

The 1992 Kemper Open at Avenel

by Tom Haske, CGCS

We began planning for the 1992 Kemper Open shortly after the 1991 event, reviewing our projects and attempting to complete them by late winter. This allows the projects a chance to settle into the existing scheme by the golf course. Some of the projects completed for the 1992 Kemper Open are: new tournament tees on the sixth and eighth holes; many bunker renovations throughout the course; enlargement of the sixth green; and planting large trees in key locations. We have also added 35,000 square feet to the practice tee, expanding the teeing area to well over an acre.

With the arrival of spring, the fine tuning begins. Bunker edging and addition of sand to the bunkers is a major job. It needs to

be done early enough to allow the sand to settle and compact. Although we overseed in the fall, we will continue to overseed thin areas throughout the spring. Agronomic applications proceed as usual but we try to not overstimulate the grass during tournament time. As we progress toward the end of May, we will have topdressed and verticut the greens several times to ensure a smooth putting surface. We will also progressively lower the greens height to 1/8". We have zoysia fairways and several zoysia tees. This grass allows these areas to be in tournament condition throughout the growing season. As the zoysia comes out of dormancy, we begin to cut at 3/8" and maintain this height the entire growing

season. We try to have the golf course in its peak condition the week before the tournament. The rough will be at the last time pre-week and allowed to grow. This puts us in a position to address any last minute problems easily.

As tournament week nears, we will increase our crew of 22 to about 38 with temporaries and volunteers. We are fortunate to have turf industry people interested in participating in the tournament preparation. We have active superintendents, assistant superintendents, foremen, grounds crewmen, turf students, as well as turf industry sales people willing to work. The local turf equipment suppliers offer

See *Avenel* on page 8

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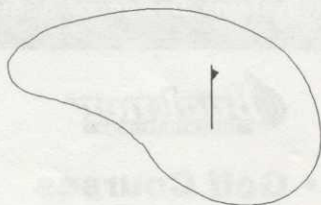
support by lending equipment.

During the tournament we work closely with the tournament officials to ensure a successful tournament. The work schedule is split into two phases: early morning work before play begins—cutting greens, bunker raking, cup changing, etc.; evening work following play—cutting fairways, tees, greens, etc. At all times this week we must be flexible and be prepared to change the routine because of weather. This all makes for long days but all of the grounds crew at Avenel feel it is worth it to be part of such an exciting event.

Following the tournament we continue to maintain the golf course in the best possible condition for membership throughout the rest of the year and begin to plan for the next Kemper Open.

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