

WORLD CUP GRASS FIELD TESTS SUCCESSFUL IN SILVERDOME

The initial phase of fine tuning the grass that will become the playing field for the games of the 1994 World Cup at the Pontiac Silverdome in Pontiac, MI, is complete. The successful seven-week trial ended August 3. The Silverdome games will be the first indoor matches in the history of the World Cup—the largest single sporting event in the world.

Scientists from Michigan State University conducted several experiments in the Silverdome over the seven-week period. Various types of grass were tested under conditions, ranging from daily Silverdome conditions without light enhancement, to substantial light enhancement. Although the turf will need to be maintained for only four weeks in 1994, the additional time used allowed the MSU experts to further their experimental process. In addition, research was conducted involving several types of growth regulators that may be used with the final product.

"The initial Silverdome testing was conducted in conditions worse than

will be present for the games in 1994," says Dr. John Rogers, assistant professor, crop and soil science, MSU. "We are very confident with the results. Failure is the most successful portion of any research. We intended to have grass fail in the Silverdome. Provisional use of special lighting was interrupted for one week during the recent *Guns and Roses* rock concert at the Silverdome. There is no question that grass will stand the test of play. We will now move our experiments to a new facility at MSU and continue to work with many combinations of grass, soil, and lighting to ensure that the final product is world class."

In addition to the MSU soil experts, Phil Szostak, vice president and director of sports facility architecture, NBBJ North Carolina, Inc., has been retained by World Cup USA 1994, Inc., to assist in the overall grass process.

"The initial phase of turf experiments conducted within the Silverdome was successful," says Szostak. "We set out to subject various types of turf and soil combinations to various con-

ditions with and without the supplemental lighting that will be used in 1994. The test grass was in the stadium for seven weeks as opposed to the four weeks necessary in 1994.

"We will continue to test a wide range of turf and soil combinations at Michigan State in the future. The grass products that have been tested in the Silverdome represent phase one of the final product."

In addition to four first round World Cup 1994 games, the Silverdome expects to host at least one match of the 1994 U.S. Cup in which the U.S. World Cup team will face major international competition. The U.S. Cup game(s) will be played on grass in the Silverdome and serve as a dress rehearsal for the 1994 World Cup games.

"The MSU and NBBJ experts assure us that the only question regarding the grass is what type of soil, turf, and lighting combination will ultimately be placed inside the Silverdome," says Roger Faulkner, Detroit host committee president.

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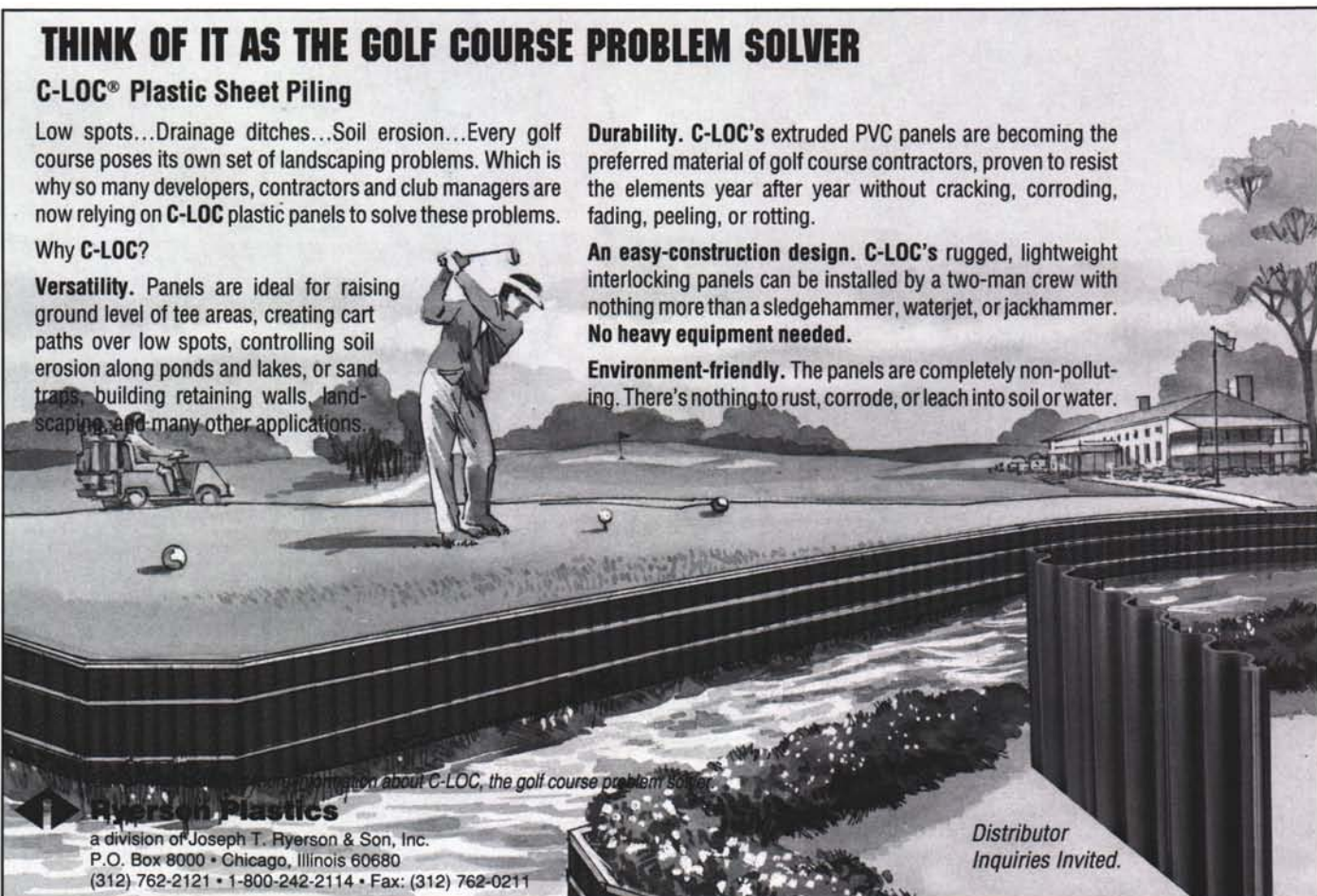
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