

INDY CARS, NASCARS, AND PINK SLIPS

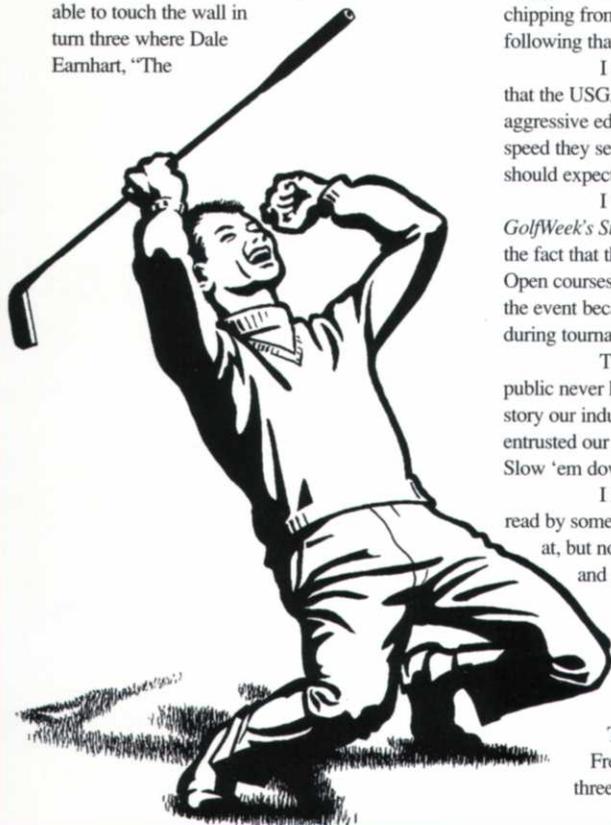
Speed Kills!

By Jim Walker



When I was a young lad of about 10, I watched a movie about the Indianapolis Speedway and the Big Race held there each year. It starred William Bendix who played the part of "Burn 'em Up" Barnes. Needless to say, old "Burn 'em Up" slammed into the wall and expired amid the wreckage and twisted metal near turn two... or three... or one of those turns. Funny how that movie stayed with me all these years, but it has. The moral of the story, obviously, was "speed kills."

Last April, my wife and I had the opportunity to get up close and personal with Daytona International Speedway, thanks to her ex-husband, with whom she has remained cordial. Bruce is an architect working for the France Company which owns the Daytona Track and several others across the country. He took us on quite a tour of the facility, but the most compelling part of the excursion was almost being able to touch the wall in turn three where Dale Earnhart, "The



Intimidator," had bought it just a couple of months before. Moral of the story: "Speed kills."

In case you were wondering what the hell a bunch of people going around in circles at 180 miles per hour has to do with turf, it is that speed kills.

I have seen too many good superintendents lose jobs because their greens took a dump as they tried to maintain them at speeds of 10, 11, or 12 on the stimp meter. This quest to have the fastest greens in town is taking a toll, and it seems to me that it is all so needless.

Now don't get me wrong, I'm not someone who putts badly on fast greens and has a personal axe to grind. As a matter of fact, the faster they are, the better I like it. This fact can be verified by any number of people whose socks I've knocked the dust out of. Putting on fast greens brings out the Jerry McGuire in me.

But enough is too much already! A stimp 8.0 to 9.0 is plenty fast enough and leaves the plant sufficient leaf tissue to accommodate photosynthesis. Furthermore, there doesn't seem to be a loss of root mass at these speeds. With products like Primo, around 8.0 on well-shaped greens is more than what 90 percent of golfers can handle. I know it's one of the main reasons play has slowed down. The greens are too fast and all these pork chops are chipping from one side of the green to the other and following that up with three- or four-putts.

I think the time has long since passed that the USGA and particularly the GCSAA began aggressive education to the masses that the green speed they see on TV every week is not what they should expect from at their clubs on a regular basis.

I wish I had kept the article in *GolfWeek's Superintendent News*, which alluded to the fact that the greens on three of the last four US Open courses had to be replanted immediately after the event because they had gotten so stressed out during tournament week.

That's the part of the story the golfing public never hears. "Speed Kills" is the part of the story our industry, and the people to whom we have entrusted our profession need to begin preaching. Slow 'em down!

I know that this commentary will be read by some folks at big-time clubs and be laughed at, but not everyone has a million-dollar budget and a staff of 20 or more for each 18 holes.

I have known Fred Klauk since his days at Eagle Trace, and his TPC course was one of the courses that my wife and I played last April. That was just a short time after the Tournament Players Championship. Fred is for sure one of the best two or three superintendents I have known in my

30-plus years in the business.

When we played the first par three on the front side, there was one of his trusted and knowledgeable staff members working diligently, sodding bare spots! His comment to me as we commiserated on his task was, "You can't mow 'em at .110 and expect them to grow, can you?"

No, especially not in Jacksonville at that time of year.

Come on USGA! Come on GCSAA! Get on board and come on in for the victory lap, or else we'll have you standing tall before the man.

Start telling the masses: "Speed Kills!"

P.S. That day at Fred's magnificent facility, I knocked it in on No. 17, shot 82 and didn't three-putt a green.

TURF=ENVIRONMENT

If You Really Want to Understand How the Activists Think... Join 'em

By Phil Busey, Ph.D.



Phil Busey, associate professor of turfgrass science at the University of Florida's Fort Lauderdale REC, operates "Turfgrass Management," a web site, online discussion forum and an irregular but frequent email newsletter. The following excerpts indicate that not all voices in the discussion of turfgrass and the environment are either shrill or confrontational.

Walk the Talk

If turfgrass is to survive in the urban age, we must talk the talk, *and* walk the walk, of environmental stewardship. If you as a turfgrass manager are not a member of the Sierra Club, or the Audubon Society, or the Nature Conservancy, you should seriously consider protecting your livelihood as well as doing what good you can do as a citizen, and join one of these or other responsible organizations. If for no other reason, you'll meet some interesting people.

That said, we must be careful to be accurate and not exaggerate the safety of pesticides, nor to exaggerate their potential harm. This came up at a recent meeting in which there was a comment made speculating about possible complaints by neighbors (which have never occurred) regarding pesticide use.

This kind of speculation is harmful

2002 FLORIDA GREEN PHOTO CONTEST • CATEGORY 3



1st Place - Native wildflowers, by Lyne Page, The Habitat @ Valkaria



2nd Place - Native plantings replace exotic invaders, by Tom Trammel, Hawks Nest G.C.

Native Plants: includes beds of native plants, aquatic plants, natural areas and wildflowers.

Easy Rules

1. Submissions for judging must be a color or black and white photograph or a slide. No computer print outs of digital photos will be accepted. Only one entry per category. Don't make us choose.
2. Photo must be taken on an FGCSA member's course and taken by the member or a member of his/her staff.
3. Attach a label to the back of the photograph

4. A caption identifying the category, course and photographer should be typed or printed on the paper below the photograph.
5. Judging will be done by a panel of FGCSA members not participating in the contest. Mail entries in a bend-proof package/mailer to Joel Jackson, 6780 Tamarind Circle, Orlando, FL 32819

Prizes

1. First Place (\$100). Second Place \$50 in each Category

2. Editor's Choice - Best Overall Photo - \$100
3. All winning entries will be published in the Florida Green.

Categories

- Category 1 - Wildlife on the Course: mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and insects.
- Category 2 - Formal Landscape: annual beds, shrubs, trees, entrance and tee sign beds and any other formal plantings.
- Category 3 - Native Landscape: native plant beds, aquatic vegetation plantings, natural areas and any other use of native plants on the course.
- Category 4 - Scenic Hole: sunrises, sunsets, frosts, storms or any other interesting view of a golf hole.

because of the work that the GCSAA, the FGCSA, the FTGA, the TPI, and others have done to educate their members on safe pesticide use, and to educate the public on the benefit of turf to the environment. It cuts deeply because pesticides are greatly misunderstood and distrusted by the general public. Idle and erroneous speculation about possible future complaints from neighbors can only feed the flames

of misunderstanding.

Most seasoned environmentalists I know have focused their efforts on broader issues such habitat loss, noxious exotic weeds, and energy policy. In contrast, pesticides are one of the few environmental issues that are under strict regulatory oversight. With few exceptions, the kinds of pesticides that are used, and the low rates at which they

are used, make the biggest problem one of actually finding them in the environment. But careless comments about pesticides get attention.

-Turfgrass Management, Vol. 4, No. 7
I had an enjoyable and stimulating exchange of views regarding my suggestion that turf managers run out and join the nearest environmental club. The comment was that doing so might be like

"joining the enemy." We came to the conclusion that different strategies may work in different situations.

In my 10 years as a member of the Broward Sierra Club, I have never met someone with whom I could not intelligently discuss turfgrass and pesticides. That may not be true everywhere, but I think it would be more true with local organizations than national ones.

We even have one Sierra Club member who advertises his pest control services in the monthly newsletter; the company name "Kilzum Bob Pest Control" says it all, followed by "Environmental Solutions."

When my colleagues and I were working with Peg McPherson of the South Florida Water Management District to develop BMPs for landscape and turf, we got to the 11th hour and realized we didn't have an environmental representative. Because of my personal friendship and membership in the club, it was easy to get the local conservation chair to a BMP meeting, sitting across the table from reps of TruGreen/ChemLawn, LESCO, and pest control organizations.

The Sierra Club representative's departing comment was, "I didn't know there was so much involved in taking care of turfgrass."

And with that we got the endorsement of the Sierra Club.

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Spray Drift Labeling

The EPA's extended comment period on

proposed new spray drift labeling guidelines ("Draft Guidance for Pesticide Registrants on New Labeling Statements for Spray and Dust Drift Mitigation") closed March 31.

While most of the proposals will not affect urban turf applications, sod producers could be affected.

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A chemical product representative in the southeastern US explained how much work was required to get the spray drift labeling guidelines to make sense. The initial draft would have permitted zero drift, even where no harm or hurt would have occurred. It would have also been impossible for the EPA to enforce.

Fortunately, there were available government and university studies on the subject of drift, which industry representatives presented to the EPA.

The chemical product representative in Florida mentioned to me, "Where a small amount of drift will potentially do harm, there should be none." But with reason and common sense on both sides of the problem, they were able to convince the EPA to develop real-world guidelines that will be good for the environment, and not create a cure worse than the problem.

So, in this complex world, there are trade groups who are helping you keep your greens green.

-Turfgrass Management, Vol.4, No. 8

Wanted: Partners for the Future

MARK MY WORDS



By Mark Jarrell,
CGCS

The long-awaited presentation to potential industry supporters of the Pine Acres project took place at the Orange County Convention Center Feb. 9 during the GCSAA's annual conference and show. Representatives from John Deere, Toro, Textron, Rain Bird, Wadsworth Construction, Harrell's, Howard Fertilizer and Chemical Co., Golf Ventures and

many others were in attendance.

For those who don't know, Pine Acres is the name of the more than 1,000-acre plot 20 minutes south of Gainesville that is to become the centerpiece and focal point of all of



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