



## *Insight*

# *One Superintendent's Perspective*

By Jeffrey J. Hanson  
Tartan Park Golf Course



### *Course and Statistics*

I am the Golf Course Superintendent at Tartan Park, which is a private recreational facility available for use by 3M employees, family members, retirees, and guests. It is located in Lake Elmo on 483 acres of land and includes 27 regulation golf holes, a clubhouse and conference center, four picnic pavilions, 12 tennis courts, five softball fields, four bocce ball courts, a driving range and two archery ranges.

### *Years in the Business*

2007 marks the start of my 17th year in the golf course industry. I worked as a laborer for six years before going to Anoka-Hennepin Technical College. After attending college, I worked my way up from an intern to my current position, Superintendent at Tartan Park.

### *Why and/or how did you enter the turf management industry?*

I was attending nursing school and decided to drop out during the spring semester in 1996. I went back to my summer job at Rich Acres for my sixth season and was having a hard time trying to figure out what to do with my life. One morning while emptying my greens mower buckets, I turned around to see several mowers and employees working near, or on, the green I had just finished mowing. In the background was the most beautiful sunrise I had ever seen, and at that moment I knew what I wanted to do with my life. I signed up for fall classes that week.

### *Who was your professional mentor?*

I have been fortunate to work with some great people throughout my journey, but none is better than my current boss, Randy Allen. He has been in this industry for almost 40 years and has great knowledge and vision for what we do. I have learned more from him in our short time

together than I could have ever done on my own and can't come up with the words to express my feelings, so I will just say thank you.

### *What has been the highest point in your career?*

I was having dinner with my family when the phone rang and I started shaking a bit, realizing who may have been on the other end. It was Randy Allen from Tartan Park and he was calling to offer me a position as his Assistant Superintendent. That was, without a doubt, the highest point in my career.

### *What has been your lowest point?*

Thankfully, there have not been many of these, but I would have to say the Spring of 2005. Most working in Minnesota at that time know what I mean.

### *Are your greatest challenges political, agronomic or managerial?*

My biggest challenges are managerial and I don't mean that to sound like we have a bad crew here because it is just the opposite. More so, I am new to management so my biggest challenges are getting to know the management ins and outs. IMHO, it is much easier to make the decisions from the passenger seat, but where is the challenge in that?

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

We spray our greens preventively and have had very little trouble in that area. In our other fine turf areas, it is a matter of reaching a threshold and applying a curative application. We are fortunate, in that have not had any diseases that can not be controlled with today's technologies.

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

No, we are lucky to have numerous applicants every year and I am generally able to pick a good crew.

### *Do you have a dog on your crew?*

No, and for the record, coyote decoys don't work too well either.

### *Where will our industry be in 10 years?*

I was practicing my archery the other night and needed a target, so I shot my magic 8-ball. I usually look to that for answers to tough questions like this so please bare with me. Realistically, in the future I think it will be tougher for folks to do their jobs. It seems as though every corner we turn, as an industry, has a new regulation, certification or license requirement for the things we do to keep our respective properties looking good. For professionals who prefer Green, there seems to be a lot of Red (tape) lately.

### *Where would you like to be in 10 years?*

Happy, healthy, and still working at Tartan Park, until I can retire.

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

I think our association has made great strides to improve the industry and our profession as a whole. The board has great focus and goals for the association in mind, and I wouldn't change a thing.

### *Name your foursome, who would*



### *you play with and why?*

I have been called an 'Archery Geek' so my foursome would be played out on an archery range, instead of a golf course. I would love to shoot with Jeff Hopkins, Nathan Brooks and Chance Beaubouef, three of the best in their business.