

## SUPER -N- SITE

Nick Marfise, *Glenview Park Golf Club*

# Keith Rincker -N-



*A 25-year-old with a Masters Degree from Southern Illinois may not be too hard to come by, but Keith Rincker has certainly set himself apart from the rest. Last summer Keith became the Manager of Turfgrass Research, for the Chicago District Golf Association (CDGA) working with Dr. Derek Settle.*

Like most growing up in Strasburg, Illinois Keith learned to farm corn and soybeans on his family's farm 180 miles south of Chicago. His family also raised cattle on approximately 800 acres of land. Keith was drawn to turf science while attending a career day at Lake Land Community College in Mattoon, Illinois. He was watching a couple of grounds workers lay sod and was certain that he could do a better job than they had.

Keith began his turf career working summers at Angus Links, a local 18-hole golf course. He enjoyed the long hours and working outside with his hands. Keith's father was the mechanic at Angus Links eventually becoming Golf Course Superintendent.

While maintaining his position at Angus Links, Keith attended Lake Land Community College where he achieved an Associates Degree in Agriculture Business and Supply. At Angus Links Keith helped his father develop a 60-acre sod farm consisting of Kentucky Blue grass, and Zoysia grass that was sold to the public. Keith soon went to Southern Illinois University (SIU) in Carbondale, where he attained his Bachelors Degree in Plant and Soil Science. While going to school in Carbondale, Keith worked at the Hickory Ridge Public Golf Center. During this time, Keith found himself liking the science aspect of turf, much more than the business side. He was fascinated with this new realm and upon completion of his Bachelors Degree, Keith started to work with Dr. Ken Diesburg on a Master's project involving tall fescue.

Keith's tall fescue challenge was a breeding project using self-pollination to determine the inbreeding depression of the species. Simply, Keith was trying to determine the macro and micro characteristics of his tall fescue plants.

Keith says, "a lot can be done with tall fescue" and feels that there is so much more we can get out of that particular species. One of his tests showed a greater resistance to brown patch.

Keith has only been with Chicago District Golf Association since June of last year and is already off to a flying start. Working with Dr. Derek Settle, Keith manages the research

and data that they collect from their trials and experiments on the Sunshine Course. Keith also travels the Chicagoland area helping with onsite visits and running trials and experiments on golf courses.

Keith is setting up two experiments for the 2009-10 seasons that are right up his alley. He is going to look at over 40 different cultivars of tall fescue to see which hold up the best under stress and which ones are most susceptible to disease. Keith also plans to work with low mow Kentucky bluegrass and record and study their response to newer herbicides. Keith recently expressed an interest pursuing plant breeding; something he knows can lead to better pest resistance. Keith has been taking a few classes in web design this past winter and will put his knowledge into practice by updating [cdgaturf.com](http://cdgaturf.com) – a website that is part of the CDGA's outreach.

As you could guess, Keith enjoys the outdoors. When he is able, he camps and canoes in the northern Minnesota boundary waters and surrounding forests. Keith has been known to mountain bike, and has participated the past two summers in the Rodney Miller Triathlon in Decatur.

Keith currently resides Westmont. Future plans for Keith include pursuing a doctoral degree and growing turf in the Caribbean. We are fortunate to have Keith as a key component and resource in the CDGA's Turfgrass Program. **-OC**



*Keith Rincker*





*Above: Keith Rincker addresses a group on the Sunshine Course at the Turf Field Day in September 2008.*

*Below: Rincker is all about collecting solid data to make the turf we manage better.*

