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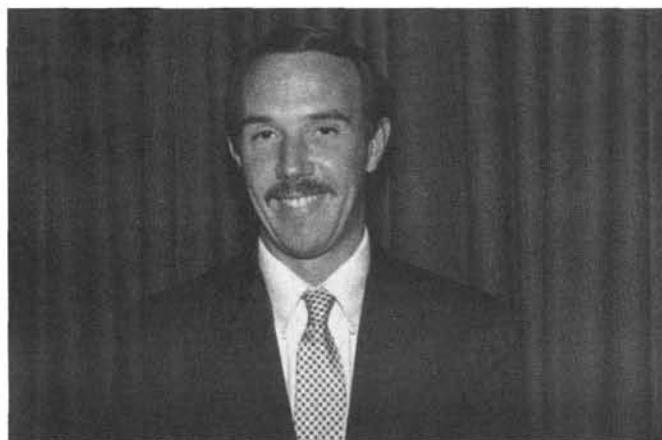
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## President's Message

by Bruce Williams, CGCS

It is quite an honor to be elected President of the Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents. Along with this honor comes a great deal of responsibility. It is a responsibility that I do not take lightly. There are many challenges ahead and I look forward to meeting those challenges. I vow to work diligently to provide the programs that **you**, the members, want.

With each annual meeting comes a changing of the guard on our Board of Directors. I would like to extend a warm welcome to our two newly elected Board members, Ed Braunsky and Don Cross. Your years on the board will be memorable ones. Several board members have completed their terms of office and will be sorely missed. We must bid farewell to Mike Nass and Roger Stewart. Mike has served the association for the past 8 years and Roger has 10 years of experience on the board. These gentlemen will be hard to replace but will still remain active on several committees. I thank them for sharing their knowledge with us and giving us guidance over the years.

While Dave Meyer will serve as our Immediate Past President, he has just finished 15 years of service to the Midwest Association of Golf Superintendents. Dave's experience has been a major factor in the continuity of the association for those 15 years. I look forward to continuing some of the programs Dave has developed during the past year.

It is always nice to visit Medinah Country Club each November for our MAGCS Turf Clinic. This usually signals that the end of the season is near. Irrigation systems are being winterized, winter fungicide applications are ready, and fall projects are nearing completion. There is no better time to sit back and reflect on the performance of the previous year. It's a great time to organize your thoughts and develop the plans for your golf course for the upcoming year. While you are planning, set aside some time for the Midwest Association. We encourage all of our members to actively participate in all of our programs. We will be appointing members to our committees this month and I urge any interested members to contact me. We value the input from every member of our association.

Once again, I would like to thank the membership for their confidence in me. I look forward to leading this association into the last decade of this century. These are exciting times for industry and our association. I am proud to be a Golf Course Superintendent and I am proud to be a member of the MAGCS, but this year I am proudest to serve the members of this association.



## A Short Wrapup of the 1989 Golf Season

by James M. Latham, Director  
Great Lakes Region USGA Green Section

A recap of the 1989 golf turf season is difficult because it was so varied — from sheer disaster to disappointment to downright delightful, depending upon where you were at what time. It was a year of opportunity for many because of an apparent return to the usual Midwestern climatic patterns and for others because Mother Nature suddenly eradicated **Poa annua** in places few superintendents would dare to try.

At some time during the winter, golf courses from Michigan to Montana experienced classic winterkill of **Poa annua** and perennial ryegrass. This phenomenon can be expected locally in almost any year, but seldom has it been so extensive. The greater Chicago area, for example, missed the experience by less than 60 miles, but the six states to the north, east and west, were extensively blessed (?) with this cheap **Poa annua** control process.

It seemed to work this way:

- The soil was frozen.
- There was a thaw and the meltwater was retained at the turf surface (even with sand greens) in depressions, on gentle slopes or even flat spots where **Poa annua** dominated in the past.
- The temperature dropped suddenly to well below freezing.
- Ice formed in the saturated crown tissue of the bunch grasses and destroyed cell structure.

To make matters even worse for some superintendents, the thin green cover materials **did not** prevent damage. The only escapes in the epicenters of winterkill were greens (etc.) which retained snowcover or those covered with thick, excelsior mats.

Comments by superintendents who used covers:

- The thin covers may have aggravated the situation by broadening the day/night temperature spread.
- The thick covers probably kept the green surfaces from thawing.
- Medium thickness covers on top of a rather heavy, late, topdressing apparently gave enough insulation to prevent surface thaw or refreezing.

This situation was compounded by very poor growing conditions in early spring which defied attempts to reseed. Even **Poa annua** seed germination was minimal. The superintendents who persevered with multiple reseeding operations now have bentgrass in quantity where it has not been in a long time. By initiating maintenance operations which keep it competitive, they can use **Poa annua** suppressants to their best advantage. Otherwise, the spring miseries will return to plague them again and again.

Substantial losses of perennial ryegrass occurred in South Dakota and Wisconsin underlining their unreliability as a primary golf turf species in this latitude. They apparently need backup by Kentucky bluegrass, fine fescues or some type of more winter hardy grass.

There are, of course, exceptions to these loss patterns, but they were rare at the courses visited during Turf Advisory Service tours this year. In some instances, I simply confirmed the superintendent's statements that it was impossible to predict the episode and that normal maintenance operations could not prevent this kind of winterkill. It became evident that agronomics must play a larger role in golf turf management so that bentgrass can become more competitive to help **Poa annua** controls become more effective. Now that we have the means to suppress **Poa annua** aggressiveness, it is possible to reestablish bentgrass and/or Kentucky bluegrass in key areas, but it is imperative that they **compete** or the cycle will begin again.

Some other strange events took place this season. The sudden appearance of mini-fairy rings on the greens at a couple of courses was one. At about the same time, similar rings elsewhere disappeared after a couple of years in residence. Why? How?

The black layer syndrome hasn't gone away, either. The sporadic rainfall pattern had a great deal to do with this — probably. Soil oxygen is still the key to prevention and cure. Internal drainage and the elimination of spongy organic layers by aeration and topdressing are necessities. And remember that black layers aren't new. O. J. Noer commented on black, odorous soil profiles in greens over 50 years ago. They were just harder to see at that time.

Supplying the anaerobic organisms with oxygen by applying potassium nitrate or similar materials will help to reduce immediate damage, but that is simply treating a contributing factor and not the cause. The cause of black layer in sand, clay or stratified profiles is usually an excess of water. The non-capillary (drainage) pores or air spaces are filled with water. Buried thatch becomes a saturated sponge. Layers of anything restrict the downward flow of water which pulls air into the soil after it. And let's not forget that plant roots need oxygen, too.

It seems that more clubs are accepting their greens' Stimp-meter readings of 8 to 9 feet. A high percentage of the membership are enjoying that speed. There is also the realization that juicing the surfaces up to 11 feet from 9 for a member-guest event destroys the home course advantage. In other words, maybe speed-need is the figment of the imagination of would-be Tour-ists and not the will of the bill-payers.

There are, of course, clubs in which the majority of the members **want** tournament class greens at all times and are willing to pay for them. That's fine with me as long as they realize that fast greens are, necessarily, firm and that fast, firm greens should be accompanied by fast, firm, fairways and the level of management they require. The bottom line is a golf course that equates to 18 **very** large greens, mown at several different heights of cut, but with the same general maintenance procedures throughout. That includes vertical mowing or brushing to minimize the tee toward the green grain which comes from golf car use on fairways. This applies to both bentgrass and bluegrass. Banning golf cars from the fairways usually destroys

(cont'd. page 4)

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(USGA cont'd.)

the intermediate roughs, so unless these vehicles are limited to roadways, be prepared for higher maintenance costs or lower quality playing conditions. Golf cars are like taxes — we do not like them but we do like the revenue they generate.

Speaking of golf car traffic, have you noticed the damage being done by the concentrated traffic of maintenance equipment? Some of the wear is in non-play areas, but certainly not all of it.

The traffic problem continues to mount on practice tees, where few golf operations have adequate space. Even fewer can do anything about it except recycle the available area they have. This brings ryegrass to the forefront even though it is no more than temporary turf that will be destroyed in a very short time. The best results have been attained by "using up" strips of turf across the width of the tees before moving play to another strip. The damaged strip is then double aerated and the cores broken up, followed by heavy (15-20 lbs. per 1,000 sq. ft.) seeding and topdressing or just mixing the seed with the soil from the cores. Rolling and fertilizing finish the job. Fungicide treated seed minimize the danger of damping off until a systemic fungicide can be applied — at about the time of the first mowing.

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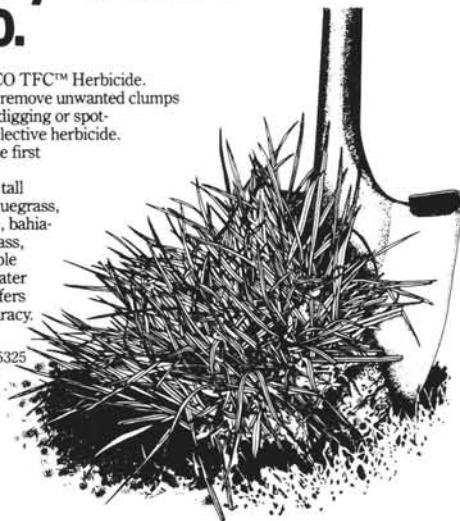
A closing thought: If we are to keep bureaucratic regulations off our back, we must make them unnecessary. The way to do this is to stay ahead of the game through safe storage and application of chemicals, employee training and protection and a close look at our own operation as if we were an inspector who had never seen the place before and had not issued enough citations recently.

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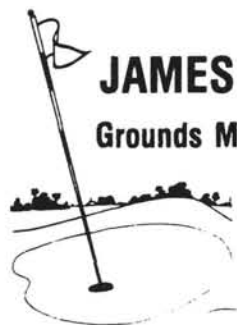
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*Greg Johnson, Dave Deno, Ray Schmitz & Bruce Schweiger*



*"Independent" — 2nd Place Collegiate Team*

*Trent Bradford, Bob Rigney, John Lebedeves, Bob Padula (absent)*

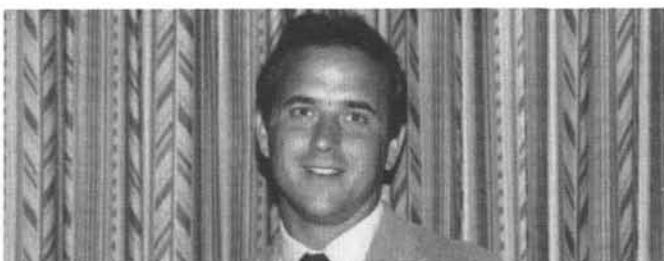


*Winners of the Dominick Grotti Superintendent & Assistant Trophy.*

*Mike Monroe and Mike Nass from Cantigny Links Golf Club*

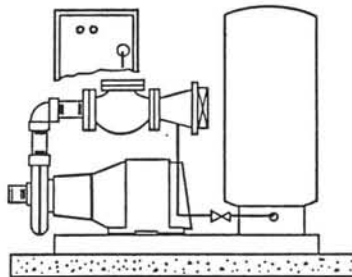


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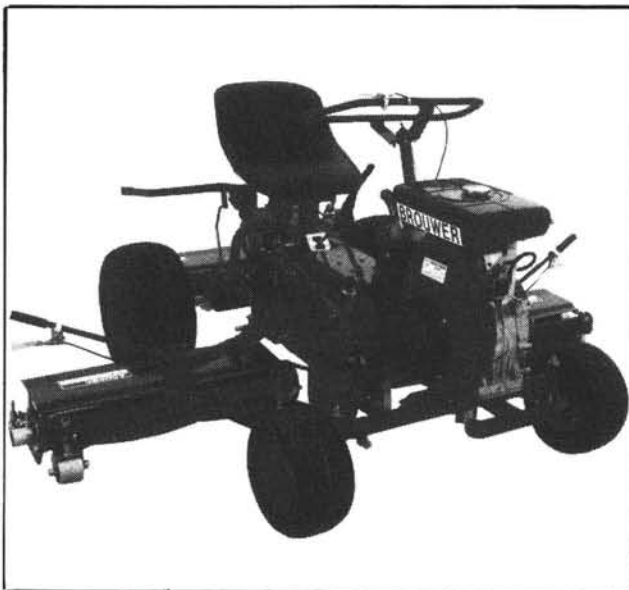
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by Glenn Bereiter, Irrigation Specialist  
Bob O'Link Golf Club

Like most projects we perform on the golf course, the way we approach and handle maintenance procedures differs from course to course. I do not claim to be an expert in the field of irrigation, but some of the ideas we use at Bob O'Link Golf Club could be applicable to your situation.

Although the pumping station may be turned off for the winter months, there are several things that can be done. With an automatic irrigation system we exercise the control clocks about once a week to keep the solenoids fresh. An inventory of parts can be made and the stock filled accordingly. Any pieces that are no longer of use can be discarded to reduce the confusion later in the year.

Prior to the beginning of the irrigation season there are several activities we try to accomplish. In the early days of spring when the system is still off, but when you can work outdoors, I like to do any work that may require opening up the underground pipe. For instance, any quick coupling valves or automatic sprinklers that need to be raised or lowered should be done at this time. A sticky valve from the previous season may be replaced now without the mess of pressurized water.

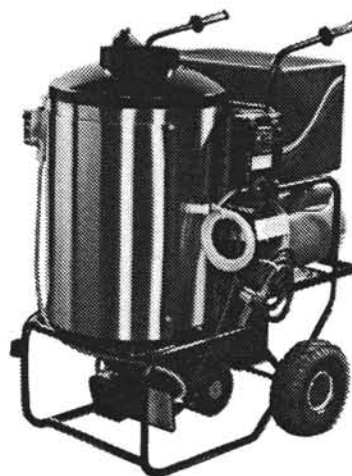
In the pumphouse, the oil can be changed in the pumps, the pumps greased, and new packing placed around the shaft of the pumps. The "Y" strainer and any screens should be removed and cleaned. Keep the pumphouse in a clean, neat, and orderly manner. Every so often, we give the place a fresh coat of paint. Have plenty of light as it makes it much easier to spend the necessary time performing the daily tasks, if you are in a clean and well lit environment. Out on the golf course the control boxes are cleaned out and inspected. Wires and fuses are checked. Rat poison and insect pest strips are replaced.

When the system is being energized turn on several sprinklers at the furthest points from the pumphouse. This is done to remove most of the air from the system reducing air and water hammer within the system that may blow lines apart. Slowly opening the shut-off valves also helps reduce water hammer on the system. We crack open the valves and check the sprinklers to see if any water has reached the furthest points. Once water is being discharged at these areas the valves are opened gradually as sprinklers are turned off. Once the proper system pressure is approaching normal check the irrigation system for leaks. Keep checking for several days as some leaks are slow to appear.

When the system is up and running check and set all of the clocks. Replace burned out bulbs in the pumphouse control panel. Before a night watering, run every automatic sprinkler on the course and check for rotation. Each head should be able to pop up, rotate, and turn off and go down.

Moisture requirements and system repairs are our major concerns. We use a mini-weather station of two thermometers, one for air temperature, and the other for soil temperature, a rain gauge, and an evapotranspiration meter. The evapotranspiration meter consists of a row of sponges, placed vertically in a plastic tub, with a ruler on the inside wall. Every day at the same time we check the water loss rate and fill it to the same mark every day. The evapotranspiration rate is just a simple way to keep track of moisture loss. This information should be recorded in an irrigation diary along with any other pertinent information of the day. (cont'd. page 14)

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