

# Hold the Rain

DESPITE NO FAIRWAY IRRIGATION, NEWPORT'S REYNOLDS WAS HOPING FOR DRY WEATHER DURING THE U.S. WOMEN'S OPEN

By Anthony Pioppi, Contributing Editor

**W**hen the 1995 U.S. Amateur came to Newport Country Club, certified superintendent Bob Reynolds was praying for rain.

A long, dry spell that year burned out the course, which only features irrigation for green complexes. The drought charred the fairways and reduced the rough to wispy clumps, hardly a deterrent to any player, especially Tiger Woods, who downed Buddy Marucci Jr. for his second of three consecutive U.S. Am titles.

This year Reynolds, in his 29th year at the course and 25th as superintendent, wanted the heavens to close up so Newport would be firm and fast when the U.S. Women's Open arrived June 29 through July 2. May and June had been abnormally rainy, resulting in a layout that was uncharacteristically green, not the usual variations of tan, henna, brown and golden. It also meant that conditions were much softer than Reynolds or anyone else at Newport wanted them.

For those unfamiliar with Newport, an A.W. Tillinghast

design, it is strikingly different than the West Course at Winged Foot Golf Club, a Tillinghast design that hosted this year's U.S. Open. At Newport there is little of the green designs that feature sweeping slopes that Tillinghast used in New York. Instead he opted for more subtle movements, most likely in deference to the winds off Narraganset Bay that buffet Newport, and the subtle landforms on which the course is placed.

Reynolds cut the greens at one-eighth of an inch but was considering dropping the height when interviewed in June. The fairway height of cut was about nine-sixteenths of an inch. Fairways had been narrowed slightly for the tournament and stayed that width once the pros left.

"The members like it. They're not going to change it," Reynolds said.

In sharp contrast to Winged Foot, which featured carefully manicured bunkers for the tournament, Newport's hazards were filled with sand that can change radically from one bunker to the next, even on the same hole, something of which the USGA wholeheartedly approved.

"They like it the way it is," longtime Newport green chairman Barclay Douglas said. "It's a smorgasbord type of sand."

The biggest change for Reynolds was in his crew size; normally he has a summer staff of 12 but this year it was 14 and was augmented by about 50 volunteers for the tournament, mostly superintendents, assistants and crew members from courses in the region.



## INTRODUCING: The Golf and Environment Initiative

### AUDUBON BEGINS PROGRAM BASED ON COMMITMENT

**R**on Dodson believes that every person and organization involved with the game of golf has a role to play in protecting the natural environment. So to help those people and organizations do just that, Dodson, the CEO of Audubon International, has created the Golf and Environment Initiative.

Through the program, Dodson said he wants to provide the environmental education, tools, assistance and incentives needed for developing industry-

wide environmental commitment, action and results. Audubon International has been managing the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Programs for nearly 20 years.

"With an estimated 17,000 golf courses — covering an area equivalent to the states of Delaware and Rhode Island — across the United States, there are tremendous opportunities for the golf course industry and everyone associated with golf to play important roles regarding environmental stewardship in their communities," Dodson said. "To date, the responsibilities associated with course management and therefore the environment has been

placed squarely on the backs of golf course superintendents. While many have undertaken this responsibility with gusto, the future of golf depends on others stepping up and doing their part to assure the game remains viable both economically and environmentally. This not only includes others employed in the golf course business, but it most certainly includes golfers too."

Audubon recently launched a Web site for the Golf and Environment Initiative. It can be viewed at [www.golfandenvironment.org](http://www.golfandenvironment.org). "The purpose of this site is to serve as a clearing house of all information connected to golf and environment issues," Dodson said.