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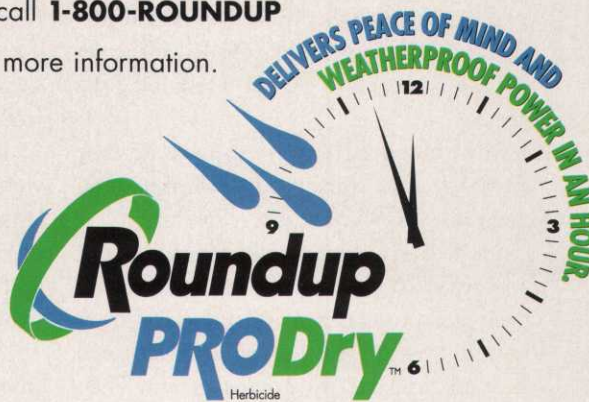
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Circle No 126

Raynor Course



RENAISSANCE GOLF DESIGN

If you play Yeamans Hall today, you'll experience fast greens with steep contours. It's a better test of golf, but not an agonizing experience.

Continued from page 59

cided the course would renovate its greens, he played other Raynor courses. "I wanted to get a feel for them," he says.

Because Doak and Yonce had played Raynor's other courses and because of the holes' similar designs, they had a good idea about contours, although they realized an exact match was impossible. Jim Urbina, Doak's on-site design associate, was in charge of reshaping the greens.

"I've taken Urbina to a many Raynor courses over the years, and he probably could have done this without me," Doak says.

In 25 days, Urbina, Doak, Yonce and their crew redid 16 greens. They stripped the old green areas, took the material that had been built up over the years, spread it and formed contours similar to the original greens. Then the greens were floated and grassed with Champion dwarf bermudagrass.

Fast times

If you play Yeamans Hall today, you'll experience large, fast-rolling greens with steep contours.

"The strategy used to be that you hit the ball to the fairway, hit it on the green, and you had a birdie putt," Yonce says. "Now it may be easier to land the ball on the green, but you might have to three putt."

Yonce says Yeamans Hall is a better test of golf, but not a punishing experience. Some members say the course is three or four shots more difficult because of the new greens and their tricky contours, he notes.

"We have some good golfers and not-so-good golfers," Yonce adds. "But putting on these greens is the equalizer."

"Once you get on the greens, that's the puzzle. That's what the course had lost over the years — that strategy."

The total square footage of greens grew from 80,000 feet to 144,000 feet. The 2nd green grew from 3,000 square feet to 10,000 square feet; the 8th green from 4,500 square feet to 10,000 square feet.

Because of their daring contours, the greens would be nearly unplayable if they weren't enlarged. And because Champion bermudagrass plays firm and fast, a golfer often has to land his ball in front of a green and run it up, rather than play for the middle of a green.

"The greens are marvelous," says Terrie, who plays the course twice a week and credits Yonce for spearheading Yeamans Hall's overall improvements. "I just wish I could go back to school and learn how to putt on them," he adds with a laugh.

Doak, who has seen more than half the near 100 courses that Raynor designed, says Raynor's style is formal and predictable. Raynor often tried to recreate holes from course to course.

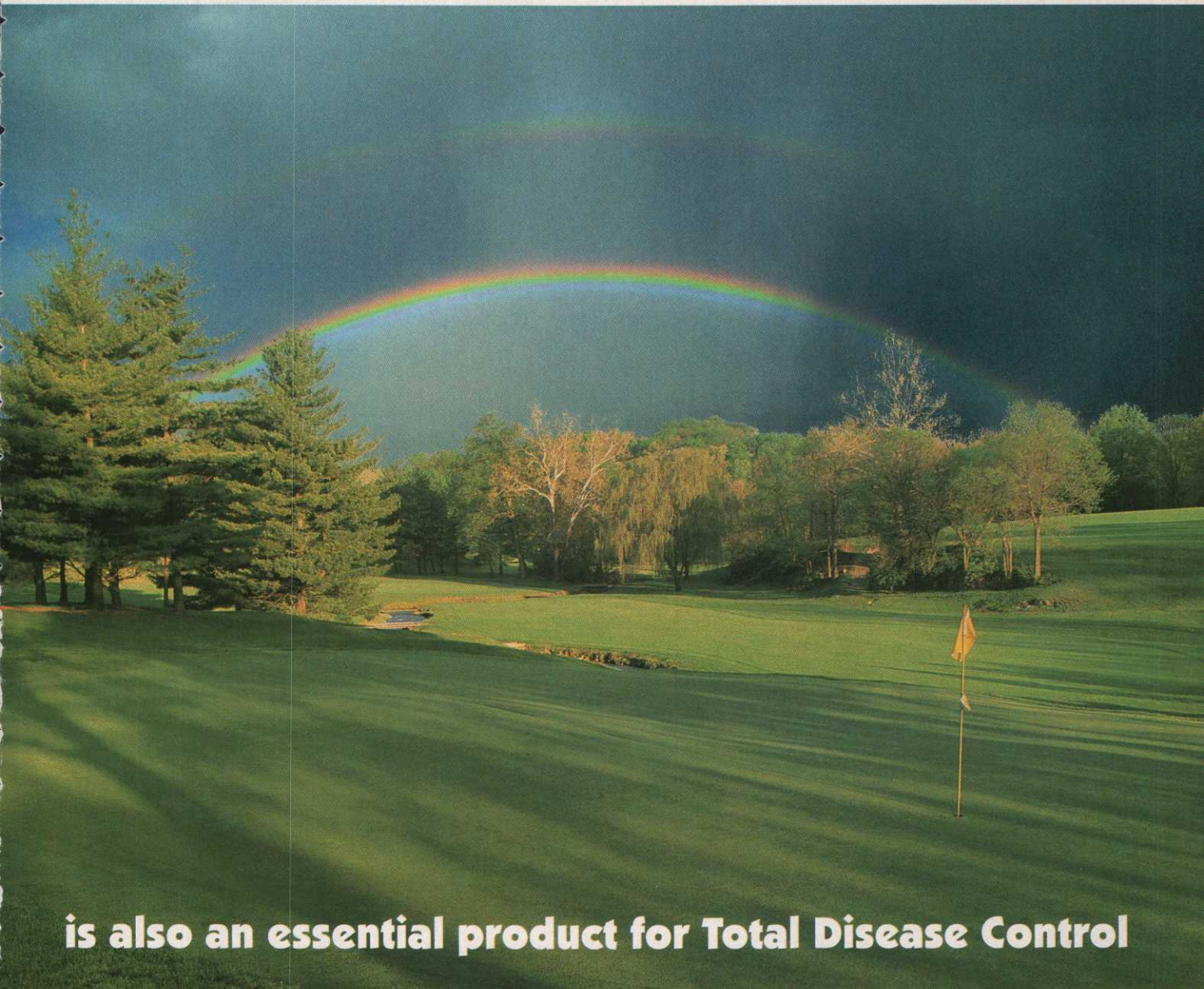
"It was interesting for me to compare the par 3s at Yeamans Hall to the par 3s at Carmargo Club and the Creek Club, and figure out which holes were better and why," Doak says. "Raynor was trying to do the same things on different pieces of land."

In December, Doak and his crew returned to Yeamans Hall Club and played the course

Continued on page 64

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Raynor Course

Continued from page 62

for the first time since its renovation.

"I was very pleased," Doak says. "I knew we got the shaping done the way we wanted to, so I expected it to turn out well."

Golf Magazine thought the renovation turned out well, too. The magazine recently

A Kodak Moment

Biltmore Forest CC is a Donald Ross design sporting a new lease on life, thanks to a meticulous restoration by architect Brian Silva who used vintage photographs to restore all 18 putting surfaces.

"The genius of Biltmore Forest can be found in how Ross routed the holes: They lay so very naturally on the rolling terrain," says Silva, a partner with Uxbridge, Mass.-based Cornish, Silva and Mungeam. "There isn't an uncomfortable golf hole out there."

Biltmore Forest opened for play during the summer of 1921. Nearly seven decades later, when Silva was hired to assess the club's long-range renovation needs, he found a golf course that had slowly drifted away from Ross' original concept. Yet Silva also found an enormous cache of photographs which clearly showed every green, fairway and bunker just as they had been when Ross finished his work at the Asheville, N.C.-based course.

Using this photographic record, Silva restored all 18 putting surfaces to their original configurations, reinstated dozens of original Ross bunkers and eliminated those which came afterward. Silva also directed a substantial tree-trimming campaign and rebuilt all 18 tee complexes in a rectangular style typical of 1920s design. The architect finished his work in 1995.

"The photos were an enormous resource, yet one can also develop an eye for Ross' tendencies and style by studying his huge body of work," says Silva, whose Ross renovation portfolio includes Seminole GC in North Palm Beach, Fla.; Riviera CC in Miami; The Country Club of Orlando; Gulfstream GC in Delray Beach, Fla.; Plymouth (Mass.) CC;

The holes at Biltmore Forest lay naturally on the rolling terrain, Silva says.

Rolling Rock Club in Ligonier, Pa.; Whitinsville (Mass.) GC; and Charlotte (N.C.) CC. "I've read where some architects claim they can walk in the shoes of Ross, think what he was thinking and base their renovation work on this sort of channeling. I'm not sure that's possible. In general, I like to steer clear of the paranormal design experience."



Architect Brian Silva used vintage photos like this to restore greens, fairways and bunkers.



ranked Yeamans Hall Club as the 64th top course in the country.

"We had never been ranked before," Yonce says. "I'm gratified we accomplished this and spent only about \$200,000."

Now Yeamans Hall and its Southern charm — including bunches of towering live oak trees draped with Spanish moss, and distinguished unirrigated and unfertilized natural bermudagrass rough — has generated talk in golfing circles.

"The place has always had a low profile, and you never heard much talk about it," Doak says. "Now it's attracting a lot more attention. I know what we did was a big improvement, but I'm surprised at all of the attention."

Yonce says Yeamans Hall members have no plans to lobby for a U.S. Open. They may like the attention, but they don't want the course, which also had many of its bunkers restored, to become overexposed. Yeamans Hall endures only about 1,700 rounds a year, and members would like to keep it that way.

"They aren't interested in it becoming a well-traveled resort," Yonce says.

The challenge for Yonce and his crew is to maintain the greens to their current state so history doesn't repeat itself. They will do that partly by walk-mowing the greens to better cut undulations and contours.

"We're trying to upgrade our maintenance over time to make sure this doesn't happen again," Yonce adds.

Yeamans Hall isn't the only course to go back in time. In fact, it has become fashionable for older courses to renovate greens in hopes to return them to yesterday's original designs. But if your 1920s course was "modernized" in the 1960s or 1970s, forget it.

"We never got modernized," Yonce says with a sigh of relief. "Luckily, we didn't have that middle architect come in, which would have destroyed the original design."

Yonce still marvels at his find. Some of those old blueprints are now framed and hanging in his home, located on the golf course.

Standing in his family room, Yonce sips a cup of coffee and stares at Raynor's original map of the golf course. He talks enthusiastically about the project. It's obvious he's proud to be part of Yeamans Hall yore. ■

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They strive to be corny. Their goal is to let their creative juices flow like Niagara Falls — so they can think up as many cockamamie ideas as possible.

That's how golf course developer and operator Orrin Vincent and his creative crew at Kirkland, Wash.-based OB Sports developed destinations like Trophy Lake Golf & Casting, a new public golf course and fishing hole in Port Orchard, Wash., and the Gallery Golf Club, a new course and art gallery in Tucson, Ariz.

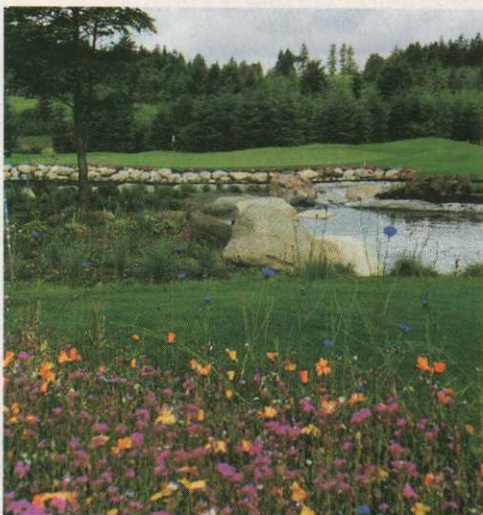
"We write down every goofy idea we have," Vincent says of his five-person staff's brainstorming sessions.

Then they look at the ideas and laugh out loud at the really stupid ones. But when the slapstick subsides, "we get back to reality," says Vincent, who founded OB Sports in 1972.

They discuss their ideas, no matter how zany, and try to fine-tune them into something original and smart — all in the name of golf.

"We monitor each other," Vincent says. "Everything is done in good taste. We respect golf so much that we don't want to do anything to make it hokie."

What OB Sports has done in the past five years is bring a new twist to the sport, as in themed golf courses. The company is marketing to golfers *and* enthusiasts of other sorts.



Trophy Lake's 7,200-yard golf course, a John Fought-design, is blanketed with fir trees and wildflowers.

Goofy Ideas Lead To Themed Links

BY LARRY AYLWARD



THEY DISCUSS

IDEAS, NO MATTER

HOW ZANY, AND TRY

TO FINE-TUNE THEM

INTO SOMETHING

ORIGINAL AND

SMART

Trophy Lake Golf & Casting is a perfect example. If you want to go fishing and you want to go golfing, but you don't have time to do both, you can go to Trophy Lake and try to score birdies and hook fish.

You can play 18 on Trophy Lake's 7,200-yard, John Fought-designed course. Then you can take to one of the property's four lakes, including the natural 26-acre Trophy Lake, to fish for bass and trout. The complex hosts golf tournaments and fishing tournaments.

If you're a fan of University of Washington sports, Vincent has a golf course for you. In the summer, OB Sports will open the Washington National GC, which features a Washington Huskies sports theme. The clubhouse will feature Washington sports memorabilia and history, and a restaurant shaped like the school's football stadium. Golf carts will be imbued in gold and purple, the school's colors, and will be labeled with names of Washington sports legends such as Warren Moon.

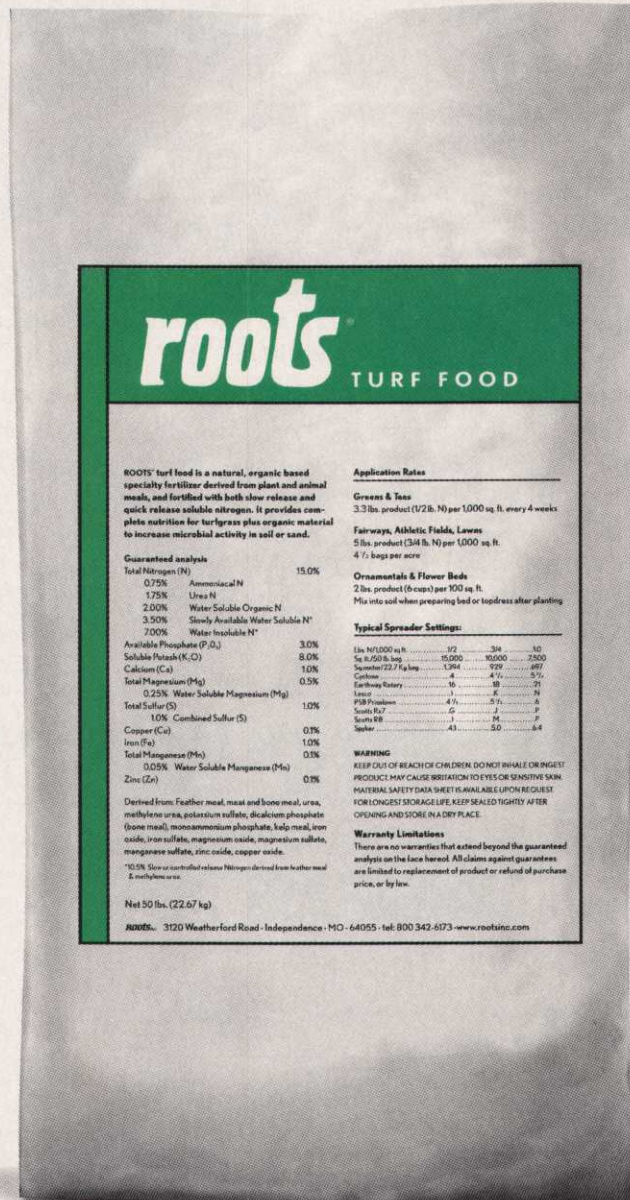
In January, OB Sports opened the Cimarron Golf Resort in Palm Springs, Calif. What do you do in Palm Springs, the land of more than 100 golf courses, to be different? If you're Vincent, you build a course with a European motif, featuring sod-wall bunkers and crushed, white-marble sand.

Vincent, who has a trickle of Las Vegas blood running in his veins, admits he modeled his themed courses after Sin City's themed casinos, sans the gaudiness.

Vincent's first themed course, Langdon Farms Golf Club, opened in 1995 in Portland, Ore. When OB Sports secured the land for the site, Vincent noticed a busted-up barn on the property. Rather than tear it down, Vincent fixed it up and adopted a farm theme for the course. He built a 22,000-square-foot clubhouse modeled after the old barn. Golf course

Continued on page 68

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Money Shot

Continued from page 66

signage, menu food items and employee uniforms all feature the farm theme.

There are other themed courses, such as The Reserve, another Portland facility with a winery theme. You can bet more are on the way. Although OB Sports' facilities are mainly in the West and Southwest, other themed courses might pop up in the East, Midwest and South. Vincent will design and build you a theme course for a price.

He's also considering approaching professional sports organizations to see if they're interested in building golf courses with team themes.

Recently, a New Yorker phoned Vincent and asked him about building a course with a Wall Street theme.

"He asked me, 'What would I do for a Wall Street golf course?'" Vincent relates. "I didn't stop talking for an hour. Can you imagine a public course located just outside New York with that



The waters at Trophy Lake are more than hazards for golfers. They're fishing holes, too, and are stocked with bass and trout.

theme? Wouldn't that be something?"

Maybe some of golf's absolutists can't imagine that *something*. Maybe they think it would be tawdry.

Let them think that. The industry has been desperately seeking ways to bring more new players to the game, and Vincent might be part of the solution.

As long as he and his associates keep their creative juices in check (please, no New Millennium-themed golf courses!), the game could be a lot more fun—even if you're 20 over par.

Larry Aylward, managing editor of Golfdom, can be reached at 440-891-2770 or laylward@advanstar.com.

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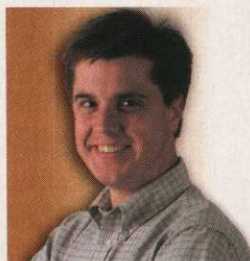
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Solve Problems the Web Way

BY FRANK H. ANDORKA JR.



JUST-IN-TIME
LEARNING ON THE
WEB WILL
REVOLUTIONIZE
THE WAY
SUPERINTENDENTS
SOLVE THEIR TURF
PROBLEMS

“**W**hat the heck are you going to do with a history degree?” I heard that question often as I studied at the College of

Wooster in Wooster, Ohio. The best thing about earning that history degree (and a master’s degree in post-war modern German history — go figure) wasn’t the facts I learned, as my eventual shift to journalism proved. I may have escaped Indiana University with my advanced degree just before they kicked me out, but I took away learning skills that still serve me well today.

The best classes, of course, consisted of a free exchange of ideas. The discussions challenged us to solve problems creatively through spirited debate. That’s why the potential of the Web as an educational tool excites me.

The estimated population of online users in the United States is between 65 million and 101 million people, depending on who’s counting. International Data Corp. has predicted that number may grow to as high as 180 million by 2003. The Web is growing at a startlingly fast pace, and those who harness its educational potential will be the people who move ahead the fastest.

Al Turgeon, professor of turfgrass management at Penn State University, shares my excitement. As one of the founding members of Penn State’s Web-based World Campus, a distance learning program that includes turfgrass management (www.worldcampus.psu.edu/publications/turfgrass/), Turgeon is in awe at the potential of the Web to reach turfgrass students around the globe.

“To bring people from different cultures together and enrich the knowledge base of the turfgrass industry feels great,” Turgeon says. “It will enable me — and others like me — to extend our reach.”

Let’s not limit ourselves to the idea that the Web is just for distance learners, though. Its graphic and immediate feedback capabilities also serve to supplement classroom learning. Turgeon and his fellow professors often send students to Web sites to do research and communicate with other students in the class.

That, of course, is the key to using the

Web as an effective learning tool: It allows the instantaneous, free exchange of ideas so critical to learning.

Imagine a university chat room devoted strictly to turfgrass managers. The Web can give you access to the best turfgrass experts across the country and innovative students who may have a new perspective on your problems.

In Turgeon’s classes, Web-based bulletin boards allow students collaborating on projects to exchange ideas more easily. For example, Turgeon will give one student in a group of five a problem to solve. When the student has a solution to the problem, he or she posts it on the Web for constructive criticism from his team members. Then the group works out a solution as a result of the exchange.

With the Web, you can access that information today, when it will help you. In the past, information might not reach you until it was too late. The instantaneous exchange of ideas propels innovation, and that’s why the Web is so important.

The next step will be just-in-time learning, when superintendents will access a database of case studies with both solutions — and failures — built in from a Web site set up for that purpose. In fact, Turgeon is working on compiling such a database now.

Then a superintendent will have the capability to hyperlink to educational sites, which will explain the scientific basis behind the solutions.

Penn State’s World Campus currently hosts students from North America, but Turgeon foresees a time when students from around the world take his Introduction to Turfgrass class online. He can’t wait for the day.

Frank H. Andorka Jr., associate editor of Golfdom, can be reached at 440-891-2708 or fandorka@advanstar.com.

Case Study #1

MAINTENANCE

Sticky Situation

Kansas superintendent wanted to use as many organic fertilizers as possible – but without all the fuss



Problem

Superintendent Kenny Hoehn wanted to use as many natural products as possible on Smiley's GC greens in Lenexa, Kan. Unfortunately, many of them gummed up mower rollers, leaving Hoehn and his crew to clean mowers after every few turns and causing longer mowing times.

Solution

Find a natural, high-quality fertilizer to work into the greens quickly, reducing the need to clean rollers and decreasing mowing time.

Keeping ahead of golfers has always been a challenge

for superintendent Kenny Hoehn and his staff at Smiley's GC in Lenexa, Kan.

An executive 18-hole walking course, Smiley's gets about 32,000 rounds a year. The course provides short playing greens (six par 4s and 12 par 3s). The 75-acre facility also offers four practice greens, a large driving range with nine distance greens and two miniature golf courses.

The problem

Organic, granular fertilizers have been a part of Hoehn's regular maintenance program for five years. Unfortunately, the available organic products that create a strong root system had one common problem: They were

slow to dissolve. Because of this, mower rollers picked up fertilizer.

"It's important to have fertilizer work quickly into the green," Hoehn says. "If you mow without baskets on wet turf and the fertilizer gets picked up by the rollers, it keeps slinging it forward and makes buildup on the rollers a real mess. If it's real bad, you have to wash the rollers after every couple turns."

The fertilizer is also pushed in the direction of mowing and bunches into piles, Hoehn says.

Even if the baskets are on, granular fertilizer creates another problem when mowing. "You can pick up everything that was just laid down," Hoehn says.

If the fertilizer stays dry, it might not stick, Hoehn notes, but all it takes is morning dew or some irrigation to cause the product to be picked up.

Superintendent Kenny Hoehn wanted fertilizer that produced a strong root system and dissolved quickly into greens at Smiley's GC.

"Golfers also don't like it when their balls pick up something," Hoehn says.

Solution

For Hoehn, choosing the right fertilizer for Smiley's was vital to correct the problems, but it was not easy.

"With the amount of play we get, I need to get fast growth," he says, adding that the need for a fertilizer with good "healing power" is also important.

Research into the different types of granular fertilizer led Hoehn to pick two fertilizers. Both claimed to be of fine grade; natural and organic; contain slow- and fast-release nitrogen; provide materials that would increase microbial activity in the soil;

Continued on page 73