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PHOTO: Luke Cella

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- 8/26 Midwest August Meeting, Crystal Lake Country Club
- 10/7 Midwest October Meeting, Chicago Highlands CC
- 11/14 6th Midwest Turf Clinic, Medinah Country Club
- 1/22/14 January Meeting & Wee One Fundraiser, Seven Bridges
- 2/5/14 Midwest Hospitality Reception, Orlando FL

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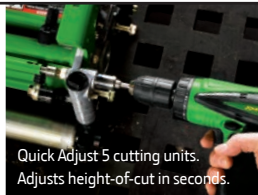
Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents (MAGCS) exists to promote professionalism and integrity, to provide networking, education and career enhancement opportunities to all members who facilitate the growth and enjoyment of golf.

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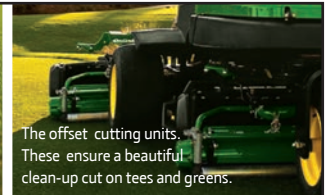
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Luke Cella
MAGCS

List of Lists

As I get older, I find it more imperative that I write things down, or record them (Siri is great for reminders on my phone, especially when I'm holding on to the steering wheel of the car and I need to remember something later.) Most golf course superintendents are list makers, I'm not certain why, but believe it has to do with being organized and getting the job done. I do know that simple action of placing a line through an item, or a check mark next to it, may, at times offer enough satisfaction as finishing the task at hand. Can it be what motivates you? Why not?

One of the latest things that I crossed off my list was MAGCS new website. Appearance wise and functionality from a user standpoint, it is similar to the old site. However, there are some improvements. First, the online directory is more robust; it offers more search capabilities and better results.

You'll also notice it is easier to print off invoices, and I think, pay online with a credit card. We switched credit card processors to PayPal. This allows us to accept all credit and debit cards through one credit card merchant and if you have a PayPal account, you can pay that way too. In addition, when you log in, you'll be able to see if you have any open invoices with MAGCS – not a problem for most of you, but sometimes, especially with dues renewals, you'll be able to tell when payment was received by MAGCS and processed.

We have created a members only section to the site, it hosts the directory - so your information is protected. In addition to the directory, we've placed Golf Course Superintendent Postings, On Course Archives, access to Turfgrass Information File, and a Membership Forum behind a firewall. We opted to set up the Forum for our members as a place to openly discuss or ask questions of the membership. It could be a great place to query the membership on a specific topic or practice in the privacy (not Facebook) that we can offer our members. One of the items we are working on updating is the Midwest Family Tree. Brad Anderson, CGCS did such a great job compiling all the records and histories, however it didn't take long to get out of date. Next time you are looking for an excuse to not balance your checkbook take a peek at the Family Tree (under the resources tab) and let us know if there are any updates or corrections to make.

The new site offers the ability to host a blog, something that the board is working through. This may be a nice place to share pictures of our members and meetings and courses, at least the ones that are appropriate and don't always make the magazine.

Please log in and check your information. (Your username is your email address. Enter that in the Email field and click Forgot Password, the system will then email you instructions to log in.) While you are at it, upload a picture of yourself for the online directory. One of the comments I used to hear by the old guys at meetings and now I hear from my age group is that they don't know half of the faces they see each month....help us out and put up a pic of yourself.

Next on my list – a MAGCS App. We want to be with you at all times, and make it easy to register for meetings, check the directory, new job posts and keep in touch. @

Teaming up with outside Contractors



Josh Therrien, Black Sheep Golf Club

PHOTO CREDITS: JOSH THERRIEN

Many questions need to be asked when it comes to moving forward in capital projects and course improvements. A priority to know is “who will be doing a majority of the work?”

Do we outsource the job to a contractor or complete the project in house? As Dave Biery's Assistant at Black Sheep Golf Club, I have had the experience of simultaneously doing both. Black Sheep has partnered up with a single contractor to complete a number of projects utilizing the experience of that contractor and our own staff.

When the Club needs excavation work to be done for particular projects, Black Sheep calls on Mike Riordan of Riordan Renovation Company. Mike is an excavator who does work on his own specializing in course restorations, designs and grading projects. In the past sixteen months Mike, our grounds staff, and myself have restored/built twenty bunkers, added drainage, expanded a tee, and resituated an entire green complex. When major amounts of dirt need to be moved Mike solely preforms most of the excavation work. He also lends a hand in the trenching and installation of drainage. When excavation is finished, our staff completes the rest of the project. However, when projects are on the smaller side and little excavation is required, our staff is able to take on the whole project in house. Knowing our abilities while having trust in an outside contractor has proven to be an efficient and affordable way to make desired improvements. Sometimes courses are too quick to act and immediately hire someone else to do the work that they may be capable of completing in house. This can get costly very fast. However contractors can provide equipment, ideas and experience that can get the job done in a smooth manner. There are many factors a golf course superintendent must look at when deciding what can be done in-house, when to hire an outside contractor, or in some cases a combination of both.

Know Your Contractor

It is vital that you become familiar with an outside contractor in order for you and your staff to work with them efficiently. Besides the general prerequisites, there are a number of things you should know about a contractor. Don't be afraid to ask questions, specifically about and to your intended contractor. Some questions to ask beyond the common maybe:

- What exactly is included in the service fee?
- How is the work billed; by the hour, or by the job?
- What equipment will be provided? How will they get it to the work site without damaging surrounding turf?
- Will additional equipment have to be rented? Who is responsible for renting it?
- Will the contractor be using fuel that you have on property? If so, who will record and pay for fuel usage?

“Sometimes courses are too quick to act and immediately hire someone else to do the work that they may be capable of completing in house”

Before the financial negotiations are settled, it is smart to know exactly what elements of the project the contractor is responsible for and what components staff will provide. A simple list of the work to be done out of house and in house is crucial for all parties to understand. This is also a good time to attach a timeline within the course calendar of general estimates for each phase to be completed.



Mike Reardon begins to cut drainage trenches to tie the new part of the green into the existing drain lines.

If the contractor is charging by the hour, it is also a good time to calculate tasks your staff can execute and complete in house. However, be careful not to over involve your staff and take them away from the daily maintenance of the course. A creative and resourceful manager excels in being able to schedule and balance course maintenance and projects. He or she will often utilize slower times of seasonal turf growth to ramp up projects with staff. It can be tough especially when wrapping up projects in spring and sometimes contractors are in high demand during the shoulder seasons that the Midwest provides. Planning ahead is always the key to getting the job done and dealing with our weather.

Know Your Staff

When taking part in any project, we want our crews to perform like a well-oiled machine. This happens through our organization of materials, personnel and timing. We must be ready to problem solve and adapt on the fly – a trait all successful people in our industry possess. As managers, we need to stay well ahead of progress in planning daily tasks and having the correct supplies, materials, and equipment ready. It is nice to be able to tackle improvements out of the golfing season so that project can take priority and the attention instead of general course maintenance.

Elements of knowing your staff at project time may include:

- What are we capable of doing as an entire team? With or

without an outside contractor?

- Is the staff going to be organized enough to work with and around a contractor so both parties do not get in each other's way?
- Does staff have the skill and expertise to tackle the project without too much on the job training?
- Are we truly able to dedicate enough time to the project

to complete our portion of the work?

Case Study

Problem: The 24th green at Black Sheep has a severe breaking slope on west half, reducing the amount of pin placements that can be fair to play.

Solution: Reconfigure the green, taking it from its original oval design to a kidney shaped green and reduce its slope.

Additional work to complete: Remove large and hard to maintain waste bunker near approach and replace with three smaller bunkers; contour approach around the green. In addition, one bunker will be added behind the green. The completed project will enhance the player's perspective and playability of the golf hole by making it more of a risk/reward par five.

Responsibilities

David Esler (Black Sheep Course Architect):

- Redesign hole with influence from Club President and management staff.

Mike Riordan (Outside Contractor):

- Perform all excavation including rough and finish grading



Staff carefully moves sod from existing section of the green to the new portion. Green was constructed using the California method of putting green construction.

- to the addition of the green complex
- Trench and tie in drainage for green and new bunker complexes.
- Grade new approach where waste bunker was while excavating in new bunker complexes
- Will provide heavy equipment and survey tools to preform work to be done.
- Utility carts and hand tools that he may need will be provided by Black Sheep

Black Sheep Staff

- Provide root zone mix for new section of green to be built. Old sand from existing green will be used in a future tee expansion project..
- Assist Mike Riordan in laying drainage and provide materials.
- Trench, lay out and install irrigation to contour around new section of green and approach.
- Cut and remove sod from old section of green then lay it on new section of green
- Utilize bentgrass sod from a section of fairway that is to be shortened and lay it on new approach.
- Lay fescue sod in rough and bunker surrounds from fescue section of driving range that will be seeded at a later date.
- Add liner and sand to bunkers.



Black Sheep staff topdressing seams on new sod and preparing new bunkers for liner installation during the early spring of the year.

Time Line

The project started in late November of 2012 after the course closed for the season. It was still in progress in spring of 2013. A temporary green was placed 100 yards short of the approach making the hole a par 4 during construction and grow-in. Utilizing the expertise of our outside contractor and knowing exactly what we had to do, we were able to open the putting surface for play in early June. The approach needed a couple of weeks more to mature. After a heavy topdressing and solid growth offered by favorable conditions and a well-planned and executed project, the whole complex was complete. @



After measuring proper irrigation head spacing, the staff re-routes lines and places piping for each head.

Common Questions to Ask When Contracting Work



The new area of putting green offers a more gentle cupping location that can be used throughout the whole year. Fescue sod was taken from the area adjacent to the fairway (in background) to cover the old bunker cavity in foreground.

Get a few estimates that lists products, materials, labor costs and a timetable. Choose from the professionals you know or have qualified references and are established.

Request proper licensing (not many contractors need a professional license in Illinois).

Request proof of insurance (general liability, property damage, and workman's compensation).

Find out if they plan to sub contract out any portion of the project.

Obtain a contract as agreed upon by both parties. It should include:

- Names and addresses of both parties
- Estimated start and completion date
- Payment schedule for contractor, sub-contractors and suppliers
- Obligations for all necessary permits
- How change orders will be handled and approved
- Detailed list of materials
- Any warranties offered or extended
- Oral promises should be added to the written contract
- Cancellation clause
- If permits are needed for the project, let the contractor get them.

Make final payments when work is completed to your satisfaction.

This should include:

- All work meets the standards spelled out in the contract
- You have written warranties for materials and workmanship
- You have proof that all subcontractors and suppliers have been paid
- Job site is clean to your satisfaction
- You have inspected and approved the completed work



The successful project as pictured this June was a combination of outsourcing and utilizing the staff at Black Sheep Golf Club for a portion of the work. Three new bunkers replaced a large, difficult to maintain waste bunker, and the green was reshaped and softened to open up more cupping locations for all to enjoy.

Algal Bloom Action

The Illinois EPA

Last year we shared with our readers the dangers of blue-green algae in our surface waters. Though most of us know the dangers of drinking water directly from these bodies, some of our beloved course animals may like to take a nip or two throughout the day. Sadly, some have died from the ingestion of a specific toxin caused by some algae. The Illinois EPA has launched a new website (the outcome from a public meeting of allied groups and stakeholders this past winter) to help manage this problem that really became apparent during last year's drought and low lake and pond levels. The following is from a release from the Illinois EPA.

With summer in full swing, Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) Director Lisa Bonnett today announced a new effort to help protect the public against harmful algal blooms that are being found in lakes and streams across Illinois. IEPA has just launched a new website (<http://www.epa.state.il.us/water/algal-bloom/index.html>) with information about how to spot blooms, who to contact with a problem and what can be done to protect yourself and others. "With so many people enjoying the summer on the water, everyone needs to know what to look for to avoid algal blooms," said Director Bonnett. "It's important to be cautious and report blooms and not risk exposure that could harm yourself or animal."

What are algal blooms?

Algal blooms are made of dense groups of blue-green algae which are naturally occurring microscopic organisms. They are frequently found in and grow well in shallow bodies of water like lakes and streams that get a lot of sunshine. Its strong color can often make it look like the water is painted pea-green or blue-green, or a reddish-brown. It may also appear with scum or foam on the water surface.

How can they be harmful?

While not always a danger, blue-green algal blooms are

capable of producing toxins that could harm the health of humans and animals when they've been exposed to large enough quantities. Exposure can come from recreational pursuits like swimming, boating, tubing and other activities where you come into contact with or could swallow the water.

The most common kind of algal toxin found in Illinois is microcystin, which can cause rashes, asthma-like symptoms, abdominal pain, vomiting, diarrhea, liver damage or severe neurotoxicity depending on the length and level of exposure.

Water monitoring done by IEPA over the years has frequently shown detections of microcystin but concentrations were generally below levels of concern. However, monitoring during last year's drought has shown concentrations that can be harmful if not addressed. In 2012, one northern Illinois lake had a microcystin concentration more than 1,500 times greater than acceptable World Health Organization Guidance values. Other lakes and rivers are also showing concentrations significantly above acceptable levels.

What precautions should be taken?

Don't swim, water ski, or boat in areas where the water is discolored or if there is foam, scum or mats of algae on the water. If you come in contact with water that might have a harmful algal bloom, rinse off with fresh water as soon as possible. Don't




Long strands of green algae, duckweed, and filamentous macro-algae are sometimes confused with blue-green algal blooms as duckweed pictured above.

let pets or livestock swim in or drink from areas where water is discolored, or if there is foam, scum or mats of algae on the water. Don't let pets (especially dogs) lick the algae off their fur after swimming in water with an algal scum. Don't irrigate lawns or golf courses with pond water that looks or has a bad odor.

Don't drink the water. Boiling the water will not make it safe to drink.

The presence or non-presence of algal toxins can only be determined by lab tests. If you believe a body of water is showing signs (strong discoloration or odor) of a harmful algal bloom, cease recreational activities on the water and visit the IEPA's website (<http://www.epa.state.il.us/water/algal-bloom/index.html>). You can report the bloom to IEPA by taking photographs of the bloom, filling out a Bloom Report form (available on the website), and emailing both to IEPA at EPA.HAB@illinois.gov. IEPA will work with local authorities on a case by case basis to appropriately handle the situation. One potential remedy is the closing of the lake to the public until the algae concentrations go down.

IEPA will be working with other state agencies to address harmful algae blooms.

For more information and more pictures of what algae blooms can look like, visit (<http://www.epa.state.il.us/water/algal-bloom/index.html>) or contact Barb Lieberoff in IEPA's Office of Community Relations at 217-524-3038. 

Identifying Blue-Green Algal Blooms

When blue-green algae reproduce quickly and bloom, there are physical signs. The blooms can look like blue or green paint spilled into the water, thick puffy blue or green foams on the surface of the water (scums), or swirling colors beneath the surface of the water. A blue-green algal bloom will coat an object when it is dipped into the water. Long strands of green algae, duckweed, and filamentous macro-algae are sometimes confused with blue-green algal blooms. Blue-green algae blooms can also have distinct smells. They can smell grassy or septic, and in some cases the smell can cause nausea. These algal blooms can accumulate near the shoreline of lakes and can move based on wind and wave action in the lake.



The presence of algal toxins can only really be determined by lab tests. However, if you see algae that looks like blue and or green paint spilled on the water, or one that has a strong swampy odor, don't hesitate to contact the IEPA.

As pictured to the left, a bloom of blue green algae, notice the swirling colors and foam.



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