

Off The Fringe

Business briefs

Finchem on Golf Economy

PGA Tour Commissioner Tim Finchem shared his observations of the North American golf economy during his acceptance of the Donald Ross Award from the American Society of Golf Course Architects (ASGCA) recently. Finchem said things are tough for the golf development economy, but he sees the overseas market "growing nicely" and believes the Olympics will have a positive effect on the game long-term. Finchem said the credit crunch and slow-down in real estate development in North America has affected golf course development and renovation.

Rain Bird White Paper Examines Water Conservation

Rain Bird's newest industry white paper, "Water Conservation and the Green Industry," details the trends, issues and factors driving the water conservation movement and their impact on the green industry and its affiliates.

The third in a series of white papers providing a comprehensive review of the role of efficient irrigation as a key part of the solution to the global water scarcity problem, "Water Conservation and the Green Industry" continues the discussion of the issues raised in Rain Bird's first two white papers, "A Homeowner's Guide to Water-Efficient Landscapes" and "Irrigation for a Growing World."

"The extent to which conservation through efficient irrigation will be a long-term solution to water shortages depends on the extent to which the green industry and the general public is educated on outdoor water conservation," said Dave Johnson, Rain Bird's corporate marketing director.

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Pea Soup



METEOROLOGIST WILL BE WATCHING SKIES FOR THE INFAMOUS NORTHERN CALIFORNIA FOG DURING THE U.S. OPEN

By Bill Bryant

It may not be nice to fool Mother Nature, but predicting her next move will be greatly appreciated this month at the Pebble Beach Golf Links, where the rain-drenched nightmare of the 2009 U.S. Open hangs over the course like a thick layer of fog.

For their continually updated daily forecasts, Pebble Beach certified golf course superintendent Chris Dalhamer and Mike Davis, the United States Golf Association's director of rules and competitions, will turn to Greg Quinn, a 38-year-old meteorologist who works for Thor Guard, a Florida-based company that provides accurate advance warning of the potential for lightning and

other adverse weather conditions.

"My job is to make sure Chris and Mike know how their plan for the day's play could be affected by weather and how they might need to make adjustments," said Quinn, who will be working his 10th U.S. Open.

Unlike Bethpage Black, which was soaked by six to seven inches of rain during last year's tournament, Pebble Beach's biggest concern may be the infamous fog that can settle over the Monterey Peninsula and severely limit visibility. As Quinn says, "if you can't see 'em, you can't hit 'em."

June is usually the worst time of the year for fog along the craggy California coastline. It's when the term "June gloom" comes into play for golfers and residents alike.

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Hold Water

We've been covering myriad irrigation topics since day one. I recently spent some time scouring the irrigation stories in the *Golfdom* archives the past several years for things superintendents and other irrigation experts had to say about the state of golf course irrigation — from their courses' use of water to the industry's use of water. Their statements make you think about the present and future of golf course irrigation.

"I'm very proud of the fact this golf course has used nothing but reused water since it was built, and I think it's our obligation to do that." — **Wayne Kappauf, certified superintendent of the Island Country Club on Marco Island, Fla., on irrigation and responsibility.**

"I don't care if you're in New York, Chicago or Washington D.C., all business is going to go effluent at some point." — **Shawn Emerson, director of agronomy at Desert Mountain, a golf community with six Jack Nicklaus-designed tracks in Scottsdale, Ariz., on the future of effluent water use.**

"In the end, the biggest trick is to understand the equipment you have and make it work. What better way to intimately know your golf course than go out and touch

STATEMENTS MAKE YOU THINK ABOUT THE PRESENT AND FUTURE OF GOLF COURSE IRRIGATION

By Larry Aylward, Editor in Chief

every sprinkler head and measure the spacing between every head." — **Mark Clark, certified superintendent of Troon Golf & Country Club in Scottsdale, Ariz., on knowing your stuff.**

"Everybody's goal is to minimize the waste of water. I don't think we can eliminate the waste. Until we invent sprinklers that aren't circular, there's always going to be a certain amount of unevenness in the overlap patterns. We always strive for the best uniformity, but nobody has ever gotten there, and I don't think anybody ever will. But we can get closer and closer as we get better with the products and better with the application of the products."

— **Jim Barrett, a Roseland, N.J.-based irrigation consultant and president of James Barrett Associates, on improving technology.**

decrease in air temperature with increasing altitude is reversed and air above the ground is warmer than the air below it. Inversion layers are normally broken up by passing storm systems, but June can be a quiet time for storms in and around the Monterey Peninsula, meaning get the fog alerts ready.

Despite the sophisticated computer forecast models and satellite imagery at his fingertips, fog can be difficult to predict, Quinn says. "Even slight changes in wind direction can move

"It's going to change this golf course and my life. It's going to allow us to use water more efficiently. We should be able to use only the amount of water we absolutely need." — **Tim O'Neill, certified superintendent of the Country Club of Darien (Conn.), upon his course getting a new irrigation system several years ago. O'Neill's previous system had 240 heads; the new system increased that to 1,200 heads.**

"Every day is different, and it's all based on the look of the course, the feel of the course and the feeling in my gut." — **John Gurke, certified superintendent of Aurora (Ill.) Country Club, discussing his strategy for irrigation and disease control.**

"I can say for a fact that I'm using less water because I have much more control over what I'm doing than I did in the past. I was putting out 250,000 gallons a day before. With my new irrigation system, I'm putting out more like 160,000 gallons." — **Rick Slattery, superintendent of Locust Hill Golf Club in Rochester, N.Y., on the wonders of new technology.**

"There are components throughout an irrigation system where you have the option to purchase cheaper parts. Invariably, they don't last, and you end up spending a lot on labor to replace them." — **Curt Leming, superintendent of Glendale Lakes Golf Course in Geneva, Ill., on getting what you pay for.**

fog into one area and completely miss another area nearby."

Once the fog settles in or the rain starts falling, the main thing Dalhamer and Davis want to know is when the sun is going to return.

"We'll try to narrow down the window and give them our best thinking," Quinn says. "After that, it's their tournament. We just try to make their decisions a little easier for them." ■

Bryant is president of Bryant Communications, which represents Thor Guard.

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"That time of year, you can get fogged in for hours or even days at a time," Quinn says.

When Pebble Beach last hosted the U.S. Open in 2000, fog forced the suspension of play for 24 hours, beginning early in the first round.

The severity of the fog during this year's Open will be determined by what's known as temperature inversion layers, Quinn explains. Also called thermal inversions, inversion layers are areas where the normal