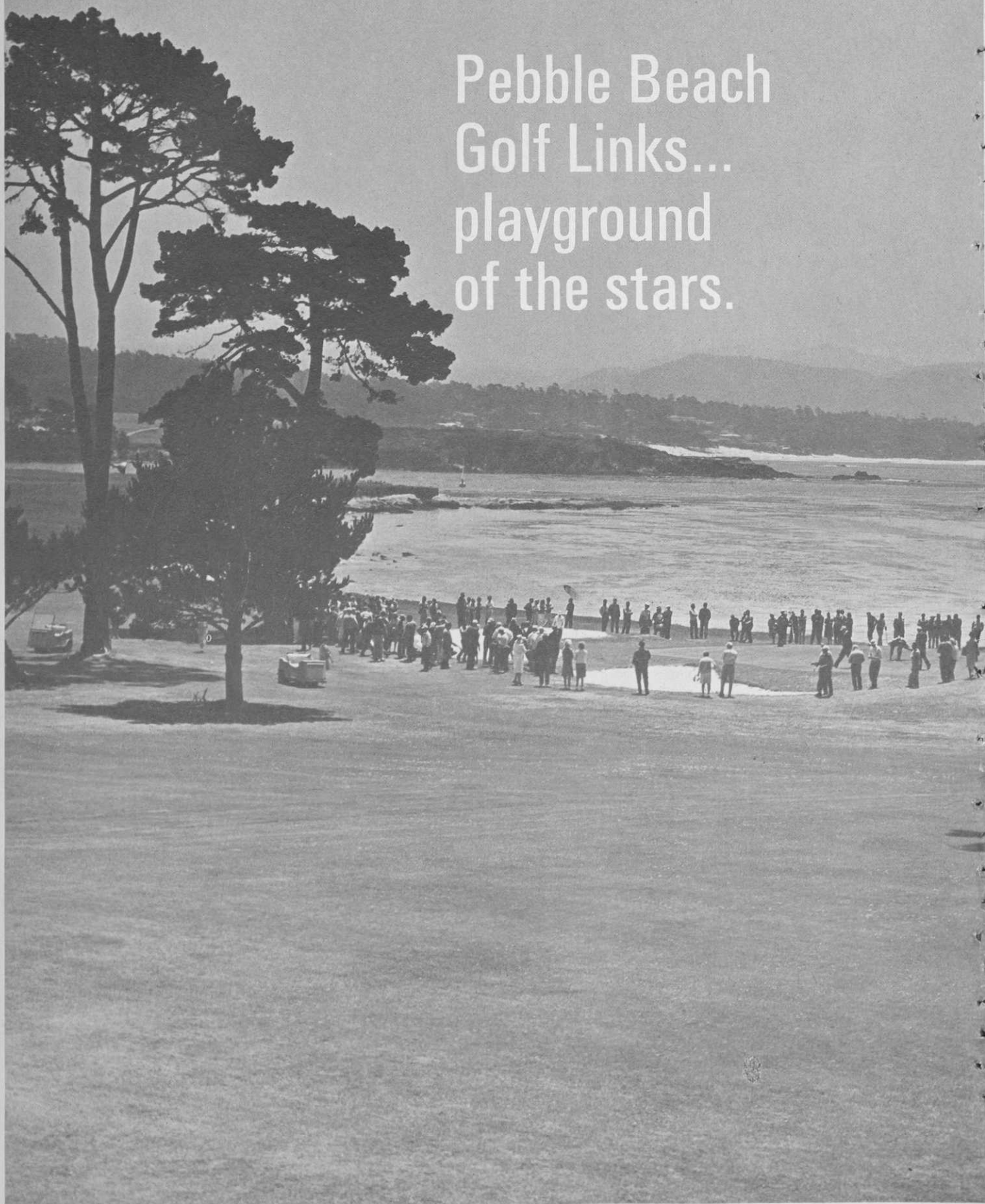


TIPS FROM A SUPERINTENDENT
#3 OF A SERIES

Pebble Beach Golf Links... playground of the stars.





BY ROGER LARSON, Superintendent, Pebble Beach, Spyglass Hill, and Del Monte Golf Courses (Owned by the Del Monte Properties Co.)

This is the week of the big one. The annual Bing Crosby Tournament here at Pebble Beach. The participants have been arriving all week, going through the course, getting reacquainted.

Most have been here before, of course. Arnold Palmer, Jack Nicklaus, Billy Casper and the rest of the really great golf pros. They like to check the land, refamiliarize themselves with the terrain, the grasses, the traps, the roughs.

This course doesn't change much, year to year. It's kept in tournament condition at all times. However, we do spend eight to ten months making sure it will be in perfect shape for this event, and for the State Amateur.

The Crosby is televised each year, so two-thirds of the TV cables are permanently installed, with the remaining third put in each time. The camera crews and technicians have been here for several days now, getting things ready for the big weekend.

Handling the huge gallery of forty to fifty thousand people is a tremendous job. The grass takes a great deal of punishment, and it has to be repaired. But this is a very popular event, and it draws the crowds. They love to watch celebrities like Bing Crosby, Ray Bolger, Jim Backus, and especially when Dean Martin and Phil Harris get together and clown around.

On the big day, a number of factors affect the game, especially the wind.

Here at the ocean's edge, the wind can be powerful. It has even pulled the sand out of the traps at times. The trees we have, live oaks, cypress and Monterey Pine, aren't enough to cut the wind.

The weather is always a factor, but it is usually very reliable. We've had only three postponements since 1941, when the first Crosby took place here. From the end of November through the end of March, it's the rainy season. We need practically no irrigation during this period. But from April to November, all we get is an occasional freak shower, so we're pretty dependent upon our irrigation system.

We recently did some expansion on it. The cast iron mains, installed in 1918, were in excellent condition. Most were left where they were; others were moved to new locations. They looked as good as new. Our records showed that, for the fifty years of service, we've had only two small leaks. Considering the fact that the system is used more or less continuously for eight months out of the year, I'd say that's an outstanding job.

And the grasses depend on it.

We use seaside bent on the greens, poa annua, fescue and ryes on the fairways, poa annua and native grasses on the roughs. The sandy loam retains moisture well, and I'd say we have no particular problems with growing things here. We use fertilizer in monthly applications, as needed.

It's been a bit cool the past day or so. Windy. And raining. One of those three postponements I mentioned was caused by snow. But that was a freak. One in a million. With all these people, with all this equipment here, it won't happen this year. I hope.

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