

# The Florida Green

Summer 2007



Number 9 and 18  
Laurel Oak Country Club  
Sarasota  
Photo by Daniel Zelazek



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**COVER STORY: LAUREL OAK COUNTRY CLUB**

Eighteen years ago, Laurel Oak opened the Gary Player-designed West Course just a few miles east of Interstate 75 in Sarasota north of Bee Ridge Road. Five years later, the East Course opened in 1994. It was also designed by Player.

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**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: GOLFERS' COURSE EXPECTATIONS**

Every golfer wants to play on quality turf. And certainly most golf course operators and owners want to have quality turf. And golf course superintendents work hard to achieve that. So why do these desires fail to get realized?

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**HANDS ON: MANAGING LABOR**

Finding, retaining and managing a fluctuating multi-cultural workforce is just another challenge for today's superintendent. With continued reports of golf growth flat-lining, we asked our members to write about how they have been affected in the labor management department.

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**INDUSTRY NEWS: NEW SPRINKLER FOR BUNKER FACES**

A new genre of sprinkler is popping up on golf courses to address the problem of irrigating areas such as bunker faces, slopes, tee boxes and landscaped areas surrounding greens: Multi-stream, multi-trajectory rotating (MSMTR) sprinklers.

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**STEWARDSHIP: GREEN GOLFER CHALLENGE**

Audubon International, with support from the PGA of America and the USGA, has launched the Audubon Green Golfer program, which asks golfers to take the "Green Golfer Pledge." TaylorMade-adidas and 30 courses already have signed on.

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# The Florida Green

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## CALL FOR ARTICLES

**Hands on Topics:** Share your best practices and tips for these upcoming topics. Photographs or slides are encouraged. Digital images that are 5 inches wide at 300 dpi or greater accepted.

**Fall 2007** - In-season Cultural Programs

**Winter 2008** - Disease Management Strategies

**Spring 2008** - Irrigation Management and Water Conservation

**Summer 2008** - Ultradwarf and Seashore Paspalum Greens

Please submit articles via e-mail if possible. Attached articles should be saved in Microsoft Word or, if you use another word processor save it as a text file before attaching, or you may just copy and paste it into the e-mail text box. Try to limit articles to 1500 words or less. The Florida Green pays \$100 per page and \$50 for 1-3 pictures.

Digital photos must be a minimum of 5 inches wide at 300 dpi for publication-quality reproduction.

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*What was I supposed to do? Well, it's on the golf course and interrupting play... so I had to do something.*

I received a call from the golf shop last week and was told that there was a bird in the bunker on the 8th hole and he looked sick. The first thing I thought was, "Wait a minute. I'm in charge of the golf course, the clubhouse grounds, all common areas and now wildlife too?" I can't control the animals. What was I supposed to do? Well it's on the golf course and interrupting play so I had to do something.

When I first approached the bird he did not move except to open his beak and kind of snap at me. I moved closer to better evaluate what

was wrong but did so cautiously. If didn't mention it before, this was a very large bird!

My first thought was that it was a juvenile magnificent frigate. Anyway, I was able to get it to waddle out of the bunker but it was not doing any flying. I thought, "let nature take care of itself and

that maybe it's just tired." I called a friend at the Environmental Learning Center and she said that it was very possibly a migrating frigate and that it may just need to rest.

The next day I was met with the same news about the same bird in the same bunker. This time he looked really tired and did not want to move out of the bunker at all when I approached. My assistant, Scott Campbell, and I talked about it and agreed that if we did not do something this bird did not look like he was going to make it. He said he would take the bird to the Treasure Coast Wildlife Hospital about an hour away to see if they could save it. It wasn't easy but we managed to find a box big enough to contain the bird. After some wrangling around

we were able to capture the bird. Fortunately he settled down very quickly and Scott drove it to the hospital.

The next day we were eager to find out how the bird was doing and couldn't wait to call and check up on our feathered friend. To our pleasant surprise it was doing well and it was not a magnificent frigate but rather a northern gannet. The hospital personnel said that gannets dive in the water for their food and sometimes they dive very deep. Evidently on one recent dive, some fish thought the bird was food and bit it in the neck. They also told us that the bird was expected to make a full recovery.

The lesson I learned from this episode is that when golfers and employees alike turn to me about wildlife and the environment, it's a good thing and I should embrace the situation. The fact that they consider me the environmental expert on property is very positive and something that I can build upon.

I'm using this informal vote of confidence and credibility as a platform in our club newsletter to explain the facts about golf courses and water use, pesticides and other regulatory issues that are currently facing our industry. When you are the "go-to" guy at your course, don't miss the opportunity to do some in-house education that can enhance the public perception of our industry.

This is my last *Florida Green* President's Message and I want to say thanks to Marie and Joel for keeping me (us) on schedule. It has been an honor to serve as FGCSA president and thanks to all of you out there who make up the FGCSA through your local, state and national memberships. A special thanks to the officers and board of directors of the FGCSA and to the leadership of the local chapters. Your time and efforts spent in serving our members and supporting our profession have only made us better and help us to grow stronger.

## When You are the 'Go-To' Guy



Craig Weyandt  
FGCSA President

*The lesson I learned from this episode is that when golfers and employees alike turn to me about wildlife and the environment, it's a good thing and I should embrace the situation.*

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PALM BEACH CHAPTER

## Elections, Fund-Raisers Top Summer Agenda

### CALUSA

Our annual meeting and election of officers was held June 19 at the Kingsway CC and hosted by our chapter president, Ryan Willis, CGCS. Ryan and Kingsway will be the featured cover story article in the fall issue of the *Florida Green* magazine. Besides the meeting and election, members will take a short survey and then tee it up in our chapter golf championship tournament following lunch.

Many thanks to Michael Pritchard for hosting our April meeting at the Westminster County Club, and thanks to Nat Hubbard for presenting his program on "Why Greens Fail." We also appreciate Nancy Miller for hosting our May meeting at Maple Leaf G&CC and look forward to visiting Rick Cirino's Deep Creek G.C. in July.

### CENTRAL FLORIDA

Thanks to our members who volunteered their time to serve as spotters for NBC at the Arnold Palmer Bay Hill Invitational. Matt Beaver, Bay Hill assistant superintendent, got to fly over the course in a helicopter and get a bird's-eye view of the course during NBC's pre-tournament filming of the course layout. Matt shared a photo with the *Florida Green*.

Josh Czarnecki will host our Chapter Golf



*Aerial View of the 12th and 13th holes at Bay Hill during the Arnold Palmer Invitational. Photo by Matt Beaver.*

Championship at the Eagle Creek GC. We are looking forward to putting on those mini-verde greens.

Our annual meeting will be held in July at the North Shore GC and hosted by John Kennedy. Grand Cypress will once again host our annual Larry Kamphaus Crowfoot

Open Aug. 4 and 5. The tournament and awards reception will take place on Saturday and Tom Alex and his staff are sure to have the course ready to test all comers. On Sunday, there will be a two-man team shoot out and a fishing tournament on the East Course.

### COASTAL PLAINS

Shane Bass, CGCS at St. James Bay G.C. and Jeff Heggen at Hilaman Park G.C. pulled some government-relations duty for the FGCSA. Shane participated in the FGCSA's 2007 Capitol Hill visit and Jeff sat in on a public hearing on the state's urban fertilizer

## Thanks to all sponsors for their support!



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*Mark Kann, Seven Rivers GCSA, center, presented FTGA Past President Matt Taylor, CGCS and FTGA Executive Director Casey Pace a \$5,000 donation to the FTGA Research Foundation during the Poa Annuia Classic weekend in Naples this past May. Photo by Joel Jackson*

rule. Thanks guys for stepping up to help represent the interests of all Florida golf course superintendents.

**EVERGLADES**

We are pleased to report that the 2007 Poa Annuia Classic raised over \$50,000 in sponsorships, provided dinner for 300, raffled off \$4500 in cash and prizes, and hosted two golf tournaments with individual and team events. The G.C. Horn Memorial Endowment Tournament raised \$8000 directly for UF turf scholarships.

Our Vendor Appreciation Day was hosted by Kevin Leo June 13 at the Old Corkscrew Golf Club where lunch was free for vendors. We gave out souvenir tervis tumblers to everyone. We are sending out vendor appreciation gifts (Case knives) to those who supported the EGCSA with at least \$500 during the year.

Our Annual meeting will be July 12 at Twin Eagles. Thanks to Bob Volpe, CGCS for hosting the business meeting, election of officers and afternoon golf tournament.

**NORTH FLORIDA**

We didn't have any applicants for scholarships for our Memorial Tournament in April this year, so we donated \$2000 to the LCCC foundation with hopes of the state matching the funds for one turfgrass scholarship and one mechanic scholarship. At the Memorial held at the Jacksonville G&CC and hosted by Greg Tharp, we also presented the 2007 Keeper of the Green Award to brothers Fred and Glen

Klauk. These two gentlemen have been shining examples of industry leaders at TPC and Pablo Creek as they quietly go about their business of excellent turf management. Fred was prominently featured on the Golf Channel during this year's TPC Championship. Congratulations and thanks for your dedication to our profession.

Thanks also to the members who participated as spotters for NBC Sports. On Aug. 22 we will be hosting a GCSAA Regional Seminar. Topic and speakers are still TBA at this time.

**PALM BEACH**

Our summer season got off to a brown, dusty start with harsh watering restrictions from the South Florida Water Management District, which had us cutting way back to 45 percent on our irrigation schedules. We finally got some relief from Tropical Storm Barry in early June.

The Future of Golf Tournament changed venues

this year to the Ballen Isles, South Course hosted by Kevin Downing, CGCS. The Falls CC and Steve Pearson, CGCS, our gracious hosts for so many years, are taking a break this year to renovate the golf course. Local knowledge proved handy as Kevin and his team of John Foy, Marty Green and Steve Utrecht won the event.

We held our regular monthly June meeting at the Atlantis G. C. Thanks to Joel Tholund, superintendent. PBGCSA Vice President Brian Main will host our Annual Meeting and election of officers at his Aberdeen G&CC in July.

While Tropical Storm Barry brought needed relief to the turfgrass, it also postponed the annual PBGCSA Fishing Tournament. Braving the choppy waters, the One and Done boat captained by Mike Carver with fishermen David Tandy, Gary Chaney and Jason Maret had the biggest wahoo (52 lbs) and highest total weight (144.6 lbs). The Down and Dirty crewed by Chris Gast, Bill Lanthier, Bill Hughes and Tim Cann had the largest dolphin at 19.1 lbs. The largest kingfish (26.7 lbs) was landed on the Off Course with boat captain Billy Cevaal and mates Dave Mummert, Jode Wells and Terry Wells. Thanks to our sponsors and our seaworthy fishermen.

Palm Beach President Steve Pearson paid tribute and thanks to the sponsors and participants in both events for helping to raise money for the chapter's benevolent fund, turf research, junior golf and scholarships.



*North Florida President Lon Chatfield (left) presents John Piersol from Lake City CC with a \$2,000 check for scholarships. Photo by Shane Bass.*

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## SPOTLIGHT

### SEVEN RIVERS

The 2007 Jeff Hayden Memorial Envirotron Golf Classic at World Woods was another smashing success thanks to the hard work by the Tournament Committee headed by Chairman Glenn Oberlander. Many thanks also to World Woods and host superintendent Jimbo Rawlings for providing such a great golfing venue for this fantastic fundraiser for turf research. As a result of this event, President Mark Kann was able to present \$5,000 checks to both the Florida GCSA Research Account and the FTGA Research Foundation, at the FGCSA Spring Board Meeting in Naples this past May.

We have had busy meeting schedule and we appreciate the clubs that have so generously donated their facilities for our 2007 meetings and golf outings like Candler Hills G.C. and Superintendent Andy Jorgensen for our May meeting and we look forward to our Annual Meeting at the Seven Rivers G.C. with host Brad Barbee. In July we are working with the UF/IFAS faculty to help put on the Summer Field Days July 17 at the Envirotron and on the 18th at the Plant Science Center in Citra. We will finish up the summer with a dual meeting with Westech in August at Hernando Oaks hosted by Mike McNeil.

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From left, Seven Rivers President Mark Kann, Golf Ventures Brad Reano and Walt McMahon and Envirotron Classic Chairman Glenn Oberlander pose for the \$25,000 Champion Sponsor check presentation at World Woods.



From left, Mark Kann, Seven Rivers GCSA president, presented a \$5,000 check for turf research to FGCSA President Craig Weyandt at the spring board meeting in Naples. Photo by Joel Jackson.

**SOUTH FLORIDA**

We had another successful Turf Expo this March and were pleased to be able to donate a check for \$27,000 to

the FGCSA Research Fund at the spring board meeting in Naples. These funds have been used primarily for us to pay for the services of a

turf technician to help IFAS maintain the turf research plots in Ft. Lauderdale. We want to thank Gary Pederson for his years of service in the technician position. Gary is leaving IFAS to take a position with Steve Kuhn at the High Ridge CC in Boynton Beach. Next year the funds will be donated directly to IFAS for the care and maintenance of the plots using graduate turf students and other resources.

Thanks to Kevin Frost, CGCS at the Diplomat CC and Stephen Fox at Ocean Reef for hosting our May and June meetings. Thanks to our speakers for their interesting presentations: Brian MacCurrach with Bayer Environmental Science, “Modern Mole Cricket Management” and Steve Woodmanese, biologist with the Florida Native Plant Society, “Native Plant Equivalents.” Kelly Cragin is stepping up to serve as our external vice president while Jim Walker recovers from his medical procedures. Get well Jim.

**SUNCOAST**

We’re pleased to report that the Sarasota County Commission’s Emergency

Ordinance passed in late April contained language recognizing the Florida Golf BMP Manual and the Florida Green Industries BMP Manual for lawns and landscaping. Our whole purpose has been to make sure sound, peer-reviewed science is the basis for local rule making. Thanks to George Cook for his one-on-one meeting with commissioners to explain our position and for the others in our chapter who took the time to attend meetings and communicate with the commissioners.

Special thanks to the clubs and superintendents who agreed to host our April, May and June meetings: Bob Wagner at Coral Creek, Bob Gwodz at Sara Bay and Tom Hilferty at Tatum Ridge. Congratulations to Adam Wright for representing our chapter as the Cover Story for the summer issue of the Florida Green magazine.

**TREASURE COAST**

Our “summer” season kicked off with a GCSAA Regional Seminar on Advanced Weed Control at the PGA Club in Port St. Lucie presented by Dr. Fred Yelverton, NC State and Dr.



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*A shot of some of the players enjoying The Blue Pearl's new venue this year, the McArthur G.C. on May 8 in Hobe Sound. Photo by Barbara Tierney.*

Bert McCarty from Clemson. We followed that up a few weeks later May 8 with our big annual chapter fundraiser of each year, The Blue Pearl. Thanks to superintendent Chris Dearsio and the McArthur Golf Club for hosting the 14th Blue Pearl tournament.

President Harry Hanson will host our annual meeting and election of officers at the Miles Grant CC in June. Look for the date of our August golf outing hosted by Tim Cann, CGCS at Harbour Ridge G.C. And it's not too soon to mark your calendars for our Treasure Coast and Palm Beach joint chapter meeting and golf

challenge at Jupiter Island hosted by John Foy of the USGA.

**WEST COAST**

Trent Inman, CGCS will host our chapter golf championship at Old Memorial G.C. in June. On July 24 we will host our second GCSAA Regional Seminar in 2007 at the Tampa Palms G&CC: Organic Approach to Golf Course Maintenance with Dr. Frank Rossi and Jeff Carlson, CGCS. In August Duane Van Etten will host our annual Pro/Superintendent Golf Tournament at his Cypress Run G.C.

**FGCSA**

This is the busy time of year for chapter secretaries and treasurers as they send out, collect and post dues notices and payments in order to report current members so they can be included in the annual FGCSA Membership Directory. Association Manager Marie Roberts sympathizes with superintendents who have "real jobs" when it comes to shuffling chapter paperwork and meeting necessary deadline, which is why we urge all chapters to hire and retain administrative help so processing new member applications and existing member renewals doesn't become such a burden. About half of our chapters have hired someone to help with newsletters, Web sites and paperwork handling. We hope to organize and hold an annual meeting of these administrative assistants to see how we can help each other serve our members better.

The FGCSA board has appointed a search committee to look for a new state staff member to come on board by this fall to train with Marie and assume her position when she retires, which will be around

the beginning of 2008. Resumes will be accepted in the coming months and interviews set up with the top candidates for August or September.

We hosted a GCSAA Leadership Series seminar at the Poa Annua Classic in Naples in May. Bruce Williams, CGCS presented "Mastering your Communications Skills" and noted that in his experience many more superintendents lost their jobs from poor communication rather than poor turf conditions. At the Past Presidents Dinner held on May 10th after the spring board meeting, Past President Greg Pheneger was given the 2007 Distinguished Service Award for his leadership and service in helping with the FGCSA's strategic planning and sound financial management.

Shane Bass, CGCS joined Joel Jackson, CGCS and Mike Goldie in visiting with Dale Dubberly from the Florida Dept. of Agriculture on the state's urban fertilizer rule and attended the FPMA luncheon with guest speaker Agriculture Commissioner Charles Bronson during the FGCSA Legislative trip to Tallahassee in March.

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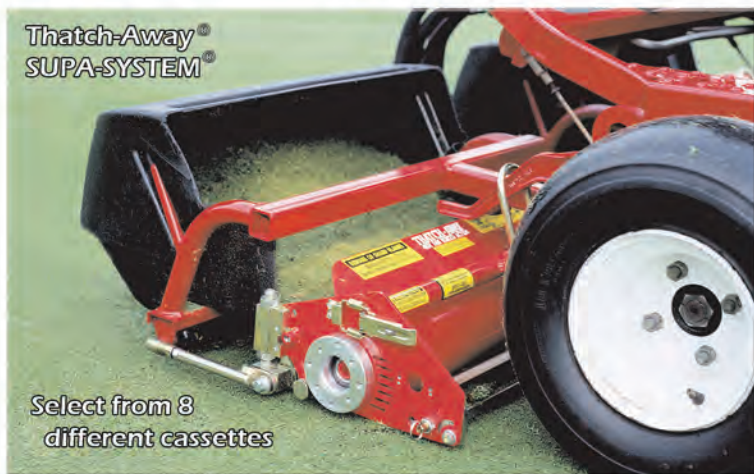


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## Distinguished Service Award Goes to Pheneger

The Florida GCSA recognized the professional and volunteer services of Past President Greg Pheneger (2003) by presenting him the 2007 FGCSA Distinguished Service Award at the annual Past Presidents Dinner held during the Poa Annuu Classic in Naples each May.

Pheneger, currently manager of golf course operations at the Johns Island Club in Vero Beach, is the son of a retired club professional so he became involved in the golf industry at a very early age. He also credits Luke Majorki, superintendent of PGA National for demonstrating a very strong work ethic early in Pheneger's career. But another thing Pheneger learned from Majorki was that family came first. Pheneger's family includes his wife Gail and sons Alec and James, and enjoys quality time with them in family vacations and sports activities.

Pheneger graduated from Ohio State University and took an assistant superintendent job at the



*Greg Pheneger, manager of golf course operations, Johns Island Club, Vero Beach.*

PGA National Golf Club in 1980. He rose through the ranks at PGA National becoming the director of golf course maintenance from 1988 to 1993 at which time he took his current position with Johns Island, managing the club's three golf courses.

Pheneger says his training at PGA National – helping to prepare for the 1983 Ryder

Cup, eight PGA Seniors Championships from 1985-1993 and the 1987 PGA Championship – helped prepare him for overseeing the maintenance and renovations of the North, South and West Courses in Vero Beach.

From 1998 to 2001 Pheneger served the Treasure Coast GCSA in all executive offices and as the chapter

delegate to the GCSAA. After two years as a director on the FGCSA Board, he became secretary/treasurer and eventually president in 2003-04. While in his role as secretary/treasurer, Pheneger guided the association in adopting progressive operating and financial plans that laid the groundwork for the association to prosper and grow.

Pheneger continues to serve the FGCSA directly as a consulting member of the Long Range Planning Committee. After a few years off from volunteer board service, Pheneger was tapped to serve on the Florida Turfgrass Association's board of directors. He will be nominated for secretary/treasurer of that organization at the annual meeting in September at the FTGA Conference and Show in Bonita Springs.

Pheneger's thorough preparation, attention to detail and his professional conduct in his work and volunteer service for the Florida golf industry earned him the Distinguished Serviced Award.

Congratulations, Greg, on a job well done.

*- Joel Jackson*

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PICS FROM THE POA

# Another Weekend in Paradise

The 37th edition of the Everglades Poa Annua Classic was another weekend in paradise as superintendents, suppliers and their families gathered once again at the Naples Beach Hotel and Golf Club in Naples in May. This year all golfers got to enjoy the superb playing conditions of the Naples Grande Golf Club. The G. C. Horn Endowment Tournament was held at the new venue on Friday following the GCSAA Seminar by Bruce Williams, CGCS in the morning at the hotel's conference center. On Saturday the fun loving golfers played a scramble event at the Naples Beach Golf Club, while the serious golfers vying for spots on the FGCSA Team returned to Naples Grande to play a low medalist event. Here are some photos from the weekend's activities.



Ryan Costello, GCS of the Audubon C.C. played his way to low gross winner and a spot on the FGCSA team in the GCSAA Golf Championship next February in Orlando. Photo by Joel Jackson.



Greg Pheneger received the 2007 FGCSA Distinguished Service Award from current President Craig Weyandt at the Past Presidents Dinner May 10 in Naples. Photo by Joel Jackson.

During the FGCSA Spring Board Meeting, President Craig Weyandt recognized Suncoast External Vice President Mike McCulloch's service of two consecutive terms as director on the FGCSA board with a plaque as Mike leaves the board. Photo by Joel Jackson.



FGCSA Education Chairman Mark Kann and guest speaker Bruce Williams, CGCS nonverbally communicate thanks to GCSAA and BASF for sponsoring Williams' "Mastering Your Communications Skills" seminar in Naples. Photo by Joel Jackson.



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Number 16 East  
Par 3, 165 yards  
Laurel Oak C.C.  
Photo by Daniel Zelazek



LAUREL OAK COUNTRY CLUB

# A Real Community Asset

*By Joel Jackson, CGCS Retired*

Eighteen years ago, Laurel Oak opened the Gary Player-designed West Course just a few miles east of Interstate 75 in Sarasota north of Bee Ridge Road. Five years later, the East Course opened in 1994. It was also designed by Player. Then in 2006 Rees Jones and Southeastern Golf tackled a major renovation and redesign

of the West Course. The course is maturing nicely according to Director of Golf Course Operations Adam Wright, who has been at the helm of the 36-hole complex since 2002.

“We may have opened a tad early last year, putting a little more stress on the new turf initially than we would have liked, but time heals all wounds and the course has really shaped up and is performing well,” said

Wright. Ten years ago Wright was finishing up his degree in agronomy at Tennessee Tech University.

He said, “Like many college students I was seeking my path and had changed majors a couple of times including Engineering and secondary education. They are wonderful fields to major in, but neither made me happy. I was looking for a profession that would





*View from the fairway bunker of the par-4, 15th hole on the East Course. Photo by Daniel Zelazek.*

***'Our assistants also serve as irrigation and pest control technicians, so it is imperative that they learn how the different courses – and especially the different greens' grasses – perform and respond to pest and environmental stresses.'***

allow me to be outdoors, be free and enjoy what I would be doing for a living. That type of career choice finally led me to golf course management.”

Now he finds himself leading a 40-person staff that maintains the 220 acres under his charge. Fortunately, Wright says, the roadways and common areas are maintained by an outside landscape firm, so he and his crew can concentrate on the golf courses and clubhouse grounds.

The renovation to the West Course introduced TifEagle greens to the list management responsibilities, while the East Course still has Tifdwarf greens. To make sure his superintendents, Adam Ellison and Zach Lane, and assistant superintendents Jimmy Barker, Matt Eichmann and Theo Evans get well-rounded experience and learn all the nuances of each course Wright is experimenting with a rotation system that will move his managers around every 3-6

months so they can become familiar with the required management practices.

Meanwhile at the maintenance operations center Equipment Manager Andrew Messina runs the shop and keeps the equipment tuned up and reels sharpened. In the office, Wright's indispensable administrative assistant, Lori Brown, keeps the paper work moving so he can spend as much time as possible on the golf course.

Wright said, “Our assistants also serve as irrigation and pest control technicians, so it is imperative that they learn how the different courses – and especially the different greens' grasses – perform and respond to pest and environmental stresses.”

Laurel Oak is fortunate to have an ample supply of reclaimed water as its irrigation source, so the current



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## COURSE FACTS



*Laurel Oak Maintenance Staff*

## Laurel Oak Country Club

**Location:** Sarasota

**Ownership/Playing Policy:** Private

**Number of Holes:** 36 - East (6,898 yds) and West (6,934) Courses; both Par 72

**Designed by:** Gary Player. Constructed by Wadsworth; West opened: 1989, East 1994. West redesigned by Rees Jones, rebuilt by Southeastern Golf and Cal-Golf in 2006.

**Management Team:** David Whalen, club manager; David Gale, club president; Ed Nettles, green chairman; Chris Brandt, head club professional; Adam Wright, CGCS, director of golf course operations.

**Acreage under maintenance:** 220

**Greens:** Tifdwarf (East), TifEagle (West); avg. size: 6,500 sq.ft.; total acres: 5.6; HOC .125 - .145 in.; green speeds: 8-9 ft. summer; 9-10 ft. in season. East greens only are overseeded with *Poa trivialis* at 8 lbs/1000 sq. ft.

**Tees, Fairways and Roughs:** Tifway 419; tees 6A, HOC .500 in., rye overseed tees only @ 20 lbs/1000 sq. ft.;

fairways 46 A; HOC .550 in.; roughs 140 A, HOC 1.75 in.

**Bunkers:** East 59, West 53. Sand type: GA26. hand- and machine raked with Toro Sand Pro 3040.

**Natural areas:** 12 crushed coquina waste areas under trees and with cordgrass in roughs

**Waterways:** 23 lakes and ponds. Outside contractor maintenance.

**Irrigation:** Effluent with supplemental well; East - Rainbird Hydraulic, West - Toro Site Pro; 1,900 heads, fertigation system.

**Staff:** 40 total including superintendent and 2 part time (student and retiree); weekly budgeted hours 40 straight time. Key team members: East Superintendent Adam Ellison, West Superintendent Zach Lane, assistant superintendents Matt Eichmann, Theo Evan and Jimmy Barker, administrative assistant Lori Brown.

**Special events:** The annual Laurel Oak Cup which benefits the Special Olympics. PGA Tour Pro Paul Azinger is heavily involved.

# Environmental Laurels

The Florida Dept. of Environmental Protection, in conjunction with the Florida Golf Course Superintendents Association and other agencies and groups, has just released a manual for the *Best Management Practices for Enhancing Environmental Quality on Florida Golf Courses*. Of course many facilities like Laurel Oak have already been engaged in Best Management Practices. Here are just a few. Photos by Joel Jackson.



*Bulrushes line the shore and littoral zone along the second hole on the West Course. The plants provide food and shelter for fish and birds and help filter storm runoff.*



*A 30-foot buffer zone (left of the red stakes) was created around this wetland on hole No. 10 East. The height of cut is 4 inches and no chemicals or fertilizers are applied in the zone.*



*Some extreme rough areas have been converted to bahiagrass turf which requires less water and fertilizer.*



*Hand watering of localized dry spots with wetting agents is more efficient than just turning on the a sprinkler head.*

*With its Tifdwarf greens, overseeding on the East Course is mandatory to have a consistent playing surface during winter, when 200 rounds per day are not uncommon. With a warmer and drier winter and spring than usual, the transition back to the bermuda base has been a challenge.*

drought restrictions have not affected turf conditions as severely as courses on consumptive-use permits. The latter are being restricted more heavily as the current drought continues.

But even reclaimed water is not always available in the amount needed, so Laurel Oak has a supplemental well to refill the irrigation lakes when needed.

Wright said, "Relying on effluent irrigation water can be a double edged sword. On the one hand turf irrigation is an excellent use of treated water. On the other hand the quantity and quality of the water can't always be guaranteed and sometimes if we have a super dry spring and summer and our winter visitors are gone back north, the amount of available treated water declines and supply shortfalls can occur affecting our ability to grow consistent quality turf."


The renovation of the West Course included several improvements to

enhance the turf quality and playing conditions. Improved drainage on the native heavy soils was accomplished by surface shaping and contouring which directs storm water runoff into swales and ultimate storage into the twenty-four lakes and ponds on the two courses.

Additionally, Wright says, subsurface drainage pipe is installed in critical areas at the rate of half a mile to a mile every year. A new Toro Osmac computer-controlled irrigation system improved coverage and watering scheduling. And last but not least, wall-to-wall cart paths will help prevent damage from cart traffic during rainy periods.

Renovations to the East Course have been mentioned but remain an item for the future.

"The East Course has a lot of character and we wouldn't need to do much," Wright says, "but it would be nice to upgrade the irrigation system to



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*Judicious use of aquatic plants enhances playability and water quality on hole No.12 West. Photo by Daniel Zelazek.*

***'It's right and proper that we are critical of course conditions. That is our job, but I sometimes think we do it to ourselves when we become overcritical... Sometimes we push the turf and ourselves to the edge and that's not good for either.'***

make it more efficient in an era where water conservation is a critical issue. If we tackle the East Course it would likely be in stages and not all at once like the West Course.”

With its older Tifdwarf greens, overseeding on the East Course is mandatory to have a consistent playing surface during the winter golf season where 200 rounds per day are not uncommon.

With a warmer and drier winter and spring than usual, the transition from the overseeding back to the bermuda base has been a challenge. Wright said he only had two frosts this winter and they were on back-to-back mornings.

Regarding this year's transition Wright explained, “We talked it over and rather than have a prolonged, indefinite period of transition with questionable quality putting surfaces, we decided to bite the bullet and spray

out the *Poa trivialis* and concentrate of growing them back in as quickly as possible. So far so good. They roll okay, but don't look great color-wise, but with the warm weather they will green up in a hurry.”

Another challenge that Laurel Oak shares with many other courses is dealing with off-type bermudagrass in the fairways. The renovation of the West course helped remove a lot of the patches of off-type grasses and has given Wright and company a foothold to fight the infestation with repeated coordinated applications of Round-up® and Fusilade® and eventual resodding of some areas. On the East Course Wright uses applications of Primo® in the spring to suppress the seedhead production phase of the off-types and, when kept mowed on schedule, they are virtually undetectable to all but the trained eye.



*Perennial purple Plumbago plants are highlighted by just a few bright-colored impatiens.*



*Using colorful perennial plants like these Mexican Bluebells instead of short lived annuals saves labor hours and materials cost.*



*Aquatic plants like these Blue Flag Iris, above, filter runoff from the shoreline turf and provide food and cover for wildlife.*



## **Landscapes ecological assets**

Besides providing color and character, golf course landscapes can also be environmental assets. Photos by Joel Jackson.

*Laurel Oak is using more native plant materials, left, to reduce maintenance costs and inputs like water, fertilizer and labor for excessive required pruning.*



## SUPERINTENDENT FACTS



*"I have had two general managers since I have been here and both of them ... knew the value of having me engaged in continuing education to stay on top of the latest technology and the latest issues facing golf course management."*

*Adam Wright, CGCS has been at Laurel Oak C.C. for five years. Photo by Joel Jackson*

## Adam Wright, CGCS

**From:** Murfreesboro, Tenn.

**Education:** B.S. in agronomy, Tennessee Tech University, 1997

**Employment:** 2002-present, director of golf operations Laurel Oak C.C.; 1999-2002 superintendent Legacy Course, Greystone G & CC, Birmingham, Ala.; 1997-1999 assistant superintendent Pine Tree GC, Boynton Beach.

**Professional Affiliations:** GCSAA, FGCSA and Suncoast GCSA vice president 2005-07.

**Work philosophy and advice:** Work, play and laugh hard. Treat people the way you want to be treated and always remain professional when others are not.

**Mentor:** I owe a lot of credit to Tom Valch who hired me right out of college to be his assistant at the

Pine Tree Golf Club in Boynton Beach. Then he hired me to be a superintendent at the Greystone G&CC in Birmingham, Ala. He believed in my ability had taught me everything I know about the business.

**Accomplishments/Goals:** Attaining CGCS status at the age of 28. Begin work on an MBA degree.

**Hobbies:** I am a fantasy football junkie.

And as for that trained eye, Wright says, "It's right and proper that we are critical of course conditions. That is our job, but I sometimes think we do it to ourselves when we become overcritical. We need to discuss expectations and communicate freely and often with our managers and members, so we really know what they want and need. Then

we can provide the best conditions we can within the allotted resources. Sometimes we push the turf and ourselves to the edge and that's not good for either."

I asked Wright his thoughts on the future of superintendent associations and if job stresses and demands are depleting the ranks of potential

volunteers who are the lifeblood of the local and state chapters.

He commented, "There's no question that expectations are higher than ever and superintendents are very conscientious about their responsibilities. I'm sure some are not always comfortable being away from work. However, I feel like our chapter's



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*At 582 yards, No.17 West is the longest of all the par-5 holes. The shot to the green is guarded by a native wetland. Photo by Daniel Zelazek.*

***Daily morning crew meetings and assignments coordinate the maintenance routine with club functions while enabling maximum turf care. Additionally Wright attends weekly manager meetings and monthly green committee meetings.***

participation is up and our educational speakers are better than ever. I am confident that leaders will always step up to keep the flow going.”

The city of Sarasota and Sarasota County have been very concerned about environmental impacts of lawn care and golf course maintenance practices over the past few years.

A small contingent of Suncoast superintendents, including Wright, has been representing the interests of the local golf course industry supported by a couple of vendors and a few general managers. The key to crafting responsible regulations is to base the decisions on sound science which result in best management practices.

Laurel Oak demonstrates the spirit of many environmentally friendly practices in its normal maintenance routine.

For example, storm runoff on the

property is carried by surface drainage swales to ponds and lake on the property. As Wright says, stormwater runoff is very slow to leave the property.

Many essentially out-of-play roughs have been converted to bahiagrass which requires fewer maintenance inputs, and at least 12 native waste areas of crushed coquina rock under large stands of trees eliminate the need for even trying to manage turf in the dense shade, a frustrating exercise at best.

The use of crushed coquina on golf courses is a becoming a more common occurrence. Besides being used under trees, it is often used as natural pervious cart paths and as a “mulch” if you will in native or waste areas. The material does not float like woody mulches and does not blow out of hazards like sand in windy conditions.

## Wildlife habitat aids Audubon certification

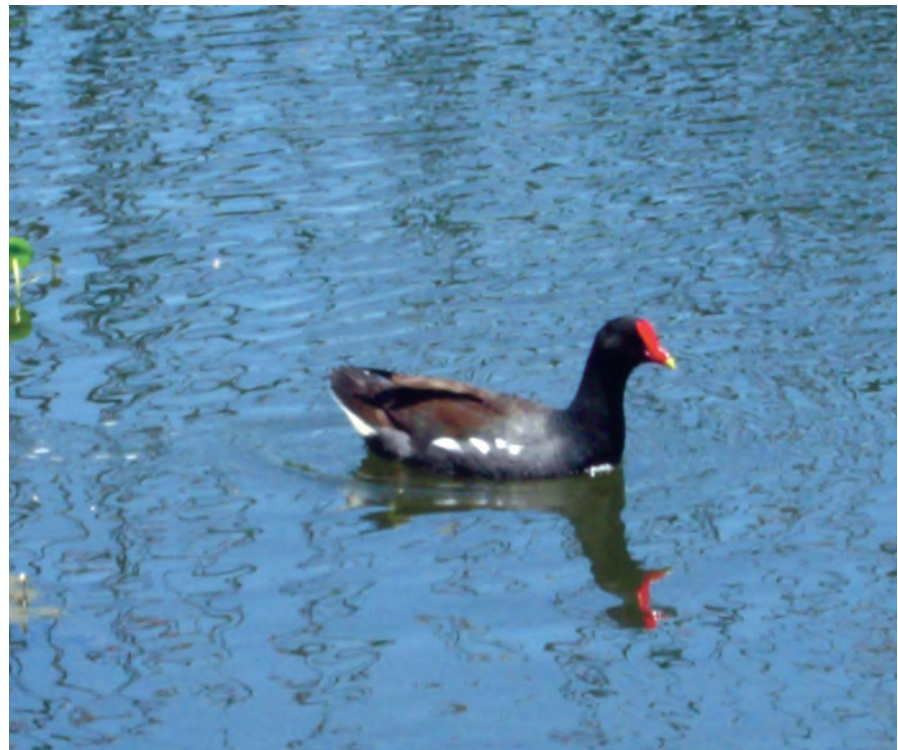
Laurel Oak is awaiting final certification in the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program. The fauna list includes otters, fox, deer, rabbits, squirrels, songbirds, wading birds, hawks, migrating white pelicans, softshelled turtles, a few alligators and an occasional visiting bald eagle. Photos by Joel Jackson.



*White ibis, two adults and one juvenile (center) rest in the shade of bald cypress trees.*



*A Great White Heron stands vigil watching for his next dinner.*



*Water birds like the moorhen, above, forage for food around the aquatic plants in golf course lakes.*



*Clear golf course lake water reveals female tilapia, left, guarding her sandy nest along the shoreline.*

**FUN FACTS ABOUT ADAM**



**The Wright Stuff**

**Vehicle:** Toyota Sequoia

**Last good movie I saw:** Departed

**The book I've been reading:** The Blind Side by Michael Lewis

**Favorite meal:** Steak & Lobster with a baked potato

**Prized possessions:** My friends & family

**Personal Heroes:** My brother Greg and my mentor Tom Vlach

**The one thing I can't stand:** People who are late

**I stay home to watch:** 24

**If I could do it over:** I wouldn't change a thing

**My fantasy is:** To eat whatever I want and not gain a pound

**If I could change one thing about myself:** Become more patient

**My most irrational act:** Thinking I could do it all myself

**Most humbling experience:** Death of my grandfather

**My dream foursome would be:** My dad, brother, Tiger and me

**My best fish story:** Catching my first tarpon last year in Boca Grande Pass




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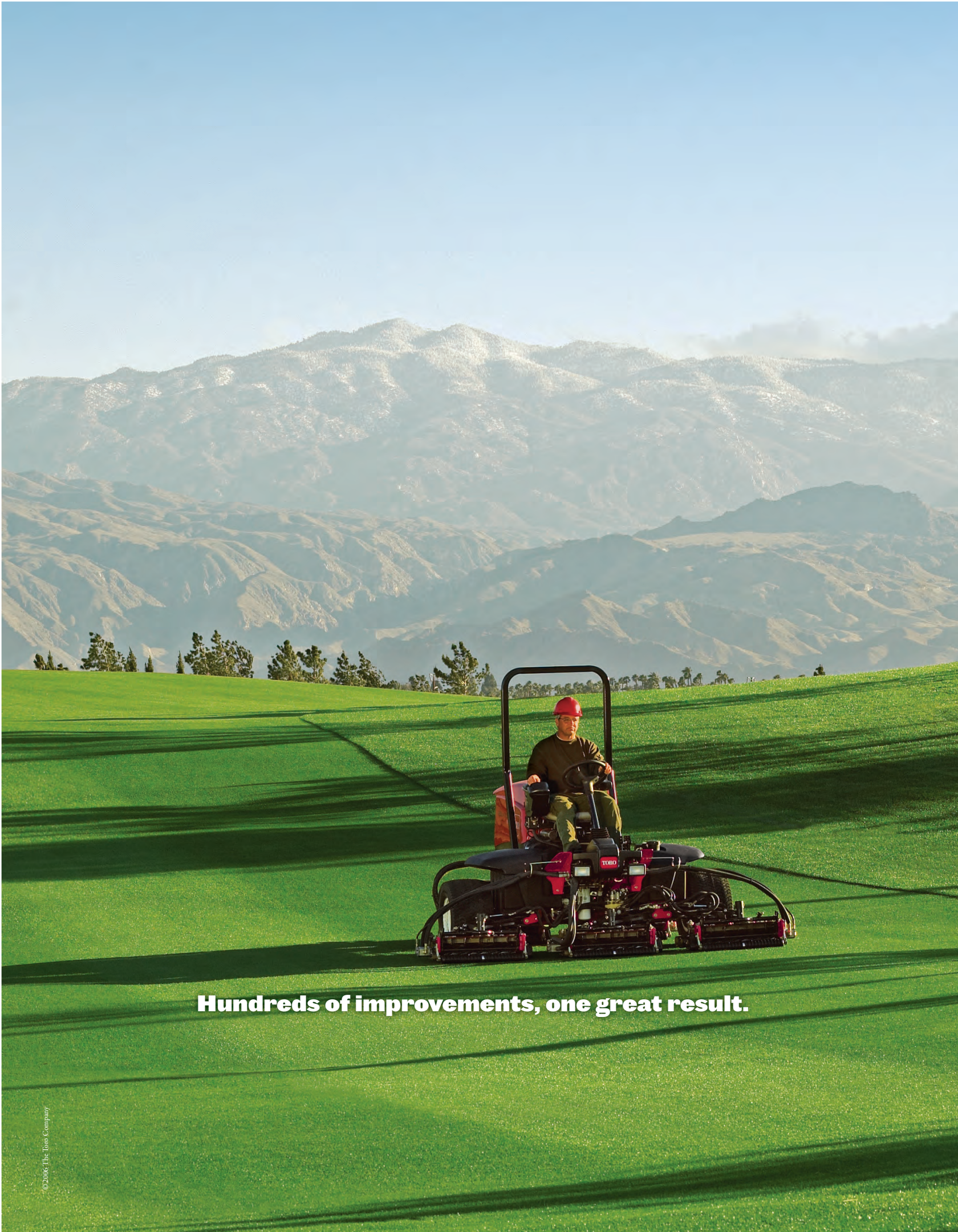
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It tends to have minimal weed invasion and does not require very much maintenance. If a golfer hits a wayward shot into the crushed stone areas, it provides a much easier recovery shot than from a fluffy lie in pine needle mulched areas.

Wright said, "The members have also made a concerted effort to convert has many formal landscape beds as

possible to native plant materials which reduces the amount of water, fertilizer and labor involved in maintaining them. We have also changed several out of play areas in the roughs from bermudagrass to bahiagrass which also reduces inputs. On the 10th hole we instituted a 30-foot no-spray and no-fertilizer buffer zone around a wetland bordering the right side of the hole and the lake near the tee.

We raised the height of cut and only mow the area a few times per year."

The course is irrigated with treated effluent, which provides a disposal service for the local utilities and does not affect the underground water resources needed for public consumption. Rather it recycles and filters the waste water to put it back into the hydrologic cycle.

But reclaimed water is also a limited resource as more municipalities begin to convert municipal landscape irrigation sources to reclaimed water. Consequently Wright and others have adopted the practice of using wetting agents and penetrants in conjunction with spot hand watering of severely droughty areas on their courses. This practice allows superintendents to supplement dry hot spots without turning on a head or zone and watering adjacent areas not under drought stress.

Laurel Oak and its fellow courses provide jobs, revenues and recreation for the people of Sarasota and the club members should promote the benefits their course provides the community.

A golf course is a living ecological system subject to attack and infestation from insects, diseases and weeds. Wright's biggest foes are mole crickets and grubs which he controls alternately with applications of slit-injected Chipco Choice® and Alectis®. For weed control, Wright applies the pre-emergent herbicide Ronstar® with his seasonal fairway and rough fertilizer applications in February, June and September. He normally applies a poly-coated, slow-release blend, usually 22-0-18 from Harrell's, but the formula also depends on soil sample results.

The greens are fertilized with a combination of granular slow-release fertilizers and foliar sprays to provide continuous feeding for the closely mowed turf. A Tru-Prill blend of 10-2-20 is applied every few weeks and weekly foliar feedings supply micronutrients like iron and manganese and perhaps 0.1 lb. of nitrogen in solution for quick uptake by the turfgrass. Three core aerifications are made to the greens per year and two on the fairways. During the winter

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- Reduced down-time greatly reduces lost revenue. Six to eight weeks is normal turnaround.
- Site preparation can be done with your own crews and equipment to fit your own schedule.
- Original putting surface grades and contours can be maintained or slightly altered if desired.
- Healthy mature seedbed is retained and serves as base for new putting surface. •Speedy conversion from poor quality greens to TifEagle, the ultimate ultradwarf putting surface.

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- Major re-shaping and architectural changes are not possible for most older putting surfaces.
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- Research shows that TifEagle has superior speed, consistency and overall playability.
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*This dogleg on No. 10 East shows one of the 12 crushed-coquina native areas that take several acres of turfgrass out of maintenance, thus reducing required inputs. Photo by Daniel Zelazek.*

***Laurel Oak is a community asset in so many ways ... and yet there is one more: The Laurel Oak Cup. This special event held each year, usually in September, raises money for the Special Olympics.***

season, small solid tines are used every other week to prevent compaction on the putting surfaces.

Daily morning crew meetings and assignments coordinate the maintenance routine with club functions while enabling maximum turf care. Additionally Wright attends weekly manager meetings and monthly green committee meetings.

Wright said, "I have had two general managers since I have been here and both of them supported and encouraged my participation in the local chapter and they also knew the value of having me engaged in continuing education to stay on top of the latest technology and the latest issues facing golf course management."

Laurel Oak is a community asset in so many ways – from its irrigation disposal of reclaimed water to the

bountiful wildlife found on the property – and yet there is one more, The Laurel Oak Cup. This special event held each year, usually in September, raises money for the Special Olympics. Organized by Sue Hokamp and strongly supported by the members of the club, the community, and local PGA Tour professional and television commentator Paul Azinger, it is one of the largest fundraisers in the region.

Beyond the game and all its traditions and the recreation and enjoyment that people derive from playing it, operating a golf course is a business and on the balance sheet a golf course like Laurel Oak has environmental and economic assets that benefit the whole community and not only the residents and members.

## ADAM WRIGHT, CGCS

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# Taking It to the Next Level

## *Golf course management and golfer expectations*

Every golfer wants to play on quality turf. And certainly most golf course operators and owners want to have quality turf.

And golf course superintendents work hard to achieve that. So why do these desires fail to get realized?

Sometimes they get derailed because golfers are apt to focus on what they are unhappy about rather than what can reasonably be attained. Then course owners or clubs are forced to chase complaints instead of following an achievable plan of action.

A.W. Tillinghast, the architect who designed Bethpage Black course and Winged Foot Country Club, among others, said, "It is my belief that too many American courses are retarded in proper development and improvement by unintelligent – although doubtless well-intended – criticism and advice from the locker rooms. Without a doubt, there exist more amateur course architects and turf authorities among the members of some of our clubs than there are following these crafts professionally."

The GCSAA golf course superintendent is the person who has the most intimate knowledge of the course and who knows best how to go about achieving course maintenance goals, but unrealistic expectations and outside pressures sometimes prevent them from applying that knowledge.

Chris Hartwiger is a USGA agronomist who consults with golf courses and has seen more than a few of these situations. He and other agronomists spend much of their of time talking to golf course superintendents, green committees and course owners during Turfgrass Advisory Service and they often hear golfers with unrealistic expectations.

"Good golfing conditions do not happen by accident," Hartwiger said. "They happen when a team is put together that has the resources and infrastructure necessary to meet the desired objectives."



He offered several examples of unrealized expectations:

**Producing a quality cut:**

Agronomists often hear that the cut was not good on one or more parts of the course. Often, it's a failure to allocate adequate resources – the course either doesn't have any reel-grinding equipment or it hasn't allowed the golf course mechanic to get the necessary training for existing equipment.

**Rough that's not "too rough"** A course owner says, "We have a good staff and new leased equipment, so why is the rough so inconsistent?" In many areas, especially the Southeast, shade and incomplete irrigation coverage doom rough to inconsistency.

Superintendents know that asking sun-loving grasses to thrive in the shade and compete with tree roots for water is an exercise in futility, but golfers rarely let the superintendent remove the trees necessary for good turf.

**Consistent bunkers:** Golfers universally want perfect bunkers, not too firm or too soft. Like Goldilocks they want them "just right." Unfortunately, bunkers will never be that consistent over the course of a season.

The solution involves better communication and the development of a network that includes golfers, the golf shop, the general manager, the green committee and the turfgrass management team.

**Better putting greens:** The best putting greens have many of the following factors in common:

- A skilled GCSAA member superintendent and experienced staff
- Good construction and enough size for amount of play
- Use of an improved variety
- Commitment to a sound aeration and topdressing program
- Little shade and good air movement

through either open sites or fans

- Excellent water quality
- Sensible mowing program
- Summer venting

Without them, the likelihood of better greens declines, too.

The role of a green committee or course owner, working in concert with the golf course superintendent, to develop and implement a coordinated plan is obvious, but where does the golfer fit into the puzzle?

A good first step is a change in mindset. If your course is regularly deluged with complaints, it's hard to create a realistic management plan. If instead, golfers are genuinely interested in what happens on the course, and ask questions when they don't understand what is happening on the course, the management team can begin the dialogue that produces achievable goals.

"The trick is to get everyone on the same page," Hartwiger said, "If complaints and criticisms are a recurring theme, focus on building the team and resources necessary to deliver the results desired."

Every course has some budget limitations, so if it's not possible to have all the employees, the machines, the budget, and the infrastructure to satisfy every hope or dream, help is available. In addition to the fact that your golf course superintendent is the person who knows the most about the course and what can be achieved, he or she has a network of more than 20,000 other turf professionals available in the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, and the extensive professional and educational resources offered by the association.

What golfers say they want may not be realistic at every course, but the good news is that every golf course can set achievable expectations and encourage golfers to enjoy the course when they play.

*Credit: GCSAA Communications Dept.*



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# Managing Labor

*Finding, retaining and managing a fluctuating multi-cultural workforce is just another challenge for today's superintendent.*

With the continued reports of golf growth flat-lining, we thought it might be interesting to ask our members to write about how they have been affected in the labor management department. Since labor generally makes up 55-60 percent of a maintenance budget, how are the hard times affecting that aspect of golf course maintenance. Depending on your particular region, the available labor pool may have been affected by construction and hurricane cleanup projects, when laborers could get a few dollars more per hour for these short-term ventures.

Superintendents have had to juggle budget cutbacks or do some soul searching on when to run light on the crew and either postpone projects or back off on some housekeeping chores like pruning and edging, which might affect the aesthetics a bit, but not sacrifice the playing conditions in the primary playing areas. Here are a few comments on the subject of labor management from your peers

## TECHNICIANS HARD TO FIND

Within the last six months, the labor market over here has seemed to free up; the building has slowed somewhat and we are having steady flow of applicants. Most are Hispanic and not many speak English. A year ago, most guys in town were really struggling to find help. What is hard to fill are the technician positions: spray techs, irrigation techs, etc. If you have a really good worker on staff, it seems as if the language barrier gets in the way with them reading labels, computers for setting up water etc.

We started this year with English classes for our staff. It is a longterm project and will be years before anything comes of it. One thing that is good is that we have a literacy council here in Bonita Springs and they have

book, computers and other materials available for the guys who really want to learn.

I think I will avoid the overtime question. We still run 5 to 7 hours per week depending if our guys work on the weekend. Each year I have to justify the overtime and it seems to be working. We have slight turnover but not too much – seems like the same one or two positions. Maybe the overtime coupled with the good benefits helps.

Private club operations are so much more different from the courses tied to real estate and/or resorts.

*Matt Taylor, CGCS,  
Royal Poinciana Golf Club*

## DON'T BACKFILL OPENINGS DURING SLOW TIMES

Over the past three and a half years, finding an adequate supply of labor has been very difficult due to the rapidly expanding housing market. Although I think few will complain about the exponential increase in the value of their homes, the housing market's effect on available manpower has made many superintendents' jobs more difficult. During the recent times of nonstop home construction, the labor pool from which most golf courses in southwest Florida draw their help was finding higher paying jobs. Price competition generally had not been a problem.

I often ask my colleagues how they are doing on labor, and usually they say they are always a couple of guys short.

In the last six months, since the housing market has flatlined and housing contracts are being fulfilled, several large construction companies laid off a large percentage of their work forces due to slow real estate sales. This downturn in the housing market has made a larger labor pool available once again. Right now I have maybe three to five guys a week walk into the shop

looking for work.

As with any position, salary depends on experience, but we typically start a knows- nothing guy out at \$8, knows-some at \$9-plus, knows-a-lot \$10-plus, and is an absolute life saver at \$11 and up. It's a crude but effective pay scale.

I have worked on both sides of the fence in my short career: courses that spend money and those that try to make money. At Collier's Reserve we would budget 3.5 hrs of OT every week and didn't depend on revenues. Here at Naples Grande we are a for-profit organization and the bottom line is everything. We don't compromise quality, but we try very hard to maintain no more than a 40-hour work week during the summer.

What I will do is not backfill any openings and run a few guys short during the slower summer season to save some labor dollars in the budget for any needed overtime during the winter months when you need all the details attended to as soon as they arise. These past two quarters have been the slowest in club history, thus affecting my spending, but we do what we can to try and ease the hemorrhaging money flow.

One way we will make up "project time" is to do it at night. We have two grow-lights mounted to a workman with a lift, we put a generator in the bed and now you have a mobile light stand. We will do the work and then send the staff home early if the payroll budget is running tight.

*Bill Davidson, GCS  
Naples Grande Golf Club*

## LABOR ISSUES

Availability: Construction still strong here but has slowed down some. Unskilled help readily available, experienced golf course workers more difficult to find, but not impossible.

Starting wages: Inexperienced \$ 8/hour; experienced \$ 9-11/hour; retention: 90 percent of my employees have been here longer than three years. We have had only one new hire in the past 2 years.

About 60 percent of my employees are Haitian, 20 percent Hispanic, 20 percent Caucasian or African American. Almost all speak English well enough to get by. I constantly encourage assistant superintendents to follow up on verbal instructions (be physically present to demonstrate) to those with weaker English skills. As long as we exhibit patience and willingness to teach and demonstrate, language is no barrier at all. If I need a new employee, my current employees usually refer enough candidates to me for me to fill the position without further advertising.

We allow all employees to work up to 6 hours of overtime each week. They were hired with that understanding

and Club has remained committed to honoring that agreement and allowing them that much overtime each week. About 80 percent of crew chooses to work that much overtime each week.

Our labor hours have not been reduced. We work diligently to ensure that our crew members are productive. Its my job to give good direction and supervision for necessary tasks, and not just keep employees occupied doing "busy" work.

I currently have one part-time (30 hours/week) employee. He is semi-retired after working full time here for 20 years. I have had a couple of other similar employees here during my eight years here. Students tend to be a challenge due to scheduling conflicts and restraints, so we have had only three or four (one at any given time) here in eight years. Since our crew size does not fluctuate on a seasonal basis, we have not needed part-time

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## SUPER TIP

## Words That Stick

By Darren J. Davis

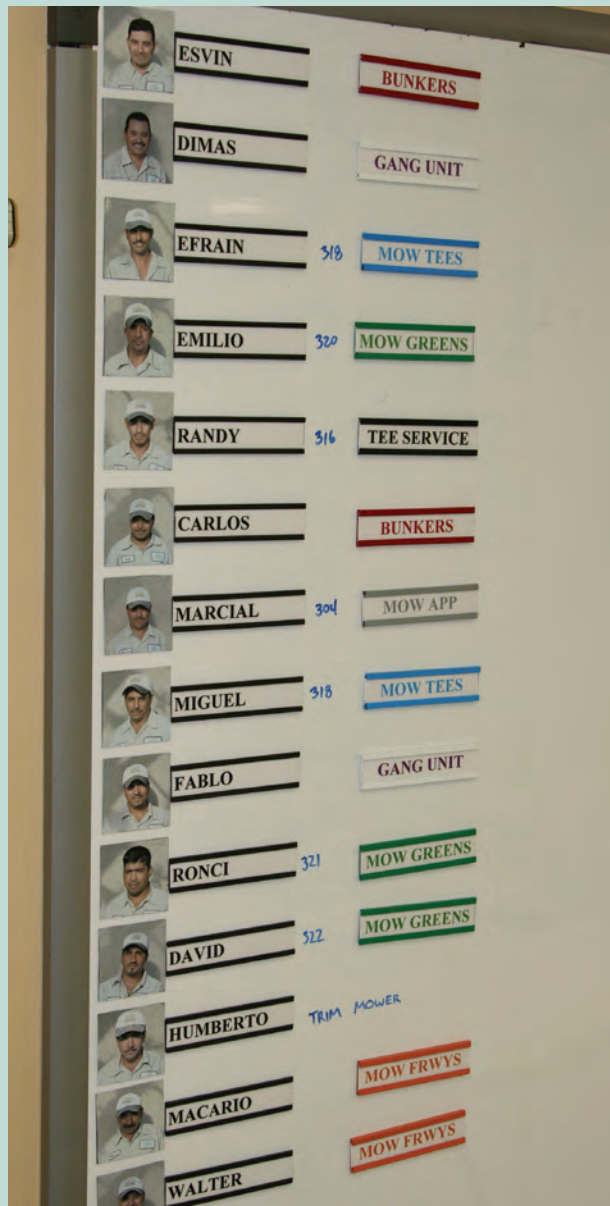
Since I am not one of them, I have always admired individuals with exceptional handwriting. Neat handwriting is definitely a skill I haven't mastered. In fact, given a choice I might use the paper with the dotted middle line used to teach handwriting in elementary school. With this said, the writing of the daily crew assignments on our dry erase board has always been a responsibility I have delegated to my assistant. However, we recently designed a system which, among other things, eliminates at least 75% of the daily writing required.

The first step in creating the new system was to purchase 4 x 1-inch magnetic holders. These are the same style of holder that we use to affix our employees' names to the assignment board (see "Names and Numbers for the New Guys" in the summer 2004 issue of *The Florida Green*). The magnetic label holders were purchased through TIMEWISE, a manufacturer of dry erase boards and accessories ([www.timewiseboards.com](http://www.timewiseboards.com)). A package of twelve holders is \$13.85 and they are available in eight different colors.

While the magnetic holders were on order, my assistant and I decided on the eight most common daily tasks. These included mowing greens (mow greens), mowing tees (mow tees), mowing fairways (mow frwys), mowing approaches (mow app), mowing rough (gang unit), changing the hole location (change cups), bunkers and tee service. We then typed the tasks in Microsoft Word using 38-point Times New Roman font. After printing and laminating the page, we cut the individual words/phrases to fit snugly inside the magnetic holders. The lamination process could be skipped if you do not own a laminating machine. However, since the cost for us was less than \$5 we chose to laminate the paper to increase its durability and enable easy cleaning.

Since I do not write the daily assignments on the board, the biggest advantage of this new system for me is that it enables me to quickly inspect the assigned jobs and the quantity of people doing each. For example, if I wanted to see if my assistant sent out one or two fairway units I

just look on the board for the orange colored label holders. Or, if I wanted to make sure he had at least four walking greens mowers assigned I just count the green colored magnetic holder.



We created a total of 30 magnetic assignment labels so the total cost of the project was under \$45.

seasonal workers. If we need extra help for hurricane cleanup or help to prepare for the opening of the season, we use contract laborers on an as-needed basis to fill in the gaps.

I know a number of South Florida superintendents who rely heavily (up to 30-40 percent of their crew on some

days) on contract labor to supplement their regular crews. Though it has challenges, this method seems to work well for accomplishing low-skill golf-course maintenance tasks like flymowing, edging bunkers and cart paths, etc.

*Bob Randquist, CGCS  
Boca Rio Country Club*

## EXPERIENCED HELP SOMETIMES AVAILABLE

The labor market in north Tampa has been good of late. It seems that every time we have an opening, there is someone filling out an application. Lately, we have had several applicants who have golf course experience. This

is not always the case. New home construction has slowed considerably in our area. Right now, that job market is not affecting us.

We will bring on a new hire with golf course experience on at \$ 8.50/ hour. No experience, \$8. Six of our 16 employees are of Hispanic background. Most speak and understand English. We utilize several crew members to interpret when necessary.

As at most courses we have been asked to keep overtime to a minimum. We schedule overtime for special events, aerification & topdressing.

We have been reduced in manpower by 1.5 workers. Budget reduction for payroll reduced by \$ 25,000 for 2007. For days of scheduled maintenance such as verticutting, aerification, we will start some crew early then overlap by having some come in later in the day to cover what is left to finish.

I do not use any part time help. The best way we have found help has

been by referral. If someone leaves, our Hispanic workers usually know of someone who needs a job.

*Bill Kistler, GCS  
Tampa Palms G&CC*

### **MANY JOB CANDIDATES DON'T MEET BASIC REQUIREMENTS**

There seem to be a lot of people looking for jobs. The problem we're having at Maple Leaf is that our insurance requires that we hire people who have a driver's license and we are a drug-free workplace. We've had problems finding people to meet these two criteria.

Our starting wages are low (\$8-8.50/hr) but we do offer a full benefits package, including uniforms, paid vacations, paid sick time, paid health, dental and vision insurance and 401K contributions. My staff right now consists of mostly older workers who are retired from another job. We have a good core staff, some of whom have

been at Maple Leaf for 10 - 25 years, but a few positions keep turning over. We have no Hispanic workers.

Overtime is generally limited to weekend work except when we are shorthanded or have special projects. Hours and manpower have not been cut, but I have a staff of only eight, inclusive. I have to be creative on a daily basis to get things done. I am budgeted for two part-time people. I have one at the moment and a second new employee waiting for drug test results. The current employee is a retiree and the new one is a student.

Comments: Given the size of my staff, I need to have quality people fill all my positions. I can't waste a pay slot. If I could offer larger salaries, it would definitely be easier to find good people.

*Nancy Miller, GCS  
Maple Leaf G&CC*

*Photo of The Falls C.C. staff by Joel Jackson.*




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# A New Sprinkler for Your Bunker-Face Blues

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** *We can't keep wasting water to try to keep steep bunker faces as green as the rest of the golf course. Here is a new sprinkler version that can help apply water efficiently to hard-to-water areas like bunker slopes.*

By Kevin Scott

Ten years ago, pop-up spray heads around bunkers were about as common as a hole-in-one. As golf course design evolved over time to incorporate visually striking bunkers with steep, sodded faces — and as golfers expect superior turf conditions on these sloping faces — a need developed to install supplemental irrigation systems around bunkers. Hand watering, sometimes supplemented with an application of moisture-retaining pellets, wasn't proving sufficient to combat the sun-fried, wind-struck, dried-out bunker face.

Traditionally, irrigation systems equipped with spray heads at the front line were installed to cure bunker face blues. This method, however, seemed to harvest even more maintenance problems; sprays have a high application rate and emit water too quickly for soils on slopes to absorb, leaving inadequate amounts of moisture for the sod, undulating runoff, and rendering soak times ineffective. Sprays are also not ideal for micro-managing bunker faces due to their inability to maintain uniformity during arc adjustments. With spray heads installed around bunkers, water is being wasted and work crews are still employing the hose-in-hand method to water those

bunker faces that just don't seem to stay green.

A new genre of sprinkler is popping up on golf courses across the country to address the problem: Multi-stream, multi-trajectory rotating (MSMTR) sprinklers are now being installed on problem areas such as bunker faces, slopes, tee boxes and landscaped areas surrounding greens. Currently, only two companies offer MSMTR sprinklers: the Walla Walla Sprinkler Company's MP Rotator, and Rain Bird's Rotary Nozzle.

MSMTR sprinklers have only

fit in Rain Bird spray heads). These nozzles rotate while throwing several powerful streams of water, and deliver water at a one-third the rate of spray heads, allowing the soil to more-efficiently absorb the emitted water. With high uniformity and the capability for longer soak times, MSMTR sprinklers elicit virtually no runoff or standing water, effectively fight wind with stream technology, and can cover micro problem areas like bunker faces with easy arc and radius adjustments that maintain the application rate and uniformity (Rain Bird Rotary Nozzles

have variable fixed arc nozzles, while MP Rotators have a fully adjustable arc on any model).

Compared to spray heads that average 50 percent distribution uniformity (DU), rotary nozzles are between 70 to 80 percent efficient, which is commensurable to the efficiency of golf rotors.

As irrigation efficiency and water conservation migrate to the forefront of



*With multi-stream, multi-trajectory rotating technology, the MP Rotator (shown here) delivers water at one third the rate of spray heads which allows the tight soil on bunker faces to efficiently absorb the water it needs--producing a healthy, green stand of turf. This technology has gradually started to infiltrate the Florida market.*

recently breached the Florida market.

“Originally, our business focus has been on the west coast because of the water situation and climate,” said Chris Wright, regional sales manager for MP Rotator. “This technology has gradually started to infiltrate the Florida market due to new distribution outlets and its reputation as a water-efficient sprinkler. There is a reason why water purveyors have made this sprinkler the most rebated sprinkler in America.”

An MSMTR sprinkler is basically a small rotor that can be retrofitted to any pop-up spray head body (MP Rotators have both male and female thread models, while Rotary Nozzles

Florida superintendents' challenges due to record-breaking drought conditions, these sprinklers have been documented to save approximately 30 percent more water over conventional spray heads.

Harold Wills, irrigation superintendent at Orange Lake Resort in Orlando, oversees the irrigation at the 1,200-acre resort, which includes two 18-hole and two 9-hole golf courses. In 2006, when Orlando received only 34 inches of rainfall and entered into a drought worse than previously experienced in 1932, golf courses and commercial properties were charged to conserve water. Wills decided to work with a water auditor

and create a five-year strategic water conservation plan for the irrigation systems throughout the resort. When researching what water-efficient products to install, he discovered the MP Rotator.

"I have the MPs installed on some of my tee boxes and greens," Wills said. "Right now we have 200 installed, and are working with a water auditor to build a case for installing MPs throughout the whole resort and all necessary parts of the golf courses. The MP's scheduling coefficient is like God's rain. And God's rain is perfect."

While he currently does not have MP Rotators installed around bunkers, he is interested in pursuing the option because of the superior coverage his greens and tee boxes are currently receiving from the MPs.

"Compared to the sprinklers we used to install, the coverage is better due to the MP's ability to apply water uniformly, and adjust to corners while

maintaining a matched precipitation rate," Wills said. "Water is not being thrown everywhere and misting away into thin air. In the last year, I have only had to fix one MP. With the old sprinklers, I was out there fixing them every week."

MSMTR sprinklers, compared to sprays, can also throw further and cover more ground while irrigating at a significantly lower flow rate.

For those superintendents who already have supplemental irrigation systems around bunkers, a switch to these sprinklers is easy, but if no system is installed, the labor costs involved in installing a system can be substantial. Because of the low flow, the irrigation design can have more heads per zone, thus fewer zones are needed, saving labor and material fees for new installation.

Additionally, MSMTR sprinklers will significantly reduce many of the costs typically associated with spray heads or

hand watering. The labor will prove to pay for itself over time.

It is important to note that MP Rotators and Rotary Nozzles have similar functionality, but their specs differ. For example, the MP Rotator has an application rate of 0.45 in/hr, while the Rotary Nozzle delivers 0.75 in/hr. Check the manufacturer's specifications on each of these products before selecting which one is better-suited for your specific application.

As water purveyors mandate stern watering restrictions and strictly monitor water use on golf courses, several water-efficient technologies have been introduced, in addition to MSMTR sprinklers, being employed by superintendents to save water — and avoid being fined.

"I recently learned that three golf courses in my area were fined \$10,000 each for going over their water-usage allotment," said Wills. "We don't want to find ourselves in that situation."



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## USGA Update 'Nobody Knows, How Dry I Am'

By Todd Lowe

Golf courses are singing the blues as the drought continues. In fact, a light haze of smoke has wafted in on TAS visits lately. The smoke is not from roughs burning out, but from multiple wildfires throughout the region. Record low rainfall has caused phase II restrictions (30 percent reduction) throughout most of the region to be in effect, with some areas experiencing Phase III restrictions (45 percent reduction). The water management districts are to be applauded for working with golf course superintendents and allowing them to decide when to irrigate; previous restrictions limited use to certain



*Bermudagrass can survive extended periods of drought, but becomes brown as it goes dormant. Photo by Todd Lowe.*

week days. After several meetings with concerned golf course superintendents, it was decided to allow courses to irrigate by a reduced percentage than their normal allotment.

Golf courses use a small percentage of water compared to other users, especially homeowners, and can easily monitor and reduce use as needed.

Enforcing restrictions on other groups is much more difficult for the water management districts, as it is difficult to effectively monitor them. Golf courses report monthly on their usage, and restriction enforcement is a much easier task. Most golf courses truly are stewards of natural resources as they are a refuge for a variety of

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wildlife and natural biofilters for many environmental contaminants.

The good news for the water reductions is that bermudagrass is drought tolerant and goes dormant until regular rainfall occurs. The bad news is that lush, green playing conditions cannot be sustained in such conditions. Localized dry spots initially occur, causing a leopard-like pattern of brown and green turf and, eventually the entire area becomes brown.

Water restrictions prioritize water use to primary play areas, with putting greens receiving highest priority. Teeing grounds are next, with fairways (particularly landing areas) ranking third. Roughs and non-play areas (like driving ranges) receive lowest priority among playing surfaces and should receive the least amount of water. As a result, many non-play areas and roughs are in various stages of drought dormancy on many golf courses at this time.

Several guidelines for managing drought-stressed turf were listed in the previous regional update and it is recommended to implement these important strategies. Also, normal cultivation practices like core aeration and verticutting on tees, fairways, and roughs may need to be postponed until normal rainfall occurs and water restrictions are lifted. Having some flexibility in scheduling is important to ensure that these necessary cultural practices are implemented at a later date.

Unlike residential properties that are restricted to set times and days of the week for landscape irrigation, golf courses are required to reduce consumption by 15 percent and 30 percent for Phase 1 and Phase 2 restrictions respectively, based on their water-use permits. While warm-season turfgrasses such as bermudagrass and seashore paspalum have very good drought tolerance, having to manage with 30 percent less water will have an impact, especially on aesthetic characteristics. At courses in Central to South Florida where large-acreage, winter-overseeding programs are



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conducted, avoiding a rapid transition also will be a challenge. Appropriate and good quality overall course conditioning can still be provided when Phase 1 and Phase 2 water restrictions are in effect.

The following is a review of some basic agronomic principals for managing turfgrass during a drought:

**Control Traffic.** Develop a traffic-control program if one is not already in place. Heavy traffic on grass under wilt/drought stress can cause permanent damage. Restrict cart traffic to paths, minimize traffic on roughs to the extent possible, do not allow crossover of the “90 degree rule” and encourage walking. The less traffic, the better. Drought-stressed turf will not tolerate traffic very well.

**Raise Mowing Heights and Mow Less Often.** After all, the grass should be growing more slowly.

**Use Plant Growth Regulators.** Where appropriate, apply or continue using growth-regulating chemicals. These products can reduce water use rates by as much as 30 percent. PGR use can improve root development and conserve soil moisture through top growth reduction.

**Pest Management.** On a positive note, insect (mole crickets) and disease activity is greatly reduced during drought conditions. However, infestations of plant parasitic nematodes can further compound drought-stress problems and the need to conduct nematicide treatments. Herbicide treatments should be performed with extra care anywhere the turf is drought stressed.

**Fertility.** Defer fertilizer applications, especially granular, readily-available nitrogen materials until the weather moderates. Guard against stimulating too much growth. Sprayable forms of fertilizers can be beneficial when applied in a timely fashion. Maintaining adequate potassium is helpful for increasing the turf’s stress tolerance.

**Irrigation Water Quality.** Regardless of the source, check the irrigation water for sodium/salt buildup. In several locations, salt intrusion is a growing

**PLANTS OF THE YEAR**

Launched in 1998, the Florida Plants of the Year program links growers with garden enthusiasts by designating plants friendly to each of Florida’s three geographic regions as Florida Plants of the Year. For 2007, five plants were selected by a jury representing different facets of the state’s diverse nursery and landscape industry. The Florida Nursery, Growers & Landscape Association (FNGLA) is pleased to announce the following plant as one the program’s 2007 inductees:

***Galphimia gracilis***

**Common Name:** Shower of Gold  
**Zones:** North as a perennial, Central & South

**Mature Height and Spread:** Generally 6’ x 4’, but can vary

**Classification:** Shrub

**Landscape Use:** as hedge, mass, accent or foundation plant

**Characteristics:** A drought-tolerant, evergreen shrub with blue-green foliage, *Galphimia gracilis* is loaded year-round with yellow clustering flowers growing



Use as a hedge, mass planting or accent plant. Photo credit: Grandiflora

up to an inch in diameter.

This plant was formerly assigned the genus *Thryalis* and many times is referred to as such.



The plants are long blooming, easy-to-grow, and fast growing, thrive in full sun, and like ample room to grow. Branches are brittle, so use in areas where traffic is minimal. To maintain a great-looking plant, prune 1-2 times annually.

**Possible Insect/Disease Problems:**

In south Florida susceptible to powery mildew

**Propagation:** by cutting or seed

**The Florida Plants of the Year program is administered by FNGLA: 800-375-3642; www.fngla.org**

concern. Evaluate the irrigation system as inefficient operation wastes water. Evaluate irrigated area and determine which portions of the course are most important to play, i.e. up the middle from tee to green.

**Renovation/Reconstruction.**

Rethink renovation or reconstruction projects. In general, do not disturb the turf unless you have the ability to irrigate these areas. Be patient, wait for better weather, and monitor district and local regulations covering renovation and turf establishment.

**Landscaping.** Trees and other plantings also need attention during drought. Some tree species require considerable amounts of water and may slowly go into decline during drought. Assess tree conditions regularly. Periodic deep soaking may be necessary

to save desirable trees.

Remember that all golf courses represent the turfgrass industry and the game of golf. Respect irrigation regulations and requests for voluntary conservation. While individual conditions vary, we are in a serious drought, and unfortunately, no relief is in sight. Good luck and let’s pray for rain.

**EDITOR’S NOTE:** *These guidelines are excerpted from John Foy, USGA Florida Region Director’s USGA April Florida Regional Update mentioned by Lowe. Tropical Storm Barry which grazed Florida June 1-2 seems to have kicked off our traditional summer “wet” season. The moral of the story is that droughts will come again, so learn how to prepare for the next time and don’t forget the lessons of the recent past.*



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*The Audubon Green Golfer Challenge gives everyday golfers the chance to become stewards of the other birdies on a golf course. Photo by Joe Hubbard.*

## TaylorMade-adidas, 30 Golf Courses Commit to Audubon Green Golfer Challenge

By Mary Jack

The first 30 golf courses have announced their commitment to support the “nature of the game” by participating in Audubon International’s “Green Golfer Challenge.” Throughout 2007, Audubon International is inviting golfers and golf courses in the United States, Canada, and around the world to take part in the “Audubon Green Golfer Challenge.” The challenge is simple — have golfers pledge to become an Audubon Green Golfer by taking steps to support environmental stewardship while playing the game.

“We’re excited about the early commitment and look forward to more golf courses — including their owners, managers, staff, and the golfers themselves — getting involved through this simple golfer pledge for the environment,” says Kevin A. Fletcher,

Ph.D., executive director of Audubon International. “At the same time, we’re happy to see organizations such as the Florida State Golf Association, Iowa State Golf Association, Oregon State Golf Association, and sponsors like TaylorMade-addidas stepping up to support this effort as well.”

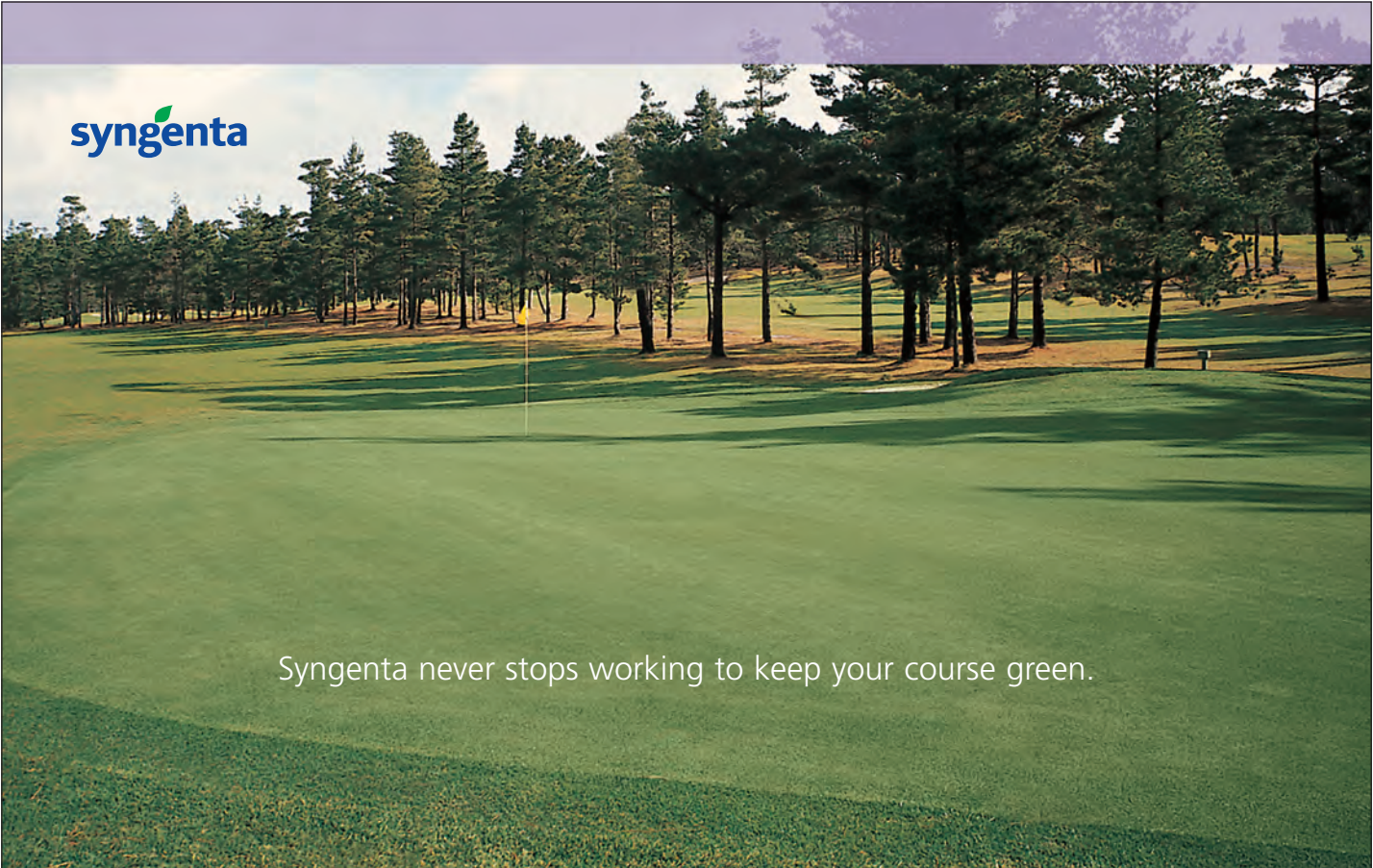
Throughout the year, the pledges from participating golf courses will be collected and counted by Audubon International with ongoing totals posted online. Prizes will be awarded to golf courses with the most golfers signed up by November 15, and winners will be announced at the end of 2007. Finally, golfers who take the pledge will also become eligible for a random drawing of prizes at the end of the year — including golf gear from TaylorMade-addidas among others.

Becoming an “Audubon Green Golfer” and getting golfers involved is

a simple way for golf course owners, managers, superintendents, PGA Professionals, and golfers to help carry on golf’s tradition of preserving the nature of the game. Golf courses interested in participating and organizations interested in supporting the Audubon Green Golfer Challenge should visit [www.GolfandEnvironment.org](http://www.GolfandEnvironment.org).

### ABOUT AUDUBON INTERNATIONAL

Audubon International is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) environmental education organization dedicated to providing people with the education and assistance they need to practice responsible management of land, water, wildlife, and natural resources. Since 1991, Audubon International has been working with the United States Golf Association, The PGA of America, Club Managers Association of America, and the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America to promote environmental education and stewardship in the game and on the course. Currently, more than 2,100 golf courses across the United States and in two dozen countries are working with Audubon International.



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## STEWARDSHIP

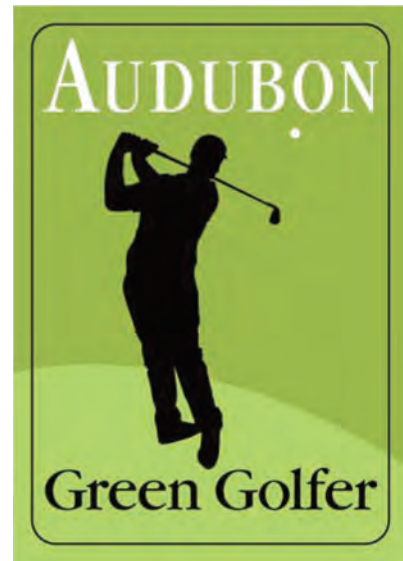
# Audubon International, PGA, USGA Launch 'Green Golfer Challenge' Program

Audubon International, with support from the PGA of America and the USGA, has launched the Audubon Green Golfer program, which asks golfers to take the "Green Golfer Pledge."

"From the early wind-swept fields of Scotland to the modern-day experience, the game of golf is intimately tied to the natural environment," says the preface. "As a golfer, you play a key role in ensuring that golf courses continue to preserve the nature of the game."

Golfers are asked to pledge eight points:

- Be kind to the course: repair ball marks and replace divots to help maintain playability.
- Walk, rather than use a cart, when



possible. Walking promotes physical fitness, healthy turf, and a clean environment.

- Look for consistent, true ball roll on greens, rather than speed. Lower mowing heights required for fast greens are at the root of many turf and environmental problems.

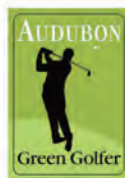
- Keep play on the course and stay out of natural areas. Respect designated environmentally sensitive areas and wildlife habitats within the course.

- Use trash and recycling receptacles and encourage others to do the same. If you see trash, don't pass it up... pick it up!

- Appreciate the nature of the game. Watch for wildlife as you play and support the course's efforts to provide habitat.

- Educate others about the benefits of environmentally responsible golf course management for the future of the game and the environment.

- Encourage the golf course to be an active participant in environmental programs for golf courses, such as those offered by Audubon International.



### Become an Audubon Green Golfer

From the early wind-swept fields of Scotland to the modern-day experience, the game of golf is intimately tied to the natural environment. As a golfer, you play a key role in ensuring that golf courses continue to preserve the nature of the game.

#### Take the Audubon Green Golfer Pledge.

- "I value the nature of the game and accept my responsibility to ensure that golf courses are managed in harmony with the environment. I pledge to:
- Be kind to the course: repair ball marks and replace divots to help maintain playability.
  - Walk, rather than use a cart, when possible. Walking promotes physical fitness, healthy turf, and a clean environment.
  - Look for consistent, true ball roll on greens, rather than speed. Lower mowing heights required for fast greens are at the root of many turf and environmental problems.
  - Keep play on the course and stay out of natural areas. Respect designated environmentally sensitive areas and wildlife habitats within the course.
  - Use trash and recycling receptacles and encourage others to do the same. If you see trash, don't pass it up... pick it up!
  - Appreciate the nature of the game. Watch for wildlife as you play and support the course's efforts to provide habitat.
  - Educate others about the benefits of environmentally responsible golf course management for the future of the game and the environment.
  - Encourage the golf course to be an active participant in environmental programs for golf courses, such as those offered by Audubon International."



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*Eight-point pledge reminds golfers that they "play a key role in ensuring that golf courses continue to preserve the nature of the game" and reminds them that the game "...is intimately tied to the natural environment."*

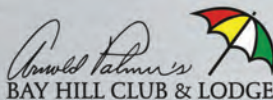
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# Cooperative Research Funding

We have traditional fundraising tournaments and events each year and the stated purpose for the proceeds is most often to help fund turf research. Once the clubs are put away and the fun and excitement of the event are forgotten we sometimes lose track of the results of those efforts. It does matter that you participate in and sponsor these events. Here is an accounting of where your money goes.

The following 2007–2008 Research Proposals have been approved by the FGCSA and FTGA Research Committees from a list of possible projects submitted this year. As in the past several proposals that had wide application were submitted to GCSAA for co-funding and is seeking approval for funding on the following projects. Only one project received co-funding from the GCSAA this year; it will be listed last. Once again we have many groups working together. They are listed below with each project.

### 1. Rapid Turfgrass Disease Diagnosis Assistantship

\$26,711 One Year Study  
 \$26,711 Total Cost

FTGA	\$8,903.67
FGCSA	\$8,903.67
SRGCSA	\$8,903.67 (Seven Rivers GCSA)

### 2. Comparative Maintenance of Paspalum and Bermuda Grasses\*\*

\$13,392 First Year  
 \$13,392 Second Year  
 \$13,392 Third Year  
 \$40,176 Total Cost

FTGA	\$6,696.00	First Year
FGCSA	\$6,696.00	First Year
FTGA	\$6,696.00	Second Year
FGCSA	\$6,696.00	Second Year

*\*\*The Florida State Golf Association (FSGA) and the CMAA will be providing support for the study, in the form of maintenance surveys for clubs that have Paspalum and like clubs with Bermuda. The FSGA will provide support for the study by providing ratings teams to rate the playability of Paspalum as compared to Bermuda grass.*

### 3. Evaluation Of Salt And Plant Growth Regulator Applications For Bermuda Grass Control In Seashore Paspalum

\$5,778.18 First year  
\$5,778.18 Second year  
 \$11,556.36 Total Cost

*Note: The FGCSA decided not to fund this project and the amount is not factored into the overall funding chart.*

### 4. Support For The Installation Of A Linear Gradient Irrigation System To Establish Comparative Water-Use Requirements @ West Florida Research And Education Center

\$12,796.63 One Year Study  
 \$12,796.63 Total Cost

FTGA	\$4,265.54
FGCSA	\$4,265.54
FSGC	\$4,265.54

### 5. Bermudagrass And Goosegrass Control In Seashore Paspalum

\$6,131.86 First year  
\$6,433.78 Second year  
 \$12,565.64 Total Cost

FTGA	\$3,065.93	First Year
FGCSA	\$3,065.93	First Year
FTGA	\$3,065.93	Second Year
FGCSA	\$3,065.93	Second Year

### 6. Breeding Bahiagrass For Reduced Flowering Period And Dwarfness

\$7,281.86 First Year  
 \$6,433.78 Second Year  
\$6,735.72 Third Year  
 \$20,451.36 Total Cost

FTGA	\$3,640.93	First Year
FGCSA	\$3,640.93	First Year
FTGA	\$3,216.89	Second Year
FGCSA	\$3,216.89	Second Year
FTGA	\$3,367.86	Third Year
FGCSA	\$3,367.86	Third Year

### 7. Breeding Bermudagrass For Improved Response To Sting Nematode

\$ 32,035.04 First Year  
 \$ 32,760.55 Second Year  
\$ 33,507.82 Third Year  
 \$ 98,303.41 Total Cost

FTGA	\$16,017.52	First Year
FGCSA	\$16,017.52	First Year
FTGA	\$16,380.28	Second Year
FGCSA	\$16,380.28	Second Year
FTGA	\$16,753.91	Third Year
FGCSA	\$16,753.91	Third Year

**8. Biological Control Of Sting Nematodes On Golf Course Turf With Pasteuris Usgae**

\$19,333.33 First Year  
 \$19,333.33 Second Year  
 \$19,333.33 Third Year  
 \$ 58,000.00 Total Cost

GCSAA \$9,666.67  
 FTGA \$4,834.00  
 FGCSA \$4,834.00  
 GCSAA \$9,666.67  
 FTGA \$4,834.00  
 FGCSA \$4,834.00  
 GCSAA \$9,666.67  
 FTGA \$4,834.00  
 FGCSA \$4,834.00

First year  
 First year  
 First year  
 Second Year  
 Second Year  
 Second Year  
 Third Year  
 Third Year  
 Third Year

**Total Costs:**

**Year One:**  
 FTGA \$53,201.77  
 FGCCSA \$53,201.77  
 GCSAA \$9,666.67  
 SRGCSA \$8,903.67  
 FSGC \$4,265.54

**Year Two**  
 FTGA \$39,971.28  
 FGCSA \$39,971.28  
 GCSAA \$9,666.67

**Year Three**  
 FTGA \$24,955.77  
 FGCSA \$24,955.77  
 GCSAA \$9,666.67

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# Photos to the Editor

## *Honey Combs to Mud Flats*

*The latest buzz: You can now add beekeeper to the list of many jobs held by assistants and superintendents. A swarm of honey bees built a hive in a valve box near the parking lot on the Duran G. C. in Viera. Jeff Von Eschen, assistant superintendent lifts the lid to show the activity. In the last issue we talked about creating habitat for native pollinators. Guys, this is above and beyond. Photo by Eric Reiter, GCS.*



*Shane Bass, CGCS at the St. James Bay G.C. in Carrabelle in North Florida sent this photo of a helicopter using one of his water hazards to fill up and fight a nearby brushfire this spring. Golf courses also played roles in helping control fires back in 1998. Photo by Shane Bass.*

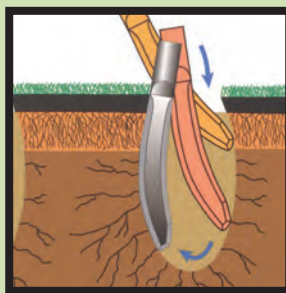




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## Photos to the Editor (Cont.)



*On the way back home from the Poa Annua Classic in May, FGCSA President Craig Weyandt stopped to show his family Lake Okeechobee, or what was left of it. The lake's record low water level prompted severe irrigation watering restrictions in southeast Florida. Photo by Craig Weyandt*

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*One of Harold "Skull" Goldstein's nearly 100 P-47 missions over France and Germany in World War II ended a few yards short of the runway... with about 130 bullet holes. He said he didn't like parachutes.*

My great friend and golf buddy Harold Goldstein died March 20, and I thought you guys and gals might enjoy hearing about his life and his great passion for "the game." I met him at Key Biscayne Golf Course in 1990. He was 68 years old. His daughter Susi brought him along because she wanted him to meet me. Although he was 23 years older, we had no generation gap. He reminded me of my grandfather. He was a wisp of a man with an infectious grin and a Boston Blackie mustache which gave warning to his wit and sense of humor.

He was like a Jewish Jiminy Cricket hopping around and making funny noises by rubbing his hind legs together. Just kidding, but I swear there were crickets chirping when he walked. He learned the game from a South African



**The Skull vs The Red Baron**  
**As I See It**  
**By JIM WALKER**

friend at Doral. His friend made him hit range balls and chip and putt for months before he went on the course the first time. Then, he was hooked. He played golf five mornings a week and read books seven afternoons.

He made his living selling seafood as his father had before him. But it wasn't one snapper at a time; he imported and exported trailer loads of fish, shrimp, clams, oysters, and lobster all across the U.S. and Central and South America. When he retired, he was so respected in the business, he became an inspector for Lloyd's of London, determining if a shipment was truly spoiled as the person receiving the product said, or if they were trying to get a better price by threatening to refuse the order.

He owned several fish markets on the Miami river in the 50s and 60s that hosted daily afternoon crap games. Those in attendance included the chief of police and many local politicians. Poker games at his house had no time limit: the game was over when the last

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## AFTERWORDS

bottle was empty. He hated liars and thieves. He said if you always tell the truth, you have no lies to remember. He was also a remarkable artist for someone who had no formal training.

I have always admired people who could fly airplanes. My cousin flew Huey gunship helicopters in Vietnam. Another friend flew C-5 cargo planes there as well. But Harold flew a P-47 fighter plane over France and Germany in 1943, 44, and 45. These were awesome machines which could reach 500 mph in a dive during a strafing run.

He flew almost 100 missions, sometimes two in the same day. His call sign, given to him back in flight school, was "Skull." You see, even at age 22 he didn't have much hair, and his forehead went half way back on his head to a spot about even with his ears. He had five confirmed kills in dogfight combat against the Red Barons of the Third Reich.

There is a picture in the den of his aircraft sitting in a pasture just short

of the airfield with half of one wing missing and about 130 50-caliber machine-gun bullet holes in the fuselage. (Change my shorts, dude). Imagine getting shot up like that and still almost making it back to your base. He said he thought of bailing out, but he hated parachutes and the ground below was not occupied by Allied troops. Necessity is the mother of invention.

Back to his golf. He never mastered the driver so he teed off with a 3 iron, which he could still sting a buck seventy-five when I met him. He told me that back in the day, he used a 2 iron and could hit it 200-plus. I believe him because his only hole-in-one came at the fourth hole on the Blue Course at Doral. It is a monster par-3 where the tour players regularly make bogey or worse.

He was a prince of a man who would do anything for you if he liked you, but he wore the worst clothes you have ever seen on the golf course. Plaid pants

with striped shirts. Neon orange, lime green, and purple socks which I am sure glowed in the dark. Topped off by the nastiest sweat-stained caps, and he always had a half dozen gloves in his bag all of which had holes in them.

Let's not forget the shoes either. Goodwill wouldn't sell them. He got mad at Susi and me when we caught a great sale on shoes and bought him two pair. He said "at my age, you don't buy two of anything." We gave him caps, balls, and gloves all the time but they seldom seemed to make their way onto the course. I used to kid him that he must have one helluva safe deposit box where he stored all the stuff we gave him. Lets not forget his incessant ball-hawking either, with a retriever about the length of today's drivers he'd prowl the hazard shorelines.

He began playing regularly with our friends shortly after we met, and his skill as a negotiator quickly became apparent when we haggled over strokes

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on the first tee. With each passing birthday, he got another stroke, until all that was left were the par threes. We drew a line in the bunker sand and said, "No more strokes!" He whined as he continued to take our money and every time he hit a great shot, he would give us his famous "tour strut." He broke our hearts and wallets countless times with his chipper, which he called his

"Whoopie Doo."

He joined us on one of our famous trips to Grenlefe and we laughed so much we thought our sides would split. Now I swear this is a true story:

His roommate, Georgie, was an Italian friend from Boston. Weeks before the trip, Georgie was teasing him that if he was going to bunk with him, he was going to have to get some lace panties.

The afternoon we arrived and everyone was carrying their stuff into their rooms, Georgie came out of his unit and fell on the ground laughing hysterically. In his hand was a pair of yellow lace panties left behind by the previous guest which he found on the closet floor when he was putting his clothes away. He knew Harold could not have planted them because he had not yet gone into the room. Georgie then accused me of having our friend, who was the pro at Grenlefe, put them there, but sadly I never thought of it. Fate put them there to give us all a huge laugh.

One of the courses we always play on our trip is Southern Dunes, which has no trees to speak of. It was late in the round, and was heating up pretty good when, at the next tee, there was a little shade. Harold with his best effort at a Boston accent said to Georgie: "paak the caat in the G. D. shade." Georgie said "Why you talking to me like that?" Harold replied, "I wanted to make sure you could understand me."

In the mid 90s his daughter Susi and I began our romance and in November of 2000, we got married. At our wedding, he wore a Bill Murray golf cap made out of synthetic turf with a flagstick and golf ball attached to it. He was the star of the



Harold "Skull" Goldstein in the cockpit of his P-47 during World War II.

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show. After the wedding, I was not his son-in-law, but his oldest son. I said, he finally got a son who can play golf. Sorry, Jack, (my brother-in-law). Jack suffers from LOFT (Lack of @#\$\$%ing Talent) Disease when he plays.

Skull's daughter doesn't suffer from LOFT on the golf course. She and her dad used to skin the winter snowbirds visiting Doral on a regular basis. Hey Harold "wanna play a little game?"

"Yea, OK, but my daughter gets to hit from the red tees."

"OK, sure, she's a girl."


So Susi gets up on the first tee and takes it deep, right down the old whazoo. A little smile curls in the left corner of Harold's lip. One snowbird says to the other, "Holy crap, did you see where she hit that ball?" They knew then it was going to be a long, expensive day.

Signing off now with, "Skull, this is Miami tower, over." God, my dear friend, I miss you so much. Are the greens in heaven really as fast as they say?"

## There Were Gators in the Pond at Oakmont, But One Duck Could Fly

In my best Robin Williams impersonation, "Gooooood morning golf nation! Who looks like a duck, walks like a duck and sounds like a duck? U. S. Open Champion Angel Cabrera, that's who."

The USGA and NBC missed a big opportunity to play the caddie card and link the loveable teddy bear, I mean rubber ducky, Cabrera to the legendary Francis Ouimet, another caddie who once upon a time slew the goliaths of the game and became a U. S. Open Champion. All Bob Costas could talk about was the Argentine connection to the "big stupid" moment of Roberto DeVincenzo when he muffed the Masters victory within his grasp. Costas



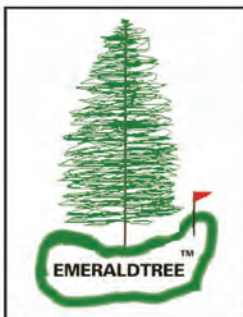
**Golf's Little Ironies**

**GREEN SIDE UP**  
**BY JOEL JACKSON**

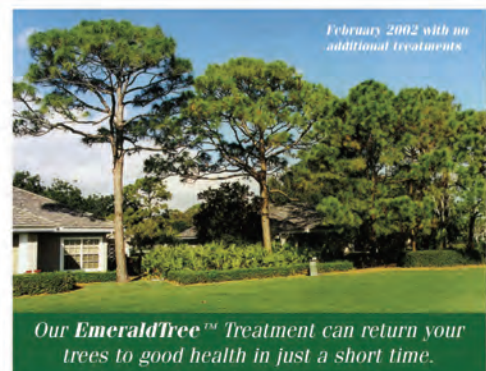
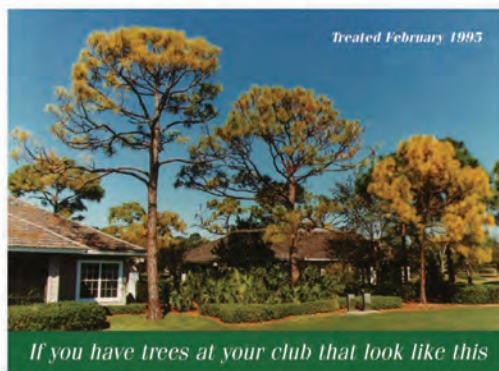
only mentioned it two or three times on the air, and it was also in this morning's paper as well.

As they fold the tents on the "dangerous" golf course (Phil Mickelson's diagnosis), the Oakmonster members can get back to their sadomasochistic game of gotcha golf. Which leads me to the puzzling tidbit of information I gleaned from the Golf Channel interview with course

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## AFTERWORDS

superintendent John Zimmers, Jr.

As Rich Lerner was interviewing Zimmers and talking about the historically fast and intimidating greens – often kept at 15 on the stimp meter – it was revealed that the greens were push-up, clay-based greens that had never been rebuilt! Whoa! Hold the horses.

This goes against everything we were ever taught and what we are told must transpire to have greens that can withstand increasingly outlandish golfer expectations.

Obviously there must be some missing information that the quick sound bite didn't cover. I mean, aren't we supposed to build greens according to USGA specifications calling for extensive laboratory testing of particle size conformity, percolation rates, pore space, organic content, drainage, etc, etc?

The fact that the USGA has held a record eight U. S. Open Championships

at Oakmont only adds to my confusion. The Green Section just went on DEFCON 3.

Zimmers did offer up one mystical explanation involving the evolution of a mysterious strain of *Poa annua* bluegrass that grows or survives only on the property. Transplants to other locales wither and die. It grows only at Oakmont. Put the turf breeders on the case. Will Penn State, home of legendary grasses, please weigh in on that one?

Of course the other obvious ironies of the week included the contrast of the affable corpulent cigarette puffing Cabrera matching wits and whacks from the jungle formerly known as the rough with the buff, hard-body Woods who has a strict workout regimen and steely determined game face demeanor. I'm not criticizing Woods, actually I was pulling for him to win, despite picking Furyk in my Pick Your Pro contest. I think

Tiger will break Jack's major records, it was just ironic that that the mook outperformed the machine when it counted on this day.

In many ways the common man's victory was a nice reminder that good people, humble people, average work-a-day people can and do succeed in this high-tech, high-profile, politically correct world that we live in.

It was also a reminder to me that golf course superintendents who work hard to make ends meet with budgets that are squeezed ever tighter can find success. They are people, like Cabrera, who manage their drought-stricken or storm-ridden courses calmly in pressure-cooker situations with humor and determination and a love for the moment and for what they do.

It isn't easy being a duck in pond full of alligators, but ducks can fly while gators crawl (and tigers prowls).



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The Aurora™ Central Control System from John Deere Golf Irrigation. It's called "intelligent programming" and it separates our Aurora System from all other irrigation management systems. With Aurora, you don't need a central control system, giving you the flexibility to control your entire irrigation system from any controller on your course. Each Aurora controller can also monitor, store, and share data from multiple sensors across the network. And you can write a program for every controller from any controller on the course.

The Aurora Central Control System. It's the smartest choice in golf course irrigation. For more information, see your local John Deere One Source distributor.



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