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Caddie Crusade

by Don Ferreri

Thinking back to my days on the grounds crew at Butterfield Country Club, I never thought I would say putting caddies on the golf course was a positive thing. In fact, I could list many negatives. For example:

1. Replacing sod in the caddie yard.
2. Finding pop cans placed in the crotch of a tree.
3. Fixing basketball hoops.
4. Softballs hit off the cars in the employee parking lot.
5. Always thinking a caddie was making more money than I was.

6. Working hard while they golfed and swam every Monday morning (this one was the worst by far).

Those days are gone now and I feel I have grown in my opinion of caddies. Never having been a caddie I may have been slightly narrow minded.

Five years ago Seven Bridges Golf Club opened to the public. We had joined the upscale public golf course roster in Chicagoland and our goal was to become the best overall facility in condition and service. Seven Bridges adopted the philosophy of country club services and a mandatory golf cart policy. This worked very well and seemed to fill the niche of would be country clubbers very well. Getting to the top of any industry requires being innovative. In 1993, we put our heads together on how we could introduce junior golf to our club. The thought led to the introduction of fore caddies to our carts only golf course. There were many pros and cons to our discussions but the pros far outweighed the cons. To start with the negatives we had to consider the customers support of another cost to the round of golf. Also, the ability to provide a well trained and knowledgeable caddie every time. Insurance and liability were a huge concern. The task of providing a good roster of kids and how many are enough, posed a problem.

Getting to the top of any industry requires being innovative.

Let's take a look at the upside of the program. I was fast to back the program and became a player in pulling it together. A lot of my reasons to start the program were selfish. We were trying to provide a country club for public golfers, like many of you are. Manicuring and top conditions every day are required. I saw the fore caddie as another member of my grounds crew, to be properly trained in raking bunkers, fixing ball marks, picking up litter and knowing when and how to replace divots. I also solicit comments from our caddies as to the golfers concerns, whether it be the rough is too long or the greens too soft, etc.

Other positives we talked about were the start of our junior golf program which allows the youth of our community, ages 13 and up, the experience to learn the game of golf and make money at the same time. The caddies can also be a tool to help keep the pace of play by locating balls from the landing area that are hit off line. Caddies

(continued page 15)



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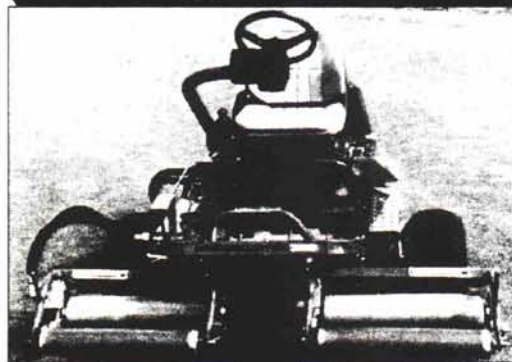
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(Caddie Crusade continued)

add another amenity to our guest for that client golf game. We also discovered a good fore caddie program would allow eligibility in the Evans Scholarship Program. And finally, it would create an employee pool for other golf course jobs as the caddies get older.

An overwhelming decision was made by the maintenance and professional staff to start this program. Myself and an assistant professional worked together to set up this program. To assemble a roster of fore caddies, we first placed an ad in the local newspapers, second we sent letters to or consulted with the athletic directors and golf coaches of the area high schools. We set a day up to hand out applications and give a one page test of golf knowledge. One hundred twenty boys and girls picked up applications on that day. Not knowing how many requests we would have for caddies we went with a roster of thirty kids. Because we received so many applicants we were able to sign up thirty kids with interest and some knowledge of the game. Training consisted of two classes on caddie procedure and two classes where they practiced these procedures on the golf course. We decided to charge the foursome \$15.00 plus tip paid directly to the fore caddie. Making him or her an independent contractor of sorts. Even though technically the caddies are not employees of the golf course, the workmen's comp of the golf course would cover them if an accident occurred.

Not wanting to have a caddie yard set up we used our seven day in advance reservation system to offer the fore caddie service to our guests. This works very well and almost always allows two to three days to fill the reservation with a caddie. We have the caddies check in a half an hour before their tee time. At this time they locate and introduce themselves to their foursome.

In the first summer of our fore caddie program, 1993, four hundred fifty reservations requested the use of a fore caddie. The response and comments by those golfers were in favor of the program. The next year, 1994, was similar to the year before, but we had a lot of requests by our golfers to add bag carrying caddies. So in 1995 we decided to take our program one step further with the addition of bag carrying caddie. We raised the price for a caddie to twenty dollars plus a tip per bag on top of our greens fee which does not seem to be a deterrent. The caddie roster was increased to forty caddies and requests are up thirty percent.

In the first summer of our fore caddie program, 1993, four hundred fifty reservations requested the use of a fore caddie.

The U.S.G.A. has declared the 90's the decade of the caddie. Caddies are not just for private clubs anymore, they can also be used for public courses. So take on the challenge to enhance your course with caddies. It is very rewarding to see these caddies heading up the first fairway early in the morning playing the game of golf the way it should be played. If you need any help setting up your program or have any questions, please call me.

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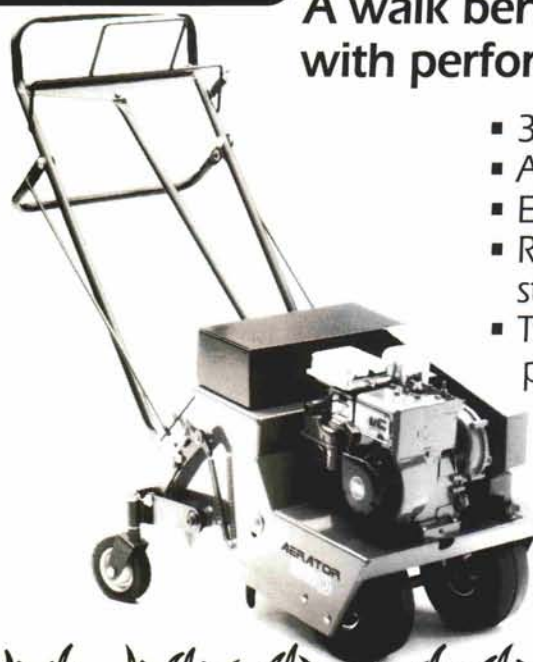
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Upcoming Events — Mark Your Calendar

August 5 — MAGCS Family Picnic and Ball Game, Kane County Cougars

August 17 — Michigan Turfgrass Field Day, Hancock Turfgrass Research Center, MSU, East Lansing, MI

August 21 — MAGCS meeting at Hughes Creek G.C.

September 25 — MAGCS meeting at Prairie Landing G.C.

October 12 — MAGCS meeting at Sportsman G.C.

October 14 — MAGCS Fall Dinner Dance at Aurora C.C.

October 16 — Northern Illinois Golf Day at Midlothian & Beverly C.C.

November 9 MAGCS Clinic & Annual meeting at Medinah C.C.

November 27-29 — NCTE at Pheasant Run Resort, St. Charles, IL

February 5-11, 1996 — GCSAA 67th Conference & Show, Orlando, FL

Musser Scores with Miles at Merit

by Dudley Smith

On Wednesday, July 12th the Penn State Turfgrass Alumni working in the Chicago area were the guests of Oscar Miles at the Merit Club in Gurnee.

Those attending from Indiana, the Quad-Cities, and Milwaukee, enjoyed a meticulous golf course. Oscar has a spacious 21 hole layout rambling over 350 acres, with large undulating Penn Links greens and vast prairies and water spillways.

The course was designed by local architect Bob Lohmann.

The Penn Staters enjoyed golf with caddies, followed by snacks and cocktails. The group raised over \$2000 for the Musser International Turf Foundation.

Marcy & Jeff Leuzinger are proud to announce a new addition to the Leuzinger family. Derek Van Leuzinger was born on Saturday, June 24, 1995. He weighed in at 8 pounds, 4 ounces and measured 20 inches. Needless to say Grandma & Grandpa Leuzinger are quite proud also.

For Sale: 1987 Jacobsen TF60 with Green mower heads, \$2250. Northland Imperial 22 cubic foot NSF freezer, \$475. Perlick Reachin 4 keg Coolerette, \$850. All in excellent condition. Call Woodbine G.C. and ask for Ted or Jim. 708/301-1252.

Joel Purpur is holding a Titleist pitching wedge with a brown grip that was found at the River Forest G.C. after our last meeting there. Call Joel at 708/782-4259 to claim it.

Peter Voykin was busy last fall and this spring by totally rebuilding #4 Red. A new green, tee, and lake were constructed. Plus many new traps were built or remodeled, with other traps being closed in. There is only one word to describe the flowers at the clubhouse at Twin Orchard — spectacular.

Professor M.C. (Marv) Carbonneau is retiring after 32 years on the faculty of the Department of Horticulture at the University of Illinois. Congratulations are well deserved.

Assistant Needed: Call Kevin Knudson at Settler's Hill G.C., 708/232-4922.

At the August 21, MAGCS meeting at Hughes Creek, Dave Meyer states we will have a pig roast after our golf. This is also "Seniors Day" and their golf championship day.

The University of Illinois has made some major changes: They have made 5 departments into 2 departments which will be the Resources and Environmental Sciences.

As Editor I get quite a lot of mail and it is addressed in various forms and ways. But recently I received one from an ad agency addressed to the "Beauty Editor". Looks like we need another staff person to head that department.

IPM Software Available — Interested in IPM software for your business computer? Purdue Extension Services is offering monitoring software which compiles a plant inventory while recording all insect and disease information throughout the growing season. It can also be customized to include pesticide records and inventories, treatment records, report and graph evaluations, labor use, and more. The cost is \$100; make checks payable to Purdue Research Foundation and mail order to Entomology Extension Office, Purdue University, 1158 Entomology Hall, West Lafayette, IN 47907-1158.

Help Wanted: Full time sales person, golf course and landscape experience required. Company vehicle, benefits, salary plus commission. Apply in person Huber Ranch Sod Nursery, Schneider, Indiana. Phone 1-800-553-0552.

The annual tournament in September at Prairie Landing will have a slightly different format. The flights will be championship, first, second, commercial first, and commercial second. There will not be a senior flight this year. The seniors will compete for the MAGCS Senior Crown in August at Hughes Creek.

(continued page 32)

Spring Disease Summary

by Randy Kane
CDGA Turf Advisor

As usual, the disease situation in Chicagoland varies with the weather — and as usual, the weather this spring wasn't the best for turf, but was favorable to a couple of troublesome fungi. We had a couple of record highs in mid-March and the warm weather continued into early April. However, the latter part of April and most of May were cold, cloudy, and wetter than normal. Because of these extended cold and wet conditions, I found more than the usual amount of two diseases — Fusarium patch (aka Microdochium patch) caused by *Microdochium nivale*, and take-all patch of bentgrass caused by *Gaeumannomyces graminis avenae*.

Fusarium patch is the same disease as pink snow mold, only it doesn't occur under snow. *M. nivale* is favored by prolonged periods of leaf wetness and temperatures anywhere from the mid 30s to 55 or 60°F. Cold damp nights and cloudy days are highly favorable. The fungus seems to prefer *Poa annua* under these conditions, which generally occur in mid-spring and mid-to-late autumn. Symptoms are typically small yellow to copper red colored spots that enlarge up to several inches across. Larger spots may have a blue-gray wilted "smoke ring" around the edge. On mixed bent-*Poa* greens, the *Poa* is preferentially attacked, similar to anthracnose.

In some cases, usually in warmer weather, *Microdochium* can cause a diffuse leaf blight that can be confused with several other problems. Also, surface water movement or mowing patterns can cause streaking of symptoms and the disease can be confused with some type of *Pythium* problem. Control of Fusarium patch is relatively easy with fungicides, but it often takes quite a while for the plants to recover and wounds to heal — because of the cool temperatures.

Take-all patch symptoms are usually much more severe when we have hot and/or dry early summer conditions after a cold and wet spring (sound familiar?). In most cases, symptoms appear on new construction or newly renovated bentgrass areas, although this year I have seen quite a bit on older, long-established golf course fairways. Patches are usually first seen in early morning when no dew forms on the stressed plants. (This can be separated from localized dry spots by the almost perfect circles of take-all). Affected patches often turn yellow to reddish brown. Older patches often have healthy grass or weeds in the center, giving the "frog eye" appearance. Patches can be small circles of 6 inch diameter, all the way up to 3 or 4 foot diameter circles. On half-inch bent fairways, most of the plants will survive the disease, making the patch noticeable but not critical. On sand based greens under more stress, take-all can be quite devastating.

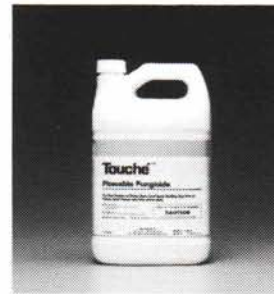
In the short term, once you see that you have the disease, there is not much you can do for control. The fungus was actively colonizing roots much earlier in the season, and curative fungicide applications will have marginal effects, at best. The best course of action is to

(continued page 21)

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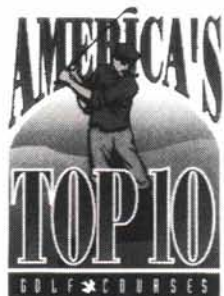
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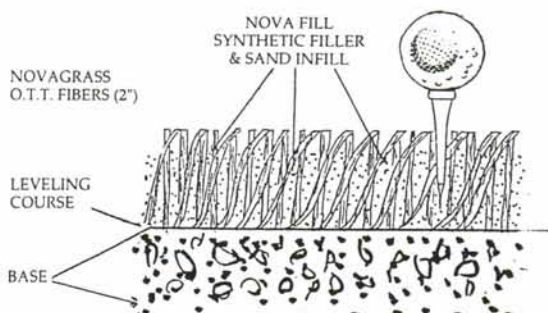


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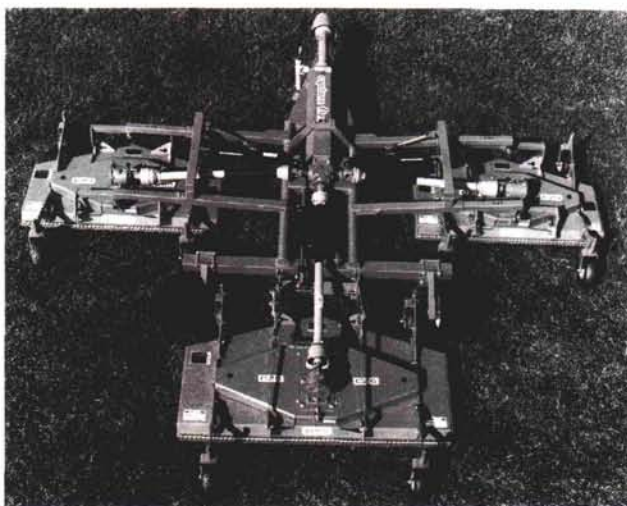
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