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HOLE NOTES

Official Publication
of the
Minnesota Golf Course
Superintendents' Association

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FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

We Need To Look To The Future



As you have probably noted, the Board of Directors approved the change of Business Office and Executive Director from the MGA Office to Turtinen Communications, effective August 1, 1990. This change has taken some two to three years of thought, questions, ideas and concerns of many members and Board members.

As was previously noted in last month's issue of *Hole Notes*, we have become too large for the MGA office to handle our daily affairs. We truly need to look to the future and the continued growth our association is having each year. Our long time friendship with the MGA office will continue. We are extremely grateful to Warren Rebholz, Ross Galarneault and Anita Hight for the support and care that they have given us over the years.

Now it is time to address the meat and potatoes issue. To make this needed move to Turtinen Communications and to keep our currently healthy financial statement, we will be recommending a dues increase effective June 1, 1991. The goal of the MGCSA Board of Directors over the past ten years has been to keep our savings accounts with enough funds to match our annual operating expenses. Our healthy financial accounts attest to that desire of the past. To maintain this health and to continue our growth, a dues increase will be placed on the ballot for a vote at the Annual Conference and Business Meeting on November 28, 1990. More information will be sent to all of you in a separate mailing.

We are an active, viable association that does receive a great deal of benefit for our dues each year. We are respected around the nation and will continue to be in this position for years to come. The environmental issues of the next decade will demand that we be better informed on all related public concerns. We cannot afford to bury our heads in the sand traps and continue to ignore this growing fact. Through the MGCSA we will answer these issues and help all in this industry to be prepared to confront these trends.

* * * *

Thanks to Bill Whitworth and the Northfield Golf Club for our enjoyable day in July. The next test of your golf game will come at the 1991 U.S. Open site. Chris Hague and Hazeltine National Golf Club have invited us to enjoy this great Minnesota course and test our games against the likes of Nicklaus, Watson, Floyd and Irwin. See you on the 13th of August. Is that your lucky day?

—Kerry Glader, MGCSA President



ABOUT THE COVER

When the U.S. Open first was played at Hazeltine in 1970, the Chaska course's 17th hole was a par four. Now it's a par three, just one of the significant changes that have taken place at Hazeltine. For an update on preparations for the 1991 U.S. Open, please turn to page 5.

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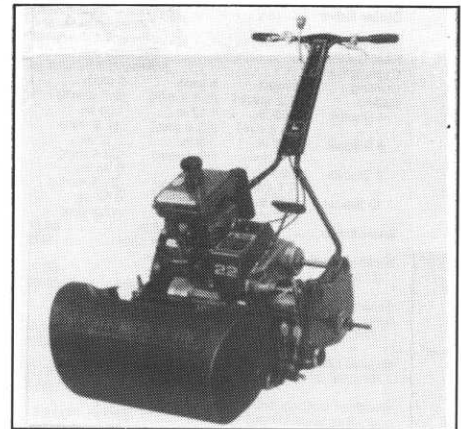
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Resodding the 15th hole

FOR CHRIS HAGUE AND STAFF

There's a Lot Going on at Hazeltine Inside AND Outside the Gallery Ropes

BY RALPH TURTINEN

Preparing a golf course for a major championship like the 1991 U.S. Open and coping with all the related responsibilities that go with it is nothing new for Chris Hague, 38-year-old golf course superintendent at Hazeltine National Golf Club in Chaska.

Next year's Open, to be held June 13-16, will be his third national USGA championship, but this classic, of course, is THE tournament most any superintendent would like to have on his own course.

Previously he was the man in charge of the grounds at Eagle Creek Golf Club in Indianapolis, Ind., site of the 1982 USGA Men's Public Links Championship, and the following year, his first at Hazeltine, he directed all the preparations for the U.S. Senior Open at the Chaska course.

* * * *

“Obviously, there's a lot to do inside the gallery ropes for a major championship like the Open,” Hague said, “but most people probably don't realize the staggering scope of activities outside of the ropes.”

However, if there's one superintendent who can get the job done right, it's Chris Hague, who is known by his peers as a “superintendents' superintendent” and is held in high esteem for his highly-organized approach to his responsibilities.

Chris has been working golf courses ever since he was a lad

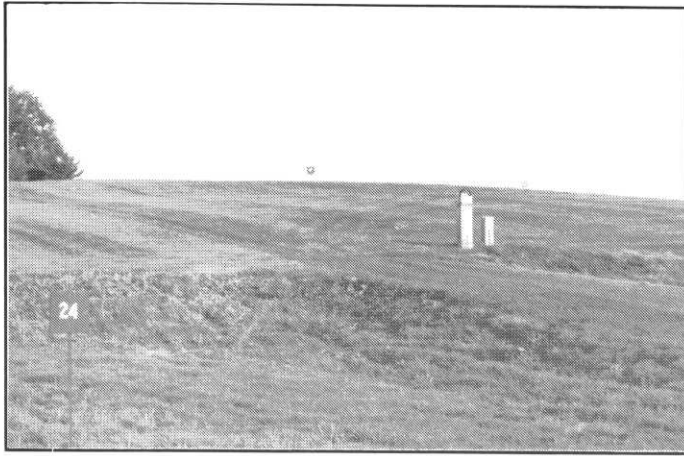
of 13 in Pittsboro, Ind., where he was born a day after Christmas in 1951 and was graduated from high school in 1969.

He enrolled in the School of Agronomy and Turf Management at Purdue University's Extension in Indianapolis, but a draft call cut his educational plans short. He wound

(Continued on Page 6)



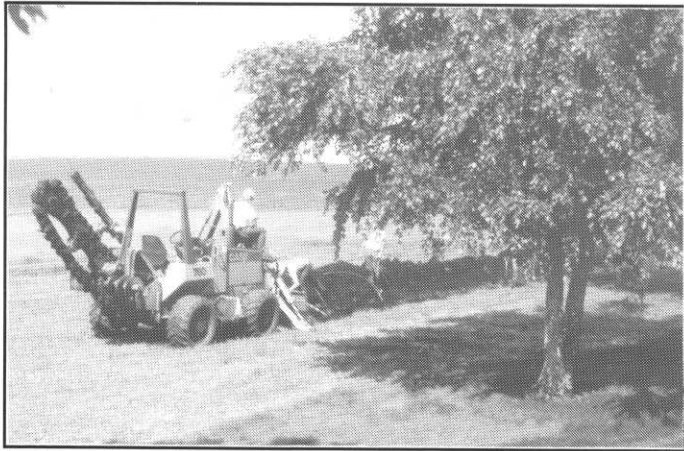
CHRIS HAGUE
Hazeltine Superintendent



The 'Corporate Village'



Hazeltine's 16th hole



Laying cable and power lines to the Corporate Village



Hazeltine's 8th hole

Corporate Village Being Developed On 22-Acre Site

(Continued from Page 5)

up in the U.S. Army for two years of which 10 months were served in Vietnam.

After his discharge he became an assistant superintendent at Plainfield Elks Club in Plainfield, Ind., then was named head superintendent at the somewhat tender age of 22 at Eagle Creek, a 27-hole municipal course designed by Pete Dye. Chris came aboard half-way through construction and remained as head superintendent through the 1982 public links championship.

About one month later, the Hazeltine position opened up, he applied, was interviewed and, 30 days later in September, 1982, he was on the job in Chaska and immediately began preparing for the '83 Senior Open.

"Naturally this experience has been most beneficial for next year's tournament," Hague said. But this time, because it is THE Open, there's a lot more to do than just making certain the course is attractive and as playable as possible.

* * * *

It's no secret that Hazeltine wanted another U.S. Open, which was held there in 1970. Having made considerable changes following the infamous remarks of Dave Hill, club officials later responded to rather ardent requests by the USGA to change the contours of 13 greens—some major, some subtle; revitalize Hazeltine's practice area; completely rebuild or revise tee boxes that affect 13 holes and, under the guidance of Rees Jones, redevelop greenside and fairway bunkers on Holes 1, 2, 3, 7, 11 and 18.

Since 1986, when the Chaska club was awarded the '91 Open, Hague and his staff have been putting in long hours on a variety of tasks, all geared to be as prepared as possible when the first practice shot is hit next June and the hordes of spectators invade Hazeltine.

For example, there's a "corporate village" being developed on 22 acres to house 40 corporate hospitality tents. This all-new, blue grass area, with several sections involving bent grass for exhibitions, has required considerable earthmoving. Flat pad sites were carved out of hills, and specific areas, 45 feet by 75 feet, had to be leveled to accommodate floor joists, plywood flooring and indoor-outdoor carpeting for the tents. A temporary irrigation system also has been installed.

"Now that this area is getting mature, we have a full-time person in charge," Hague said. "It's like maintaining a 20-acre golf course."

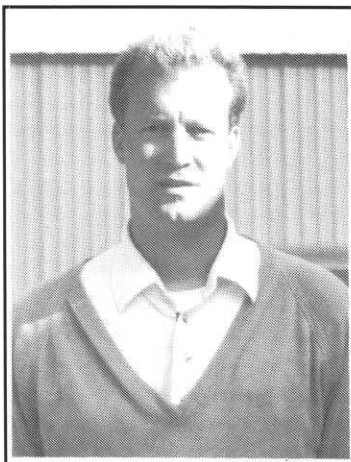
In addition, Chris has to supervise the installation of scoring circuits, bleacher sites, leader boards, throughboard sites, the placement of merchandise tenting and concession tents as well as develop spaces for trailers.

Then there are the telephone lines and electrical lines, the access to utilities, gravel roads for parking areas as well as preparing the admission area.

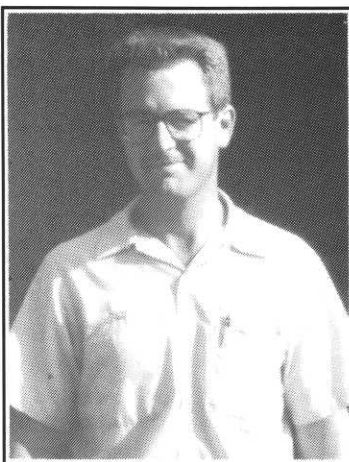
Coming, too, is all the preparatory work for ABC-TV, including scaffolds, camera viewing positions, tree trimming, boom trucks and electrical power sources.

"It's like setting up a small city," Hague said. "Next year we'll have about 30 tractor trailers and six satellite dishes on site."

All of these "extras" funnel through the course superinten-



DAVE DEEMS
Assistant Superintendent



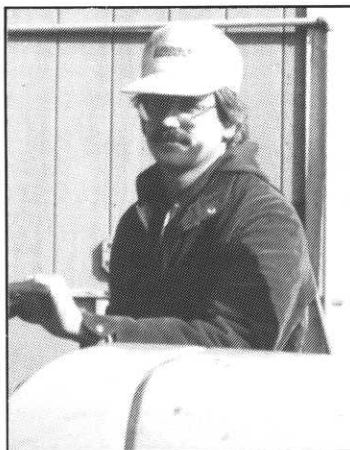
SCOTT SCHUNTER
Golf Course Foreman



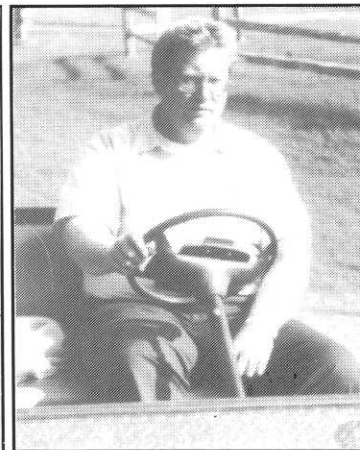
Preparing fairway on third hole for resodding



Resodding



RALPH ARNT
Equipment Manager



JOHN BETCHWARS
The Cup Cutter

PHOTOS BY SCOTT TURTINEN

Stimpmeter Will Be At 11.5 When 1991 U.S. Open Begins

(Continued from Page 6)

dent, in this case Chris Hague, who also has plenty to do with preparing the golf course.

* * * *

"Obviously the course has to be in playable condition," he said. "This work isn't much different than it usually is, except we nit-pick more. . . a lot more."

"For example, we repair small dips in the fairway or small holes in the rough," he said. "A tree may have been decaying for 20 years, and a sink hole results. We're much more fastidious about everything. We comb the course to find little flaws, then repair them."

The green program also isn't much different from normal maintenance.

"We've been having the stimpmeter at 9-9.5 for normal play and make it 10-10.5 for some special events, but for the Open it will be 11.5."

* * * *

Hague's normal staff numbers 20-21, but he now has 29 on time cards. In addition to one person specifically responsible for the corporate village, he has six persons on what he

calls his "sodbuster staff" plus a golf course foreman for this crew. Primarily the sodbusters are re-sodding, leveling improper humps, installing drain tile and handling a miscellany of other chores.

Next spring, Chris will beef up his staff "to do all that needs to be done." He expects to peak around 40 persons.

Of major help to the Hazeltine superintendent in all of these preparatory responsibilities are Dave Deem, first assistant golf course superintendent; Scott Schunter, golf course foreman, and Ralph Arnt, equipment manager.

Deem's primary duties are within the gallery ropes. He devotes considerable attention to greens, tees, fairways and bunkers as well as the corporate village and is responsible for training non-skilled persons.

Schunter focuses on work outside of the ropes, such as primary roughs, intermediate roughs, ponds and pond banks.

Arnt, like Deem and Schunter, has much more to do than in a normal year. Since his area of expertise requires more staff and more equipment than usual, his responsibilities in maintenance and upkeep have increased with his inventory. Currently he's responsible for approximately \$800,000 worth of equipment.

"Naturally, during the golf season, there are a lot of long hours and a lot of hard work," he said, "but, most of the time, we're enjoying this opportunity. The Open gives our entire staff and myself the chance to see what we can do. We'll be in the limelight, and that's a big incentive for all of us. So far every-

(Continued on Page 8)

Unknown Elements Cause the Most Stress

(Continued from Page 7)

one who's here now plans to come back next spring, so we'll be relatively experienced."

* * * *

Perhaps the most stressful parts of Hague's duties deal with unknown elements, things that he can't control like the 13 inches of rain in a 40-day period this spring, or the problems associated with the "bad winter" of 1989-90.

"The logistics of having our course at its peak when the tournament begins is a major challenge," he said, "as it is for preparing for any eventualities, like what type and how many auxiliary pumps are needed just in case it rains during the tournament like it did this Spring, or how many thousands of yards of wood chips would be required to place on fabric liners to alleviate major traffic problems in case of a deluge."

"If it did pour," Hague said, "we'd need increased wrecker service for the parking area. We could lose 20-25% of the 200 acres set aside for parking, and we also would have to develop a shuttle service."

* * * *

Communicating with all the people who want to talk with Chris also poses a problem. Some, of course, are important. A big help in this regard is Paula Buetow, who used to work on the grounds crew but now serves as Chris' administrative

assistant. Along with pursuing considerable and necessary paperwork, she's in position to screen calls, to contact Chris when it's important and to politely ask people to call back or wait for Chris to call if it's not something that needs immediate attention.

Chris has a cellular telephone with him on the course, so that he can respond as promptly as possible.

* * * *

Meantime, what effect does all this have on Chris' personal life? He may love his golf course, but he also loves his family, which includes his wife, Sharon, and their two daughters, Stephanie, 16, and Stacy, 13.

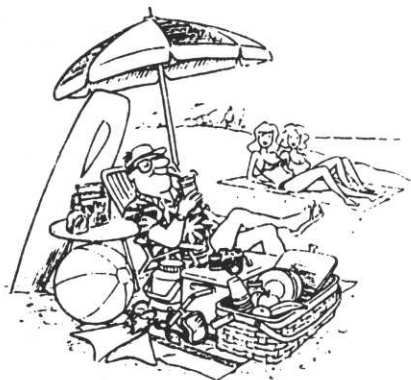
"Obviously, this type of work, particularly with the Open, makes personal planning difficult," Hague said. "But some times the time is right to get somewhere, at least for a while."

"Fortunately, Sharon is a very understanding wife," Chris said. "She comes from a farm family and knows what a proper work ethic is all about. So do our daughters. They all know that for six to seven months a year it's a busy time for golf course superintendents, but we can settle back a bit in December, January and February."

A little winter respite will be important. When the snow melts next Spring, say in April, the following two months certainly will test the mettle of Chris Hague and his crew.

But, like his professional colleagues say: he's so well-organized. He and his staff will get the job done right.

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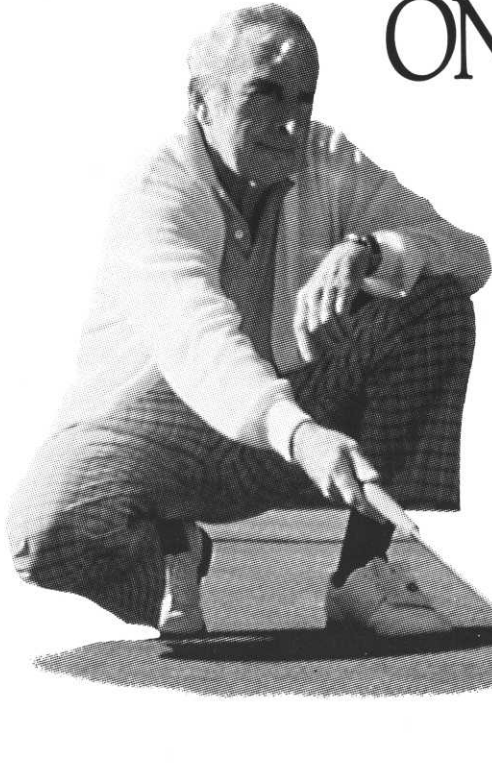


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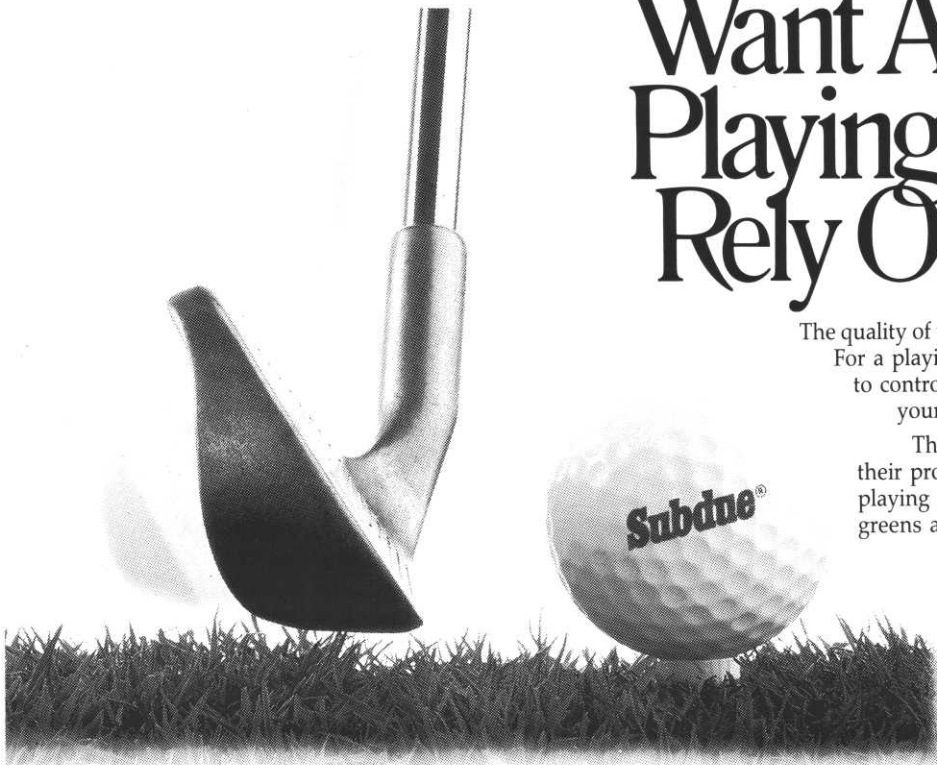
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* * * *

Factual Approach to Environmental Issues

By James M. Latham, Director
Great Lakes Region, USGA Green Section

American golf courses are better than ever and I can prove it. If not, why does our office get more inquiries about sand bunkers and bunker sands than anything other than new construction? It seems paradoxical that course conditions can remain high when maintenance programs continue to be hampered by pressure to reduce the use of pesticides, fertilizers and water. Evidently, golf course superintendents have responded to the pressures by working smarter than ever with the high quality products which *are* available.

The pressures are not going to let up, though. Pesticide posting laws are in force in some states now, and some versions will follow in others. There are other potential legalities regarding pesticides which could hamper our means of communication with golfers. A recent GAO publication evaluating EPA performance listed the things that lawn service operators *CANNOT* say about the products they apply to lawns:

- Any statement implying that a pesticide is recommended or endorsed by any federal agency.
- A true statement used in such a way that is false or may mislead a customer.
- Claims about the safety of a pesticide or its ingredients such as "safe," "nonpoisonous," "harmless" or "nontoxic" to humans or pets, *with* or *without* phrase "when used as directed."
- Non-numerical or comparative statements on product safety, such as "contains all natural ingredients," "among the least toxic chemicals known" and "pollution approved."
- "Approved by" any federal agency
- "Low in Toxicity," "will not harm beneficial insects," "no health hazard" or "ecologically compatible."

Just remember that EPA considers no pesticide safe since all of them are supposed to kill or adversely affect the growth of something.

To follow these guidelines, how would you answer Mr. and Mrs. Golfer when they ask if the stuff being sprayed by the Man From Mars is safe? What will they do when you hand them labels or MSDS and stand mute? Will this satisfy their Right to Know?

We have some information on this through the publications by Watschke, Petrovic and Cohen, but we still do not have the whole story. For example, we don't know what becomes of pesticides after they are applied to turf and run their course of action. What are the products of their decomposition in soils? In sands? Under aerobic or anaerobic conditions and at what pH? Several years ago, when Milwaukee began applying a digested sludge to farmland, a consulting engineer subjected some of the treated soil to delicate testing for nonmetallic compounds. He found none of the toxic organics he anticipated, but did see the presence of some "unidentified compounds" which *Might Be Harmful*. The bottom line was a recommendation that application be suspended until further tests were conducted to identify the material and determine its toxicity. Of course, *he* would do the testing (at a tidy fee) for a few years.

Charlatans abound whenever an emotional issue arises which deals with unknown, potentially hazardous materials. These folks are usually better speakers and writers than knowledgeable scientists and do not have to prove anything. When faced with data from University research, they simply say that it is tainted by the influence of the anti-environmental agricultural combine. Period.

To cope with this kind of reaction and to provide factual information for those truly interested in environmental issues, the USGA Executive Committee has charged the Research Committee, now headed by Dr. Mike Kenna, with another national-level research program. The 3-year project will develop information to help us:

- Understand the effect of turfgrass pest management and fertilization on water quality and the environment.
- Evaluate alternative pest control measures in Integrated Turf Management Systems and
- Determine the human, biological and environmental factors that golf courses influence.

The proposed budget for 1991 is almost a million dollars, with similar amounts planned for 1992 and 1993.

The intriguing thing about this project is that it seeks the unvarnished truth. If our present practices are faulty, golf will have to clean up its act and, if not, we will have full confi-

(Continued on Page 13)