



Dodgertown Golf Club, the first public course in Florida's Indian River County, opened in 1965.

THE DODGERS' OTHER MANAGER

If there are calamondins in center field,
we must be in Dodgertown.

by Will Perry, managing editor

With a sharp crack of the wood, a baseball is sent tearing through soft Bermudagrass in search of safety in center field. Instead, it will be swallowed in the webbing of Los Angeles Dodgers' shortstop Alfredo Griffin's glove. Moving quickly to his left, Griffin backhands the ball as it hops off the red clay infield and releases a waist-high strike to the first baseman, nicking a few points off the pre-season batting average of a disappointed Oriole.

Twelve thousand sun-tanned hands clap their appreciation of Griffin's defense while Dodger manager Tommy Lasorda looks on without registering emotion. Six rows behind him, Carol Thomas does the same. Neither has reason to get their dander stirred, for everything had gone according to plan.

"When I'm at these games I'm especially attuned to hits like that. I watch closely to make sure it takes a good, natural bounce—no surprises," says Thomas.

For the past three seasons Thomas has been sports complex superinten-



Carol Thomas and Ron Cummins use their combined knowledge of turf and infields to keep the fields at Dodgertown looking good.



The Los Angeles Dodgers play 14 games in Dodgertown in March. Then, the Vero Beach Dodgers begin their 140-game Class A schedule.



Superintendent Thomas encourages wildlife at the Dodgertown courses—a practice appreciated by this fox squirrel, which is dining near a practice green.

dent here in Vero Beach, Fla., spring home of the Dodgers. This is her second season grooming Holman Stadium, one the five baseball fields used by the team in spring training and by its sister team, the Vero Beach Dodgers, in the Class A Florida State League the rest of the summer. She also manages the rest of the 450-acre Dodgertown landscape:

- Dodger Pines Country Club and Dodgertown Golf Club (18- and 9-hole golf courses, respectively);
- a 23,000-square foot administration building;

- a 90-villa residential complex;
- numerous office and equipment buildings; and
- 70 acres of citrus groves.

A huge job

It is, by all measures, a huge job: she balances 55 employees; tries to keep the often inflated egos of professional sportsmen at bay; remains responsive to club members; battles fierce mole cricket infestations; and provides the first class landscape one would expect of a high-profile organization like the Dodgers. It is also, by all measures,

performed admirably.

Thomas, 36, is a strong-willed, hands-on manager who knows people as well as she knows turf. She is a life-long sports enthusiast yet she stops well short of the hero worshiping that goes on every day along the foul lines at the stadium.

She loves animals and usually brings her black cat Sprint to work with her (she leaves her two parrots and dog at home). She is an adamant environmentalist who defends the judicious use of chemicals. Though demanding of her employees, Thomas carries with her an even temper and a sincere concern for their well being.

Thomas is modest about Dodgertown's success and will tell you without hesitation it's her people who are responsible for its look. Half-way through her third season here, she says she has now got the fine-tuned staff she needs to get the job done.

"You cannot run an operation of this magnitude without good support people," says Thomas. "I really feel that people in this labor market aren't given enough credit. Without these people we simply couldn't have the golf courses that we do. I encourage them to think about the importance of their job and of themselves."

Using retirees

She can't say enough good things about the benefits of employing retired people, or "little encyclopedias with legs," as she calls them. She finds retirees more dependable and harder working than the average teenager. She is constantly amazed by the things they've learned over the years. "It's neat because these people have done so many things and learned so

A brief history of Dodgertown



Dodgertown's 450 acres were formerly an abandoned naval air station. Forty-one years since it was purchased by the Dodger organization, it has grown into one of the country's superb sports facilities.

1839. Abner Doubleday lays out the first diamond-shaped field with four bases, 60 feet apart, at Cooperstown, N.Y.

1845. Alexander J. Cartwright designs the game of baseball and establishes standard rules. He also organized the first team, the New York Knickerbockers.

1869. The Cincinnati Red Stockings, the first all-professional team, is established. Players earn from \$600 to \$1,000 a season.

1871. On May 4, Ft. Wayne defeats Forest City of Cleveland 2-0, winning the first all-professional game ever played.

1876. The National League is formed.

1900. The American League is formed but rejected by the National League. Disputes about players defecting to the new league lead to its eventual acceptance.

Around 1900. An eight-team league is formed in the National League. Its members include the Boston Braves, Brooklyn Dodgers, Chicago Cubs, Cincinnati Reds, New York Giants, Philadelphia Phillies, Pittsburgh Pirates and the St. Louis Cardinals.

1948. Eastern Airlines flight and station manager Bud Holman sells the Brooklyn Dodgers on the idea of training in Vero Beach, a sleepy, coastal Florida town of 3,000 residents.

1953. Holman Stadium opens.

1965. Walter O'Malley, president of the Dodgers, purchases 110 acres of land from the city of Vero Beach and opens Indian River

County's first public golf course, Dodgertown Golf Club.

1972. O'Malley purchases another 220 acres, which become Dodger Pines Country Club. Its No. 3 hole, at 660 yards, is one of the few par 6s in the country.

1972-1976. Dodgertown undergoes major renovation. Old barracks are torn down and replaced with modern housing units. An administration building containing dining room, kitchen, canteen, lounge, movie theatre, locker and equipment rooms, medical department, dark room and recording studio is built. An Olympic-size swimming pool, four lighted tennis courts, a basketball court and shuffleboard courts complete the scene.

1977. Harrison Conference Services of Glen Cove, N.Y., is brought in to conduct business meetings and seminars at Dodgertown throughout the year.

Today. Football, too, has a place here. Dodgertown was the New Orleans Saints training camp from 1974 to 1984 and has hosted the Green Bay Packers, New England Patriots, Cleveland Browns, Buffalo Bills, Miami Dolphins and Tampa Bay Buccaneers in recent years.

The Dodgers have won championships in 1949, '52, '53, '55, '56, '59 (World Series), '63 (World Series), '65 (World Series), '66, '74, '77, '78, '81 (World Series), '83 (World Series), '85 (World Series), and '88 (World Series). Dodgertown now employs 240 people.

—Will Perry□

much over the course of their lives. The biggest part of my job and the reason I'm successful at it is not because I know everything but I know how to find things. With these people around, I have great sources of information on almost any subject."

Referred to by one employee as a perfectionist, Thomas is not at all intimidated by the challenges of managing Dodgertown or by being a woman in a traditionally male sport and field. It's a scenario she's used to, she says, thanks to her father, who demanded the most of her at all times. There weren't too many other women studying microbiology at Orlando's University of Central Florida either, or earning graduate degrees in microbiology at North Carolina State in the mid 1970s. Being a minority has made her work even harder.

Up with the sun

Thomas begins her 12- to 14-hour day by coordinating all the notes she has scribbled to herself at work the previous day. This list of instructions and suggestions will move down the hierarchy of employees via several chalkboards in equipment and maintenance facilities throughout the complex. It's indicative of Thomas's philosophy of preventative instead of curative management.

The well-groomed nature of Dodgertown reflects Thomas's foresight. "Before she got here this place was a real mess," says an employee in his sixth season here. "You wouldn't have believed professional sports teams played here. Carol has really got it together."

Her days are pretty evenly divided between the baseball complex and the golf courses, until the Dodgers arrive in late February. At that time it's important that the field conditions befit what one would expect for the world champions.

"You're talking about me providing a safe place for the \$7.9 million man (pitcher Orel Hershiser). If this guy brings to my attention something that he thinks is a problem that potentially could shorten his career, then it's worth looking into," says Thomas. "I can't afford to have even a paltry \$2.5 million player have a problem on my fields."

Thomas's expertise in turf is complemented by Ron Cummins' knowledge of clay infields to provide the quality playing conditions at Dodgertown's ball fields. Thomas says there are no management practices used here that would differ much from any other facility. Still, because Holman Stadium is so old, there is no underground drainage system, no home

plate-to-center field grade and an irrigation system consisting of "a few Toros, some Rain Bird and other stuff."

"This is a very, very old system here, much like what I have on the golf courses. A lot of it has been piece-mealed together," says Thomas. "We've tried to make some alterations but not nearly what we need." A new sprinkler system is on tap for the stadium, though it may get bumped if field expansion plans are implemented next year.

Thomas began covering the mound and home plate area every night, thereby preventing the rain from washing the clay into the turf and eventually choking it off. Stripping and renovating those areas was "a major undertaking" according to Thomas, and it has since been added to her to-be-avoided list. Around the infield, clay is swept or hosed back into the base paths as necessary.

The mound is built with a dense clay packed very hard to absorb the pressure exerted on it by pitchers. "It's a lengthy process of packing, packing and more packing. You want to avoid a layering effect, which will allow it to peel off in pieces over the course of a game. That happens when

you use more than one substance to build it," says Thomas.

The mound height is maintained at 14 inches. The Bermudagrass infield is cut at $\frac{1}{2}$ of an inch, the outfield at $\frac{5}{8}$ inch.

Unless they interfere with play or grow so low that they get in the way of mowing equipment, trees on the course are left alone. As a result, problems with the trees are non-existent.

For the first time this year at a slight increase in cost, the post-game cleanup work has been contracted to an outside firm. The expense is well worth the reduced aggravation involved, according to Thomas.

From bats to clubs

Dodgertown Golf Club is a nine-hole, par 35, semi-private course just up the

street from Dodger Pines Country Club, an 18-hole, semi-private, par 73 course that neighbors the baseball complex. Like many places in Vero Beach, the golf courses too are dripping with Dodger folklore.

According to Thomas, former Dodgers' president Walter O'Malley and his players were often seen teeing off at nearby clubs when the team was in town.

"Everything was going well until the Dodgers started to bring in the first black players. In the old South like this, especially at the country clubs, black people were not allowed to play golf. So Walter said, 'I'm going to fix you guys,' and he built the nine-hole course." It became so popular, Dodger Pines was opened seven years later, in 1972.

Both courses enjoy an abundance of Floridian vegetation, challenging water hazards and smooth Bermudagrass fairways. Thomas uses a combination of Tifway 419 Bermudagrass and bahiagrass in the roughs and Tifway 328 on the greens. In the winter the greens are overseeded with ryegrass.

From the Dodger Pines clubhouse you can watch golfers at work on seven different holes. The first, third, fourth, sixth, seventh, ninth and tenth

EASY COME.



Top row: Leaf-feeding caterpillar, Mealy bug, Japanese beetle, Bagworm, Gypsy moth. Bottom row: Cankerworm, Leaf skeletonizer, Tent caterpillar, Webworm.

holes have either a green or tee that abuts the facility.

The courses absorb 250 to 300 rounds a day. That means compaction and cup placement problems, which are compounded by the fact that the tees and greens are on the small side. To reduce compaction, a lot more hand aerifying at the end of cart paths and on tees is taking place. The goosegrass that inevitably grows in these areas is handled with MSMA.

On greens the cups are moved every other day and a color-coded flag system is used to alert players if the cup is at the front, middle or rear of a green.

Thomas prefers granular fertilizer applications, supplemented with liquids for quick green-up, at both golf courses and at the baseball fields.

Slow-release fertilizers are also used here. In the spring and summer it's sulfur-coated and some methylene-urea products. "In late fall we use IBDU because I feel that with the temperatures here I still get some nitrogen release without having to worry about microbial activity," she says. Weak areas, such as cart paths, tee slopes and other sites that endure heavy traffic, will be fertilized even more often. Tees and greens are fertil-

ized on a monthly basis ranging from 1/2 to 1 lb./N/sq.ft.

"I like using fertilizer rates that are high in potassium because potassium provides so much hardiness and drought tolerance. We have plenty of

Carol Thomas is not at all intimidated by the challenges of managing Dodgertown or by being a woman in traditionally male sport and field.

natural phosphorus in this part of Florida," adds Thomas.

The biggest problem

Mole crickets "are by far and away the worst problem here," says Thomas, adding that infestations are worse every year. The scope of the problem limits the preventive measures she can take that will be effective. Oftanol is her primary weapon. An applica-

tion is made in spring as soon as juveniles emerge from the eggs, usually in early May. After that, spot treatment with Orthene is used on an "as needed" basis.

Another significant problem that many superintendents face, says Thomas, is the franchising network that often makes it difficult to receive the prompt equipment service often necessary in this business. "Equipment-wise there are a lot of really well made things out there. But you can't buy just a piece of equipment any more. I'm actually looking at my second or third choices in equipment because I have to be able to get the service I need from the franchisor."

The pines

The many trees that line the courses are primarily laurel oak, Florida slash pine and sable palms. Unless they interfere with play or grow so low that they get in the way of mowing equipment, they're left alone. As a result, insect and disease problems in trees are almost non-existent. Lightning remains their cardinal nemesis.

Another delightful aspect of the courses is the abundance of wildlife. *continued on page 69*

EASY GO.

NEW!

The invasion is coming. An army of hungry insects, ready to destroy everything you've worked so hard to achieve.

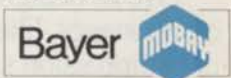
But with new TEMPO® insecticide, they're stopped dead in their tracks. On arrival. With excellent residual



control. And all while using about 60% less chemical than most of the competition.

It's really a simple idea. Ornamentals need protection when insects mount their attack. With new TEMPO, the battle is over before it's even started. No contest.

Mobay Corporation
A BAYER USA INC. COMPANY



Specialty Products Group
Box 4913, Kansas City, MO 64120

Tempo is a TM of Bayer AG, Germany. ©1989 Mobay Corp. 62891

Circle No. 143 on Reader Inquiry Card

WHERE TO FIND WISCONSIN ROBIN ENGINES.

ALABAMA

Parts Service Company
(205) 264-3464, Montgomery

ALASKA

Lucky Distributing
(503) 252-1249, Portland, OR

ARIZONA

Southwest Products Corp.
(800) 842-8548, Phoenix

ARKANSAS

Keeling Company
(800) 452-5500,
North Little Rock

ARIZONA

RCB Distributing
(901) 345-2200, Memphis, TN

CALIFORNIA

Lanco Engine Services
(619) 429-1313, Chula Vista
(800) 255-3204, Gardena

E.E. Richter & Son, Inc.
(415) 658-1100, Emeryville

COLORADO

Central Equipment Company
(303) 388-3696, Denver

CONNECTICUT

John Reiner & Company
(201) 460-9444, Carlstadt, NJ

DELAWARE

The Power Center
(800) 447-9400,
Fredericksburg, VA

FLORIDA

Highway Equipment & Supply
(800) 432-3019, Jacksonville
(800) 432-6495, Orlando
(800) 282-9092, Tampa

P.H. Neff & Sons, Inc.
(305) 592-5240, Miami

GEORGIA

Industrial Engine & Equip.
(800) 877-7828, Atlanta

HAWAII

Lanco Engine Services
(808) 836-1188, Honolulu

IDAHO

The Power Center
(800) 999-7610,
Salt Lake City, UT

ILLINOIS

Allied Construction Equip.
(800) 843-5420, St. Louis, MO

The Power Center
(414) 786-1600, Waukesha, WI

INDIANA

Cincinnati Engine & Parts
(513) 221-3525, Cincinnati, OH
(419) 589-4775, Mansfield, OH

IOWA

Wilson Engine Power
(800) 777-6027, Des Moines

KANSAS

Harley Equipment Company
(800) 362-3222, Wichita

KENTUCKY

Wilder Motor & Equipment
(502) 966-5141, Louisville

LOUISIANA

Wm. F. Surgi Equipment Co.
(504) 733-0101, Harahan

MAINE

Diesel Engine Sales & Serv.
(617) 341-1760, Stoughton, MA

MARYLAND

The Power Center
(800) 447-9400,
Fredericksburg, VA

MASSACHUSETTS

Diesel Engine Sales & Serv.
(617) 341-1760, Stoughton

MICHIGAN

Engine Supply of Novi
(313) 349-9330, Novi

INDIANA

The Power Center
(414) 786-1600, Waukesha, WI

MINNESOTA

Minnesota Power Center
(612) 424-8234, Brooklyn Park

Northern Engine & Supply
(218) 628-2836, Duluth

MISSISSIPPI

RCH Distributing
(901) 345-2200, Memphis, TN

Wm. F. Surgi Equipment
(504) 733-0101, Harahan, LA

MISSOURI

Allied Construction Equip.
(800) 832-2003, St. Louis

MONTANA

The Power Center
(800) 999-7610,
Salt Lake City, UT

NEBRASKA

Minnesota Power Center
(612) 424-8234,
Brooklyn Park, MN

NEVADA

Lanco Engine Services
(213) 329-9300, Gardena, CA

E.E. Richter & Son, Inc.
(415) 658-1100, Emeryville, CA

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Diesel Engine Sales & Serv.
(617) 341-1760, Stoughton, MA

NEW JERSEY

John Reiner & Company
(201) 460-9444, Carlstadt

NEW MEXICO

Central Motive Power
(505) 884-2525, Albuquerque

NEW YORK

John Reiner & Company
(315) 454-4490, Syracuse

NORTH CAROLINA

King McIver Sales
(800) 632-1373, Greensboro

NORTH DAKOTA

Northern Engine & Supply
(701) 232-3284, Fargo

OHIO

Cincinnati Engine & Parts
(513) 221-3525, Cincinnati
(419) 589-4775, Mansfield

OKLAHOMA

Harley Equipment Company
(800) 331-4449, Tulsa

OREGON

Lucky Distributing
(503) 252-1249, Portland

PENNSYLVANIA

Joseph L. Pinto
(215) 747-3877, East Lansdowne

The Power Center
(800) 552-8874, N. Huntingdon
(800) 447-9400, Fredericksburg, VA

RHODE ISLAND

Diesel Engine Sales & Serv.
(617) 341-1760, Stoughton, MA

SOUTH CAROLINA

Wilder Motor & Equipment
(803) 799-1220, Columbia

SOUTH DAKOTA

Minnesota Power Center
(612) 424-8234,
Brooklyn Park, MN

Northern Engine & Supply
(701) 232-3284, Fargo, ND

TENNESSEE

RCH Distributing
(901) 345-2200, Memphis
Wilder Motor & Equipment
(615) 329-2365, Nashville

TEXAS

Harley Equipment Company
(214) 638-4504, Dallas
(713) 466-8999, Houston

UTAH

The Power Center
(800) 999-7610, Salt Lake City

VERMONT

Diesel Engine Sales & Serv.
(617) 341-1760, Stoughton, MA

VIRGINIA

The Power Center
(800) 552-6758, Fredericksburg

WASHINGTON

Lucky Distributing
(503) 252-1249, Portland, OR

WEST VIRGINIA

Engine Sales & Service
(304) 342-2131, Charleston

WISCONSIN

The Power Center
(414) 786-1600, Waukesha

WYOMING

Central Equipment Co.
(303) 388-3696, Denver, CO

INDIANA

The Power Center
(800) 999-7610,
Salt Lake City, UT

DODGERS from page 67

Several fox squirrels appeared mysteriously recently. They are joined by otters, soft-shelled turtles, numerous varieties of birds, a family of three alligators and a 5½-foot-long land-locked tarpon that has been on the course for eight years.

"I have a real hands-off policy about killing anything," says Thomas in a tone that leaves little room for interpretation. "I'm real particular about it."

On this morning, she brought to work with her the scraps of an apple pie she prepared the night before—a treat for the squirrels.

"I leave a lot of natural vegetation in my waterways. I won't bottom-clear," adds Thomas. "At my mem-

Because Holman Stadium is so old, there is no underground drainage system, no home plate-to-center field grade and an irrigation system consisting of 'a few Toros, some Rain Bird and other stuff.'

bership meetings, that will invariably come up. They want me to dredge and chemically clean out all the vegetation and replace it with sand so that people will have an easier time finding their golf balls. I tell them I won't do it. I ask them, 'Have you ever seen the otters...the bass...all the wading birds?'

Twelve hours after her day began Carol Thomas is sitting on the St. Augustinegrass that covers the ridge spanning the outfield fence at Holman Stadium. The game is over; busses move into place to transport players; fans head for the parking lots and the final foursomes beat into the clubhouse before the sun sets. A disgruntled Coach Lasorda decides his defeated team could stand a little more practice before calling it a day. Carol Thomas, walkie-talkie in tow, directs her crew to drag out and set up the batting cage.

The Dodgers' other manager's day isn't over yet. **LM**

More Power To You
Over 15,000 Authorized Service Centers.