

FIELD OBSERVATIONS

FUNDING RESEARCH, ADVOCACY, AND EDUCATION GCSAA/EIFG R4R



By *Ralph K. Dain Jr.*,
GCSAA Regional Representative Florida

Are nematodes giving you headaches? Is the fear of fertilizer bans keeping you up at night? Do you want to attend a chapter meeting and be awed by a great presentation (other than the ones I provide)? If only there were an opportunity that could facilitate answers to these questions. But wait a minute! There is an answer!

That answer is Rounds 4 Research. In a previous edition of *The Florida Green*, and in my recent travels, I have discussed the basics of the GCSAA's Environmental Institute for Golf program and the great opportunity we have in Florida to raise some much-needed money. I want to illustrate ways that these funds can provide real solutions to the issues you are facing regularly.

The rewards will benefit the entire industry, not just one segment. Golfer expectations are still very high, and solutions to today's challenges can go a long way to maintaining their enjoyment of the game and subsequently your enjoyment of the profession.

As an industry, we enjoy a great relationship with the University of Florida. UF scientists are willing and able to conduct research on issues like nematode control, finding alternatives for MSMA and Methyl Bromide, as well as field studies on new chemistries. Unfortunately, there are limited resources to conduct the necessary research. In exchange for foursomes of golf at local facilities, funds could be generated to help raise the necessary dollars.

The fear of fertilizer bans and water regulations definitely keep me up at night. Just when you think you are winning, a new issue arises somewhere in the state. Right now the issue of fertilizer ordinances containing restrictive blackout periods is ongoing in Volusia County with the cities of Melbourne and Rockledge considering ordinances.

In my discussions with the chapters, I reference the \$38.5 million raised by the Conservancy in SW Florida to protect the Florida environment. By the way, the Conservancy views golf as a polluter and would enjoy very much taking us down. I am also aware that in Collier County there is a movement to reduce the amount of water that golf courses have available through their consumptive-use permits. I have been

told by as much as 50 percent. The price of a few foursomes of golf seems very little to pay to fight these issues, right??

I am considering taking up juggling flaming golf balls to keep everyone engaged when I speak at meetings. I will resume practice once my eyebrows grow back. As much as I know that all the chapters appreciate the professionalism of my presentations, wouldn't it be nice to attend a meeting with an authority on any issue with which you are currently dealing. Again, the funds generated from our Rounds 4 Research program can be directed for chapter education. One of the primary functions of the chapter is to educate their members and help them advance in their careers.

Here is what I now ask of you. Please take a moment and visit our website at <http://eifg.org/>. Review the R4R information and if you have any questions contact me (my information is included below). Our first auction this year is June 6-16 in conjunction with the US Open. Our second auction is Aug. 1-11 in conjunction with the PGA Championship. Please, Please, Please consider making a donation of at least a foursome to this very worthwhile cause. your donation is an investment in your future success.

Until next time,
Ralph Dain – GCSAA Regional Representative (FL)
Phone 785.424.4306
Email rdain@gcsaa.org

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**HELP US
HELP YOU!**



**GREEN SIDE UP
BY JOEL JACKSON**

If every golf course in Florida annually donated \$100 to the FGCSA for education, research and advocacy for golf course turf management issues, that would roughly come to around \$120,000.

Consistently, the most important factor for “enjoyment of the game” voted by golfers across the nation is “golf course conditioning.” Yet most courses or golfers

can't find it in their hearts or budgets to write the check to help the game they love.

Superintendent associations have been trying to raise money from their own ranks and from the vendors they do business with, but business and budgets in general lately are making that a tough proposition. What can we do to engage clubs and golfers into helping out?

Hello! There is a new and simple way to solve the problem. Instead of cash money, all a golf course has to do is donate a foursome round of golf and it will be auctioned off online and 80 percent of the money raised will be returned to the designated superintendent chapter to be used precisely for education, research and advocacy.

Guess what? The program already exists. It's called Rounds4Research. Surely you have heard of it by now.

Of course the trick is that someone has to tell the general manager, Green Committee, golf pro and members and

customers that the program exists and the club should participate. Why? Oh, I don't know, ever heard of fertilizer bans, water shortage restrictions, immigrant labor regulations, applicator licenses or certifications and chemical registration cancellations?

Those are all such boring, mundane matters compared to hosting the Member/Guest Tournament, or prepping for a PGA, LPGA or Champions Tour event. But wait, the course presentation and reputation are at stake not just for these special events but for charity fundraisers and, of course, for those who pay dues and greens fees to play golf every day for the pure enjoyment of the game.

No one has to squeeze the budget to eke out some funds to grudgingly donate to turf research or legislative advocacy. All a club has to do is fill out a simple one-sided form designating a month, day and time for a tee time to be donated to the cause. The club dictates the time of year,

time of day, dress code and places a dollar value on the outing. Fill in the name of the superintendent organization to receive the proceeds and you're done.

But if clubs still can't bring themselves to donate a round (or rounds) of golf for a worthy cause such as golf course sustainability with regard to conditioning, then they can make a cash donation.

The Rounds4Research program gives golfers a method to contribute to the game, and they are a virtually untapped source of funding to help battle the war mounted by activists on turfgrass in general and they are drawing a bead on golf as they build up steam, and they have deep pockets.

We have enclosed a Rounds4Research fact sheet and donation form with this Florida Green to take to your GM and/or Golf Pro and get your club involved. To paraphrase fictional sports agent Jerry Maguire, “Help us help you!”



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