

SAN JOSE CC HOSTS GCSANC ASSISTANT'S MEETING

By Mitch Tankersley

On Monday July 18, 2005 Assistant Golf Course Superintendents from all over Northern California descended upon San Jose Country Club for the 4th Annual Assistant Superintendent Meeting and Golf Tournament. Hosted by Jason Green, Superintendent and Mitch Tankersley, Assistant Superintendent of SJCC, attendees to the meeting were treated to an educational seminar in the morning followed by a BBQ lunch, Golf Tournament and a hosted reception to wrap up the day.

The morning session offered insights into various resources available from both the GCSAA and the NCGA, interviewing tips, ideas and trial by fire talks from first and second year superintendents. This was followed by a presentation on the latest industry trends by the USGA Green Section.

The first speaker was Mike McCullough from the NCGA, who kicked off the meeting by discussing the assistant golf course superintendent Boot Camp hosted annually in Pacific Grove. The Boot Camp is a valuable training program that offers a variety of topics designed to build knowledge and confidence to help assistants reach the next level in their career. Congratulations to Jason Goss of Santa Rosa Country Club and Leon Alvarez from Spring Valley who were the lucky winners.

Following Mike was Jason Green, Superintendent from San Jose Country Club (filling in for Gary Carls who was attending a GCSAA National Board of Directors Meeting) began an open discussion soliciting opinions and feedback on the types of resources assistants would find valuable from the GCSAA: Local seminars, trade shows and other educational events. Hot topics for assistants seemed to be learning budgeting and politicking. The feedback from this group will go a long way towards developing a stronger Assistant Superintendent Resource Group on a national level.

Steve Byrne, Superintendent from Mira Vista Country Club was next on the agenda and gave an excellent talk on getting your first Superintendent job. He talked about the importance of always being professional and forthright. "You are always interviewing" he said, "whether you are on the course

or in the club house eating lunch, you need to be on your toes and prepared to answer questions from members, general managers and guests." Steve made some excellent points in his speech and it was well received by the assistants.

Jeff Steen, newly appointed Superintendent from Spanish Bay followed Steve and talked about the role of an assistant when the superintendent is away. "Assistants are sometimes placed in situations where they need to make crucial decisions on the fly" he said, "When the boss is away and a decision needs to be made, think about how he/she would handle the situation. It always helps to put yourself in their shoes as you make a decision. Is this how they would handle it?" Jeff shared several stories of situations he had to manage while in the field including a construction project for a Jack Nicklaus designed course in Canada and his stint as the 1st assistant at Pebble Beach.

Pat Gross from the USGA Green Section was the final speaker and concluded the meeting with a very insightful presentation on best practices for golf course management. Pat spends most of his time traveling throughout California and Arizona assisting superintendents with information on ways to improve turf grass fertility and reduce potential disease outbreaks. Some of the topics Pat covered included: Reducing salinity build up in greens through flushing techniques, creating a preventative fungicide program for late spring, summer and early fall to help thwart the break out of Anthracnose and other warm weather diseases and top dressing greens, tees, and fairways on a regular basis to build and maintain strong soil profiles. The presentation delivered by Pat was outstanding and appreciated by all of the attendees.

Following the morning session San Jose Country Club served a BBQ lunch and hosted a scramble format golf tournament. Everyone seemed to enjoy the days festivities which ended with a hosted bar with appetizers after golf. The 4th Annual Assistant Superintendent Meeting and Golf Tournament turned out to be a huge success thanks in large part to the generous sponsors: Mike Ravel from Verdicon, Sal Sorbello from Reed and Danny Ramos from DHR Construction. Next year will be the 5th annual meeting and it promises to be even better.