

GOLF COURSE CHALLENGES IN MALAYSIA - by Robert Muir Graves
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Just returned from my most recent visit to East Malaysia (northern portion of Island of Borneo) where I inspected a just-opened, 9-hole golf course that I designed on the Island of Labuan. Also checked rough grading work on another of our 18-hole courses near Kota Kinabalu, capitol of the State of Sabah.

It is always bloody hot there and extremely humid--often 95 per cent plus, but after awhile you get almost used to it. They will average 5 to 10 inches of rain per month and around 100 inches per year. A tropical thunderstorm puts on quite a show, particularly if you are flying in its vicinity.

In addition to the usual problems encountered on a golf course project, in Malaysia you must be on the alert for pythons and cobras. In West Malaysia where we recently completed preliminary golf course plans for a new project, our concerns while on-site were for tigers, wild elephants and occasionally communist guerillas. Worst that happened to me was a blood-sucking leech that attached himself to my leg, drank his fill and dropped off.

It is a land of contrasts for the westerner. Some of the grading work is done with the usual heavy equipment and at other times by women carrying wicker baskets.

Although we have tried several varieties of Bermuda with some success, the Malaysians often prefer to use their native grasses. We will probably use Tifgreen for greens and common Bermuda for fairways at Kota Kinabalu. But, undoubtedly, some "Cowgrass" will be used for the rough and will end up in fairways. Cowgrass looks just like it sounds--very coarse, broad leaves, but it is extremely tough and drought-tolerant. Gives a golf ball a pretty fair lie when properly mowed.

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GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENTS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

"50 YEARS OF PROGRESS" is the theme for the Golden Anniversary Celebration hosted by the Sylvania Country Club, Sylvania, Ohio. Highlight of the ceremony will be a GCSAA plaque, cast in bronze, permanently mounted on a large stone to commemorate GCSAA's founding at Sylvania C.C. The inscription will read "Birthplace of Golf Course Superintendents Association of America. Founded as National Association of Greenkeepers of America. September 13, 1926, Sylvania Country Club."