

USGA UPDATE

Brown Turf is OK

By Todd Lowe

Chances are, many Florida golf courses have had some significant dry spots this past spring. Florida experiences a normal dry cycle each year at this time. It has also been very breezy this spring and we just had near-record-high temperatures for the Memorial Day weekend. Many golf courses have not had a “good” soaking rain for several months. Even with the most sophisticated irrigation system or water-savvy superintendent, the prolonged dry spell causes some degree of discoloration on golf courses. The relative humidity has been predictably low for this time of year and the dry weather is causing bermudagrass turf to turn yellow to brown on many golf courses throughout the region. For the most part, the brown areas occur as isolated patches throughout the golf course and are accentuated by one or more of the following stresses:

Localized Dry Spots: Sand particles become coated with organic substances and these coated particles repel water (hydrophobic) as they dry out. This causes the turf to become brown from drought stress. Rewetting localized dry spots is a difficult task and the most effective program is to apply wetting agents preventively every three to four weeks, usually through the irrigation (fertigation) system. Although a difficult task, the goal is to prevent the soil from becoming dry. Irrigation efficiency/uniformity is very important as areas that receive less irrigation are the first to exhibit localized dry spots.

Nematodes: Nematodes have been active since early spring and aboveground symptoms have been apparent on our visits over the past few weeks. There is no way to eradicate nematodes and the best nematicides suppress nematode populations, temporarily improving root growth. However, it is just as important to improve cultural practices in nematode-stressed areas to maintain turfgrass quality. In particular, irrigation and fertility frequency should be increased to compensate for the lack of roots. Also, cart traffic should be reduced as stress becomes apparent.

Salt Accumulation: With the lack of rain, salts have been accumulating in the upper rootzone, making it difficult for roots to extract water from the soil. In addition to routine gypsum/lime applications, occasional flushing (leaching) of the root zone is necessary at this time of year to move salts away from turfgrass roots.

Concentrated Cart Traffic: Golf carts are an integral part of the game of golf but it is necessary to restrict traffic to cart paths at certain times. Like most creatures, golfers follow the path of least resistance and often travel in similar patterns from hole to hole. Heavy traffic removes leaf tissue and eventually destroys turfgrass growing points (crowns). These areas become thin over time as the turfgrass dies out from constant leaf removal. Soil becomes very compacted and extreme measures of tilling, regrassing and/or amendments of crumb rubber to these areas must be taken

“Green is good, brown is bad” is the mentality of many golfers, thinking the golf course should never lose its lush, green color. Unless the stress is being caused by a major pest like an insect, disease or a misplaced tree, some brown turf is O.K. from time to time. After all, golf is a sport and good playing conditions occur less often on pretty, green golf courses. It



Poor irrigation coverage is accentuated on this overseeded fairway during the dry season. Photo by Todd Lowe

is also important for golfers to realize that cart traffic is an additional stress and if brown turf is not desired, then eliminating cart traffic in these areas hastens recovery.

The bright side for our region is that most of these stresses subside as we experience summer rains that begin in June. Routine rainfall leaches salts from soil and provides water to the turf, which improves overall turf health.

GCSAA News

Committee Operations Begin Under New Governance Structure

The 2004 Strategic Communications Committee is one of the first GCSAA committees to operate under a new structure that analyzes issues from a strategic rather than an operational orientation. GCSAA Secretary/Treasurer Sean Hoolahan, CGCS is the chairman of this committee. Flowing from the committee are task groups that will focus on operational issues. Non-directors are chairpersons for the Task Groups.

Task Groups under the Strategic Communications Committee:

- Media Information Task Group – Chairman Ken Magnum, CGCS
- Chapter/Member Media Tools Task Group – Chairman James R. Fitzroy, CGCS
- Technical Assistance Task Group – Chairman Rick Tegtmeier, CGCS
- Publications Use and Positioning Task Group – Chairman Joel Jackson, CGCS
- Messaging/Brand Strategies Task Group – Chairman Jonathan Jennings, CGCS
- Online Properties Use and Positioning Task Group – Chairman Richard Lavine, CGCS

At the April meeting of the Strategic Communications Committee, the following questions/topics were discussed. These outcomes from the meeting reflect the discussions and presentations.

Professional Development Session

Dr. Max Utsler, professor of mass communications at the University of Kansas,

engaged the committee in an exercise to develop communications strategies. His presentation focused on the concept of "Audience - Purpose - Message" in crafting effective communications. By analyzing who the target is (audience) and why it is being delivered (purpose), the communication (message) is more likely to achieve desired results.

Facility-Directed Communication

A new model of communication flow and content was presented. Rather than directing all communication through to the superintendent, opening a direct communication channel to the entire team of facility decision-makers is proposed. This strategy will be more effective in positioning the superintendent as expert and in delivering solutions to help the golf facility achieve success.

Finally, all communication will accompany effective communication tools for the member superintendent, and will be sensitive to the actual employment relationship. Virtually all GCSAA committees and task groups will provide input in the development and execution of facility-directed solutions and communications that address the value drivers of the facility (what matters most to the facility as a business).

The discussion revealed several possible new key business drivers for facility success:

- Consider legacy – is it part of competitive advantage?
- Reputation and branding – knowledge of business and economic conditions
- Community image of golf club
- Conditioning

Not all golf facilities have the same drivers

Key Messages

Following are the key messages GCSAA should communicate to facility decision makers:

GCSAA members:

- Use resources efficiently and effectively (no facility wants to waste money)
- Build strong relationships with peers to achieve goals
- Follow good hiring practices to achieve goals – especially critical in risk management
- Have a high level of integrity
- Understand future issues to protect assets
- Create the best experience on the course
- See the whole picture of facility management
- Gain and maintain customer loyalty
- Provide a solid return on investment

- Develop a national network of peers for problem solving
- Are professional, educated, good communicators, and astute businesspeople
- Collaborate with all golf allies
- Make the golf course more competitive
- Assume the responsibility for the most important asset

Medium and Most Effective Methods

These are the most effective methods to reach facility decision makers:

- Email (superintendents [because of spam issues] will forward to key decision makers)
- Trade magazines – Golf Digest is the #1 golf magazine
- Engage highly recognizable golf spokesperson
- Use a strong campaign and tagline (ex. Got Milk? campaign)
- Leader Board, NewsWeekly – useful to communicate with management
- Actively seek third party validation (NGCOA and other golf organizations)
- Golf Industry Show
- Printed materials
- Half day seminar with owners

New Product Announcement



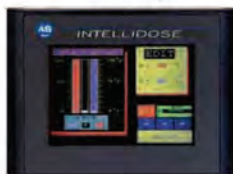
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Evaluating a Name Change for GCSAA

Would we be more effective in achieving the association's goals and objectives with a different name?

The committee listened to a presentation on why organizations change their names and the internal and external influencers that may indicate an opportunity for GCSAA to advance a name change. The committee discussed the pros and cons of changing the association's name. They took a straw poll to determine the level of support from the committee on this initiative, which was 14 for it and two against it.

Reasons why a name change makes sense

- Helps position members for management positions at facilities – broaden scope of our profession
- Current name hard to pronounce – hard to remember – too long
- Higher prestige, respect, status
- Easier to define job/tasks
- Means to market better
- Easy to transition to an international organization

- Adds value to the profession
- It's time because the job has changed
- Titles are moving away from association name
- Aligns closer with the magazine
- Current name is ambiguous /archaic
- Push from external audience (industry partners, for example) for change
- Timing - affiliation agreement

Reasons why a name change doesn't make sense

- 50-year tradition
- Confusion of a name change
- Cost
- Lack of an alternative
- Timing (new governance, PDI, EIFG)
- Loss of momentum
- Inconsistency of chapters
- Lack of perceived need
- Brand equity issues
- Loss of association support (internal), member support
- Loss of support with allied associations
- Competitive association may form
- If it fails, the process and leadership is questioned

Suggested names

- Golf Course Managers Association (8 votes) – pros included GCM fits better, is about people
- Golf Course Management Association (8 votes) – pros included no confusion with CMAA, aligns with the magazine, descriptive of what we do, more accommodating for multiple titles

Outside perspective

- Need more explanation of why a well-established association would consider changing its name
- There is a lot of brand equity in the current name and it may be lost with a name change

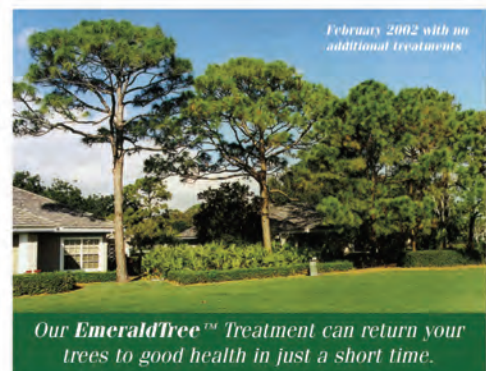
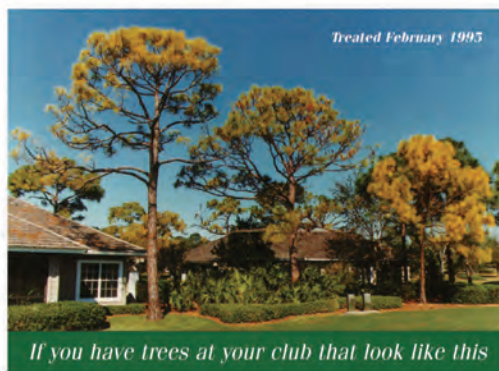
Member perspective

- Keep the same logo to help with continuity and recognition
- Golf course manager is much easier for external audiences to understand the profession, unlike "superintendent"
- Members of the association will continue to carry titles that are comfortable to them, despite what the organization is called
- The membership will want to know why a name change is being considered

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How do we engage our members to support a name change?

- Provide a limited, clear choice (one new option or stay with the same name)
- Provide factual information so that members can make an informed choice
- Give it to the delegates with enough advance time to communicate back to others
- Give members solid reasons why we need a change
- Remind members that this is an ongoing process
- Our members already know that the association is considering a name change
- Keep it "in the news" so members don't feel blindsided
- In the end, members will have the final say through the voting process

Chapter representatives' feedback

Would a name change be an issue with chapters?

- It may not be an issue for those chapters that already have "managers" in their chapter name
- Requiring chapters to conform to the association's name would face much resistance
- Chapters may want to keep some individuality and independence.
- There are ways to be affiliated, but not lose all sense of independence
- Chapters may feel "strong enough" to survive alone without the national association
- Phase-in may be acceptable
- Must convince chapters the importance of aligning with the national association for branding, etc.
- If chapters want to change their names to match the national association, now is a good time because affiliation agreements are up for renewal within the next year

Environmental Institute for Golf (EIFG) Presentation

GCSAA Director of Environmental Programs Greg Lyman and Director of Development Teri Harris shared the EIFG communications strategies in "fundraising" and "friendraising" activities. The concept of Audience-Purpose-Message was employed in crafting communications to reach targeted audiences. A graphic illustration of the communication plan will accompany the outcomes. As The Institute continues to deliver communications and implement programs, the Strategic Communications Committee will be engaged to provide guidance.

Growth of the Game Initiative

GCSAA is an active participant in the

golf industry's initiative commonly referred to as Golf 20/20. The objective of the venture is to increase participation and retention of golfers by the year 2020. GCSAA CEO Steve Mona sits on the Golf 20/20 executive board. He provided the committee an overview of the initiative and outlined GCSAA's contributions to date. The committee then engaged in a discussion to ascertain how members might be able to participate in growth of the game.

What can the facility do to increase rounds played?

- Infrastructure issues – waive business fees
- Cut fees or add value
- Free food incentives with rounds of golf played
- Coupons for discounted prices or free stuff
- Day care/camps for kids
- Leagues
- Business women focused – special deals – teaching game
- Free lessons and caddy instruction
- Beginner's clinic – adults & children
- Late evenings – beginners
- Club etiquette for kids – free with parents
- Club etiquette classes/seminars for everyone
- Establish caddy programs and training
- Offer late evening/afternoon hours of free golf to beginners
- Make course more playable for average/beginner golfers

Feedback

- Golf is too hard, too expensive
- Retrofitting is challenging and expensive
- There is pressure to have competitive fast greens, but these are not playable for beginners
- Having the best greens is a marketing edge for courses and superintendents are competing against each other
- Are we trying to grow the game at the high-end courses or the low-end courses? Each will need different strategies.

How do GCSAA and its members play a role in Golf 20/20?

- Communicate that members make courses more playable
- Develop BMPs for making the course beginner-friendly
- Assist facility leadership in adopting the BMPs
- Support regional efforts to grow the game
- Provide matching grants to retrofit school property
- Bring the game to schools – create a few small greens on grounds
- We must participate in this program

Methyl Bromide Update

Golf Courses Allowed 'Critical Use' of MeBr

By T. J. Swaford

(Editor's Note: The headline-grabbing news of the phasing-out of methyl bromide by 2005 does not carefully report or explain how the mandated reduction in production will actually affect turf production or future soil fumigation uses for regrassing. This update from Hendrix & Dail should put all the rumors to rest.)

Methyl bromide is and will be available for future use on golf courses and athletic fields. Regardless of the negative rumors regarding the availability and use restrictions, methyl bromide will be available to the golf industry well into the foreseeable future. The Montreal Protocol simply regulates the production of methyl bromide; it does not dictate the use!

Currently there are three exemptions to production allowed by the Montreal Protocol. They are emergency use, critical use, and quarantine and pre shipment (QPS). The GCSAA has filed a critical use exemption on behalf of golf courses throughout the United States. This will allow for production of exempted methyl bromide to be used on golf courses starting Jan. 1, 2005.

Methyl bromide that is used on turf farms within the guidelines of the QPS program qualifies as exempt usage. In other words clean planting stock grown on fumigated soil will be available to the golf course superintendent.

Methyl Bromide Facts:

- Methyl bromide is available for golf course use now and into the foreseeable future
- Montreal Protocol only limits the production of methyl bromide, not the use
- Methyl bromide use on golf courses is not banned either now or in the future
- GCSAA has filed a critical use exemption for golf courses
- Many turf farms are using QPS methyl bromide, thus assuring a clean supply of planting stock.
- There is no single alternative fumigant, chemical, or other technology that can readily substitute methyl bromide in efficacy, low cost, ease of use, wide availability, and worker safety.

Please visit www.hendrixanddail.com for current industry updates. For additional information regarding the availability, use, or status of methyl bromide please contact Hendrix and Dail, Inc. at 800-726-5215.