

EDUCATION RECAP

Charles Anfield, CGCS, *Heritage Bluffs Public Golf Club*



ITF Winter Workshop

Dr. Frank Rossi from Cornell University was the lead-off hitter for the day. First he showed slides from the new Yankee Stadium turf consulting work and gloated over his Yankees winning the World Series. Then he got down to "brass tacks" and made a very informative presentation on The Bethpage Project.

Legislation was pending in 2000 to ban the use of all chemical pesticides on public golf courses on Long Island. Researchers at Cornell University developed a long-term management project on the Green Course putting surfaces that was designed to develop non-chemical and reduced chemical strategies. Ten years later they have an extensive array of products and programs that effectively reduce the environmental risk associated with pesticides by 96%. His presentation addressed the philosophical and practical aspects of reducing the use of chemicals and fertilizers on the entire golf course. Through modern IPM, the use of bio-rational products, and a variety of progressive cultural practices this was accomplished on an 80-year-old bentgrass/annual bluegrass golf course.

Initially, the non pesticide program failed to provide greens of suitable quality. Rounds declined by 30% and policy makers had to rethink their legislation.

Cornell's "Progressive IPM" program has a few guidelines.

- Develop written historical records.
- Manage plant health populations to promote bentgrass.
- Regularly check predictive models.
- Disease control on greens does not use thresholds, treat preventatively.
- Use EIQ (Environmental Impact Quotient) which reduces risk by providing a numerical value for risk.
- Focus on tee and fairway playability, not 100% control.
- Seek large scale reductions of pesticide applications.

This alternative culture reduced costs by over 40%. Golfers were satisfied with greens with reduced maintenance and rarely perceived a quality difference in playing surface. Surveys indicated that golfers are OK with judicious pesticide use.

There was a large quality difference between no chemical use and a few chemicals used. A Progressive IPM and Best practices program could be maintained with a 30-65% reduction in the application of pesticides.

One of the goals of the project was to demonstrate and provide resource efficient golf turf.

- Recognize transition phase.
- Communicate in, out and up.
- Use N only on soil base systems.
- Reduce weed control.
- Mow less area, green to rough.
- Seek reduced risk products to reduce "environmental cost".
- Use research based information and not anecdotes based on science. Good stuff.



Len Conley gave a great talk on creating a successful organic fertilizer program.

After lunch Greg Martin, of Martin Design led off the afternoon session entitled, "Construction Trends (the New Normal)."

Greg is very passionate about the sustainability of the game of golf. Sustainability: a practice that ensures the continued viability of a product, practice, industry or system well into the future or the capacity to endure. The current state of the game indicates growth is flat and discretionary spending is down.

He cited challenges with the time/cost/difficulty formula of the game. The future of the game will depend on golf course designs that offer solutions to environmental challenges. Golf courses need to serve as storm-water management, water quality buffer zones, providing for biodiversity, wetland mitigation, and degraded brown-field landscapes.

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Greg says we need to re-think our expectations of the game.

- Perfection, fairness, and shooting par should be eliminated from our vocabulary.
- We need to help adjust golfer's expectations of conditioning.
- Reduce construction costs by building smaller, more compact courses.
- Improve pace of play with easier set ups.
- Reduce impact of medal play; promote match play.
- Foster new players by providing playability for a wide range of player's skill and accessibility.
- Be willing to develop new golfer programs.
- The "new normal" of design should have a smaller footprint: par 3 courses and hybrids.
- Shorter, wider courses will be more fun to play, less expensive to maintain.
- We need to grow the game with a less tedious, better-paced experience.

The last presentation of the day featured Mike Sprouse of Randall Oaks Golf Club and Todd Quitno of Lohmann Golf Designs.

Randall Oaks Golf Club underwent a re-design of the West Range Learning Center in a "Grow the Game" initiative. Lohmann Golf Designs offered numerous routing options and renovation of existing course features.

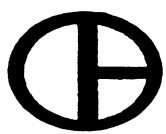
The location along Randall Road provided a great marketing opportunity for junior golf. The Acorn course was already a huge success for Junior Programs and alternative golf programming. Randall Oaks wanted to improve their course and promote golf as a way to enhance lives, benefit the community, assist disabled people, and teach young people lessons of life.

Day two of the seminars started with a very informative session by Len Conley of The Sanctuary. Len focused on building an organic fertilizer program for your turf. Dr. Tom Voigt talked weeds and products and the afternoon was wrapped up with a discussion about artificial turf. The ITF did a really nice job of providing turf education that we can all use. **-OC**

Jonathan Huard of Field Turf talked about the plastic side of turf— an eye opening talk.



Carla Wagner of Wild Goose Chase broke up the afternoon with her dog and one of the new services they offer – finding bed bugs for hotels. Carla explained the dogs can be trained to pick out many different scents. What's next, pythium?



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