

# Hole Notes

The Official Publication of the MGCSA

University of Minnesota  
2019 Spring Regional Reports  
Conditions reported by  
your peers

Vol. 54, No. 2 March 2019



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## Mark Your Calendar:

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Host Chris Aumock

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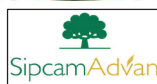
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***On the Cover***  
***Reports from across the***  
***region indicate courses***  
***could be in for an***  
***interesting spring season.***

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# Presidential Perspective

by Matt Rostal, Superintendent Interlachen Country Club

I was hoping when this issue of Hole Notes hit your inbox that our attention

would be turning to spring and the golf course. That thought seems to be a bit premature seeing the record setting snow amounts in February. It will take some warm days to melt all of this snow away just to get down to the ice many of us have on our golf courses. My hope for March is for the snow to melt away quickly so we can all get to work on the golf course and potentially start restoring any turf damage.

On February 20th the golf industry had its annual 'Day on the Hill' or the 'Blizzard Day on the Hill'. I thank everyone who ventured out that snowy day. It was the day at the State Capitol where we got to spread the good message of golf to our legislators. This year we

were joined by one of our allied associations, the MGA. The MGA put together a very thorough 'Economic Impact of Minnesota Golf' that highlighted how the game of golf drives significant economic activity across the State of Minnesota. The industry's economic impact is far reaching not only to our golf facility but also golf-related manufacturing, retail spending, golf tourism, and new golf-related residential construction. It is very impressive to think about all the industries golf impacts.

The Board of Directors was going to have our biannual strategic planning retreat and Board meeting February 24th – 26th Craguns Resort. Steve Randall; Director of Chapter Outreach from the GCSAA was to be the moderator of the strategic planning session. Due to the winter storm and 50 MPH winds it was decided that the



strategic planning session would be postponed to September 2019. This retreat is extremely valuable in keeping the association's mission and vision statements current while always focusing on member value. The GCSAA is in the process of working with all local chapter to develop BMP's. The MGCSA was one of the first chapters to develop a BMP manual, and in actuality created four separate manuals.

The MGCSA BMP series are on our website under the environmental tab and I am challenging everyone to read the BMP's during this final month of winter. I am in the process of reading all 200 plus pages of the BMP's, it is a very substantial document that is made up of nine sections focusing on Best Management Practices we carry out on our golf courses. As members of the MGCSA we must embrace this BMP initiative. The GCSAA is also developing a BMP template so each of our facilities can personalize them to our own programs. I believe this

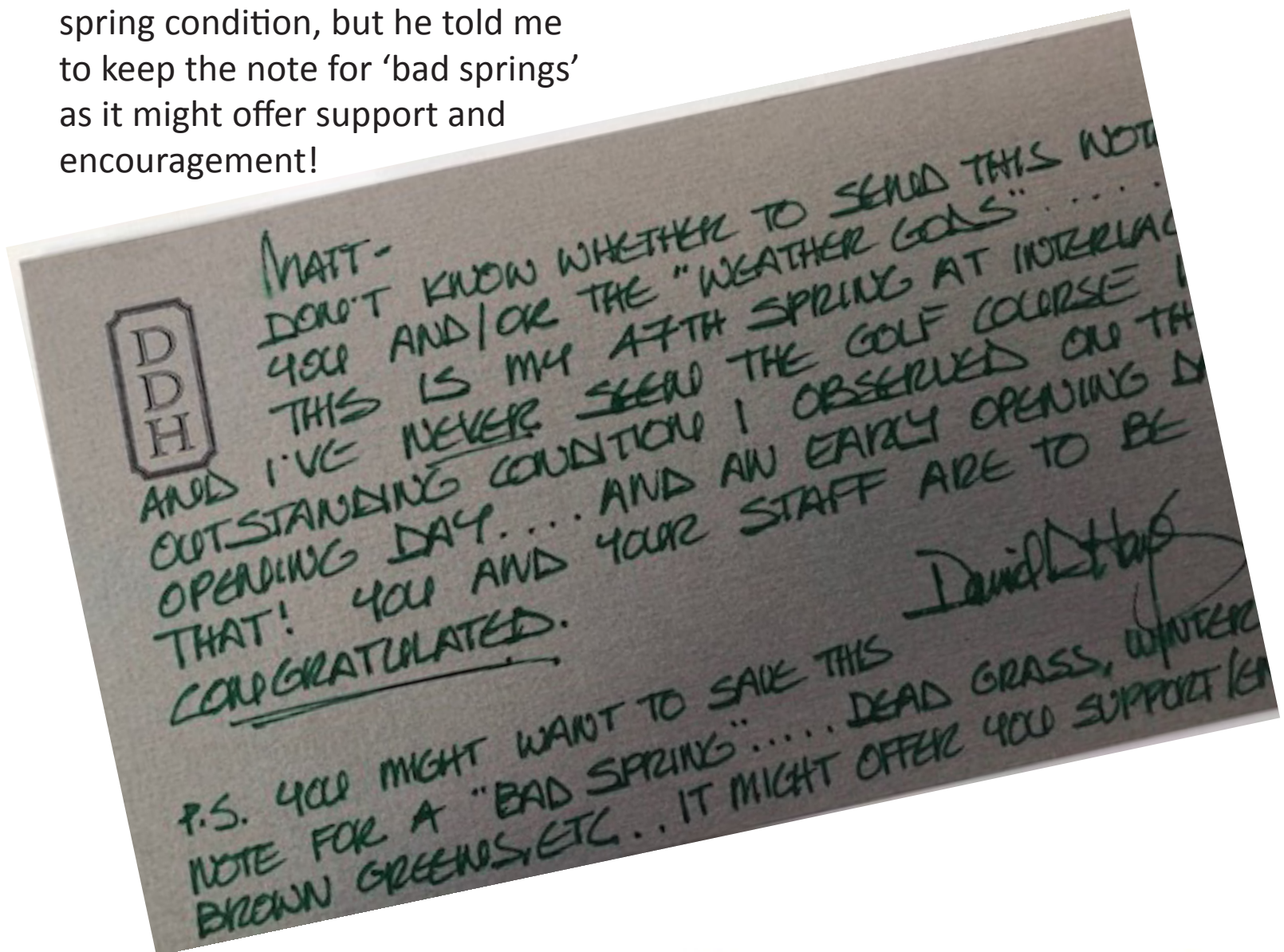
is vitally important to demonstrate as an association that a large percentage of our member facilities have adopted these Management Practices. By formally applying agency and industry BMP's and common sense stewardship, golf courses will be able to document and support all of the good things we have been doing for years protecting of our natural resources, the environment, and diverse wildlife that call our courses their home. Only when we have adopted these BMP's at our facilities will we be truly viewed as environmental leaders in our communities.

My hope as we enter into March is that all the snow is gone by April! You all know the pressure of getting your golf course open for the season and in good condition. The pressure is always there this time of year! So, I hope everyone has a nice spring without any winter issues to overcome. It is interesting to me as I enter my 19th spring as a superintendent, that I



vividly remember the springs when I had significant winter damage, but I really never remember the springs when there was little or no damage at all! I keep a note that a member wrote me years ago congratulating on the outstanding spring condition, but he told me to keep the note for 'bad springs' as it might offer support and encouragement!

I wish the best to everyone as the snow melts and we get out on the golf course.







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*Associations and*  
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# *On The Hill Participating Allied MGCSA Members made an impression*



***In 2019 the focus was upon introducing the 2018 Economic Impact Study, a push to clarify 16 and 17 year old labor questions, support against specific pesticide laws that would allow cities control over regulation and the limited liability salt legislation.***



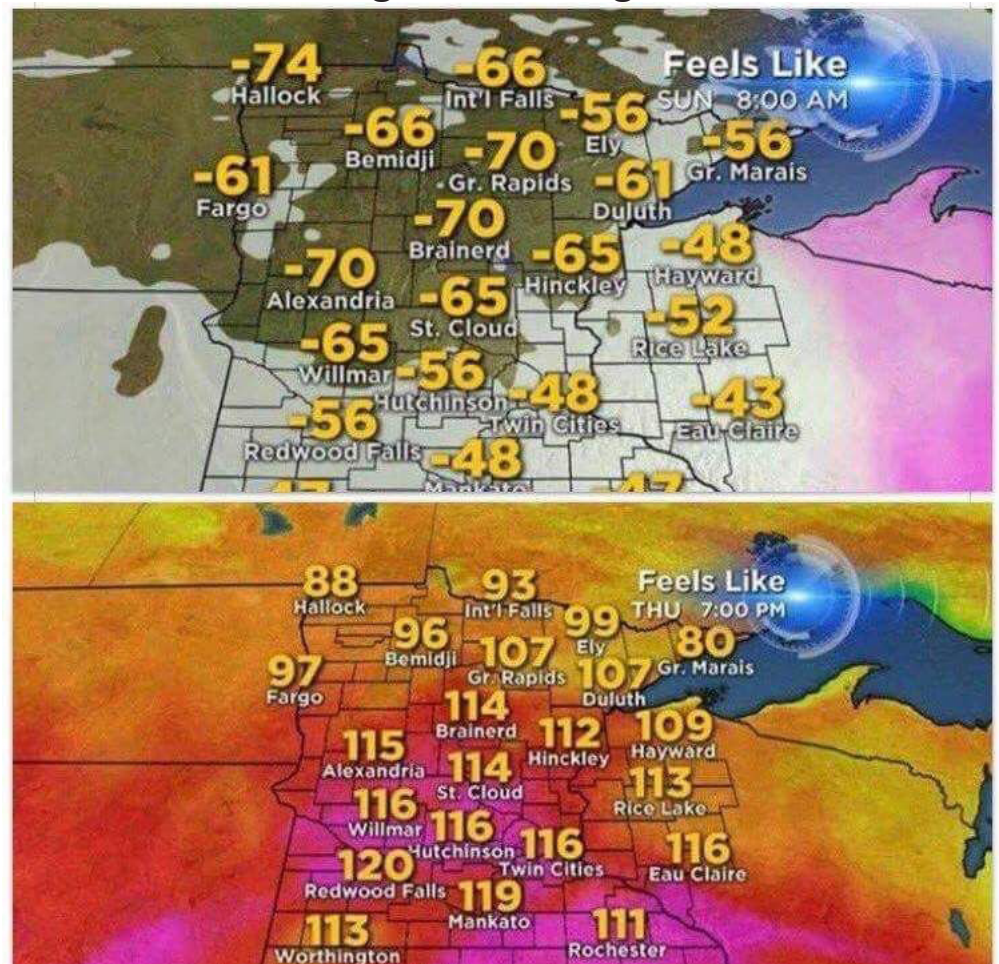
# March 2019 Regional Turfgrass Report

Dr. Brian Horgan University of Minnesota

What a record breaking February we had. At the start of the month, a good portion of the state had very little snow cover and a vast majority of the snowmobile owners were wondering how to repurpose their large paper weights. Well, things have changed drastically with record-breaking snowfall of 35.7" at MSP, which is the most snow ever recorded in February and now the 6th snowiest month on record.

Couple that with extreme cold resulting in a copious amounts of school cancellations and you have many superintendents and staff chomping at the bit to get the grass season going. We also cannot forget the widespread rain event on December 26/27th and 40 ° F temps in early January, which presented op-

portunities and additional concerns. The seasonal weather swing in Minnesota makes it a very challenging region to grow grass, not to mention grass that is grown at a tenth of



an inch.

These reports are meant to provide support for other superintendents and assistants and let them know that they are not alone in their winter struggles and sup-



## Twin Cities February 2019- Snowiest Month Since November 1991 6<sup>th</sup> snowiest month of any month on record

**Twin Cities Top 10 Snowiest Months On Record**

Month	Amount (in.)
Nov. 1991	46.9
Jan. 1982	46.4
Mar. 1951	40.0
Mar. 1965	37.1
Mar. 1985	36.8
<b>Feb. 2019</b>	<b>35.7</b>
Jan. 1967	35.3
Dec. 2010	33.6
Dec. 1969	33.2
Jan. 1999	33.1

\* As of 6AM on February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2019

**New All Time February Snow Records**

Year	Amount (in.)
<b>2019*</b>	<b>35.7</b>
1962	26.5
1967	23.7
1909	24.2
2004, 1936	19.7



Normal February Snowfall: **7.7"**  
Departure from Feb normal: **+28.0"**  
Seasonal Snowfall To Date: **53.5"**  
Departure from normal To Date: **+13.0"**



port is just an email or phone call away. The report is also meant to be shared with golf course owners, general managers, board of directors, greens committees or additional stakeholders to help reinforce the message that no one is exempt from the weather extremes that we are experiencing.

The questions in this regional report were sent out on January 30<sup>th</sup> to ten superintendents throughout the state of Minnesota, Western Wisconsin and Eastern North Dakota. Please feel free to reach out with any questions or concerns (email [bphorgan@umn.edu](mailto:bphorgan@umn.edu), cell 651-216-6827).

### Public 18 Hole Golf Course: North Central MN

The current temp is Currently -35°F with about 18" of snow on ground. Minimal ice at the moment that I am aware of-unlike last year. The course is 100% covered with snow and I expect it to remain that way into March/April. Although I do not seem to have much ice, the temps here really have not been warm enough to melt too much anyway.

This year I preemptively created small drainage canals (with a Miltona strip sod cutting tool) leading away from low areas on putting greens to help remove standing





water. I have used this technique in the past with some success. I expect to see some snow mold this spring-particularly in roughs which we do not treat.

Each fall I put down a heavy topdressing after closing and then cover with Evergreen (permeable) covers. These covers can help in years with light snowfall and actually help to get things moving in the spring but they do nothing, as we all know, for ice damage. Although I do not use temperature sensors I would assume they would say it is cold out there. It's currently still too early to know what issues I may have in the spring so there is not much to evaluate at the moment that would facilitate a need for winter preparation changes. That may

change in the spring.

**Private 18 Hole Golf  
Course: Twin Cities  
007 Creeping Bentgrass  
Greens  
Dominant Extreme 7  
Creeping Bentgrass Fair-  
ways**

Currently we have complete snow cover. We had ice on greens after the

Dec 27th rain event, but all of that ice has dissipated and appears to be a non factor. Currently I'm very pleased with how the turf looks. We don't appear to have any injury on our greens and fairways. While the rain event was taking place on the 27th we did create channels so water could exit greens. Channels were also made in low areas on fairway next to drains. This allowed for huge volumes of water to exit the property and resulted in minimal accumulation of ice on the surfaces. We did have a few greens, that have limited slope, accumulate larger volumes of ice. On those greens we did take advantage of the lack of snow cover and applied Milorganite in an attempt to assist



ice removal. This appeared to help significantly. I would definitely do this again if conditions required it. We currently do not have any snow mold issues, but will continue to monitor. We did not use manufactured covers, but we did top dress heavily. We use the Toro Turfguards and during this extreme cold weather the lowest temperatures we saw was seven degrees.

We are currently happy at this point and see nothing that would warrant future changes in our winter preparation.

## **18 Hole Public Golf Course: Twin Cities**

**A1/A4 Creeping Bentgrass Greens  
Providence Creeping Bentgrass  
Fairways**

Joke: What do you get from sitting on the ice too long? Polaroids!

Current conditions are lots of ice. Greens, tees, fairways. It all has ice. We initially were out on December 20th using squeegees to get some snow melt off of the greens. Then we got 1.0" of rain on December 26th that froze fairly quickly to create about 0.25" to 0.50" of ice on



greens, tees, and fairways. I was okay with that, but then on January 4th through 7th we had temps in the 40's that caused a tremendous amount of melt that quickly froze again on the 8th. This actually caused a great deal more ice to form (as we had about 4" of snow cover to melt) on our fine turf surfaces. We now have



0.5" to 2" of solid ice on greens and tees and as much as 5" on fairways . It's all over, including slopes.

It is actually very similar to what we in January-March of 2017 when we had the Christmas 2016 thunderstorm. Pretty similar amount of ice and we came out of that pretty well. We'll see what happens.

We currently have about 4" of snow on the ice, but had very little cover until the snow on January 28th. We have not really evaluated any turf at this point. We plan

to start pulling some plugs in later February or early March to bring inside and see what grows. As mentioned before, we did have a few days of squeegee work in December. Since then we have put out 4,000 pounds of green sand on the green surfaces (January 11th) to try and get some kind of air channels in the ice. We did not expect to get much melt from this, but it also didn't provide much help in terms of the hoped for air channels.

We will likely go out again after the snow melt in March, I hope.





We have not seen any snow mold issues yet and we rarely do in our bentgrass. We do not treat much of our Kentucky bluegrass rough other than tee banks and a few loops around greens. I think the very cold November will help with that as the soil was well frozen prior to snow cover.

We use the permeable Evergreen covers on our greens. We also put a light topdressing on the greens prior to the covers going on. We also top dressed the tees and fairways with 15 tons/A. We usually get a quicker green up with the

sand applied to tees and fairways. The covers provide a very nice green up, but it usually fades quickly in the spring once the covers are removed.

We solid tined all greens, tees and fairways just before winter as well. Always makes us feel better that we are providing an area for water to go before it turns to ice. Who are we kidding though, there is way too much water. We do not have temperature sensors, but with the lack of snow in November and December and the below normal temps I'd expect it to be pretty cold

The advertisement features a large background image of a golf course with a green, sand traps, and trees. Overlaid on the image is the Hartman logo, which includes a stylized green tree and the word 'HARTMAN' in large, bold, serif capital letters. Below the name is a purple swoosh and the text 'Golf Course Construction & Renovation'. In the top right corner, the text 'Quality since 1971...' is written in a red, cursive font. At the bottom left, the text 'Specializing in...' is written in a purple, cursive font. Below this, a list of services is provided in a yellow, sans-serif font: 'Bunkers • Tees • Laser Leveling • Green Drainage • Irrigation • Design • Pump Station Upgrades'. At the bottom left, the company's address and phone number are listed in a white, sans-serif font: '8099 Bavaria Rd.', 'Victoria, MN 55386', and '952.443.2990'. At the bottom right, the company's email and website are listed in a white, sans-serif font: 'info@hartmancompanies.com' and 'www.hartmancompanies.com'.



in terms of soil temps.

Changes in winter preparation? Who knows with the ice. We have started to use less covers with not covering our par 3 course. With all the ice, the covers kind of limit our options of ice removal as we do not want to damage the expensive covers. Not that we would do anything mechanical anyway, but it's an option we don't even think about with the covers. We will make a decision on our ice encasement during the last week of February.

We will likely start removing snow at that time to put a fresh coat of green sand on the ice and use the stronger sun of early March. However, I'm more scared of the freeze thaw cycles in March

and April than I am of the current ice cover. We have bentgrass seed in-house just in case.

## **18 Hole Private Golf Course: North Eastern MN**

**Bent/Poa Greens**

**Bent/Poa Fairways**

**Joke: Why do golfers always carry a spare pair of trousers with them? In case they get a hole in one.**

Current conditions, COLD. We have had about 26-30" of snow since December 26th. We are completely covered in snow with good depth throughout even with wind drifting. More snow on the way next week. We received rain on

November 30th creating a ¼"-2" ice layer on most of our greens. Ice on greens that early in the winter is not what I want for our bentgrass. Following that we began applying black sand to melt it down. We were about 75% clean of ice the following week. We then got



some snow that shut us down.

We had an abnormal warm stretch from 12/13-12/18. We removed snow from greens prior to that to prevent more ice buildup. During the warm spell we applied black sand and were 95% clean of ice. I thought at this point we were as good as we could be for the rest of winter but the one negative thing that could affect us would be more rain. Of course, we received more rain on December 21st that left a ¼"-1/2" layer of ice on all greens. That was followed by more snow and even more snow.

At that point I decided it's best to leave the greens covered in snow for the rest of winter as I didn't feel we'd be able to melt any ice and didn't want to expose the ice layer to the temperature swings. So, my next move will

be to assess where we are at come mid-March. I will make a decision to remove snow and melt ice if we are reaching 90 days of our bentgrass being encased in ice. Have not evaluated winter injury yet.

Once we are out of this arctic blast we'll gather some samples. I believe we will see death to our poa





annua. Fortunately we have high populations of bent and our poa is typically only small spots no larger than large coins. It will be an interesting year, excited to see what the outcome is. I'm comfortable with losing poa. No snow mold at this point.

We do not use covers but, put down a heavy topdressing late in the fall. We accomplish this with three applications of sand at roughly 8 tons per acre with each application. This is the third winter without covers and I find the multiple applications at lighter rates gets uniformity I'm looking for.

We also don't mow once growth is nearly done. This year

we didn't mow in October and just began topdressing into late fall growth. Other fall cultural practices included our typical deep tine on greens but I think I'll do a double deep tine on greens in the future.

## **18 Hole Private Golf Course: South Eastern MN**

**Joke: What is brown and sticky? A stick.**

We currently have about 16" of snow, but windblown with a few high slopes having little snow. It would currently take multiple warm days to thin snow so we will be covered for foreseeable future. We were 100% clean of snow/ice



earlier in January. Pumped water from practice area to help prevent ice. Frost was still 2' deep at that point.

As far as winter injury, I'm not expecting any at this point, but was getting concerned about desiccation prior to recent snowfalls. I have seen no snow mold yet, could possibly see some product degradation on the open tees/fairways from being open for so long. Time will tell.

We use permeable GreenJackets on greens for covers. Multiple topdressings prior to covering, nothing to be worried about at this point in my opinion. The new bentgrass putting greens looked great when we had no snow cover. I currently do not have temperature sensors, but will add next year. Some changes to our winter preparation going forward will include irrigation system blow out earlier (October) and will add snow fences at certain spots that are very wind-blown this year.

Otherwise same protocol as 2018. I'm looking forward to finishing our restoration project and giving the course back to membership. It's been a rewarding but stressful

3 years, course has changed beyond what I ever imagined....members and guests excited to see the changes.

### **36 Hole Public/Semi-Private Golf Course: Western WI**

We currently have ice cover on 70% of greens after a few melts. Some greens 100% covered with others less than 20% covered. Shade has played a big role in what has melted off to this point. I am not "Freaking Out" yet due to the amount of bentgrass I have on our greens. If we have this much ice cover come the middle of March I will start having some serious concerns. On one of the courses, the fairways are 70% covered with ice. These fairways will be most concerning to myself moving forward as these fairways are greater than 80% poa and have very poor draining capabilities. Even if we get the ice to go, it takes a while for water to move on through. The other course fairways and tees are greater than 90% Bent, so I have very little concern. I have not assessed any potential injury yet. I plan on doing so middle of February. During a couple warm





days, I did put down 40 bags of NutriPel (Milorganite) on greens and it helped quite a bit.

One more sun filled day and I would have been ice free until the current temperature drop happened. We were out creating some channels on greens that we typically see dam up in the spring melt. I currently do not see any snow mold issues.

We do not use covers. I anticipate using covers on some greens to help melt some ice close to the end of February. We have always done fall topdressing. This year, due to the wet/cold fall, I was unable to get the amount of sand out I typically would. I do anticipate using a dyed sand this spring for melting purposes.

Moving forward in our winter

preparation, I may consider covering five greens that are more than 50% poa with excelsior mats. All other greens I lose poa on I feel I have enough bent to survive a crummy winter such as this. Some fun additional notes, this spring we are resurfacing and expanding all of our par three teeing complexes, as well as three par 4 complexes.

This will also include building new forward tees on our 5 longest holes using the “Long Leaf Initiative”. This will happen in a two phase process as to interrupt golf as little as possible. We are also converting all of our no-mow areas to a complete fine-fescue stand. This will be a much longer process as we may only get 5-6 acres a year done.

**9 Hole Public Golf Course: North**

## Eastern MN

Currently there is 24" of snow with no significant ice cover under the snow. We had a rain event about a month ago, so there is a thin ice/snow layer about 6" below the surface of the snow cover. I do not anticipate any significant winter injury as of now. I did attempt to remove standing water from the greens in late November with a squeegee. Too soon to tell on any snow mold issues, but I am satisfied with the timing and conditions of my snow mold application last fall. I used to cover the greens with Excelsior mats each winter.

About 5 years ago I started experimenting with using mats on half of the greens and just heavy sand on the other half. My biggest concern is ice damage, and all things considered, I feel I have better luck with sand. The mats would occasionally freeze to the green, seemingly exacerbating the problems caused by ice. I now just cover the greens with heavy sand (10 - 12 yds./

acre) each fall after I close. I core aerify the greens as soon as possible in the spring and drag all of the excess sand into the holes. I find this to be a very efficient solution. I'm satisfied with the changes over the past several years and do not anticipate changing anything moving forward at this point.

## 18 Hole Private Golf Course: Twin Cities

There is currently ice accumulation on about 20% of the property, mainly in low areas of surface flow. Six greens have ice accumulated in the Excelsior cover, about  $\frac{3}{4}$ " thick, mainly caused by tree lines on south side of complexes.

Other greens are clear. I cur-





rently have not taken any plugs inside. We did remove melting snow in the days leading up to the freeze up. Shoveled many troughs in fronts of greens and anywhere surface drainage struggles to get off fairways. We did not apply black sand, etc., on ice that did accumulate. I currently do not see any snow mold issues. I use covers on nineteen greens. Fourteen with Excelsior and five with GreenJackets.

Greens were heavily top dressed then deep-tined with ½" solid tines to 8" deep. This process has proven worth the effort and cost, as even this year, the only greens that have ice accumulated within the Excelsior have shade issues, all other greens are completely dry and clear. Four greens (including nurseries) are top dressed and deep-tined but not covered. They are all clear of ice except where shade is present. I used to have Toro Turf Guards two years ago, but have not put them back in.

We put out our snow mold a little earlier this year and will likely continue that in the future. Glad we applied snow molds earlier than later.

### **18 Hole Private Golf Course: South Central MN**

**Joke: Did you hear about the dyslexic, agnostic, insomniac? Apparently, he lays awake all night wondering if there really, truly, is a Dog.**

We have hard snow and ice under eight inches of powder snow. In contrast to many courses around us, the early snow lingered on fairways, greens and tees after the melt in early January. Some areas



had quite a bit of ice in the 1.5 inch range, while other areas had no ice. We shoveled water ways on the 7th of January on seven greens that were accessible and not covered. We cover five greens with excelsior mats and we did not attempt to do anything on those greens.

On two of our historically poor draining greens , we removed 2 -3" of snow to expose the ice, and applied Milorganite at a 1/2 lbs. N per 1000 square ft. rate and applied black sunflower seeds at a 40 lbs. per 5,000 square ft./green going heavier in deep ice spots and lighter

in little ice spots. The applications were made on January 11th. Our observations indicated that there wasn't enough solar exposure for the black materials to do much good, although some penetration into the ice was observed in full sun areas. No snow molds have been observed at this point.

We top dressed at a medium rate on October 30 and dragged. We covered those five greens with excelsior mats on November 7th. The five greens we cover are "problem greens" that are small, shaded, poorly drained, etc. We will likely

## NO HIBERNATING HERE ...

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be taking turf samples in late February and possibly removing snow and ice at that time if we feel it will improve our chances for less winter damage. This may include more black materials and possibly breaking ice up with an aerifier.

**18 Hole Private Golf Course: Twin Cities (response sent in late February)**

**Joke: Not sure if I know any clean jokes but saw an interesting ad on a liquor store while in the middle of Wisconsin this winter..."Don't like Tequila?? Give it a shot."**





Currently covered in two plus feet of snow. There are pockets of ice from the freezing rain storm at the end of December that mostly disappeared the week following, but there are a couple spots out there still. My gut is telling me that this amount of snow will not be gone until sometime in April after seeing the NWS forecast for March is supposed to be below normal and have average precipitation. Which I hope they are wrong.

I have not pulled any plugs as I have all bentgrass that any damage is pretty minimal at this point in time. No water was removed in early January since I have all bentgrass and my worry at that point in time is we would be approaching what is typically the coldest time of the year and the ice can be a pretty good cover in a wind desiccation situation.

I like my snow mold program that I apply to all my short grass surfaces as well as my bunker faces. At this point I don't think we have had a lot of snow mold pressure since everything froze up before significant snow fall. We will have to see how things pan out this spring however. I do not use any covers

and we try to build up a pretty good layer of topdressing sand on greens, tees, and fairways going into winter. Basically bury the crown, but not the leaf blades. It has worked well for us for the past 4-5 years.

I have used temperature sensors in the past but my batteries on my turfguard sensors needed to be replaced so we pulled them in this winter. At this point in time I see no changes to my winter program, however if we get to the last week of March, first week of April and there still is substantial snow on the greens we will be removing it to get them clear, obviously this is dependent upon weather and something like a late winter Polar Vortex coming back would stop that.

I'm excited for a few projects for this year will include a couple of tee additions/renovations and changing our second practice tee to low mow bluegrass. I'm also excited this year to partner with Turf Cloud for their job board use and daily drone flights(High Res, NDVI, and Thermal) that will integrate into our Toro Lynx Irrigation system.



# Badgerland Outreach Bristol Ridge Golf Club Thank you Host Todd Mott





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## roger stewart retired super

interviewed by matt cavanaugh

*adjective*

**insensitive to criticism or insults.**

“you have to be thick-skinned to work in the turf industry”

synonyms: **insensitive, unfeeling, tough, hardened, callous.**

I just learned from Will Smith that the oxygen we breath does not come from the rain forest. What? I better double check with a resource that I can trust. Hey Alexa, what produces most of the oxygen we breathe?

“Scientists believe that phytoplankton in the ocean produces up to 80% of the earth’s oxygen. Phytoplankton, including algae, produces oxygen by photosynthesizing. Did that answer your question?”



Well, I guess it did, or at the very least Alexa knows as much as Will Smith about oxygen production. There are so many places to obtain information these days. Who do you trust? What is correct? What is garbage? Life

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used to be a little more simple, but now we are inundated everyday with new and different information that can be overwhelming. Where do you get your information, or the better question may be, where don't you get your information? In this complicated world I don't even know what I know or even what I think I know and what I know is, we don't know what we don't know and we may need to be thick-skinned to hear it.

### **The one simple thick-skinned question:**

Roger, you visit with and have many conversations with golf course superintendents and assistants. Based on the current facts, research and knowledge, what is one thing you see that we as turfgrass managers could change to help improve turfgrass decisions?

**Roger:** *"So Matt, you know me better than to ask for anything short or simple to come out of my mouth and you know I have a tendency to get completely unchained."*



**thick-skinned:** Roger, I contacted you in the hopes that you would get completely unchained.

**Roger:** *“Works for me. So Matt, back to the question, WHAT the heck does it mean? Right away I’m focused on the “one thing” part of the question. Can I even do this question justice by focusing in on one thing? Everyone knows our job as a golf course superintendent or assistant is way more complicated, convoluted and at times confusing to justify concentrating on one thing.”*

**thick-skinned:** Let’s just focus on the agronomic part of the business for the time being.

**Roger:** *“That is a huge relief because now I could eliminate all the things we must deal with from the business side, like accounting, public relations, employee management, managing the players and members, our managers, club officials, social media, etc., etc. I guess I just eliminated about 80-90% of the things that we focus on every day and often cause us the most stress. That leaves a much smaller but equally, if not more, important part of our job, producing the best playing conditions possible.”*

*“The last 6 or 7 years of my career at TPC Twin Cities, I was fortunate to have worked with a guy named Mark Michalski, who eventually took over for me when I retired. I only mention this because he and I often had discussions about what is the best approach to managing turf. These philosophical discussions often went on way too long after the day was done. What is interesting is that despite somewhat different career backgrounds, he was working his way up and I was looking at some kind of exit strategy, we shared very similar opinions about managing turf and golf courses. Mark came from a small public course where he worked as a kid and then graduated from Minnesota Crookston. I had been in the private club sector and had done a number of PGA Tour Champions events. I never considered myself a great agronomist and was a much better man-*



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*ager of the other stuff. Mark was pretty fresh out of school with a wealth of knowledge and information that he balanced against his working background. Our conversations consisted of bouncing questions, thoughts, ideas and turfgrass stuff off each other. Now you are wondering where the heck am I going with this, right?"*

**thick-skinned:** I'm all ears on anything revolving around Mark.

**Roger:** *"Don't give him too big of a head. The one thing that the young and upcoming guy and the guy with forty plus years of experience, always came around to was that despite all the tremendous advances in technology, products, equipment, procedures and grasses, keeping things simple was the best way to go. Mark and I employed the K.I.S.S principle in some way almost every day at the TPC Twin Cities. It's important to continue to educate yourself, your staff and yes, your peers, by sharing information and taking in new concepts and ideas. Only by doing that, will you be able to employ the K.I.S.S principle and make decisions based on good science and technology. In the end, it's about making good decisions based on an abundance of accumulated knowledge and common sense. I think Doug Soldat was telling us to do that in his thick-skinned article. Mark and I used to look at each other and just say, it's really not rocket science, but it is important."*

**thick-skinned:** I absolutely love the K.I.S.S method because I think over thinking is an issue in our industry, why do you think over thinking is an issue?

**Roger:** *"You said this was going to be simple? My initial reaction seems appropriate and that is the fact that we are inundated today with more and more information. Some people would suggest that it's a good thing to be overwhelmed with information and, at the risk of being labeled (something all too popular today) as a person who can't keep up with the world today, I would suggest that we are overwhelmed with useless in-*

*formation. Take a look at social media, it's kind of like the cable company of information. You have a need for channels that are relevant, but you have to put up with all the channels that are not relevant just to get what you want. In our business there have been incredible advances in technology and products over the past twenty years, that have proven to be extremely valuable to superintendents and we are fortunate to have those advances. Along with that comes products, ideas, strategies and technology that are not really useful and some of it just plain doesn't work. We are overwhelmed with social media like Twitter and Facebook where anybody can make claims about anything and we are exposed to that type of stuff every time we open a social media app. Some would say, you should just ignore that stuff and use the information that you find helpful. Ok, but that is like channel surfing on your cable TV system. What a waste of time trying to manage all that useless information to glean a few morsels of good stuff. It's like panning for gold. Using the K.I.S.S principle means being very selective of the sources of information you use and relying on trusted sources you have accumulated. Personally, I use people in academia who I believe infuse a good deal of common sense into their recommendations, industry reps who are knowledgeable and are helpful even if you don't always purchase from them, and peers who have a proven track record of success and produce high quality playing conditions. Combine information from those sources with your own common sense and experi-*



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*ence and I think you can be very successful in making the best agronomic decisions. There is one more thing, continue to educate yourself at every opportunity using your local chapter, regional trade shows and GIS. Never stop learning.”*

**thick-skinned:** Roger, unbelievably well said. So, do you need help getting down?

**Roger:** *“From my soapbox? Na, I’m retired, I like being up here.”*

**thick-skinned:** As turfgrass managers we can often make things too complicated. Do we feel a need to prove that we are more than what Caddie Shack has portrayed us to be? I’m not sure, but what I do know is there is plenty of thought, ideas and knowledge throughout this whole industry that can be very far from the K.I.S.S method. We now work in an industry that is very willing to share information good or bad, which is a big change from even ten years ago, but be selective in your resources for information. Hey Alexa, what is turfgrass? “Turfgrass is usually defined as any grass that is used to make turf.” See what I mean.

***Do you have a thick-skinned idea for an interview or individual, or group of individuals, that needs some prodding? Reach out to Matt Cavanaugh at [mattc@umn.edu](mailto:mattc@umn.edu)***

**Roger Steward is a retired superintendent with forty plus year in the industry. He now spends most of his time at raccoon hat conventions. Roger can be reached at [rasgcs@yahoo.com](mailto:rasgcs@yahoo.com) or @rasgcs on Twitter.**



**Matt Cavanaugh is an Assistant Superintendent at Rush Creek Golf Club in Maple Grove, MN.**



# 2019 Show Thank You Kyle Stirn, Dale Hieb





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# Fourteen Years Becoming a Superintendent

## Jeff Mold, Superintendent Braemar Golf Course

I spent fourteen years at Edina Country Club. First as an intern during the 2004 season, and then I returned for my second year as a foreman and quickly moved up the proverbial ladder of the turfgrass industry to second assistant, then to lead assistant during the following years. My longest tenure was spent as the lead assistant for eight years at Edina before I obtained my first Superintendent position at Braemar Golf Course in Edina Minnesota in the spring of 2018. I am sure if you were to tell my intern self, back in 2004, that he would have to wait until 2018 to get his first superintendent job he wouldn't believe you. As much as I don't like the phrase, it all happened for a reason.

I applied for my first superintendent role in 2014, which was my

third year as lead assistant at Edina. Even though I applied for the position, I knew for the most part that I wasn't ready to make that jump. I did, however, want to get the ex-



perience interviewing for a superintendent position. Much to my surprise, I actually got called for an initial interview for the one job that I applied for. I went through that process and was called back for a second interview that I decided to back out of. I knew I wasn't really

ready and I didn't want to take the job as it was, so instead of leading them on and wasting their time I declined the second interview. I did, however, get a little of the experience I was looking for.

Why wasn't I ready though? I realized that after three years as lead assistant I wasn't fully ready to lead a staff in the way that it needed to be done. In my first few years as a lead assistant I wanted to be friends with the whole staff and I learned some difficult lessons on why having a friend relationship isn't in the best interest of my staff and my employer. You can treat everybody fairly, but you can't be their friend, because at some point you will have to say something they will not want to hear as well as make some tough staff decisions when they arise.

That was the biggest thing I wasn't ready for. I also was still not quite ready to deal with members, a whole membership, or even a greens committee. Admittedly, I'm an introvert and it took a little practice for me to become comfortable interacting with these groups. I was lucky enough to have opportunities

at Edina to be involved with committee meetings where I started to get to know people and that started to break me out of my shell.

Moving forward, when I did feel "staff" ready, I had applied for four other superintendent jobs that I was turned down for before I applied for the Braemar superintendent position. The reasons for those four rejections were:

Course #1: Didn't get an interview.

Course #2: Final 2 or 3.

Course #3: Final 2 or 3.

Course #4: Final 2 or 3.

There was frustration from not making it to the end goal, no doubt about it. I really wanted the superintendent position at course number two and three. I've had people ask if I called back to inquire about "why I didn't get the position". I was frustrated so I never did and maybe I should have. Maybe I would have learned some of the issues, if any, I had during the interview process or determine some of the shortcomings in my skillset they saw as a problem. Most of the time people just say the basic thing, which is un-



derstandable, “you were great Jeff, there was just a better fit”.

Even with the frustration, it never really crossed my mind to leave the industry. We have all seen qualified assistants leave for roles outside the golf course as well as completely out of the business. This choice happens for a number of reasons, but I couldn’t see myself doing any other job. I guess growing up on a dairy farm pre programmed me to be successful early in the morning. However, it did cross my mind that maybe I needed to apply for

another lead assistant role at a different course, just to see something different. Maybe it was hurting my resume only being at one spot for fourteen years. However, I always thought it was interesting to work with three different superintendents having three different agronomic perspectives, ideas and practices during my fourteen years at Edina.

During the first superintendent’s time at Edina we had issues with the greens (poa/bent). The second



***Edina Country Club Green Staff 2017***

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superintendent came in and had all kinds of different ideas for the poa/bent greens. The third and current superintendent (Brandon Schindele) went through the reconstruction and grow-in and is now managing bent.

The problem with having all these different superintendent experiences is, how do you put that on a resume? You really can't and it likely can only be explained in an interview, but someone may discount me right off the bat for being at one course for so long. I thought about

making the lateral move just to build my resume a little more, but Edina was and is such a good place, so I never did move.

With each passing interview I learned something new. I started to do as much research as possible. I began to find out who was doing the interview. I would find out about them, what their role was and I would ask to walk the course, if possible and take notes during the walk. I became more prepared and I got better at pretending it was not an interview. I convinced myself



that I was just talking turf and talking about the business that I know.

On my first few interviews, I would just ramble on. I had to learn that it was okay to sit there, gather my thoughts, think about the question and make sure I gave a coherent answer. One mistake that I made during an interview was giving a flat out “NO” to a question. Really no explanation to the question I just said “NO”, next question. That was likely a red flag in that situation. So again, think about the question and gather your thoughts. It’s certainly better then blurting out a “NO”.

I have had all types of interviews. A one-on-one interview, an interview with two people at the club and even with a panel of eight people at one time. The more interviews I went on, the more comfortable I was with myself regardless of the amount of people. I eventually realized that we all can grow grass. For employers it’s more about how you treat, interact and deal with the staff, members, patrons and even residents around the course. They wouldn’t bring any of us in if we didn’t know how to grow grass.

You can’t hide your personality in an interview, but you can hide it in a resume.

The most challenging interview wanted me to create a budget. This was a new course and they didn’t know what their budget was going to be, but they wanted me to create a budget. So, I took a few days and I completed the task at hand. This was a pretty big eye opener for me. I had been part of the budgeting process at Edina, especially with the seasonal staffing budget, but I had never put a whole budget together. I didn’t get the position, but it was a great experience making a full budget from scratch. It is absolutely something any assistant should be ready for. I learned so much after going through this process and I will be ready the next time it comes up. The bottom line in an interview is be ready for anything and always have some questions of your own to ask.

My resume evolved over time as well. I cleaned it up for almost every job I applied for. The cleaner, more simple you can get it the better off you will be. The items you

leave off in a resume can always be discussed in the interview. I would try to leave it at one page with absolutely no more than two pages. I feel employers look at where you work currently and then skim the rest. If there is too much, they get bored. I also determined it was a good idea to leave out tournament experiences as well.

Yes, it is nice for career development, but most courses don't care. You can always talk about it, but unless you are applying for a position at a course that hosts a lot of

tournaments no one cares that you raked bunkers at an event. It is the little things you don't need to add. I eventually had Brandon look over the resume and he was more than willing to give me a few tidbits. I didn't want to show Brandon the first few resumes, but after a while I became more comfortable with having someone else look at my resume as long as it continued to represent who I am. It can be very easy for someone to interject themselves into a resume and I wanted to keep that to a minimum.



*An overview shot of the club Jeff landed upon, Braemar Golf Course. It took time, but patience and diligence paid off.*



Over the past five years my interviewing skills and resume writing have certainly improved as it likely prevented me from obtaining a few jobs. I continued to take lessons from each step as I got closer to gaining my first superintendent role. The people around me kept giving me the cliché of “it wasn’t meant for you”, but that doesn’t make you feel better at the time.

However, after five other attempts (including the initial 2014 attempt), the sixth course in Braemar did end up being the best fit. I know the area, many members from Edina

play at Braemar and I had gone through a grow-in at Edina which is what I stepped into at Braemar, so it really was a perfect fit. Did I think it would take me fourteen years to obtain my first superintendent position? Probably not. And there were certainly times when I became frustrated. Many capable assistants have had the same experience and decided not to continue on in this industry, which is certainly understandable. However, if you are willing to take the time and learn from each step, I’m confident that you will find your fit like I did with Braemar Golf Course.

**Have you formed a team  
and registered for the  
Don White Memorial  
Match Play  
Tournament?**

# Western Outreach Oxbow Country Club Thank you Host David Wood



Join Your Peers for the:  
**2019 MGCSA Western  
Winter Outreach and Forum**  
Oxbow Country Club Clubhouse, ND  
Hosted by Superintendent David Wood  
Thursday, March 7, 2019

8:00 - 8:30 Registration with coffee and donuts  
8:30 - 8:35 Welcome, Jack MacKenzie MGCSA  
8:35 - 9:25 Member Driven Research, Dr. Brian Horgan, UMN  
9:25 - 10:35 Irrigation, Judd Duinick, Duinick Golf  
10:35 - 10:50 Networking Break  
10:50 - 11:20 Bridge Building, Matt Gregg, Wheeler Con  
11:20 - 12:30 Renovation Considerations, Kevin Norby ASGCA Herford Norby  
12:30 - 1:10 Gourmet Lunch  
1:10 - 3:00 Open Turf Forum: A Devil of a Summer, Horror Stories



Cost is \$25 per person includes meals, education and forum  
**RSVP Requested by February 23rd please**  
**All area members and non-members are welcome**

To Participate register on-line or Contact:  
Jack MacKenzie, Executive Director, MGCSA jack@mgcsa.org





## ***Advocacy in Action***

On February 20, 2019, the Minnesota Allied Golf Associations, the MGA, MnPGA, CMAA, MWGCOA and MGCSA, participated in a Day On The Hill Event. Several actions were taken on behalf of the industry. “if you are not at the table, you are on the menu!”

***House File Number 790, Senate File Number 1805***

***Section 1. LAWN MOWER CLARIFICATION.***

***(a) Push lawn mowers, self-propelled lawn mowers, ride-on lawn mowers, lawn trimmers, and weed cutters are not prohibited machinery under Minnesota Rules, part 5200.0910, and 16- and 17-year-old minors may lawfully operate or assist in the operation of those machines.***

***(b) The commissioner of labor and industry must amend Minnesota Rules, part 5200.0910, to reflect paragraph (a) of this section. The commissioner must use the good cause exemption under Minnesota Statutes, section 14.388, subdivision 1, to adopt the new rule.***

Although, according to the Department of Labor and Industry, 16 and 17 year olds **can** be hired to operate machinery, industry has pushed for a clarification in the ruling as many employers have the impression youth cannot be employed to run turf management equipment

### ***What can you do?***

*Originally this was only a House file, however, in part due to the advocacy actions those who participated in the Day On The Hill, an accompanying Senate File was added. This issue is currently in Committee for review. Reach out to your legislators in the House and Senate and ask them to support these House and Senate Files.*

H.F. No. 212 A bill for an act relating to agriculture; eliminating state preemption of certain pesticide control ordinances for cities of the first class; amending Minnesota Statutes 2018. (b) An ordinance adopted and enforced by a city of the first class that prohibits or regulates any matter relating to the use, application, or disposal of pesticides is not preempted by the provisions of this chapter.

and

H. F. No. 1255... Subd. 2. Authority. Statutory and home rule charter cities may enact an ordinance, including their own licensing, penalty, and enforcement provisions, containing one or both of the following:

(1) the pesticide application warning information ...

(2) the pesticide prohibition contained ...Statutory and home rule charter cities may not enact an ordinance more restrictive than that which is provided in subdivision subdivisions 3 and 4.

Subd. 3. Warning signs for pesticide application.(a) All commercial or noncommercial applicators who apply pesticides to turf areas must post or affix warning signs on the property where the pesticides are applied....

Subd. 4. Application of certain pesticides prohibited.(a) A person may not apply or use a pollinator-lethal pesticide within the geographic boundaries of a city.

(b) For purposes of this subdivision, "pollinator-lethal pesticide" means a pesticide that has a pollinator protection box on the label or labeling, or a pollinator, bee, or honey bee precautionary statement in the environmental hazards section of the label or labeling....

Both of these House files allow individual cities to create, implement and enforce their own pesticide policies. According to the authors, the bill was written to limit agriculture pesticide applications and not golf targeted. The Golf Allied Associations spoke out against these files and requested golf courses be exempt as we are already highly regulated through the state should the files "get legs".

### ***What can you do?***

*Currently this is only a House File and requires a Senate companion File to move it through to Committee. Reach out to your Representative to either kill or allow golf exemption. Reach out to your Senator and ask them not to take up the file. Emphasize the fact that golf courses are very regulated by the Department of Agriculture and applicators licensed with continuing education requirements.*





# In Bounds

by Jack MacKenzie, CGCS

Oaks was certainly my beloved.

Way, way back in '85, just shortly before the start of spring, with cardinals singing and the smell of exposed healthy turf tickling my nose, I headed out onto the course. First life lesson learned, waterproof Gortex really isn't, note to self, buy new rubber boots. Second lesson? Spring melt on a golf course is one of the most emotional experiences an individual can experience.

With each receding snow bank, every collapsing temporary fairway pond and seemingly endless flow of water off exposed green surface, a little

bit of your future is foretold. Out from under a winter blanket of snow, the tea leaves are easily read. The commencement of the season begins with a green and fresh canvas awaiting the swoosh of recently sharpened reels or it will be "C.Y.A." time as you await patiently for recovery.

Just a little over four short decades ago, my inaugural season was beginning exceptionally well. Reviewing my journal it reads that, "Snow mold chemicals did their job to protect the turf from disease, grass looks good". Indeed the PNCB and mercury drench was very ef-

1985 was my rookie season as superintendent at the North Oaks Golf Club. My first expedition onto the track took place March 15th and provided me with insight into what, for the next 27 years, I would learn to love, hate and hate to love. This course would be my last to manage, and easily my most cherished golf course. Not my favorite, as that would always be the White Bear Yacht Club, my home stomping ground, but North

fective, however, the greatest factor allowing for an even better spring was an optimum winter weather season.

November was light of snow and frost drove deep prior to a consistent blanket of fluffy insulation. There were limited severe weather anomalies upon exposed turf, just one significant December rainfall and fewer than average number of the infamous and scary “January thaws”. In fact, our area was bitterly cold the first month of 1985, but the turf was protected under several inches of snow.

And thus, on the Ides of March, I found an incredible stand of turf once the snow disappeared. The chemicals worked, the

snow provided exceptional cover and the spring melt was quick and efficient. North Oaks Golf Club opened on April 15th looking mighty fine. I was heralded as a turfgrass guru.

Not so much so in ensuing years when Mother Nature occasionally twisted her crooked finger into my ... ear and set me up with a long slog into the summer season. 2005, a full twenty years of experience after my first spring walkabout, and Mother Nature’s finger nail was scratching the back of my throat.

The winter had been wrought with temperature fluctuations and more rain than an average October. Most certainly,

the snowmold chemistries were doing their job, but disease was not the real issue when the turf had been saturated and frozen and saturated and frozen, and then rained upon until a solid three to five inches of ice locked up my now dead grass. My journals indicate another revelation, “Sun flower seeds, although black, float upon melted ice and do not burn down through the ice. However, the local squirrel population is very happy”.

Turf samples taken from the second week of January and repeatedly until the ‘big melt’, told the same story, dead and stinky greens were going to present my staff and me with a chal-



lenging spring. In time I would learn that 16 of my 19 putting surfaces were whacked, up to 90 percent dead, and would need re-grassing as soon as they were firm enough for foot traffic. The following steps were useful in retaining my sanity while the greens recovered and might be helpful for you as well.

1) You don't know what you don't know. Take samples often in the spring to determine the damage potential.

2) Communicate, communicate, communicate. Sometimes the truth is painful, but honest information cannot be argued against successfully. Tell the facts, respond using your professional

skills, grow grass and get back on track.

3) Get out as soon as the green is firm enough for foot traffic, walk-vertical mow, drop spread/slit seed and then push the seeds into the green with a hand or aerator device that physically mashes the seed into the disturbed surface. Use a starter fertilizer, as I recall we applied God's formula, Lesco 18-24-12.

4) Cover the surfaces with a permeable green cover. We bought ours, all 16, specifically for recovery and not winter desiccation protection.

5) Communicate, communicate, communicate.

6) Prepare and use a temporary target green. Don't spend

too much time here, focus on recovery.

7) Leave the covers alone. A little peek under the fabric is fine, but do not remove the cover. Temperatures taken under my covers in 2005 never exceeded 95 degrees. However, I had learned during a few previous seasons' moderate winter injury recovery periods that removing and replacing covers doesn't do seedlings any favors. Permeable fabrics retain moisture, a critical necessity for seedling growth. Aggressive removal and replacement will pull barely rooted seedlings quickly and efficiently. I never had pythium disease pressure under the covers.

8) Fire up your irrigation as soon as

possible. One Chinook wind can wipe out your new seed stand in a couple short hours. Leave your covers on. Irrigate through the cover when necessary.

9) Focus on the other areas of your course. In 2005 our fairways and many tees were smoked too. Hind sight, as clear as glass, should have pulled me from looking under my covers at the tiny seedlings and made me hop on a core cultivator and seeder on the tees and fairways.

10) Green and growing is paramount, don't be concerned with limiting poa encroachment.

11) Communicate and limit play until YOU are ready to open the greens.

12) Pray for warm weather. In 2005 we seeded over a five day window the last two days of March and early April. The temperatures did drop, but whatever sunlight presented itself on clear days was very helpful in heating up the green surface where the seeds had been sown.

In 2005 we seeded the greens the last week of March and all were open for play by May 11th. Many of the club's snowbirds didn't even know the course had suffered a calamity. Was this an anomaly only observed at North Oaks Golf Club? Nope, John Steiner CGCS, superintendent at the White Bear Yacht Club and arguably one of the very best agronomists in the state, was also "hammered" by a nasty winter smack-down. He too followed the listed procedures and had amazing results.

This recovery method might be something for you to consider too. It was based on getting back to the basics. Prepare a seed bed, insure solid soil to seed contact, apply a starter fertilizer, use a cover to capture solar radiation to heat the seed bed, leave the cover on as a moisture saving mulch, don't disturb the seed bed until the plants are mature to hold their own and communicate, communicate, communicate.

A little bit of prayer helps as well.