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## PARADISE FOUND

Maintenance at the Kapalua, Hawaii, golf courses is sometimes a 24-hour-a-day proposition. But superintendent Short Honma and his people have risen to the occasion in the past. And the course shows it.

It is 5 a.m. the day of the 1987 Isuzu Kapalua International Pro-Am. It is the Kapalua Bay Golf Course. A fleet of triplex mowers moves up and down the fairways. The crew's only light comes from the headlamps of pick-up trucks.

Because of the six-hour difference in time between the Hawaiian island of Maui and the Eastern Time Zone back on the mainland where the matches were being shown on television, tee times were very early in the morning, which meant that superintendent Short Honma and his lieuten-

ants were up even earlier.

And there were complications, too. "Because of the rain earlier in the tournament, I ended up using all my extra triplexes. I couldn't take the big equipment out," notes Harry Pali.

And what better superintendents for the Kapalua Golf Courses than native Hawaiians? Pali, in particular, knows the land well: he was born on what is now the fifth hole of the Bay course.

Besides Honma and Pali, Kent "Herb" Nishigima and Andy Tiara round out the managerial team of the

two 18-hole golf courses, known as Bay and Village. Honma oversees the entire operation. Nishigima is supervisor of the Bay course and Tiara super of the Village course.

### Lovable tourists

Kapalua is situated in the northern portion of the Hawaiian island of Maui. Visible across the water, providing an idyllic background, is the island of Molokai. Tourists love the place.

"We take pride in what Kapalua is, and what it stands for," says Honma,



Teamwork is evident among top management: left to right, Short Honma, Andy Tiara, Harry Pali and Herb Nishigima, who split the work.

who oversees up to 43 employees.

The biggest event of the year is the Izuu Kapalua International, played on the 6,731-yard Bay course. The 5,981-yard Village course, however, is referred to in one tourist brochure as "Hawaii's most challenging." Both are open to tourists.

And because of the largely tourist clientele, a large emphasis is put on beauty. Most of the colorful vegetation has been imported: bougainvillea, African tulips, eucalyptus trees, Christmas berries and a Madagascar olive that is called the "Autograph Tree."

Pali is in charge of special projects, which last year included installation of a new sod farm, new tees on some holes and a complete renovation of one Bay course hole.

The original designs came from Arnold Palmer and Ed Seay. Pro golfer Ben Crenshaw has designed an additional 18 holes on which construction begins this month.

"The course had to be designed around 'no-man's-land valleys,'" says Tiara of the Village course. One of

### *The clayey soil has to be continually aerated.*

Kapalua's attractions is its radical change in elevation because of its proximity to the ocean. Two ocean holes are at sea level, but inland the elevation gets as high as 800 feet.

#### **Hard as a rock**

One of the major problems is compaction, due in part to the traffic but due also to a clayey soil that has to be continually aerated. The tradewinds also tend to dry the course quickly, complicating the problem.

Common Bermudagrass fairways are mowed at 3/8-inch in the winter and at 1/2-inch in the summer on the Village course and at 1/2-inch on the Bay course, where most of the championship matches are played. "We groom the course finer for tournaments," notes Pali. Stimpmeter readings rise to 8 1/2 for tournaments from the "high sevens" for non-tournament play. "Our goal every year is to make the course the best possible for the International," adds Tiara.

Village Course greens are mowed at 3/16-inch in winter and 1/8-inch in summer and tees at 1/4-inch. Rough areas are at a standard 1 1/2 inches.

As preparations continue for the new course, excitement grows. Tidwarf sod is being grown on the four-acre sod farm for the fairways of what will be called the Plantation Golf Club.

Before Kapalua opened in 1974, Honma worked at Sea Mountain Golf Course on the island of Hawaii. None of the other three have previous golf course experience. Tiara went from the hotel business to the golf business; Nishigima was a construction worker. They all started as laborers at Kapalua and worked their way up the ladder. To a man, they like working for Honma.

"Short is strict, but an honest and straight-forward kind of guy," observes Tiara.

Honma's direction shows up in solid team management and respect for co-workers evident on the staff. And they need it, to keep the Kapalua golf courses among the most popular in the world. **LM**