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Career management: feature

Taking the NEXT STEP

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Turfgrass research: Q&A feature

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Course management: feature

58  FROM SCRATCH
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The Standard Golf Flag Collection...Now includes Heavy-Duty Nylon.

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*source: USDA
More recognition

I
s the golf course superintendent pro-

fession taken for granted? The major

TV networks seem to think so. After

attending the practice rounds of The Mas-
ters and watching most of the tournament

on the tube, it's clear superintendents
don't get the recognition they deserve. It
seems superintendents only get recogni-
tion when bad weather adversely affects a
course. The business side of the industry
owners, builders, architects and general
managers knows and respects superin-
tendents, but that knowledge and respect
needs to extend to the public.

Superintendents should be recognized
for the work they do - and not just in trade
magazines, daily newspapers and local
media, where most of that occurs. They
deserve to be recognized on national TV
when major golf tournaments are broad-
cast because, in golf, the playing surface
is more integral to the game than any
other major sport. The golf course is the
challenge to the player, not the opposing
players, as in other sports. Superintendents
are an important part of the game because
they're responsible for the conditions of the
courses, which receive attention on TV.

When the Masters, the U.S. Open and the
PGA Championship are televised, millions
of people see the beauty of Au-
gusta, Pinehurst and Baltusrol. Fans see
these courses on TV and take those higher
expectations of course conditioning back
to their courses. That's good and bad. It's
good because it raises expectations, but bad
because they can misinterpret expectations
beyond what's reasonable. The missing
link between the good and bad is knowing
the cost and time it takes to get courses like
these courses in shape for a tournament.

There are many viewers who are more
interested in Tiger's caddy racing cars in his
spare time than how a course is prepared
for a major, but I'm also sure there are many
golf fans who wonder how these courses
become so picture perfect. I walked among
dozens of spectators at Augusta National
who commented about how wonderful the
course looked and asked questions about
how the "greenkeepers" were able to get
the course to look the way it did.

Wouldn't it be nice if NBC did a piece
about Paul Jett and his staff and how they
changed and prepped the course for the
U.S. Open? And just because Pinehurst is
hosting the U.S. Open, that doesn't mean
a story about superintendents has to focus
solely on Jett. The story could focus on any
number of superintendents and aspects of
golf course maintenance.

I called NBC and talked to the assistant
of the producer of the U.S. Open and asked
her if they planned on airing any bit about
superintendents or course maintenance.
She didn't know and said she would get
back to me. I haven't heard from her yet.

Major networks and some viewers might
consider these types of stories boring, and
the networks might have a hard time find-
ing advertising support. But there doesn't
need to be an hour-long program about this
- just a five to 10 minute piece would

suffice.

Granted, the GCSAA has made consid-
erable efforts with various television net-
works pitching story ideas about the work
of their members. And the Golf Channel
has produced some shows about this in
recent years. There also have been some
major championship preview shows that
highlight course preparation. Apparently,
the recognition superintendents receive has
improved during the past 10 years, but it
could improve even more.

Yet some superintendents are fine
with the coverage they receive. Jim Ni-
col, CGCS, at Hazeltine National Golf
Club in Chaska, Minn., hosted the PGA
Championship in 2002. He thinks course
maintenance is of little importance in the
scope of broadcasting a golf tournament
nationally and that superintendents get
plenty of coverage from local media.

"There are a lot of people involved with
a golf tournament who don't get singled
out," he says. "We do well just being
mentioned (in the national media), and I
don't think superintendents should ask for
anything more."

I disagree. But if short TV pieces about
superintendents were aired during a major,
Nicol says one thing needs to come across:
golf course maintenance is all about money.
Another subject matter could be the falla-
cies of pesticide use on golf courses.

Superintendents deserve more time in
the spotlight, and major networks should
take part in that. However, that might
mean the industry has to spend more time
and money to produce these TV bits to
present to the networks.
More research

After reading Kevin Ross' article about building up a bentgrass seedbank ("Analyzing a nemesis," March issue, page 40), I wondered if there's any ongoing or prior research that supports the practice, or is it based on theory? While Dr. Joe Duich was quoted, and an interseeding study by Dr. Karl Dannenberger was cited, Ross didn't cite any research studies related to building up seedbanks.

Is there such research? I would like to see some before spending a few thousand dollars per year on seed. It sounds like an interesting theory, and I appreciate the article bringing it to my attention.

RALPH J. KEPPLE, CGCS
East Lake Golf Club
Atlanta

Ross' response:

In this case, I'm not aware of any university research to support my practice of building a seedbank. This management practice is something I have experimented with for years. It started from the practice of dormant seeding, which I have been using for about 25 years. Dormant seeding has been a successful part of my management programs. Other superintendents who have adopted my dormant-seeding programs also have reported excellent results.

After seeing the results of dormant seeding, I decided to experiment with building a bentgrass seedbank in the soil/root zone. Also, knowing how weed seeds could survive in the soil for many years, I wondered if bentgrass would do the same. I consulted with Dr. Joe Duich, and he informed me bentgrass could survive 10 to 15 years in the soil. After hearing this, I was convinced this would help. I then began seeding each time we topdressed throughout the year. Observing the greens closely, we began to notice some bentgrass germination in our ballmarks. This convinced me that if a void occurred, bentgrass seed already in place would have a chance.

Most golf courses have a couple of so-called problem greens, (shade, traffic, etc). This is a great place to experiment with this program. Then you can evaluate it and make your own determination. This is what I recommend to everyone.

I enjoyed John Walsh's editorial, "Targeting workers," in the February issue (page 70). It was a thought-provoking article bringing it to my attention. Walsh response:

I think a little differently.

Ralph J. Kepple, CGCS
East Lake Golf Club
Atlanta

I was shocked when I first learned (at the Golf Industry Show) that Pat Jones was no longer with Golfdom. I was hoping that he moved on into something really great. After reading his column, "First things first," in the February issue (page 70), it became obvious to me he has the best of both worlds. I couldn't be happier for him and his "management team." I appreciate his creativity, insight and guidance.

SCOTT D. HUSTIN, CGCS
Chesapeake Hills Golf Club
Lusby, Md.

Clarification

In Pat Jones' column, "Beer and scribbles," (March issue, page 70), he said the vast majority of the people working the Golf Industry Show wearing GIS Staff badges were temporarily hired from around the Orlando area. The Golf Course Superintendents Association of America refutes this and says it hired only one temporary person to staff the show that wore a staff badge. The only other support people were security (who wear uniforms), various facility staff (who wear uniforms) and various food vendors (who wear uniforms). The GCSAA emphasizes it just doesn't bring in people off the street to service attendees and vendors. It puts significant pride and emphasis on customer service. GCN
Calendar of events

June 14
Cactus and Pine GCSA Seminar on fire, bark beetles and Forest Service
Oak Creek Country Club
Sedona, Ariz.
Call 928-284-1660 or visit www.cactusandpine.com.

June 21
West Texas GCSA Superintendent Leadership Series program
LakeRidge Country Club
Lubbock, Texas
Call 800-687-8447 or visit www.wtgcsa.org.

Aug. 1
Western Washington GCSA Fifth Annual Equipment Field Day
Glendale Country Club
Bellevue, Wash.
Call 360-705-3049 or visit www.wwgcsa.org.

Aug. 9
Western Washington GCSA OSU/WSU Turf Field Day
Corvallis, Ore.
Call 360-705-3049 or visit www.wwgcsa.org.

Aug. 10-14
Golf Course Builders Association of America's Summer Meeting
Hyatt Regency Hotel
Jersey City, N.J.
Call 402-476-4444 or visit www.gcbaa.org.

Aug. 29-30
RISE 2005 Turf Grass Conference
Hyatt Regency Hotel
Crystal City, Va.
Call 202-872-3983 or visit www.pestfacts.org.

Oct. 14-16
International Lawn, Garden & Power Equipment Expo
Kentucky Exposition Center
Louisville, Ky.
Call 800-558-8767 or visit www.expo.mow.org.

Oct. 19-20
Turfgrass, Landscape and Equipment Expo
Fairplex
Pomona, Calif.
Call 800-500-7282 or visit www.turfcouncil.org.

CDs, DVDs, Web sites

Tea-2-Green is offering free copies of its new 2005 Bentgrass Information Resource CD to all GCSAA student chapter members and university professors. The CD contains bentgrass maintenance tips from Dr. Joe Duich, advice from golf course professionals who share their management techniques, roundtable discussions with industry experts and technical information on Tee-2-Green bentgrasses. Turf students and professors can request copies of the CD by sending an e-mail to bentinfo@tee-2-green.com or by calling 800-547-0255.

The Champion Group, a Phoenix-based golf course consulting firm, released a DVD, “Selling More Golf Tournaments,” that covers every aspect of the process. The topics on the DVD include: the selling process, attitude in selling, who produces golf tournaments, why golf tournaments are produced, how to find them, how to sell them and add-on selling. For more information, call 602-867-1491 or visit www.thechampgroup.com.

Superintendent’s Video Workshop added two new titles, “Guide for Tee Renovations” and “Basics of Understanding Irrigation Repair and Maintenance,” to its video-based training series designed for golf course superintendents and their staffs. The “Guide to Tee Renovation” covers the complete step-by-step procedure for planning and executing a successful tee renovation. “Basics of Understanding Irrigation Repair” explains how an irrigation system operates and shows basic repair techniques on PVC pipe, gate valves, control valves, swing joints and irrigation heads. The videos are available in VHS or DVD formats. Each title includes employee handbooks, tests, answer keys, sign-off sheets and instructor guidelines. For more information, call 800-938-4330 or visit www.svwonline.com.

Golf course architect Jeff Mingay launched a Web site, www.mingaygolf.com, which includes an archive of articles and essays Mingay has contributed to publications throughout the world. GCN

Contact Rob Thomas, associate editor, at rthomas@gie.net or 800-456-0707 to submit resource information.