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SEPTEMBER 2011 Volume 65 No. 5



Subtle undulations in a rolling fairway can make an "easy" shot not so simple when your balance is off, a design feature of Perry Maxwell.

FRONT COVER

Most golf courses display our flag somewhere on the property. Does yours? If so, send us a picture - this one happened to be from out west, and is a fitting cover to compliment Brian Placzkowski's feature. Photo credit: Luke Cella

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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

Dave Groelle, CGCS, *Royal Melbourne Country Club*



Midwest Turf Clinic Takes Shape

As I write this we are nearing the end of another tough Chicago summer. It has been a long season and we are all hoping we are on the down-hill side of the climb. I'm sure the last thing on your mind is the educational program on tap for the 58th Annual Midwest Turf Clinic. However, Chuck Barber and I have been working diligently throughout the season on the program, in the hopes of creating an educational and entertaining day for all in attendance.

The program will feature Paul Vermeulen, Director of Competitions Agronomy for the PGA Tour and Tim Moraghan, former Championship Agronomist with the USGA and current Principal of Aspire Golf Consulting. Paul will be discussing the TOUR's tournament preparations, and in particular, how they approach the dual challenges of green speed and putting green firmness. Tim will be discussing a variety of topics that include everyday championship agronomy, what works and what doesn't. He will also go into career development, interviewing do's and don'ts, and generally wow us with his wealth of knowledge.

Curtis Tyrrell, CGCS of Medinah Country Club will also share with us some of the preparations Medinah will make in advance of the Ryder Cup in 2012. This will be a terrific event for the Chicago golf market and put the world golf spotlight in our area for a few days next year.

It will be a great day of education highlighted by respected individuals of our industry.

Jan Jarvis of Master of the Links will be our National Anthem performer again this year. I promise you this is a performance you will NOT want to miss. I can't believe how lucky we are to have a performer like Jan share his talents with us. Jim Cornelison of Chicago Blackhawks fame has nothing on our guy Jan!

As is customary, the event will be held at Medinah Country Club on Wednesday, November 16, 2011. There will be much more on tap so please mark your calendars for this great event.

There is no shortage of things to do between now and the Turf Clinic and I hope to see you at one of the MAGCS sponsored events: The iTurfExpo on September 22 at Midwest Golf House, the Midwest October Meeting hosted by John Nelson and Merit Club on October 3, and the joint educational meeting with the Club Managers Association on October 11 at Stonebridge Country Club. **-OC**



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FEATURE I

Gregory Martin, *Martin Design*

Magic is not Obvious but Infectious



Golf course architects come in many shapes and sizes, from different places and with different perspectives. Golf course architecture should be a reflection of the wonderful variety this game provides. The game of golf is played on distinct and unique playing fields—and architectural variety is what makes the game so grand.

This is nothing new. Golden age architects, Bell, Tillinghast, Ross, McKenzie each had a unique style and offered varying perspectives on how golf course architecture should react to the land and expose the game. But their success was based upon some simple and shared ideas about golf and golfers.

Architectural perspectives still come in different shapes and sizes. This variance is what gives golfers the fodder for discussion about golf courses and golf course architecture.

I have the greatest admiration for Pete Dye. He has created some of the most extraordinary golf courses of the modern era. His “diabolical” efforts have been examined, dissected and detailed. The professional player is harassed and the average golfer besieged. Some of his more distinctive designs were those that offered an extraordinary level of intimidation. From all angles, there was much to observe, much to understand and a lot to digest. Beautiful and engaging, these courses like TPC Sawgrass, Whistling Straits and PGA West are oddly harmonious while simultaneously menacing - bombarding every golfer with continued dread.

Interestingly, golfers of all types have had great rounds on these golf courses. This past year, a professional posted a 64 at TPC Sawgrass, even with a double bogey. He played as if with blinders, never seeing the trouble or allowing that trouble to affect his play. When I played there, I began my round with a series of pars, a bogey and a birdie. I was even



after eight holes. On the ninth hole, I made a mistake, and never regained a level of the most basic competence – overwhelmed and fearful for the next 9 holes I became a terrified golfer.

His designs are equal parts strategy, heroism and pressure. Play the right shot to the right spot and you can play well: do not let the massive bunkers, steep grades, or insidious hazards affect your play. Play the wrong shot, or play to the wrong spot and you will be penalized. Simple, right? But once you make a mistake, the blinders are off. You will see everything and it will interfere with clear thinking. Only the most talented thoughtful golfers can recover. This is the genius of Pete Dye.

I am an admirer of Pete Dye, but my design philosophies come from the opposite direction. My instincts as an architect are to allow the golfer to ‘play away’ with little care, and a wide berth, but generate subtleties and surprises that offer challenges enticing and goading the golfer into carelessness. Each shot is presented with challenges, some easier than the next, and each providing subtle demands requiring attention, or even recovery. I believe golf should be a challenge - equal parts fun, strategy and difficulty. Other architects use different equations.

These same philosophies are inherent in the designs of Perry Maxwell. He managed to create some wonderful golf

(continued on page 7)

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courses that adhere to strategic principles while providing a simply beautiful challenge. It is both fair and tough. The Maxwell rolls are the most notable aspect of his courses. The greens are filled with pitches and curves, rolls and ridges. Yet, even with these heavily contoured greens there is subtlety and nuance to his designs; there is charm and timelessness that is revealed slowly and evenly. The course grows as a friendship, with characteristics that are at the same time polite and puzzling. There is magic to these golf courses. The challenges are not obvious, but they certainly exist. That magic is charming.

Every golfer should learn to read a golf course...to take the clues from the architect and determine how the hole should be played. Pete Dye offers lots of clues that are intended to overwhelm the senses. Perry Maxwell provides few clues, but with equally destructive results.

Like magic, good golf course architecture does not have to be obvious. It can be obvious and menacing, or it can be subtle, simple and simultaneously captivating. **-OC**





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FEATURE II

Brian Placzkowski, *Royal Melbourne Country Club*

Not Your Average Bunker



I've read before that golf mimics life or maybe life mimics golf. Since I've become the Assistant at Royal Melbourne, I've found many parallels between our profession and a part of my life. As we all know, this month marks the ten-year anniversary of 9/11. This tragic day has touched all of us in many different ways. This day holds particular significance with me, because nine years ago this month I found my naive, Midwest, suburban behind in the middle of the hottest, dirtiest, scariest Afghani desert I would have never thought to imagine. You might wonder what the heck I was doing there. I was on deployment with Task Force Panther of the 82nd Airborne Division. Over the next six months as an infantryman in the 1st Battalion 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, I would experience good and bad events that will stay with me for the rest of my life. I often have people ask me, "What was it like?" It's not that I don't want to talk about it, but I don't always know what to say. You see, there's not much that I can compare it to that they would understand, and many people walk away confused. You might wonder how, but in only my second season as an assistant superintendent at Royal Melbourne Country Club, I've found a surprising amount of similarities between being a soldier in Afghanistan and an assistant superintendent in the Midwest (no offense Dave!) and I thought I'd take a minute and share a few with you.

The biggest thing the Army prepared me for was this whole early to bed early to rise mentality. I commonly saw the sunrise, set, and rise again all without ever going to bed. After long summers like the last two, I sometimes feel the same way. The biggest thing I had to get used to was not having to put on body armor and carry a rifle to the bathroom in the morning. Another likeness I've noticed is the shocking similarities between scouting for diseases on hot muggy mornings and climbing through the mountains looking for the Taliban. You can run into them at any place and time and when you do it almost always means it's going to be a long day. The only thing is, Pythium doesn't shoot back.

My favorite comparison is when you find yourself in a foreign country, trying to provide a service to help people who don't speak your language... is very similar to dealing with golfers who want to know why the greens are slow, why their balls plug in the bunker, and why we aerate the golf course every year. Both missions start with the best of intentions and end with people walking away shaking their heads. And then there's wanting to jump out of a perfectly good airplane. Well, on second thought I haven't quite found anything to compare that to except maybe going to a green committee meeting, but if I think of something better I'll let you know.

Both missions start with the best intentions and end with people walking away shaking their heads.

This September 11th take a minute and whether you thank a soldier, thank a firefighter or thank God, take a moment and be thankful for the great country we live in and for all the brave men and women everywhere in any capacity that fight hard every day to preserve it. **-OC**



NEWS FROM ALLIED ASSOCIATIONS
Brad Chamra, *Lake Shore Country Club*



2011 iTurf Expo Preview

The calendar has flipped to September and hopefully all of the torrential downpours and oppressive heat remain a faint memory until next summer. With the arrival of cooler temperatures, area golf courses can jump-start plant health through heavy doses of cultural practices. Fall projects such as drainage, overseeding, and tree removal are gearing up to lessen the effects of another extreme growing season. Another crucial tool turfgrass professionals can use to educate and prepare for the 2012 season is the iTurf Expo, an event sponsored by the Illinois Turfgrass Foundation, the CDGA, U of I and SIU.

The 2011 iTurf Expo will once again be held on the Sunshine Golf Course located at the Midwest Golf House Complex in Lemont, IL on September 22. The iTurf Expo presents a great medium for interactive training and education, as well as networking with peers and other industry professionals on successful practices for 2011 and improvement strategies for 2012. Not only is it a great "one stop shop" to see new or updated equipment and products being offered for turf professionals across all turf trades, it is also a valuable opportunity to listen to unbiased research on diseases, turfgrass varieties, and annual flowers.

With the help of the CDGA Turfgrass Program and Dr. Derek Settle, The Illinois Turfgrass Foundation (ITF) has bought together some of the most highly respected educational minds in the turfgrass industry. Dr. Settle developed a very well rounded educational program for the golf course superintendent, assistant golf course superintendent and the industry that support our courses. Every year, the ITF looks to improve the experience for attendees while at the iTurf Expo, and this year's line up of researchers should not disappoint.

Dr. Jim Kerns from the University of Wisconsin will share his research, "Everything Dollar Spot." Dr. Kerns research discusses the suppression of dollar spot through different fungicidal families, rates, intervals, and growth regulators. He will also present a new dollar spot model, in collaboration with Oklahoma State University, in which dollar spot outbreaks may be predicted in the future.

Dr. Aaron Patton from Purdue University will be presenting his research, "Selective control of creeping bentgrass and other weeds in golf course roughs." With his research Dr. Patton focuses on planning, implementing, and leading projects devoted to managing quality lawn, sod, golf, and



sports turf while reducing management inputs.

Dr. Lee Miller (will return to his old stomping grounds) from the University of Missouri will examine how DMI fungicides can be used for fairy ring prevention and how spring DMI applications combined with wetting agents and PGRs work into a greens' management program.

Dr. Bruce Branham from the University of Illinois and Dr. Ken Diesburg from Southern Illinois University will be on hand to discuss problems and current research that are specific to turfgrass professionals in Illinois.

Tim Sibicky, Manager of Research for the CDGA will discuss, "Multi-State Evaluation of Dollar Spot Susceptibility in Creeping Bentgrass Cultivars." Mr. Sibicky's research findings and analysis are usually presented in parts for weekly CDGA Scouting Report, but at the iTurf Expo he will be able to fully expand on his research.

Dr. Settle, Director of Turfgrass Programs for the CDGA, will present his research "Waitea Gone Wild- Research Experience of Early Summer 2011" and "Testing Newer Fungicides for Disease Control on Golf Course Greens." Dr. Settle's research, along with information gained from numerous site visits during the past two difficult growing seasons, will combine for an invaluable presentation.

With all of the research and expertise available at the 2011 iTurf Expo, skipping this event may be more foolish than skipping fall aerification. Mark your calendar to travel to Lemont on September 22nd and take in a day of education, networking, and enjoyment. For more information on registration along with an agenda, go to the Illinois Turfgrass Foundation web site, iturfexpo.org. **-OC**