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Robert Kronn, Sr. and Woodstock Country Club

Bob Kronn, Jr., Boone Creek Country Club

PHOTOS: LUKE CELLA

This day and age, many traditional golf clubs built in the early 1900's have gone through expansive renovation to remain relevant or to keep up with technology. On the contrary, Woodstock Country Club has done everything to preserve their 9 hole Thomas Bendelow design.

The design approach was simple. Following the flow of the natural terrain, Bendelow staked the location of the green and tees on foot and on the fly. "It was farm fields and meadow, and the founders would come out on weekends with a horse and wagon and clear away rocks and brush and basically built it by hand" said long time member Kent Cooney. "It was done frugally by a bunch of townspeople" Through the years there were multiple opportunities to expand the club to 18 holes, or to move the club to a different location. Fortunately those options



Bob Jr. (Supt. at Boone Creek) and father Bob Kronn, Sr. are excited for Midwest members to enjoy Woodstock CC.

never came to fruition, and the membership now is able to enjoy a golf course that has seen very few changes over the



The club is on Country Club Rd, in the town of Bull Valley. It holds the 19th spot on Golf Digest's best Nine Hole golf courses in the US.

years, as the golf course today looks and plays much like it did nearly a century ago, a testament to both Bendelow's ingenuity and the natural beauty of the land it was shaped from.

Woodstock Country Club was established in 1916 but went by the name of Glen Crest until the mid 1920's, The 65 acre property is nestled in the rolling hills of Bull Valley, right in the heart of McHenry County. The par 70, 5968 yard golf course uses 2 unique sets of tees to create a terrific 18 hole golf course. Don't let the yardage fool you, this golf course provides a unique challenge to players of all abilities, and will



require every shot in the bag. This is a great place to work on your game considering there are very few level lies after you leave the tee box. Local knowledge also helps as the flowing changes in elevation naturally conceal several flagsticks.

Golf course superintendent Bob Kronn describes the 65 acre property as “one of the nicest pieces of property for golf in Northern Illinois. The layout is fantastic. We haven’t done any big changes since it was constructed in 1916. What we do now is like turning the clock back to keep it close to the original design”. Kronn has spent the last thirteen years at the club, time which he has utilized to improve the playability and aesthetics of the golf course.

Bob began his career under the tutelage of his father Ben Kronn, who diligently served as the superintendent at Twin Orchard Country Club for over thirty years. In 1970, after attending Penn State University, Bob accepted his first Superintendent position at Ridgemoor Country Club in Harwood Heights. After three seasons he moved on to Rolling Green Country Club for 12 years and then on to La Grange Country Club for 16 years.

As a 45-year member of the GCSAA Kronns’ success comes from his hands-on management style. Being a second generation Superintendent has allowed him to learn the trade from the ground up. Of course being a single digit handicap has helped. “My playing ability goes along with my knowledge of growing turf.” Bob has played in numerous tournaments throughout his career. He has won the MAGCS Championship a record twelve times, and has competed in several PGA events. Using the players’ perspective has been a crucial quality in his time as a Superintendent.

“We don’t want green grass; we want grass that is ex-

tremely playable,” is one of Bob’s mantra’s. Firm conditions along with consistency from tee to green are two of the more important things he has passed on to over a dozen MAGCS members that are now superintendents in the Chicago area. “I have always felt you should give something back to our profession. My thought was to pass on my knowledge and my Dad’s to a select group of individuals who would become very successful in our profession. I take great pride in that,” Kronn said.



Blind shots abound at Woodstock, not only off the tee, but into several greens as well. And good luck finding a flat lie if you are fortunate enough to hit a fairway.

The current staff at WCC includes Assistant Superintendent Jeremy Woods, who has been at the club for over ten years. Woods fills the role of the mechanic, spray tech, and

Continued on next page.



irrigation tech while managing a crew of 3 to 4 seasonal employees. He takes great pride in the golf course and working for a superintendent that is knowledgeable.

The membership is also grateful for the work done by Kronn and the maintenance staff. In fact several members often help out with in house projects on the golf course and in the clubhouse. Members have moved on, and passed away over time, but the communal effort of the membership to preserve the golf course has remained constant. Bob, Jeremy, and the WCC members are excited to open the course to the MAGCS on July 10th. Hopefully you will be able to come out and enjoy this original layout that plays as it was designed nearly 100 years ago. @



The membership appreciates the knowledge and experience Bob has brought to Woodstock CC and it is apparent as one plays the course. You won't find much fluff at Woodstock, just great golf conditions and a lot of happy members who love to play the game.





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Chuck Anfield, CGCS Heritage Bluffs Golf Course



Shane Conroy of Spectrum Technologies addresses the audiences on some of the more popular tech-tools used for turf.

Shane Conroy of Spectrum Technologies made his presentation at the monthly MAGCS Meeting held at Aurora Country Club. “If you don’t measure it, you can’t manage it” was Shane’s advice to Golf Course Superintendents in attendance.

Monitoring Water Usage

The average golf course uses 312,000 gallons per day for irrigation use. Is your course using too much water or not enough?

Shane listed out and explained the reasons to conserve water:

1. Save natural water resources
2. Conserve energy used to pump water
3. Improve turf quality
4. Develop optimum irrigation programs
5. Reduce labor costs

How do we know when we have put down enough water? Historically, the turf was visually observed for wilting and hot spots. Often a probe or soil profile sampler was used to observe how wet the soil looked or felt. These techniques often lead to inconsistencies.

Soil Water Measurements Now

Permanent soil sensors can be installed in the soil profile. The challenge with this type of sensor is it is limited to one spot and many sensors need to be installed to get a complete soil moisture profile measurement.

A portable soil sensor will give the operator more flexibility and can monitor many areas quickly and efficiently. Data can be downloaded and mapped. This information can be used to create or adjust irrigation programs. Soil water is measured by quantifying (VWC) or volumetric water content. This is the actual amount of water in the soil structure and it is measured as a percentage of the overall volume of the soil. Different soil types have different pore space and consequently different wilt points and different field capacities.

The Spectrum TDR 3000 is a portable soil sensor that measures time domain reflectometry. It creates an electric wave pulse that shoots between two probes in the soil. The speed of the pulse will measure the VWC. Common measuring techniques include creating a grid of the area to be irrigated or just random probing. The goal is to have consistent moisture values. One attendee commented to make certain the length of the probes used (variable) on the meter are suited for your putting surfaces, especially if there is a significant layer of topdressing sand that most of the roots are growing into – this is where you would need to measure- not below it.

Adjustments that irrigation managers can make after taking measurements is to change nozzles, hand water specific drier areas and increase or decrease run times in the irrigation program.



The overall benefits that can be gained via more efficient irrigation use include: improved plant health, decreased disease incidence, improved esthetics, better playing conditions promoting a firmer faster playing surface.

Shane commented that thresholds will be different for each course. Knowledge and experience will still be very important for water management.

Measuring Salinity

Soluble salts can have negative effects on turf growth. In highly saline soils it is harder for the plant roots to extract water from the soil. Soluble salts can accumulate in irrigation water sources, from frequent fertilizer applications and effluent water use.

(EC) electro conductivity is the unit of measurement for salinity. After measuring salinity in irrigation water, it can be specifically treated.

Measuring Light and Shade

Light is of major importance for photosynthesis. Plants grown in decreased light will have much less vigor and perform poorly. Light intensity is measured by (DLI) daily light integrals.

By measuring light intensity pruning documentation can be established to promote pruning decisions, create landscape designs, select specific turf species for establishment and compare light from green to green.

The light meter can be a hand held device that gives instant feedback or a unit that will record long term exposure.

Measuring pH

pH meters are used to measure alkalinity or acidity. Acidic or alkaline soils can reduce microorganism populations and reduce plant tolerances. Alkalinity can also be very important when mixing plant protectant products in spray tanks. Effectiveness of pesticides can be reduced from alkaline hydrolysis. A small inexpensive meter can save thousands of dollars to ensure product effectiveness.

Measuring Firmness

A tool can be used to measure green firmness. This tool sometimes goes by the name of a "thump meter." It measures turf penetration by mimicking ball impact with a hammer dropping type motion.

This tool helps establish baseline data that can then be used to measure overall green conditions and help adjust cultural practices for a more consistent playing surface or to provide better tournament conditions.

All these tools help us to quantify many of the circumstances we already manage. Placing a number to these conditions helps us to create a benchmark and track changes. We still have to correlate the fluctuations as we manage our inputs and tune our turfgrass from there. @

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