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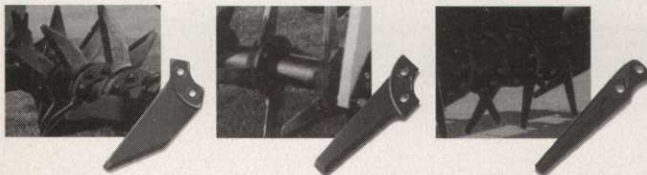
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CIRCLE NO. 106



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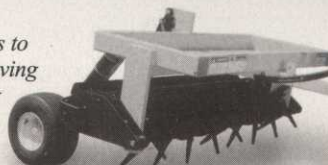
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CIRCLE NO. 107

We've Got Mail

■ LETTERS FROM THE FIELD

American Golf Fires Back

We were disturbed by the misinformation and negative conclusions in Shane Sharp's article about American Golf Corp. ("American Golf at the Turn," January). We hope American Golf's customers, club members and employees will dismiss Sharp's unwarranted criticism and cavalier inferences.

By Sharp's own admission, he has little experience playing our courses. More importantly, he mentioned no unpleasant experiences of his own. It may surprise him to know that more than 12 million rounds are played at our courses annually. Certainly, the "dozens of e-mails" he has received in the past year don't resemble the "majority of the golfing population" he contends are dissatisfied [with our service].

To make a case against American Golf based on such meager and unreliable evidence is as unfair as it is irresponsible, especially given that Sharp has no direct experience to substantiate it. American Golf greatly values guest and member feedback and actively solicits it through annual surveys, customer satisfaction programs and comment cards. The high level of dissatisfaction that Sharp presumes would hardly be ignored by a company that strives to exceed the needs and expectations of its guests, members and landlords.

Sharp points to positive features of American Golf in his article — that the company employs more superintendents than any other golf-based corporation in the world, it invests a great deal in education for its superintendents and that a number of American Golf-operated courses are in excellent condition. What he neglected to discover was that American Golf makes a great effort creating a career path for superintendents and assistants. In light of these facts, it is disconcerting that Sharp would choose to draw only unfavorable conclu-

sions. This is a disservice to our company and your readers.

Craig Kniffen
Executive Vice President,
Maintenance and Construction
American Golf Corp.
Frisco, Texas

Thanks for the Jump-Start

I've been carrying around the equivalent of a 5-pound bag of fertilizer for the last five years. Sounds strange? In layman's terms, the "bag" is my stomach. After reading a *Golfdom* article about getting into shape ("Getting into Shape, September 2002"), I realized that a lot of the things in the article were about me. I was sluggish at work, had no energy and no idea where to turn.

I then decided that diet and exercise had to be a part of my life if I was to continue to have a long life. I had been on blood pressure medicine for the past year.

I started to exercise and eat healthier. I'm happy to say that I've gotten rid of almost 30 pounds in two months. I went to the GCSAA conference in Atlanta and never gained a pound. I wore clothes that I had not had on in three years. I worked out every day in the hotel. To my surprise, there were a number of superintendents doing the same. I have a tremendous amount of energy every day, and I hope to attain my goal of losing 50 pounds by the end of the golf season.

Thanks for giving me the jump-start that I needed.

Rick Tegtmeier
Certified Superintendent, Elmcrest CC
Cedar Rapids, Iowa

Got something to say? We want to hear from you. You can e-mail your letters to Frank Andorka at fandorka@advanstar.com, fax to 440-891-2675 or send them via snail-mail to: 7500 Old Oak Blvd., Cleveland, OH 44130. Make sure to include your name and phone number for verification. Letters may be edited for length or relevance.