Month



Hole Stats

Distance: 238 yards

Par 3

The Turf

Green: Penn G-2 Fairway: Tifway Bermuda

Eight unique courses grace Pinehurst's 2,000-acre landscape, providing a breadth of challenging play. This month 200 amateur golfers will compete for the chance to play against pros Retief Goosen and Gary McCord at the 2006 BASF People vs. the Pros at the Centennial Pinehurst No. 8. The 7,092-yard, par-72 course opened in 1996 to commemorate Pinehurst's centennial year. Tom Fazio used signature Donald Ross features in the design of No. 8, including dips and swales around the greens, sloping greens and false fronts. As the site of the PGA Club Pro Championship in 1997 and 1998, as well as numerous amateur championships, No. 8 is a proven championship course that both daunts and delights players.

Among the field of People vs. the Pros amateurs will be golf course superintendents from across the country who qualified in BASF-hosted regional tournaments. While your superintendent peers are vying for the chance to play the pros, they will also have an opportunity to go head to head with a peer on ESPN in the BASF Superintendent's Cup Championship.

Whether playing or managing a course, superintendents know they have to make their own luck. Pinehurst No. 8 superintendent Jeff Hill and his crew professionally dedicate themselves to the agronomic details that create high-quality course conditions to meet the expectations of tour-savvy pros and golf-fanatic amateurs. While meeting those expectations, Hill and his crew take pride in knowing they're deepening the rich heritage of Pinehurst golf.

To find out more about the 2006 BASF People vs. the Pros at Pinehurst, visit the event Web site at www.pvpgolf.com. To find out how BASF Professional Turf and Ornamentals can help you better manage your course, contact your distributor sales representative or BASF at www.turffacts.com.

GOLFDOM'S HOLE OF THE MONTH IS MADE POSSIBLE BY:



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OPINION

t's been a busy summer already here at the Lake Omigosh Country Club located in central Florida. Hurricane season wasn't even two weeks old when Hurricane Alberto nearly roared ashore in the Big Bend area where Florida takes a hard left turn to the west and steals the beaches from south Georgia and Alabama. Fortunately, no major damage was done.

I ran into our superintendent Duffy Mc-Duffy the other day on the golf course. The course looked good to me and the greens were rolling smooth and medium fast, but Duffy had a harried look on his face as he drove up. "Hey Duffy, how's it going? The course looks great!" I said truthfully. Duffy smiled weakly and said, "Thanks. We try. To tell you the truth, the weather has been so weird between the storms and then hot and dry, it's enough to drive a body to drink! These days they should count a superintendent's time on a golf course in dog years."

"It's that bad?" I asked. "Oh, you know us supers," he replied. "We are our own worst critics and worrywarts when it comes to course conditions and reacting to all the "what ifs" of growing grass in today's politically correct world. I just get worn out trying to please all the members and fighting city hall over water, fertilizer and pesticide non-issues that get all blown out of proportion by the media and a few cockeyed do-gooders."

Unfortunately, I knew Duffy's frustrations had been building up by the talk going around the 19th Hole and Whine Bar. It seems Duffy's normally polite and professional demeanor had given away to some snappy sarcastic comebacks in conversations with some of the members lately.

For example, Gordon Goodnight had been harping for a couple of weeks on how our greens weren't as fast as those over at the Kwitchyerbellyakin Country Club down the road. One day last week he asked Duffy, "How fast are the greens running today?" Duffy barked, "Well let's just say that with your slow play, you can't catch them."

He got so miffed at some of the members comparing apples to oranges that he started

Superintendents Are Only Human

BY JOEL JACKSON



DUFFY GOT SO MIFFED AT SOME OF THE MEMBERS THAT HE STARTED POSTING STIMPMETER READINGS IN METERS INSTEAD OF FEET posting Stimpmeter readings in meters instead of feet. Some days when he was really upset he used centimeters. The greens still rolled as good as usual but it caused quite a stir as the members had no idea what the real green speed was, which was Duffy's point all along.

When the subject of concerns over bunker consistency came up at a recent green committee meeting, Duffy snapped back, "It's a hazard for Pete's sake. Are you planning on holding a sand sculpting contest with sand castles or something that I don't know about?" Then he went too far when he added, "If you are so worried about hazard consistency, I'm surprised you haven't asked me to raise or lower the lake levels daily or prune all the trees in the woods up to the height of your backswings."

Duffy didn't reserve his frustration just for the members. Word got out that a couple of his new employees were having problems getting to work on time. Reportedly he told his assistant Archie Clark, "Arch, the next time those guys are late, give them their paychecks a date late."

Duffy apologized to one and all for his moments of insanity and it dawned on me how often we take him and his crew for granted as they give us such a great course to play on day after day through all sorts of adversity — environmental, economical and political.

So long from the Lake Omigosh Golf Club where the superintendent is only human after all, the crew tries hard and the members are about par for the course.

Joel Jackson retired from Disney's golf division in 1997 and is director of communications for the Florida GCSA.

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aking a quick spin around one of America's great old courses, I came upon a twosome and their caddy. They appeared to be a father and son, out for a quick afternoon round. Well, not quick. The father was frozen

over his tee ball.

I quietly stopped the golf car I was tooting around in and got out to inspect a nearby bunker rake that looked similar to those used at this year's Memorial tournament. While lost in a deep analysis of the furrowing-friendly rake, I noticed out of the corner of my eye that the father still had not hit his shot.

Nor had he waggled.

Now I couldn't take my eyes off this fiasco, barely resisting the urge to break into full Al Czervik mode and screaming, "Let's go, while we're young."

Sensing my curiosity in this particular freak show, the son and caddy turned toward me with embarrassed faces. To think they must go through this 40 to 50 times a round.

Finally, prior to the sun setting or the son intervening, the old man pulled the trigger a solid 45 seconds after locking himself into place with nary a flinch or waggle to break up this madness. And I know you'll be shocked to learn that this Smails wannabe hit a weak push into the right trees.

This painful episode reminded me of the story about John Arthur Brown, the legendary president of Pine Valley who ruled over that great club for 52 years. America's No. 1 course has always been run as an autocracy, with the club president calling the shots. Brown was notoriously impatient with slow players.

One day a foursome of guests was taking its sweet time playing George Crump's dream course. The group had been warned to keep up, but either they were unable or unwilling to do so.

So Brown got in his personal golf car and drove to where the group's caddies were forecaddying on the 13th fairway. Upon his arrival, Brown told the caddies, "That's enough. Take the bags in."

With that, he drove off.

Sadly, Slow Play Has Come to This

BY GEOFF SHACKELFORD



SLOW PLAY HAS BECOME ENDEMIC OF A WORLD WHERE INDIVIDUALS TAKE THEMSELVES TOO SERIOUSLY The caddies picked up the clubs. End of round. End of problem. Sometimes there is no other way to deal with an act as selfish as holding up play.

I know, I know, slow play has many causes, including Tour players, technology, architecture, course setup, tee times spaced poorly, etc.

But slow play has become endemic of a world where individuals take themselves too seriously — one where the earth's inhabitants are often so sure of their self-entitlement that they actually think every shot must be treated as their last.

And anyone who dares to tell them otherwise is mean-spirited. Or worse, infringing on their vaunted individual right to take as much time as they deem necessary, regardless of the impact on others. Which is why Brown's display is sometimes the only way to deal with a problem that plagues the game.

No room for debate, no pleas for forgiveness. Some people are just rude and you have to treat them accordingly.

Oh sure, we could come up with other ways to tackle the problem. Make everyone buy a \$300 device, widen out courses, shorten them and assess two-shot penalties for Tour players. But that still doesn't address the number of rounds ruined by selfishness.

Perhaps contracts need to be signed by golfers that require them to leave if they don't play nine holes in a certain amount of time. Or shotgun tournaments will be treated like they were on the Champions Tour, where after 4.5 hours the round is over, regardless of how many holes have been played.

Sadly, this is what it has come to.

Contact Geoff Shackelford at geoffshac@aol.com and visit his Web site at www.geoffshackelford.com.

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BY THOMAS SKERNIVITZ, MANAGING EDITOR

NANCY DICKENS HAS ENJOYED MANY HALLMARK MOMENTS AS A SUPERINTENDENT,

starting with her daring mid-life decision to ditch a desk job with the country's largest manufacturer of greeting cards.

As a female superintendent she is one of only 81 affiliated with the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA), yet she stresses this is one e-card that shouldn't be judged by its Flash cover. The profession is far from chauvinistic, she notes, and more women will opt to join the ranks once they discover that opportunities do exist. Despite being in the minority, female superintendents don't see sexism as an industry issue

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PHOTO BY: CHRIS MOONEY

"If young girls were to call me, I'd tell them it's the greatest job around," says Dickens, the certified superintendent at Kierland Golf Club in Scottsdale, Ariz. "Sometimes people just don't realize how many great jobs are out there. I think times are going to change. It just takes time."

Since 1999 the GCSAA's female membership has grown from 153 to 216. Among that number are 62 Class A superintendents, 19 superintendent members and 42 assistant members.

Dickens, 46, represents the rare superintendent — male or female — who can recount extensive firsthand experience in two distinctly different lines of work.

Several years after graduating from Baylor University with a degree in finance, Dickens joined Hallmark at its corporate headquarters in her hometown of Kansas City, Mo. As an inventory controller, she helped manage \$40 million of seasonal products for what she considered a "great, solid employer."

Five years later, her duties had become humdrum. Worse yet, she had a never-ending view outside the fish bowl.

"The grounds around the Hallmark facility are beautiful," Dickens says. "There are beautiful glass windows all around, and I'd just look out, going, 'Gosh, what am I doing here?' I didn't want to work the next 30 years behind a desk."

After several inquiries with local superintendents and a female superintendent in Florida, Dickens quit Hallmark at 32. Her mother and brothers and sister couldn't believe it. "I turned a few heads when I did that," Dickens says.

The decision led Dickens to Pinehurst, N.C., where she worked from the bottom up on the vaunted No. 2 course. Starting at \$5 an hour, she stayed at Pinehurst for three years while simultaneously earning a turf degree from North Carolina State University in Raleigh.

"It was a leap of faith in that I had never even actually worked on a golf course when I decided to do this," Dickens says. "Certainly there were moments when I thought, 'Wow, I hope I know what I'm doing.' But I had been around the game and I felt I did enough homework to know long-term what my goal was and what the industry was about."

Her goal: to become a superintendent. Dickens fulfilled that quest in 1996, moving from an assistant position at Mission Hills Country Club in Rancho Mirage, Calif., to superintendent of the club's Dinah Shore Tournament Course and Arnold Palmer Course. Just a year later she moved to Del Webb's Sun City Palm Desert community, where she spent five years "maintaining a small, little city." Her duties included the construction of a second 18-hole course, putting course, softball field and fishing lake.

Since 2002 Dickens has been employed by Troon Golf, first as the director of agronomy at the company's Westin Mission Hills Resort in Rancho Mirage and, since January 2005, as the superintendent at its Kierland *Continued on page 28* "I've always been given opportunities. That next job has always been there for me."

~NANCY DICKENS~

Fair Play

"There were a few men who said, 'I'm not working for no damn woman.' But that was a long time ago."

~CANDACE COMBS~

Continued from page 27

club, where she manages 40 employees and a \$2 million budget.

Through 14 years in the maintenance industry, "I've always been given opportunities," Dickens says. "That next job has always been there for me. And it's been a pleasure to work for the people I work with."

Being a woman has neither hurt nor helped her cause, Dickens says. About the only act of sexism she has experienced occurred while filling divots alongside a somewhat crude crew member during her early days at Pinehurst No. 2.

"He looked at me one day — his language was somewhat coarse — and said, 'Now, I got a question for you: Why would someone hire a white woman like you when they can hire a white man like me?' He was very, very direct," Dickens says. "Since that point, (gender) has never been an issue.

"There's a perception that this is a maledominated business, which it is, but maybe I've been fortunate or blessed because it has never been a challenge to me. In fact, I've had guys that have left with me when I went to a new job. That's happened at two different jobs."

Likewise, gender hasn't been an issue for Candace Combs, the certified superintendent at Torrey Pines in San Diego. Her cause has been aided by the fact that Torrey Pines and Balboa Park, where she had worked for 30 years, are city-operated courses.

"Once you're in the municipal organization, they have rules about that. They have to treat you the same," Combs says. "In the beginning, way back when, there were a few men who said, 'I'm not working for no damn woman.' But that was a long time ago."

Andrea Bakalyar doesn't have it quite so easy while running two municipal courses in Knoxville, Tenn. One of the facilities, The Wee Course at Williams Creek, is located in a "very challenging neighborhood," she says, and her crew is comprised largely of young,



African-American males who "have a hard time taking leadership from a white woman."

"I'm in a culture where some of these young men don't even call their girlfriends by their first names. They call them, 'My baby's mother,'" Bakalyar says. "(But) it's not their fault that they've grown up in this environment. They're just victims of circumstances. These are guys who are pushing 30 and have never really held down regular jobs. They have several children and just haven't had an easy way through life."

Through it all, Bakalyar resists feeling sorry for herself if she's treated differently as a woman; nor does she feel like she has more to prove as a female superintendent.

"You have to take that 'I'm a woman' coat off," she says. "I am a woman. I can't change it. I'm not going to try to pretend I'm something I'm not. And people actually respond better to that than me trying to be something that I'm not."

Outside the municipal sector, Michelle Frazier-Feher credits her male colleagues with



helping her to reach her 10th anniversary this month as the certified superintendent at Boston Hills Country Club in Hudson, Ohio.

"The local association welcomed me with Continued on page 30

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Harmony In Growth



Continued from page 29 open arms," Frazier-Feher says. "They're like a big group of uncles and brothers."

Meanwhile, it took a little longer to find a husband willing to deal with the nuances of a superintendent's career, but Frazier-Feher, 34, eventually married in October.

"It does take awhile to find someone willing to deal with time schedule, and that's not just with a female (superintendent)," she says. "I found a wonderful, wonderful person. We work opposite schedules from each other, so when we get one day off a week together, we try to spend as much time together as possible."

As for her newly hyphenated surname, Frazier-Feher wasn't about to surrender one of the benefits to being the rare female in the industry.

"One of the positives is that hardly anyone ever forgets your name," she says. "You're not one of those people that actually blends into the crowd. A lot of people know me and have met me across the United States. So for business I started hyphenating."

Bakalyar, 35 and divorced after an early marriage, says she's at the point where the career vs. family question is persistent.

"Is it more important for me to become the Continued on page 32

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