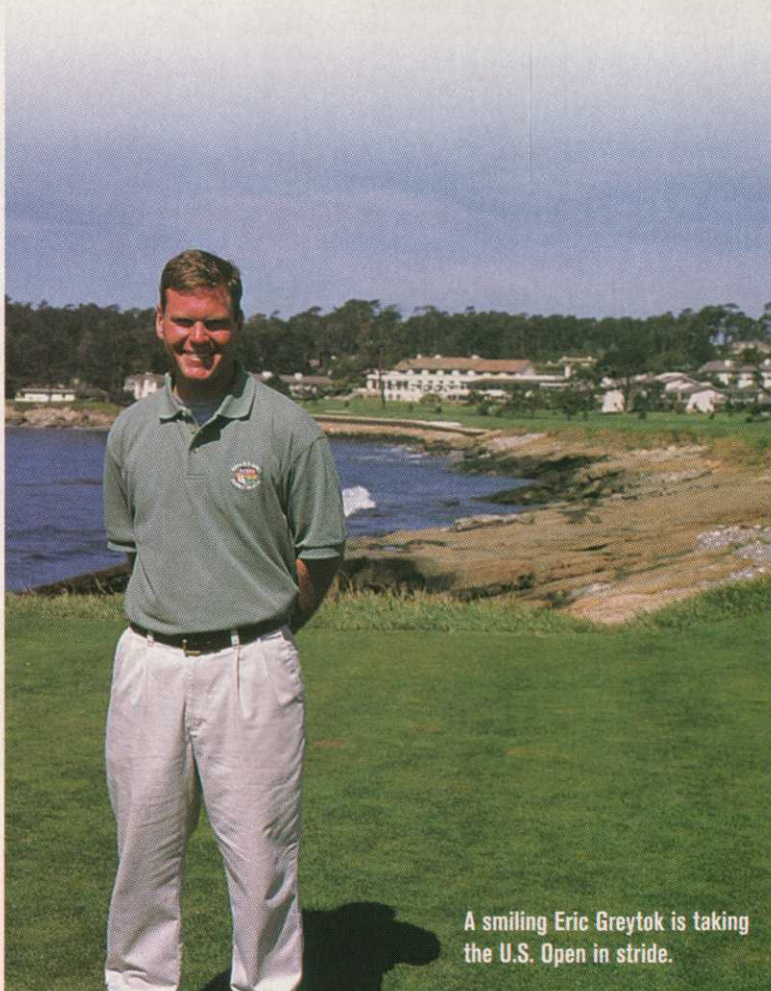




Baptism

BY Fire

27-year-old **Eric Greytok** was appointed Pebble Beach's new superintendent – just in time for the pressure-packed 100th U.S. Open



RAIN BIRD

A smiling Eric Greytok is taking the U.S. Open in stride.

Eric Greytok is getting the rock-star treatment — and he doesn't even play guitar.

But because Greytok plays the role of new superintendent at Pebble Beach Golf Links, site of the 100th U.S. Open this month, he's discovering that the media wants to shine its sparkling spotlight on him as if he were Bruce Springsteen.

**BY LARRY AYLWARD,
MANAGING EDITOR**

It's two months before the circus is due in town, and Greytok is already besieged by the media. It's shortly before 6 a.m. on an April morning in Pebble Beach, Calif., and Greytok is on the phone talking turf and answering what's-it-like questions from a reporter in the eastern time zone. Welcome to the jungle, Eric.

The soft-spoken Greytok politely answers the questions, but you can tell he could do without the fanfare.

"I don't like the limelight," he says diplomatically. "I'd rather go about my job. The media is starting to call, and that's fine. I understand that comes with the job. But if I had it my way ..."

If he had his way, he'd do his job quietly and with little attention. But *this* is the U.S. Open and the circumstances are a bit different. Paul Jett, certified superintendent at Pinehurst Resort and CC's No. 2 course, says he felt like a celebrity when the U.S. Open came to North Carolina last year.

"Nobody clued me into the fact that the media would be this overwhelming," Jett said. "I don't remember a Major where the superintendent and his staff received as much publicity as we did."

But Pebble Beach might take that cake this year. The media has several story angles to explore, including the 100th playing of the tournament and its romantic return to a course — Pebble Beach hosted the U.S. Open in 1972, 1982 and 1992 — where so many dramatic moments in tournament history have occurred.

And then there's Greytok's saga, which is an intriguing story. The 27-year-old was hired as an assistant superintendent to then-superintendent Mark Michaud in November. But after Michaud resigned from Pebble Beach around the beginning of 2000, the "kid" with a 1995 bachelor's degree in turfgrass management from Penn State University was appointed to the post just five months before the U.S. Open. A baptism by fire? Try an inferno.

The modest Greytok, however, brushes off any talk of pressure and quickly gives credit to Michaud, now the superintendent at Shinnecock Hills GC in Southampton, N.Y.

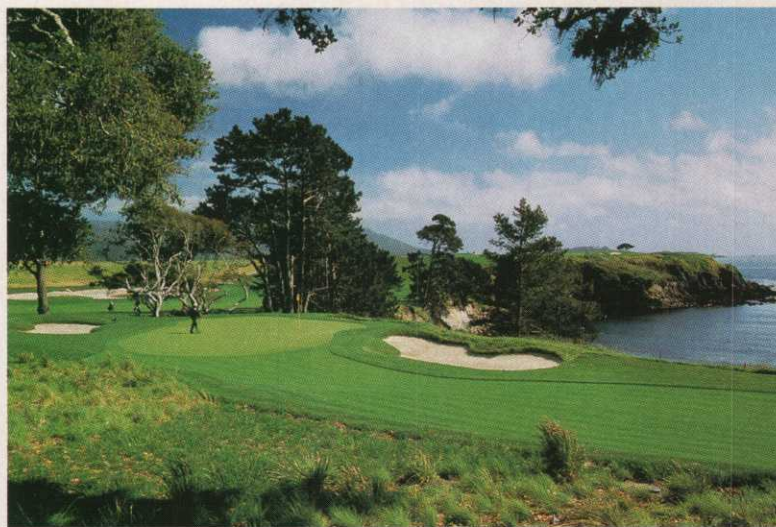
"The program he had going here was a great," Greytok says of Michaud, who spent seven years at Pebble Beach. "I would be foolish to change anything."

Even demanding talk from USGA chairman David Fay doesn't rattle Greytok. "The mantra of the U.S. Open is that it has long been known as the world's toughest golf tournament, and we don't want to give that up," Fay insists.

Greytok responds, "What Michaud did the last five years has ensured this will be (the world's toughest golf tournament)."

In mid-April, Greytok said the course was nearly ready, except for fine-tuning. He and his crew were moving cart paths and building bridges to contain the throng that would invade the course for four days.

Even if he's feeling a bit of pressure, the



PEBBLE BEACH CO.

Philadelphia-raised Greytok is accustomed to it. His entire career, while short, has been filled with challenges. Fresh out of Penn State, he went to work for superintendent Paul B. Latshaw at the prestigious Merion GC in Ardmore, Pa. Then Greytok worked under the heralded Paul R. Latshaw, Paul B.'s father, at Riviera CC in Pacific Palisades, Calif., and Congressional CC in Bethesda, Md.

Greytok says the Latshaws taught him a lot more than agronomics. "I learned how to be a businessman and how to attain a professional image," he says.

To some, Greytok may be too young to be staging the prestigious U.S. Open. But the age thing doesn't trouble him.

"None of the too-young talk has been directed toward me, but I know it's being said," Greytok says. "It doesn't bother me because I know I can do the job."

Continued on page 40

The Jack Nicklaus-designed new 5th hole, which opened last year, has performed well.

Baptism By Fire

RAIN BIRD



Pebble's Watertight Irrigation Plan

By Jason Schmaderer

Eric Greytok, superintendent of Pebble Beach Golf Links, describes himself as a perfectionist. That's probably a good thing because near-perfect playing conditions are expected on the legendary course under Greytok's care for the playing of the 100th U.S. Open in mid-June.

Greytok says he and his crew must manage precisely two important factors at Pebble Beach - the amount of water they put down and chemical applications. Of the former, Greytok says he and his staff take irrigation practices seriously, especially when the weather at Pebble Beach can be foggy and wet one day, and 70 degrees with 30 mile-an-hour winds the next.

"My philosophy is to keep the course fairly dry, but not to the point where the grass will suffer," Greytok says.

Mark Thomas, Pebble Beach's irrigation technician, says the Rain Bird irrigation system the course installed five years ago offers him the flexibility to adapt to Greytok's mandate, as well as the challenging microclimates he must deal with on the course.

"The holes on the coastline are a lot different than the ones that are inland and protected with trees," Thomas says. "So we rely on our system's flexibility to give us the ability to isolate areas, zones, station sizes and even individ-



PEBBLE BEACH CO.

ual heads. If we're irrigating a slope with southern exposure, I can change that particular station to water more than the rest of the fairway. It's important to have the ability to fine-tune because we're dealing with a number of different microclimates that may vary significantly from day to day."

Thomas, in his 13th year at Pebble Beach, prefers manual probing to get a good feel for

Continued on page 42

Continued from page 39

Greytok's age doesn't bother Ted Horton, Pebble Beach Co.'s vice president of resource management, who appointed Greytok to superintendent. Horton describes Greytok as a gamer — someone you would want to be at the plate with the bases loaded in the ninth inning.

"People say he's young, but I tell them, 'Gosh, I remember in my career how wonderful it was to get a head start when I was a young person,'" Horton says. "I'm not going to let age frighten us.

"(Greytok) has a definite sense of urgency," Horton adds. "He has a willingness to take charge. He's precise and efficient."

Greytok says he has a no-bull management style, and he likes a fast and furious pace.

"I don't take 'no' for an answer," he says. "Don't ever come to me and say that something can't be done.

"I like to have a lot of things going on at the same time," he insists. "I don't like idle time."

USGA has kept Greytok and his crew busy readying the course in the association's likeness. The common denominators for all U.S. Open courses is that premiums are put

on golfers to hit their balls in the fairways and to hit the greens in regulation. Also, U.S. Open greens are traditionally firm and fast — but not too fast.

"When you have fast greens, you limit where you can set holes," Fay says. "You can't be as creative."

Horton says Pebble Beach's greens will register between 10.5 and 11 on the Stimpmeter for the tournament. "Because the greens are small and fairly undulating, the USGA doesn't want them excessively fast," he adds.

Pebble Beach, according to USGA standards, will sport tees and fairways mowed to three-eighths an inch, down

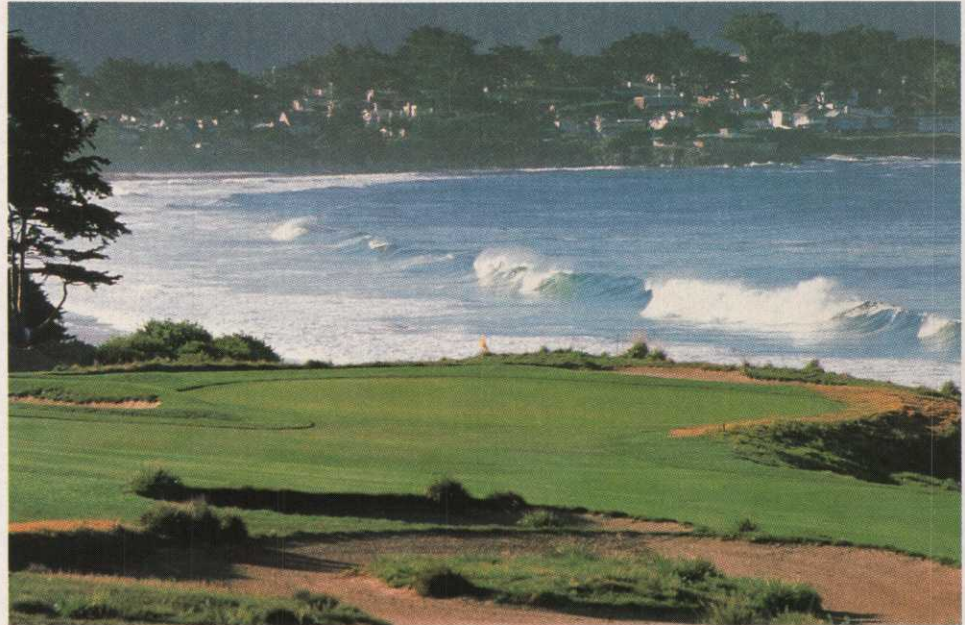
Players will notice revamped bunkers with better-packing and better-draining sand.

The greens at Pebble Beach will measure 10.5 to 11 on the Stimpmeter for the U.S. Open.

from the course's normal one-half inch. The rough will be 4 inches to 6 inches deep, and fairways will be 27 yards to 32 yards wide.

"When it comes to course setup, our standard hasn't changed much in years," Fay admits.

A few things have changed at Pebble Beach, though, since the course hosted its last U.S. Open in 1992. For starters, there's the Jack Nicklaus-designed new 5th hole, which debuted early last year. The hole was described as simple but sound by one architectural critic. Horton says the hole, which will measure 187 yards from the back tee for the U.S. Open, has performed well.



PEBBLE BEACH CO.

Prior to constructing the new hole, Horton recalls, Pebble Beach's brass sought out golf's most respected authorities and asked them what they thought of the project. It was like asking them if they would tweak the Mona

Continued on page 42

EVERGREEN™

THE PROVEN TURF GROWTH BLANKET

- Earlier spring green-up
- Faster seed germination
- Deeper root development
- Delays dormancy in fall
- Ideal winter blanket
- Best for quick turf repairs
- Available in any size
- Longest lasting
- Choice of 3 and 7 year warranty covers



CALL TOLL FREE
1-800-387-5808

COVERMASTER INC., REXDALE, ON, M9V 5C3
TEL 416-745-1811 FAX 416-74-COVER (742-6837)

WEB: www.covermaster.com
E-MAIL: info@covermaster.com

MEMBER
Sports & Turf
Managers Association

COVERMASTER™
COVERMASTER
COVERMASTER
MASTERS IN THE ART OF SPORTS SURFACE COVERS

Turf Management Made Easy . . .



Easy to install & remove



Anchor pegs supplied



Deeper root development



Any custom size cover

Baptism By Fire

Continued from page 40
the health of the course. "It helps us recognize how much water it will take to keep the turf where we want it or to revive it if it gets too dry," he says.

Although Greytok said in April that Pebble's preparation was on track, there were a few revisions begun in the early 1990s to prepare for the U.S. Open. During the 1992 U.S. Open, aerial shots from the blimp uncovered some water distribution problems that Pebble Beach staffers knew would have to be addressed before the next tournament.

"The aerial shots showed donuts forming around the heads where water wasn't getting properly diffused," Thomas says, adding that the coastal holes at Pebble Beach are difficult to irrigate uniformly because of the wind and soil conditions.

In an effort to overcome the problem, Pebble changed to the Rain Bird system in 1995. Initially, though, the chronic distribution problems persisted.

"The original nozzle selection didn't do the trick," Thomas

says. "We immediately went to the drawing board to come up with a solution."

Steve Sakurai, Western specification manager for Rain Bird's Golf Division, says correcting the problem was difficult and time-consuming.

"With the course situated right on the ocean, the winds can wreak havoc with uniform water distribution," he explains. "We also had to deal with the short testing window at Pebble to check our revisions. The winter is too cold and wet to see the results, so we had to wait for the middle of the summer to see the benefits of the nozzle design changes."

Following several nozzle design tests, it was Rain Bird's dual spreader nozzles that conquered the notoriously difficult winds at Pebble Beach. The rotors used at Pebble Beach are now equipped with one range nozzle to cover the longer throw, and two rear spreader nozzles for mid-range and close-in coverage. The dual spreader nozzles are designed with wedge-shape profiles for

Continued from page 41

Lisa, Horton says. "But virtually all of them came back and said, 'The 5th is a candidate for change, especially if you can get it on the ocean,'" he adds.

Nicklaus, who has played Pebble Beach so many times that he knows the course like the grip on his putter, was the obvious choice to lead the design.

"It would have been hard to fail on that one," Horton says of the renovation and those involved with the project. "I wouldn't want to be here if we did."

U.S. Open players will also notice revamped bunkers, which were emptied and refilled with better-packing and better-draining sand. Also, the second hole will play as a par 4 for the tournament, not a par 5.

"It's not a long and demanding par 5 and never has been," Horton says of the 502-yard hole. "It plays much more demanding as a long par 4."

All eyes will be on Pebble Beach from June 15 through June 18. It's safe to say this historic U.S. Open is the highlight of the 2000 golf season. But even that doesn't seem to intimidate Greytok.

"You're always under the microscope here, but that only makes me work harder," Greytok says, the self-assurance evident in his voice. "There's always something going on. That's why it's so enjoyable." ■

added efficiency in windy environments.

The revision corrected the problem, Thomas says. Regular aerial photographs attest to the improved conditions.

Although Pebble Beach is meticulously maintained for daily play, Greytok says he and his crew stepped it up for the U.S. Open. "We're not going to overlook anything," he said two months before the event.

For Thomas, this translated into several creative irrigation strategies to help Greytok and his crew cover the bases.

"We're paying special attention to some areas like the bunker edges and islands inside the bunkers by using some smaller residential rotors," Thomas notes. "We want to irrigate the grass, not the sand."

Greytok stresses the importance of manual irrigation.

"There are times when we

get out there with hoses and syringe the greens and tees and maybe even spots on the fairways," he says. "It's this type of special effort that sets us aside from some other places."

Greytok's main goal is to provide Tiger Woods and other golfers with a fair and honest test of golf at Pebble Beach.

"Although people judge the aesthetics, I'm more concerned by the actual playing conditions," he says. "I want the players to walk away saying that it was a fair course."

But don't be surprised if a number of people walk away from the U.S. Open talking about a lush, green course as well.

Jason Schmaderer is a public relations associate for Swanson Russell Associates, based in Lincoln, Neb. Rain Bird is an SRA client.



RAIN BIRD

Dual spreader nozzles conquered Pebble's difficult winds.