



### Chicago Golf Club's 10-Year Endeavor

The renovation work at Chicago Golf Club began more than 10 years ago. It was long known, from review of old photographs and obvious areas that had evolved into rough on the back sides and fronts of the greens, that large areas of putting surfaces had been lost. Similar to what Skokie did, greens were enlarged by gradually lowering the cutting height on the areas in the fronts. Areas that had become rough were removed and sodded. Corners of the greens that were once square were returned to their original shape.



The Club began to get serious regarding the restoration in 2000. A list of golf course architects to oversee the restoration work was compiled for review. The criteria for selection was simple: the architect would advise the Club on a restoration plan that would return a look from approximately 1928. Tom Doak of Renaissance Golf was selected as the architect to offer oversight of the restoration.

Trees planted in locations that blocked vistas, created agronomic issues or acted as backdrops were reviewed. Green area was inspected for further enlargement possibilities. Bunkers that had been lost for various reasons were evaluated for effectiveness. And finally, misaligned tees would be reset in the direction of the landing area, leveled, return to traditional square corners and resodded.



The work was broken into phases that would take place over a four-year period. Outside contractors placed bids on the tee-leveling aspect of the project. Each of the three contractors that bid the job had very different prices, ranging from \$43,000 to \$105,000. The tee leveling, green expansion and bunker restoration were to be completed in-house, utilizing the maintenance staff and equipment.

Tree work took place over a three-winter period. This work was also bid by outside contractors. The decision was made to use a contractor for the tree work since the Club did not have the equipment required for the removals. Some of the smaller trees were relocated to the outer perimeter of the golf course.



Bunker restoration was relatively simple as bunkers that were either filled in or allowed to grow over still maintained their original shape. The outlines were painted and the bunker cavity was excavated. Seth Raynor, in his 1922 renovation, installed an extensive drainage system throughout the golf course, including all of the bunkers. Because of this, additional drainage was not required.



After the excavation, approximately seven inches of sand was placed within the bunker and compacted. The sand originally used in the bunkers was Reliable sand. That sand is no longer available. C9 sand, which most closely resembles the original sand, continues to be used in the bunkers. This sand drains relatively well and becomes very firm over time, although it is a little coarser than most bunker sands that are commonly used.



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The decision was made to level the tees utilizing in-house labor. The reason for this: in-house staff would have greater flexibility in the event of inclement weather. The other reason was there would be tighter control of material used and the scope of the work on the areas surrounding the tees.

The Club purchased a laser level from Southern Laser in the late fall of 2001. The tee-leveling was to commence in the fall of 2002. The Tuesday after Labor Day, the first tee, as well as the rough on the surrounding tee banks outward to approximately 25 feet, was stripped bare of sod. With the grader box attached to the back of a tractor and the laser set up, it was soon realized that there were eight inches of fall from one corner of the tee to the other. Upon completion of leveling, the tee surface was set perfectly flat. Depending on the severity of the existing tee surface, the surface could be leveled in a few hours.



Grading of the surrounding banks also took place. Areas that settled from where trees had been removed were filled with topsoil and brought up to grade. Central Sod Farms provided Penncross bentgrass sod in big rolls. Straight bluegrass sod was used on the banks and rough. In good weather, two tees a week could be completed.



The warm days in September allowed rapid establishment of the sod. The tees were reopened after three weeks. Work progressed until the weather changed in November. Eight holes were completed at that time. Tee-leveling will resume in September this year with the anticipated completion date of December 2003.



The final element of green expansion will occur later this year. A turf nursery started in 2001 was expanded this past fall to be used for the enlargement of greens. Plugs were collected and spread over the native-soil area that had been prepared as a nursery. Penn A4 bentgrass seed was introduced at the rate of 1 pound per 1,000 square feet to hold the sod together when it is ready to be relocated. As the turf nursery develops, many heavy topdressing applications are made in conjunction with the green height being lowered. When it comes time to harvest the sod, there is no native topsoil in the profile, only topdressing that matches with the material being used on the greens.



Working closely with photographs from 1928, greens number 9, 12, 14 and 18 will be enlarged in varying degrees, returning them to the size they once held. The no. 18 green will be expanded on each corner to the point where moving the irrigation piping and heads will be required so the piping is outside the expanded green area. Some areas of the no. 12 green will not be restored exactly as they were 75 years ago. The punch bowl aspect of the green had steep banks that would scalp with today's low mowing heights. The green will be brought as close as possible to the outside edge.

## Endgame

The renovation at Skokie is complete, with the entire golf course being reopened for play in 2001. To summarize the scope of the project: two greens were rebuilt, all of the fairway area was reclaimed to near original size. All of the bunkers were rebuilt with the installation of drainage and new sand. And 51 tees were realigned, leveled, squared up and resodded. Overall, the membership was very pleased with the renovation. However, there was a learning curve in maintaining the newly renovated areas.

The grass banks were mowed higher in the beginning of the 2001 season so the turf would have a chance to establish. While being agronomically sound, this frustrated the golfer, who would have a ball roll through the bunker and disappear into the grass about 40% of the time. In order to make the banks more playable, the height was gradually lowered. Unfortunately, with the onset of the increased summer temperature, the turf on the bunker faces began to decline in some sections. Crater pits were created by mowing the blue/fescue sod while it was under stress. To repair the damaged spots, spading forks were used to poke holes and prep a seed bed. Straight fescue seed and Penn Mulch were applied to these weak sections and lightly watered until they began to establish. The banks were left long during this regrowth period. Presently, the banks are kept as dry as possible through the season and they



are not mowed during periods of high stress to avoid thinning. When widening fairways, it is recommended to utilize existing fairway sod from an area where it will not be noticed, either a par 3 or the beginning of a par 4. The bentgrass sod placed along the edges of the expanded fairways did not blend initially, whereas sod that had been brought in from another location on the course would have. The sod that was removed can then either be seeded or sodded. The two rebuilt greens were grown in the same fashion as the nursery, with aerification plugs and L93 bentgrass on USGA mix so they would visually match the other greens on the course.

The rejuvenation project at Chicago Golf Club is a work in progress. By not bringing in outside contractors, the challenge becomes a balancing act between maintenance and construction. Regular maintenance is performed during the first part of the morning. As the tasks are completed and people free up, they are assigned to the restoration work. There was a learning curve with the new equipment. Once the operator

became familiar how the laser level works, it did not take very long to perform the task of leveling. New sod on tee surfaces can be tricky as far as when to open the tee. The roots may be in the upper surface a few inches and the density of the top looks good, but the turf is very susceptible to damage from players' feet twisting. For small renovations, where the scope of work is manageable and the deadline for completion is flexible, in-house labor can save a lot of money, produce tighter quality control and take care of other issues that are uncovered. Tree removal has opened vistas across the 200-acre property that had not been experienced for a number of years. Backdrops no longer offer depth perception when hitting a shot into the green.

In conclusion, both courses benefited from their careful planning as well as the selection of a golf course architect. Proper review of old photographs is essential if the original design of the golf course is to be returned.



*Careful planning and judicious selection of a golf course architect, combined with proper review of old photographs, are essential in returning a golf course to some semblance of its original design.*

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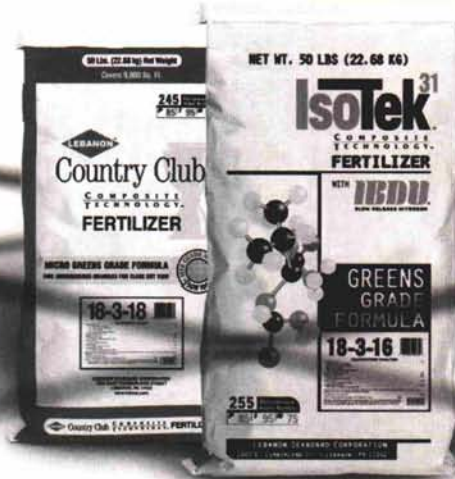
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# the Bull Sheet

John Gurke, CGCS  
Contributing Editor

## DATES TO REMEMBER

March 11 — MAGCS monthly meeting at Midwest Golf House in Lemont, IL.

March 12-13 — Reinders Turf Conference at the Waukesha Expo Center in Waukesha, Wisconsin.

March 20 — CDGA/USGA Green Seminar at Medinah Country Club, **Tom Lively, CGCS** host.

March 31 — Deadline for applications for MAGCS Scholarship Program. More info follows.

May 4 — J. W. Turf's Golf and Turf Equipment Auction in Hampshire, IL.  
Yep—more info follows.

The MAGCS Scholarship Program is offering, for the third consecutive year, three \$1,000 scholarships to deserving family members of its membership. Two MAGCS scholarships and the John Buck Memorial Scholarship are available for the taking, but you have to act fast—deadline for applications is March 31. You can get an application for your family member either by calling George Minnis at MAGCS (630-406-5356), or by downloading it from the MAGCS Web site. MAGCS gratefully acknowledges the generous financial support of our sponsors and especially, J. W. Turf.

While on the subject, mark your calendars for J. W. Turf's Golf & Turf Equipment Auction, to be held on Sunday, May 4 at 8:30 a.m. The auction is a great place to find some real steals on previously-owned equipment, and to unload your consigned equipment as well. Call 847-683-4653 for more details.



Host superintendent **Bob Breen** (you may have caught him in the movie *Top Gun* under his stage name **Tom Skerritt**).

The January MAGCS monthly meeting was held at Arrowhead Golf Club on the 14th, and a big crowd turned out for the event. Host **Bob Breen** and the staff at AGC once again treated the MAGCS members to a great day of conversing, consuming and career-planning. Education speaker **Jim McGoughlin** gave a very in-depth and interesting presentation on "Strategic Career Planning," which highlighted the day's activities. Many thanks to everyone at Arrowhead Golf Club, to **Luke Cella, CGCS** (Education Director), and to **Jon Jennings, CGCS** for their hard work in making the day a success.



Educational speaker **Jim McGoughlin**.

As most all of us know already, **Peter Voykin**, longtime superintendent of Twin Orchard Country Club, passed away on January 30. More on this sad news can found on page 38. MAGCS offers its deepest sympathies to Peter's brother **Paul**, to his family and to the countless friends he made throughout his illustrious career.



**Peter** (right) with **Dudley Smith** in 1999.

A little something to think about: This study on "Body Language Speaks" was printed recently in GCSAA's *Leader Board* newsletter, and shows that there is a correlation between common nonverbal gestures and the kinds of emotions one is likely to encounter in a business setting.

- Gesture: Hands together with fingertips forming a steeple.  
Meaning: *A decision has been made.*
  - Gesture: Touching neck with hand while speaking.  
Meaning: *Possible deception, dishonesty.*
  - Gesture: Rubbing ear between thumb and forefinger.  
Meaning: *Doubt or lack of interest.*
  - Gesture: Unsmiling, with brows down.  
Meaning: *Display of dominance or authority.*
  - Gesture: Forefinger at or near mouth.  
Meaning: *Resistance, or "I don't want to hear this."*
  - Gesture: Picking at clothing as if to remove lint.  
Meaning: *Disagreement.*
  - And finally, Gesture: Raising one's hand while extending the middle digit.  
Meaning: *"Have a nice day."*
- (Can you guess which was not actually in the study?)

(continued on page 28)



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Congratulations to the following MAGCS members who were nominated for *Golfweek's Superintendent News'* 2002 Superintendent of the Year award: **Rob Foster** of Highland Park C.C., **Ken Lapp** of Cog Hill G.C., **Mike Matchen** of Wilmette G.C., **Pat Norton** of Nettle Creek C.C., **Ken Shepherd** of Prairie Bluff G.C., **Dave Ward** of Olympia Fields C.C. and **Phil Zeinert**, CGCS of Elgin C.C. And even BIGGER congratulations to Kenny Lapp for being named to the "Front Nine"—the list of finalists for the coveted award.

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**Ted Fist**, CGCS of Wynstone Golf Club was featured in the January issue of *Golf Course News* with a very smart solution to a big problem. The effluent water being used for irrigation is very high in sodium, causing numerous difficulties in turf and landscape care. This high-sodium situation was due in large part to the use of sodium chloride by homeowners to soften their water. Ted's solution was to change to potassium chloride (which his crew distributes to the homeowners—the cost being split between the Wynstone Homeowners Association and his operating budget). Before this program, sodium content was at 300 ppm, but is now at 82 ppm—a significant decrease—while potassium levels have risen to 170 ppm, allowing Ted to cut back on fertilizer use. Pretty cool, Ted.

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Belated congratulations to **Jan Jarvis**, who is a sales representative for Master of the Links.

Also, congratulations go out to **Brian Widmer**, former assistant superintendent at Bryn Mawr Country Club, on being named superintendent of Hilldale Golf Club as of February 3. Second assistant **Rodney Riech** has moved into the first assistant's position at Bryn Mawr, and applications are being taken to fill his vacancy. Contact **Brian Bossert**, CGCS at 847-677-4112 for details.



.....  
*Brian Widmer.*

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Golf course technician wanted: Hughes Creek Golf Club seeks a qualified technician NOW! Salary and benefits are negotiable—interested parties contact **Darin Ayres**, golf course superintendent, at 630-365-9220.

**Bruce Williams**, CGCS of the Los Angeles Country Club passed along a Web address that may be of interest to you. Get your paper and pencil out—it's a doozy: <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/ndlpcoop/ichhtml/cdnhome.html>. This site links you to the photo archives of the old *Chicago Daily News*, and is rife with historic photos and stories of Chicago-area golf courses and golfers. If you feel the urge to get sentimental, log on and check it out—there's even a story about a murder in Aurora (go figure).

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Looking ahead to this year's ITF combined golf days . . .

• The Odyssey Club will host the 2nd Annual Regional Team Championship on May 20. Can the team from the Metro North defend their championship on the South Side? Host superintendent **Ray Schei** will be retiring this year and looks forward to preparing the course one last time for his friends in the MAGCS organization.

• The annual College Scramble will be held at Prairie Landing on October 7 with host superintendent **Tony Kalina**. The University of Illinois currently holds the trophy.

The ITF is looking for additional assistance on the golf committee this season. If you are interested in helping out, please contact **Jim Shone** at 708-217-8509.





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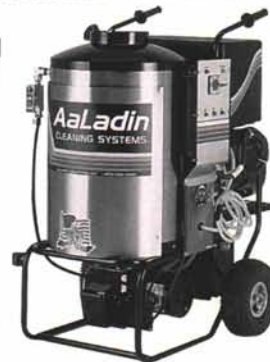
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