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The 18th at Cog Hill's Dubsdread, site of the 2009 BMW Championship, and the August combined meeting of MAGCS and the ITF. You can bet the hole location will be back left for tournament Sunday.
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The Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents (MAGCS), founded December 24, 1926, is a professional organization whose goals include preservation and dissemination of scientific and practical knowledge pertaining to golf turf maintenance. We endeavor to increase efficiency and economic performance while improving and enhancing the individual and collective prestige of the members.

The MAGCS member is also an environmental steward. We strive to uphold and enhance our surroundings by promoting flora and fauna in every facet in a manner that is beneficial to the general public now and in the future.


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DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

Dan Sterr, Stonebridge Country Club



No Small Task

There has been a post it note attached to my computer screen since the first of April reminding me of the article I needed to write for On Course. The article was due July 1st.

It is now July 7th and I am just now sitting down to write. I did call Luke on June 30th and asked him for some ideas on what to write and he informed me that he did not need the article right away, so I was able to put off writing the article for another couple of days.

Serving as the current Secretary/Treasurer of the MAGCS, I have come to appreciate all the hard work and dedication not only the current Board of Directors has put in to the success of the association, but all the previous members of the Board of Directors and Executive committees. Luke Cella is a tremendous asset to the association. His dedication, not only to the association, but the profession of the Golf Course Superintendent is outstanding. I can truly say that Luke has the best interest of our association and our profession at heart.

The amount of work that goes in to running an association like ours is tremendous. There are many tasks that not only the Executive Director, but the Board of Directors needs to perform in order for the association to run efficiently. Everything from answering the phone at the office, to preparing an agenda for the upcoming Board of Directors meeting, to paying the association bills, to running a monthly golf event, and to preparing a budget all just do not happen; they take the dedication of many individuals involved with the association.

During a MAGCS Board of Directors Meeting, the members approve the minutes from the previous meeting, review the Financial Report, review any communications to the association, review the Executive Director Report, and review a report from the Commercial Advisory Council and the Class C Advisor. After the Board has reviewed these items they move to Reports of Committees. Each member of the Board of Directors is responsible for a committee. The committees are Arrangements, Education, Golf, Editorial, Partnership Task Group, Membership,

The amount of work that goes into running an association like ours is tremendous.

Employment, Scholarship, Media and Public Relations, By Laws and Nominating, Past President Council, and Benevolence.

During the meeting, committee chairman, will report on the status of their committees, After the report of the committees there is a report of the officers, this is where the President, Vice President, and Secretary/Treasurer report any pertinent information to the Board of Directors. The meeting then moves to unfinished business, then to New Business, and finally to the Directive Summary—this is where the Board Reviews any outstanding items that need attention and what Members of the Board or Staff or both will handle. If needed, the Board of Directors will move to Executive Session. From the list of committees I think you can see there are many things that go in to running the association.

Because of the dedication of our current Board of Directors and Executive Director, and the path that all the former members of the Board of Directors and Past Presidents set our association on, the MAGCS is looked upon as one of the premier associations in our profession and we all should be very proud. **-OC**

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Ken Lapp -N-

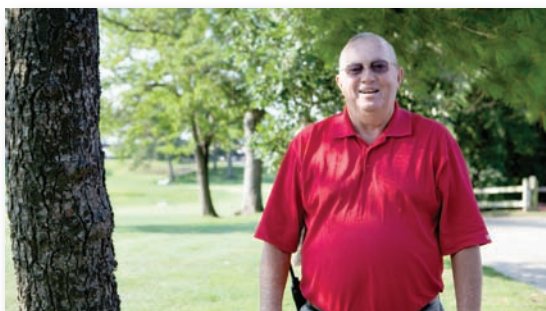


Millions of Rounds Under His Belt and Still Counting

Ken Lapp has been a golf course superintendent for the past 54 years. At 73, he still enjoys what he does, he must. At an age when most are well into their retirement, Ken is looking forward to hosting his 18th PGA tour event with new anticipation. Coghill's #4, Dubsdread, just reopened this spring after a complete renovation that began the day after hosting his last PGA event, the BMW Championship in September of 2007. With a few finishing touches, the course is ready and waiting. Ken defers the success of the project to the weather and staff, "We caught a break", but those in the know, understand a large part of the accomplishment was due to Ken's ability to manage. Ken has never been afraid to ask questions and seek answers, a trait most admired and one not so common these days.

Ken began his career working for his father, Amos Lapp at St. Andrews in West Chicago, and soon found himself the golf course superintendent at Fresh Meadow in Hillside at the age of 19. Trusted at such an early age, young Kenny proved himself to be a hard worker, a quick learner and a value to the industry. After 18 years at Fresh Meadow, Ken headed to his current course(s) at Cog Hill in 1973. Ken has worked for the Jemsek family his whole career, from St. Andrews to Fresh Meadow and still at Cog Hill. When asked how many rounds of golf he has provided through his efforts, he told me, "to be honest, I never thought of that as a number." Doing the quick math, I replied it has to be many millions, a milestone that few will ever reach. Ken eschewed responding in his humble way.

Ken oversees the four golf courses at Cog Hill. Many of his 75 staff members have been with him since the early to mid 80's (some longer than that!), a testament to his kind demeanor and forthrightness. Never wanting to overstep his bounds, Ken is very modest man and defers credit and praise away when often he is the one responsible. In a conversation about hosting the many PGA and other national events (A U.S. Amateur, a couple of Men's Public Links and a Women's Public Links) Ken stated, "The guys know what to do, they just start getting ready for the tournament. Often, they remind me of what needs to be done".



Ken Lapp, Golf Course Superintendent of Cog Hill, father of 3 and grandfather of 5, is at home on the golf course.

This year, it will be all-new, and many are looking forward to it. Previously rated, at 73.8 "Dubs" from the tips played to 6,945 yards with a slope of 139. Emerging from the hand of Rees Jones, it now boasts 7,616 yards, a rating of 78.1 and a slope of 152. Each hole has seven sets of square tees, deepened bunkers, new sand, and elevated and intriguing putting surfaces. Gone are any drainage issues with the installation of a SubAir system under each surface that will allow Ken to get things firm and fast. Still learning the ins and outs of the SubAir, Ken is excited to have this system at his disposal. Ken told me 1,888,808 square feet of bluegrass sod was planted, a number that helped them to open the course this past spring. When I toured the renovation last fall, I found myself taking a picture of the putting surface admiring the purest stand of bentgrass (A1/A4) I have ever seen.

When I ran into Ken, he was happy with the project and the way it all came together. He said he was a bit tentative taking the reins prior to the start but found it to be invigorating and fun. Ken enjoyed working with Rees Jones and all those on the project and in typical Ken Lapp fashion gives all the accolades away. It will be our honor and privilege to play Dubsdread ten days before the BMW Championship commences. We look forward to playing one of Chicagoland's most famous golf courses this month. Thank you Ken for making this possible. **-OC**



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Design for a "Rough" Economy

Whether you call it a recession or depression, difficult economic times are certainly upon us. Anyone who has not felt a tightening budget or a request to make a cut-back is in a unique situation.

The game of golf felt this downturn well before the recession was official. The reasons for this decline have been clearly documented over the past nine years. Heck, articles have been published in the *Wall Street Journal* that depict the game on the verge of extinction!

Indeed, golf rounds have dropped 5.7% since 2000, and golf participation has decreased by 1.5% in the past five years. We have been presented with many negative statistics. I will not discuss those numbers further in this article. Instead, I will present ideas from a design perspective that can help accomplish more with less.

MASTER PLAN

Before making any changes that can affect the playability, functionality, or aesthetics of the course, it is absolutely necessary to develop a comprehensive Master Plan that addresses both the physical and operational aspects of the facility. A mission statement is established, along with goals and objectives that focus on the facility's long-term benefits.

Working with the facility's golf committees and staff members, a plan should be developed by third party professionals such as arborists, irrigation consultants, golf course architects and/or agronomists. This will eliminate the possibility of members or golfers misconstruing change as personal preference. The plan should then be circulated among the members or small breakout committees. Next, feedback should be provided to the consultants. The plan is then developed, adopted by the Club, and implemented according to established priorities.

DRAINAGE AND CIRCULATION

Heavy rains this spring have shown us that drainage and cart path circulation can have a direct reflection on our revenue. Many courses experience standing water and have no ability to circulate golf carts after rain events. In Chicago we have approximately 210 potentially playable days of golf. In 2008, weather limited the number of days to approximately 181. This means we had precipitation during the hours of play for 29 of our 210 potential days. The 29 days of course closure increase greatly if the precipitation is not removed from the course through drainage or if there is no way to circulate carts

during moist ground conditions. It may be an inconvenience for golfers to be restricted to cart paths only, but at least they have the opportunity to pay a green fee and damage to the golf course is minimized.

Drainage pipe is relatively inexpensive to install and can normally be installed by staff. The full efficiency of existing drainage can be maintained by flushing out debris, keeping inlets open,

and removing roots that have penetrated pipes. Adequate drainage, especially in bentgrass areas and on golf course features, can yield greater savings than any other design element discussed here.

Remember that the two most important things in any golf course operation remain: 1) getting water off of the course, and 2) getting water on the course.

IRRIGATION

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(continued on page 9)





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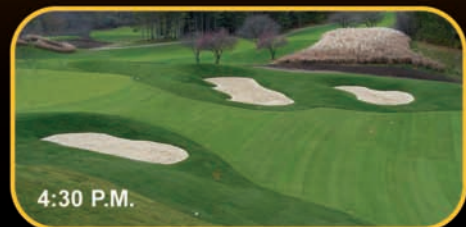
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that will optimize current irrigation systems by measuring and calculating the correct water requirements. This is done with information gathered by small electrodes distributed throughout the golf course, forming a sensor network. These nodes allow for the sprinklers to be activated and deactivated efficiently with consequent water savings estimated at between 20 and 30% of current requirements. This translates to cost savings and a Greener approach to irrigating.

FAIRWAYS

Generally, the most costly element to maintain on a golf course is the premium playing surface of bentgrass (approximately \$1,200.00 per acre, per year). Most courses include this turf on tees, greens, and fairways. This can total 30-40 acres on an 18-hole course. The reduction of the size of these areas and their replacement with bluegrass or fescue can yield significant savings in chemical applications and mowing time.

Bentgrass can be eliminated from the start of fairways within a short distance of the teeing grounds. It should not be the intent to create long forced carries from the tees, but it certainly is not required that the fairway run adjacent to or immediately up to the front of the tees. Areas between landing zones can also be reduced by narrowing or even eliminating the bentgrass. Playability is foremost, and only "educated" reductions should be considered.

Altering the mowing patterns of fairways can result in a very quick and immediate cost savings. The following excerpt from an online blog clearly demonstrates this.

"Prior to 2007 the fairways at Northland were striped with 9 holes being mowed each day for an average of 6 days a week. After calculating man hours, and fuel usage the cost to mow fairways for one season was roughly \$30,000.

Beginning in 2007 the fairways were mowed in a light and dark pattern, all 18 holes being mowed 2 days a week. After once again calculating man hours, fuel usage, then adding the cost of turf growth regulators, which allow us to mow only two days a week; the total cost per season is roughly \$12,000.

A difference of \$18,000 is a pretty nice number from something as simple as changing mowing patterns. It is because of these types of savings that we have been able to

increase our seasonal labor and other areas of the budget, which allow us to make changes, such as walk-mowing and topdressing of approaches, and hand rake bunkers."

*~Chris Tritabaugh
Duluth, Minnesota*

TEES

The teeing areas have a significant impact on perceptions of the course, because they are the very first thing a golfer experiences on each golf hole. Pleasant shapes, level surfaces, and a good stand of turf will suffice for most golfers.

Many courses have multiple teeing locations to provide yardage elasticity. Each tee is located independently on a separate box. Combining tee boxes into larger pods at the yardage locations that are most often played can save time and money. This limits the idle travel time of the mowers from one box to another. Proper sizing is essential to allow for divot recuperation and teeing variation.

Square tees can provide a "classic" look while maximizing area for tee markers, but they can be very expensive to maintain because of walk mowing. The same look and feel of the tee can be preserved with straight edges and rounded corners. This permits a riding mower to be utilized to maintain the tops. The corners need a minimum radius of 8' to avoid tire marks on the surface.

Adequate spacing between tees and adjacent features, such as cart paths, should also be considered. The distance of the gentle slope between the two features should be in increments that equal the cut of the mowing unit that will be used to maintain the area.



Striping the fairways takes time and fuel. This can be reduced by mowing using the ring-around-the-rosie pattern.



Proper tees sizing and growing conditions help to reduce inputs and create better playing surfaces.

BUNKERS

Whether your course has five sand traps or 105, these design elements can be "hazardous" to maintain. The response of most superintendents when asked which element of a golf course is most difficult to maintain is usually the sand traps. When building or reconstructing these hazards, two determinations need to be made before tearing up turf. The first is what style fits your course's character. Second, can that style be maintained within your budget.

Regardless of the style, construct the bunker using USGA
(continued on next page)

function properly, it deters golfers and costs the course money. A heavily used bunker costs just as much to maintain as a rarely used bunker. Converting some of the less "important" bunkers to grass hollows can ease the budget while preserving design integrity.

With any bunker that is going to have flashed sand, be sure to take advantage of the advanced technology in erosion control. The cost of installing erosion control fabrics such as Sandtrapper II or SandMat is very quickly recouped.

"The bunker fabric installation in our bunkers has saved us 80-90% of the time it used to take us to replace sand on the faces after a rain storm."

~Dan Dinelli CGCS,
North Shore Country Club

Grassed faced bunkers should use growth regulators and drip irrigation to reduce maintenance while preserving healthy turf. The steeper the face is graded, the more time and money it will take to maintain it. Draping push mowers over the top edge of a bunker with ropes is not a way to reduce costs! Consider grass-



High flashed sand faced bunkers are nice to look at, but ding the labor line every time downpours hit.



Bunker fabrics help to reduce labor and reduce sand contamination.

ing these faces with a combination of bluegrass and fine fescue seed blend as the fescue will survive under stress and provides great aesthetic value.

Also, be cognizant of the position of these hazards adjacent to other golf course features such as putting greens. The mower width that is used to maintain the rough grass should be the minimum distance between the hazard and the feature. Otherwise, the mower will ride on the putting surface, creating additional stress.

VEGETATION

Turf cannot be healthy without proper sunlight and air movement (i.e., budget expenditure). Golfers cannot enjoy themselves (i.e., spend money) on a golf course if their game resembles pinball instead of golf. Evaluate the vegetation on your site and determine if a tree or shrub is a burden to your budget. If so, remove it and plant another one somewhere well off the fairway.

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