

Month

Hole Stats

Distance: 583 yards

Par 5

The Turf

Green: L-93 Bentgrass

Fairway: Meyer Zoysiagrass

The seventh hole on the course at Big Spring Country Club is a feat for golfers who haven't mastered a fade shot. A demanding hole off the tee, the initial fade requires follow-up by a long carry or the golfer is forced to lay up just short of Beargrass Creek. The green features three challenging undulations, making for a difficult finish.

"If you hit the ball on the wrong side of the green, you've got a full day's work," says golf course superintendent Bob Rogers.

Host of the 1952 PGA Championship, Big Spring was founded in 1926 and hosts 17,000 rounds annually.

Since a course renovation in 2003, one of Rogers' major challenges has been managing *Pythium volutum* on his greens. Relying on research from North Carolina State University, he monitors the turf when soil temperatures reach the mid-40s and begins preventative treatments with Insignia® fungicide. Rogers makes two split applications in the spring and fall and hasn't experienced any turf loss since incorporating Insignia into his rotation.

Roughs at the club were comprised of native grasses until the renovation. Since then, the Big Spring crew has been in the process of converting the roughs in the primary areas of play to fescue and bluegrass to provide more consistent play for members. Prone to brown patch, the turf is treated with preventive applications of Curalan® fungicide from late spring through the fall.

"We use Curalan to the full label rates of 14 days to 28 days of control and have been fairly successful in pushing a month out of the applications," Rogers says. "Curalan has played a good role in our rotation for treating an array of fungus, including brown patch."

To see past Holes of the Month, download a desktop image and more, visit www.turfacts.com.

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GOLFDOM'S HOLE OF THE MONTH IS FURNISHED BY:

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The Chemical Company

Shades Of Green

■ OPINION

The New Year is just beginning, and all you Frost Belt superintendents are hunkered down in your maintenance buildings rehabbing your equipment, attending educational conferences and maybe doing some tree work in the off-season. Sun Belt folks are just trying to mow and go and get out of the way of the snow bird golfers. As for those in the Transition Zone, they're lucky enough to get seasonal golfers and bad weather.

Welcome to our wonderful world of golf course maintenance.

But in general, the agronomic pace is slower everywhere even though we're busy grooming turf and rebuilding equipment. So it's a perfect time to examine our programs and budgets and to make plans to tweak both.

One thing that won't be going away come springtime will be the continual erosion of the arsenal of products available to use on turfgrass. We will likely see PCNB and MSMA disappear this year. The public comment periods on the EPA decisions have just ended, so the final word has not been issued. But I figure they are done. And Namacur is gone as of May, except for cleaning out the warehouse shelves.

I champion the use of sound science and a transparent review process to make sure our industry is not unfairly targeted as an abuser or misuser of these previously EPA-approved products. To that end, I propose that all golf course superintendents and turf managers adopt a game plan to reduce annual inputs of fertilizer, chemicals and water use by 10 percent this year.

This is not an original idea. I am borrowing it from my friend and colleague Gordon Witteveen, a Canadian superintendent who winters here in Florida. Gordon has written about making a New Year's resolution to reduce chemical applications by 10 percent several times during the years. In recent years, I have seen and come to know several superintendents who have reduced use. And when you consider the groundswell of environmental advocacy that we know won't go away, proactive moderation seems to be the right thing to do.

Pushing the Point of Diminishing Return

BY JOEL JACKSON



SELF REGULATING
PESTICIDES, WATER
AND FERTILIZERS
CAN SAVE MONEY,
MAN HOURS AND
REPUTATION WITH
NO AGRONOMIC
SACRIFICE

Granted, some of these recent actions were spurred initially by flat revenues and budget cutbacks, but when superintendents started skipping a fertilizer or chemical application here and there without any disastrous side effects, a new mindset was born. I'm not advocating abandonment of successful turf management programs that work for your location. I'm saying that what works or is necessary one year is not necessarily what needs to be done the next year.

Do you need a pound of nitrogen, or will three-quarters of a pound suffice? Do you need to apply pre-emergent herbicides to the whole rough or just a few passes closest to the fairway? Can monitoring and scouting and spot treatments of hot spots replace blanket treatments of fairways and slopes? Can you skip one complete fertilizer application in the warm months?

People are doing these things. They are saving money on product and labor. These are conscious decisions based on observations of turf appearance, clipping yield and threshold damage or infestation assessments. Annual applications of some pesticides are being stretched out to every-other year based on residual activity of some new products.

As the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America conducts its series of golf course environmental profile surveys to provide baseline data for the industry, it's a good time to determine if programs and products — specifically pesticides, fertilizers and water use — can be cut 10 percent in 2007. It is the environmentally responsible thing to do at a time when we need to show leadership in that arena.

Certified superintendent Joel Jackson is director of communications for the Florida GCSA.

EVERYBODY IS DOING IT!



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There's no better indicator of conspicuous consumption gone awry than the excess often found in today's "ideal" golf course locker room. It's stunning to witness the amount of money and concern directed toward such a tiny portion of the golf experience.

In the ideal locker room, the setting should be homey and simple. That means our ideal locker room is where shoes are shined, clothes are changed and the walls include just memorabilia to remind you where you are, but not so much that you feel like you've entered a hall of fame.

Lockers are big enough to store a hanging blazer and shirts and spare clubs, but not full tour bags. Saunas and Jacuzzis are not necessary if there are showers with just enough water pressure to put out, say, the Chicago fire. Towels are plentiful and preferably thick, but the club logo should not be displayed. You don't want to tempt golfers to take one home.

The showers feature private areas for disrobing and toweling off to discourage the never-pleasant site of grown men walking around naked. The counter areas are stocked liberally with various products like mouthwash and sunscreen. We don't need stuff from Kiehl's, just enough to provide everything a golfer needs to freshen up.

An attendant is present in the ideal locker room to shine shoes, listen to war stories from the links and greet golfers in a friendly but never excessively effusive way. He's well-versed in area dining establishments, sports and a variety of other vital topics to sustain a conversation with the tense guest awaiting his host's arrival. If need be, he can also fix a quick drink, though the ideal locker room should strive to separate the gathering and drinking area from the messy business of shoe maintenance.

Shoe horns are plentiful on the benches. A box of tees, ball markers and ballmark fixing tools are fully stocked. And that's all golfers need.

The locker-room layout is intentionally simple. There's one long hallway, and the

Lavish Not Needed in the Locker Room

BY GEOFF SHACKELFORD



IN THE IDEAL
LOCKER ROOM,
THE SETTING
SHOULD BE HOMEY
AND SIMPLE

rows of lockers feed off a main traffic area. Or the locker room can take up two stories so an open-air room is created to better enjoy camaraderie of pre- and post-round banter.

The laughs and scowls echo around a two-story locker room better than one of those single-story, maze-like rooms that prove both confusing, unworkable and even claustrophobic. The upstairs aspect also allows windows to be opened without golfers being able to see in, providing natural ventilation. Never underestimate the importance of fresh air.

Plush carpet is a must in keeping with the home-like feel, as is a sense of scale. We don't want to feel like we're walking for miles to and from lockers, but we also want enough space on busy days to have our own bench to throw on some Etonics.

Finally, our ideal locker room features a comfortable but separate card room or gathering area where unwinding is the theme. There are a few books in cases, recent golf magazines on a table and of course, at least two televisions for sports viewing. (Please, no cable news. Let's keep it light.)

A wet bar is nearby, and perhaps food is served in this off locker room. This is also where scorecards are tabulated after a day on the links. And while the golf course provides sanctuary from everyday life, the off locker-room hangout is a safe haven from the travails of the links.

Laughs, friendly conversation and locker-room banter are not optional.

Contributing Editor Geoff Shackelford will sign his latest book, "Lines of Charm," as well as several other of his books at this month's Golf Industry Show. He will appear in the GCSAA bookstore from 1:30 to 3 p.m. on Feb. 22.

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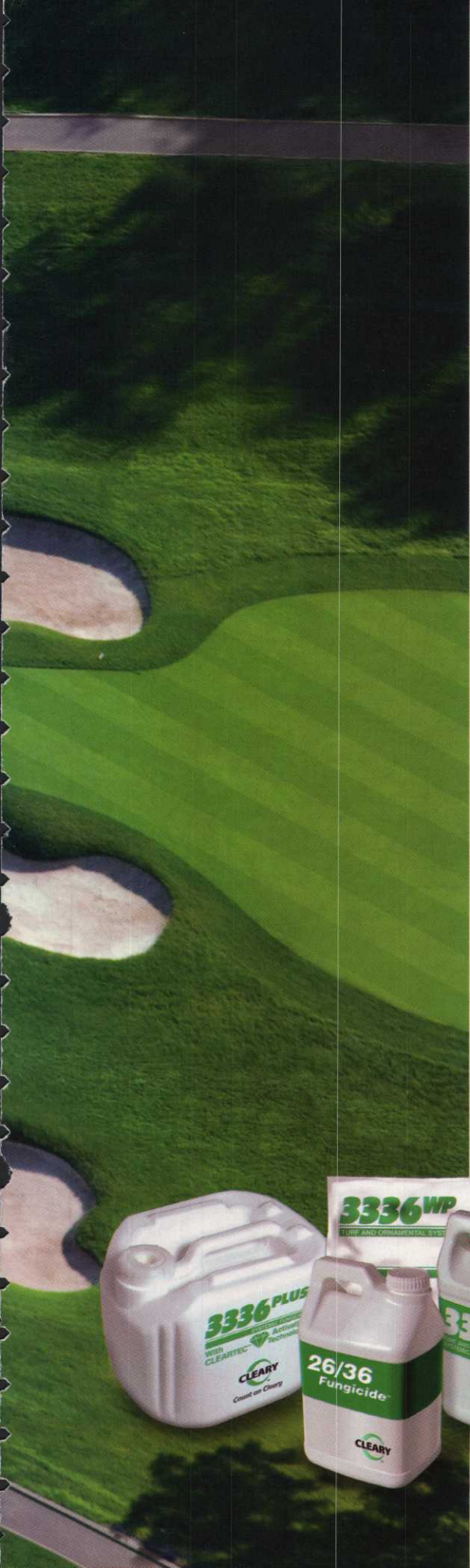
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Baby Boom *or Bust?*



BY DAVID FRABOTTA, SENIOR EDITOR

Wait and they will come. That's been the conventional wisdom about capitalizing on the baby-boom generation as its members enter their prime golfing years.

It's no secret the current senior generation constitutes the industry's most profitable customers; the 50-plus crowd accounts for 56 percent of all rounds played in this country. And as the largest generation in U.S. history, now ages 42 to 61, starts to consider retirement, many industry observers expect the rounds to start rolling in.

National Golf Foundation (NGF) President and CEO Joe Beditz even suggests that the 3-percent gain in same-store rounds in the first half of 2006 could be "the beginning of the rising tide."

Maybe so, but you'd be wrong to assume that baby boomers are slowing down. They're just getting started. So don't expect them to start acting old just because they're aging, and golf might not be high on their activity list like it was for their parents.

"Don't rely on boomers to follow the current senior generations of spending most of their time at the golf course. They just won't do it," says Phil Goodman, a speaker, consultant on generational marketing and author of "Boomers: The Ageless Generation."

Goodman identifies cohort trends to boost efficacy of marketing and advertising programs. He says each generation has unique mindsets, attitudes and lifestyles as they interact with each other, and more importantly, consume products and services, including golf.

He says one critical characteristic to understand is baby boomers' affinity for family, or families as the case might be. With the highest divorce rate in U.S. history combined with abundant remarriages, many boomers still have young families despite their age.

More than half of baby boomers over 55 have at least one child living at home under the age of 18, according to the U.S. Census Bureau data. And Goodman says at least 28 percent of baby boomers will have grandkids from their first marriages who are about the same age as kids from their second or third marriages.

So while about 9 million current boomer golfers are about to move into the traditional higher-play frequency, according to the NGF, many factors that make the generation unique could inhibit their ability to play regularly.

That's why "it would be a mistake not to aggressively go after that generation, to strengthen the emotional connection to the game," says Ruffin Beckwith, executive director of Golf 20/20, a division of The World Golf Foundation that is charged with growing the game.

He says his main goal in 2007 is to create more programs to coax boomers to the game. In 2001, Golf 20/20 launched Link up 2 Golf, which sought to ease the anxiety for new and former players.

Such programs will be important for courses to profit from the NGF-estimated 75 million to 100 million rounds that boomers are expected to bring by 2015. That swell is based on self-reported sentiments of boomers, many of whom, are in their 40s — more

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Now on the tees:
America's largest
generation. But could
time scarcity keep golf
from cashing in on
its financial potential?

HONOR THE



WE HONOR THE GAME THROUGH OUR DEDICATION. At Club Car, our dedication
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