

Business briefs

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ing Greg Fukumitsu of Syngenta, Martin Howard of Trump National Golf Course, and Reed Yenny of Hillcrest Country Club. In the spirit of the evening, the winners donated their winnings to the American Cancer Society. The tournament raised \$61,000 for the society — the most in its history.

Scotts donates to Wee Foundation

Scotts/Landmark Seed will donate \$5 to the Wee One Foundation for every 25-pound bucket of its new Memorial Creeping Bentgrass that is sold.

The Wee One Foundation — established in memory of certified superintendent Wayne Otto — provides financial assistance to golf course management professionals who incur extensive medical expenses within their families. To qualify, applicants must have suffered a catastrophic medical hardship and be either a golf course superintendent, assistant golf course superintendent or an individual who works for a company or organization that serves the golf course management industry.

"Wayne Otto was a very special person," said Wayne Horman, director of seed sales and marketing for Scotts.

A "Dismal" opening? Not quite

Another celebrated golf course designed by a big-name architect has come to the Sandhills of Nebraska. In August, Jack Nicklaus officially christened Dismal River, located in Mullen, Neb., during the course's grand opening. In 1995, Ben Crenshaw and Bill Coore opened Sand Hills Golf Club in Mullen. It's regarded as the nation's top modern design.

Who would have thought that Mullen would become a destiny for such celebrated courses? Nicklaus, for one. "The experience of arriving at the Dismal River site was like stepping back in time and seeing what the dunes of Northeast Scotland must have looked like a hundred years ago," Nicklaus said.

Dismal River represents Nicklaus' 250th design.

A Variety on the Rise

SUPERINTENDENTS, RESEARCHERS WEIGH MERITS OF PASPALUM

By Curt Harler

In the constant battle to provide better varieties for greens and fairways, seashore paspalum is butting heads with bermudagrass as the variety to plant in the South. At several upper-end courses in Florida and the Carolinas, paspalum appears to be gaining ground. It also is doing well in Hawaii and inland areas like Arizona.

Paspalum has several advantages, including its much-touted requirement for less nitrogen and lower water needs than bermudagrass. While agreeing that paspalum has other advantages, United States Golf Association agronomist Todd Lowe cautioned superintendents at a recent meeting, "It is not a wonder grass."

"It has excellent drought tolerance, needs 50 percent less water than bermudagrass and less need for edging along cart paths," he said. "It is not as affected by cloudy or rainy weather. Its tight canopy sits the ball up high for golfers. It stripes up nicely."

In fact, the "wow factor" was cited by almost all the 50 researchers and superintendents who attended a recent paspalum seminar sponsored by Bayer Environmental Sciences and Environmental Turf in Naples, Fla.

Most superintendents in attendance either oversee courses where paspalum is used or have experimented with the grass. They represent high-budget courses with tight water restrictions, many using reclaimed or brackish water.

With the recognition paspalum has received, researchers are spending more time on breeding, insect and disease problems. Georgia plant breeder Paul Raymer noted the ability of paspalum to tolerate several stresses has driven its reputation. Yet, he said individual varieties show broad variation in their ability to cope with different stresses.



Most attendees at the paspalum seminar said they are "wowed" by the variety.

"There has been a lag in research with seashore paspalum," added Tim Murphy, weed specialist at the University of Georgia. "We need to know what pests — weeds, insects and diseases — are affecting it. One challenge is that many paspalums that are close relatives of seashore paspalum are considered weeds. The good news is we are now seeing seashore paspalum included on (weed and insect control) labels."

Lowe noted that paspalum does well at rates of 3 pounds to 6 pounds of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet per year. But he stressed that potassium and micronutrients should be kept under control. Clemson University professor Bert McCarty added that a lot of calcium is required — 15 pounds per 1,000 square feet per month at the high end — but much less in the summer.

Lowe pointed out that seashore paspalum has awesome root growth, but it can produce awesome pads of thatch. On the plus side, those long roots can go deep in the soil profile for water, he added.

There was general agreement that it was a bad idea to mix-and-match paspalum and bermudagrass. The consensus: Go with one or the other.

Harler is managing editor of Golfdom's TurfGrass Trends.