

Following my first article in the last issue of Greenkeeping, I received several emails from readers with great feedbacks and suggestions for future topics that I very much appreciated.



Golf Course Performance

- improved by 'remodelling'

I hope to hear more from any of you in the future because I consider the main purpose of my articles should be to inspire you to participate in an open discussion about subjects we are all dealing with in our professional lives. Please participate, voice your opinion, thoughts and experiences - may they be exceptionally good or horrible, funny or heartbreaking; sharing them with us will be well appreciated and they may appear in one of the future issues of this magazine! This publication is scheduled to become a 'get-together' stage for our professional field and you are invited.



REMODELLING WORK

Wintertime is a good time of year to re-evaluate the performance of the golf course during the last playing season. For most Greenkeepers, life becomes less stressful since the weather restricts the grass from growing. Besides giving the maintenance equipment a thorough cleaning and check-up we should also consider that could be improved on the golf course to make maintenance easier and golfers even happier during the next playing season. Therefore I would like to share with you some thoughts about why remodelling work may become necessary on golf courses.

Improvements are necessary on every golf course from time to time since golf clubs have to compete for members and greenfee players to be economically viable. The demand on design and condition of golf courses has definitely changed since golf was played on Scottish linksland and maintained by grazing sheep. However, there are no rules for the perfect golf course and much depends on the

individual golfer's perception and playing ability.

Unfortunately, it is often the Greenkeeper who is blamed if the home golf course does not look as green and beautiful as golf courses seen on television or played during vacations in warmer climates. By the way, also the Greenkeepers here in Florida struggle with achieving fairy-tale perfect all-year-round quality some golfers think can exist! Instead of wet spots during the colder season in Central and Northern Europe, the draught during the summer can be made responsible for many gray hairs over here, especially when the water supply is limited.

We have to teach our golfers that a golf course is not a static entity; it is a dynamic organic complex in a steady process of growth, decline and change that is noticeable over the year. Just ask the chairman of the greens committee to compare the process of maturing with his own self. Even though he most certainly has been taking very good care of his body, he may have bushier eyebrows than 20 years ago, grown a little belly, or gotten a bad hip. What he does about it, of course, is all up to him, but to preserve his youthful appearance and function, he would have to intensify grooming, work out and get surgery.

Something similar happens on our golf

courses: trees grow and change in size and shape as do water edges. Formerly defined shapes and contours of fairways, greens and bunkers blur almost unnoticeable. Diseases and vegetative succession change the quality of the turf. High volume of play and the use of heavy ride-on maintenance machines can exceed the capability of turfgrass. Soil compacts, the drainage ability and oxygen supply become insufficient and the surfaces become spongy. Reduced turfgrass growth, diseases and wet spots are the final problems that can only be solved in the long term by remodelling work.

FLAWED PRACTICES

Renovation work can also become necessary when flawed maintenance practices have been carried out over an extended period.

enquiry link 629



That includes poor irrigation, compaction of the ground due to the use of heavy machinery in sensitive areas, the choice of unsuitable sand grain sizes for top-dressing and the filling of aeration holes as well as infrequent verticutting and deep aeration.

A significant reason for remodelling golf courses is the development of golf clubs and balls from hickory clubs and featheries to Big Berthas and Balata balls that caused a significant increase in shot distance. Previously demanding golf courses have therefore become too short and hazards don't come into play anymore or punish only the weaker golfers.

I hope to have listed sufficient arguments for a variety of reasons why golf courses have to be upgraded from time to time to maintain high standards in turfgrass condition and quality of play. In the next issue of Greenkeeping, I am going to focus on how renovation, restoration, repair work and technical improvements can enhance the quality of our golf courses. In the meantime, I wish you all a great start to a happy and peaceful year in 2003.



Bettina Schrickel (EIGCA)

Readers are invited to email any comments or suggestions for future articles to: lionessgolf@aol.com

BETTINA THE INTERVIEW

GREENKEEPING took the opportunity to interview new Features Editor Bettina Schrickel about her background and how she came to find her niche in a 'Mans World!'

Q1 *How did you initially become involved in Golf?*
In the early 1990's my parents moved into a new home overlooking the 10th hole at Seddiner See GC in Germany. I soon began playing during my first summer vacation.

Q2 *Where is your favourite course?*
My criteria for judging courses are : challenging play, natural beauty and high aesthetics combined with a well maintained course which reflects the character of the landscape. Such examples are the Old and New Courses at St.Andrews, Swinley Forest and Walton Heath in the U.K. In the States, it must be Cypress Point, Bel-Air and Cordevale in California. You can add Baltusrol and Pine Valley in New Jersey to this impressive list.



St. Andrews Golf Course

Q3 *How did your family background contribute to your golfing career?*

I was raised in a family of landscape architects. I spent two years interning in my father's practice. I then embarked on a series of further internships with golf course architectural practices such as Deutsche Golf Consult and the Ronald Fream Design Group. I became a certified golf course architect following completion of a diploma course in golf course architecture at Merrist Wood College in the U.K. I then worked for Ronald Fream again before joining Robert Trent Jones Jr. In Palo Alto, California. I have now launched my own company, Lioness Golf.

Q4 *What's it like being a woman in a male-dominated sport?*

Golf has always been male-dominated and golf course design has often been a second career for retired pros! However, I remember how nervous I was before attending a golf conference for the first time. Being the only woman there was a daunting challenge but I was warmly welcomed and also taken seriously. It is crucial to convince with enthusiasm and knowledge to get accepted.

Q5 *Are there any tips or advice for other females wishing to join the golf sector?*

My advice is to learn as you go and use every opportunity to create your own plans. This creates confidence in all aspects of your chosen career. Add to this dedication, consistency and diligence coupled with talent and a sound education and you'll get there!