Superintendent salaries now averaging over $57,000

By JAY FINEGAN

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — The average base salary for golf course superintendents rose this year to $57,057, according to a survey by the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSSA).

Half of all superintendents earn more than $50,000 a year, 25 percent make more than $68,000, and 10 percent pull down more than $88,000. The salaries represent a seven percent increase from the average base salaries in 1998, or an annualized average increase of 3.6 percent.

For assistant superintendents, the average base salary rose to $29,638, up from $27,981 in 1998, a 6 percent jump. Some 77 percent of assistants are salaried employees; the remainder are paid hourly. The 2000 "employment profile" by GCSSA also shows an average age of 41 for all superintendents, while the median experience level is 11 years, up from 10 in 1998. The data show that, on average, superintendents take their first position as head super at age 30, with 15 percent of them still in the profession at age 50.

In education, the profile showed that nearly 80 percent of all superintendents hold a minimum of a two-year certificate, an associate's or bachelor's degree, or a graduate degree.

The results of the survey, based on 3,527 responses, show a modest rise in the number of golf facilities run by professional management companies—14 percent this year, versus 13 percent in 1998. Much of the increase, the report said, appears to have come from an increase in the numbers of relatively small management outfits.

Other findings from the study include these:

• The median budget managed by superintendents is more than $550,000, including maintenance, capital equipment and payroll. Median crew size checked in at 17.

• As in 1998, less than a third of superintendents indicated a desire to become a general manager (GM). Superintendents most often report to GMs (29 percent), the survey found, followed by green committee/board of directors (19 percent) and directly to course owners (18 percent).

• Nearly 75 percent of survey respondents worked at 18-hole courses, with 41 percent of them private, 38 percent daily-fee and 12 percent municipal.

Gray leaf spot forces mass regrassing at Philadelphia CC

By JOEL JOYNER


On certain golf courses in the region, turf damage amounted to as much as 90 percent. At the private Philadelphia Country Club, opened in 1930, head superintendent Michael McNulty knows quite well the constant struggle to maintain ryegrass fairways against gray leaf spot.

The club installed ryegrass on its fairways in 1982, and McNulty first noticed gray leaf spot in 1994. "We've been successful using Heritage and Dacoull," McNulty said about the fungicides used to control the problem. But now, ryegrass vulnerability to gray leaf spot has prompted a more financially prudent approach.

As one of the last remaining courses in the Philadelphia region to offer ryegrass fairways, this year will mark the beginning of the club's conversion to bentgrass. The 27-hole layout will regrass nine holes at a time, hoping to complete the first nine by early next spring. For the initial phase, McNulty killed off the rye by gassing it with methyl bromide and Basamid on the fairways and tees.

"It's on the market, only I'm using it for a different purpose," Viera said. "We are using this on our tall fescue, but it could be applicable for any grass."

"Most people use FlyMos on their bunker edges," he added. "They work, but scraping the bunkers and grinding the edges down to dirt is a common problem. This alleviates that problem."

After wet summer in N.E., supers still battling moss

By JOEL JOYNER

FALMOUTH, Maine — Head superintendent Scott Cybulski at the Falmouth Country Club has been fighting moss growth for a number of years, but this year it has presented "a drastic problem" in Maine.

"The combination of constant wet weather and golfers wanting us to shave the greens down resulted in a lot of high undulated areas going to moss," Cybulski said. "Aggressive aeration and heavy top dressing have suppressed the problem for now, but the weather and level of play restricted our opportunities to top dress earlier this year, which allowed the moss problem to develop.

Cybulski has controlled the moss with a heavy top dressing of an "iron sulfate and straight-up sand" mixture. Metallic-based fungicides have been the traditional method for moss control, but better sense prevailed in eliminating the spraying of mercury, zinc, and even lead (back in the 50s and 60s)."

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