

Turfgrass Matters



August 1991, vol. 44, no. 6

Mid-Atlantic Golf Course Superintendents Newsletter

Bretton Wood to host MAAGCS picnic Wednesday August 14

Bretton Wood Recreation Center is on 280 scenic acres along the Potomac River near Germantown, Md. It is a private club owned by the International Monetary Fund. They bought farmland and developed the area in the late 1960s as a recreational facility for their employees. Membership is limited to employees of the Fund, the World Bank, and several other affiliated organizations.

There is an 18-hole golf course at Bretton Woods, but as the name implies, golf is not the only game there. It also has a swimming pool complex; a tennis area with two hard courts, four Omni courts, and eight Har-Tru courts; two soccer fields; basketball and volleyball area; picnic area; and two playgrounds for children. There are large undeveloped areas of woods and fields along the perimeter of the property; these green spaces give Bretton Woods a rural character.

The golf course was designed by Eddie Ault, and it plays 6327 yards from the white tees and 6663 yards from the blue tees. Originally, there were wide fairways (old measurement figures show some 65 acres of fairways) and open rough areas. In recent years, fairway acreage has been substantially reduced, and the planting and growth of trees have brought more penalties into the rough.

The soil greens at Bretton Woods are bentgrass, with the usual intrusion of some *Poa annua*. They are mowed at 5/32" five times per week. Tees are

bentgrass and ryegrass, with some zoysia in areas of high use. The fairways are mostly ryegrass, with some areas of common bermuda and a few remnants of the original bentgrass. Fairways are mowed at 5/8" two or three times weekly.



Larry Ott

Management of the golf course involves the usual cultural, fertilizer, and pesticide programs, and the usual conflict of golfer expectations with the realities of the budget. Although the majority of the golfers at Bretton Woods are of moderate skill, the minority of skilled golfers are more vocal about matters such as height of cut and green speed. Because of these requests, management of the greens and of the general mowing and watering has become more aggressive than in the past.

Larry Ott has been superintendent at Bretton Woods since May, 1988. He grew up near Cleveland, Ohio, and started golf course work at an early age, first as a target on the driving range, then in the pro shop, then at the real world of the course itself. After

receiving a degree in Biology from Marietta College in Ohio, he worked on the crew at the Kittansett Club, a links-type course near Cape Cod, for five years. He then returned to school at the University of Rhode Island for a degree in Resource Management. Some time with a lawn service company, and then ten years managing the grounds at Gallaudet University in Washington, D. C. preceded his return to golf course work at Bretton Woods. Larry's principal hobbies at this time seem to be repairing ball marks, watching the irrigation pond drop, and waiting for Fall.

Any description of Bretton Woods would be incomplete without mention of its General Manager and the Maintenance staff. Gerry Gerard was the superintendent at Bretton Woods for 20 years, and is now its General Manager. Those who know Gerry from the old days can imagine how he thrives on negotiating building permits with the County and monitoring the maze of membership categories. Although the maintenance staff—Buzz Stine, Jim Barnes, Bill Beachley, Earl Fox, Buddy Kinsey, Mark Mills, Jerry Stine, and Larry Weller—is a small group for a large job, they are an example of a reliable and capable group.

Directions: Take the River Road exit from I-495, follow River Road west through Potomac to Bretton Woods. Bretton Woods is 12 miles from the Beltway, on the left side of River Road just before its intersection with Seneca Road.

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MAAGCS Newsletter

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Mr. Ed Crow, guest speaker for the July meeting at Turf Valley, did his best to answer our questions about safe pesticide storage buildings, but as he acknowledged, the standards that have been set so far are very general.

As a follow-up to that meeting, Dean Graves, Lou Rudinski and I were in attendance at the Governor's District Council meeting in Annapolis on July 27.

We accepted this opportunity to make a presentation regarding our need for more input from the Department of Agriculture about the specifications for storage buildings.

I feel the Council understands our position and they have assured us they will consider the information we presented along with the plans they already have to come up with a set of guidelines so that we can build or buy storage buildings today that will not be outdated tomorrow.

We should have some news to pass along to the Association very soon.

Also, while we were at the meeting we talked to Council

member George Harmon, Program Administrator, Toxics Registries and Analysis Program with the Department of Environment about getting more



information on underground storage tanks and the regulations regarding the "Employee-Right-to-Know" law.

Mr. Harmon has since mailed me a list compiled by the Department of Environment which contains contractors for underground spills, surface spills, petro-tite tests, tank salvagers and tank removal.

Anyone needing any of the information listed can give me a call and I will send you a copy.

We have now gotten past the 4th of July and are headed for Labor Day which means our Association's annual picnic is upon us. Remember this year we are at Bretton Woods and are there on **Wednesday, August 14.**

Let's all try to forget how miserable this summer has been so far and get out there to take advantage of the good food, beverages and the good company of our family and friends.

See you all there.

*Nick Vance, CGCS
President, MAAGCS*

GOLF NOTES

Congratulations to our 1991 two-man team champions Ken Ingram and Jeff Miskin. Ken and Jeff combined for a team total of 116 points. In the Gross Division Bill Shirk and Tim Sage teamed up for a very fine total of 93 points.

Special thanks go out to Mike Gilmore and the entire staff at Turf Valley for a most enjoyable day on the links.

As everyone knows, our August meeting will be the Annual Picnic, so there will be no golf tournament. However, anyone wishing to play may do so anytime during the day.

*Scott Wagner
Golf Chairman, MAAGCS*

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Massive Greens Project Underway at International Steve Nash looking forward to April 1--no joke

Golf course superintendents are accustomed to construction projects—a couple of tees a year, a new green here and there, work on the irrigation pond—but imagine the project Steve Nash is overseeing this summer: 17 new greens, making two ponds into one large one, installation of a wooden bunker around number six, two new tees, and two fairway bunkers. Except for well-kept fairways and golfers dodging dump trucks, International Country Club, Fairfax, Va. in mid-July resembled a new course under construction.

ICC, named because of its proximity to Dulles Airport, is a member-owned club opened in 1961. Approximately 460 of its 600 members are golfers, and of these, about 60 or 70 are single-digit handicappers. "They are serious!" says Steve. Still, he was surprised when they decided to "bite the bullet and do this."

"Our main objective," said Steve, "Was to get drainage and have more modern greens. Some of our greens were so undulating there were very few pin place-



Steve Nash examines an excavated bunker. In addition to the greens construction, Steve and his crew are building two new tees and two fairway bunkers.

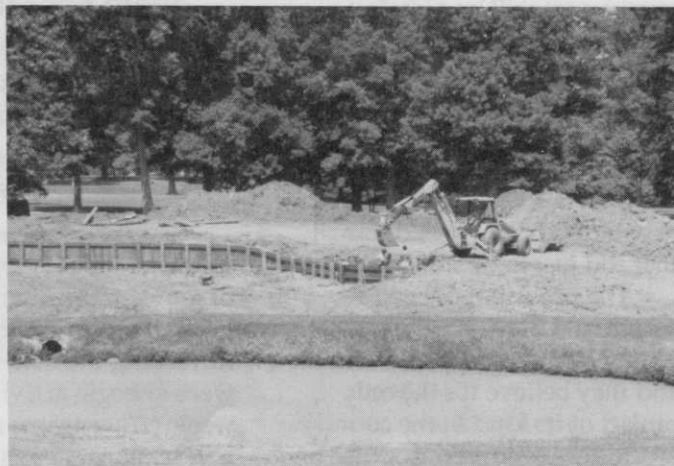
ments and we needed more because we're pushing 50,000 rounds—during peak times play would run between 1200 and 1500 rounds per week. The greens were wearing out pretty quickly. First, though, we wanted to get them so they would drain. When we got those summer thunderstorms followed by 90-degree temperatures, the greens would be like a pressure cooker—sweltering from moisture and heat."

International had been considering doing something for about three or four years. Says Steve, "As our rounds of golf increased—last year was our biggest year—the greens became increasingly worn out. It was hard to find cup placements."

About the same time the club received a substantial windfall. In 1988 Fairfax County took 13 acres from the back side of the course to build a highway. The greens

project is being financed from the \$2.25 million received from the county. The remainder of these funds will be used to improve the clubhouse facilities.

Planning began approxi-



A wood retaining wall--now almost finished--around number six at ICC is both functional and attractive.

mately two years ago. The membership told architect, Bill Love of Ault Clark & Associates, that they liked the basic character of the greens, that they wanted a few minor changes—a couple of bunkers, some mounds in front of greens flattened—but they didn't want drastic changes.

The club employed John Ponko of Virginia Beach to do the work. "His main claim to fame is as a greens shaper," notes Steve. "John himself does the actual bulldozer work around the green. One person described Ponko and his bulldozer as an artist at work, sculpting. For massive earth-moving, he has a crew who use heavier equipment, but the fine tuning is done by him with one little bulldozer with an eight-foot blade."

See Nash, page 4

Nash, continued from page 3

The club's other major decision was to sod rather than to seed. "We decided more than a year ago on sodding in order to bring the greens back quicker.

Last September Summit Hall Turf Farm in Poolesville started our sod from seed. They are growing it on exactly the same mix that will be used to build the greens so it will be a perfect match." The seed they chose was a bentgrass blend—SR 1019/1020. "They have four acres of sod that's absolutely beautiful right now. They're just waiting for us to call." The plot is 100X1500 ft. Says Steve, "I couldn't believe we'd use all that sod just to do our greens."

The president of Seed Research told Steve it's the largest plot of his bentgrass he's ever seen and they believe it's the only project of its kind in the country.

Riding around the course one

could detect the shape of six or so of the new greens. The cavity was dug out, the bunkers shaped. Some, however, are still just mountains of dirt. Steve notes how pleased the members are now that they can envision what those six holes will look like.

Plans call for four-inch

"A few clubs put them back in play in about six weeks. They look playable, but the worst thing you can do is get back on them that soon."

drainage pipes, a four-inch layer of gravel topped with a 12-inch layer of sand mix. Egypt Farms is furnishing the materials which were to begin arriving the next week. "This means more trucks," notes Steve. "The thing about

trucks is getting them to go where you want them to. You can show them one day, but there may be entirely different drivers the next day."

Ponko will probably start laying the sod in August. All the work will be done from plywood, explains Steve, so that you never step on the mix. And when the sod is laid, it will be rolled with plywood on top so that the sod won't move and workers won't disturb the ground.

Completion date is September 26. Because the summer has been so dry, work is fairly much on schedule. After the sod is down Steve and his crew expect to put in long hours "babysitting it." He anticipates watching it from dawn to dusk.

Although the members are anxious and he *knows* how temptingly beautiful those new greens

See Nash, page 6

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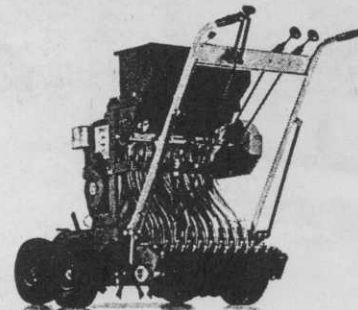
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Members and families are welcome. Guests are \$5.00 each.

1991 Two-man Tournament Champs



Ken Ingram, who with Jeff Miskin won the 1991 two-man championship with 116 points, accepts his certificate from MAAGCS golf chairman Scott Wagner. Bill Shirk and Tim Sage, right, winners of the Gross Division, finished with a score of 93 points.

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NEW BABIES

July is always a busy month for people in the golf business. But for some MAAGCS members, July was even busier than usual. Additions to the MAAGCS family in July include:

Todd Emerson, Jr. and Lauren Leslie to **Todd** (*Turf Equipment and Supply Co.*) and **Leslie Cowing**

Timothy Alexander to **David** (*Tiscawilla West Country Club*) and **Carole Burkhart**

Michael Gregory to **Bud** (*Montgomery Country Club*) and **Gina Sweeney**

Heather Lynne to **Tom** (*Cornell Chemical and Equipment*) and **Karen Walsh**

WANTED

Drs. Kevin Mathias and Lee Hellman of the University of Maryland are looking for golf course test sites to do evaluations for insect control. They would like an area of anything from a few thousand square feet to a half acre. Research will center around the cutworm but white grub, chinch bug, billbug, sod webworm, and ataeinus beetle are also of interest. They would also like to hear about any type of activity from any other pests. Dr. Mathias can be reached at 301-405-3920.

NOTICE

Those planning to sign up for the GCSAA tourney in Florida who want to play on a Mid-Atlantic team, get in touch with Nick Vance or Scott Wagner ASAP.

Nash, continued from page 4

will appear in the fall, no play will be allowed until April 1. Notes Steve, "A few clubs I've talked to that sodded greens, put them back in play in about six weeks. They look playable, but the worst thing you can do is get back on them that soon. They said the longer you can keep them off, the better."

Planning for this project was thorough, and so far nothing unforeseen has happened. Last winter they moved irrigation lines so than only one had to be moved during construction and that only because they made a last-minute change. Steve was without a phone for a week when the line was accidentally cut—but in some ways, that's not all bad. Asked if he would do anything differently, Steve said he would have to wait until later to answer that one.

"It's been an education, but I'll be glad when it's over."

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