

Hold Water

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

By Larry Aylward, Editor in Chief

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

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.**

"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.**

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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

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

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." ■

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