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(continued from page 18)

included health insurance, 401(k), life insurance and payment of dues for national and local associations. Some of the perks mentioned that were discarded by management companies were vehicle allowances and dental plans; health insurance in some cases may have been of lesser quality.

- Generally speaking, it is not a common practice to share equipment between facilities unless it is a specialty piece such as an aerifier, trencher or backhoe and a situation where sharing means speeding up a project or keeping equipment costs down. All respondents also reported having a stationary crew and equipment technician, except in one situation where courses were close enough geographically for sharing staff to be effective.

- Because of their size, management companies are able to obtain national accounts with chemical and equipment companies. The site superintendents stated that this does not come without a few pros and cons. Superintendents get better prices with strong warranties and guarantees, while still being able to utilize local distributors. This is one positive aspect. On the other hand, superintendents are limited to one vendor and one brand of equipment or chemicals that may or may not be the "desired choice." In some cases, they may be subject to pay sales tax. Although this somewhat contradicts the statements above, items such as fertilizers and chemicals do go out for bid to get the best "bang for the dollar."

- Record-keeping at courses operated by management companies is basically the same as at any

Record-keeping requirements may include such items as monthly golf course audits, variance reports and a job/task-completed list for each employee. I will quote one superintendent who said, "Paperwork is extreme . . . we are required to document everything."

other golf course, but with a few additional requirements. These requirements may include such items as monthly golf course audits, variance reports and a job/task-completed list for each employee. I will quote one superintendent who said, "Paperwork is extreme . . . we are required to document everything."

- The final question of the survey was, "Someone you know has been offered a superintendent position with a management company; what kind of advice would you give them to prepare themselves for the job?" Here are some of the responses I received. One superintendent said, "Avoid it . . . or be prepared to focus all of your efforts and attention toward money issues and the bottom line." Another stated, "Be prepared to walk a fine line between spending money to maintain quality

(continued on page 24)

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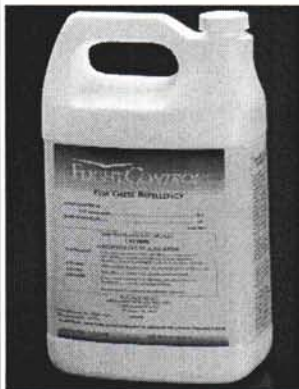
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An Overview of Management . . .

(continued from page 22)

versus spending too much money and affecting the bottom line." Another opinion: Be prepared to deal with a lot of politics and "stand up for what you believe in." And another: "Talk with other superintendents within that specific company as well as the normal inquiries about the specific site." "Keep an open mind . . . management companies will become more dominant in the future because of their purchasing power and vast information network." And last, but certainly not least, "Find out a pay scale for the entire crew and yourself. In addition, find out the turnover rate in the company and how much control you have in the budget process."

The management company's perspective

We will now look at these issues through the eyes of Club Corp. The questions submitted by the superintendents at private and public facilities were answered in full; unfortunately, municipal facilities are not Club Corp's primary business, therefore these superintendents' specific issues were not addressed. Items of interest include the following.

- Both private and public facilities are handled in the same manner, with the exception of private facilities retaining their individual boards of directors.
- A regional superintendent (a senior superintendent with five-plus years with Club Corp) is assigned to oversee each course. They are designated to advise and consult the club superintendent. The chain of command is department heads reporting to a general manager. In a private club setting, the board of directors serves in an advisory capacity to the club.

The biggest concern a superintendent has is: Will I remain in my current position, or will I be replaced? At Club Corp, a superintendent normally remains with the club and is encouraged to talk with other superintendents within Club Corp to get a feel for how the firm operates.

- The biggest concern a superintendent has is: Will I remain in my current position, or will I be replaced? At Club Corp, a superintendent normally remains with the club and is encouraged to talk with other superintendents within Club Corp to get a feel for how the firm operates. If the superintendent is not currently certified, he or she is encouraged to do so. Club Corp does pay for educational seminars and local and GCSAA dues.
- The benefits supplied by Club Corp for the superintendent, assistant superintendent and equipment technician are health insurance and investment opportunities. In addition, the superintendent receives a bonus based on meeting certain predetermined objectives.

- Records to be kept by the
- (continued on page 32)

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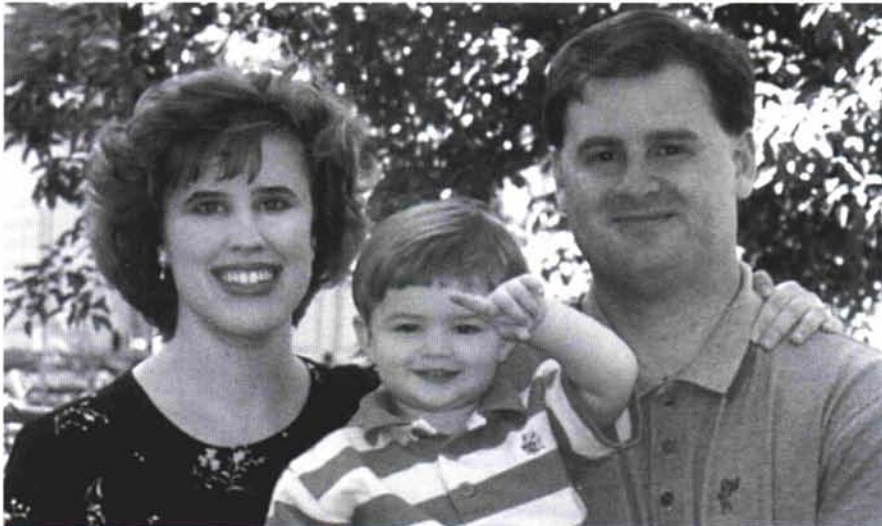
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A New Editor "Tees Off"



Cathy, Ryan and Phil Ralston

Cathy Ralston, Editor

Four years ago, Fred Opperman commissioned me to write an article for the August issue of the *Bull Sheet*. My story featured North Shore C.C.'s Dan Dinelli and documented that July's suffocating heat wave. Little did I imagine while completing my assignment that one day, I would assume Fred's role as editor of the *Bull Sheet*'s successor, *On Course*.

Am I honored to find myself charged with editorial leadership of the MAGCS magazine? Certainly! Am I shocked? No. Golf, you see, has been a recurring theme in my life. In fact, my family's immersion in the golf business afforded me some of my most delightful childhood memories. First and foremost, I recall summer evenings riding with my brothers in the grimy flatbed of a Cushman cart as my dad set the sprinklers at Sugar Creek G.C. The sensation of the wind whipping through my hair, the dazzling purples and pinks of the twilight sky, my dad's occasional observations on wildlife, the smell of damp grass—these were

I have a couple announcements to make. One is the initiation of a Letters to the Editor column, so please—send me your comments and observations, whether related to articles appearing in On Course or hot industry issues.

moments I treasure to this day. (Now that I'm a mother, I realize that my mom, enjoying an hour of solitude back at the homestead, probably cherished those moments, too!)

Also among my favorite memories: our yearly pilgrimages to the Western Open during

Uncle Oscar's tenure at Butler National, at which time we met Tour legends, received incessant lectures on golf etiquette from my dad and ate vast quantities of Italian ice. In 1980, at the grand opening of Arlington Lakes G.C., Uncle Butch hosted our family for the day, which meant lunch and photo ops with the celebrity guest, Bears running back Walter Payton.

Thanks to kind comments from Bob Maibusch and Fred Behnke that appeared in this magazine's April issue, you already know my credentials—a B.S. in journalism from Northwestern University, graduate coursework at the University of Minnesota, nine years of experience in publications and media relations in industries ranging from healthcare to high-tech to golf. I believe, though, that what really matters as I take the helm of *On Course* is my passion for golf and what it offers its devotees, the communities it touches and the individuals who have made it their livelihood. I hope that by waxing nostalgic, you get a sense of the respect I have for the golf course superintendent profession as well as the background I bring to this new endeavor—and perhaps you'll reflect on the memories your own children will one day have thanks to your involvement in the golf industry.

I would be remiss if I didn't divulge a bit more about who I am, even as I look forward to getting to know many of you in the years ahead. In August, my husband Phil and I will celebrate eight years of marriage. Phil is an English teacher and coaches basketball and, of course, golf at Grant Community High School in Fox Lake. Our son, Ryan Timothy, is 21 months old

(continued on page 38)

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Bad Greens Deserve A Failing Grade

(continued from page 3)

Crenshaw, G-2, L93, Providence and SR 1020. Older creeping bentgrass varieties that have poor summertime performance include Penncross and Toronto. On a grading scale, annual bluegrass (*Poa annua*) rates below the older creeping bentgrass varieties in terms of both heat tolerance and disease susceptibility.

An example of a grading scale that can be used to illustrate dominant turf species is as follows:

- A – Dominant stand of a new, heat-tolerant creeping bentgrass variety.
- B – Mixture of new and old creeping bentgrass varieties with a very small percentage of annual bluegrass (*Poa annua*).
- C – Mixture of new and old creeping bentgrass varieties with a small percentage of annual bluegrass (*Poa annua*).
- D – Dominant stand of an older creeping bentgrass with a significant percentage of annual bluegrass (*Poa annua*).
- F – Dominant stand of annual bluegrass (*Poa annua*).

The third factor that can influence turf performance during the summer months is sunlight exposure. Sunlight exposure influences turf performance because it is the driving force of photosynthesis. Without adequate sunlight exposure, the process of photosynthesis is retarded and the turf cannot produce ample amounts of complex carbohydrates to fuel vigorous growth. When forced to grow slowly, turf cannot recover from routine mowing and pedestrian traffic and it gradually loses stand density.

The impact of sunlight exposure on turf performance is a function of duration, intensity and whether full exposure occurs during the morning or afternoon. The best turf performance can be expected on greens that are fully exposed to the sun from dawn to dusk. The worst turf performance can be expected on greens that sit in partial or deep shade from dawn to dusk or are only exposed to the sun in the afternoon. Intermediate turf performance can be expected



Standing water in the hole after a green has been deep-tine-aerified is a clear indication of poor subsurface drainage and the need to rebuild.



A clear sign that a green is too small and/or too severely contoured is concentrated traffic scars around the three to four level hole locations.

on greens that are exposed to full sun from dawn to late morning. A premium value is placed on early morning full exposure because it (1) removes dew and frost, (2) reduces disease incidence, (3) encourages root development, (4) encourages greater photosynthetic activity and (5) encourages dense canopy formation.

An example of a grading scale that can be used to illustrate sunlight exposure is as follows:

- A – Full sunlight exposure from dawn until dusk.
- B – Full sunlight exposure from dawn until mid-afternoon.
- C – Full sunlight exposure from dawn until late morning.
- D – Full sunlight exposure from late morning until dusk.
- F – Shade to partial shade cover from dawn until dusk.

The fourth factor that can influence turf performance during the summer months is cross-ventilation. Cross-ventilation influences turf performance during the summertime because it encourages water escaping from microscopic pores on the leaf surface to evaporate. As water evaporates from the leaf surface, it dissipates heat from the turf canopy, thus preventing overheating during warm, sunny afternoons.

As a point of reference, creeping bentgrass greens with good cross-ventilation are usually able to maintain a canopy temperature below 105°F on a sunny afternoon when the thermometer reads 95°F at the nearest airport. During the same climatic conditions, poorly ventilated greens typically have a surface temperature of over 120°F. It can be safely assumed that maintaining greens with a canopy temperature of 105°F is infinitely easier than maintaining ones that are almost in flames.

An example of a grading scale that can be used to illustrate cross-ventilation is as follows:

- A – Unrestricted cross-ventilation across the entire putting surface.
- B – Partial restriction of cross-ventilation across a small portion of the putting surface.

(continued on page 30)



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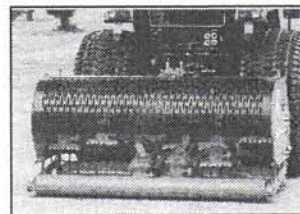
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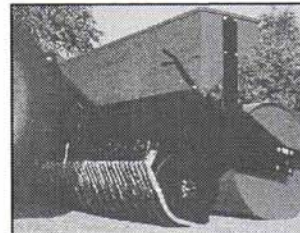
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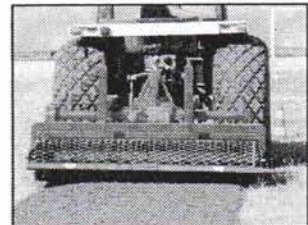
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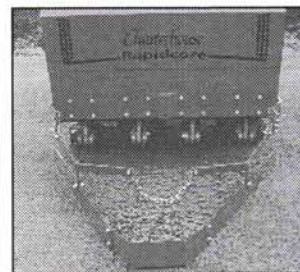
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Bad Greens Deserve A Failing Grade

(continued from page 28)

- C – Partial restriction of cross-ventilation across the entire putting surface.
- D – Significant restriction of cross-ventilation across the entire putting surface.
- F – Severe restriction of cross-ventilation across the entire putting surface.

The fifth factor that can have an influence on turf performance during the summer months is traffic distribution as influenced by the number of hole locations. Even distribution of pedestrian traffic over the entire surface of a green is influential on turf performance because it prevents signs of physical wear from developing in isolated areas. Greens that have six or more level hole locations of approximately 250 square feet tend to show few signs of concentrated traffic at an average Stimpmeter reading of 9 feet 6 inches. Greens with five or fewer level hole locations tend to show clear signs of concentrated traffic by the end of a summer season.

An example of a grading scale that can be used to illustrate traffic distribution as influenced by the number of hole locations is as follows:

- A – 8 or more hole locations.
- B – 7 hole locations.
- C – 6 hole locations.
- D – 5 hole locations.
- F – 4 or fewer hole locations.

The sixth and final factor that can influence turf performance during the summer months is surface drainage. Good surface drainage is critical to turf performance as standing water can suffocate turf within hours during a warm, summer afternoon. Additionally, surface water that cannot

escape from the putting surface without delay can cause the soil to become super-saturated for extended periods, thus mimicking the effects of poor subsurface drainage and resulting in a high incidence of disease activity.

Ideally, greens should be contoured in a manner that allows surface water to drain off the putting surface in multiple direc-



Great greens with poor cross-ventilation usually lead to disappointing putting conditions during July and August.



Standing water on greens that requires squeegeeing following heavy rainfall is an obvious sign of poor surface drainage.

tions. Greens with a single exit point for surface drainage or, worse yet, greens that have water flowing onto the putting surface from the surrounding rough during heavy rainfall, have a high risk of turf loss during the summer season.

An example of a grading scale that can be used to illustrate surface drainage is as follows:

- A – Surface water flows off of the green in three or more directions.
- B – Surface water flows off of the green in two directions.

- C – Surface water flows off of the green in one direction.
- D – Surface water flows onto the green from the surrounding rough and exits off in one direction.
- F – Surface water flows onto the green from the surrounding rough and exits by percolating through the root zone.

Once a letter grade has been assigned to each of the six factors that influence summertime turf performance, a final letter grade can be given to reflect the overall reliability of the turf. In many instances, this grade is heavily influenced by two or more failing grades for the six factors that influence turf performance. An example of a report card for a bad green that has poor subsurface drainage and is covered by morning shade, but has a large surface area that sheds water in multiple directions and has good cross-ventilation, would be as follows:

Green No.	13
Subsurface Drainage . . .	F
Turf Species	D
Sunlight Exposure	D
Cross-Ventilation	B
Traffic Distribution . . .	A
Surface Drainage	B
Overall Reliability	D-

As can be seen, a report card with multiple failing grades quickly gives golfers the impression that something is very wrong. Furthermore, they can see that improving turf performance will involve more than just rebuilding the green in accordance with USGA specifications. If you have a bad green on your course, try giving it the failing grade(s) that it deserves. 