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Circle No. 113

Continued from page 30

Bundschuh believes that wearing a hard hat is less important than wearing safety glasses and hearing protection. Even though he believes hard hats are necessary, ClubCorp's Carmack agrees.

"You have more accidents with workers running chain saws, weed eaters and lawn mowers than you will with someone getting dinged on the head with a golf ball," Carmack says.

If OSHA ever decides to strictly enforce its hard hat regulation, would golfers have to wear them? That'll be the day.

Legal issues

Assume that a golf course worker who's not wearing a hard hat is struck in the head by an errant golf ball and injured. Whether or not OSHA cites the course for safety negligence, the injured employee is eli-



gible for workman's compensation.

"Fault has nothing to do with it," says Gary Crist, a lawyer representing the National Golf Foundation. "Whether or not the employee was complying with safety guidelines is irrelevant. The employee is still entitled to whatever workman's compensation provides."

The issue could also affect golfers. If OSHA ever decides to strictly enforce its hard hat regulation, would golfers have to wear them?

Fratto says no because there's a difference between the two groups. Players are more attuned to what's going around them, as in who's hitting behind them. A player is also more inclined to hear another golfer yell "fore," rather than a maintenance worker who's riding a noisy fairway mower.

Insurance companies may also have a say in the hard hat issue. For instance, a course might have a lower insurance premium if it requires workers to wear hard hats.

As Bundschuh says, the hard hat issue always provides fodder for discussion in golf course safety seminars. But discussions don't lead to any exact interpretation.

"It doesn't seem to get any clearer," Bundschuh says. ■

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- **Class B** – These are helmets for employees doing electrical work. They protect against falling objects and high-voltage shocks and burns.
- **Class C** – Designed for comfort, these lightweight helmets offer limited protection. They protect workers from bumping against fixed objects, but do not protect against falling objects or electric shock.

Source: OSHA

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Circle No 135

"Does the club have a name?"

"St. Andrews at Spark Plug Mall! We broke concrete this week."

— Dan Jenkins in *"Designers and Developers"*

The recent boom in golf course construction means hundreds of new tracks have arrived in the past few years. With the new crop of layouts comes a dire shortage of names.

I concede the world of golf doesn't need another Hillcrest or Riverside. But has anyone taken notice of how lame, moronic and embarrassing golf course names have become in the past 20 years? Am I the only one who blushes for the honest, hard-working folks who have to work at these places?

At least the names are easy to break down into categories:

• **Futile attempts to make a name "looke elegante"** — You know these names. Someone takes a simple word like Bay, Point or Old and tacks on an "e" in a feeble attempt to convince people that the course has ties to old(e) money.

• **Dial 911** — Fire marshals must cringe when hearing all the variations on "Burning." Oaks, ridges, bushes and even sands are ablaze at one golf course.

• **The links tie-in** — It's a fascinating thing when tree-lined American inland golf courses become links. If you award a winner for "Best Performance by an Oxymoron in a Golf Course Title," this is your category. Just run an Internet search on links and tree names, and you'll get a kick out of all the so-called links that also have tall woody plants. And in case you don't understand my point, well, how do I put this gently: There are no trees on authentic links courses!

• **Animals doing strange things** — Golf courses have quails and blackwolves running, rabbits dancing, eagles doubled, puppies in creeks and raccoons doing things we can't put in print. You could populate a very odd zoo with these wacky creatures.

• **Strange pines** — Again, there are plenty of ways to use pines in a pleasant, simple way that stands up over time — Pine Tree, Pine Valley, Pinehurst, etc.

But why the desire to treat pines like a con-

Let's Stop Giving Golf a Bad Name

BY GEOFF SHACKELFORD



THE BOOM IN GOLF
HAS MEANT MORE
COURSES — AND
MORE LAME NAMES

ortionist? We've got golf courses with pines that are bent, circled, coos'd, dodgered, moody, quiet and knotted.

Talk about brutal material for the logo people to work with.

• **The (choose Lakes, Links Quarry, Experience, Challenge, Tradition) at the (fill in course locale here)** — These are the names that will eventually (if not already) earn the "what were they thinking award?" Fifteen years from now, golfers will look at this plethora of long-winded designations like we look at bell-bottoms today. You know the ones: The names always have a rather nauseous "Golf in the Kingdomesque" resonance. Things like, "The Soulful Challenge at Chicken Soup Beach."

• **The "National" Disease** — This is my personal favorite. Inserting "National" in the title usually indicates a course desperate to host a national event while remaining ultra-exclusive the other 51 weeks of the year. Such courses take a location, slap on "National" after the area (even if it sounds wretched) and think they have the Augusta National of their regions. Do any of these places actually have national memberships?

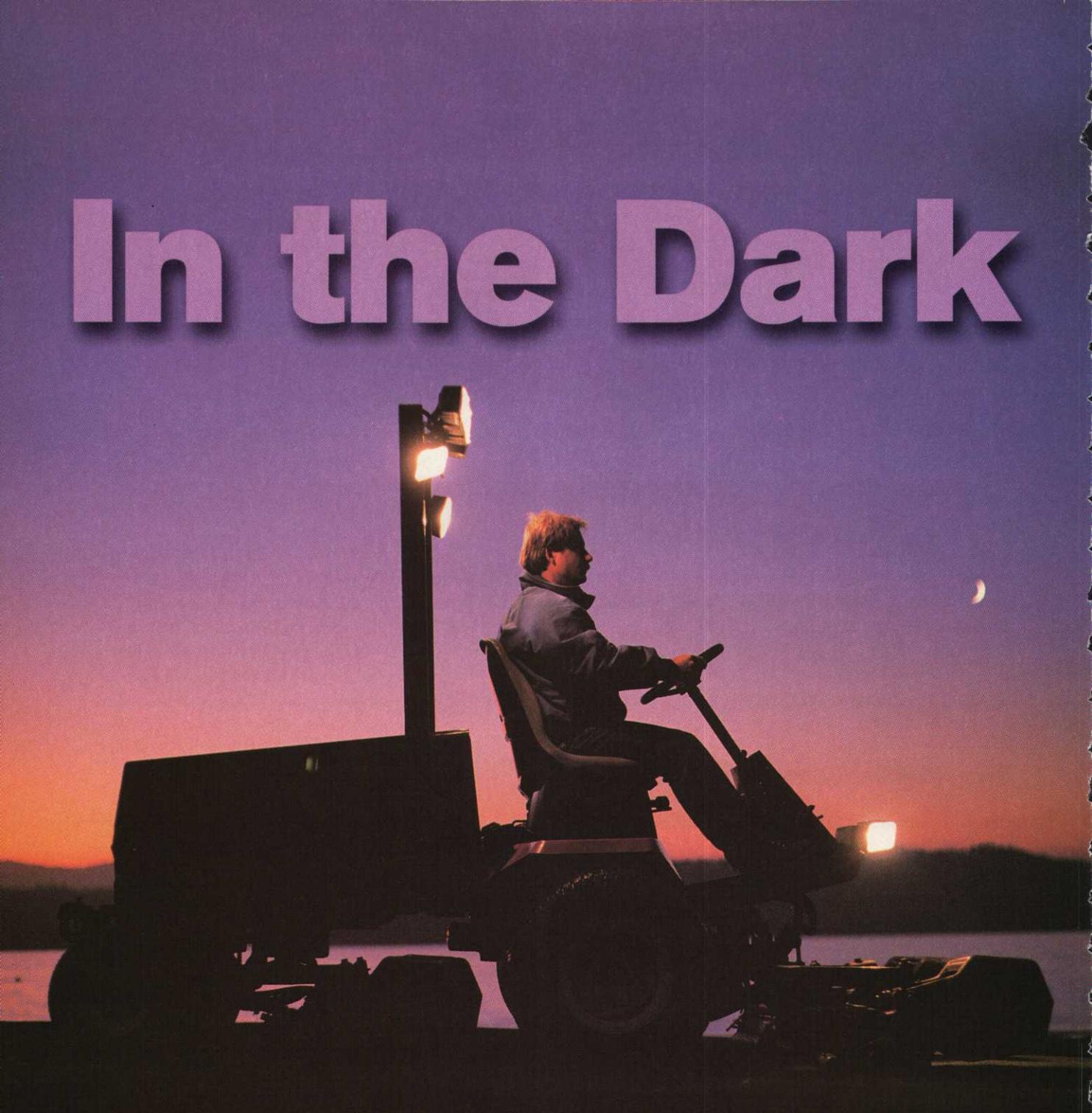
The title of your golf course (or should I plug in upscale daily fee here) says everything about your facility. If you want to sound like some cheesy Disneyland franchisee, go ahead.

But if you want golfers to respect the course or you want your staff to take pride in the place, give it a simple and creditable name that pays respect to your region or something native to the terrain your course is built on.

The name of this game is simple: Don't overdo it.

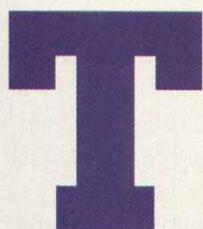
Geoff Shackelford's latest book is simply named The Golden Age of Golf Design. He can be reached at geoffshackelford@aol.com.

In the Dark

A man in a dark jacket is operating a maintenance vehicle, possibly a generator or lighting tower, at night. The vehicle is silhouetted against a dark sky with a crescent moon and a low sun on the horizon. A large, illuminated light tower stands behind the vehicle, casting a glow. The scene is set outdoors, possibly on a golf course or a large property.

Nighttime is the right time for a few maintenance operations,
but working after dusk isn't viable for most staffs

BY SHANE SHARP



The scene resembles something out of *Star Wars*. The sun has set on the finely manicured grounds at the Coeur d'Alene Resort GC in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, but the dark course abounds with flashing lights that dance on fairways and greens. No, there's not a covert operation going on, and what's happening at Coeur d'Alene is hardly top secret. It's just business as usual.

The golf course is lit up like a night game at Yankee Stadium because Coeur d'Alene's golf course maintenance staff, headed by superintendent John Anderson, is in high gear. Mowers with beaming headlights traverse fairways like tractor-trailers rumbling down the interstate at night. Such a full-scale nightly maintenance program is a sight to behold — and uncommon among U.S. golf courses.

"We've been doing the majority of our heavy maintenance at night since 1992," Anderson says.

Anderson's reason for working late has to do with Coeur d'Alene's "great guest moment" policy. "We want to provide the best golfing experience possible for our guests, and part of that is not to have equipment running while they play," Anderson explains.

The last tee time at Coeur d'Alene is about 3:30 p.m., followed by employee tee times. The maintenance program begins soon after.

Pioneers in the nighttime maintenance concept, the Coeur d'Alene staff has had tremendous success in keeping its course conditioned under the watchful eyes of the creatures of the night, Anderson says. In the summer, the course's nightshift begins at 4 p.m. and continues until around midnight. But running equipment well into the night raises a number of challenges that have limited night work to only a handful of course maintenance = operations.

Pros and cons

Players may walk away from Coeur d'Alene amazed at the peace and quiet they experienced while playing the course. But Coeur d'Alene is one of the few courses where play-

ers won't see or hear maintenance workers before noon because implementation of full-scale maintenance operations at night is having trouble catching on.

The benefits to maintaining courses at night are lack of player interference, grass cuts better because it's not wet, and cooler temperatures are easier on workers and machinery. However, there are factors that limit courses from getting anything done at night, and most golf facilities target only specified maintenance activities for after-hours.

"We do all of our chemical applications at night, so we don't interfere with play," says Mark Skeen, superintendent at Heatherwood GC in Springboro, Ohio.

Skeen says there are drawbacks to mowing at night. For instance, a hydraulic leak on a mower could go unnoticed in the dark. Even if it was spotted, there wouldn't be a mechanic around to fix it.

In Myrtle Beach, most courses aerify greens at night or perform spot maintenance — tasks that don't require mechanics to be on duty or won't disturb tourists and residents who stay in nearby homes and villas.

Matt Sapochak, general manager at the Winyah Bay GC in Georgetown, S.C., formerly mowed fairways until 10:30 p.m. at Myrtle Beach's Deerfield Plantation when he worked there from 1994 to 1998. But pressure from residents to reduce evening noise led Sapochak and other Grand Strand superintendents to pack it in early.

Try keeping your mowers out at night in the sunshine state, and you may run into the same objections. John Foy, director of the USGA's Florida Region Greens Section, notes that most Florida courses are surrounded with houses, and maintenance crews aren't permitted to work past 10 p.m. most of the time because of local ordinances.

Homes and mechanical issues are not the only obstacles to running full-scale night maintenance operations. In the Southwest, mowing at night takes a backseat to irrigation.

It makes more sense for superintendents to water their golf courses in the cool of the evening in the water-scarce region.

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“Nighttime mowing is something we’ll see more of, but it’s not revolutionizing the business as we know it.”

— Warren Mitchell,
John Deere

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“The conflict in Arizona, that other places may not have, is our watering requirements are much greater,” says Kevin Smith, president of the Cactus and Pine GCSA and CGCS at the Golf Club at Eagle Mountain. “Our irrigation systems run well into the evening, so it would be difficult for us to get out on the course at that time. Even if we did, the mowing conditions would be horrible.”

But just because you can’t mow at night in the Southwest doesn’t mean you can’t take on other projects. Danny Fielder, superintendent at Sunrise Vista GC at Nellis AFB in Las Vegas, is an experienced night worker. Where many superintendents see obstacles in working at night, Fielder sees opportunity. “It presents a better public relations image for the course,” Fielder says, explaining that he and his crew oversee at night so they don’t bother players in the day.

Surprisingly, an issue that doesn’t stop courses from advocating working at night is safety. Several superintendents say that if night maintenance operations were introduced or expanded at their courses, adequate lighting and training would eliminate their safety concerns.

At Coeur d’Alene, lights installed on equipment and additional free-standing lights provide enough illumination to make employees feel as safe as if they were working during the day, Anderson says. Employees also get as much work done as they can late in the day and don’t take breaks until it gets dark.

Anderson says workers only work a few hours in the dark during the summer. When the days get shorter, the workers begin their shifts early so the number of hours they work in the dark remains constant.

Coeur d’Alene workers also aren’t permitted to work at night until they complete an operational safety checklist that’s signed off by Anderson, the mechanic and Mark Kitchen, the course’s night superintendent.

“We haven’t had one injury from working in the dark,” Anderson says. “We’re very accurate in our night mowing.”

The nocturnal future

While few facilities roll out the nighttime equipment that Coeur d’Alene does, numerous courses undertake some form of maintenance before and after daylight. Equipment

manufacturers have responded accordingly by offering mowers and other machinery with lights. High beams can be outfitted on most equipment by request.

In light of the advantages and disadvantages of working at night, will the practice be the next titanium driver of golf course maintenance? Or will its popularity amount to the long putter?

Warren Mitchell, administrative manager of Worldwide Marketing Development, a marketer of John Deere equipment, is not convinced that working at night is the wave of the future.

“Nighttime mowing is something we’ll see more of, but it is not revolutionizing the business as we know it,” he says. “Many of the greens mowers and fairway units can have lights on them because most courses are cutting before the break of dawn, not necessarily at night.”

But all signs point to more courses undertaking periodic, routine maintenance activities such as aerification, overseeding and spraying at night while leaving the mowing to the Coeur d’Alenes and other courses with distinctive goals.

“You would have to have the budget for it and have a mechanic on board,” Skeen says. “We’ll think about doing anything we can do if we’re not interfering with the players, but part of the fun of this job is seeing the sun come up.”

Ken Happ, regional superintendent for American Golf and superintendent at Fowlers Mill GC in Chesterland, Ohio, often has his crew mow tee boxes and fairways at night, but greens are cut at night only if the course has a special event the next day.

“Bottom line is we need to get the job done, and it’s easier to do some things at night, like spraying,” Happ says.

Some say that electric mowers could bolster the amount of nighttime maintenance undertaken at courses around the country because they don’t roar like gas mowers. But electric mowers probably can’t change maintenance budgets, desert heat or the powerful inertia of the status quo. So don’t pawn those sunglasses just yet. ■

Shane Sharp is a golf writer from Charlotte, N.C., and is senior writer of TravelGolf.com.

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Circle No. 116

Don't Cry Over Spilled Chemicals

Preparation can minimize the damage caused by an accident

By Frank H. Andorka Jr., Associate Editor

Bill Spence, superintendent of The Country Club at Brookline, Mass., remembers the day the tractor tipped on the 17th fairway, spilling 700 pounds of granular Turcam insecticide.

Spence was stunned. How was he going to deal with a chemical spill that large?

"We got together with all of our workers and tried to figure out how we were going to deal with this," Spence says. "We wanted to fix the problem while causing the least amount of damage to the environment. It was a tense scene."

Spence's story could be a superintendent's worst nightmare.

With golf courses often perceived by the general public as environmental menaces, a chemical spill can quickly turn into a public relations disaster. But with a well-conceived plan and a well-trained staff, most spills aren't worth weeping over.

Designing a proper storage facility starts the plan off on the right foot (see sidebar). Nancy Richardson, director for Audubon International's Signature program, says her organization recommends storing chemicals in a separate building, away from other equipment.

The building should be constructed with concrete and sealed with an impermeable substance. Build a 6-inch berm around the edges to contain any spills. The key is to keep superintendents in control during a spill.

"If you keep all your chemicals in one building, you know where to focus your cleanup plan," Richardson adds. "It's imperative to do

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ILLUSTRATION BY DAN BEEDEY