

Off The Fringe

Balboa Park Golf Course Gets Major Overhaul

BY BETH GERACI

A ribbon cutting ceremony was held last month at The City of San Diego's Balboa Park Golf Course, marking the completion of a \$4 million renovation of the 96-year-old course's irrigation system.

The 27-hole facility comprises an 18-hole layout and a 9-hole layout. Work on the 18-hole layout began in February and was completed in September, said Paul Cushing, assistant deputy director of the City of San Diego Golf Division, which oversees maintenance on all four of San Diego's city golf courses. Work on the 9-hole layout began this September and was completed at the end of November, Cushing added.

"The golf course is in the best condition it's ever been in," he said. "It's just phenomenal. It's a crown jewel. The maintenance programs have been

lacking for many years and the course is now back."

With the overhaul, Cushing said Balboa's irrigation system is now ET-based and features new spacing, new HDPE main line laterals and more than 2,000 new sprinkler heads. "We're anticipating anywhere between 20 and 30 percent water savings, comparatively speaking," he said.

In addition to the irrigation system renovation, Balboa engaged in a separate restructuring of the golf courses, which ran concurrently with the irrigation system redo.

Cushing wouldn't elaborate on the cost of that project, but it was extensive. Among other things, the course was lengthened by about 200 yards, six new tees were added and turf was completely renovated and overseeded.

To improve its soil structure, Balboa has performed multiple aerifications and

applied more than 200 tons of gypsum over the past year. The maintenance team also trimmed trees and cleared overgrown brush on both courses, Cushing said. The programs will continue on both courses, he added, because golfers have enjoyed the benefits of both.

Cushing said new Balboa golf course superintendent Wayne Carpenter, formerly the superintendent at Torrey Pines, is "bringing a new set of standards and a higher level of maintenance and attention to detail" to the course overall. And given all of the renovation that's taken place at Balboa, "the course is more playable now," Cushing said.

The renovation disrupted play substantially, and many golfers stayed away during it, Cushing said, but now that word is spreading that the project is complete, "the place is jumping again."

PHOTO COURTESY: PAUL CUSHING



Balboa's 1st and 18th holes post-renovation, with the San Diego skyline in the distance

Quotable

“Let’s put one in every single state and one every second week. It’s that good of a symposium. I made it a point to ask (the superintendents) myself what they thought of it and everything was 100 percent positive.”

— Chuck Hicks, *Redexim*, when asked how the *Golfdom Summit* could be improved

Carolinas show sets record

The Carolinas Golf Course Superintendents Association has once again set a personal record with its conference and show. The 1,800-member association sold 1,364 educational seminar seats during the three-day conference last month, beating the previous mark of 1,281 set in 2007. Gross revenues of almost \$600,000 made for the second-highest in the event’s nearly 50-year history. Trade show exhibit space was sold out.

“We are extremely grateful for the continued support of our members and our industry partners,” says the association’s new president, Doug Lowe, CGCS from Greensboro (N.C.) Country Club. “We know everyone has experienced budget cuts of some kind in recent years. For superintendents and vendors to continue to invest their precious resources in this event is concrete proof of the value it delivers.”

Toro on a roll

The Toro Company announced recently that it has acquired the Graden greens roller product line, which includes the GSR 1200 greens roller. The acquisition provides entry into a new product category and broadens Toro’s offering to golf customers worldwide. Terms of the deal were not disclosed.

“This acquisition fills an important product gap in our core golf business and helps further strengthen our offering

in the greens care category,” said Darren Redetzke, vice president of Toro’s Commercial Business. “Rolling greens has become an important agronomic practice for golf courses that improves the health and playability of the greens. By leveraging our brand strength and extensive global distribution, we are well positioned for growth in this new segment.”

Graden’s other turf maintenance product lines, which include zero-turn mowers, verticutters and sand injectors, were not associated with this acquisition.

School is in with Syngenta

WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. — For the third consecutive year, Syngenta hosted a group of superintendents at Wake Forest University for the Syngenta Business Institute.

The three-day seminar utilizes Wake Forest faculty for classes in finances, negotiations and leadership. This year’s class included 26 superintendents from around the country.

The business-focused curriculum appealed to the superintendents attending.

“It’s unlike what I’ve seen in the past from GIS or any other classes I’ve gone to,” Jim Alwine, superintendent at Stockton (Calif.) Golf and Country Club, told *Golfdom*. “It’s not bugs, it’s not soils — it’s finances, it’s management and negotiating. I’ve taken away quite a few things I can implement at my course.”

Stephanie Schwenke, golf marketing manager for Syn-

Bill Davidson, CGCS at the Country Club of Naples (Fla.), discusses with the Syngenta Business Institute class the advantages of keeping a maintenance blog while Fred Dickman, CGCS at the Broadmoor Golf Club, Colorado Springs, Colo., looks on.



genta, said that hosting an event that didn’t focus on any of Syngenta’s products was key to the uniqueness of the event.

“We wanted to go beyond the agronomics that we believe superintendents are offered throughout the year through many different events,” Schwenke said in an interview that can be seen on *Golfdom TV*. “We want to enhance our relationships with superintendents and give them some different skill sets for challenges that we believe they’re being faced with every day at their courses.”