

Off The Fringe

NEWS WITH A HOOK

Business briefs

As expected, BASF buys from Bayer

It was assumed that BASF AG would be Bayer CropScience's sole customer when the latter announced it would divest several insecticide and fungicide ingredients after its acquisition of Aventis CropScience earlier this year. Assumption came to fruition in late October. Bayer CropScience, in line with the Federal Trade Commission's (FTC) requirement to divest the ingredients, said it will sell a package of selected insecticides and fungicides to BASF AG while retaining certain back licenses for nonagricultural applications. The total package is valued at \$1.3 billion.

The transaction is subject to approval by the European Commission and the FTC.

The insecticide ingredients include fipronil and ethiprole. The fungicide ingredients include prochloraz, iprodione, triticonazole, fluquinconazole and pyrimethanil for certain regions and application fields. BASF will also acquire the Aventis CropScience manufacturing plant in Elbeuf, France.

"After the sale of these products, Bayer CropScience can now focus entirely on developing its business and expanding its market position," said Werner Wenning, chairman of the Board of Management for Bayer AG.

BASF said it has strengthened its Agricultural Products Division by purchasing the ingredients.

"This acquisition allows us to considerably strengthen our insecticide business, especially in growing and attractive specialty markets," says Peter Oakley, a member of BASF's board of executive directors.

Dow AgroSciences to reorganize, eliminate 500 positions

In September, Indianapolis-based Dow AgroSciences LLC announced it was eliminating

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GCSAA May Move Headquarters

ASSOCIATION MAY ALSO MERGE ITS ANNUAL CONVENTION WITH NATIONAL GOLF COURSE OWNERS' SHOW

By Larry Aylward, Editor

The GCSAA may be on the move. The association is talking about relocating its Lawrence, Kan.-based headquarters to another location, preferably a city in a "high-traffic, golf-intensive region" that "facilitates high accessibility for constituents."

At the association's Chapter Delegates Meeting in November, it was agreed the GCSAA Articles of Incorporation should be changed to allow the GCSAA board of directors to determine where the headquarters should be located. Delegates from GCSAA's 102 chapters also agreed that GCSAA "should engage in the next phase of the feasibility study to narrow the number of potential headquarters communities and to determine what opportunities exist."



Steve Mona: "When you think of golf organizations, they're usually located in big golf destinations."

GCSAA hired a consultant more than 18 months ago to research the feasibility of a move.

"The firm has engaged in a variety of research projects for us," GCSAA CEO Steve Mona told *Golfdom*. "There were three critical junctures where we could have aborted [the project]. But [the firm] advised us to continue to explore [the option of moving]. For us to go to the next level, we had to go public with it."

Mona then said GCSAA approached the subject with chapter delegates, who advised the association to explore it further.

GCSAA said any relocation must bring long-term financial and growth benefits to the association and its members. Cities meeting "ideal site criteria" for a move include Atlanta, Dallas, Jacksonville, Fla., Orlando, Fla., and Phoenix.

In December, Mona said the Board of Directors will make a determination on what cities can best meet the needs of the association. The consultant will then study the cities in accordance with the association's needs.

Despite the talk of a move, Mona stressed that a decision has not already been made.

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500 positions as part of a reorganization to address consolidation in the worldwide agriculture market. About 300 employees (less than 5 percent of the workforce) will leave the company, with the remaining 200 reductions involving jobs either not currently staffed or slated for elimination by attrition.

Dow said the job cuts come at the same time it is "focusing resources to align with ongoing key business initiatives."

"The new structure will allow us to focus even more intently on key growth areas with plant genetics and biotechnology, agrochemicals and urban pest management and better positions us to innovate in this very competitive global industry," said A. Charlie Fischer, president and CEO for Dow AgroSciences. "These changes will leave us more focused and better able to address the needs of our customers."

EAGL acquires ClubCorp properties

You could say the following transaction between two management companies has a Texas twist. Irving, Texas-based Evergreen

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"We have no offers in hand," Mona said. "We have no preconceived notions of where we should be, but there are some positive attributes to being in what I would call a golf-centric location."

Mona told the *Lawrence Journal-World* that "when you think of golf organizations, they are usually located in big golf destinations like Florida, California and Arizona." But Mona said the association would have to be "wowed" by another city to leave Lawrence, where GCSAA has been since 1972.

Mona also said the GCSAA has received previous offers to sell its building and relocate. The last time was in 1998 when the association considered a move to Jacksonville, but decided in the end it was not economically feasible.

The lingering question, Mona said, is whether the GCSAA can accomplish its future goals while based in Lawrence. "We don't unequivocally know the answer to that question," he added.

Mona also said the GCSAA and the National Golf Course Owners Association (NGCOA) may merge their annual conference and trade shows.

"That's actively being discussed, and it's something both parties would like to see happen," Mona said. "We've been talking with NGCOA for a couple years. We're trying to work it out, and we both have the will to get it done."

Mona said a joint trade show will not happen any sooner than 2005. The GCSAA currently holds its annual show in February. The NGCOA had held its annual show in January, but is moving it to February next year.

ORLANDO CVB



Sunny Orlando, Fla., where the GCSAA often holds its annual show, is what GCSAA CEO Steve Mona considers a "golf-centric" location.

Quotable

"I'm really irritated that the GCSAA is asking for a dues increase and making continuing education more expensive when the economy has hit a lot of superintendents hard."

— Mark Claburn, superintendent for the Golf Club at Bradshaw Farm in Woodstock, Ga., on GCSAA's proposal to increase dues for members.

"We need our talent to shine. It wants to; it just hasn't. We have to play not for ourselves but for each other, for the

team. It's not asking too much to be a team for a week, is it?"

— Hal Sutton, captain of the U.S. Ryder Cup team in 2004.

"I'm sure Hootie will probably have a female member by then."

— Tiger Woods, predicting that Hootie Johnson, chairman of Augusta National, will accept a female member by The Masters next April.

"I used more sun block than I ever used. I wish I could have gotten some on the fairways. There's an idea — sun block for your fairways."

— Don Abraham, certified superintendent of the Steubenville (Ohio) CC, on the high number of sunny days last summer.

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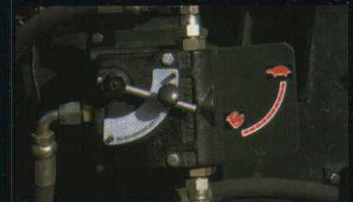
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Business briefs

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Alliance Golf Limited (EAGL) acquired five Texas tracks from Dallas-based ClubCorp, including the Plantation GC in Frisco; The Golf Club at Fossil Creek in Fort Worth; The Golf Club at Cinco Ranch Golf in Katy; Greatwood GC in Sugarland; and Clear Creek GC in Houston.

Westbrook Partners, which owns EAGL, funded the transaction. "With the backing and support from Westbrook, our goal is to continue to search for golf facilities to add to our portfolio and strengthen our position in the golf industry, particularly in our existing cluster markets," said Joe Munsch, EAGL's president and chief operating officer.

Plantation GC and The Golf Club at Fossil Creek are located in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex. The Golf Club at Cinco Ranch Golf, Greatwood GC and Clear Creek GC are located in the Houston area.

Florida superintendents support environmental education

The Everglades GC Superintendents Association in Bonita Springs, Fla., organized and hosted a golf tournament in October at the Bonita Bay East GC that raised more than \$8,000 in support of the Corkscrew Regional Ecosystem Watershed (CREW) Land and Water Trust's Environmental Education programs. CREW includes members of environmental groups, state and local governments and agencies, businesses, developers and private citizens working together for the preservation and stewardship of the water resources of the region. CREW's educational mission is to promote an awareness of the importance of the region's natural systems through land and wildlife management programs, guided tours and presentations to schools and community associations.

Toro receives GSA contract

The Toro Co. has received a General Services Administration (GSA) corporate contract. Included in the contract are all golf, grounds and sports field product. GSA helps federal agencies better serve the public by offering, at best value, superior workplaces, expert solutions, acquisition services and management policies.

The Keeping of the Golf Green

Editor's note: Rick Slattery, superintendent of Locust Hill CC in Rochester, N.Y. is in the Christmas spirit, and he wants to share his fondness of the holiday season with his peers. Slattery, a superintendent for more than 30 years, offers his creative version of A Night Before Christmas below. Of course, it has a golf industry touch. The Jolly One would love it.

Twas the evening before Christmas, when all through the clubhouse not a golfer was stirring, not even a mouse.

The golf clubs were placed in the lockers with care, in hopes that springtime soon would be here.

Locust Hill members were nestled all snug in their beds, while visions of birdies danced in their heads.

The grounds crew in their long johns and I in my ski cap had just put the golf course to sleep for a long winter nap.

When out on the golf green there arose such a clatter, I sprang from my office to see what was the matter.

Away to my golf cart I flew like a flash, put the petal to the metal as I tried not to crash.

The moon on the breast of the new fallen snow gave the luster I needed to find the vandals below.

When what to my wondering eyes should appear, but a miniature golf cart and eight tiny reindeer.

With a little old driver, so lively and quick, that I knew in a moment it must be St. Nick.

More rapid than eagles his bogies they came, and he whistled and shouted and cursed them by name:

"Now driver, now putter, now mashie and wedge — no hooks, no slices, no whiffs and no shanks!"

Now up on the tee St. Nick did

stand with his bag full of clubs, surveying the land.

Then in a twinkling I heard in the air, the flight of a golf ball just missing my hair.

As I drew in my head and was turning around, down the fairway Santa came with a bound.

His eyes how they twinkled, his dimples how merry, as he studied the ponds that he now must carry.

His droll mouth was drawn up like a bow, as he addressed his ball that was propped up in the snow.

The stump of a cigar he held in his teeth, and the smoke it encircled his head like a wreath.

He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old elf, and I laughed when I saw him in spite of myself.

The wink of his eye and the waggle of his clubhead, soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread.

He spoke not a word but went straight to his work, and began his backswing suddenly with a jerk.

After his follow through, and a nod of his head, he laid a finger on his nose as his ball rolled into the hole from the direction he chose.

He sprang to his golf cart, celebrating his birdie with a whistle, and away he flew like the down of a thistle. But I heard him exclaim as he drove out of sight ...

"HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO ALL AND TO ALL A GOOD NIGHT!"



DYNAMIC GRAPHICS

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Bent Placed on the Back Burner

AG DEPARTMENT WANTS MORE DATA ON ROUNDUP READY

CREEPING BENTGRASS BEFORE SIGNING OFF ON IT

Roundup Ready Creeping Bentgrass will be running a little late. The arrival of the first-ever genetically modified bentgrass cultivar, created jointly by The Scotts Co. and Monsanto, has been delayed because the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) asked the two companies for more information about the grass before giving them the go-ahead to produce it commercially. Subsequently, Scotts and Monsanto tem-

porarily withdrew their joint application to have the cultivar approved for commercial sale.

Scotts and Monsanto say they will collect the additional data, provide it to APHIS and resubmit their application. A spokesman for Scotts said the APHIS request was not uncommon in such applications. Scotts and Monsanto had hoped to have Roundup Ready Creeping Bentgrass on the market in 2003. It may be delayed until 2004, though.

Eric Nelson, a senior turfgrass scien-

tist at Scotts, told *Golfdom* earlier this year that Roundup Ready Creeping Bentgrass will be the "most thoroughly studied bentgrass cultivar ever" before it hits the market.

Scotts and Monsanto say that *Poa annua*, *Poa triv* and bermudagrass are difficult to control selectively or suppress in conventional creeping bentgrass without also damaging the bentgrass. "Roundup Ready creeping bentgrass should permit selective control of both grassy and broadleaf weeds without any observable phytotoxic reaction on the bentgrass," according to the companies.

KEY (AVAILABILITY):

A = expected surplus;
B = adequate supply;
C = limited supply.

KEY (PRICE):

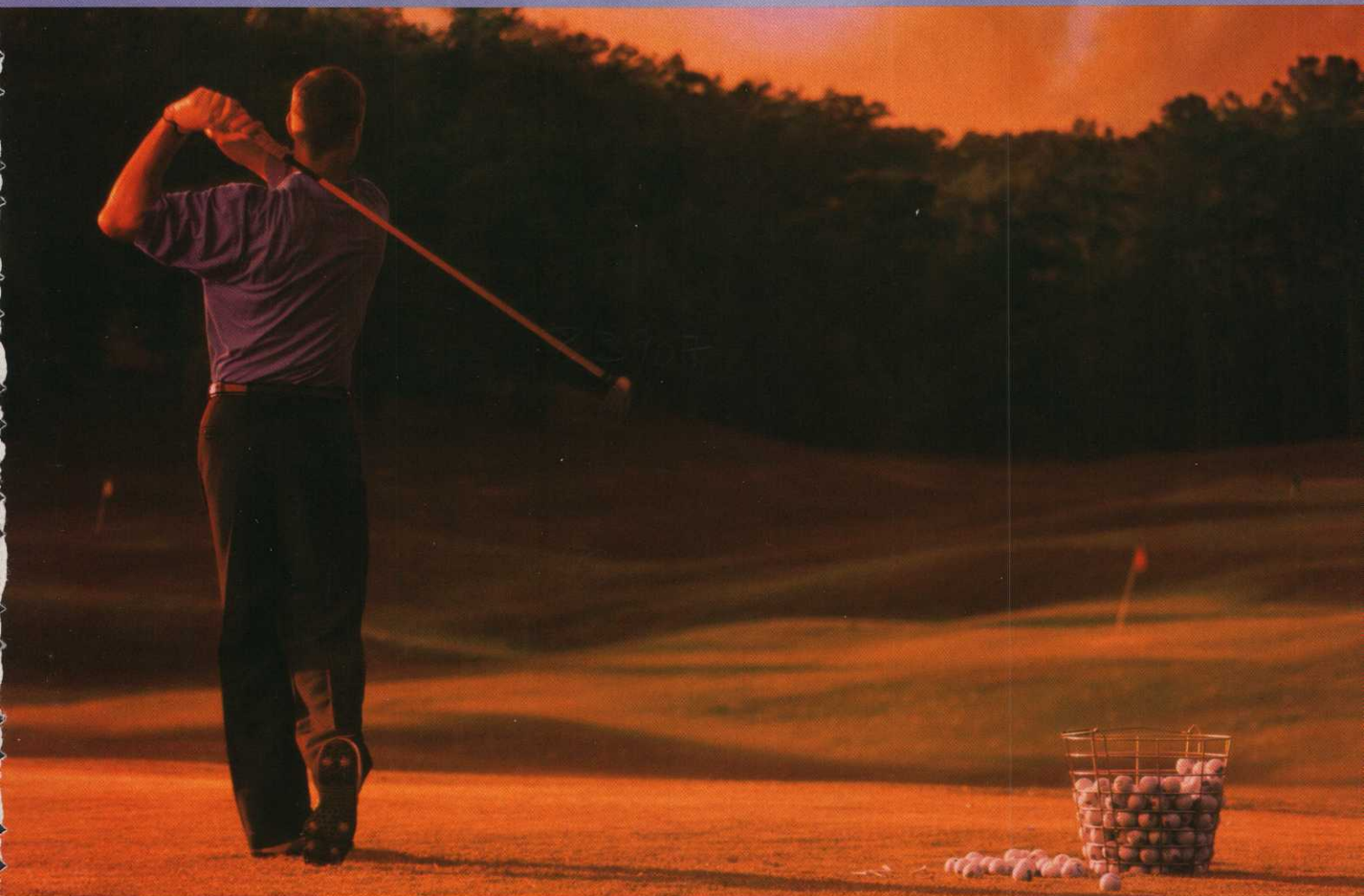
H = higher price than last season
S = stable, equal to last season
L = lower prices than last season

Seed Availability Additions

In October, *Golfdom* published a seed availability guide. The following cultivars and marketers were inadvertently left out of the guide. The complete guide is available at www.golfdom.com.

CULTIVAR	MARKETER	AVAILABILITY	PRICE
Kentucky Bluegrass			
Blacksburg II	Turf-Seed	C-	new
Brilliant	Turf-Seed	B	S
Challenger	Turf-Seed	B	S
Midnight II	Turf-Seed	C-	new
Midnight Star	Turf-Seed	C-	new
North Star	Turf-Seed	B	L
Rita	Turf-Seed	B	S
Voyager	Turf-Seed	B	H
Perennial Ryegrass			
Brightstar SLT	Turf-Seed	C	H
Catalina II	Turf-Seed	C-	new
Chaparral II	Turf-Seed	C-	new
Citation Fore	Turf-Seed	C	H
Manhattan 4	Turf-Seed	C-	new
Salinas	Turf-Seed	C-	new
Quick Trans	Turf-Seed	C	H
Tall Fescue			
Apache II	Turf-Seed	B	S
Coronado Gold	Turf-Seed	B	S
Endeavor	Turf-Seed	B	S
Matador	Turf-Seed	B	S
Olympic Gold	Turf-Seed	B	S
Tar Heel	Turf-Seed	B	S
Wolfpack	Turf-Seed	B	S
Fine Fescue			
Aurora	Turf-Seed	C	S
Discovery	Turf-Seed	B	S
Little Bighorn	Turf-Seed	C-	new

CULTIVAR	MARKETER	AVAILABILITY	PRICE
Seabreeze	Turf-Seed	C	H
Shademaster II	Turf-Seed	B	S
Tiffany	Turf-Seed	B	S
Bentgrass			
Alister Colonial	Turf-Seed	C	S
Penn A-2	Tee-2-Green	B	S
Penn A-1	Turf-Seed	B	S
Penn A-4	Turf-Seed	B	S
Penn A-4	Tee-2-Green	B	S
Penn G-2	Tee-2-Green	B	S
Penneagle	Tee-2-Green	B	S
Pennlinks	Turf-Seed	B	S
Pennlinks	Tee-2-Green	B	S
Penntrio	Tee-2-Green	B	H
Seaside II	Turf-Seed	B	S
Bermudagrass			
Savannah	Turf-Seed	B	S
Transcontinental	Turf-Seed	C	H
Princess-77	Pennington Seed	B	S
Mohawk	Pennington Seed	B	S
Sahara	Pennington Seed	B	S
Sultan	Pennington Seed	B	S
Sydney	Pennington Seed	B	S
Yuma	Pennington Seed	B	S
Bermuda Triangle	Pennington Seed	B	S
Royal Blend	Pennington Seed	B	S
Poa Trivialis			
Winterplay	Turf-Seed	B	S
Winterplex	Turf-Seed	B	S



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Off The Fringe

Fast Crowd

THANKS TO JOHNNY MILLER'S SWIFT COMMENTARY, MANY GOLFERS MAY BELIEVE THAT "10" MEANS SLOW ON THE STIMPMETER. THAT'S NOT GOOD NEWS

By Anthony Pioppi

Wait. Quiet. Listen for it. Yup, there it is. A golfer complaining about green speed. More accurately, complaining the greens are too slow.

That golfer, whoever it is, on whatever course it is, knows the putting surfaces aren't running at the speed they should be. Until recently, what Stimpmeter rating constituted slow was never defined, but thanks to television announcer Johnny Miller, the number is now carved in British steel.

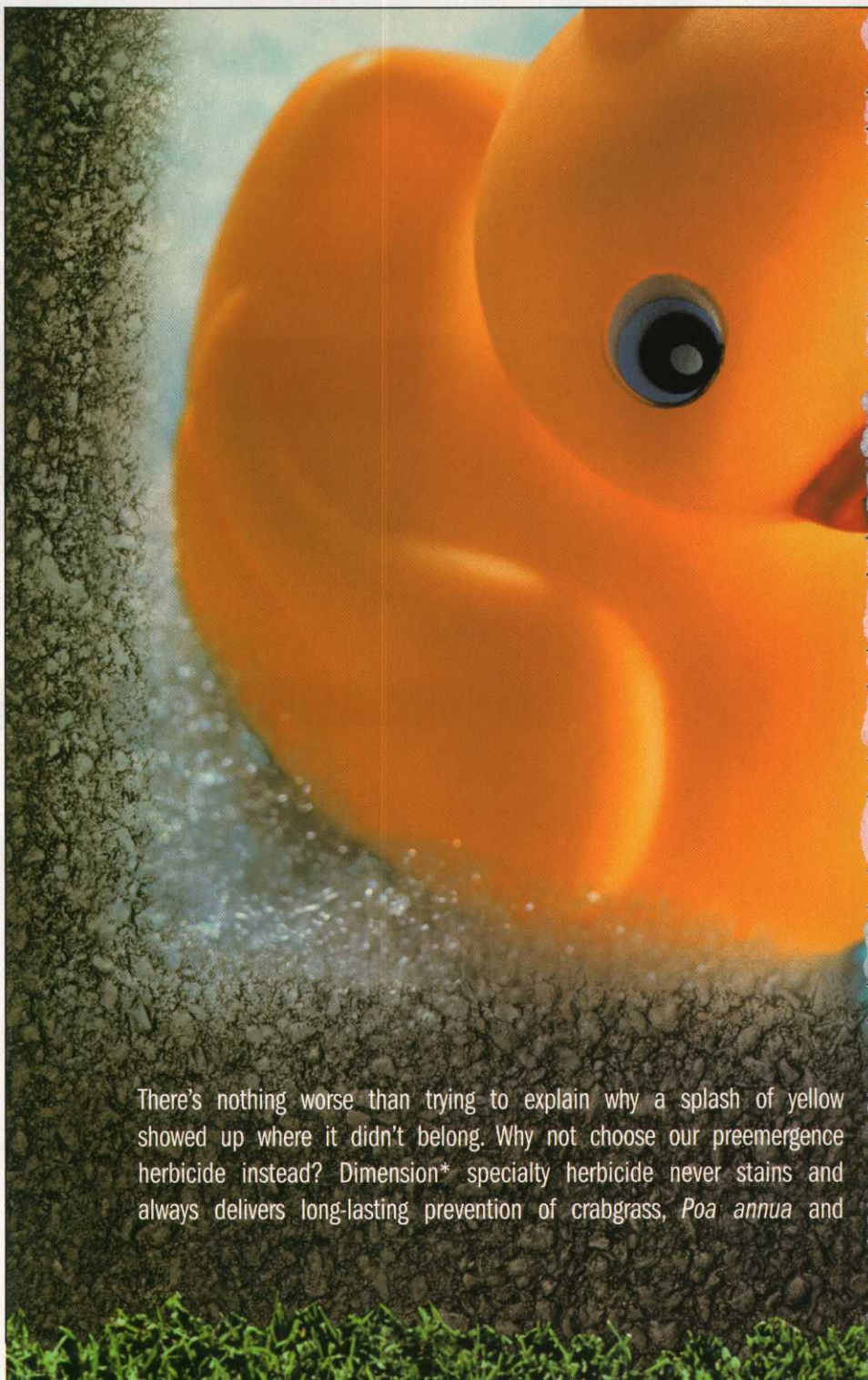
During the Ryder Cup broadcasts, Miller could go no more than 45 seconds without referring to the greens at The Belfry as "slow," even though he said they were rolling at 10 on the Stimpmeter. On-course commentator Roger Maltbie began beating the drum shortly after Miller let loose with the line.

When Tiger Woods was asked about the frequency at which American players were leaving putts short through the first day's matches at the Ryder Cup — with the implication being it was because of slow green speeds — he did not blame the pace of the greens. The fault, Woods said, was with the players failing to adapt to the speed of the putting surfaces. Woods said The Belfry greens were rolling at the same speed as nearly every European PGA Tour venue, including Muirfield, which hosted this year's Open Championship — where every U.S. Ryder Cup player participated.

That information didn't matter to Miller. Instead of saying the greens are slower than what American Tour players are used to, he just kept saying the word "slow" over and over until his brand of poison spread. By week's end, The Golf Channel's squawking heads were also



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marching to Miller's ill-informed beat. In no time, all of America knew that "10" on the Stimp constitutes as slow.

As one greenkeeping friend pointed out, Miller's mouth is going to cause problems on the local level. When a superintendent tells his club's members that the greens are running at 10, the members will — thanks to the influence

of Miller — respond, "Oh, that's slow."

Miller's repeated faux pas serves to illuminate the problem of golfers wanting faster and faster greens. It's ironic, considering that few golfers are really sure of green speeds unless they are one of the few lunatics carrying Stimp meters in their golf bags. Even if golfers do know the Stimp reading, few can translate

that into real-world experiences.

Stimp measurements, like the Dow(n) Jones Industrial Average and Richter Scale readings, are general reference points at best for the average Tom, Dick and Mary. When the Dow plummets 300 points, it is easy to see things are not going well in the market. Honestly, though, what does a plunge really mean to the average person in everyday life? OK, so the Dow is down, but if on the same day all your retirement money is in Unethical Tobacco and it's up 8 7/8, then how bad can things really be?

The same can be said of earthquakes. Sure, one of a magnitude of 3.7 on the Richter Scale is far less severe than one at 7.3, but how much less? At what number do dishes fall off the shelves? Outside of the nearest seismology center, does anyone really know?

The same is true with greens. One running at 11 feet is much quicker than one at 8, but do players know how that translates to everyday life on a golf course? Ask the average complainer how does a downhill putt on a green running at 8 with a slope of 2 percent compare to a flat putt on the 11th green and they'll get the same glazed-over look as Rams fans after last year's Super Bowl.

There are no real meanings to the numbers. They're just used as generalizations by the Neanderthals: Fast . . . good. Slow . . . bad. Ugh.

Now, because of Miller's comments, superintendents are going to have to ratchet up the speeds whether the turf likes it or not. Either that or practice a little deception. At least one high-profile superintendent lets his members believe the greens are rolling at 11 when in fact they are not. "I Stimp them maybe twice a week," he said after requesting anonymity, "but I putt them every day to make sure they are consistent."

Consistency, is that what's important? Nah, fast is the goal and from now on that means anything above 10. Thank you very much, Johnny Miller.

Pioppi is a free-lance writer from Middletown, Conn.




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Off The Fringe

Sound Advice

HUMBLE COURSE WORKER/COLLEGE STUDENT OFFERS
VITAL COMMUNICATION TIPS TO SUPERINTENDENTS

By Luke Wagner

As a college student who spent the last six years roaming the fairways, greens and roughs as an employee at a local country club in southern Indiana, I've learned a thing or two about this crazy business we call golf course maintenance.

But while I'm only a journalism student and about four years short of a turf degree, I'm more concerned with the human element of the industry than the Xs and Os of what makes grass grow. One important element is leadership, and I believe I've experienced my share. My situation involves working for five superintendents in six

years. If my observations are correct, that's a lot.

I kept my eyes open enough to observe what works and what doesn't work when it comes to molding an existing crew around a new authority figure. I think my experiences enable me to provide advice on how to help bridge the communication gap between regular seasonal/full-time workers and their new superintendents.

My first piece of advice falls under the use-what-you-have heading. It relates to two superintendents I worked for — one who used what he had and one who didn't.



After working on a golf course for six seasons, Luke Wagner knows a few things.

Consider that most golf courses have one or two workers who've been employed for 10 to 15 years and could practically run the course themselves. No amount of college education could supply a new superintendent with 10 to 15 years of history on a certain course. So my first suggestion to new superintendents is to use those veteran employees as assets. Don't be afraid to ask Billy Bob if he remembers the last time that 180-degree sprinkler head on the No. 8 approach was changed.

A new superintendent, who's unfamiliar with a course, will fail if he tries to do the job himself. I've seen it happen.

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