Davis awarded '98 Leo Feser

Darren Davis, superintendent at Olde Florida Golf Club in Naples, Fla., will be presented with the 1998 Leo Feser Award on Feb. 4 at the Opening Session of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America's (GCSAA) 69th International Golf Course Conference and Show in Anaheim, Calif.

The annual GCSAA award honors the most outstanding superintendent-authored article, published in the association's monthly magazine, Golf Course Management (GCM). The winner's name is engraved on a plaque for display at GCSAA headquarters in Lawrence, Kan.

GCSAA's Publications Committee selected Davis' article, titled "Sowing the Seeds of Knowledge," which was published in the December 1996 issue of GCM. The piece provided methods by which superintendents can teach school children about environmental principles.

"I have made an attempt to educate as many people as I can on the benefits that a golf course provides," Davis said. "It's a subject I feel strongly about, and have consequently given many school tours at Olde Florida and have gone to many classrooms to give slide presentations. One of my goals was to help fellow superintendents understand the value of this task."

A GCSAA member for eight years and a graduate of the Penn State's turfgrass management program, Davis has been at Olde Florida since 1992. He has also served as an apprentice superintendent at Augusta National and assistant superintendent at The Loxahatchee Club in Jupiter, Fla.

The award honors Leo Feser, a pioneer golf course superintendent and a charter member of GCSAA. Feser is credited with keeping the association's official publication alive during the Great Depression. For three years, he wrote, edited, assembled and published each issue of the magazine from his home in Wayzata, Minn.

MacCurrach honored with scholarship fund

Allan MacCurrach, senior agronomist for the PGA Tour until his death at age 57 on Jan. 14, 1997, will be honored through the annual Allan MacCurrach Memorial Scholarship, announced by the PGA Tour and the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA).

The MacCurrach Memorial Scholarship, consisting of two $2,500 awards, will be given each year to the second- and third-ranking scholars in the annual GCSAA Scholars Competition. The top scholar is named winner of the Mendenhall Award, given in memory of the late Chet Mendenhall, who served as GCSAA President in 1948 and was a charter member of the association.

The GCSAA Scholars Competition, administered by the PGA Tour and the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA), is open to students in the fields of agronomy and related sciences who are pursuing a degree in turfgrass science and management. The competition is administered by the GCSAA's Publications Committee.

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No architect would disagree with me when I say that a great builder can make your work look outstandingly good, and a poor contractor can butcher the greatest design in the world. Some builders have taken bad golf course plans and made enough field adjustments to fashion a good golf course. It is not so easy to have the designer get all the credit. These are good times for golf course builders, for many courses are being built. However, not so long ago when the country was facing high inflation, the interest rates and rising wages made it difficult to make a profit, or even stay in business. This affected every golfer who appreciates a fine golf course. Each time we lost one of these artisans, the evolution of course design was set back for we lost the subtleties of interpretation so necessary to produce a great golf course.

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struggle to justify expenditure on golf course construction.

Once more, the perceived image of golf is causing problems. "Golf has the wrong image, it is seen as being exclusive, elitist and discriminatory. If we are to provide for a wider base of golfers we must overcome this," said the BIGGA spokesperson.

Another way forward is for existing private clubs to open its doors to the general public on a pay as you play basis with no discrimination against non-members.

Prime Minister Tony Blair made clear before the general election in May that he wanted the Lottery Funds to be run in the spirit of public good.

If golf is able to evolve into a truly "people's game" then convergence with the Lottery Funds would be all the more likely. At the moment, however, an awful lot of people are not able to play golf at all and the funds are not forthcoming to allow them to do so.

An analogy would be if a gifted composer wrote an imaginative and inspired piece of music, but if the only musicians around to play it were a street corner band, you can imagine the result. This is humorous perhaps, but the same results might be expected if you gave a terrific golf course plan to a road builder.

Thank goodness our country's economy has improved and golf course construction has built up to a high rate. Now the problem is finding contractors or train crews in the subtleties of course construction. Provided the industry is successful, which it seems to be, the best golf courses ever are yet to come. Better designs and better construction, supported by better maintenance, guarantee great golf.

Now, I am not so naive as to think that human nature will change and we will acknowledge all of our unsung heroes. But next time you are impressed by a great golf course, don’t just think of the designer. Remember the golf course builder.

MacCurrah honored
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GCSAA Foundation, is open to undergraduate turf students. Each applicant is encouraged to submit a career preparation and potential to make an outstanding professional contribution. Applications are distributed in December and January to all colleges and universities that offer turfgrass management. Applications are also available on the GCSAA Web site (www.gcsaa.org). The application deadline is June 1, with the judging process to be completed by July 15.

MacCurrah became his career as golf course superintendent at Valley Country Club in Warwick, R.I., in 1962. In 1972, he became the 45th person to receive the title of Certified Golf Course Superintendent from the GCSAA. MacCurrah became the PGA Tour’s first agronomist in 1974, then was named senior agronomist in 1988. In 1994, he received the GCSAA’s Distinguished Service Award.

“Allen’s contributions to the PGA Tour specifically, and the turfgrass world in general, are immeasurable,” said PGA Tour Commissioner Tim Finchem. “As senior agronomist, he played a leading role in establishing the standard of excellence for course conditioning at Tour events. The scholarship is an appropriate means by which his dedication to the PGA Tour and the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America.”

Mastroleo wins Distinguished Service
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manage Fox Hills Golf Course in 1959. Eleven years later, he became superintendent at Hillcrest Country Club, where he has been for nearly 30 years.

“Dave Mastroleo is the epitome of what golf course superintendents are all about,” said Bruce R. Williams, certified golf course superintendent at Los Angeles Country Club and GCSAA immediate past president. “He has spent a long career giving and sharing while asking for nothing in return. Dave is a shining example of the spirit of volunteerism, with over 40 years of contributing his time and talents to various GCSAA chapters and allied turfgrass organizations.

Mastroleo has been a GCSAA member since 1954, and is a member and past director and president of both the California Golf Course Superintendents Association (GCSAA) and the GCSA of Southern California. He is also past president of the California Turfgrass Council.

“As a mentor, Dave has a long list of successful superintendents who benefitted from this tutelage. The respect that those former trainees have for Dave is immeasurable, and many of them pinpoint Dave Mastroleo as the primary factor for their success,” Williams said.

Fream: Golf in Asia
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Golf in Asia will be even more important. Cost factors, politics and environmental issues will prevent Japan from ever again building vast majority of present and future players. It must be recognized that Asia is diverse in many ways. The effects of the current economic turmoil will impact each country differently while the timing of the impact, the duration of the downturn, as well as the severity, will vary and may rotate. The emergence from adjustment and correction actions will surely vary. Politics and strength of conviction on the part of the various national leaders will have direct bearing on the timing and rate of recovery.

The ongoing dip in golf play and golf development activity will be viewed in the new millennium as but a pothole in an otherwise profitable and expanding industry. There will be more that 60 million golfers around the world by 2001. That is a major market to target.