

Is Full

plenty of work to be done on The Country Club's 27 holes, starting with the bunkers.

When The Country Club was awarded the Ryder Cup in 1996, Spence rewarded himself and his crew with a work order to rebuild 15 of the course's 97 bunkers.

"The bunkers were a big concern going into the Ryder Cup because we hadn't done much to them since 1988 (when the course hosted the Open)," says Spence, who has been at The Country Club for about 15 years. "When the course was being evaluated for the Ryder Cup, our bunker sand was in need of replacement and many of the bunkers' edges were worn from play."

The revamped bunkers look new, but they have a rustic appearance, which is The Country Club's trademark look. The 250-acre course is also known for its natural, hilly landscape.

"It has that New England look," Kerry Haigh, senior director of tournaments for the PGA of America, says of the 117-year-old course. "It looks beautiful day in and day out."

The Country Club, like much of New England, is also teeming with history. Founded in 1882, it's the oldest country club in America and one of the founding members of the Amateur Golf Association of America, which later became the U.S. Golf Association. It was also the site of what some consider one of the greatest upsets in sports history. In 1913, a 20-year-old American amateur named Francis Ouimet defeated two of the greatest golfers on the planet, Britain's Ted Ray and Harry Vardon, to win the U.S. Open. Ouimet's victory helped spur more American interest in golf.

"The course is steeped in tradition," Haigh says. "It's going to be exciting to play the Ryder Cup there."

Go for the green

Besides the bunkers, Spence and his crew leveled out and reconfigured four championship tees. They also pruned many trees for safety reasons.

The greens needed no major work. Spence says they were well-received by golfers at the '88 Open and he expects the same for the Ryder Cup.

Continued on page 30



MONTANA PRITCHARD, PGA OF AMERICA

The Country Club at a glance

Championship yardage: 7,023 yards

Primary grasses: tees, bentgrass; fairways, bentgrass/Poa annua; greens, bentgrass/Poa annua.

Terrain: rolling and rocky.

Average tee size: 1,800 square feet.

Average green size: 3,200 square feet.

Stimpeter rating for tournament play: 11.5 feet.

Sand bunkers: 96 on championship course; 120 on entire course.

Water hazards: seven.

Soil conditions: silt-loam.

Green construction soil mix: push-up with sand layer on top.

Source of water: wells and pond.

Cut for tournament play: tees, 3/8 inch; fairways, 3/8 inch; greens, 1/8 inch; rough 4 inches.

Wildlife on course: coyotes, fox, squirrels, raccoons, hawks.

SOURCE: GCSAA

BY GEOFF SHACKELFORD

Ben Around

**The veteran captain Crenshaw speaks
with Golfdom on the setup at Brookline,
design and the dreaded Stimpmeter**

Editor's note: In a recent interview conducted inside a Pacific Palisades, Calif., coffee shop, Golfdom's Geoff Shackelford and 1999 Ryder Cup captain Ben Crenshaw talked about course maintenance, Crenshaw's love of golf architecture, the state of the game and preparations for the upcoming Ryder Cup.

Crenshaw recalls how during an airplane flyby, he was mesmerized by the eroded dunes that would one day become part of Sand Hills CC, his most distinguished design with partner Bill Coore. He also shares his thoughts on everything from ryegrass and the Stimpmeter's effects on the game to what he would do if he was the USGA's executive committee and the PGA Tour commissioner for one day.

In general, how do you expect The Country Club at Brookline, Mass., to play for the Ryder Cup, particularly with regard to rough height?

Crenshaw: (I favor) having something that's fairly conducive to match play. To me, that means rough that runs 2 1/2 to 3 1/2 inches, maybe 4. The superintendent, Bill Spence, says the course will reflect the kind of year the (Boston area has had) weatherwise. It's a difficult thing trying to figure exactly how to take advantage of your team. We do have some long hitters, but so do the Europeans.

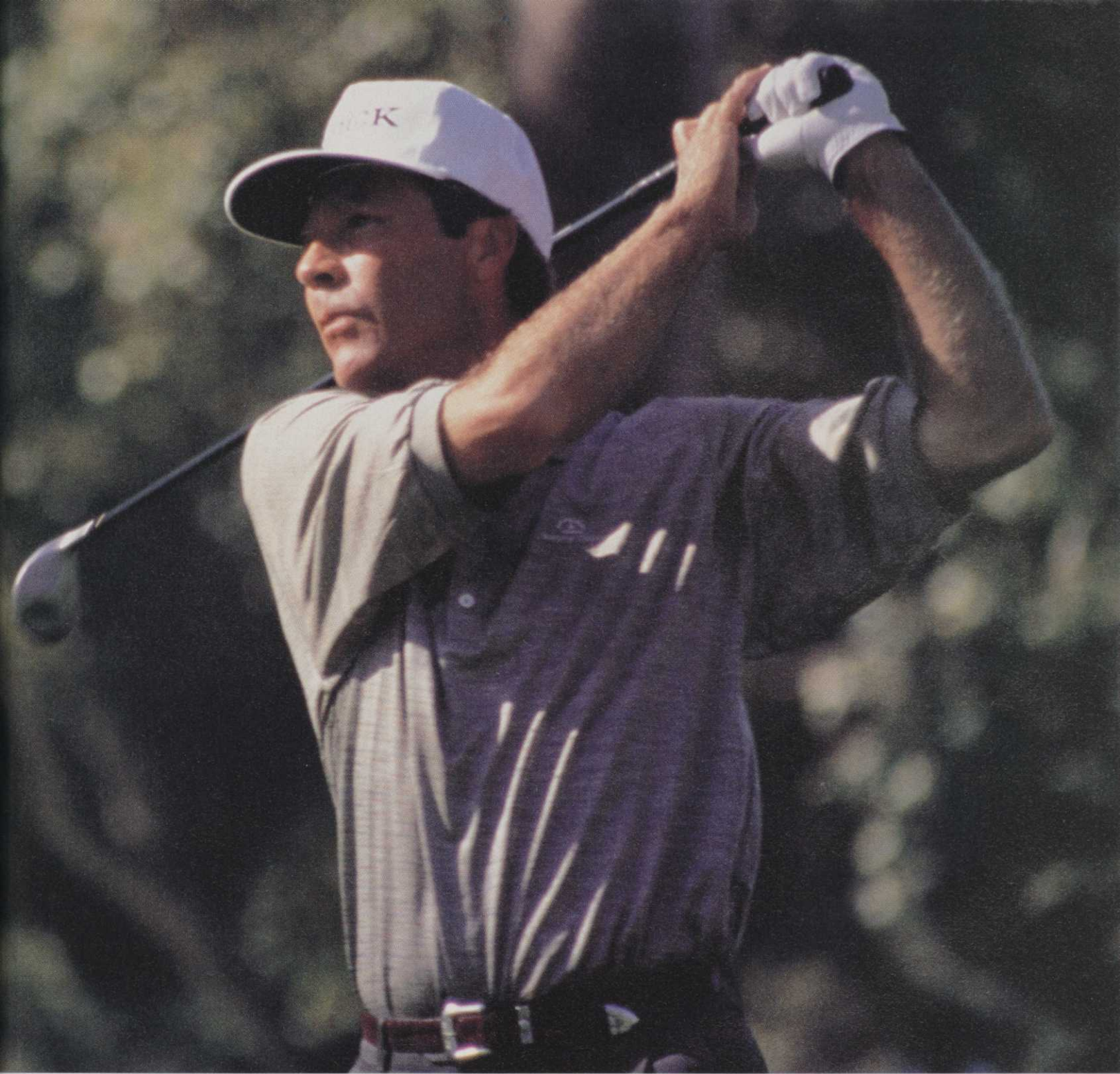
A lot of people don't understand how proficient the Europeans are. They've seen all kinds of conditions. (At the 1995 Ryder Cup), Lanny Wadkins (team captain) grew heavy rough around the greens at Oak Hills CC (in Rochester, N.Y.), and it didn't phase them. I'm probably going to pay more attention to the rough around the greens than around the fairways.

Chipping areas?

Crenshaw: I don't think so. Brookline doesn't lend itself to that.

Can you name a handful of designers that people should study in terms of the greens complex?

Crenshaw: (Alister) Mackenzie and (Perry) Maxwell were incredible green builders. They had the most vivid shapes. People should study Maxwell's convex slopes. Gosh, they're fascinating. Very tough, too. Mackenzie's greens were most fascinating for their actual shapes and outlines.



The Stimpmeter has cut down both in our playability and in our day-to-day decisions on what you can do with a green. I couldn't agree more with Pete Dye about undulations and keeping greens too fast. Pine Valley is a great example of a place where, basically, it should be the goal to get the greens to a certain speed so that you open up the possibilities of more pin placements. But the faster speeds render a lot of pin placements on those greens obsolete.

To my mind, if you can't defend a green in terms of its undulations and its character, then you play right into

the hands of technology. There are some naysayers who are going to say, "How are you going to challenge anyone with a Stimpmeter reading of eight?" Well, if they had some undulations to putt over, and you had to put your ball in the proper compartment, that's how you challenge them.

Which designers should every student of course design study in terms of bunkering?

Crenshaw: The more pictures (of classic old courses) I
Continued on page 26



Dylox. The second fastest way to kill insects.



In as little as 24 hours after you apply DYLOX® Insecticide, your grub problems aren't just gone, they're splattered. Because DYLOX is the fastest grub control around. And as everyone knows, speed kills. For more information, contact Bayer Corporation, Garden & Professional Care, Box 4913, Kansas City, MO 64120. (800) 842-8020. www.protect-your-turf.com

ALWAYS READ AND FOLLOW LABEL DIRECTIONS.
© 1999 Bayer Corporation Printed in U.S.A. 99S17A0050

Circle No 111



Ben Around

Continued from page 23

see, it seems like everyone did artful bunkers back then. It wasn't just two or three guys. Everyone, it seemed, strived for having either something that mimics nature or portrays erosion. There are a million people who will say it looks unkempt, but it's the very thing we try and work on.

Do you think many modern courses are devoid of strategy? If so, why?

Crenshaw: I'll say this in defense of modern courses, and I mean it. Some guys would like to do some things, but they're harnessed in a lot of ways, particularly with time constraints. Sometimes the piece of ground doesn't allow you to do things without completely rearranging the landscape. It's not always the architect's fault. I can't say that in every case. There are a lot (of architects) who try to put thought into it, but it's a race to cut that ribbon on opening day.

Ben Crenshaw at a glance

Age: 47

Residence: Austin, Texas

Career victories: 23

Major victories: 1, 1995 Masters

Turned professional: 1973

First PGA win: 1973, San Antonio-Texas Open

Other achievements: four-time Ryder Cup Team member (1981, '83, '87, '95); three-time NCAA champion, 1971-73, University of Texas.

If a club asked you to cite some examples of excellent restoration work, what courses would you recommend that they visit and study?

Crenshaw: Baltimore CC is excellent. I wish people knew what they tackled there — what Doug Petersan (the former course superintendent) did and the club president did. They took the bull by the horns and said, "Look, we are going to protect this in the right way." And look at the results.

A lot of it does involve trees. It's myriad things that trees do to affect courses. The two factors are: One, they cut down on the avenues of play that the architect intended; and two, the superintendent can't grow any grass.

It's extremely important for people to compile documentation and photos to understand these courses. Photos are the benchmark of any restoration. I just have to say to the people out there who have these classic courses: Protect them; do as little as possible to them and preserve them. To me, it's absolutely no different

than what's at the Getty Art Museum or the National Gallery of Art in Washington. You find impressionism, all the things that you view in art, and that's what these courses are — art.

How much has the quality of maintenance of PGA Tour courses changed since you started playing in the early '70s?

Crenshaw: The grooming of the grass is better; the putting surfaces themselves are so much better. The fairways provide much better lies, which is not necessarily always a great thing, but it's more consistent. The greens are immaculate, just immaculate. My gosh, way too many people need to understand that if the surfaces are prepared better, they're going to shoot better. It's gotten so good that it has an effect on the scores these guys shoot every week.

The courses are groomed to peak when they host a tournament, but that reminds me of the wonderful line that (early 1900s architect) H.S. Colt said about Sunningdale GC (in Berkshire, England) after he walked the course and said, "The lies are too good."

Then there's all the ryegrass. I'm sick of the rye, I'm in it all the time (laughs). It's a cultivated grass; it doesn't grow in the wild. Not like a bermuda. Rye and those who sell it, I'm sure, guarantee color and a certain density, but I think most of it's for color.

Talk about Sand Hills GC. Is it true you kept an article on the Sand Hills region in Mullen, Neb., many years ago from National Geographic magazine?

Crenshaw: It was in an art publication, *Southwest Art*, on the region and the cattle ranches out there. There was also an article in *National Geographic*, but *Southwest Art* was the first one. Great pictures. I cut it out and just stared at it. All those eroded dunes. I thought, my God. Then I saw a picture in *The Golf Course*, and then, Dick Youngscap, (Sand Hills founder) called. We broke our necks looking at stuff there. I'll never forget, we did a fly-over in an airplane and we just looked at it and laughed, thinking how good it looked. And then we got out on the property and it got better.

Talk about your architecture partner, Bill Coore.

Crenshaw: I've described him as one of the most fortunate things to ever happen to me. He has given me a great appreciation for what we try to do. He's extremely knowledgeable and patient. He is very good personnel-wise. He treats all of our guys with a lot of respect. He tells them to have fun and they do. And it's an integral part of how we believe that it's as

Continued on page 28

"(Bill Coore) has given me a great appreciation for what we try to do."



Some things that offer true performance and speed require special maintenance.

Like a fine sports car, PENN G-2 creeping bentgrass is at the top of its class for performance. But PENN G-2 *won't* drive up your maintenance budget or require excessive upkeep. In fact, when it comes to cost efficient management, PENN G-2 runs circles around most other grasses. Extremely fine, dense and upright, this grass delivers the truest putts imaginable when mowed at .125 to .100". And nothing beats it for practical maintenance because PENN G-2 prefers golfer-friendly grooming like



light, frequent verticutting and topdressing and occasional spiking. Plus PENN G-2 can really take the heat and is so deep rooted that it requires moderate watering and little or no syringing. Those are

benefits any superintendent can appreciate. Moderate fertility, disease resistance, reduced

Poa annua invasion, outstanding wear tolerance, practically non-existent winter "purpling" and consistent year-round quality are

some others. PENN G-2. True performance like a sports car, but with one very important exception. No special, high-cost maintenance required.

PENN G-2 proved it can take the heat at the 1999 U.S. Open at Pinehurst No. 2

No wonder more than 400 golf courses are already using it. Find out more from your sales representative or call 800.321.5325.

Some things don't.

LESCO®
GROW WITH US.™

LESCO is a registered trademark and Grow With Us and the PENN G-2 logo are trademarks of LESCO, Inc. PENN G-2 is a registered trademark name of Tru-2-Care Corp.

“If you need intricate drawings, we are not your architects.”

Continued from page 26

much their work, with occasional guidance from us. A lot of times Bill has told me that if you leave these guys alone, they do beautiful work that can't be improved on, and he made me believe that. He's a real friend.

After the Ryder Cup, do think you two will stick to your current method of designing and building about two courses a year?

Crenshaw: Well, we're just comfortable with it. Neither Bill nor I have ever done anything real fast. We don't like to be rushed.

Have you run into many problems with developers, cities or counties because Coore and Crenshaw don't do extensive plans? Or do you just work with people who understand how you work?

Crenshaw: We tell them up front: If you want some documents, we will do the most rudimentary ones. If you need intricate drawings, we are not your architects. We just don't do it. It's not because we can't. We just don't work that way. For some reason, it seems to me that if you plan something, it's going to change in the field anyway. And you've got to have an ability to change when we are talking about small details. It's not like you're changing green sites and tees. We're not changing entire holes. In terms of features, bunkers, shapes and outlines of greens, those are things that change in the field. The more you get into the ground, the more you realize that rigid documents can be a problem.



Crenshaw and Coore transformed a desolate chunk of Nebraska into a masterpiece – Sand Hills.

GEOFF SHACKELFORD

Besides making the paddle grip legal again, are there any other rule changes you would make if you were the USGA executive committee for a day?

Crenshaw: Well, I think the putter, the long putter, needs to go. I'd get rid of it (laughs). I just don't think it's a free expression of the stroke, among a lot of other things. And the golf ball. Whatever the overall distance standard is, I'd have to look hard at that, especially now, and it has been coming for a long time.

What about a competition ball?

Crenshaw: I'm warming to that. Jack (Nicklaus) came forward with that thought very early. And he has been very consistent with that, and he's right. The ball is one component of it all, but it is extremely important. Shafts, components of the head are another thing; the length of the club is another thing to be looked at. I don't see why it needs to be more than 46 inches long. That's a good cut-off point.

You're commissioner of the PGA Tour for a day. Anything you would do to the general makeup of the Tour schedule or direction it's headed?

Crenshaw: We should have fewer tournaments. I worry about all of these tournaments running together and losing their importance. How are you supposed to differentiate? I worry about a dilution factor.

It seems to me there was a great effort to put a lot more product out that contained golf, which got the prize money up to take care of a lot of players. That was the thrust and that's OK, but still it should be the quality of the events. I just don't know what these tournament sponsors are going to do to compete. A guy just can't, especially with the World Tour, play more than 24 events.

What about PGA Tour courses and setup?

Crenshaw: They do a pretty good job. If somebody took away Riviera CC, Colonial, Westchester and maybe one or two more, say Pebble Beach, it's hard for me not to look on the side of tradition, which helped build our Tour.

Imagine what the L.A. Open would be without Riviera CC? When (PGA Tour) Commissioner (Timothy) Finchem took the job, he stated that his goal was to protect and promote our brand product. And there is a vast complexity as to how to interpret that, but I have always fallen on the side of looking at those who have come before us both in terms of players and places, and that's just far too important to jettison.

If I'm accused of living in the past, so be it. I don't care anymore. ■

Enhance your turf maintenance program all season long.

MACRO-SORB®

L-AMINO ACID BIOFERTILIZERS
CALCIUM DEFICIENCY CORRECTOR



Plants save energy when treated with L-amino acids. The saved energy is used for other processes resulting in a healthy and efficient plant that can withstand stress and the onslaught of disease.

Use MACRO-SORB® *radicular* throughout the growing season to enhance root development, especially when aerating, hydrojecting, overseeding, sodding, or when you are watering in other agrochemical products.

Use MACRO-SORB® *foliar* throughout the year, especially in stressed areas, to increase chlorophyll formation and photosynthetic capacity, and to enhance the effectiveness of other foliar applied products.

Use QUELANT®-Ca (calcium chelated with amino acids) at least once a month to keep calcium levels sufficient within the plant for stronger cell walls, turgidity, and increased disease resistance.

Tank-mix MACRO-SORB® and QUELANT®-Ca with fungicides, PGRs, herbicides, or liquid fertilizers to enhance the efficiency of the agrochemicals and to improve the overall health and quality of your turfgrass all season long.

For more information about MACRO-SORB® call Nutramax Laboratories at: 800-925-5187

Circle No. 107



Agriculture Division
Baltimore, Maryland

1-800-925-5187

www.nutramaxlabs.com



His Cup is Full

Continued from page 21

Speaking of the greens, they are puny at The Country Club, averaging 3,200 square feet. The smallest green at No. 4 measures a mere 2,100 square feet.

But these greens are forgiving, unlike the Pinehurst No. 2 greens, which were downright diabolical to golfers at this year's rough-and-tough U.S. Open. Right, John Daly?

"It was grueling to watch players hitting very long shots into those greens when you knew what the results would be," Spence says.



"We would like to have the course play as firm and fast as possible," Spence says.

But don't worry, Tiger. That won't be the case at The Country Club.

"Our greens are flat," Spence says with no apologies. "A well-hit shot, even out of the rough, has a good chance of being well-received on a green."

Keep in mind that the Ryder Cup, pitting top American golfers against their European equivalents, is a match-play event. That means players win with holes, not by strokes.

Spence and Haigh say they don't want the course to play a factor in the outcome of the tournament. For instance, if David Duval drives his shot 300 yards into the rough, Spence doesn't want him to be limited to pitching his shot back on the fairway to set up for a third shot because the grass is ankle deep. He would want Duval to go for the green. Hence, the crowd would be intrigued and excited.

"We want the players to be able to let it all out," says Spence, noting that the rough will be kept at 2.5 inches to 3 inches in length. "We want the course to be neutral. (U.S. Ryder Cup captain) Ben Crenshaw says he wants the course to be fair for everyone."

Crenshaw, who played the course as a junior in 1968

and again in the 1988 U.S. Open, says The Country Club is not a straight-forward American golf course.

"There's a lot to learn about it, a lot to feel," he says. "It's a different course. You would not say on paper that the Americans would have a distinct edge."

Green ribbons

The Country Club didn't absorb a drop of rain during June, but Spence was hoping for even more Mojave Desert-like weather in August and September. You see, Spence was in charge of constructing 20 bleachers around the course to seat about 15,000 people, in addition to erecting nearly 60 corporate chalets and tents, and seven jumbo-sized television screens. Rain mixed with forklifts and other heavy trucks used in the setup would have caused a muddy mess.

The sunny and arid spring and early summer also had the course looking parched in spots in early July. But Spence wasn't worried. In fact, the course had achieved the appearance that he and Crenshaw had hoped for: lush-green fairways and greens flanked by dormant rough with a straw-brown color.

"We look at it as these green ribbons of fairways, greens and tees running through a brown piece of land," says Spence, noting that the tees, fairways and greens are normally the only areas that are irrigated.

Spence is hoping the weather cooperates with the event. Borrowing a line from Jimmy Buffett: "Don't try to reason with hurricane season." Spence knows that much is true, but he still has a crisis management plan just in case a whirlwind blows through. September, after all, is peak hurricane season on the East Coast. Spence recalls when Hurricane Gloria hit the Boston area in mid-September of 1985.

"It leveled us, and we had to keep the club closed for a few days," he says. "Everything we do to prepare (for the Ryder Cup), we have to think about the possibility of a hurricane."

Because The Country Club features many trees, especially lining the fairways, Spence has about 100 arborists on call to help clean up if a hurricane happens to hit and flatten them. But Spence is hoping for a few typical early fall days, which he describes as splendid in New England. And dry.

"We would like to have the course play as firm and fast as possible," he says.

And Spence would love to see the Americans, who have won 23 of 32 matches with two ties, win back the prestigious title after losing it in 1997. But with the outcome, the realistic Spence is sure of one thing.

"The team that loses will more than likely have a few things to say about the golf course," he says. "The team that wins will probably love it." ■