

on <sup>11/2016</sup>

THE MIDWEST ASSOCIATION OF GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENTS

# COURSE

GCSAA MEMBERS MEET

SUMMER PATCH

BULLSHEET AND MORE



Making Some Sense  
of the Season of 2016



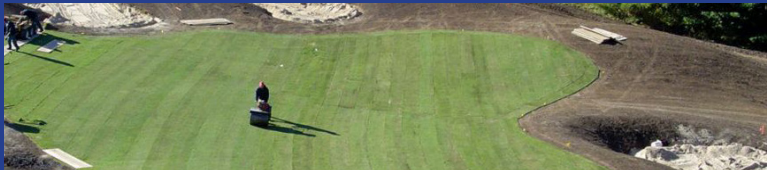
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FEATURE

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## front cover

Looking back at the season of 2016, the cover shot features the 16<sup>th</sup> hole at this year's International Crown at Merit Club. Despite some poor weather this season, turf managers stayed on top of the issues and produced some of the best playing conditions for their membership and players.



One of the issues that plagued golf course superintendents this season was summer patch. The photo above depicts it attacking the Kentucky bluegrass surrounds of a tee. Chuck Barber recounts his battle with this pathogen on his putting surfaces at St. Charles Country Club on page 16.

## DEPARTMENTS

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## DATES

### 2016-17 UPCOMING MIDWEST EVENTS

- 12/7 Midwest Annual Meeting and Turf Clinic, Medinah CC
- 1/24/17 Midwest January Meeting and Wee One Fundraiser
- 2/8/17 Midwest Hospitality Reception, Orlando, FL
- 2/16/17 Annual Winter Workshop, Lemont IL

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Shane Conroy  
GCSAA Field Staff

# GCSAA Members Meet

*82 delegates representing 84 chapters converged in Kansas City, MO and Lawrence KS over two days to participate in GCSAA's annual Chapter Delegates Meeting.*

The meeting offers delegates the opportunity to see first-hand the programs and initiatives put in place by GCSAA staff and the Board of Directors, as well as gives delegates the chance to participate in discussions on upcoming plans and strategies. Some of the main focuses this year were advocacy,

BMPs and membership growth.

Advocacy has been a main focus of GCSAA for some time, and Chava McKeel and her team are not slowing down. During the Chapter Delegates Meeting, Chava updated the delegates on the successes from National Golf Day in Washington DC, and from GCSAA's Grassroots Ambassador program. In 2016, GCSAA had the largest turnout to date at National Golf Day, and was the most represented group from the 'We Are Golf' coalition. Part of this success is due to the Grassroots Ambassador program, which is paying great dividends. We currently have 246 Grassroots Ambassadors across the nation. Five states presently have all their ambassadorship positions filled, with an additional six states looking for only one more ambassador. Illinois currently has nine of the 20 available grassroots ambassador position filled, which means we are continuously looking for individuals to get involved. The program is open to any class A, B or C member and requires a minimal time commitment from the ambassador. GCSAA arms you with all the necessary information and provides regular updates and resources. Please contact me if you are interested in getting involved in this worthy program. I am also pleased to announce GCSAA is hiring Michael Lee as Manager, Government Affairs to work alongside Chava McKeel and Bob Helland. One of Michael's main focuses will be to increase communication with our Grassroots Ambassadors and aid in connecting the ambassadors with their U.S. Congressperson or Representative.

Delegates were also briefed on GCSAA's BMP Planning Guide and Template by GCSAA's Associate Director, Environmental Programs Mark Johnson. Only 13 states have some form of a BMP manual in place, which does not include Illinois. These manuals are important as it broadcasts our professional commitment to the community and environment, as well as, showcases the stewardship our industry demonstrates while providing quality turfgrass. The BMP Planning Guide will be completely digitized and will be customizable for each state. Working with allied associations, state agencies, universities and other affiliated GCSAA chapters within the state will be crucial when completing the guide. The official launch of the program will be at GIS 2017 in Orlando, FL.

Shelia Finney, Senior Director, Member Relations briefed those in attendance regarding the associations plans to increase membership over the coming years. With the goal of bringing membership up to 20,000 by year 2020, membership recruitment will focus on all domestic classifications and well as international members. Efforts will also be made to move Class B members to Class A, and focus will be given to connecting student and local chapters to allow for more student-employer networking. Welcome packets will be created for both student and equipment manager (EM) classifications, and personalized new-member contact will increase. Chapter growth will also be a priority of the next few years, with outreach resources being provided to local chapters. The GCSAA board also presented proposed bylaw changes which would affect the International Superintendent Member (ISM) and the EM classifications, which would allow for additional members.

The meeting also featured a 'Town Hall' session where delegates can voice their concerns and ask questions directly to the board and GCSAA staff. Each year the meeting concludes with breakout sessions and presentations from all of those running for GCSAA board and officer positions. The voting will take place during the GCSAA Annual Meeting February 9th during GIS in Orlando, FL. @

# Making Some Sense of the Season of 2016

Mr. David Marquardt, Dirt-n-Turf Consulting, Inc.

*There are many things we like to see behind us: High school and college, internships and safety training and the election and colonoscopies, (which in this year might be about the same thing!)*

And of course, if you talk to anyone growing turf this year, we're glad this summer is behind us too. A summer full of the two things we most don't want to see for cool season turf; heat and water. As many would agree, it was like living in a petri dish this year, and again, we're glad it's behind us. There are few people who visit more golf courses and look at more turf issues than I, so I thought I would share a bit of what clients were dealing with and maybe what we've learned.

First, I would be remiss if I didn't say how well we responded as an industry. (I still struggle with calling golf an industry.) Superintendents, vendors, CDGA and our universities, and many others who support our efforts, all came together to ease the stresses and make the best of a difficult situation. We are very fortunate as a profession to be able to reach out to colleagues and professionals to both gain and offer support. We are in this together, which is rare in the competitive world we live in today.

So here are a few of my observations: One of the



*Many superintendents were ready this year to get the hoses out and begin the handwatering regimes from the start.*

things I most enjoyed was how quickly superintendents and their staffs responded to the heat. While I would agree that managers are better trained, I think there's more to it than that. Most of our memories are still fresh enough from the last bout of heat that came only 4 seasons ago in 2012. This year, most superintendents knew how to cool greens, get the fans running, do the syringing, and in general, respond to the conditions before us. This was not the case in 2012. Operators got behind and much more damage took place before corrective measures were implemented. Why? Because we really hadn't been through anything like it since 2006 and many of our superintendents were assistants or in college 10 years ago. Many lessons were learned in 2012 and we jumped into action as soon as this season's heat lingered.



*Persistent storms hampered planning, operations, and rooting.*

Responding to the excess water is quite another story. Many areas across the Midwest had record setting rainfall, often in just a day or two. Add to that the endless cloud cover and humidity, drying turf and soil profiles became an overwhelming challenge. Clients were quick to respond with venting and fans to help dry tissue and wick away excess water, but in most cases, root degradation had already taken place. Again I applaud managers on how quick they responded not only to the emergency caused by flooding rains, but also to the need to micro-manage a turf without roots. Many clients found themselves syringing fairways, collars and approaches by the end of June which was not at all a normal process. LDS blew up everywhere by the 4th of July, and with-

out roots, wetting agents were in many cases, ineffective. Beyond responding to the excesses of heat and water, clients also had to deal with reoccurring diseases. Twitter was still active with talk of Dollar Spot spraying as late as the first week of October. But perhaps the biggest problems we saw were Take-all and Summer Patch. These two animals just would not quit and many superintendents used everything they could find to try and minimize the damage.



*If it didn't rain, we experienced many days of cloud cover, coupled with high humidity - a bad combination for turf health.*

Tip burn was also an issue this season unlike any we've seen. I don't think I've ever had more calls with tissue burn from just about every tank combination guys applied. Often it was with no fertilizer in the tanks! Burn appeared after PGR and fungicide applications that superintendents had safely used for years. No one I've talked to all year seemed to have an answer for this so if you have a hunch please share it with the rest of us!

Something else that was unique was the extreme amount of grass clients were cutting and the lack of fertility that was applied. Summer and fall nitrogen levels in native soils or where there was organic matter present were some of the highest we've observed. This was mostly due to the high amount of biological activity that was present thanks to the



*Localized dry spot (LDS) reared its ugly head and became a tough combatant this summer. These two soil samples were taken from a fairway two feet apart. Can you tell which soil is hydrophobic?*

heat and humidity. This process is known as mineralization which is the biological breakdown of organic matter and the release of ammoniacal nitrogen,  $NH_4$ . Often clients would remark that they were at record low inputs and yet struggling with PGR programs to maintain clippings.

As an agronomist, one of the things I found most interesting was just how low fertility levels were in fall sampling, and yet how healthy the turf was. Beyond the mineralization noted above, many clients recorded record low levels of irrigation use. So while fertility levels were much lower than usual, so were irrigation salts. It became very obvious that the less sodium, chloride, and sulfates we applied through irrigation, the less need there was to offset it with nutrient salts like calcium and potassium. Many clubs who deal with really poor irrigation water, loaded with road salts and sulfates, would have had even a worse time in this year's heat, had they been loading surfaces and tissue with sodium and chlorides in their cooling efforts.



*Summer Patch was prevalent this season, as pictured here the Kentucky bluegrass surrounds of a tee bank.*

Even though clubs maintained very reasonable playing conditions throughout a very difficult year, there were still problems to come. Just as expected and predicted, service calls picked up quickly following Labor Day. As noted above, all things considered, turf and playing surfaces looked pretty good. However the rootzone told another story. Warm wet soils had taken a toll on rooting and root integrity, and yet many clubs continued with fall cultural practices because of a prearranged date on a calendar. In many cases, after a year of 'holding on' and doing a great job of maintaining playing conditions, operators took the steel to the course and badly injured turf that was simply not ready for such abuse. We observed this with core aeration as well as many deep grooming practices. Add to this the fact that the heat and rain just continued, and recovery has been slow. This is one of those cases where less is more. We have encouraged many clients to either forego normal fall cultural practices or solid tine only. Obviously this wasn't the case for everyone, but it was for a high enough percentage that it bears mentioning here.

And so through all of this what did we learn? Well many things.

- First of all know what's underneath, not just what's on

top.

- Meters have their place, but so does an old school soil probe and your nose. Don't replace tried and true tools with new shiny ones just because everyone else is doing it.
- Less is more when turf is under stress. Sounds simple, but it's just not our nature to pat the turf on the head and leave it alone when we have a shed or two full of grooming equipment and a club crying for ball speed.
- Over and over again this year we heard the saying that 'I'd rather have slow greens than no greens'. So true!
- And then there's what I call the 'White Gold' effect. I find it so interesting how so many products we can't live without in the good years are nowhere to be found in the tough years. The KISS method is really the best method and keeping to the basics really paid dividends this year.
- Respond quickly! While this seems natural it's not. Over and over superintendents thought the heat would break and the rains would quit. Respond as if the conditions will get worse instead of better! It's easier to return to normal cultural practices and put the fans away, than to put turf back on injured playing surfaces.



*Turf growth never slowed down this season, even with minimal to no fertility inputs because of the the mineralization in the soil profiles.*

- This is the kind of year when the limiting factors or weaknesses in your program or on your course came to the surface and its good time to evaluate them with your club and start to address those that are within your control. What are the weaknesses or limiting factors? Each course is different and a long list might start with irrigation water quality; rootzone limitations; drainage; equipment; staff; micro-climates; turf age and varieties.....
  - And in this vein, many guys have learned to be very careful when they compare cultural practices with colleagues. Each club's cultural program needs to be designed with not only the limiting factors in mind, but also factors such as budget, round counts, work days, and more. The point; while one guy with a new turf, quality rootzones, less play, and good water, takes advantage of a couple of cool days to do some grooming and topdressing, the guy with poa, 35,000 rounds, minimal staff, micro-climates and salty water can't. Several clubs learned this the hard way by following someone else's lead on social media.



*Sometimes, less is more; a light brushing is what this superintendent chose to do as the weather began to cool.*

- And maybe the best lesson of all, don't make rash program changes based on this 'not so typical' season. Make notes of what worked and what didn't and file them in a 911 file on your desktop, but don't change what you know has been successful at your club based on a season like this.
- Lastly, don't judge that new PGR, that new wetting agent, that new fertilizer product, based on a year when profiles were compromised and turf response hampered. Be fair and re-evaluate these products again next year. What's the saying, don't throw the baby out with the bath water? This applies.

I'm sure there are many observations and lessons I've missed but these are fresh on my mind in a year that I'm glad to have behind us. Upward and onward! @



*When the opportunity arose, many superintendents began to groom. Small solid tines were used on the turf above - less detrimental to weakened turf than large hollow ones.*





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# #BullSheet



November 2016

## DATES TO REMEMBER

November 30 - December 1 –51<sup>st</sup> Annual Wisconsin Turf Symposium. Kohler, WI. ([wgcsa.com](http://wgcsa.com))

December 5 – Annual Southside Superintendent Holiday Party at The Bier Stube, Frankfort, Illinois. Contact Matthew Harstad & Ed Esgar.

December 7 – 64th Midwest TurfClinic at Medinah Country club, Curtis Tyrrell, CGCS, MG host.

December 9 – Deadline for nominations for the 2016 TurfNet Superintendent of the Year Award presented by Syngenta.

December 16 – Annual West Side Superintendents Holiday Party at Seven Bridges Golf Club in Woodridge, IL from 11 to 5, Don Ferreri and Dave Gelino hosts.

January 10-11 – ITF's Turf Conference, Poplar Creek Golf & Country Club, Dustin Hugen, host ([iturf.org](http://iturf.org)).

January 24 – MAGCS January Monthly Meeting and Wee One Fundraiser at Seven Bridges Golf Club.

SiteOne Landscape Supply announced that its Joliet store has moved to a new location. Look for them at 18801 S. Wolf Road, Units 5, 6, & 7 in Mokena, IL.

Hopefully everyone has addressed the new Department of Labor Fair Labor Standards Act overtime law, and is in full compliance. If not, don't fret it—you have until December 1 to get it done!

We lost an oldie but a goodie last month, when Jim Burdett passed away on the 13th at the age of 82. Jim was a fixture in our business from 1957 when he first went to work for his dad at the Paul E. Burdett Company through 2000 when he retired. Jim took over the golf course supply business upon his father's retirement in 1972, and ran it (and later Burdett's Inc. and Master of the Links) until he sold them to **Mike O'Neill**.

Throughout his time in business, Jim would visit his customers in a variety of vehicles, including the famous "bread truck," in which he carried invaluable wares for superintendents such as rumble strips and tile cleaning nozzles. Assistants got to know Jim well, as their bosses ran and hid when that old truck came in the gate, leaving them to hear the latest spiel. He was truly one of the nicest people you could possibly know, and an icon in our association for many years. **Eddie Braunsky**, who is about Jim's age, had this to say: "They broke the mold when Jim was born. Some of the 'young bucks' in the Midwest Association never had the pleasure of meeting him. They never had the chance to 'hide' from Jim as he pulled up in his bread truck full of wares. Jim would roll up the door to his truck and the adventure would begin. 'Hey Jim...give me 3 cases of paint...2 rolls of rope and a box of 1" hose washers.' I still have half a box of those washers purchased 20 years ago. I had the pleasure of playing golf with Jim several times. Patience is a virtue...that's all I want to say about that. The highlight of one of those rounds was when Jim blasted a ball that shattered one of the divot containers he used to sell. 'I need to sell them a few more,' Jim chirped. Jim always asked about your family. He really loved his family. We would mention some story about his wife Marilyn or let you know what his son



*Jim Burdett was a nice man who loved the golf industry and the people in it.*

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was up to. He truly loved the MAGCS and was proud to be a longtime member. 'Hey listen'....Jimmy rest in peace, and say hi to Albie and the boys!" Jim Burdett—often imitated, NEVER duplicated.

While on the subject of oldies but goodies, here's a couple of blasts from the past—on the left is longtime MAGCS member Bruce Williams, whose work you can find in Golf Course Industry magazine, and on the right is Fernando Fernandez, former superintendent at Green Acres CC and Black Sheep. The two hooked up at a chapter meeting in Massachusetts recently, and haven't changed a bit since leaving the area for greener pastures.



*Bruce Williams and Fernando Fernandez meet up in Mass.*

Sweet deal—Erin Hills, the Hartford, Wisconsin golf club that will host next year's U.S. Open, closed the first week of October and will not reopen to the public until after the tournament on June 18th, 2017. The move was made by

owner Andy Ziegler in order to ensure the golf course looks its best for a worldwide audience, and to avoid a repeat of the criticism that last year's host course, Chambers Bay received. By comparison, Chambers Bay closed to the public on May 15th prior to hosting the Open on June 15th. That puts some serious pressure on superintendent Zach Reineking and his crew, huh?

At the time this was being written, the Cubs had lost game 1 of the World Series to the Indians. However the series turned out, ONE of these two is the proud fan of the last team to win a World Series in Chicago. I'm hoping against hope it's not Baumgartner.



*Matt Baumgartner of Nadler Golf and Todd Schmitz of Phillips Park*

Speaking of the World Series, on October 26<sup>th</sup> The Golf Channel's Matt Ginella announced

his lineup of the courses one MUST play if they are coming to Chicago for one of the games at Wrigley Field. Batting first was the Dunes Club in New Buffalo, MI, followed by Shoreacres, then Chicago Golf Club, with Butler National batting cleanup. Batting fifth in the lineup was Olympia Fields North course, Medinah #3 was 6th, Cog Hill #4 in the 7 hole, followed by the Glen Club hitting 8th and Cantigny in the ninth spot. Good shout out to some great venues in our midst.

On a very rainy October 12th, Kris Kvelland and Ridge Country Club hosted the University of Illinois Alumni Golf Outing.

The annual event brings together U of I alumni in all areas of golf and turf from across the area, along with a few of their professors for a day of golf and catching up. Many thanks to Kris and the staff at Ridge for hosting, and for opening the bar where ALMOST all the day's participants took shelter. Somebody forgot to tell Chuck Barber and Luke Cella that, so they earned the distinction of being the only two to complete all 18 wet holes. (Pictured below: Front (LtoR) - Bob Kohlstedt, Chuck Barber, Connor Healy, Greg Rounds, Alan Hill, Brian Winkel, Ben Larsen, Erwin McKone, Darin Habenicht, Craig Shepherd, Jim Boccarossa. Back: (L to R) Luke Cella, Brian Mores, Matt Kregel, Brian Kalal, and host Kris (I hope my members don't see how wet it is out here and I'm letting you idiots take carts) Kvelland.



OK, why not?  
Can an atheist get insurance against acts of God?

Big congrats to Dave Ward and Coyote Run Golf Course in Flossmoor on winning the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago's (MWRD) 2016 Sustainable Landscaping and Bio-solids Beneficial Re-use Award. Dave has been involved with using bio-solids on the property since taking part in a study conducted by Tom Voigt of the U of I in 2006, and is also a noted expert in native plants, having planted countless species on Coyote Run's 140 acres.



*From US Open Superintendent to native plant expert to bio solid guru- there is no slowing down for this MAGCS member.*



*How many turkeys do you see on this fairway at Cantigny?*

Ryan Ochs and the crew at Sunset Valley Golf Course will have their hands full come springtime—the Park District of Highland Park has finalized a \$5.6 million plan to overhaul the course beginning next May and not reopening until July of 2018. Rick Jacobson (Jacobson Golf Course Design, Inc.) will be the architect overseeing the work, which will involve re-contouring the course and improving stormwater management to minimize revenue losses after rain events.

Jerry Kershasky is one of the Top Guns at Reinders, which is in Wisconsin, a state that I'm told more than one River Runs Through It. Is there a possible connection?

## MIDWEST Doppelgänger



Jerry Kershasky or Tom Skerritt?

### Rules of Golf Quiz:

True or False—a player concedes a hole, but then realizes he was entitled to a handicap stroke on the hole and makes a claim. Should his concession be revoked? Answer at the end.



Audubon International, which oversees the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for golf courses among its many functions, has hired a new executive director. Christine Kane comes to AI after serving as a leader at several educational and charitable not-for-profits in New York State.



The World Golf Foundation (WGF) has announced the launch of the Golf & Health Project, academically researching and highlighting how the game can benefit people's lives. Studies by researchers at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland have shown that golf's key benefits include improvements in life expectancy and quality of life, physical and mental health benefits, decreased risk of more than 40 major chronic diseases like type 2 diabetes, heart attacks, co-

lon and breast cancer, and has positive impacts on cholesterol, body composition, metabolism and longevity. No mention of any benefits to liver function, but my guess is probably not.

In a year from now, on October 23-24, the inaugural CanAm Cup will be played in New Jersey at Canoe Brook and Baltusrol. Over 200 golfers from each country will represent the Canadian Golf Superintendents Association (the Can faction) and GCSAA (the Am component) in flighted competition over two days to determine which country has more game. More information on how to get in on the fun will be forthcoming from GCSAA.

A few words about your GCSAA classification status: Effective January 1, 2017, Grandfather Status for Class B members relative to Class A eligibility will no longer be available. Also, effective July 1, 2017, the requirements for Class A and CGCS renewals will change. Go to [www.gcsaa.org](http://www.gcsaa.org) for all the fine print. It's important.

Q: When Julie Andrews visits **Kevin DeRoo's** course, what happens?

A: The Bartlett Hills are Alive With the Sound of Music. Yes, I'm running really low on material.

Speaking of Bartlett Hills and Kevin DeRoo, we had the opportunity to get out and play there last month on the 5th for the last MAGCS golf event of the season, and what a beautiful day we had! After Jerad Minnick educated attendees with his "Advancing Grass Genetics and Technology" talk, it was on to the course for the Two-Person Ryder Cup format, with teams playing six holes of scramble, six best ball and six alternate shot. The course was in great shape, and everyone had a blast while enjoying the chance to play some late-season golf. Many thanks to Kevin and everyone at BHGC for graciously hosting the day, and congratulations to the winning teams of Chuck Barber and Chris Cameron with their gross score of 68, 2<sup>nd</sup> Place: Dustin Hugen and Luke Cella (70), 3<sup>rd</sup> place Ben Kelnhofer and Kurt Sams (71).



*The best of the day and the tallest twosome to compete, Chris Cameron and Chuck Barber took home first place honors in the MAGCS Two-Man Championship.*

Quiz answer: False, per Decision 6-2a/4.



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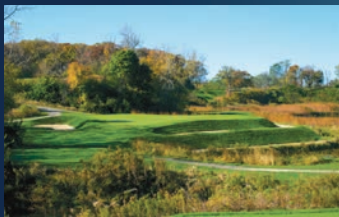
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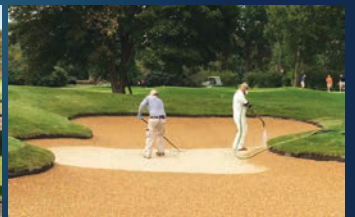
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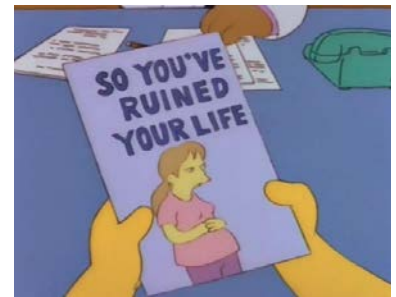


# SUMMER PATCH!



Chuck Barber, St. Charles Country Club

*It might be overstating it that I'd 'decided to ruin my life' as this bit of humor from The Simpsons (right) might have you believe. However, if you've ever dealt with Summer Patch (Magnaporthe poae) on putting green turf as I did in the summer of 2016 you might have a different opinion.*



First, a little background on this pathogen might be helpful. For those of you that have creeping bentgrass as the predominant variety on the golf course you can skip reading this article. As luck has it, Summer Patch is most commonly found in *Poa annua*, Kentucky bluegrass, and the fescues. Creeping bentgrass can become infected but shows few symptoms and recovers quickly. Summer Patch usually becomes noticeable between June and September, although small signs can appear at any time but can be hard to discern because infected turfgrass can recover quickly.

Summer patch is usually caused by an interaction of environmental factors (stress) and a root or crown rot caused by *Magnaporthe poae*. The fungus *Magnaporthe poae* is consistently found in grass roots but does not become noticeable until conditions are favorable. Favorable conditions include extended periods of humid weather and daytime high temperatures usually (greater than 82° F) in midsummer. Other causes include: poor air circulation, high soil moisture (sometimes caused by frequent irrigation), soil compaction (heavy traffic), and poor drainage. The disease does not appear noticeable during the cool weather of spring and fall. Summer patch seems to favor soil with a pH higher than 6.0.

The greens at St. Charles Country Club are a little bit of everything. There are nine USGA greens built in 1987, 12 native soil greens built in the 1950's and 60's from entirely different construction methods and six USGA greens built in 2005. The oldest greens on the course were seeded to Penneagle in the late 1970's and early 1980's after C-15 decline killed the original grass. These greens are at most 80% bentgrass on some and as much as 80% *Poa annua* on others depending on construction type, shade and other factors. The greens built in 2005 were seed to A1/A4 and did not experience the

stress or symptoms of Summer Patch at any point.

Summer Patch symptoms were first observed as localized dry spot (LDS) on our 6th green June, 28th. Initially, these areas were treated as LDS because they were observed on drainage trenches installed by XGD Systems in 2013.



*The sixth green at STCCC displayed symptoms of LDS around the areas of installed XGD drain lines.*

After the onset of these symptoms on the 6th green, we began to observe similar symptoms across almost all greens with high or higher populations of *Poa annua*.

Samples were sent to both Purdue University and The Univer-



*It did not take long for other high-Poa populated greens to exhibit similar symptoms that the 6th green was showing.*



*Once the greens got wet this summer, they stayed wet. And shade only exacerbated the conditions.*

sity of Wisconsin and confirmed that we had Summer Patch. Dr. Rick Latin stated in his report that he had at no point prior to our samples seen the blackened hyphae as abundant in any other sample to that point in his career.



*Dr. Rick Latin confirmed our infestation of Summer Patch through his diagnosis of the samples we sent.*

When we received the diagnosis our applications of preventative measures were reviewed. Where did prevention go wrong? Our applications of Propiconazole in the spring were most likely poorly timed due to the early spring green up in March followed by the cool April and May. Following the label, which recommended treatments based on calendaring, we began our preventative DMI applications. In hindsight, we should have begun treatment when the soil temperature reached 60 degrees for three consecutive days. Our preventative measures also include the use of acidifying fertilizers like ammonium sulfate and manganese sulfate that were applied throughout the spring of 2016. The concept in using these fertilizers is to alter rhizosphere pH to antagonize the pathogen in the root zone. We found attempting to change our highly alkaline pH (7.8ish) to anything lower is improbable and impractical at best.

Further compounding the problem was frequent rainfall, high nighttime temperatures, high humidity and low sunlight levels. All greens have internal drainage either from original construction or a 2014 installation of XGD Systems in the native soil greens. This season the amount of available water relative to the amount of evaporation and plant use was way too high. Once the greens got wet, they stayed wet, suffocating the root zone as summer progressed. The anaerobic soil conditions coupled with regular maintenance compounded the pathogen's activity on the root systems. In addition, the most affected greens were those that are shaded for part of the day. These greens have greater *Poa annua* populations, and support microclimates that have higher humidity and greater soil temperatures than those in full sun.


A preventative fungicide program is the best method for Summer Patch control. If fungicides are called upon for curative control, results are sporadic at best. In the curative method at St. Charles Country Club, they were ineffective entirely. Once symptoms were observed in June (verified by lab testing) the pathogen stayed active well in to September because of the elevated soil temperatures experienced. The below photo was taken on 9/15/2016.



Managing greens on a golf course without a functioning root system is a stressful situation. We removed all stress that we could when we could: alternating mowing and rolling, reductions in PGR usage, no mechanical sand incorporation during topdressing or other impactful cultural practices. Further, Nitrogen was spoon fed at low rates on frequent intervals. Acidifying wetting agents were used as broadcast applications in conjunction with acidifying fertilizers. A newly registered nematicide was used on the most infected greens to see if root function could be restored. Every fungicide that was labeled for Summer Patch control was tried at some point throughout the season. The only thing that stopped the progression of the disease was cooler days and a reduction night-time temperatures.

The lessons learned from this experience include but are not limited to:

- Properly timed, preventive fungicide applications
- Improved pore space and compaction relief in spring and fall
- Improved pore space through venting in the summer months
- Reduced rolling frequency especially during wet, humid weather to avoid compaction

Summer Patch is in the rearview mirror for the time being. The greens at St. Charles Country Club have been aerated several times in the intervening period. They will continue to be aerated until the ground freezes in the most appropriate manners to better prepare for the summer of 2017. This is a disease I hope to never see again. I wouldn't wish this on my worst enemy. 

## Summer Patch Disease Profile

**Pathogen:** *Magnaporthe poae*

**Pathogen notes:** Infection is highly dependent on temperature and moisture status of soil. Pathogen is most active when temperatures exceed 65°F. Infection most frequently occurs in spring prior to any symptoms noticed when adequate moisture is present.

**Pathogen movement:** the pathogen survives in infested turf debris and in infected root and crown tissues; naturally occurs in many soil types, can be transferred to new areas through maintenance practices which move soil and other contaminated plant debris (i.e. core aerification)

**Susceptible species:** *Poa annua*, Kentucky bluegrass, some fescues.

**Period of activity:** late spring and summer

went turfgrass root growth is diminished.

**Symptoms:** initial symptoms resemble small circular/oval patches that are orange-brown and in clusters. They can expand to over 12 inches in diameter. Turf damage occurs at the leading edge of the patch. On putting greens, areas in the center of the patch may fill in with creeping Bentgrass as *Poa annua* is infected.

### **Cultural practices to suppress Summer Patch:**

Practices that relieve summer stress can help to minimize infection and disease damage.

These include:

Core aeration in the spring and fall. Avoiding nitrogen deficiency. Prolonged (deep) infrequent irrigation. Syringe and a cool turf on hot afternoons. Limiting traffic and compaction. Reducing shade and increasing air movement. Thatch reduction.

### **Chemical control options to control Summer Patch:**

Initial application timing is critical: Fungicides must be applied when the pathogen is active as determined by soil temperatures. Generally, apply after maximum daily soil temperature (average) at 3-inch depth is 65°F or higher for three consecutive days. Several applications at 28-day intervals are normally recommended for preventative summer patch control. Fungicide applications should be made in high-volume of water or watered in immediately after application. Spray applied after symptoms occur will have very limited effects.

*Adapted from PURDUE Extension – Turfgrass Disease Profiles, BP-115-W, Dr. Rick Latin*

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