

Business briefs

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consultant to the club and also works with other facilities around the country. Prior to his tenure at Austin Golf Club, he was golf course superintendent at Baltimore Country Club in Maryland for eight years and at Prairie Dunes Golf Club in Hutchinson, Kan., for 12 years. Before that, he served at facilities in Nebraska and Illinois from 1960 to 1980.

Nutramax supplies the turf, ornamental and agricultural industries with L-amino acid based products for the health and wellness of plants.

Sage Golf Formed

There's a new management company on the block: Sage Golf Group Worldwide (SGG Worldwide).

Pete Davison, who has more than 40 years of experience in the club industry, including the past 25 years with the TPC Network, recently announced the formation of the full-service luxury golf management company specializing in third-party management contracts, as well as club development and construction for new and existing facilities in the United States and abroad. Davison is president and CEO of the company, which also offers consulting services.

SGG Worldwide is made up of most members of the management team that operated the PGA Tour's Tournament Players Club Network from its inception in 1980. The company will focus on premier world-class oriented properties in the private, resort and daily-fee sectors. Davison said discussions are under way for involvement with a number of leading developers and owners from the United States and other countries around the world.

Davison is the former senior vice president and chief operating officer of PGA Tour Golf Course Properties and the TPC Network. The other members of SGG Worldwide include Roberta McDougal, vice president of finance and accounting; Chuck Green, vice president of golf course maintenance operations and agronomy; Mike Diffenderfer, senior consultant marketing

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My Life as a Rough Fluffer

VOLUNTEER CHRONICLES HIS GOLF MAINTENANCE EXPERIENCE
AT THE WACHOVIA CHAMPIONSHIP

By Adam Slick

Editor's note: Adam Slick (right) is a marketing communications manager with Jacobsen, who volunteered his time at Quail Hollow Club in Charlotte, N.C., to help the course prepare for the Wachovia Championship in May. Jacobsen is the exclusive equipment provider to the Quail Hollow Club and an official sponsor of the Wachovia Championship.



It's 4:45 a.m. and the turf maintenance crew is up before the golfers, way before the fans and even before the earliest of the local birds (quail, of course). Heck, we might be the only ones up in North Carolina. For the gathered turf professionals and agronomists, this is a chance to prepare one of America's finest courses for Tiger, Phil, Vijay and the rest of the world's top players. For the volunteers, we're just happy to be alongside some of the biggest unsung heroes on the PGA Tour.

At this hour, coffee has little to no effect. We stand around grunting like bears as we wait for our leader to emerge and hand down his edict of assignments. My daydream of walking the famed 17th hole with a greens mower or mowing the fairways is interrupted as superintendent Jeff Kent appears to open proceedings. My curiosity turns to angst as the more glamorous mowing jobs (yes, there is such a thing) are given to volunteers who actually do this for a living. I anxiously await my name like the 10-year-old baseball player not wanting to be the last one picked. I eventually get news that I'll be "fluffing roughs" with a group. It sounds interesting until I learn my assignment is actually a euphemism for "raking grass."

I quickly ascertain that "fluffing rough" is the equivalent to starting in the mailroom at Microsoft: You have an important job and it's a great place to work, but it sure is a long way to the top. Our task, as the job description implies, is to fluff up the rough that the mowers mat down.

Before long, the sun is up. We return for a warm meal and share war stories with other fluffers. We watch the tournament unfold and hope someone — anyone — notices our work on the crisp, clean 5 inches of pristine grass surrounding the fairways. Of course, our work is unheralded and underappreciated — the best courses in the world purposely look as if they are placed there by Mother Nature. But even if one fan looked down at the tall grass, and thought, "That is some nice rough," then we did our job. We don't do it for the fame, we do it for the love of the game.

In all seriousness, we thank Jeff Kent and the entire Quail Hollow Club crew for letting us be a small part of something great. We are certainly proud to participate in what has become one of the PGA Tour's biggest events. We truly look at any job at Quail Hollow Club as a privilege — whether it be cutting the 17th green or raking the grass.

Who knows, maybe next year we can be in charge of getting rid of the gophers. ■