

Turfgrass Matters



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Mid-Atlantic Golf Course Superintendents Newsletter

Fred Heinlen to host April 13 outing

April 13 is your opportunity to escape to Ocean City. Although it may be a bit early for the beach, you can enjoy golf on a Gary Player signature course. With the construction of River Run and four other new courses, planners hope to establish this area as a northern golf destination, thereby extending the tourist season.

River Run's 18 holes make up the center of a planned community. The property, 276 acres purchased in 1987, comprised three separate farms. Construction was slow because of bad weather, indecision, and a strict set of environmental guidelines. To date, expenditures total more than \$16 million—none of it borrowed.

"Construction—or destruction, depending on how you view it—is ongoing," says Fred. "Just when the golf course finally started to mature, the powers that be decided to run sewer and water lines through the course. This project is overshadowing the crew's winter work of adding 13 sand bunkers, five tees, 3,000 feet of drainage, and extensive woods cleaning. It's great this winter is flying by, poor weather and all. This is the third construction project I've been involved with and should be the last. The hard work of construction followed by the heartache Mother Nature can cause is like marriage—something everyone should experience."

The greens are planted to Penncross bentgrass and have seen some Pennlinks introduced during overseeding. The tees and fairways are ryegrass while the roughs are rye with some fescues



trying to make an appearance. "Growing grass on the poor soils with which River Run is blessed is one of the greatest challenges I have ever faced. Soils here are heavy clay with a very low pH. One fairway, the seventeenth, has so far received 22 tons of various limes; the pH is now up to 4.1."

Gary Player was involved in the original design of the course and still has a voice in any changes. The Player Design Company must approve all changes or River Run would give up the privilege of being a Gary Player "Signature" course. He has been on the sight twice, offering publicity and input for future improvements. "Contrary to what I expected," says Fred, "I found him to be one of the most caring people I have ever met. His visits cost \$15,000 per day plus expenses, so I'm sure he won't be a regular."

Fred graduated from the Penn State two-year turf program in 1976; River Run is his fourth superintendent's position. "I have

been here for two and one-half years and plan to enjoy the Ocean City area for what it has to offer this year."

Fred cannot say enough about his staff. This is the third course where he and his assistant, Mike DelBiondo, have worked together. Notes Fred, "The crew is outstanding and professional in every sense of the word. They are caring and really pay attention to detail. They not only make me look good, but also make me a better superintendent. Bob Baldassari, the PGA pro who has been here for a year is the greatest—an example all pros should follow."

"I have been married to my

See River Run on page 6

Dinner: The day will have an Eastern Shore Theme. Dress is casual. The menu: oysters and steamed shrimp for hors d'oeuvre and broiled crab cakes, fried chicken, and baked ham as the entree. Cocktails (cash bar) at 4:30; dinner at 5:30 Cost: \$25.

Golf: any time after 10:00 a.m. The pro-shop number: 410-641-8177.

Directions: From DC take Rt. 50 to Rt. 90. Take Ocean Pines exit and turn left. Go past second light (3/4 mile). You will see billboard on right. River Run is second golf course on left on Beauchamp Rd.

Accommodations: River Run is less than two hours from the Bay Bridge, but for those who would like to stay over, arrangements have been made with the Comfort Inn on 112th Street. Cost is \$35 per night per room. For reservations call Stephanie: 410-524-3000.