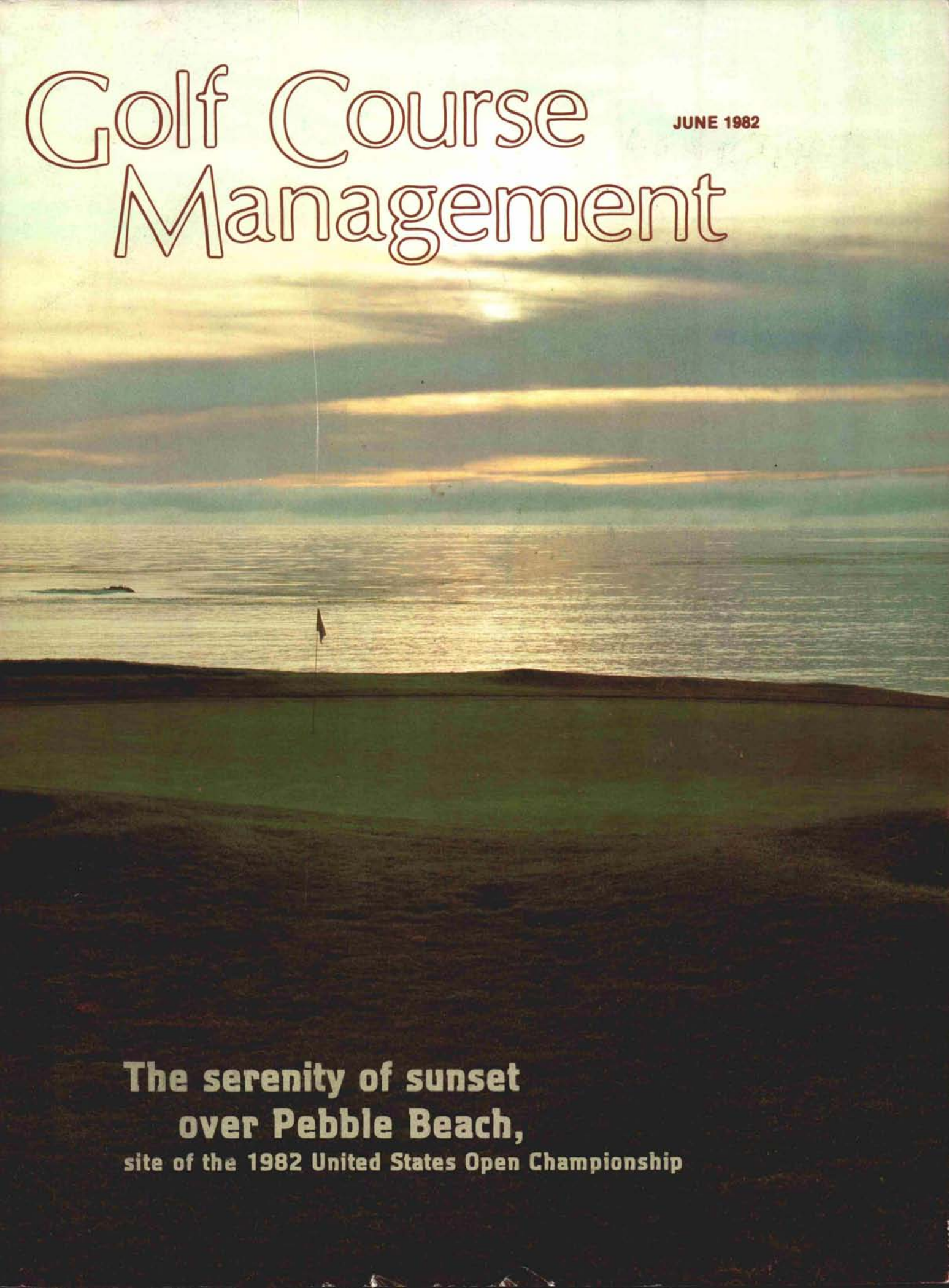


Golf Course Management

JUNE 1982



**The serenity of sunset
over Pebble Beach,
site of the 1982 United States Open Championship**

“ PEBBLE ”



Par 3, 218 yd. 17th at Pebble Beach, viewed from the back of the green.

READY AGAIN FOR A U.S. OPEN

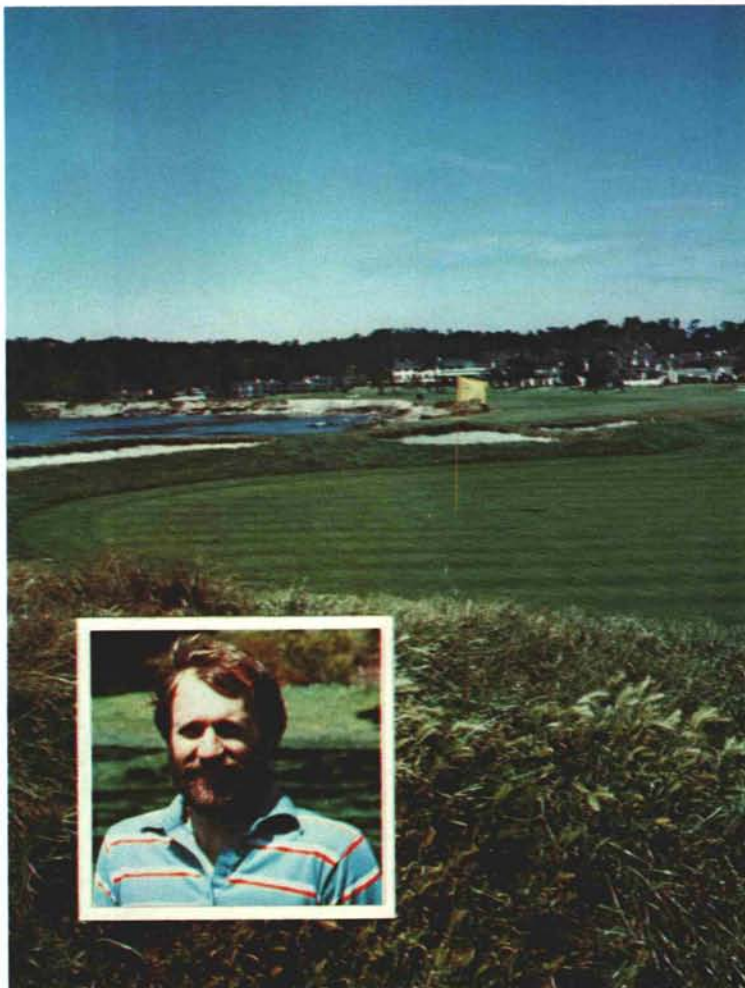
James G. Prusa, CGCS

As one drives south along the coast from San Francisco, the drama of nature is all about. With the blue Pacific as a right stage and the majestic Santa Cruz mountains towering on the left, you head down the dramatic coast highway looking forward to your destination with ever-increasing anticipation. It is an anticipation nurtured in every lover of golf since initial introduction to the game. You *know* you are about to enter a unique place on earth. A place where John Steinbeck wrote his famous “*Grapes of Wrath*,” told about in his renown “*Cannery Row*,” and where Bing Crosby ultimately brought his clambake and golf tournament. The area surrounds the beautiful Monterey Bay and the destination is Pebble Beach Golf Links, site of the 1982 U.S. Open Golf Championship.

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View from the left side of No. 17 green with No. 18 in the background. It was here that Jack Nicklaus survived gusty winds and squall conditions to score a 2 over par 74 and win the 1972 U.S. Open.

Inset: Mike Phillips, golf course superintendent at Pebble Beach.



Over the years, Pebble (as it is affectionately known in the world of golf) has become Mecca to golfers around the world, regardless of their handicaps or social position. Mike Phillips, golf course superintendent at Pebble Beach and a GCSAA member, has developed a great love for this renowned links and has strong feelings about his course being open to the public.

"It's such a great course, a challenging and legendary course, I don't want it to be made into an inaccessible shrine like the others," Phillips says. "There are so few courses of this world class caliber open to the general public. It's certainly not inexpensive to play, but every golfer can have access to it. As a golfer myself, I respect and appreciate that. I'd hate to go through life thinking that I could never have an opportunity to play Pebble Beach. It's comforting to know that you don't have to know a senator or sheik to play it and enjoy its unsurpassed setting."

Phillips is one of the younger breed of the professional golf course superintendents. He is a professional with sincere respect for the time-honored traditions and practices of his predecessors, and an aggressive practitioner of current technology, with an eye to the future.

Phillips entered the profession of golf course management well prepared. He obtained a Technical Certificate in Turfgrass Management from Cal Polytechnic Uni-

versity at San Luis Obispo after completing a Bachelor's Degree in Sociology with a Business Management minor. Phillips also has the unique distinction of being the first graduate to go through a prestigious professional training program. He was selected to serve as a professional intern at Pebble Beach after his college graduation. This intern program was jointly created and sponsored by the Golf Course Superintendents Association of North California and the North California Golf Association. Phillips served his two-year internship under the guidance of John Zoller, Executive Director of NCGA who was then Director of Golf at Pebble Beach.

Asked about the applicability of his business and sociology education to golf course management, Phillips responded, "You know, it was my dad who advised me to include a business minor. He wisely told me that I would always find value in business courses. The sociology training has especially come in handy. Dealing with people as a human resource takes a great deal of our effort as golf course managers. There is so much more to our profession than simply knowing how to grow grass."

Preparing golf courses for the U.S. Open has been a challenge to golf course superintendents since Horace Rawlins won the first Open at the Newport (R.I.) Golf Club in 1895. Preparation for this year's Open at Pebble has been no exception.

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Although Pebble Beach Golf Links is traditionally in championship condition at all times, Phillips has been completing a number of special projects in anticipation of the Open. He explains that one of the biggest problems has been soil compaction. Pebble receives so much play (over 50,000 rounds per year) that this condition is severely amplified. Over the past year, greens have been aerified five times, and tees three to four times. The fairways have basically been given the same treatment as tees, including applications of gypsum.

Phillips says that this past winter's record rainfall in California was a blessing in disguise even though some damage was inflicted on the course. "The rainfall has actually limited the play this winter, which allowed us to get some projects completed without disturbing the golfers. It also has leached out the salt build-up in the soil, especially along the 18th fairway, which receives quite a lot of ocean salt water spray."

Phillips points out that one of his biggest projects has been the renovation of the many bunkers at Pebble.

"Over the years, due to constant sand shots from heavy play, the lips of the bunkers became very steep and high. This was pointed out by USGA officials several years ago. After lengthy research, which included a collection of many old photographs of the course and individual holes, we began to restore the bunkers to their

original design and shape. Some of the deepened bunkers were left, if it was determined they improved the hole and allowed for fair execution of golf shots. Fescues have been seeded around the edges of bunkers and allowed to grow to full height. This has provided a "ruffy-tuffy" natural look to the bunkers and substantially reduces maintenance costs related to hand edging."

Another major challenge at Pebble Beach has been the war on kikuyugrass (*Penisetum clandestinum*).

"We've made major gains against the invasion of our fine turf areas by kikuyugrass. There's been probably seven or eight areas around the course that the kikuyu has aggressively invaded and interfered with play. We've gone after those areas annually for the past three years. Kikuyugrass was originally imported to Pebble from South Africa in 1936 as an erosion control grass for use along the back nine seawalls and cliffs. About the same time it was introduced to Riviera C.C. in Los Angeles to stabilize erosion in the barrancas which run through that course. Although they've learned to love kikuyu at Riviera, it's an obnoxious, undesirable species at Pebble Beach due to our wetter, cooler growing conditions.

"I remember we began our kikuyugrass eradication program several years ago out on the sixth fairway. It was about that time that the PGA agronomist arrived to

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"It may at first appear unreasonable that the question of aesthetics should enter into golf-course design; however, on deeper analysis, it becomes clear that the great courses, and in detail all the famous holes and greens, are fascinating to the golfer by reason of their shape, their situation and the character of their modelling."

Dr. Alister MacKenzie, circa 1920.

The first U.S. Open Championship was in 1895 with ten emigrant British professionals and one Canadian amateur. The original amount of prize money was \$335. Not only has the prize money increased over the years but also the number of participants and competition.

Professional or amateur golfers may enter the Open as long as their handicap does not exceed two strokes. A total of 150 players are eligible for the Championship proper.

The winner of the Open receives a gold medal, the Championship Cup for the year and a money prize, if he is a professional. The original cup was destroyed by fire in 1947 but an exact duplicate was reproduced by Spaulding & Company and was re-presented that year by USGA.

But the Open doesn't begin and end with the players. It begins with the architect who designed the course and the superintendent who manages the course.

The conception and construction must have the fundamental qualities of an Open course. The holes must be challenging without being intimidating. They have to require judgment as well as skill from the player and the holes must call for a wide variety of shots without overemphasis on any particular part of the game.

The course is designed to penalize the player if poorly played. If properly played, the course will yield to the player. Thoughtful strategy as well as skilled execution are the requirements for an Open victory. The course must have a balanced challenge throughout to provide a fair test of the players' skills.

The purpose of the Open is to identify a U.S. Open Champion as a golfer of real distinction.

And Pebble Beach is where it will happen this year, for the second time in the history of this great golf course.

"PEBBLE"

from p. 37

survey the course for an upcoming Crosby. He almost fell off his Cushman when he passed the fifth green and turned to view the recently sprayed sixth fairway — it was as brown as a coffee berry. The poor fellow had never seen several acres of dead turf and I thought I'd have to give him CPR. After we explained to him what we were doing he was totally supportive.

"The kikuyugrass control program I initiated is fairly simple in scope and is based upon previous University of California research efforts. We simply spray the infested areas with an application of glyphosate, follow up a few days later with an application of siduron and then overseed the affected areas with a balanced mixture of Kentucky bluegrass and perennial ryegrass. I've noticed that the growth of the bluegrass and ryegrass seems to increase the efficacy of the siduron treatment as far as inhibiting kikuyu seedling germination. The program is not 100 percent effective, but it's at least 95 percent, and the best we can offer with current technology."

Phillips adds: "We're probably the only golf course in the world with permanent television facilities and hook-ups on nearly every hole. Everyone on the Pebble Beach staff is getting excited by 'Open Fever' and some of the innovative techniques ABC will be applying to their televised broadcast. We've met several times with ABC and reviewed their plans for setting up tents, towers and mobile units around the links. I understand that they're considering floating a camera and crew out in Carmel Bay in order to provide special coverage of four, six, eight and nine holes, and additional coverage of seventeen and eighteen.

"I think that the usual, weekly television coverage of golf events needs this type of innovative broadcasting. For a great many years we, the television audience, have seen the same angles, actions, golf courses and holes, and heard the same kind of interviews. I'd love to see a different, in-depth and personal interview on some of the behind the scenes activities. Short histories on the game, on the courses played and on the supportive people in this great game. What it really takes to prepare and maintain a course for a major championship.

"For example, they could do a very interesting short on the intense work and expense that goes into preparing the course, at 4 a.m., for a televised round hours later in the day. It would be a new twist and could fit nicely into the televised tournament preview. The viewing public are hungry for *all* kinds of information about sports. I think this was evident from the strong interest shown by the public and media concerning the conditions of Candlestick Park turf during the San Francisco 49'ers' rise to the championship. Everybody and their uncle wanted to know what was going on with that field and how it was being accomplished. Arnie, Jack and all the other great players do a fabulous job of catching and holding an audience, but the poor guys can't be expected to dramat-

Continued

"PEBBLE"

from p. 39

ically capture the attention of the human mind for 100 percent of the time.

"Pebble will be in Open championship conditions to the Nth degree. We've worked very long and closely with the USGA to ascertain a perfected test of golf. The guidance of the USGA staff has been dedicated and professional. They're an inspiring group to work with. Pebble Beach is always a challenge, and during the Open, the rough will be tough, the fairways tight, and our greens fast and true. We'll be double cutting the greens at nearly $\frac{1}{8}$ inch in height, much as we do for the Crosby.

game, Frank "Sandy" Tatum Jr. Tatum, a former USGA President and a highly skilled and devoted practitioner of golf, is fond of relaying the following message about the United States Open preparation and playing conditions:

"The most prevalent and serious misconception, is that Open courses are selected and 'tricked up' to confound the best players in the world. Such nonsense is accepted by an extraordinary number of people who ought to know better. Implicit in such acceptance is the assumption that a large number of very busy and active people would devote countless hours, substantial experience, significant resources, and a good deal of intelligence to the demeaning purpose of subjecting the

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Our objective is to obtain a green speed reading of over 10 on the USGA Stimpmeter. It will truly be an examination of championship skill."

Pebble Beach Golf Links has been called the most picturesque of all Open sites, a magnificent golf course tuned to a finely manicured masterpiece. Mike Phillips' preparation of Pebble Beach for the Open can best be described by paraphrasing a renowned statesman of the

world's premier players to four days of misery and humiliation."

Tatum adds, "The fact is that confounding the best players in the world plays no part in the planning and preparation for the U.S. Open. *The singular purpose simply is to determine who the 'best' are.*"

And that just happens to coincide with, and describes the objectives of, Mike Phillips' superb efforts. ■

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A record 5,255 entries have been received for this year's U.S. Open at Pebble Beach, according to P. J. Boatright, of the USGA. This is a far cry from the first Open at the Newport Golf Club in Rhode Island, which drew only 11 contestants. When Francis Ouimet stunned the golfing world with his playoff victory over English professionals Harry Vardon and Ted Ray at The Country Club in Brookline, Mass., in 1913, entries had grown to a mere 165.

Since that time, Open entries have grown steadily, passing the one, two, three and four thousand barriers along the way. Ten years ago, when the U.S. Open was at Pebble Beach, there were 4,196 entries. Last year's Open at Merion had 4,946 entrants. This is the first year that entries have crossed the 5,000 mark.

Players this year include David Graham, the defending Champion; and former U.S. Open Champions Arnold Palmer, Jack Nicklaus, Gary Player, Lee Trevino, Johnny Miller, Hale Irwin, Jerry Pate, Hubert Green, Andy North, and current U.S. Amateur Champion Nathaniel Crosby.