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GOLF CLUB MANAGEMENT

The  
Business  
**MAGAZINE**  
FOR THE GOLF INDUSTRY

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VOLUME 6 • ISSUE 9

# Royal Harare

## A SUCCESS STORY

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Royal Harare

### ■ EDITORIAL

#### JOHN BOTHA

Email: bogeyfree@mweb.co.za  
Cell: 082 498 7380

### ■ PUBLISHER

#### CRAIG WILSON

Email: craigw@ramsaymedia.co.za  
Cell: 083 288 3834

### ■ ADVERTISING

#### SEAN SHARP (NATIONAL SALES MANAGER)

Email: seans@ramsaymedia.co.za  
Cell: 082 821 0474

#### NICKY MEARS (ADVERTISING SALES EXECUTIVE)

Email: nickym@ramsaymedia.co.za  
Cell: 082 927 5408

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# FROM THE EDITOR

## EDUCATING GOLFERS

One of the biggest challenges that management teams at golf clubs face is the 'education' of golfers. This can involve having to tactfully remind certain individuals of your club's dress code or having to enforce standards of general behaviour. Of course we like to think that golfers are generally decent sorts, and the majority are, but there is always that small minority that push the boundaries.

Nobody relishes the prospect of having to lay down the law and in the mythical perfect world this would never be necessary. But we all know that the golfing world, like any other, is far from perfect.

But besides the regular problem children – those who know better but who occasionally flaunt the rules – there are those who simply do not know any better, and it is perhaps time that a system was put in place whereby aspirant golfers should be required to pass a basic test before being allowed onto the course. This has been successfully implemented in parts of Europe, where golfers have to attend a course which, besides covering the fundamentals of playing the game, also offers an introduction to the rules and etiquette of golf. Once new golfers have passed this test, they are issued with a 'green card' allowing them access to golf courses.

Of course it is likely that there would be resistance to this idea from certain quarters, and it is a fair bet that this system would be considered to be discriminatory. Howls of protest from some would suggest that golf was becoming more elitist, but for my money this isn't necessarily a bad thing. Of course we want the game to be accessible to all sectors of society, but if we insist on promoting participation without ensuring that new golfers have some idea of what constitutes

reasonable behaviour, we are in trouble.

We have all had the dubious pleasure of playing in corporate golf days where it is clear that some of the participants have no clue about either playing the game or any of the basic rules. Understandably the company hosting the day is only interested in entertaining their guests, but the well-meaning organisers of these days should at least establish whether their guests have indeed played the game before.

Recently I played a round on one of our 5-Star Experience courses, but unfortunately the experience fell well short of expectations.

The reason for this disappointment was that in front of our fourball was a group of would-be golfers that may or may not have played the game before, which made for a long, frustrating day. The apologetic course marshal was clearly out of his depth, and could only explain to us that unfortunately there would be no point in our group playing through because the groups in front were just as bad.

Then there is the matter of golfers drinking alcohol on the course – which is for me and many others an anathema. It is high time that this practice was banned forthwith. There was a time when a club's liquor license stipulated that alcohol could only be consumed in a designated area of the clubhouse, and as far as I know, this still stands. Please, no more shooters at short holes, or players being allowed to stock their carts with booze. By banning alcohol on the course, those imbibers might speed up play in order to get to the 19th hole quicker, which will make for a more enjoyable experience for everyone.





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## BIRDIES AND BOGEYS



Not for the first time, Sun City resort has established a new industry benchmark – this time for its efforts in greening up its act, and the Nedbank Golf Challenge is well on its way to becoming the first carbon neutral golf tournament on the African continent.

**It is well known** that the Gary Player Country Club's golf course was the first to be constructed following USGA specifications.

The standards of conditioning seen at this course have also set a precedent that many other courses have tried to emulate, but very few have managed. More importantly, the management of this resort has been at the forefront of environmental consciousness for some time, and recent work that has been done is likely to see the Nedbank Golf Challenge become carbon neutral.

The drive to become more environmen-

tally friendly is an on-going project that Sun International takes very seriously, and the process of measuring and assessing the Nedbank Golf Challenge began in 2008.

With the help of the Heritage Environmental Company, contracted to compile a detailed report on the impact of the tournament, a huge amount of data was gathered and evaluated. The information covers every aspect affecting the carbon footprint of the event, from the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions generated by the spectators who travel to the resort, emissions on the golf courses

## BIRDIES AND BOGEYS



and surrounds, total energy consumption and the recycling of waste.

Since this first study was done, a considerable amount of progress has been made in reducing carbon emissions, improving waste separation and saving on energy consumption. Greg McManus of Heritage explains: "One of the biggest gains has been in water consumption. At one time clean water was used to irrigate the golf course, but now only grey water is used," he says. "Also, the golf course is now completely "electrified", meaning that all diesel generators etc have been replaced by electrical units."

A lot of care has gone into the planning and administration of the 2010 event, and for the first time it is likely that it will earn full accreditation as a 'green' event.

It is planned that within three years this

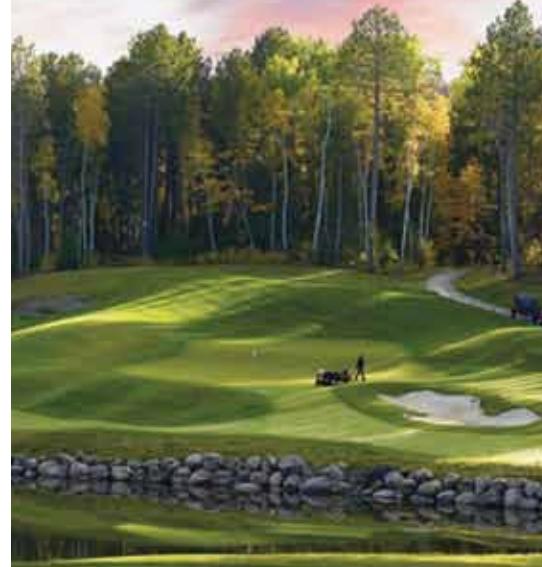
marquee event, which attracts thousands of spectators, will be carbon neutral. This may be ambitious, but McManus believes that it is achievable.

The Heritage Company also offers a programme for golf courses to become more environmentally friendly (The Fairways system), based on similar programmes such as Audubon International, Committed to Green, USAF Golf Course maintenance and ISO 14001.

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# Royal Harare

## ZIMBABWE'S NO 1

During a recent visit to Zimbabwe, it was my pleasure to attend the captain's dinner at Royal Harare for the second time in three years. All things considered, this golf club must be recognised as Zimbabwe's premier facility, and a visit to that country's capital city is highly recommended, writes **John Botha**.

**Zimbabwe may have** had its fair share of political strife and the country's economic meltdown resulted in hyperinflation that set a world record, but thankfully, some things never change. One of these things is the dogged determination of the Zimbabwean people, who must be the friendliest on the continent. Another is the spirit of the country's golfers – a spirit that thrives at Royal Harare.

The golf industry in Zimbabwe has obviously taken a hammering over the last few years; the numbers of golfers declined dramatically, and clubs found it increasingly difficult to stay afloat. Many golfers left the country, and of those that have remained, a sizeable proportion find it difficult to afford to play the game. But rather than wallowing in self-pity, Zimbabweans get on with

## CLUB PROFILE



The resurfacing of Royal's greens has resulted in the putting surfaces being as good as can be found anywhere.

it, and there are encouraging signs that suggest this country has turned the corner.

Nowhere is this more evident than at Royal Harare, where the car park is filled with vehicles and the demand for corporate and charity days remains strong. This club has a long and proud history, and while it has not had it easy, it has proven that with strong leadership and a loyal group of members, it has been able not only to survive, but to thrive. This club, which has been a

golfing institution for more than a century, must be considered the country's premier facility, and long may it remain so.

I read a wonderful book that was published 12 years ago that coincided with Royal Harare's centenary year, and as a student of history, I was fascinated by the old photographs and the snippets taken from club minutes. One of these gems, from 25 November 1899, states that "an attempt was made to play the eighth monthly competition, but owing to the bushes which had grown up owing to recent rains, the round had to be abandoned." Even before the formation of a club golf, we are told that the game had been played on the banks of the

**"THIS CLUB, WHICH HAS BEEN AN INSTITUTION FOR MORE THAN A CENTURY, MUST BE CONSIDERED THE COUNTRY'S PREMIER FACILITY..."**

Makabusi River, where the very real threat of blackwater fever and its precursor, malaria, existed. The daunting task of chronicling the century of the club's existence was admirably achieved by Bernard Gilbert with the help of the National Archives and members of the club, but one must experience this special place to truly appreciate the sense of history that pervades the club.

This book also reminds us that in 1979 the immortal golf writer Peter Dobereiner rated Royal Harare among the 50 best golf courses outside of the United States, and the layout has certainly improved since then. The clubhouse has also been constantly upgraded over the years, and recent work to the upstairs area, which includes a revamped bar with beautiful teak furniture, has further improved this facility.

The chronology dealing with the actual course development is rather sketchy, but it is obvious that a professional who had a major influence on the layout was Laurie Waters, who joined the club in 1922. (Waters was the co-designer of the famed Durban Country

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# Let your utility car do the walking

**The best ideas are often the simple ones** – as the team at Yamaha Distributors has shown with the development of a removable tool-carrier rack for the transport of brushcutters, chainsaws and other equipment. The rack is the first of its kind in South African landscaping.

With the average 18-hole golf course about eight kilometres long, getting power tool operators to out-of-the-way places can be a logistical, unproductive nightmare. Operators either have to walk (sometimes only to return, again on foot, within an hour or two for fuel or a glass of water!) or are transported together with their equipment.

Having brushcutters or chainsaws rattling around in the back of a utility vehicle is also not the best way of extending the lifespan of equipment – as some greenkeepers have discovered the hard way.

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carrier rack will prevent  
damage to equipment and  
enhance operator productivity**

Many golf clubs in South Africa are STIHL fleet owners, using multiple STIHL brushcutters/edgers, chainsaws and blowers. STIHL is therefore pleased and proud to be associated with this latest initiative of Yamaha Distributors, which adds great value to the use of STIHL equipment.

The removable rack has been designed to drop into slots in the rear bin of the latest Yamaha utility car, the YTF2, which is a 360cc petrol-engined workhorse with a tilting rear bin and a tow-hitch point for pulling a small trailer.

“Fitting the rack converts the YTF2 into an awesome vehicle for landscapers, garden services and even forestry

operators,” says Kelvin Thomas of Yamaha Distributors. “In addition to golf courses, it will add value for a host of customers, also including hotels and municipalities.”

The first racks are in operation at local golf courses and have received a unanimous thumbs up.

The Yamaha rack accommodates up to three brushcutters/edgers and two chainsaws with any blade length, four upright rakes and brooms and a hover mower, as well as 20 litres of fuel and 20 litres of drinking water for working staff.

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Chainsaws and brushcutters/edgers are usually not secured properly during transport, which means they may get damaged easily. With the Yamaha rack, your brushcutters and chainsaws can be padlocked into place.

“The rack carries everything the maintenance team could need to complete their day’s work – and all completely mobile!” Thomas says. “Furthermore, since the YTF2 can pull up to 450 kg on its hitch, adding a lightweight trailer to collect and carry débris or materials is also possible.”

The decision to design and market the tool-carrier rack using STIHL brushcutters and chainsaws was a logical one.

“STIHL is a market leader and many of our Yamaha dealerships also sell STIHL. The STIHL brand has a reputation for quality and is associated with a strong service ethos – a philosophy we share.”

A new-generation alternative for noise-sensitive neighbourhoods would be to transport a silent Yamaha generator in the bin of the vehicle and then use the range of STIHL electric trimmers and chainsaws, he says.



**The front and rear views of the Yamaha YTF2 utility car fitted with the locally designed tool-carrier rack, keeping your STIHL brushcutters/edgers and chainsaws safe and secure.**

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## CLUB PROFILE

Club, which was for many years considered to be the finest golf course in South Africa.) It was Waters who was responsible for the introduction of grass greens and tees, and it must be assumed that he was also involved with other changes to the original layout.

As with all older courses in Southern Africa, there have been many changes to what started out as a rather modest facility, and the work of FW Hawtree and later Nick Price and Steve Smyers has resulted in what is now a truly exceptional layout.

The recently completed resurfacing of the bent greens has been another triumph, and these putting surfaces compare with the best anywhere. But there is a lot more to a club than just the course, important though it may be. General manager Ian Mathieson, who originally joined the club as course manager in 1997, is both passionate and astute, and in the old tradition of Zimbabweans, he never fails to 'make a plan'. But he is quick to point out that he has the help and full support of the club's board of management – a group of successful executives and business people that have guided him through some of the most challenging times.

This board, which was formed some seven years ago, is headed by Pat Rooney, who explains that the formation of the board was to place the affairs of the club on a sound business footing. "It was found that the single role of a captain to direct and control the affairs of the club was too arduous, and there was not enough strategic thinking," he says. Initially the board formulated a three-year strategic plan and annual budgets and monthly financial results are prepared by the accountant.

It is obvious that this system of administration works well. "Initially the key essential ingredient was for there to be a clear understanding of the new board's role, and the role of the club captain. Both now understand their roles and duties."

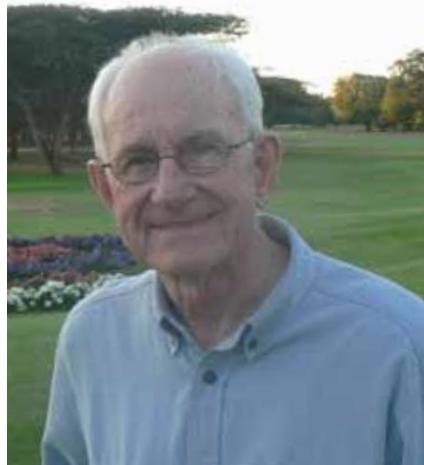
For its dramatic setting, Leopard Rock's golf course takes a lot of beating. Borrowdale Brook is another excellent course which forms part of Harare's upscale estate. Elephant Hills is another favourite – the quintessential 'African' course on the banks of the mighty Zambezi River, but when it comes to a traditional club of the highest quality, Royal Harare stands head and shoulders above the rest.



**ABOVE:** Royal Harare's popular general manager Ian Mathieson has his finger on the pulse of this vibrant club.

**BELOW:** Former club captain Andrew Pasipanodya is naturally proud of the achievements of his club, which included the highly successful hosting of the Zimbabwe Open Championship during his tenure.

**BOTTOM:** Advertising executive Michael Hogg is a member of the board of management that put Royal on a sound business footing.



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Of course, there are occasions where we have received complaints from readers about goods or services which have failed to live up to expectations. No system is perfect and we cannot possibly test every product that appears in our publication. We do, however, trust that the thorough checking of references indicates that these instances are few and far between. Clients tend to be less likely to praise good service and we urge golf clubs who have received excellent service to let us know, as it is the opinions of these clients on which the Preferred Supplier Programme is based.



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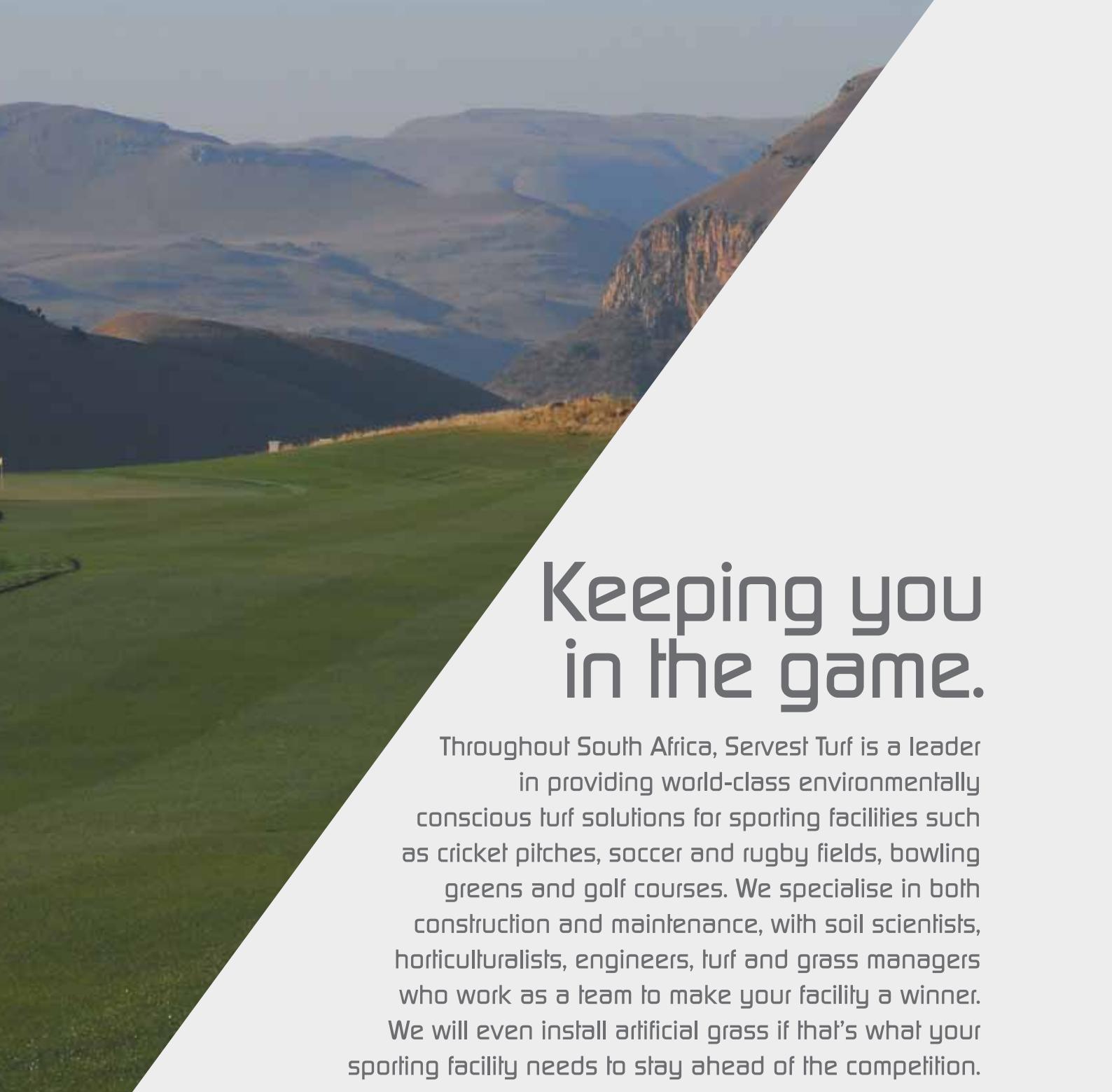
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## FEATURES

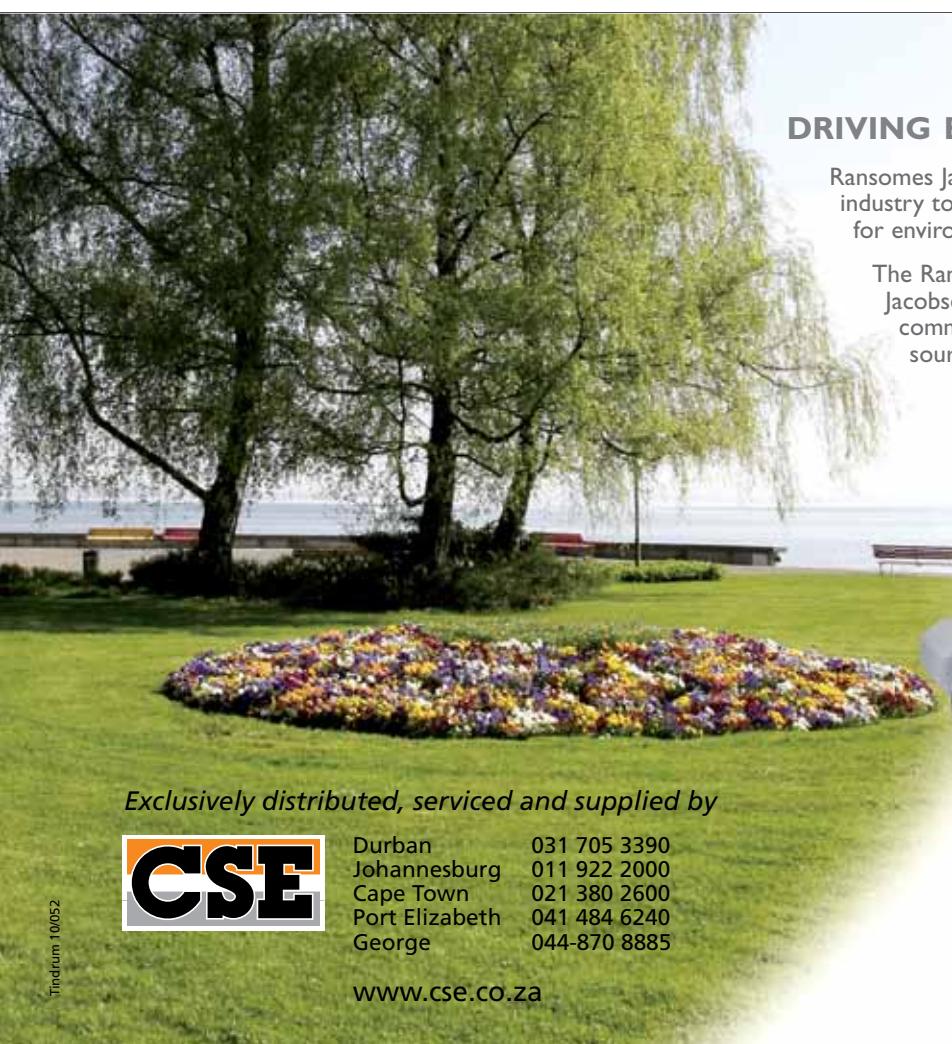
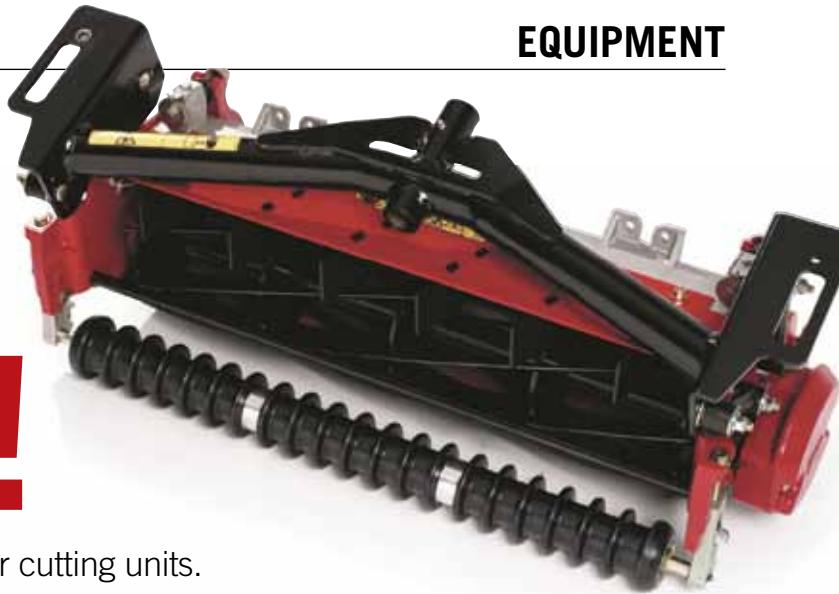
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# PROTECTED TREES ENRICH OUR FUTURE

**Val Thomas**, author of the *Sappi Tree Spotting* series, suggests highlighting protected trees on your course.

The focus of many of these *GCM* columns has been to encourage the planting, nurturing and awareness of indigenous trees and shrubs on golf courses. This not only makes environmental sense, but will also contribute towards diminishing the unhappy fact that golf courses are often perceived to be gross consumers, polluters and environmentally unfriendly playgrounds for the rich. We need to green up our properties and this month we are looking at the role that protected trees, which are of course indigenous, can play in marketing a more environmentally friendly image for golf courses.

There are currently 47 tree species that are protected by law in South Africa. Under the auspices of the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, protected trees may not be cut, disturbed, damaged or their products sold without a license.

There are a number of reasons why trees achieve this status. One is the rarity of the species, either locally or throughout Africa. Another is the tree's biodiversity and importance as a keystone species in its natural habitat. Also, some trees are valued for their cultural, spiritual or medical significance. It is often the intense harvesting of trees for medicinal use that can lead to its demise in a particular area, as their roots or bark are stripped, the trees are likely to die eventually.

As a particular species of wild tree diminishes in one geographical area, the overall sustainability of that species becomes threatened.



SHEPHERDS-TREE

The importance and significance of protected tree species is something that should be remembered and revered, and golf courses can provide wonderful environments in which to do this. By caring for any protected trees you already have, or by planting new ones, you can create a link in the chain between two individuals of the same species.

A couple of species included on the protected list spring to mind as worth talking about in more detail.



SHEPHERDS-TREE  
*Boscia albitrunca*



The stocky, stiffly branched Shepherds-tree, *Boscia albitrunca* is, for instance, a good example of a tree that is deeply rooted in South Africa's cultural heritage, and is important to humans and animals on a number of levels. It is often referred to as the 'Tree of Life', with leaves that provide nourishing fodder for game, as well as livestock, in times of drought. This is a keystone species, a category that affords it protected status. By keystone we mean that it provides a vital link in the ecological chain of its natural environment. Their pale, smooth bark and uniquely individual shapes could be an attraction on your course, if it falls within the tree's natural distribution. Five to 10 Shepherds-trees fairly closely grouped together can create a strikingly unusual feature, and make yours a 'proudly South African' golf course.

The genera *Podocarpus* and *Afrocarpus* – the Yellowwoods – are all protected trees, and all are highly prized for their beautiful wood. South Africa's national tree, the Broad-leaved Yellowwood, *Podocarpus latifolius*, is the most common and widespread of the species. Its wood, more than any other indigenous timber, has been used to decorate many old homesteads and was also used to make railway-sleepers. Its wood was so sought after that its status declined from being an abundant resource to becoming almost extinct in some areas.

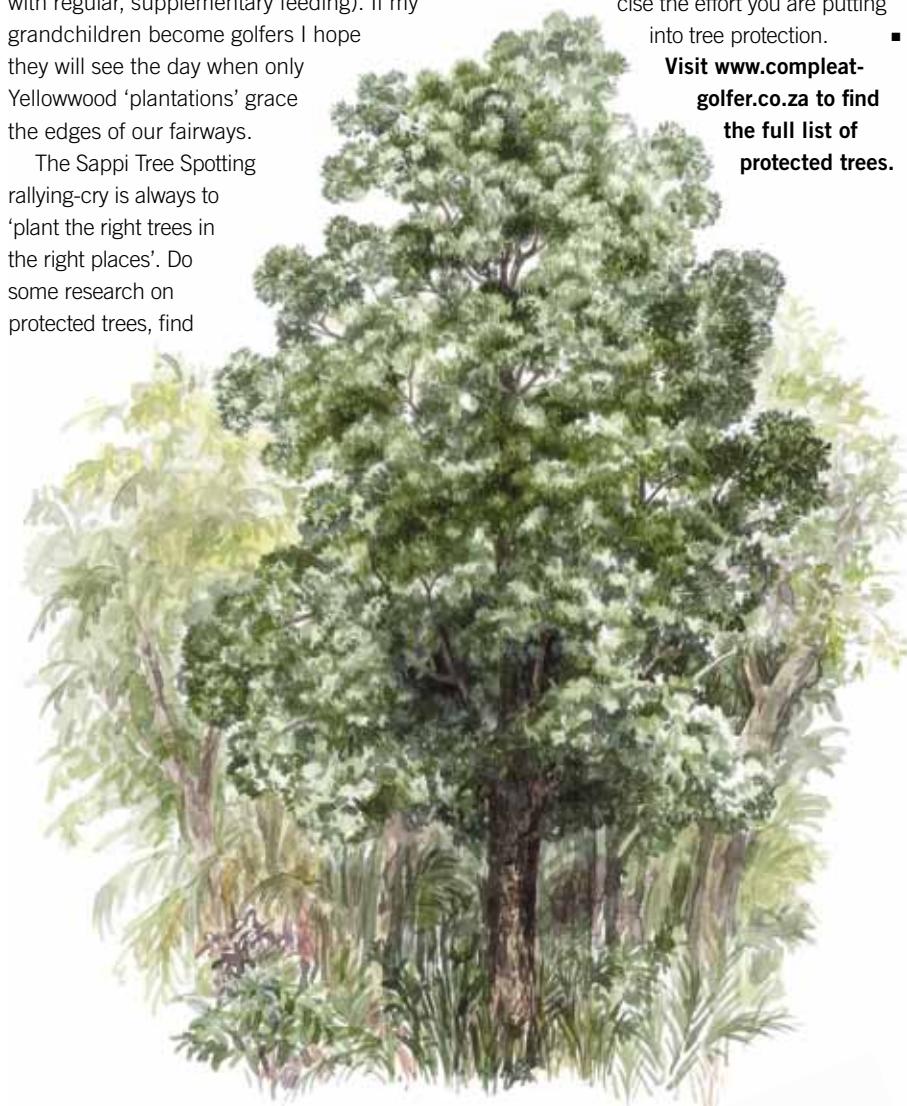
Yellowwoods all do very well on higher altitude golf courses in the eastern Mpumalanga and Gauteng regions and western KwaZulu-Natal. At Royal Johannesburg and Kensington we have had marked success inter-planting groups of Yellowwoods in gaps among the established pines, an exotic

species that, to my mind, creates sterile environments on golf courses, gradually destroying the soil around them. The Yellowwoods thrive in the protection offered by the pines (in deeply-trenched, well-fed holes with regular, supplementary feeding). If my grandchildren become golfers I hope they will see the day when only Yellowwood 'plantations' grace the edges of our fairways.

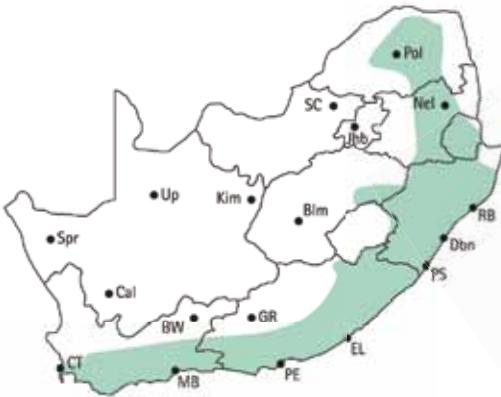
The Sappi Tree Spotting rallying-cry is always to 'plant the right trees in the right places'. Do some research on protected trees, find

out their distribution, and choose one that grows naturally in the surrounding area. And if you do take the worthwhile decision to plant one, place a tree-tag somewhere on the trunk that shows its name. It's a great way to publicise the effort you are putting into tree protection. ■

Visit [www.compleat-golfer.co.za](http://www.compleat-golfer.co.za) to find the full list of protected trees.



**BROAD-LEAVED YELLOWWOOD**  
*Podocarpus latifolius*



# THE SILICA QUEEN



Rosa van der Merwe started her career in the sand industry in 1979 when she joined a British company, Tarmac Roadstone, in Benoni, Gauteng. Tarmac owned two sand and stone quarries, namely Rosslyn Rossway and Van Ryn Quarry. It is interesting to note that Ebotse Golf Course is built on the old Van Ryn site where Van der Merwe's career started. (See article on Ebotse in Landscape SA Jan/Feb 2008).

Rosa van der Merwe with Thabo Ntshiqwa, CEO of Bronx Mining.

**Initially employed as** a personnel manager, she soon became intrigued by the mining operations of silica sand and together with the managing director of Tarmac Group, Arnold Jones, they conducted research on the use of silica sand.

In those days silica was mostly used in the glass, foundry and ceramic markets. During the period of sanctions against South Africa, Tarmac Roadstone disinvested from South Africa and closed its quarries. However, Jones decided not to return to Britain and bought a silica deposit in Bronkhorstspruit as a virgin site, starting a silica mine from scratch. It was called Mowcop Silica and Van der Merwe was put in charge of marketing. Research led them to the golf course industry.

In those days the USA was already using silica sand in golf course construction, but in South Africa, most courses were built with

accredited laboratory was incorporated into the production process to verify the production on a daily basis. Much research and time was spent with Hummel & Co in the USA and various agronomists to ensure that gradings were to specification and that root zone mixes for optimal infiltration rates, capillary porosities and saturated hydraulic conductivities were accurate. Green's Sand has fine tuned all this and is now the largest golf course sand supplier in South Africa.

The company is very fortunate that the shape of its silica sand is sub-angular and not rounded or crushed. A sub-angular sand is preferred for the construction of greens, whereas a rounded sand will result in a soft green and a crushed sand will result in a compacted green.

Green's Sand has built up a comprehensive product mix covering all aspects

### **"GREEN'S SAND HAS FINE TUNED ALL THIS AND IS NOW THE LARGEST GOLF COURSE SAND SUPPLIER IN SOUTH AFRICA."**

river sand, which is mostly decomposed granite, resulting in greens needing to be rebuilt more often due to the disintegration and compaction of the sand. In contrast to river sand, silica is derived from naturally occurring friable silica sandstone situated in a hard quartz rock formation which does not break down.

Says Van der Merwe: "It took the market a lot of convincing to change to silica sand as river sand was considerably cheaper. The first USGA spec golf course was built by Top Turf in 1977 and the course at Sun City used local sand that was mined at Maanhaarrand. Since then most courses, including bunkers, have been built on silica sand and the success speaks for itself.

Mowcop Silica was taken over by Bronx Mining, a German group, during 1981.

Green's Sand was founded in the same year and was awarded the marketing contract, with Van der Merwe in charge, to explore the golf and leisure industries. Bronx Mining is now classified as a 100 percent BEE mine and Green's Sand is a Level 2 BEE contributor.

A dedicated plant was designed to produce a constant high grade USGA silica sand complying 100 percent with USGA specifications for greens and bunkers. An

of golf course building and maintenance, namely greens mixes, peat mixes, ceramic mixes, divot mixes, fairway mixes, bowling green mixes and compost mixes. A mixing, screening and loading operation is on site for this purpose.

Out of the top 100 ranked golf courses in South Africa, Green's Sand has associated with about 95 percent of them from construction to maintenance. The most recent project is Steyns City (Jack Nicklaus) while past projects include Serengeti (Jack Nicklaus), Eye of Africa (Greg Norman), Legends, Nondela, Blair Atholl (Gary Player), Waterberg, Cotswold Downs, Leopard Creek, Elements, Highland Gate (Ernie Els), Euphoria (Annika Sorenstam), Victoria Country Club, Pecanwood (Jack Nicklaus), The Hills (Greg Norman), Ebotse, Gardener Ross (Ernie Els), Waterford, Harbour Town, Clarens, Zimbali, Vaal de Grace, Simbithi and Zebula. In addition they have been involved with the rebuild of Houghton, Parkview, Johannesburg Country Club, Randpark, Krugersdorp, Monument, Glendower, Royal Johannesburg, Sun City and Woodhill golf courses. They have also supplied all the bunker sand to Pinnacle Point and Fancourt.

Green's Sand is also involved with all

the major golf course construction and maintenance companies namely Top Turf, Matkovich & Hayes, Golf Data, Turftek, Evergreen Turf, Wallington Sport, Penquip, Keep it Green, Tee to Green, Bouston Trading and Emerald Landscapes. The support and loyalty from these companies has been instrumental to their success.

Green's Sand was the preferred supplier of sand for the 2010 World Cup soccer stadiums and thus has to comply with FIFA's specifications. Van der Merwe says that soccer sand specifications were much stricter than those for the USGA and that her company started preparing three years ago to ensure that all material complied with FIFA specifications.

Not only is the particle size important, but the shape of the sand particle, infiltration rate and capillary porosity has to be spot on. As consistency of the materials is of utmost importance a strict quality control system was implemented and overseen by Turf and Soil Tech CC.

Since starting to supply to soccer projects early last year, Green's Sand has supplied over 35 000 tonnes of soccer mix all over the country.

The following accredited testing facilities are used on an ongoing basis: Hummel & Co (USA), ETL Lab (Scotland) and Thomas Turf. Locally, Civilab, Turf and Soil Tech CC and Scientific Turf and Sportsfields Consulting are used.

Green's Sand's motto for the past 29 years has been customer satisfaction, loyalty, quality and service. Their product list can be obtained from their website ([www.greensand.co.za](http://www.greensand.co.za)) and deliveries are made throughout South Africa.

**For further information contact Rosa van der Merwe on 082 552 9953.**



### **GREEN'S SAND CC**

**Website:** [www.greensand.co.za](http://www.greensand.co.za)

**Tel:** 011 964 3236/2997

# ESTABLISHING A TRADITION



**Peet De Wet** is one of those individuals who clearly loves golf and his job as general manager of Ebotse Golf Club. Having been at the helm of this upmarket estate club since its opening nearly three years ago, he has put together a motivated team that makes this operation one of our industry's success stories.

**To be a good**, effective golf club manager, one needs a broad range of skills and the right personality, among other attributes.

Peet De Wet, with his impressive CV in the hospitality industry, a deep understanding and passion for golf and his friendly, outgoing personality, certainly qualifies as one of the best in the business.

A Grey College graduate who is quick to point out just how well his old school was represented by the victorious Craven Week rugby team, Peet was at one time deter-

mined to play golf for a living.

He played the game at provincial level as a junior, and after matriculating, he took a gap year touring Europe and the United States. During this experience he spent time at a golf academy in Lexington, Kentucky that was attached to the local university. 'Blue Grass Country' is better known for being the home of fine thoroughbred race horses, and Peet worked as a stable groom in the mornings and would spend time working on his golf skills in the afternoons.

After returning to South Africa, Peet embarked on an academic career at the University of the Free State, which yielded a degree in sports psychology, and he then opened a rather unique restaurant and take-away in Bloemfontein called Love Bites – an interesting concept that supplied, among other offerings, heart-shaped hamburgers. This was a popular place, especially for students, and was the only late-night operation in the city, staying open until two am. (Peet also registered with



Ebotse's 2nd hole bears no resemblance to the unattractive quarry it was in a previous life.

UNISA to study a bachelor's degree in commerce, majoring in economics.)

After selling his share in this business, Peet became the owner/operator of a Spur franchise in Richards Bay, where he spent five years before being offered the management contract to run the Richards Bay Golf Club. After two years at the club, a group of businessmen approached him and he was convinced to become involved in the hotel business. He was then appointed as manager of the four-star Richards Hotel. After successfully running what is considered to be the premier hotel in Richards Bay, Peet was then offered the top position at the Velmore Hotel in Pretoria, one of Gauteng's top accommodation and conference facilities. (The German national soccer squad were based here for



**LEFT TO RIGHT:** Hardus Maritz, senior golf course superintendent; Peet De Wet, general manager; Carla Serrao, function and events co-ordinator; Karen Bender, membership secretary; Rittah Ntuli, receptionist; Rosou Rossouw, deco catering director and Charlie De Wet, golf day co-ordinator.

the duration of the 2010 World Cup.)

It was after being invited by Derek Cuthbert to a golf day sponsored by Bell's at Zwartkop, that Peet was lured into the club management field. "I found myself sitting next to Dave Usendorff, who let it be known that there was an opportunity available in the club management field, and I applied to join his company, Inside Right." The Ebotse Golf Club Management (Pty) Ltd was then formed, which was contracted to manage the affairs of the fledgling club for the homeowners on the estate. Peet was entrusted with setting up systems and putting together the team that would run the club – a team that clearly strives to attain the highest service levels.

The Ebotse golf course is one of Peter Matkovich's most unique designs, a true modern classic that features all the hallmarks of a Scottish or Irish links, and what was a rather unattractive quarry, was transformed into superb course that has received rave reviews since its opening.

The modern, functional clubhouse offers great views of the course, and there is a pleasing, relaxed feel about the place. The catering function is contracted out and the quality of the cuisine certainly bears special

mention – it is first class. The course maintenance was until recently contracted to Mike Wallington, but the home owners and Ebotse management company have now taken over this function. "We have a great relationship with Mike Wallington, who will be retained as our consultant," says Peet. "I rate him as one of the best in the business." The club has been fortunate in securing the services of course superintendent Hardus Maritz, who has an excellent reputation and together with his staff of 28 he is determined to maintain the highest possible standards of conditioning.

Ebotse has established itself as a premier golf estate, and is a strong contender for *Compleat Golfer's* 5-Star Golf Experience award. It is quite obvious that Peet is determined to continue to raise the standards in every department of his club, and his enthusiasm and energy has certainly rubbed off on the willing members of his staff. "It has been a wonderful experience to have been involved with every aspect of the club since its opening, and I see it as part of my mandate to establish the traditions and for Ebotse to take its rightful position among the best clubs in South Africa. He and his team are definitely on the right track. ■



Not for sale to persons under the age of 18



# THEY 'PLAY' IN THE ROUGH

## It's all about being a good neighbour

It's the second highest point in Gauteng and one of the most impressive examples of what developers are capable of doing – creating a golf estate while maintaining the existing pristine environment of its own property. What's more, the Eye of Africa, designed by Greg Norman, works toward being a good neighbour as well.

Eye of Africa Management believes in extending ecologically sustainable resource utilisation to the utmost. It already has established a plant for recycling its wastewater and wants to extend this system to ensure that it maintains a proactive, eco friendly relationship with its neighbours.

It has therefore contacted leading environmental design, development and management experts, Local Biodiversity Solutions, to assist it in this key goal.

LBS has developed a most practical approach to recycling the course wastewater via a cost effective, biological treatment of hydrocarbons. The result will be an even more self sustainable golf course while reducing demand on neighbouring water resources.

LBS' extensive scientific and formal conservation expertise will enable the company to monitor results of this programme with accountability, accuracy and objectivity.

LBS' clients include Old Mutual, Murray & Roberts, Sasol, Total, Royal Canin, SAB, and DDG USA, a world leading design firm.

**For more information, please visit [www.localbiodiversity.com](http://www.localbiodiversity.com) or contact: Zane Masson on +27 11 805 5342 or +27 79 898 2071**

**lbs**  
local biodiversity solutions



# BEATING THE BUGS WITH MERIDIAN

Syngenta claims that its Meridian 250 WG product is the most effective application for combatting a range of pests.

As any **turfgrass** manager knows, experiencing insect damage is a perennial problem. Insects such as grubs, mole-crickets, ants, termites and many others infest turfgrass and create problems for turf quality and development. Most damage normally occurs below the soil surface in the root zone, but this may also extend above the soil surface where the insects feed on the foliage.

Meridian™ 25 WG insecticide provides turf managers with an unprecedented degree of control and application flexibility in managing a broad spectrum of grubs and insects on turf. This water dispersible granule contains 250 grams of active ingredient (Thiamethoxam) per kilogram of formulated products, and is conveniently packaged in 250-gram bottles.

Meridian belongs to the neoniconiod group of insecticides, which consists of Thiamethoxam, a world-leading active ingredient for superior insect control. Meridian is mainly effective in below-surface insect control, providing both contact and ingestion activity. If treated preventatively, insects stop feeding within hours, leading to minimal turf damage. Death occurs quickly, usually within 24–48 hours. The product is most active in early development stages of grubs and mole-crickets. Alternative chemistry should be used for the adult stages.

Insects controlled with Meridian include soil pests such as billbugs, white grubs (such as Japanese beetles, oriental beetles and European, Southern and Northern masked chafer) and mole-crickets; as well as foliar pests such as aphids, whiteflies, mealybugs and leafhoppers among others. Meridian also offers quick control of ants and termites and

other insect pests of trees and shrubs.

There is a wide application window, allowing flexibility regarding the time of application needed to maintain season-long control. Meridian has curative properties through the late second instar of insect development. It leaves little or no odour and metabolises slowly in turf-grass, allowing for extended control with good knockdown activity. Meridian has a favourable solubility value that ensures efficacy even under dry soil conditions and can be leached into the soil with a small amount of water.

The first application should take place between August and September at a dose rate of 1.2kg/ha, followed by a second application in January. Six millimetres of irrigation is required after application to ensure

**RIGHT:** Soil pests such as African black beetles can be effectively controlled with Meridian.

**BELOW:** Meridian is most active in early development stages of grubs.

the product leaches into the upper levels of the soil. This programme should result in season-long control.

Meridian™ 25 WG is a superior product manufactured by Syngenta and distributed nationally by LHG Consulting and Services. LHG is the exclusive supplier of Syngenta's turf products to the South African turf industry. ■

**For more information contact: Bennie Buys – [bennie@lhg.co.za](mailto:bennie@lhg.co.za) or 082 809 5447.**





# QUICK AND EASY

New quick adjust reels from John Deere Golf make changing cut heights simpler than ever.

**When John Deere** Golf began looking at ways to improve its cutting units, it set a goal of developing the most practical, user-friendly cutting unit on the market.

After experimenting with several different designs, the company started placing prototypes in front of superintendents and technicians to gain their insight into what concepts they liked best and what they would change.

Numerous focus groups and feedback sessions later, the new QA5 and QA7 cutting units deliver on that original promise.

Changing cutting height on the quick adjust reels is both fast and easy and it can be done from just one point on the reel.

The revolutionary new speed link system connects both sides of the rear roller to a high-reduction worm gear, allowing one-

thousandth of an inch (0.025mm) adjustments to be made to both sides of the roller simultaneously using a variable speed cordless drill or socket.

However, it didn't stop with the height of the cut system. The adjustments for the cut on both the QA5 and QA7 use a notch system to move the bedknife on the QA5 or the reel on the QA7 for quick adjustments in the shop or out on the course.

The optional fairway or greens tender conditioners and the rear roller power brush for both the QA5 and QA7 cutting units are designed so they can be quickly adjusted for optimum performance.

And to make it even better, you can make all these adjustments with one five eighths inch or 16 millimetre spinner or socket. Woodhill's workshop manager Dawie

### KEY DESIGN TECHNOLOGIES

#### ■ SPEED LINK SYSTEM

Worm gears quickly adjust and hold on the course.

#### ■ NOTCH FOR CUT

New notch system for quick cut adjustment on the QA5 and QA7 moves bedknife on the QA5 and reel on the QA7 a precise half of one-thousandth of an inch per notch (0.025mm).

#### ■ FAIRWAY AND GREENS TENDER CONDITIONERS

Can now be adjusted by turning a top mounted bolt, while still being gear-driven, which allows you to easily engage them in seconds for changing conditions.



## THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN

See below for the highlights of John Deere Golf's largest product launch in the past 10 years, held in Spain in July:

### ■ **QUICK ADJUST QA5 AND QA7 CUTTING UNITS**

A revolutionary new speed link system makes it possible to adjust cut height on both sides of the reel in seconds from a single point.

### ■ **THE 220 E-CUT HYBRID WALKING GREENS MOWER**

Contour hugging floating head makes it easier to achieve the perfect cut on severely undulating greens.

### ■ **THE 7500 AND 8500 E-CUT FAIRWAY MOWERS**

Electric drive cutting units eliminate the need for hydraulic lines in the reel circuit, greatly reducing the possibility of a leak. Other benefits of E-Cut hybrid technology include consistent frequency of clip, quieter operation and noticeably lower fuel consumption.

### ■ **THE 8000 E-CUT FAIRWAY MOWER**

Three-wheeled design and narrow width of cut offers the ability to cut fairways with the finesse of a greens mower.

### ■ **THE 7200 PRECISIONCUT TRIM AND SURROUNDS MOWER**

Operator can shift front cutting units left or right to trim, or adjust the width of cut right from the seat.

### ■ **THE 8800 TERRAINCUT ROTARY MOWER**

Now enhanced with reinforced mower decks and a unique height-of-cut adjustment system that clicks in settings.

### ■ **THE HD200 SELECTSPRAY**

The HD200 gives you the choice of a longlasting diaphragm or centrifugal pump, the option of a traditional manual or customised auto rate controllers and both detaches and re-attaches in minutes without tools.



Annendale was clearly impressed with the groundbreaking adjustment system.

**Please contact the John Deere territory manager, Christo de Koning on 082 420 9379 or [dekoningchristo@johndeere.com](mailto:dekoningchristo@johndeere.com).**



**JOHN DEERE**

# MANNEQUINS

## and window displays

**Kymi Bodenberger** offers advice on dressing mannequins correctly and warns against shoddy presentation that can spoil the effect of these attractive merchandising tools.

**At the end** of every training session on mannequin display, I explain to the class that I do not want to see any drunken mannequins in their stores going forward. The comment always receives a chuckle, but I have truly seen a number of intoxicated-looking mannequins proudly on display in golf shops.

Simply put, a 'drunk mannequin' is dressed like the guy you see stumbling out of the corner pub at two am: His zipper is down, often displaying a hastily stuffed-in shirttail, his belt is nowhere to be found, resulting in his pants hanging too low (regularly emphasised by clothes that are too big for him – seemingly not his own) and his jacket is missing.

Yet, as a mannequin, he is proudly standing at the entrance of the golf shop encouraging customers to come in and note his impressive fashion sense. Sound familiar?

There are a few tricks of the trade when it comes to dressing mannequins and creating attractive, eye-catching window displays. The impact of a good window display is highly rewarding to any retail store.

The first step in dressing a mannequin is to select attire that you have well-stocked in your store. Your mannequin is promoting the ensemble it is wearing; therefore, you want to have plenty of opportunity to make sales based on the items being displayed.

As you select the items for the mannequin to wear, keep two objectives in mind:

- Choose items that visually attract attention with bright colours, interesting details or unique styles.
  - Layer the clothing. Start with the golf shirt and shorts and then add a sweater, a jacket tied around the waist, etc.
- As a buyer myself, if a shirt or clothing item

catches my attention as a great mannequin piece while I'm ordering stock from a supplier, I will generally purchase more of that particular item knowing that I will expose the product to a greater customer base on my own mannequin.

As you select the outfit, make sure the clothing is the right size for the mannequin. Most mannequins wear small and medium sizes. Once the basic attire is addressed, add any accessories that will complete the outfit – a belt, socks and shoes, a cap, sunglasses tucked into the placket of the shirt, a golf glove hanging out the back pocket, etc. You have successfully dressed your mannequin when you see passing customers have a double-take thinking it might actually be a person standing in the shop.

Many shops use the torso mannequins that do not have heads or arms but consist of only the body torso on a stand. When dressing these, slide the stand pole through one of the legs of the pants or shorts leaving the decorative base to show. The trick here is to tie off the bottom of the pants with a belt as shown in the pictures. If you leave the pants to hang at the bottom, the stand holds one leg higher than the other causing your mannequin to appear rather unbalanced.

Because the torso mannequins do not have arms, I often dress them in long sleeve items to create an interesting display. Once dressed, I use the packets that the shirts arrive in from suppliers to stuff into the sleeves and then tuck the sleeves into the pants or jacket pockets. This simple touch creates a more realistic presentation.

The torso mannequins are often used for both male and female displays, even though the torso is more masculine in design. If you

choose to display female clothing on this mannequin, please remember to give her the requisite female 'assets'.

Sounds funny, but a ladies shirt on a flat-chested mannequin is not going to help your sales. The easiest option is to purchase a 36-B sized bra and stuff it with tissue paper. Be careful not to go too large as this may detract from the display and may even cause the clothes to be ill-fitting. Besides, we are potentially aiming at a different market...

Because the torso is primarily a male form, making it larger than a female form, use large or x-large clothing when dressing in female attire so that the items appear more natural and feminine.

Lastly on the mannequin issue, if you are creating a display with two or three mannequins together, dress them in colours that complement each other. Your resulting display will have a more coherent and cohesive appearance.

If you are creating a window display, your primary goal is to make it attractive yet simple. A window display is meant to catch the





**LEFT:** Dressed for success – an example at the Killarney pro shop where mannequins are neatly displayed and do not look like they have been on a binge!

**ABOVE:** Bright colours, interesting details and unique styling are some of the fundamentals to consider when dressing a mannequin.

**RIGHT:** A mannequin should be dressed in clothing that is well-stocked in the store.  
**BELLOW RIGHT:** Most mannequins should wear small and medium sizes to fit properly.

passing customer's attention and draw them inside. Your average customer will spend approximately two to five seconds looking at your display so it needs to impress at a glance.

As with the mannequins, try to incorporate colourful items into your display. Larger sized merchandise is the key. A display area filled with tiny items like sleeves of balls and miscellaneous golfing accessories will simply be lost during the potential customer's glance. Instead consider golf bags, different types of luggage bags, (stuffed with paper to display the proper size and design) large props and supplier promotional materials, if they enhance the overall appearance.

I am frequently asked how often a display or mannequin's outfit should be changed.

This depends completely on the frequency of your customer visits. If the majority of your customers enter your shop every week, you should change the displays weekly. If you are a destination location with fewer repeat customers, you have the flexibility to change displays based primarily on the availability and stock of your displayed products rather than on frequency-based factors.

Mannequins and window displays are a sales-enhancing part of promoting your merchandise selection. Care and consideration should be taken to ensure a successful result and avoid your shop becoming yet another local hangout for the dreaded drunken mannequin phenomenon. Don't let it happen in your shop. ■



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**FJ FOOTJOY**

# The end of AN ERA

Founder and former managing director of TopTurf **Dave Kirkby** may have effectively 'retired', but he still has a lot to offer the turf industry, and he will be an active member of the golf industry's Green Star awards. *GCM* looks back at the career of this popular man who has made countless friends in and out of the industry.

**Who says 'nice guys'** have to come second? If this is indeed so, Dave Kirkby is certainly an exception. His colleagues, his long list of clients, his many acquaintances, and even his opposition in business only have good things to say about him; something that is refreshing in the cut-and-thrust, dog-eat-dog world in which we live.

After his first visit to a farm as a school boy, Dave knew he wanted to become involved in agriculture. After completing his schooling at Kingswood, he attended Natal University and earned a BAgri degree and became involved in pasture research and lectured at Fort Hare, but a major turning point came when he hired 40 hectares south of Johannesburg and, together with partner Jimmy Power, started TopTurf. With typical modesty, Dave insists that he was simply very lucky to be in the right place at the right time, and it was this 'luck' that saw his company grow into an operation that employed 1 500 people in South Africa and some 400 abroad. Many who know him would suggest that it was more about his hard work and his reputation for being a person of integrity who has never been prepared to compromise his principles. He is quick to point out that it was the people that he came into contact with that have shaped his success – and he names the

likes of Gary Player, Sol Kerzner, Patrick Watson, Laurie Dippenaar, Paul Harris, Peter Bacon, Brian Holmes, Keith Kirsten, Paul Jones, Patrice Motsepe, Graham Wood, Chippy Brand and, more recently, Brian Joffe.

A self-confessed 'turf junkie', Dave tells us that his passions have remained the same as they were back in 1977 when TopTurf was launched – turfgrass, the environment, attention to detail, the belief that anything is possible and a concern for



the status of the industries in which he has operated. He is also disarmingly honest. "When you push the limits there are always going to be spectacular failures," he says. He lists the Newlands debacle, the decision to use cool season grasses for horse racing at Gosforth Park and the devastating effects of trying to achieve "impossible" speeds on the greens at Sun City for the DiData tournament. In each of these instances, Dave never hesitated in taking the rap, and he made sure that remedies were found. In the case of the Newlands rugby pitch, he enlisted the help of Hewitt Sports Turf in the UK, who suggested the use of Desso Grassmaster. "Despite being the culprit, I was retained to do the remedial work and I've had a good relationship with Newlands ever since," he says. The Gosforth Park experiment, to over-seed 40 000 square metres of kikuyu with rye and to lay this on the home straight, turned out to be rather less than successful. "The result was a spectacular green straight in a sea of winter brown grass – everyone was very pleased and we waited

in anticipation for the first practice gallops. It was a spectacular disaster – the horses skidded all over the place on the slippery rye grass, and the jockeys refused to ride on the surface! The 40 000 square metres had to be replaced at our cost," he says. The killing of the greens at Sun City, despite the devastating effects, also ended well, and the putting surfaces were soon back to their best. "Of course at the hottest time of the year in Sun City, trying to produce green speeds better suited to Augusta National in the springtime was a blunder, but to the everlasting credit of the management there, and to my huge relief, we were not fired, but rather retained to find the solution."

Dave is less enthusiastic about listing the several awards he has received – an impressive collection that includes the SANA Golf Medal for his contribution to the nursery industry, honorary life membership of SALI for his contribution to the landscaping industry and being admitted to the SAGIC role of honour for his contributions to the whole green industry.

He is happier looking for ways that everyone can benefit from his experience and this unselfish attitude is just one of the reasons that the name of Dave Kirkby is held in high esteem. "We have to attract good people to the industry – there should be a culture of positive outlook, professionalism, integrity and fun; where there are opportunities for individuals to achieve their life's ambition," he stresses. "It is obviously up to all the stakeholders in the industry to make this happen."

Although Dave sold TopTurf to Bidvest in 2005, he remained actively involved until the company fulfilled its commitments for the 2010 World Cup. There was some surprise when he announced that he would be leaving the company he started and the general consensus was that TopTurf would never be the same without him. He tells us that he does not intend to put his feet up and watch the grass grow – "I'll still be around," he says, and it is a fair bet that he will be happy to give advice and to help where he can; he is just that sort of person. ■

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# TWO-FOLD REWARD ECOLOGICAL AND ECONOMIC

Following on from his June issue thoughts, presenting initial ideas for our Green Star certification project, **John Masson** returns to this topic and, once more with feeling, suggests the next step in what he sees as a process in creating the first golf industry approach to monitoring and rewarding a constructive contribution to our planet's environmental sustainability. Reward comes not merely in an ecological sense, but also in the all-important economic sense.

**Around the world** there is a growing recognition of savings that can be generated as a result of adopting self-sustainable strategies.

- The US Green Building Council states in reference to 'outside space': "The 'native' (sic – American for 'indigenous') requires 77 percent less water, produces 66 percent less green waste and costs 68 percent less for maintenance than the traditional garden."



- In South Africa we have achieved even greater results through implementing self-sustainable systems. Sasol calls it the introduction of "locally indigenous vegetation". This would then reduce the need for expensive and conventional 'garden maintenance' practices such as irrigating, mulching, top dressing, bed turning and the application of poisonous additives.

### TOPICS COVERED IN THE GREEN STAR CERTIFICATION PROJECT INCLUDE:

- Select course locations to preserve existing natural resources and repair damaged ecosystems
- Plan for course self-sustainability from the onset of the project
- Reuse/recycle existing materials and support sustainable activities
- Minimise negative effects of golf course construction
- Reduce negative effects associated with a course's use of water
- Reduce negative effects associated with a course's soil and vegetation usage/introduction
- Build a healthy golfing community
- Manage the course for self-sustainability
- Reward exceptional performance and improve the self-sustainability body of knowledge for golf courses

The savings in water consumption after the establishment phase would be 100 percent.

John states that this is not a 'fait accompli', but rather a stepping stone that is meant as a catalyst and stimulant requiring Green Star panel and industry involvement, moving toward that light at the end of the tunnel.

The following objective and measurable biodiversity certification rating system is divided into two sections:

- those actions associated with the majority of golf courses
- the existing ones and those associated with new courses yet to be constructed.

All points for activities that appear in the latter sector will have a 'life' of four years and will then fall away – with so-called 'existing' activities having to take their place in order for a course to maintain its standing/rating.

You will see that certain activities are not awarded points, but are linked to a 'pre-requisite' – these are extremely important activities that must be adhered to in order to take part in this rating programme.

## EXISTING GOLF COURSE POINTS

<b>TOTAL MINIMUM</b>	91 pts
<b>TOTAL MAXIMUM</b>	173 pts

## NEW SITE GOLF COURSE POINTS

May allocate these points to existing courses where appropriate steps were previously taken.

<b>TOTAL MINIMUM</b>	57 pts
<b>TOTAL MAXIMUM</b>	89 pts

## WHEN COMBINING 'EXISTING' AND 'NEW' CATEGORIES:

<b>GRAND TOTAL MIN PTS</b>	148 pts
<b>GRAND TOTAL MAX PTS</b>	262 pts

## AWARD LEVELS

Bronze	80 pts
Silver	110 pts
Gold	130 pts
Platinum	160 pts

If you have any questions or would like to chat with John regarding any points raised in this article, please contact him on 082 892 8860 or [john@localbiodiversity.com](mailto:john@localbiodiversity.com).

GOLF COURSE GREEN STAR CERTIFICATION			
Y	N	Pts	Possible Points
			<b>Flora &amp; Fauna</b>
			Prereq Remove and manage invasive plants found on-site
			Prereq Use appropriate indigenous plants
			Credit 1 Use locally indigenous plants
			Credit 2 Preserve locally indigenous plant communities
			Credit 3 Restore locally indigenous plant communities within "out of play" areas
			Credit 4 Reintroduction and or allow for recolonization of appropriate locally indigenous fauna
			Credit 5 Use indigenous turf grass species or hybrids thereof
			25-53
			<b>Water</b>
			Credit 6 Reduce water use for golf course irrigation by 25 percent
			Credit 7 Reduce water use for "out of play" irrigation by 80-100 percent
			Credit 8 Protect naturally occurring on-site riparian and or wetland systems
			Credit 9 Restore lost streams, wetlands and shorelines
			Credit 10 Manage stormwater runoff through attenuating, harvesting and storing on-site
			Credit 11 Protect and or improve on-site water quality
			Credit 12 Waste water generated on-site is used for irrigation
			31-47
			<b>Soil</b>
			Prereq Restore exposed disturbed soils
			Credit 13 Erosion control measures
			Credit 14 On-site composting
			Credit 15 Reduce and convert fertilizers to organics
			Credit 16 Limit and control usage of chemicals pesticides and herbicides
			12-26
			<b>General Resources</b>
			Prereq Plan for sustainable golf course maintenance
			Credit 17 Recycle organic matter generated during maintenance
			Credit 18 Reduce outdoor energy consumption for all course operations
			Credit 19 Use renewable sources for electricity
			Credit 20 Minimize generation of greenhouse gases and other forms of air pollution
			Credit 21 Reduce emissions and promote the use of fuel efficient vehicles
			11-21
			<b>Integration - Man and Nature</b>
			Credit 22 Integration of golf course and clubhouse with the "out of play" ecosystems
			Credit 23 Promote education and awareness among members of its environmental footprint
			Credit 24 Provide stimulating, healthy environment for mental, physical and social interaction
			6-14
			<b>Monitoring and Management</b>
			Prereq Integrated environmental management plan (EMP)
			Credit 25 Monitor performance of sustainable practices
			Credit 26 Implementation of EMP
			6-12
			<b>Location</b>
			Prereq Preserve sensitive on-site ecosystems
			Prereq Protection of threatened or endangered species
			Credit 27 Site selection - greyfields
			Credit 28 Site selection - brownfields
			25
			<b>Design and Planning</b>
			Credit 29 Conduct predesign site assessment and explore opportunities for site sustainability
			Credit 30 In terms of site topography, work with the natural lay of the land
			Credit 31 Use integrated site development process
			Credit 32 Incorporate the use of indigenous turf grass species or hybrids thereof
			20-34
			<b>Construction and Material Reuse/Selection</b>
			Prereq Control, restrict and retain construction pollutants
			Credit 33 Where possible maintain on-site structures
			Credit 34 Use recycled building waste materials
			Credit 35 Use regional materials
			Credit 36 Utilize material manufacturers applying sustainable practices
			Credit 37 Utilize nurseries applying ecologically sustainable practices
			Credit 38 Reuse or recycle vegetation, rocks, and soil generated during construction
			12-30

 Existing Golf Courses categories  
 New Golf Courses categories





# Tee-box TACTICS

Construction and maintenance of a course's teeing ground is often an overlooked area. Divisional director of Servest Turf (formerly known as Turftek) **Murray Veitch** offers a few pointers.

**Uneven, neglected tee-boxes** can send frustration levels soaring, and even the best fairways and greens won't make up for this disappointment and annoyance. Tee-boxes affect playability and contribute to course aesthetics, and they impact a golf course's overall ratings. Therefore, it makes sense to take extra care when constructing and maintaining teeing areas.

### TEE CONSTRUCTION

Tee construction affects tee maintenance. So if you're constructing a tee-box, make sure you do it properly to avoid maintenance hassles. The most critical requirement is evenness, and at Servest Turf we use high-tech laser levellers to make certain that levels are correct. You could even add edging around your tee-boxes to help you maintain their levels in the long run. Although tee-boxes have to be even, they should be built with slight slope of about one per cent to allow for adequate drainage. Using a soft medium such as silica sand as a top layer contributes to the latter. It also prevents compaction, thus enhancing playability.

When it comes to root zones, the USGA recommends choosing a 7:2:1 or 8:1:1 sand/organic matter/soil root zone. According to the USGA it provides a stable surface with good moisture and nutrient retention.

Teeing areas should also be aligned to the greens and their locations should be well considered. For example, a lack of sufficient sunlight will impact turf growth, causing maintenance headaches in the process.

Size is another key consideration. Too much tee traffic can wreak havoc on turf, especially when tees are undersized. Mowing becomes difficult too. Just think of women's tees. Neglected in the past, these tees are notoriously small. Due to lack of turning space, mowers often damage these tee-boxes. They therefore have to be adequately sized. Moreover, women's tees need to be built according to the other guidelines in this article.

The USGA recommends following this formula when deciding on a tee-box's size: for every 1 000 rounds of golf the tee receives each year: 100 square feet (30.48 square metres) should be provided. Remember that short holes require more tee space than the

longer holes because shots are mostly played with irons and they suffer more damage.

### TEE MAINTENANCE

Tee maintenance should include general horticultural practices such as fertilisation and irrigation, as well as sports turf-specific tasks like divot repair. It's crucial that divots are repaired correctly; they shouldn't be overfilled and a high-quality divot mix should always be used. Another tip: don't forget to move the tee markers regularly. If you leave them in the same spot, the area will get worn out.

Regular hollow-tining and decompaction should also be part of your tee-box maintenance regime. These practices, as well as scarification, top dressing and laser levelling, should be included in your spring treatment in August or September.

Over time, tee-boxes do lose their shape. Uneven, worn out or compacted tee-boxes may require some expert attention or an upgrade. So approach turf specialists, such as Servest Turf, for a tee assessment.

**Information supplied by Servest Turf. Visit [www.servestturf.co.za](http://www.servestturf.co.za) for more.**  
**USGA recommendations mentioned in this article have been included in *Guidelines for building great tees*, an article by James Francis Moore in *Green Section Record* May-June 2005.**

# THE CLUB PRO STEPPING UP TO THE PLATE

The July issue of *GCM* featured an article looking at the plight of club professionals. This elicited a strong reaction from certain quarters – one of the most articulate responses was from **Paul Marks**, director of golf at Woodhill Country Club, who is also vice-chairman of the PGA.

**When I did** my apprenticeship, it was under the one-and-only, legendary 'Germiston Giant' Phil Simmons. I spent, or rather survived, three and a half years learning from a mentor who was a top playing professional, top club-fitter, top businessman and all-round excellent club professional. I consider myself fortunate to have had the experience of learning from the best.

The methods may have been old school in those days, and the current crop of apprentices has to complete a far more advanced programme in order to qualify, but it is worth noting that we have a proud record of producing many excellent people in our organisation, many of whom have gone on to secure top jobs abroad as club profes-

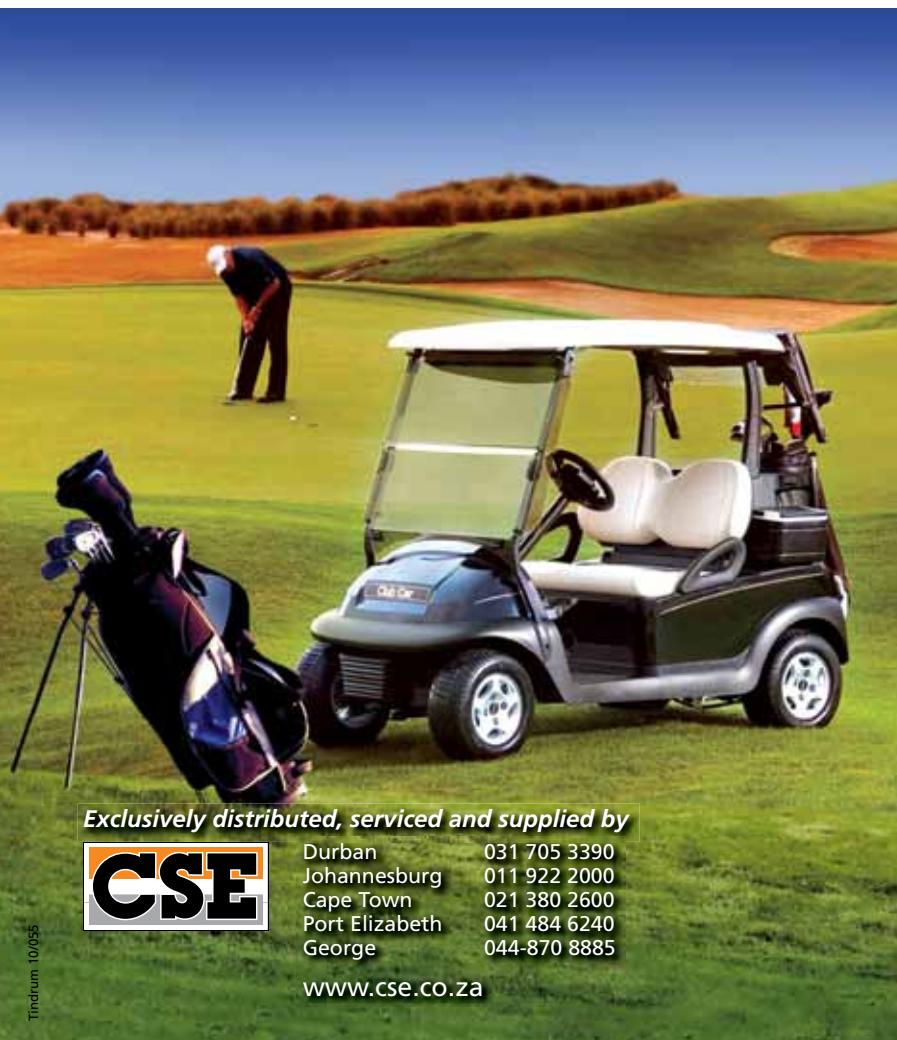
sionals, directors of golf and managers.

Of course the role of the club pro has changed, and clubs no longer see themselves as being non-profit organisations, but rather as business entities constantly striving to generate more revenue in order to improve the quality of the experience for their members and guests. Certainly club professionals have had to step up to the plate and become an integral part of these changes. In my case, this has meant a considerable investment in staff and merchandise, amounting to almost one million rand.

Spare a thought for the pro who, having made this investment with the accompanying risks, has to then bear the consequences of any number of disasters from

the loss of greens, fires, break-ins and other calamities that can result in a loss of income. Contracts have indeed become the norm, but it is not unusual for certain unsympathetic committees to move the goalposts. There have been cases of certain committees being determined to get rid of the club pro for no other reason than a personality clash.

Perhaps clubs should take a closer look at what exactly the function of the club professional is really worth – I am proud to be part of an organisation that has among its members a group of highly and multi-skilled individuals, who make no issue of the fact that they work long hours for often very little reward.



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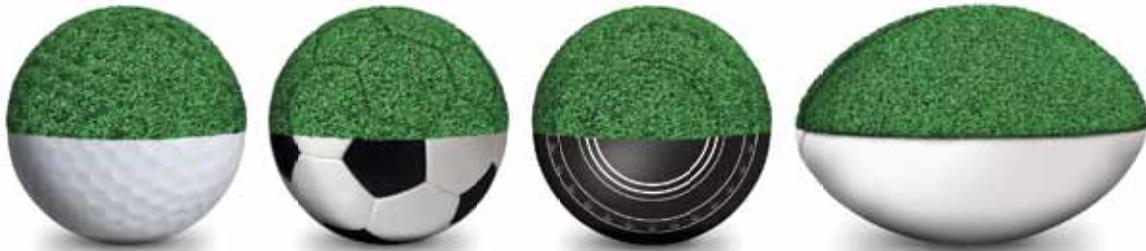
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