

## Ross Pudenz

It's not heaven — it's Eau Claire, Wis. But for Ross Pudenz, that may amount to the same thing.

"Everything I was hoping for happened," Pudenz says. "I couldn't have had things work out more perfectly if I'd scripted it myself. I was completely comfortable from the beginning."

Pudenz graduated from Iowa State University and took a job as an assistant superintendent at Mill Run GC in Eau Claire, a 36-hole facility (18 holes were added this summer after Pudenz joined the staff). He says the owners hope to have the new 18 holes — called Wild Ridge — listed as part of *Golf Digest's* new top 10 new upscale public courses in 2001. Pudenz says he learned a great deal partaking in the construction process.

"It was challenging, but they gave me as much responsibility as I could handle," he says. "They would tell me what they wanted done. Then I went out and did it."

Pudenz says he's planning on leaving Mill Run soon because he believes he's



ready to take on the challenges of being a superintendent. His current superintendent, Barry Hines, knows he's looking and is helping him. "I want to leave Mill Run on good terms, and it appears that I will be able to do that," Pudenz says.

Pudenz says he would advise students entering the profession to pace themselves: It's a different world on a real golf course than it is in the classroom.

"The season is long, and you have to make sure you're putting out the same effort at the end of the season as you are in the beginning," Pudenz says. "You don't want to burn out, so just make sure you take it as it comes. Work hard, but it's not necessary to kill yourself."

## Andy Thompson

We tried to track down Andy Thompson, the Penn State University student we profiled last year, but to no avail. Penn State's crack alumni staff listed him as working at Davenport CC in Davenport, Iowa, but a phone call to the course revealed that Thompson had left there for Madison, Wis. Attempts to find him there also failed.

Andy, call your mothers at *Golfdom* — we miss you. ■

*Editor's note: Golfdom will revisit these students periodically to examine their progress in the industry.*

## VW&R Will Be There with The Supplies and Expertise You Need— No Matter How Difficult Your Growing Conditions!

- Chemicals and fertilizers across the Sunbelt-Soon to be nationwide.
- Building a nationwide team of turf professionals who understand your needs.
- VW&R is the most efficient distribution company in North America.
- Over 65 U.S. locations.



**Van Waters & Rogers Inc.**

A ROYAL VOPAK COMPANY

Call Your Local  
VW&R Office at...

**1-800-888-4VWR**

*We understand that failure is not an option for our customers*



**A**s a full-blooded Turfhead, I don't really like winter. However, I don't mind the beginning of the winter because it's a chance to catch up on important things — like sleep and food — of which the dog days of summer and the hustle of fall deprive us.

Although the warm-season gang doesn't get the same break that others do when winter arrives, the season presents a time for a lot of superintendents to catch up on things they put off during busy times. We might not like the cold weather, but winter is good for us — it's kind of like the "eating your veggies" of the business.

Turf managers' minds need to be fed, and winter is when you get all kinds of educational food. By now, everyone should know that staying abreast of developments in the field is essential to great golf course management. I'm glad to see all the education programs planned by various organizations — university, commercial or otherwise — and the effort that goes into getting information to superintendents.

While the GCSAA may think it has cornered the market on education, someone is going to do a seminar near you that will contain a few gems for you to use. You just have to show up.

Several groups of superintendents I know use the slower time to get together for breakfast once a week. When I was younger, the entrée of choice was the Bloody Mary on Saturday mornings, but that was the extreme of winter boredom at work.

Certainly, there isn't time for organized weekly get-togethers in the season, but I'd like to see this kind of thing year-round. Informal turfgrass talk is good, and there's always something to be gained. It's not hard to pick up the phone and make camaraderie happen.

You know the old saying, "Failing to plan is ... blah, blah, blah." I must say I'm stunned at how many superintendents I see not getting their acts together until the last minute. Maybe it's because we've grown accustomed to so much changing of jobs and changing of management at golf facilities these days that planning ahead doesn't pay — but that might

## But What Do *You* Do in the Winter?

BY DAVE WILBER



**TURF MANAGERS'  
MINDS NEED TO BE  
FED, AND WINTER  
IS WHEN YOU GET  
ALL KINDS OF  
EDUCATIONAL FOOD**

also just be a weak excuse. Budgeting, purchasing, staff training, equipment replacement and management and about a zillion other things that you don't want to do in the heat of battle should be easier this time of year.

From an agronomic standpoint, the weather may change your moves during the different seasons, but there's nothing wrong with sketching out the broad strokes and picking the colors of what your program is going to look like. This does not make you a cookbook-type grass grower; it makes you more efficient and prepared.

Now, for the most important part of Wilber's Winter Lesson: Your friends and family will always miss you as long as you stay in the golf business. They miss you in the summer, especially if you work on summer holidays. They miss you in the fall when you're busy setting up for a prosperous season next year.

But now the days are short, and there's no time like the present to make sure you include time away dedicated to your loved ones. A superintendent who missed his daughter's college graduation because of an event at his course in the spring told me that he didn't feel guilty about taking his daughter and wife on a nice vacation to the beach for Christmas. Sounds easy, but you would be surprised at how many people in our business miss those opportunities.

What will your winter bring? Even if you are like me and don't relish winter, the season can be your spinach — and you need your spinach. If you do some planning, it could bring you an incredible 2001.

---

*Dave Wilber is a Sacramento, Calif.-based independent consulting agronomist who can be reached at [dave@soil.com](mailto:dave@soil.com), even in the winter.*





# *Losing fertilizer to mower pickup just doesn't cut it.*

What a waste. Applying fertilizer one day, only to have it picked up by the mowers the next. With some fertilizers it's par for the course. But not with NOVEX™, the new homogeneous, controlled-release fertilizer from LESCO.

**NOVEX™**

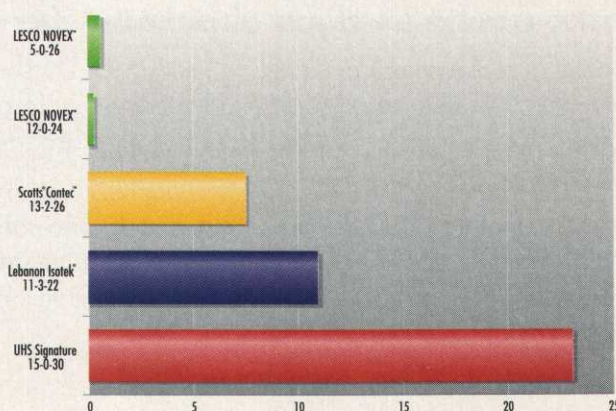
The tiny, uncoated NOVEX particles readily penetrate the turf canopy. They resist mower pickup even when applied to extremely dense, low-cut putting surfaces. And that's a real advantage in more ways than one.

With NOVEX, you don't waste money by throwing away a

significant amount of fertilizer with the clippings. And the fertilizer stays in the turf so it can do the job it was intended to do. With that kind of efficiency you may even find yourself applying less product. And another benefit? NOVEX is barely visible to the golfers.

NOVEX is available now in an assortment of analyses in fairway or greens-grade particle size. Try it. You'll see. This is a great fertilizer not only for what it does, but also for what it doesn't do...get thrown away with the clippings. Contact your LESCO Professional or call 800.321.5325.

**Fertilizer Loss To Mower Pickup**  
(The Pennsylvania State University 1999)



**LESCO®**

G R O W W I T H U S.™

Circle No 123



# Switch from Dursban Longer Residual and Guaranteed.

"Hey, who turned off the lights?"



## **Talstar® insecticides can be used just about anywhere you use Dursban.\***

Talstar® insecticides are the replacement for Dursban. But unlike Dursban, they are guaranteed\*\* to provide long-lasting performance against a broad spectrum of insects, or your money back. And you can use Talstar® insecticides on lawns and landscape ornamentals, for perimeters and just about anywhere else you'd use Dursban.

Talstar® insecticides are formulated with the active ingredient, bifenthrin, a low-dose pyrethroid, which contains no alpha-cyano group. That means they are also less likely to cause the skin irritation experienced with other pyrethroids, and won't cause throat irritation. Plus, they're easy to handle and at label rates, are odor-free.



# to Talstar® and get Better Performance.

For more information, contact your FMC  
authorized distributor, call 1-800-321-1FMC,  
or visit us at [www.fmc-apgspec.com](http://www.fmc-apgspec.com)

\*\*See Guarantee Program Guidelines for details.  
This guarantee does not apply to termiticide products.



**FMC**

©2000 FMC Corporation. The FMC® logo and  
Talstar® are registered trademarks of FMC Corporation.  
\*Dursban is a trademark of Dow AgroSciences.

Circle No. 151



## The Million-Golfer March

BY LARRY AYLWARD, EDITOR

**A**merican Golf decided last year that two heads were better than one to lead the company. So in June, the Santa Monica, Calif.-based management company named David Pillsbury and Joe Guerra as co-CEOs. Both men have been at American Golf, which operates 320 courses and practice centers, since the late 1980s.

The 38-year-old Pillsbury and the 42-year-old Guerra, who met in 1986 while each was earning an MBA at the University of Southern California, have two things hanging over their heads when it comes to marketing initiatives: gaining more players and retaining current players.

"Our vision for the industry is that we ought to be able to add 1 million golfers a year," Pillsbury says in an optimistic tone.

That may not be as difficult as it sounds, Pillsbury adds, especially when

one considers the statistics of golfers who enter the sport and later abandon it. Citing National Golf Foundation statistics, Pillsbury says about 3.5 million golfers join the game every year and about 3.5 million golfers leave it.

"All we have to do is keep one-half million from leaving and get another one-half million to join, and we'll have 1 million golfers," Pillsbury notes. "But that happens one customer at a time, and it happens at the grassroots level."

Pillsbury and Guerra realize that traditional barriers, such as the intimidation that comes with a 600-yard hole, must be broken to gain a million golfers. Also, a million more golfers won't help matters much if they don't play more than a couple of rounds a year. It's vital, Pillsbury and Guerra agree, to increase rounds to keep up with new course construction.

"We have a positive force working in our favor," Pillsbury says, noting NGF research that says there are 41 million people who want to join or rejoin the game.

The force may be working. According to a recent NGF report, the number of rounds played annually reached a record high of 564 million in 1999, up nearly 7 percent from 1998. The average number of rounds per player in 1999 was 21.3, up by 6.5 percent from 1998, while the number of players remained virtually unchanged at 26.4 million. It's good news, although some industry insiders contribute the increase to dry weather throughout the spring and summer in 1999.

The co-CEOs hope to flood the golfing world with new players — and hopefully more rounds — by increasing the number of Nike Golf Learning Centers that American Golf operates. "We



JOE GUERRA, CEO

have 40 learning centers up and running, and we plan to have 150 by the end of this year," Pillsbury says.

The learning centers are located at American Golf-operated courses and offer basic instruction as well as lessons in golf jargon and terminology, proper etiquette, pace of play, how to operate a golf car, how to reserve a tee time and how to move smoothly from the practice range environment to the 7,000-yard golf course environment. There are also programs for intermediate and advanced golfers. Each program cost about \$150 for six hours of instruction.

"We create a professional environment for instruction by hiring PGA and LPGA pros," Pillsbury says. "We guarantee your satisfaction, or you get your money back."

Some critics contend that golf is too expensive, another reason the game is not bustling with new players. But Guerra disagrees.

"The reality is that many of the new properties need to charge high green fees



DAVID PILLSBURY, CEO



# Golfdom

January 2001

This card is void after March 15, 2001

AN **ADVANSTAR** PUBLICATION  
 ©2000 Advanstar Communications Inc. All rights reserved.

NAME (please print) \_\_\_\_\_ JOB TITLE \_\_\_\_\_  
 FIRM \_\_\_\_\_  
 ADDRESS\* \_\_\_\_\_  
 CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
 \*Is this your home address?  Yes  No  
 PHONE (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ FAX (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-MAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to receive **GOLFDOM** free each month:  Yes  no

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**1. My primary business at this location is: (fill in ONE only)**

**GOLF COURSES**

- 01  10 Daily Fee/Public
- 02  20 Semi-Private
- 03  30 Private
- 04  40 Resort
- 05  50 City/State/Municipal
- 06  55 Other Golf Courses (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- 07  60 Golf Course Architect
- 08  70 Golf Course Developer
- 09  90 Golf Course Builder
- 10  105 University/College
- 11  100 Others Allied to the Field (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Which of the following best describes your title? (fill in ONE only)**

- 12  10 Golf Course Superintendent
- 13  15 Assistant Superintendent
- 14  25 Owner/Management Company Executive
- 15  30 General Manager
- 16  35 Director of Golf
- 17  70 Green Chairman
- 18  45 Club President
- 19  75 Builder/Developer
- 20  55 Architect/Engineer
- 21  60 Research Professional
- 22  65 Other Titled Personnel (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**3. What is your facility's annual maintenance budget?**

- 23  A More than \$2 Million
- 24  B \$1,000,001-\$2 Million
- 25  C \$750,001-\$1 Million
- 26  D \$500,001-\$750,000
- 27  E \$300,001-\$500,000
- 28  F \$150,001-\$300,000
- 29  G Less than \$150,000

**4. If you work for a golf course, how many holes are on your course?**

- 30  A 9
- 31  B 18
- 32  C 27
- 33  D 36+
- 34  E Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**Please send Golfdom to the following people at my organization:**

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Title \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Title \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Title \_\_\_\_\_

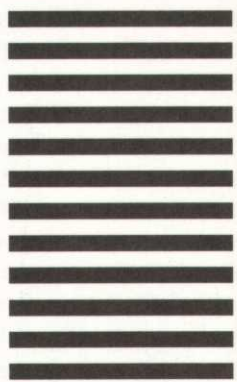
101	113	125	137	149	161	173	185	197	209	221	233	245	257	269	281	293	305
102	114	126	138	150	162	174	186	198	210	222	234	246	258	270	282	294	306
103	115	127	139	151	163	175	187	199	211	223	235	247	259	271	283	295	307
104	116	128	140	152	164	176	188	200	212	224	236	248	260	272	284	296	308
105	117	129	141	153	165	177	189	201	213	225	237	249	261	273	285	297	309
106	118	130	142	154	166	178	190	202	214	226	238	250	262	274	286	298	310
107	119	131	143	155	167	179	191	203	215	227	239	251	263	275	287	299	311
108	120	132	144	156	168	180	192	204	216	228	240	252	264	276	288	300	312
109	121	133	145	157	169	181	193	205	217	229	241	253	265	277	289	301	313
110	122	134	146	158	170	182	194	206	218	230	242	254	266	278	290	302	314
111	123	135	147	159	171	183	195	207	219	231	243	255	267	279	291	303	315
112	124	136	148	160	172	184	196	208	220	232	244	256	268	280	292	304	316



NO POSTAGE  
 NECESSARY  
 IF MAILED  
 IN THE  
 UNITED STATES

**BUSINESS REPLY MAIL**  
 FIRST-CLASS MAIL PERMIT NO 950-024 PITTSFIELD MA

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE



# Golfdom

ADVANSTAR COMMUNICATIONS INC  
 PO BOX 5129  
 PITTSFIELD MA 01203-9392





NO POSTAGE  
 NECESSARY  
 IF MAILED  
 IN THE  
 UNITED STATES

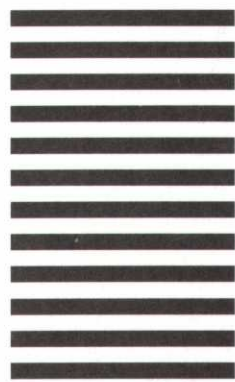
## BUSINESS REPLY MAIL

FIRST-CLASS MAIL PERMIT NO 950-024 PITTSFIELD MA

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE

# Golfdom

ADVANSTAR COMMUNICATIONS INC  
 PO BOX 5129  
 PITTSFIELD MA 01203-9392



# Golfdom

January 2001  
 This card is void after March 15, 2001

AN ADVANSTAR PUBLICATION  
 ©2000 Advanstar Communications Inc. All rights reserved.

I would like to receive GOLFDOM free each month:  Yes  No

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**1. My primary business at this location is: (fill in ONE only)**

**GOLF COURSES**

- 01  10 Daily Fee/Public
- 02  20 Semi-Private
- 03  30 Private
- 04  40 Resort
- 05  50 City/State/Municipal
- 06  55 Other Golf Courses (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- 07  60 Golf Course Architect
- 08  70 Golf Course Developer
- 09  90 Golf Course Builder
- 10  105 University/College
- 11  100 Others Allied to the Field (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Which of the following best describes your title? (fill in ONE only)**

- 12  10 Golf Course Superintendent
- 13  15 Assistant Superintendent
- 14  25 Owner/Management Company Executive
- 15  30 General Manager
- 16  35 Director of Golf
- 17  70 Green Chairman
- 18  45 Club President
- 19  75 Builder/Developer
- 20  55 Architect/Engineer
- 21  60 Research Professional
- 22  65 Other Titled Personnel (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**3. What is your facility's annual maintenance budget?**

- 23  A More than \$2 Million
- 24  B \$1,000,001-\$2 Million
- 25  C \$750,001-\$1 Million
- 26  D \$500,001-\$750,000
- 27  E \$300,001-\$500,000
- 28  F \$150,001-\$300,000
- 29  G Less than \$150,000

NAME (please print) \_\_\_\_\_ JOB TITLE \_\_\_\_\_

FIRM \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS\* \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

\*Is this your home address?  Yes  No

PHONE (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ FAX (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

**4. If you work for a golf course, how many holes are on your course?**

- 30  A 9
- 31  B 18
- 32  C 27
- 33  D 36+
- 34  E Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**Please send Golfdom to the following people at my organization:**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

101	113	125	137	149	161	173	185	197	209	221	233	245	257	269	281	293	305
102	114	126	138	150	162	174	186	198	210	222	234	246	258	270	282	294	306
103	115	127	139	151	163	175	187	199	211	223	235	247	259	271	283	295	307
104	116	128	140	152	164	176	188	200	212	224	236	248	260	272	284	296	308
105	117	129	141	153	165	177	189	201	213	225	237	249	261	273	285	297	309
106	118	130	142	154	166	178	190	202	214	226	238	250	262	274	286	298	310
107	119	131	143	155	167	179	191	203	215	227	239	251	263	275	287	299	311
108	120	132	144	156	168	180	192	204	216	228	240	252	264	276	288	300	312
109	121	133	145	157	169	181	193	205	217	229	241	253	265	277	289	301	313
110	122	134	146	158	170	182	194	206	218	230	242	254	266	278	290	302	314
111	123	135	147	159	171	183	195	207	219	231	243	255	267	279	291	303	315
112	124	136	148	160	172	184	196	208	220	232	244	256	268	280	292	304	316



to make the economics work," he says. "They're all chasing that high-end daily fee golfer that will pay \$65 to \$125 to play. But there's another huge base of customers that can't afford to pay that."

Those golfers are finding that there are quality golf courses that charge low green fees.

"We have a bunch of them, and we also have high-end courses," Guerra notes. "But when you blend them together, our average green fee is less than \$21 and our average cart fee is \$8."

Still, the entire industry needs to deliver more quality and service to retain golfers, Guerra adds. "You just can't raise green fees and dues to achieve annual growth," he says.

The co-CEOs recognize that maintenance plays a major role in the game's marketing, and they sympathize with superintendents who are discouraged with etiquette-lacking golfers who don't repair ball marks and divots.

"I don't blame superintendents for being frustrated," Pillsbury says. "It's amazing to me how many beginning golfers don't know how to drive a golf car. And they don't understand that you don't drive a golf car on a tee box or the collar of a green. They haven't been educated."

Pillsbury says that pros and pro shop workers, as well as course marshalls, need to do a better job of educating golfers about the basics of course etiquette.

"In the service environment, we have to take responsibility for probing our guests," Pillsbury says. "We need to ask them how often they play and what their handicaps are. We need to tell them to fix ball marks, and that there's sand on the tee boxes to be used to replace divots."

Pillsbury and Guerra were on the road last fall visiting several of American Golf's 320 facilities, and talking with superintendents and general

managers about their challenges. Finding reliable workers is the biggest challenge they're facing, Guerra notes, especially since some fast-food restaurants in major cities are paying \$9.50 an hour and giving signing bonuses to new employees.

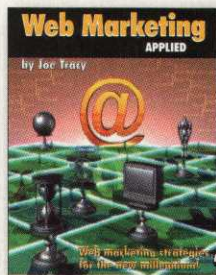
"We've had to step up and make sure we're keeping our existing workers happy," Guerra says. "We've had to get more competitive in recruiting new workers."

The CEOs agree that superintendents are integral to their operation, and they want to keep them happy in their roles.

"I view superintendents as being the true heroes of the organization," Guerra says. "They are invaluable to us."

"Most superintendents I know [would say that] if you give them a choice between getting a raise or having an old mower replaced, they'll replace the mower," Pillsbury adds. ■

## You're *Open* for Business on the Web



**\$31<sup>95</sup>**

Item#DMGB100  
Over 300 Pages  
Soft Cover

Written by  
internet specialist  
and leading  
author, Joe Tracy

Read This Book!

...What's Your Next Move?

**Web Marketing Applied, Web Marketing Strategies for the New Millennium**, is the must-have book for Webmasters, Web marketers, Web developers...or anyone involved in the marketing or promotion of a Website. Every chapter is filled with powerful ideas to help you drive traffic to your site. Excellent for any industry, business or profession.

Master Your Next Move with Success!

**Call 1-800-598-6008**

Fax: 218-723-9146 • Outside the U.S. call 218-723-9180

Please mention code 950918GOLF when ordering

Visit our Website and order online at

[www.advanstarbooks.com/webmarketing/](http://www.advanstarbooks.com/webmarketing/)

INFORM ♦ INTRODUCE ♦ INFLUENCE ♦ INSTRUCT

# REPRINTS

Reprints of *Golfdom* articles, advertisements, news items or special announcements are available through Advanstar Marketing Services. Customized to meet your specific needs, reprints are highly effective when you use them to:

- ♦ Develop direct-mail campaigns
- ♦ Provide product/service literature
- ♦ Create trade show distribution materials
- ♦ Present information at conferences and seminars

**Extend your coverage to your website. Custom reprint packages include an E-Print of the same article to post on your website.**

ARTICLES ♦ NEWS ITEMS ♦ ADVERTISEMENTS

# Golfdom

**ADVANSTAR MARKETING SERVICES**

MARCIE NAGY

1-800-225-4569 ext. 2744 • 440-891-2744

Fax: 440-891-2740

Email: [mnagy@advanstar.com](mailto:mnagy@advanstar.com)



# Real-Life Solutions

ARDSLEY CC, DOBBS FERRY, N.Y., AND THE LINKS AT ECHO SPRINGS, JOHNSTOWN, OHIO

## Get Down

How can you get the green-up golfers demand while not damaging the long-term health of your turf?

BY FRANK H. ANDORKA JR.,  
ASSOCIATE EDITOR



### Problem

Superintendents must meet golfer expectations for quick green-up in the spring without sacrificing long-term turf health.

### Solution

Find a slow-release granular fertilizer that combines green-up effects of foliar with long-term benefits of granulars

**T**he demand to play golf early in the year has increased with the sport's popularity. Golfers figure they should be able to play as long as there isn't snow on the ground.

Even though they're playing before the winter chill has left the air, however, golfers demand turf as green in the spring as it is in midseason. But how can superintendents get the early green-up golfers demand without sacrificing the long-term nutritional needs of the turf?

### The problem

The two types of fertilizer currently used in the industry — liquid foliars and slow-release granulars — each have advantages, but

neither gives superintendents everything they need to meet golfers' expectations in the spring.

Slow-release granulars keep greens healthier for longer periods, but the green-up is delayed. In addition, granulars are more likely to be picked up by mowers.

In contrast, foliars provide immediate green-up and are less likely to be captured by mowers. But foliar fertilizers are labor intensive and need to be applied more frequently to receive the same long-term effects.

George Pierpoint III, superintendent at Ardsley CC in Dobbs Ferry, N.Y., says it's a conundrum he faces every year.

"You hate to sacrifice the long-term health of the turf for the short-term green-

**Superintendent Greg Wiles says he was pleased with Novex's performance after he adjusted his application procedures.**

up," Pierpoint says. "But you obviously have to answer to golfers, so you have to find a balance."

Pierpoint heard about a new, small-particle granular fertilizer in February 2000 called Novex that seemed to combine the advantages of both. But because Cleveland-based Lesco didn't start mass production of the product until last fall, he couldn't find a batch to put down last spring, so he had to wait until July and August.

"I'd heard great things about what it was supposed to do," Pierpoint says. "It was supposed to be the best of both worlds, and I wanted