

2005 USGA Regional Conference More than 100 Attend USGA Conference

By Joel Jackson, CGCS

Attendance at the 2005 USGA Regional Conference in Palm Beach Gardens, like many other events, was affected by Hurricane Wilma, but nonetheless it was successful and educational for 100-plus at the session

Longtime director of Southeast Regional Affairs, Roger Harvie, is retiring and Kathy Gordon has taken his place at the Marietta, Ga. office. Harvie will be moving to Florida, possibly to the Treasure Coast.

MORNING SESSION

Mr. Positivity, Tim Hiers, CGCS, discussed how turn your main-



From left: Todd Lowe, USGA Agronomist and Superintendents John Cunningham and Tim Hiers go over Power Point procedures at the USGA Regional Conference held in Palm Beach Gardens. Photo by Joel Jackson.

tenance facility into an asset for crew morale and course productivity. You don't have to have a big budget to have a neat, clean and organized shop. A little pride and professionalism in the maintenance facility shows the crew that you and the club care about them. It pays dividends.

Setting written maintenance standards so a superintendent knows what the members want and expect in terms of course conditioning is easier than you think, according to Todd

Lowe, USGA agronomist who listed ways for members to achieve consensus on priorities. With divergent opinions among committee members a superintendent must try to satisfy a wide range of expectations.

Pete Dye has said the three most important aspects of golf course design are drainage, drainage, and drainage. Pat O'Brien USGA agronomist from the Southeast Region recommended hiring professional drainage experts to solve your problems. New technology and methods can capture and move water more efficiently, and a professional will get results.

Bruce Adams from the South Florida Water Management District discussed cooperative funding initiatives for water conservation. To no one's surprise, public consumption is the number-one enemy in the much-ballyhooed water crisis. Adams said much water could be saved simply by retrofitting high-rise condos to meet current codes. He also said that, in a



Afternoon Session speakers at the USGA Regional Conference included Pat O'Brien, USGA Agronomist, Lee Bloomcamp, Syngenta and John Mascaro, Turf Tec International. Photo by Joel Jackson.

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recent survey of golf-course use, golf was using two percent of the water in SWFWMD district.

Hopefully, Black Diamond Ranch and Superintendent John Cunningham, CGCS will be the catalyst to shed light on the subject of shade on greens. The ancient battle between trees and turf took a positive step when the owner and members of Black Diamond Ranch enacted a sun-light-enhancement program that essentially mandates that all trees causing turf decline on the course shall be removed. They have taken a stand that the turf is the most important aspect on a golf course. Hallelujah!

AFTERNOON SESSION

After lunch, Jim Leiseberg, regional agronomist for WCI Communities, said environmentally responsible development can be a definite asset to the local community. His company's commitment extends from the design and operation of the golf courses to the entire community plan.

John Foy, director of the USGA Florida Region Green Section discussed winter annual weed control. He said new products have made chemical transition more of a reality for those who don't want Mother Nature to pull any surprises.

Nozzle-type selection and droplet patterns are just as important as calibrating your spray equipment, according to Dr. Phil Harmon, plant pathologist with UF/IFAS.

Lee Bloomcamp from Syngenta discussed rumor versus reality in pesticide resistance. Rotating chemicals is good policy, but plants and pests don't mutate at the drop of a hat. It takes the right combination of events for resistance to develop.

John Mascaro, president of TurfTec International, has revived the famous Mascaro Photo Quiz of his late father, Tom. The Photo Quiz feature, and old and new turf puzzles, appear regularly in Golf Course Management magazine. My favorite was the mysterious circular thin spots the size of hoola hoops on sports turf. The answer? Cheerleader wear.

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