

# GCBAAs Says "I Love New York," Part Two—Insights for Superintendents

*Editor's Note: In our December 2005 issue, Sharon recapped the setting and speakers at the GCBAAs summer meeting, which took place in Jersey City, just outside New York City, in August. Here is more of Sharon's recap, including highlights of great interest to golf course superintendents.*

*Opening remarks came from representatives of all facets of golf: Tommy Sasser, president of the GCBAAs; our own Steve Mona of the GCSAA; Tom Marzolf, ASCGA; Bob Scott of the ASIC; Mike Tinkey, NGCOA; Dave Oatis of the USGA; and Brian Whitcomb of the PGA of America. It was encouraging to see all of these organizations coming together to strengthen the integrity and growth of the golf industry.*

These speakers presented some very interesting facts:

- Timeshares grew 16% in 2004 and golf, more than any other amenity, is the #1 item that sells timeshares.
- 4% of leisure travelers took a golf vacation, representing 2% of all vacations taken by Americans.
- 14% of active travelers are interested in playing golf while on vacation.
- Openings and closings of golf courses are about the same.
- Price increases of up to 15% are sticking.
- Shorter courses are becoming more popular.
- Golf memberships are now being packaged into the price of homes.
- Golf ball, golf glove and footwear sales are trending upward.
- Lifespan on the golf course: USGA greens 15-30 years; bunkers five-seven years; irrigation 15-25 years; mulch one-three years; tees 15-20 years.

We then heard how there are many different Web links and programs out there to encourage play and provide information on the status of the golf industry:

- Golf20/20.com provides insightful research addressing the future of golf.
- Playgolfamerica.com features a zip code search engine for golf courses.
- Linkup2Golf.com provides a "welcome to golf" for the new or infrequent adult player.
- Juniorlinks.com is a Web site and database for the junior golfer.
- EWGA.com concentrates on the executive women golfers.
- AccessGolf.org highlights courses for disabled golfers.

The summer 2005 meeting also featured panel discussions with golf course architects as well as one with representatives from oil companies, designers, manufacturers, distributors and contractors discussing "Rising Construction Costs." This provided a very lively discussion on who runs up the bill the most.

Dave Oatis, the Northeast Section director for the USGA Green Section, gave a very informative speech on putting-green construction. His focus: Why do greens fail? He said a major reason why a lot of greens are rebuilt is because arborists originally designed them. Other facets that come into play: poor design, traffic flow, insufficient cupping area and surface drainage. The most important point

he made was that the golf course superintendent should be involved in selection of the rootzone mix since he/she will be the person who will have to maintain it. Go figure!

Another speaker who drew the audience's attention was the keynote speaker, Carol Forrest, who works for GeoSyntec Consultants. She gave a very detailed speech on stormwater regulations for construction sites. It was amazing to hear how the EPA can fine up to **\$32,500 per violation per day** on a construction site. She shared several best management practices to help our builders avoid noncompliance and the possible ramifications it can cause.

The conference then moved to Royce Brook Golf Club in Hillsborough, NJ, where 120 players competed for a record number of contests and giveaways. After the tournament, it was back to Jersey City for the awards and a silent auction. More than \$5,000 was raised for the GCBAAs Foundation, the charitable arm that runs the "Sticks for Kids" program promoting the game of golf to our underprivileged youth.

The Golf Course Builders Association will once again be involved in one of the Solution Centers at the GIS. Last year, they were responsible for the "Building of the Green" Solution Center, which drew rave reviews from the attendees. If you are contemplating a course renovation or restoration or will be involved in a new course construction, you won't want to miss this year's "Constructing the Game" Solution Center. Areas to be covered are:

- Determining construction and renovation schedules.
- Interpreting the plan and methodology of layout.
- Installation of drainage.
- Construction of greens.
- Bunker reconstruction.
- Irrigation problems and solutions.
- Erosion-control problems and solutions.

Please plan on spending some time at this well-thought-out venue. As you can imagine, it takes a great deal of time and effort to put on these live demonstration centers. See you in Atlanta!







# Dan Nielsen

August 31, 1965 –  
December 12, 2005

*Dan Nielsen, golf course superintendent of Golf Club of Illinois, passed away peacefully at his home on December 12, 2005 after a valiant battle with pancreatic cancer. He is survived by his wife, Kira; sons Zachary, Tyler, Nick and Travis; parents Dennis and Sandra Nielsen; and his brother, Michael Nielsen.*

Dan Nielsen began his career as a golf course superintendent with the Golf Club of Illinois in 1996. It was here until his final days that Dan served the game of golf with great distinction, inspiring and touching the lives of everyone with whom he worked. Before his tenure at the Golf Club of Illinois, Dan served as an assistant at Midlane Country Club and Westmoreland Country Club.

It is a mark of Dan's humility that so few of us were even aware of the fact that Dan was an exceptionally gifted athlete. While studying criminal justice at Western Michigan University, Dan set and still holds several pitching records there.



*The Dan Nielsen family  
(L to R): Tyler, Nick, Kira, Zachary, Travis and Dan.*



## 34 DAN NIELSEN

Pitcher

R-R, 6-2, 205, So., Northville... earned All-MAC honors as a freshman and was unbeaten against five league opponents, which included four complete games... his mark was also best by a MAC hurler and WMU's tops since 1979... had a two-hit 2-0 shutout over Ohio State... has excellent fastball, slider, and control... good leader.

■■■ was all-league pitcher during senior year of high school as he compiled a 7-2 mound mark... also played outfield... earned two letters in baseball, plus basketball and football... defensive tackle and tight end in latter sport and all-league pick.

□□□ business major... born August 31, 1965.

Year	IP	R-ER	BB	SO	W-L	ERA
'85	59.1	30-26	19	46	7-0	3.94

*This entry in the 1986 Western Michigan University yearbook chronicles some of Dan's exceptional achievements as a pitcher.*



Before choosing greenkeeping as his profession, Dan pitched for two years in the Pittsburgh Pirates minor league system. Dan might have been brought up into the major leagues had he not injured his throwing arm. He never told me how he blew out his arm, but knowing Dan, I think it is safe to assume that his misfortune was owing to his no-holds-barred style. Probably he should have eased up a little on his fastball, but Dan just wasn't wired to ever back down from a contest of will or endurance.

Dan had a huge heart for greenkeeping. He threw himself into it when he discovered it. And one of the things that he enjoyed most about our profession is the camaraderie that we have. The passion that Dan put into his work was equaled by the devotion that he had towards his family and friends. When Dan passed away, many of us lost our best friend.

When one of our own is taken in the prime of his life, I think that it should get our attention. I am hoping that we will all honor Dan's memory by cultivating stronger friendships,



Dan with his Harley.


and by being thankful every day for the gift of life.

*Donations to the family of Dan Nielsen may be made care of the MAGCS.*



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