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## Expanding horizons through the Dreer award

My name is Mieke Darnaske, a Senior Plant Science Major at Cornell University.

My field of interest is Golf Course Management. Currently, I am in the process of applying for the Dreer Scholarship for students in any Horticulture field of study.

The Dreer Award allows for one student from Cornell University to spend at least one year in a foreign country, studying a field of interest to them. The student must design a programme citing work or internship arrangements, travel expenses and most importantly the reason for travelling to the intended country(s).

Travelling to the United Kingdom to study the different aspects of Golf Course Management will allow me to have a better understanding

of the history of golf. As my family recently built an 18 hole course in Upstate New York, it is important to develop a strong appreciation for management in foreign countries, as well as in the United States.

I have worked on all aspects of golf course construction, as well as standard mowing operations, flower garden design and installation and have acted as assistant club house manager. The Dreer Award will give me the opportunity to enhance my knowledge and experience upon returning to my family's course.

Along with my academic studies, this spring I will be working to certify the Cornell University Golf Course with the International Audubon Society. The certification process will be a learning experience not only for me, but also for the

Superintendent, David Hicks, and the University.

This will not be the first time I have spent time in a foreign country. During 1994-1995, I spent one year in Wageningen, the Netherlands as a Rotary Foreign Exchange Student. I believe my language skills and international experience will be an asset to me if I am awarded this scholarship. I feel my experiences both on and off the golf course will also benefit you and your course.

The interests which I seek to expand on through this scholarship are:

- Clubhouse management
- Golf course maintenance and restoration
- Golf course horticulture and flower bed designs

I seek both paid and non-paid internships at up to four courses over the period of one year. If there is interest from your course to work together with me, or if you may know of a interested course or company, contact me at:

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Thank you for your time.

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 Victor, New York

## McDivot 1



As a member in good standing of BIGGA, I take exception to the article in the January issue of Greenkeeper International entitled "Sand Green Destruction" by "Sandy McDivot".

I have always enjoyed the author's articles in the past. He has an admirable flair for the written word, and his astute observations on the state of our industry and outspoken opinions (albeit under a pseudonym) are a much desired breath of fresh air in the otherwise stifled atmosphere of golf politics.

In his past articles, Sandy McDivot always had a firm grasp of his subject matter, and seemed to me to be someone speaking from an informed position. In the case of "Sand Green Destruction" however I can forthrightly state that any demonstrable knowledge of sand green maintenance is sadly lacking. I base this on my own 15 years of building and managing sand based greens.

To begin, McDivot complains of greens that puddle up and a "huge splat of a pitch mark". The only way that happens on a USGA green is if you are throwing out way too much water. Likewise the *Poa annua* infestation, excessive spiking, black layer and *Fusarium* that McDivot describes in the article are all symptoms of chronic over watering. Any turf school graduate could point that out.

Try field capacity, Sandy, and not saturation.

McDivot would do well to read the USGA literature on the desired level of irrigation.

Then the author says he was forced to apply "obscene quantities of fertiliser", and even worse - he had to do it in the autumn! Well, when exactly do you fertilise bentgrass? High summer? And just what is an "obscene" amount? A half an ounce a thousand? Two tons an acre? Further, what fertiliser is he applying? Ammonium nitrate? Cow manure? We are left to wonder.

Regarding fertility levels, one constructive suggestion I could make to anyone with sand greens is to "spoon feed", applying small amounts, (ie 0.5oz N/M, depending on soil analysis) at frequent intervals, even weekly. This will avoid nitrogen-induced disease incidence and the surge of green growth McDivot describes.

I have never seen a case of the described thatch build up when the correct management procedures of aeration, verticutting and top dressing were applied. This latter practice isn't mentioned at all in the article. Here's a clue, Sandy: Regular, light top dressing has been proven to reduce thatch, improve disease resistance, improve ball holding capability, reduce grain and smooth those old spike and ball marks. Try it!

If it's Take All Patch that you're worried about. I've obtained 100% control with alternating applications of Bayleton (2.5

kg/ha) and Rubigan (3.0 l/ha) supplemented with ammonium sulphate at 30.0 kg/ha, all on seven day intervals. It took about three months to disappear completely, not so many years as McDivot says, and the total cost didn't exceed £2,000, hardly exorbitant in this day and age. This may not work in all situations, but it certainly cleared up the problem for me.

Speaking of heavy play, we are presently doing over 200 rounds a day on a public course where the soft spike policy is cheerfully ignored and no golfer takes particular care to pick up his feet or repair his pitch marks. We change holes three times a week, or about every 450 golfers on average. This is on sand greens which don't even meet USGA specifications, and they remain both playable and attractive.

We are managing "Pennlinks" creeping bentgrass in a sub-tropical climate for which the species is entirely unsuited. We mow at five mm, the greens roll nine feet on the Stimpmeter and, oh yes, they are absolutely free of *Poa* (which does grow here) or any other weeds for that matter without an ounce of herbicide.

For decades the USGA Green Section has worked diligently through scientific research to develop the best possible growing medium for golf greens. This is meant to benefit both the Course Manager and the golfer. I spend a

considerable amount of time and effort to convince the powers that be to the necessary expense in constructing USGA greens, and it dismays me to see my arguments undermined by ignorance.

I believe it is irresponsible to publish articles, which contradict the fundamentals of sound agronomic principles by an individual who is either uninformed or incompetent. I find it distressing that a professional and reputable publication would carry such misinformation. Printing anecdotal evidence - moreover from an anonymous source - that flies in the face of proven industry standards is a disservice to this organisation.

I understand why the author wishes to remain anonymous, but he could do himself and everyone else in golf a favour by consulting with someone who truly understands USGA golf greens. I am acquainted with several knowledgeable people in the UK who I would be happy to recommend.

Alternatively, I invite the author to visit us here in the Canaries, to observe first hand, the successful management of sand based bentgrass greens.

After all, it's better to light a candle than curse the darkness.

Stephen Okula  
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 Spain