

MAGCS IN MOTION  
 Steven Biehl, *Naperville Country Club*

# To Blog or Not to Blog

*Communication seems to be a never-ending task at many clubs. Soon after I started at Naperville Country Club, Tim and I began discussing how we could be more effective at communicating information to the members. I knew what a blog was and what it was capable of, but had never created one. We looked at examples of other superintendent blogs, and then became bloggers ourselves.*

Due to the versatility of the blog, we hoped it would become our primary forum for the members. Previous to the blog, the formal communication of the green department existed of a few paragraphs in the monthly newsletter and a bulletin board in each locker room. Those outlets rarely provided the adequate length or versatility necessary for the topics we inform our members about. With the blog, we utilize however much space we need and can include pictures, videos and links of related resources. Likewise, the member can get as involved as they choose. They can subscribe to receive new postings through email, comment or just check in to read the latest posts.

We have found more to like than dislike about maintaining a blog. It has become very easy to make a large amount of information available to the entire membership. As we expand the blog's uses, it keeps getting easier. Along with the blog, we have created accounts through Twitter, TwitPic, YouTube and utilize the club's Facebook page. By utilizing the RSS feed of the blog the information we post is automatically posted on Twitter, and the club's Facebook page. With a phone smart enough, we can take a picture while on the course, write a sentence about it, and send the picture and text to the blog as an email where it will be uploaded as a new post. The RSS feed will then send the new post to anyone subscribed to the blog, our Twitter account and the club's Facebook page, all before we can get back to the office.

What started out as just a blog has turned into an entire social network for the green department. We had not anticipated the blog to be anymore than an avenue to provide members with information. Along the way, the blog has become part of a network of golf course management blogs where superintendents share information about each one's respective maintenance practices. Because of this, the decision to make the blog private or public should be made before the blog is created. If it is available to the public it can be utilized

to move internet traffic to a club's website through Search Engine Optimization (SEO).

Through it all, we still only have a small percentage of members who visit the blog on a regular basis. That number is slowly increasing as we utilize a wider range of resources on the internet. The next step we are taking is to provide a touch screen computer in the locker room that will be set to display only the blog and act as an interactive bulletin board. Whether communicating through a blog, email, or face-to-face, there needs to be two halves working together. With the blog we feel we are continuously improving our half.

## Blog examples

**Friday, April 22, 2011**

WET WEEK FOR THE COURSE



The rain didn't want to stop this week. We had 0.70" on Saturday morning, 0.80" on Monday morning, 0.68" on Tuesday morning, 0.26" this morning and almost 0.20" since we have been at work today. Thankfully it looks like the bulk of the rain will be missing us to the south. Our total for the week is still a little more than 2.5".

*(continued on page 29)*



As I mentioned earlier, most of our time this week was spent on getting our bunkers in shape. This involved trimming and pulling weeds around the edges, moving sand to provide a uniform depth and finishing up with a thin layer of fresh sand. The bunker on the left was done and ready for a fresh layer of sand.



Here is a picture of the guys adding a fresh layer to the green side bunker on 9.

**Tuesday, April 12, 2011**

WORK ON THE POND AT 11 TEE



Last season you may have noticed a spot between the cart path and pond on 11 was beginning to show a sink hole. This spring we dug it up to find out exactly what the problem

was. There is a pipe that moves the overflow for the pond to a concrete tank underneath the cart path. From there the water move out of the tank into another pipe that moves it to the pond on 17. After it was dug out, the underside of the metal pipe that was in the ground had completely rusted out and soil was being washed from around the pipe into the concrete tank.



The hole was dug out and a new pipe was put in place.



We were not able to get the repair completed before a rain event set us back a little.



After the rain, we needed to dig around the pipe again to prepare for more concrete to seal the pipe to the concrete tank and to hold the pipe in place. **-OC**






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