



Dave Blasiman, assistant superintendent at Frenchmans Creek Yacht & Country Club, demonstrates the use of this solar-powered, multiple-use emergency/halfway house call box system.

the eighth and 17th holes of both the North and South Courses have an additional button to provide communication to the halfway house to allow for a quick snack at the turn.

As pointed out by Mr. Dave Blasiman, assistant superintendent at Frenchmans Creek, each box is numbered for identification purposes. However, similar to the previous system, each box is automatically identified at the central receiving station when the door to the unit is opened.

This particular equipment, manufactured by GTE (813-273-3000), is in fact a solar-powered cellular phone system. Each call box unit is fully self-contained and, due to solar power, requires no electrical tie-in to an outside source. Therefore, these units can be placed virtually anywhere on the golf course where sunlight is not obscured. Each unit also contains an enclosed battery pack that maintains a full charge from the solar collectors to provide supplemental power during extended periods of low sunlight exposure.

To ensure consistent operation, each unit at Frenchmans Creek sends out a status report once per week to verify proper operation and battery levels. Should a battery become weak, a default system kicks in to notify the central unit of the situation. According to the installer of this system, only one battery pack has had to be replaced in the 18 units since installation of the system in the fall of 1992.

The whole concept of this type of wireless emergency communication system is tremendous and the versatility is unlimited. For example, the possibility of utilizing this equipment to interface with early warning lightning detection systems also exists. The ability to add horns or sirens on call box stations in strategic areas throughout the course to provide warning of dangerous weather conditions can further add to the safety of golfers.

As the popularity of golf continues to increase, the number of hours people spend on the course in pursuit of this pastime will also increase. Without question, the primary consideration of any successful golf course operation should be to provide the best possible emergency communication network to assist in providing optimum safety on the golf course. Although the expense of these golf course "extras" can be significant, what dollar value can be placed on the health and safety of the golfers who use the course?

Considering the dependability of this emergency communication, there should be no more excuses. Installation is easy and painless, and operation of the equipment is simple. Swing smoothly, rest easy, and go wireless.

Armchair Architect

by **PATRICK J. GROSS**

Agronomist, Western Region, USGA Green Section

KEEPING the golf course open for play during an extensive renovation project can be a difficult and challenging experience. Bill Martin, CGCS, of the Victoria Golf Club in Riverside, California, was faced with such a challenge when his proposal to renovate the fairways and plant hybrid bermudagrass was accepted by the membership. The only condition was that the board of directors demanded that the course be kept open for play during the entire renovation process.

The solution was to renovate nine fairways at a time and design an 18-hole course using the remaining nine holes. This is how this innovative idea was put into action.

Members would play two nine-hole rounds from different tees to different holes on the greens. White tee markers and flags were used for the first nine, and blue tee markers and flags for the second nine. The forward tees were designed using red markers and red stones. The different tee locations provided a different yardage each time the

hole was played and generally required different club selections. By using alternate tee locations, it was also possible to change the angle of approach to some greens. For example, hole No. 3 played as a dogleg right from the regular tees. On the second nine, this same hole played as a dogleg left by using the championship tee from an adjoining hole.

Placing two holes in each green made it possible to provide different putting characteristics each time the hole was played. The

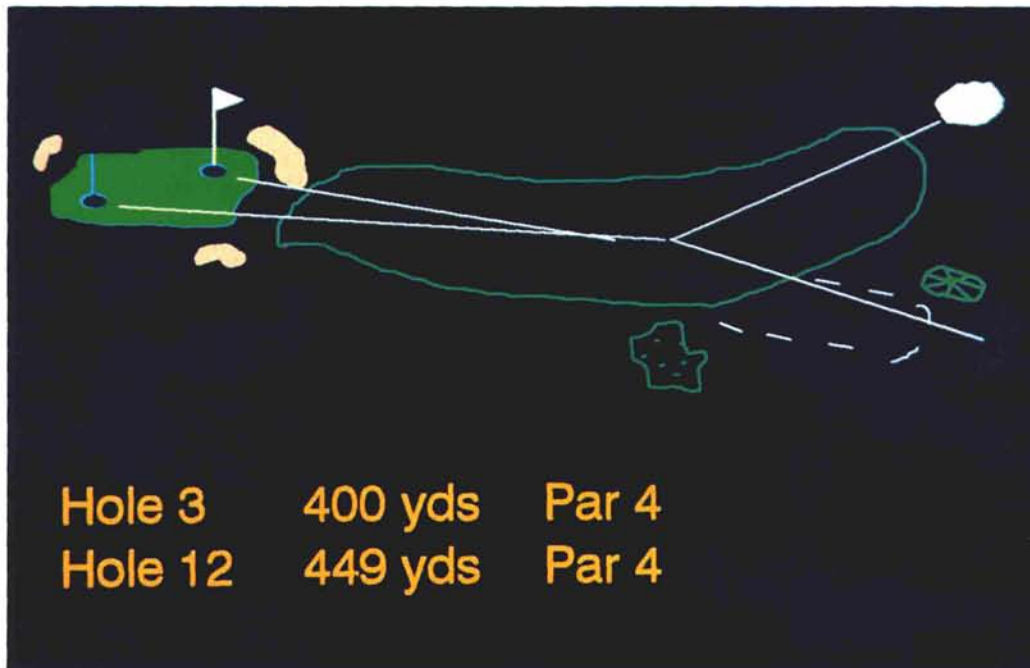


mowing height on the *Poa annua*/creeping bentgrass greens was raised to $\frac{3}{16}$ " to handle the extra volume of play. This also slightly decreased putting green speed and made it possible to reclaim previously unusable hole locations.

There are some practical considerations that must be addressed if you wish to implement this plan at your course. The first priority is to insure safety. Don't create a shooting gallery with crossing fairways or other dangerous features. Also, players should be instructed that only one group at a time is allowed to play each designed hole. Next, provisions must be made to alternate groups for those making the turn after nine holes. No problems were reported with this system at the Victoria Club; however, it may be necessary to increase the tee time intervals at busier courses. This will help to avoid a traffic jam on the first tee.

Two additional benefits of this plan were that it required minimal cost and the course was able to maintain its course rating.

Overall, the fairway renovation project was a tremendous success. The entire course was back in play within 12 weeks, and plans are in place to complete the remaining nine holes in 1994. If you are faced with a big renovation project in the future and you have to keep the course in play, you may want to get creative and try your hand at being an "armchair architect."



(Top) Raising the height of cut on the greens provides improved turf resiliency and makes it possible to recapture previously unusable hole locations.

(Above) An 18-hole course can be created by playing two nine-hole rounds from different tee locations to different hole placements.