

JB VISITATIONS:**June - Oregon**

Participated in a tour stop at the Turf Seed/Pure Seed Testing Field Day at their field research laboratory near Hubbard, Oregon. Over 400 attended from around the US and other parts of the world. The subject addressed was the interlocking mesh element system for sports fields presented on the site of a comparative test area constructed to high-sand, perched hydration zone specifications. The performance findings to date under the high rainfall conditions in Western Oregon have been very positive.

An aspect of the research of particular interest was the differential performance of turfgrass cultivars and species groupings when grown under the shade of different tree species.

July - Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

Presented an invited afternoon Research Lecture following a morning Supplier Field Day held at Quatland College, sponsored by the Western Canada Turfgrass Association. The weather conditions were very rainy for the morning events. It did not dampen the enthusiasm of the 350 attendees.

July - Los Angeles

Presented an invited lecture on Agronomic Sports Turf Safety before a National Football League Players Association sponsored Turf Injury Seminar. Topics included artificial versus natural grass surfaces, shoe design, physiology of turf injuries, and turfgrass surfaces and their culture. These lectures were recorded on a two video tape set which can be obtained by writing Seminar organizer Mr. Leigh Steinberg, Steinberg and Moorad, 500 Newport Center Drive, Suite 820, Newport Beach, California, 92660, USA.

August - Coleraine, Northern Ireland

Presented two invited lectures before the First International "Golf-Theory in Practice" Conference sponsored by the University of Ulster. A diversity of golf topics including golf club design, the mechanics and psychology of the golf

swing, marketing and golf course construction, and golf turf culture were addressed.

An interesting lecture was presented by Dr. Robert Price of Glasgow, Scotland. The approach to golf development in Ireland and Scotland are distinctly different. In Ireland the National Tourist Board has been very effective in promoting their golfing facilities internationally and has made funds available for the construction of new golf courses via European Development Fund grants. As a result there has been a major golf course construction boom in Ireland. A 40% increase in the last 15 years to 362 courses, with many being operated as commercial businesses.

In Scotland a very limited number of new golf courses have been constructed in recent years. A 12% increase in the last 15 years to 477 courses. The trend in this case is for private membership golf courses to offer more golfing opportunities to visiting tourists. The fees for this service are fairly high, which results in essentially a subsidization that keeps the cost to local golfing members low. But what are the long term costs?

I observed the same approach, as is being pursued in Scotland, during the 1960's in Northern Michigan. At that time there were many golf courses with beautiful unirrigated, fine-leaf fescue (*Festuca* spp.) fairways with a relatively low cost for course maintenance. This situation now exists on many golf courses in Scotland, particularly on linksland. In Michigan the opening of private golf courses to more summer tourist play resulted in increased worn turf and eventually bare ground. This necessitated installation of irrigation systems and additional nitrogen fertilization to stimulate turf recovery. As a result, the fine-leaf fescue disappeared and annual bluegrass (*Poa annua*) became the dominant grass on fairways. The net result eventually was a major increase in the cost of golf course turf maintenance.

The question is whether the same cycle will occur in Scotland under their current approach to marketing golf? This would be sad if it results in the loss of the classic fine-leaf fescue fairways on the older linksland courses that are an important heritage of golf in Scotland!