



INSIGHT:

One Superintendent's Perspective

By **TOM MEIER**
Le Sueur Country Club
Le Sueur, Minnesota

Le Sueur Country Club is an 18-hole semi-private club located southwest of the metro area. Le Sueur Country Club was established in 1926 as a 9-hole course built along the Le Sueur Creek. In 1972, the course was expanded to 18 holes with the additional nine holes designed by Joel Goldstrand.

I have been in the golf industry for 28 years. Graduate of Worthington High School. Studied business at Minnesota West Community and Technical College.

Why did you enter the turf management industry?

I took up the game of golf in the late '70s and was immediately hooked. During my junior year in high school I was asked if I would be interested in working on the driving range at the Worthington Country Club. Enjoying the game of golf so much, I couldn't think of a better way to improve my own game than being around it all the time. As I was working that year, I also had the opportunity to help with the grounds crew several times and found that I really enjoyed that side of the business, too. The following year a position opened within the grounds department, which I applied for and was hired. The rest is history.

Who was your professional mentor?

I would say it has to be Mr. Drew Demorest who hired me as his assistant superintendent at the Worthington Country Club in 1981. He gave me the opportunity to further enhance my career

by sharing with me his knowledge of the golf course maintenance industry and also by giving me plenty of responsibility as his assistant. In addition, when he left in 1988, he recommended to the board of directors at WCC that I be promoted to the position of golf course superintendent.

What has been the highest point in your career?

There have been many high points in my career with the first and foremost being hired as superintendent at Worthington Country Club. Next would be being hired as superintendent at Le Sueur Country Club. I would also say that winning the MGCSA Championship has to be right up there, too.

What has been your lowest point?

I think that it had to be Thanksgiving weekend in 1996 or '97. We had a terrible ice storm followed by heavy snow, most of the trees on the course were either damaged or destroyed, there was also a 2-3" layer of ice underneath about 10" of snow on all of the greens. My heart sank to my stomach as I stood there watching huge trees succumb to the weight of the ice and snow and wondering if we were going to have any turf alive on the greens come spring. That was a long winter!

Are your greatest challenges political, agronomic or managerial?

I have learned to try and avoid the political side of the industry although it is hard to do sometimes and focus on the

agronomics and managerial side. The two are equal as far as challenges.

What is the most difficult disease to manage on your course?

Anthracnose and pythium are the most difficult diseases to manage here at Le Sueur Country Club. We monitor the weather closely and spray preventatively when conditions favor development. I've found that the phosphite products have worked very well the past couple of years.

Is it hard to find good help in your area of the state?

Not really, you just need to know where to look and use the great staff that you already have to make new contacts.

Where will our industry be in 10 years?

I wish I had a crystal ball to see that far into the future. My thought is that there will be continued improvements to chemistries, equipment and turf grass cultivars. Maybe new equipment that is controlled by GPS and operated at night so as not to disturb players on the course during the day, new and improved electric powered equipment that takes us away from our dependence on foreign oil. There may also be improved formulations of growth regulators, fungicides, herbicides and fertilizers that are safer for us to use and safer for the environment. I also think that our water supplies and usage will be a big issue. With the population growing at such a rapid rate, conservation of our natural resources will be extremely important for our industry.

Where would you like to be in 10 years?

Still happy, healthy, enjoying life and family, and of course, a little closer to retirement.

What is your perspective of our state association and what would you change?

I believe that our association is a well-run and organized group. The current and past B.O.D. and staff have done a fantastic job of giving our members plenty of educational opportunities to further enhance our careers, and also keeping us informed as to changes in the laws and regulations that will have an impact on our industry.

Name your foursome:

Jack Nicklaus because he's the greatest ball striker who ever has played the game (*maybe a little of that would rub off on me*). Ben Crenshaw, the greatest putter ever and Fred Couples, because of his calmness under pressure – we could all use a little help with that on the course.



New Construction • Renovation
Restoration • Laser Leveling Tees
Drainage • Green Construction

800-328-8949
www.dbigolf.com

P.O. Box 208, Prinsburg, MN 56281



