

EDUCATION REVIEW

Charles Anfield, CGCS, *Heritage Bluffs Golf Course*



Midwest Turf Clinic

The MAGCS Members once again met at the always spectacular, Medinah Country Club for their premiere education event of the year. Of course I'm talking about the 59th presentation of the Midwest Turf Clinic and Annual Meeting. Once again, the "cracker" Staff of the Education Committee Chaired by Dave Groelle, CGCS from Royal Melbourne Country Club did not disappoint. The theme for this year's Clinic was "It's Tournament Time."

Outgoing President Dan Sterr from Stonebridge Country Club started the Annual Meeting and included a recap of all of the Education from the monthly Meetings of this year.

Brian Placzowski, Assistant Superintendent from Royal Melbourne Country Club was the Morning Moderator.

Our Host for the Day Curtis Tyrrell, CGCS from Medinah Country Club was the first speaker. Curtis's topic was "Ryder Cup Preparations." His Ryder Cup preparations began the day he was hired as Director of Golf Course Operations in 2008. The Club had compiled data that indicated that 8 of 12 rounds being played were being played by guests. Guest expectations for golf at Medinah are "sky high." The Membership wanted to improve day to day playing conditions on all of the courses. The Membership wanted to try to meet expectations by improving the infrastructure, to create better consistency in turf maintenance practices and playing conditions. This was to be accomplished by rebuilding and renovating existing features as required and re-grass turf species. The initial focus is on course #3 and over time will expand to the other two courses.

Golf Course Architect, Rees Jones (A.K.A. "The Open Doctor") was brought back in by the Membership (not mandated by the PGA) to make some changes to course #3 to prepare for the 2012 Ryder Cup. Curtis showed some slides of soil profiles on some of the greens on course number 3 prior to the renovation. The photos revealed a clay subgrade capped with a soil loam, topped off with a few inches of ac-



Curtis Tyrrell, CGCS

cumulated topdressing sand from over the years. These greens were problematic during periods of hot and wet soil conditions. The overall goal was to provide firm, fast conditions, every day. The decision was made to rebuild all of the greens to USGA specifications. Minor topographic contour changes were made. The greens were also "plumbed" to accommodate portable Precision Air units which can either blow or remove air from the greens profile. Vaults were installed to be able to visually check for positive water flow. Seed was planted in August of 2009.

In addition all of the bunkers were renovated to stabilize the subgrades, improve drainage, install liners and add new sand. Some new tees were added and constructed as recommended by Rees Jones.

The fairways were renovated to create a more uniform stand of bentgrass. First they were sprayed out with Round Up, and then an application of Basamid was made and watered in. The fairways were seeded in two directions. Root pruning was conducted on all fairway perimeters to minimize tree root intake of the herbicide. Curtis compared the scope and mess of the process with his experiences in the desert over-seeding ryegrass into dormant Bermuda.

Tree removal has been ongoing and the thinning of some of the heavily dense stands of trees and removal of dead and dying foliage has taken place. Curtis showed some slides of this "wicked" tree cutting machine on tracks that looked like something out of "Mad Max". The pictures brought oohs and aahs from the grass loving Members in attendance.

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I asked Curtis what the maximum size tree it could handle. "There's nothing here that it can't handle," he answered.

On the day of this presentation, Curtis was meeting with the Green Committee and Board of Directors later to decide the fate of a fair amount of mature oak trees marked for removal. The meeting went well into the night but the resolution passed. This was to be sure, a difficult but big step in the agronomic health for the new turf and playability of the golf course.

The biggest change to the golf course was the redesign of hole #15. Previously, the hole had drainage issues and was considered a non-descript par 4. The Members let Rees design a drive-able par 4 to create more dramatic risk/reward situations in a match play scenario. The new yardage will play between 280 and 315 yards. New drainage was installed and a new pond fronts the green as an added challenge.

Curtis showed some stunning overhead views. This hole is sure to be a major viewing area for the Ryder Cup and will be an exciting hole for the Members to "double down" and "put it on the line" for their own matches.

In addition, The Club re-built the Golf Maintenance Facility.

Curtis took some time to emphasize the TEAM concept that needs to be adaptable to fit the scope of preparing a golf course for the Ryder Cup. It starts with the Staff, Members, Consultants, PGA and a network of colleagues. There will be over 43 acres used on property just for infrastructure support including hospitality and the media.

On June 5, the preparations on site for the event begin.

Much of the major "in house" work will begin after the Ryder Cup ends. Work will need to be done to restore the damage from the galleries and equipment used during the event. If that's not enough, future renovation work was recently approved for course #1 in 2012. The Club will bring in Tom Doak and Renaissance Golf for a re-design. Curtis and his Staff will be busy next year.

Curtis also mentioned the Class A/SM GCSAA gold membership card will get you access each day to the tournament for you and your spouse. Furthermore, Curtis will be working with the Midwest to ask for volunteer help. Look for communications forthcoming.

Tim Moraghan, Principal: Aspire Golf Consulting took the podium for his presentation, "Everyday Championship Agronomy." Aspire taps into an extensive and knowledgeable network comprised of leading golf industry professionals with decades of experience and who understand the importance of long-term relationships. Based on client needs, Moraghan and his associates create short and long term golf conditioning programs, facilitate the master planning process, develop event solicitation and preparation strategies and fit Superintendents with the best courses through Aspire Golf's placement division. In addition to his work as a Golf Course

Superintendent with experience in maintenance and grow-ins, Tim spent 20 years with the USGA as Director of Championship Agronomy.

Tim began with a few pieces of advice. "No one appreciates Superintendents and I don't know why. Also, brown is not the new green, green (as in money) is the new green. Don't be afraid to play golf. The lower your handicap is the higher your turf growing I.Q. Take a Rules of Golf Seminar; it will increase your credibility."

- I. Planning and Organization
 - a. Plan events around the weather for that time of year.
 - b. Know the competition format
 - c. What will set up philosophy be?
 - d. Form an event management team
 - e. Work with Committees
 - II. Access Needs
 - a. What equipment will you need?
 - b. Start gathering volunteers to help.
 - c. Begin contacts with outside Vendors.
 - d. Consider Parking needs
 - III. Prepare Timeline
 - a. Maintenance calendar should be based on soil temperatures.
 - b. What cultural practices will need to be done and when?
 - c. Overlay golf calendar with maintenance practices.
 - d. Adjust dates if conflicts.
 - e. Start season.
 - IV. Follow Up
 - a. Coordinate with Chairman and Committees.
 - b. Coordinate with Staff and Professionals.
 - V. Execution
 - a. Course set up issues
 - b. Rules of golf
- Tim ended his presentation and left us with a few bits of wisdom for consideration.
1. Purchase a prism to measure "true" height of cut on greens.
 2. In stress conditions, sometimes its best do nothing. When in doubt, don't do anything.
 3. Make sure tee markers are 7 paces apart.
 4. Bunkers
 - a. Check for proper sand depth
 - b. Make sure bunker has defined margins
 - c. Work on drainage



Tim Moraghan