



cent premiums on residential lot sales for property on golf courses. So if you have 100 lots, then you can sell them like you have 150; that's a pretty good deal."

According to NGF, about 69 percent of new facilities were tied to housing developments last year. The trend of building real estate-related courses is expected to continue as 70 percent of courses scheduled to open in 2007 are connected to housing developments.

There are currently another 305 18-hole courses in the serious planning stages, but it remains to be seen if they will break ground.

While development enclaves might be able to fund most new-build and renovations on the onset, it's not a sustainable model, as the income will eventually run out. Courses undergoing a renovation must be able to make money after the development subsidies are gone, says Bobby Weed of Weed Golf Course Design in Ponte Verde, Fla. He says the lion's share of golf courses are still supported by development, and it will continue to play a major role in the marketplace.

One way it becomes an option is by "blowing up" an existing course and carving out development opportunities while re-designing the golf course on the existing track of land. The housing subsidies can be very significant, Weed says.

"We've recently put about \$12 million in a few clubs' pocketbooks," he says. "That's a pretty good start to rebuilding your golf course, making upgrades to your clubhouse and paying off debt."

Many blow-up renovations open the door

to sustainable design as well. With tight demand and subsequent tight operational budgets, superintendents are under increasing pressure to keep operational costs down while still providing conditions in line with member expectations.

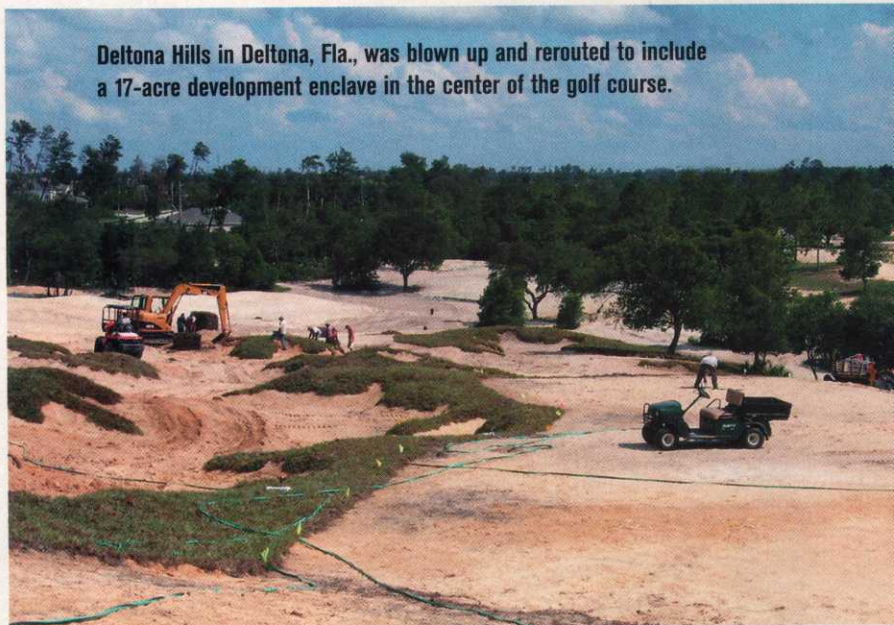
"About 25 years ago, you could get away with some pin-prick mistakes, but today you can hemorrhage and die if you have enough pin pricks," Weed says about maintenance inefficiencies that arise due to design issues.

A more compact, core-routed course is easier to build, manage and maintain, he says. "And since labor, salaries and wages are about 60 per-

Continued on page 42

Miami Beach (Fla.) Golf Club underwent an extensive facelift, including rebuilt greens and a regrassing to seashore paspalum.

Deltona Hills in Deltona, Fla., was blown up and rerouted to include a 17-acre development enclave in the center of the golf course.



Staying Ahead of Market Demands

Brooksville (Fla.) Country Club was retooled to make way for a road to 400 adjacent acres for development, including 41 lots with golf course frontage. Three holes were routed through a limestone quarry, and 12 additional acres were carved out for future development.

Continued from page 41

cent to 65 percent of budget, we need to be more concerned about man-hours as well," Weed says.

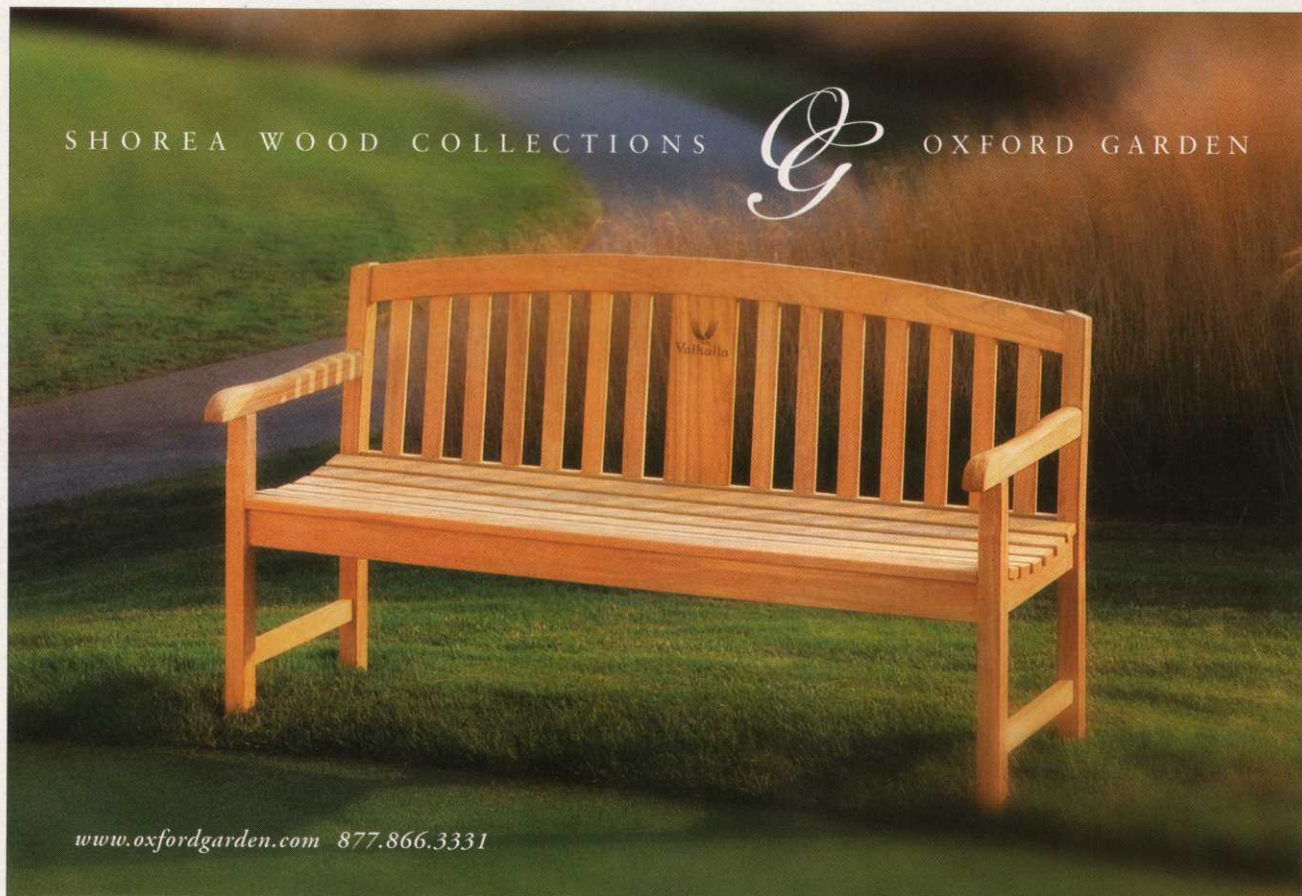
Renovations allow clubs to re-assess their clubhouses, too. The traditional banquet space/grill room model might not be what newer


members are looking for. In contrast to Oakmont Country Club, where members suffer in a second-floor locker room sans air-conditioning, members by-and-large will be increasingly unwilling to do without their creature comforts, such as multi-use rooms, high-speed wireless Internet access and nonfat, no- whip triple lattes.

"The days of the 30,000 to 40,000 square-foot clubhouse are out the window," Weed says. "We need WiFi service, a breakfast Starbucks-style component and a trendy mixed-grill component along the lines of a Wolfgang Puck setup. We need some place to take care of the children, such as a family playroom, and we need to have more porches, terraces, outdoor fire pits and fireplaces, as well as event lawn areas. And we need to stop spending all this money on banquet space that needs to be heated, cooled, maintained and staffed.

"It really starts with the design," Weed says. "Every one of these components is going to have to be value engineered in order to be successful in the future." ■

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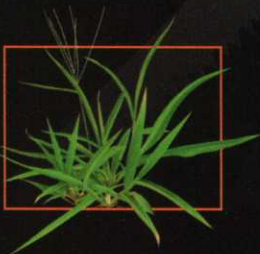
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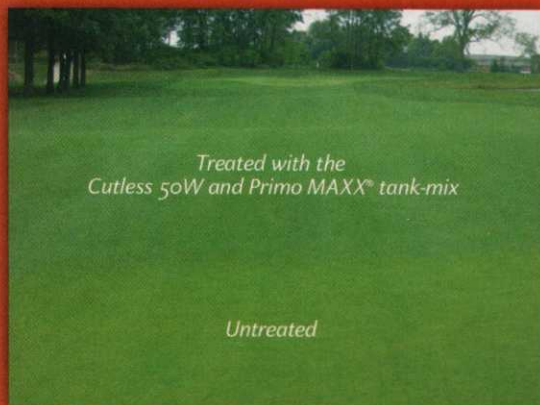
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Even the exalted Augusta National has been altered through the years, albeit to the condemnation of many Golden Age purists.

Genius Misunderstood

Golden Age architects were good, but does reverence for their work undermine necessary golf course evolution?

Golf course architects are getting a lot of attention these days. The golfing public cares about course designers. People know the names of architects, their styles and their courses. As part of this new attention, some architects have become media superstars, appearing on television and on the lecture

circuit. All of the national golf magazines now rate courses and give lots of ink to designers. Everyone seems to have his favorite architect — old, new, living or dead.

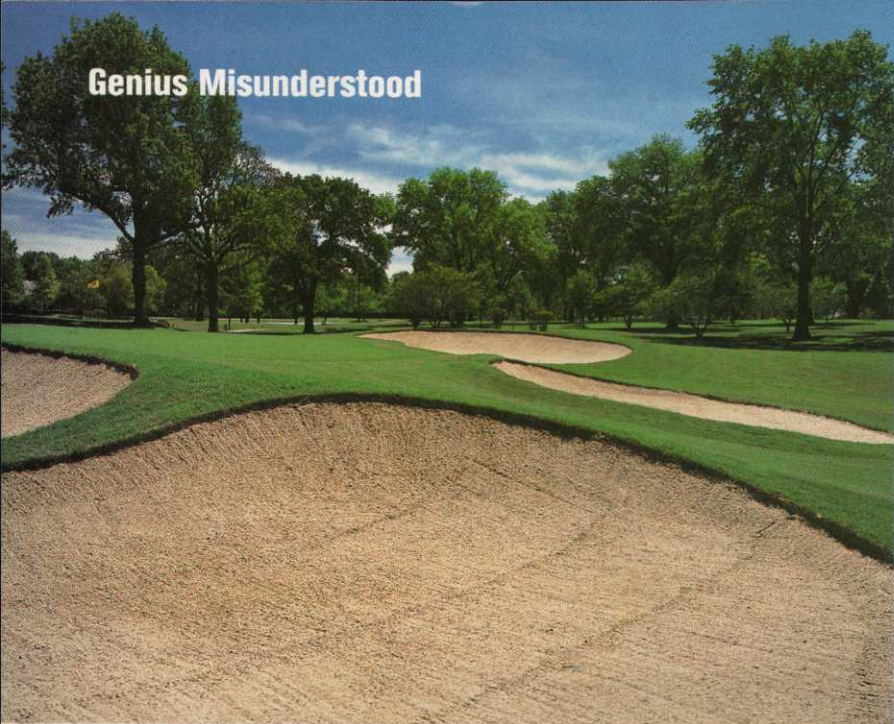
It wasn't always like this. Not too long ago architects got very little attention. Golf courses were just places where you played golf. They weren't "by" anyone, and they weren't in any particular style.

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By Mike Young

ANALYSIS

Genius Misunderstood



Perry Maxwell's Southern Hills Country Club was retooled by Keith Foster in 1999, including tees, greens and bunkers.

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Consider, for example, Bernard Darwin's famous "Golf Courses of the British Isles," a book that brought attention to famous courses in England, Scotland and Ireland for the first time. Golf architecture is central to

the book. There is, however, not a single architectural attribution anywhere. In a similar vein, Pete Dye wrote recently that while in the Army during World War II, he played Pinehurst No. 2 many times, never knowing who the architect was. He says he wouldn't have known "Donald Ross from Betsy Ross" at the time. Likewise, "Shell's Wonderful World of Golf" in the 1960s was filmed at some of the greatest courses in the world. Rarely, if ever, was the architect of the course identified.

It is a sign of how much things have changed that in a recent edition of "Shell's Wonderful World of Golf," the course's architect was not only prominently mentioned, he introduced each hole on air. Entire real-estate developments are marketed on the strength of an architect's reputation. Architects now figure prominently in media coverage of major tournaments. Never before have architects received this kind of attention.

All of this architect adulation gets ratcheted up another notch when it comes to Golden Age designers. If there was a time when Dye didn't know Donald Ross-designed golf courses, those times are over. Ross, Alister MacKenzie, A.W. Tillinghast, George Thomas, C.B. MacDonald, Seth Raynor, William Flynn and the other members of the Golden Age pantheon are now household names, and they are treated like deities. That's not an altogether bad thing. They were an extraordinarily talented group, and the recognition of their talent was long overdue. Their recent fame has helped to save many of their courses from mutilation or worse.

But sometimes I wonder if all of this adulation hasn't gone too far. As good as the Golden Age architects were, the reverence for them can sometimes be over the top. Their courses are sometimes treated like sacred texts. Every swale, tree and ridge (or lack of the same) is taken as a mark of the master and invested with deep architectural significance.

All of this might be disregarded as harmless hero worship if it weren't for the fact that courses from the Golden Age evolve and change like any other courses. Questions of restoration or alterations inevitably come up,

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and dealing with these issues on Golden Age courses can get crazy, especially if you are dealing with people who believe that the designer of their course was a genius (which is sometimes true) and that every feature on their course is a sign of the designer's genius (which is almost never true).

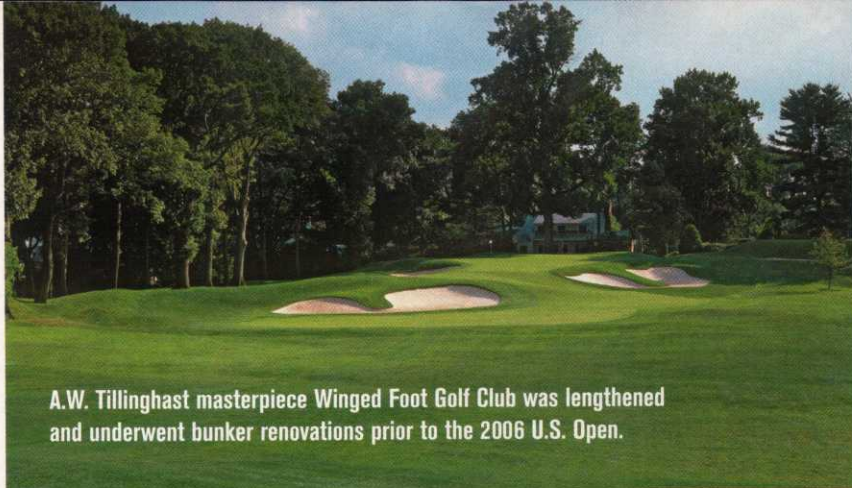
The sanctification of courses by these famous architects can get in the way of thoughtful restorations. I've had people tell me that an architect carefully placed a tree behind a green for depth perception. The tree would have been no more than a 2-foot sapling when the course was built in the 1920s. Swales

It's impossible to know all the details about what an architect wanted 75 years after a course opened.

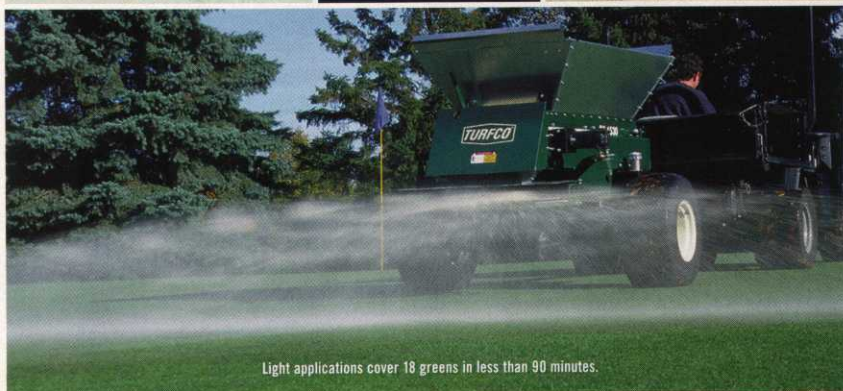
in fairways, dug for drainage, are seen as marks of unsurpassed artistry. Odd bunker locations are taken to have deep aesthetic significance. I've come to think that these architects placed bunkers in certain locations simply to provide a source of fill dirt for nearby green pads.

It's not possible to know all of the details of what an architect wanted for a course 75 years after it opened. Even if you are fortunate enough to have detailed drawings, it's still not possible. What still exists on the course can be misleading as well. The fact that an architectural feature survived 75 years does not necessarily mean it was intended or desirable. It's very hard to know what details Ross would have wanted on the 300 or so courses he de-

Continued on page 48



A.W. Tillinghast masterpiece Winged Foot Golf Club was lengthened and underwent bunker renovations prior to the 2006 U.S. Open.



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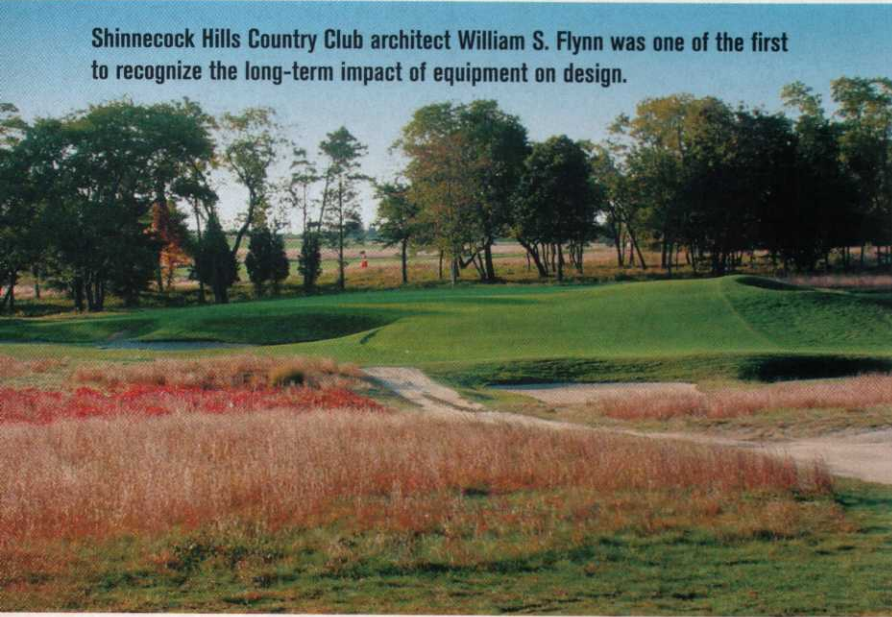
Genius Misunderstood

Continued from page 47

signed but never saw. It's entirely possible that he didn't know.

All designers from all eras left a great deal

Shinnecock Hills Country Club architect William S. Flynn was one of the first to recognize the long-term impact of equipment on design.



to the interpretation of construction crews, owners and club members. Even when architects oversaw construction, features were constantly being changed in the field. Ross tinkered with Pinehurst No. 2 his entire life. McDonald was still changing National Golf Links 25 years after it opened. MacKenzie was rethinking features at Pasatiempo until the end. Augusta National was the only clay-based course designed by MacKenzie. Clay-based courses present unique drainage problems, and I suspect that MacKenzie would have made many changes to the course after opening day if he had lived. And these famous architects fully expected this process would continue long after they were gone.

When asked to restore or repair an older course, the first, middle and last question is, "What is it you are restoring?" The course details as originally intended? As originally built? As it looked at some interim date? And what if the current membership has its own ideas about what the course used to be? These

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are all legitimate issues that should be debated and resolved in any restoration project. But I think the masters of the Golden Age would have scoffed at the idea of literal restorations of their original designs.

Cults, whether about Mao Tse Tung, The Grateful Dead or Donald Ross, always get in the way of clear thinking. An overdose of reverence for practitioners during the Golden Age can get in the way of thoughtful restorations.

The best of the Golden Age were unmatched geniuses at using existing landforms to build strategy and interesting shot options. I stand in awe of what they were able to do. My point, to butcher an old axiom, is that their genius does not reside in every detail. It can be counter-productive to treat Golden Age courses with too much deference. A balance has to be struck between respect for their genius and the needs of the modern player, new turf types and the current regulatory environment, to name a few.



Finding that balance is the hardest part of a good restoration. But when done well, it is also the most satisfying part. ■

Mike Young is a golf course architect and partner with Young/Rymer Design in Athens, Ga.

Alister MacKenzie's bunkering at Cypress Point makes it difficult to discern where nature ends and where artistry begins.

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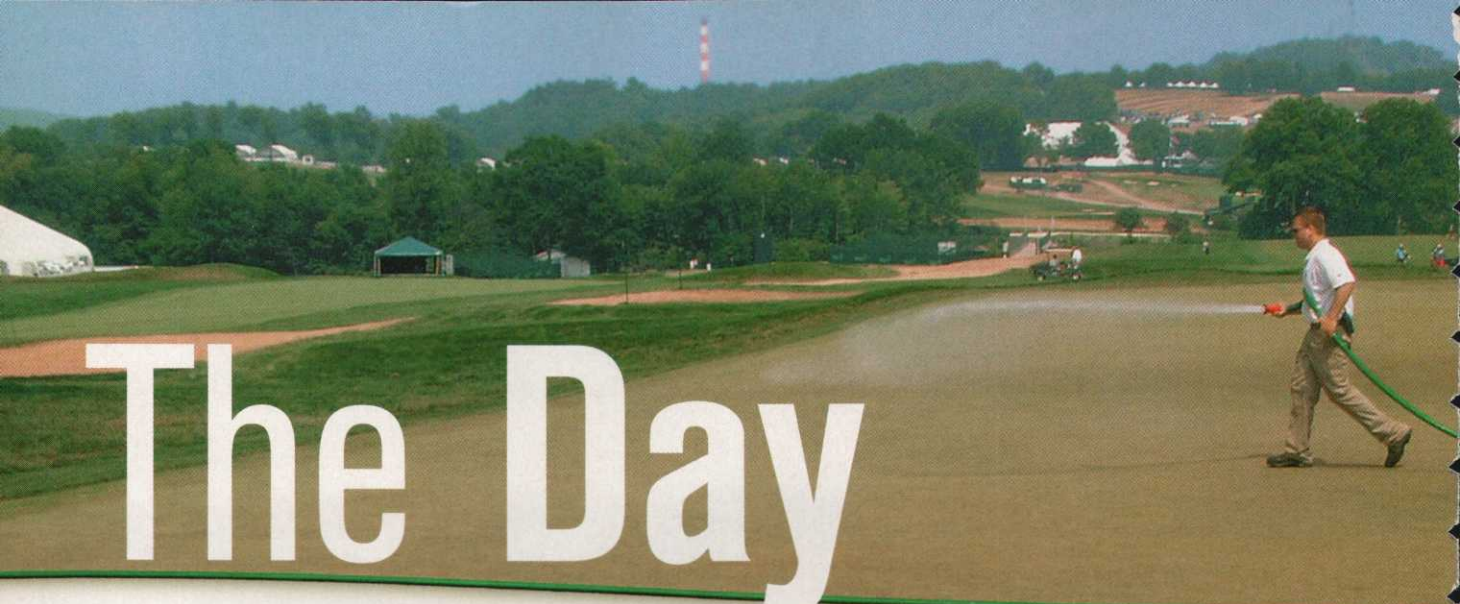


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The Day After

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHS
BY LARRY AYLWARD
EDITOR IN CHIEF

Life (and plenty of work) goes on at the Oakmont Country Club for John Zimmers Jr. and his staff after hosting the U.S. Open

Standing on the top row of the empty grandstand, John Zimmers Jr. stares out through dark sunglasses at the imposing golf course known as Oakmont, which still appears majestic despite being beat up by all things that come with hosting a U.S. Open Championship.

It's the day after the championship, not even 24 hours since winner Angel Cabrera embraced the U.S. Open trophy on the 18th green and kissed it. It was also on that green that Tiger Woods, who tied for second with Jim Furyk, embraced Zimmers and said to him, "That was tough." Woods, of course, was talking about Oakmont's setup, and his comment to Zimmers was meant as a compliment, not a criticism.

Zimmers and his 40-member maintenance staff at the Pittsburgh club fretted and sweated over that setup for months, in accordance with United States Golf Association guidelines. Together, they set out to set up the toughest test of golf of the year for the world's best players. Considering that nobody broke par, their mission was accomplished.

But it's over now. All the hard work that Zimmers and his crew spent preparing for and staging the championship has been officially

filed in the Oakmont archives, not to mention their memories.

"It was such a great time," Zimmers says, his face still beaming on the day after. "Yeah, it has to come to an end. But, boy, it was fun."

For first assistant superintendent Brett Bentley, hosting a U.S. Open was the time of his life. Bentley says he was glum Sunday evening when the event was over. But it didn't take him long to shake those blues and start thinking about what he had to do Monday morning.

"After the trophy presentation," Bentley says, "I was thinking about what areas of the course we had to water on Monday."

It was one heckuva party. Attendance for the three practice rounds and four tournament rounds held June 11 through June 17 was a record 258,907. The USGA, which stages the championship, was ecstatic with the course.

"We've never had a golf course conditioned — at least for the championships I've done over the last 18 years — as good as this one," says Mike Davis, USGA's senior director of rules and competitions.

With a party of this proportion, however, comes a mess to clean up afterward. And as Zimmers gazes out from the grandstand behind the No. 3 green, he sees the blemishes