

Oh Hell and All Hail...

Bill Hamilton's blog from China

It's been a busy time lately. Fall really did come quickly and we've been hustling to get the greens that we have popped and dressed and seeded. I may have to revisit the hustling part. Regardless, the greens are done and now it's on to overseeding the bermuda fairways. This should be interesting with all the resident experts I have on staff. "Well, when I worked at the Kung Fu Country Club, we



did it this way." As much as I like to be patient and listen, I pretty much let them know that I am trying "something new, and don't worry because I will take full responsibility if it doesn't come out right." I can't believe they still bite on that one. Thank Buddha that they've all come out right so far.

I finally figured out what was causing my collar fits over the summer. It turns out that in an effort to add just a wee bit more contour into the green surface the construction contractor doubled up on

the sand volume coming out of the core.

For all you metric fans out there, at 2.5 centimeters per inch, that 60 cm equals 24 inches of sand above the gravel layer! That's double the design specification amount of 30 centimeters/12 inches of "uniform" depth of sand base. Well the sand dunes around the greens' edges dry out much faster, causing grass density to thin. And thin turf is the enviro du jour for black algae in this humidity. We'll be incorporating some profile, or porous ceramics, into the collars diligently over the next year. Where's the local Dry-Ject guy when you need him? Oh yeah, I'm him. With labor my greatest asset, they're going to love this coming job. Grab your funnels!!



Aerification of the greens was interesting too. I found quite a bit of Chinese pea gravel that must have floated to the surface.

If I'm a size 13, that pebble had to check in at a 7. And you can trust me, those guys never travel alone, they go for the group discount. It's always a treat when your aerifier jumps off the ground like it ran over a railroad track when it's supposed to be working on a "sand-based" putting green. I would have thought that the finish guy might have noticed a clanging noise or sparks flying from his box blade.

So I collect my bag of rocks and start the hike to the GM's office for some "show and tell." He's cool and has actually built a couple of courses himself. So he and I can cross "golf course construction methods" off the list of languages needing translation. The GM says "I'll tell this situation to the Chairman of the Board (as well as the too much sand on the collars)." We've got some serious issues being generated from the construction company and their techniques. I'm sure the COTB and the construction company owner will come to terms and resolve these problems. Well, it just so happens that they are the same guy! COTB for the club is the construction company owner. Imagine that? For the record and security reasons, this individual will be heretofore referred to as "FC," as in fire cracker. I don't want to agitate our budding romance.

Usually, as a concerned and conscientious employee of my club, I will fight and defend what is right for my people. How does one fight this battle, especially here in C-doo. The answer is you go "Joe Friday" on them. I whip out my 714 badge and give 'em "the facts ma'am, just the facts." That's all I can do. There's no fine line to walk. Here's the problem and here's the solution. Do you Mr. FC, want to deal/pay with/for it or not? Ball, his court. So far it has worked out great. No loss of face for either face, and the cue ball gains grass cred.

It's very hard to describe the environment here and how the game is played. The rules are very different and they are written in a different language. This is not a game for the weak of heart, or the hard of head. There is a feudal atmosphere here that never left with the last dynasty. All I know is that I want to be in the round table room with the knights, sucking on that big turkey leg, cause that is where the action is and the overcast view of C-doo is the clearest.

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