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Tim Rappach
Superintendent
Medalist Golf Club



Peter R. Bass, CGCS Director of Golf Course Maintenance

Originally from: Acushnet, Massachusetts.

Family: Wife, Antoinette; Children: Tom, Dave, Peter and Andrea.

Education: AA in Turf Science from UMass Stockbridge School of Agriculture.

Employment History: Crew member, New Bedford Public Links, New Bedford, MA; crew member/intern, Sunningdale CC, Scarsdale, NY; crew member, Westchester CC, Rye, NY; assistant supt., Hauppauge CC, Hauppauge, NY; superintendent, Cypress Run G.C., Tarpon Springs, FL; superintendent, Palma Ceia CC, Tampa, FL; director of golf maintenance, Westin Innisbrook Resort, Tarpon Springs.

Professional affiliations/Offices held/Honors/Awards: Certified member GCSAA; Member of the FGCSA; former secretary/treasurer West Coast GCSA; former committee member FTGA; all chairs in the Long Island GCSA board; past member of the Metropolitan GCSA of New York City.

People in or out of the industry who have influenced your life and career: My father, Raymond Bass, a retired superintendent. He was a great role model for honesty and work ethic. Stan Brown who taught to love the game of golf. Bob DePencier who gave me his friendship and some of my first technical knowledge of the business. Bob Rankin and Phil Zimmerman for their professional support. Brent Wadsworth for sharing construction and landscape experience and philosophy. A note of interest: Dennis Ledger, one of the PGA Tour agronomists, was a classmate at UMass.

How did you get into the business? When I was just a kid in 1955, I did some caddying but I didn't like it. I went to the "greenskeeper" at the public links course and asked for a job. My introduction to the business was raking bunkers and hand mowing greens with a Pennsylvania push mower. I worked after school and summers until I went to college. After one year of pursuing a chemistry major, my father said, "You love golf. Go for it!"

Goals, Accomplishments, Philosophy, Advice: Prepare a golf course for a major tour or USGA event. Became a CGCS in 1991. Be consistent, honest, fair and firm in your demands of others. Do your job the very best you can the first time and do your homework before tackling a project. Plan ahead! I don't like surprises! Work with your crews and be a daily presence on the course. Maintain an open policy for ideas and discussions. Acknowledge jobs well done and don't accept poor efforts. Surround yourself with positive thinking people.

Memorable moments: My wedding day. I had a bad-fitting tuxedo and we had an ice storm that day. All of our children were born on snowy days. After we moved from New York to Florida in 1982, our water pipes froze that winter. Trips to Germany, France and England. Coaching Little League and Junior League baseball.

Hobbies and interests: Golf, action movies, mystery novels and family.



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From left, front row: Alan Bollenbacher, John Fake, CGCS, Mike Blanchard, Carl Collins. Back row: Charlie Comblo, Bill Grosser, Bob Makres, Rob Gates, Chuck Knowles, Bob Messinger, Pete Bass, CGCS. Not pictured: Andrew Troutner, Jeff Troutwine, Malcom Hardinge, Steve Davis. Photo by Joel Jackson.

Westin Innisbrook Resort

Location: Tarpon Springs, Florida.

Ownership: Starwood Capital Group.

Playing Policy: Resort.

90 holes: Copperhead (18) Par 71. 7,807 yards. Rating/Slope = 74.4/14; Island (18) Par 72. 6,999 yards. Rating/Slope = 74.1/132; Hawk's Run and Eagle's Watch (under construction), formerly 27-hole Sandpiper course.; Recently acquired Lost Oaks (18) formerly Tarpon Woods C.C.

Management Team: General Manager Westin Innisbrook Resort, Michael Welly; Facilities Manager Troon Golf, Jay Overton; Director of Golf Course Maintenance, Peter Bass, CGCS; Course Superintendents = Copperhead, John Fake, CGCS; Island, Carl Collins; Eagles Watch & Hawk's Run, Mike Blanchard; Lost Oaks, Andrew Troutner; Support Services Manager, Alan Bollenbacher.

Designed by: Lawrence Packard. Constructed by: Wadsworth Golf Construction. Opened: 1971

Major renovations/projects: Additional nine holes under construction for Eagle's Watch. Opening scheduled for December 1997. Recent purchase of Tarpon Woods C.C. renamed Lost Oaks of Innisbrook.

Acreage under maintenance (4 courses): 650 acres.

Waterways: 3 acres managed by Aquagenix

Greens: 12 acres. Average size = 6,000 sq. ft. Turf type = Tifdwarf. HOC: .125 - .150 in. Overseeding - Type and rate: Poa trivialis @ 18-20 lbs/M. Putting surface goals: 8.5 Medium fast.

Tees: 11 acres. Turf type = Tifway 419. HOC: 3/8"-7/16". Overseeding = Perennial Ryegrass @ 25 lbs/M.

Fairways: 160 acres. Tifway 419. HOC: 7/16"-5/8" . Overseeding = Perennial Rye @ 500 lbs/Acre.

Roughs: 200 acres. Turf type = Tifway 419. HOC including seasonal changes) = 1.5"-2.0". No overseeding.

Bunkers: 280 bunkers. All hand raked. Sand Pro with plow blade used for erosion repairs.

Irrigation - Source = Pinellas County effluent stored in five holding ponds. Direct line connection to new 9 holes on Eagle's Watch at 95 psi with booster pump. Five pump stations with turbine pumps. Toro VTII Hydraulic Control System. Single and double row coverage.

Staff: Total of 123 including superintendents. Administrative assistant, Linda Abel; projects manager, Bob Messinger; general grounds superintendent, Joe Manning. 6 assistant superintendents; 14 mechanics; 5 irrigation technicians, 4 pest control operators; 3 administrative/clerical support.

Special circumstances, unusual conditions, which are challenging in managing the turf: High, sandy ridge areas with droughty conditions followed by low wet areas on the original Sandpiper property. The golf courses are the main drainage runoff areas for the entire property. Pine needle collection and removal. Rerouting irrigation to prevent damage to pine trees. In 1991 100% sand-based greens built on Copperhead and original 27 holes of the Sandpiper. Original 1971 80-20 mix on the Island course greens.

Special events: Copperhead course - Home of the PGA/LPGA's J. C. Penney Classic held in December.

Wildlife: A variety of ducks and wading shore birds, anhingas and cormorants, swans, Canadian geese, hawks, ospreys, bald eagles, Graham's fox squirrels, grey squirrels, raccoons, opossum, and fox; 40-acre nature walk and nature preserve with identified tree species.

check out how it transitions back to bermuda in the spring. On all the courses we applied the seed with two 8-foot wide Gandy drop spreaders. It was too time-consuming. Next year I'd like to try Vicon or Lely spreaders to speed up the process."

Overseeding is one of those tasks we all must face in the fall, but the Innisbrook property offers some of its own management challenges. The property is a primary drainage area for the surrounding area west of U.S. 19. Within the property, the roadways, parking lots and condominium grounds all drain onto the golf course and its series of retention ponds. The beautiful, rolling terrain can become a nightmare as intense rain events accelerate downhill, eroding bunkers and native areas maintained with mulch.

"Last week we spent two days repairing every bunker we had," said Bass.

But when it doesn't rain, those same high, rolling hills get too dry.

"We don't have wall-to-wall irrigation," Bass explained. "We have single-

and double-row systems that have been further restricted because the pine trees were beginning to decline from the original irrigation coverage. Now when it dries out, we have to put someone on hand-watering duty to move roller sprinklers around to cover the wilting scalloped edges of the roughs and fairways. It is a long-range goal to redesign the system with part-circle heads to protect the pine trees and irrigate the turf properly at the same time."

Another part of the original construction was the crushed shell base used for the cart paths, which is wider than the paving on top. Consequently, the turf does not grow up to the edge of the path and stabilize the ground surface. Heavy rains erode the soil and shell areas which have to be backfilled. Bass hopes to be able to excavate the excess shell material along the paths and back fill with good soil to grow a good strong turf cover.

Growing a healthy turf cover in a densely wooded setting is also a challenge.

"We have several areas that are showing signs of stress from too much shade and root encroachment, said Bass." Next spring we hope to start a root-pruning program. We will begin with the greens complexes, then the tees and then key fairway and rough areas.

"We will also have to dedicate an irrigation repair crew to follow along with the pruning crew. There have been so many modifications to the 26-year-

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Pete's fleet! It takes lots of equipment to groom 600 acres of turf. Photo by Joel Jackson.



Pete partners with the tennis pro! Old nets become fairway drags with the addition of a piece of PVC. Photo by Joel Jackson.



Many Graham's fox squirrels can be found on the courses. Photo by Joel Jackson.

Camera's view of Innisbrook



Another traffic-control idea. Photo by Joel Jackson.



This flock of Canadian geese is getting an early start on their winter vacation. Photo by Joel Jackson.



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old irrigation systems no one is real sure of where all the tubing and wiring might run.”

Juggling the routine maintenance on five courses and preparing for a special tour event would be enough for anyone, but Bass is also supervising the construction of the new nine holes on the Eagle’s Watch course. Bass explained, “The new nine will be holes 5 through 13 and will combine with holes from the old Sandpiper Palmetto Course to make the new 18 holes.

“The project has been impacted severely by heavy rains and we have had to repair large-scale erosion damage several times. Fortunately we have construction insurance, which will help defray some of the repair expense. We are running in four to five sod trucks daily to get the new holes completed in time to open up for play in January.”

Pilot effluent program

The new nine holes will also be a pilot program for direct effluent service from Pinellas County. The county’s treatment plant is located adjacent to the course and is tied into the irrigation main line. An in-line booster pump raises the static pressure of 95 psi to 125 psi for irrigating.

All of the courses use effluent water which is stored in irrigation ponds on the other courses and pumped out using traditional turbine pumps. Innisbrook also has a 30-acre power-line easement which is irrigated so they can distribute the effluent when it is too wet to put out on the courses.

Bass misses one other modern feature not present on the old irrigation system.

“I hope some day we can install a fertigation system on all the courses,” he said. “Fertigation can be a real useful tool, especially in getting nutrients to all parts of the golf course.

“One of my main concerns is bunker lips. Right now we are on a weekly program of foliar drenching the lips with our portable sprayers. It’s tough to get good coverage with a granular spreader on the steep faces, so the fertigation is a real plus. Of course the

ability to spoon feed nutrients is also a sound environmental practice as well.”

Audubon Sanctuary

Innisbrook management is keenly aware of the importance of sound environmental management. It has a dedicated nature preserve with a boardwalk that meanders through a wetland. Plaques identify the native plant species and an observation deck at the end of the boardwalk allows guests to sit and watch water fowl, wading birds, otters and other wildlife up close.

Once all the construction is completed, Bass is ready to get all the courses involved in the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program.

“We already practice good stewardship in several areas,” he said. “It’s high time we make it official and get some recognition for the company. Not only do we use of effluent water, we collect all our grass clippings and put them in a Mill Creek spreader and scatter them on property daily.

“We are a very heavily wooded property and we continually lose trees to lightning and high winds. We stockpile the downed trees and limbs and twice a year we rent a couple of tub grinders and they come in and grind up all the wood to make mulch that we use on the grounds.”

Pete showed me Mulch Mountain in a staging area to illustrate the point.

Pete has lots to do at Innisbrook, but it is the type of position he had hoped for.

“Two of my goals were to manage a multi-course facility and prepare a course for a tour event. Innisbrook has provided me with those opportunities. I had hosted some U. S. Open qualifiers and the Florida Open a couple of times, but I wanted to experience the big show! Ironically, Dennis Ledger, the PGA Tour agronomist who just made his second advance visit was a classmate of mine in 1965 at the Stockbridge School at UMass. Small world isn’t it?

“You have to love this business. If you don’t, get out now! Because it can wear you out quick. Each day is a bal-

ancing act among what you would like to do, what you have to do and what your boss wants you to do. All the salaried staff put in 55 to 60 hours a week including me. I’m the first one in and the last one out, but I also leave my work at the gate when I go home. I learned that lesson when we were raising our four active kids.”


“Career paths can be funny. I used to work down the road at Cypress Run. We held a lot of board and committee meetings here before the clubhouse was built so I got to know the property and a lot of the people before I moved on to Palma Ceia in Tampa. You have to prove yourself, but building relationships and not burning bridges are still key factors in seeking positions.

“Now I work for a management company. After years at private clubs, I didn’t quite know what to expect. I must say I feel more secure than I did at a private club where you could get fired on a whim, contract or not.

“At least a management company operates with a business approach. Goals and performance are better defined and there are a lot of opportunities to explore. Salaries may not be as competitive at all levels, but the benefits and opportunities as the company expands are very good.”

“Another issue driving the growth of management companies is the changing profile of club members. As time goes by more and more working professionals join clubs and take over leadership roles, they don’t have the time or want to spend the time to run a club.

“They want to come out and enjoy a day at the club and not get bombarded with complaints all day long. Doctors, lawyers, bankers and hotel chains don’t have the expertise to run a golf operation, so they hire that expertise!”

The Innisbrook resort and golf courses have long been a showplace of beauty and excellence in Florida’s golf industry. Now Westin Hotels, Troon Golf and Pete Bass take up the challenge and the opportunity of managing those 28 lodges, 1,000 rooms and 1,000 acres. 



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There is a person in your community who can help with lawn care troubles, give tips on composting projects, provide information on the safe application of fertilizers and educate youth about environmental stewardship. He or she might even be able to help you with your putting.

If you are a golfer or live near a golf course, you already know this professional as the golf course superintendent. The superintendent is the person responsible for the physical management of the facility and is equipped with science, business and communication skills. An overwhelming majority of these professionals grew up around the game of golf, and therefore also understand how the game is meant to be played.

"Since the golf course superintendent deals with a variety of issues, you typically find him or her involved in numerous community projects outside of normal job responsibilities," says Golf Course Superintendents Association of America President Paul McGinnis. "Many superintendents serve as consultants to schools and recreation departments in the maintenance of athletic playing fields. Others are regular guests on outdoor-type radio shows or provide a periodic column in a newspaper. Still some host field trips for civic and education groups at their local course. This professional is truly a community asset."

A recent *Golf Digest* survey revealed that the superintendent was the most important golf course employee. Imagine trying to play golf without the work of

this individual. Or, visualize what your housing development may look like and hold in valuation without this person's expertise.

"I believe the public looks at the superintendent for expertise and leadership," McGinnis says. "We are entrusted by golfers to provide optimum playing conditions, while owners of the facilities are quite cognizant that the value of their investment rests in our abilities to maintain and improve conditions.

"But we are morally and ethically responsible for performing our work in the most environmentally-sensitive manner possible. The golf course superintendent is an educated professional who is attuned to the environment. Anyone who spends time with a superintendent recognizes that golf courses are valuable sanc-



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tuaries for numerous animal and plant species.”

If the superintendent is regarded as the most important person on the golf course, just imagine what he/she can do for your community. You may already have a superintendent who is involved in a multitude of civic activities. But if you notice a void or are in need of advice, give your local professional golf course superintendent a call. He/she might just be the best kept secret in town.

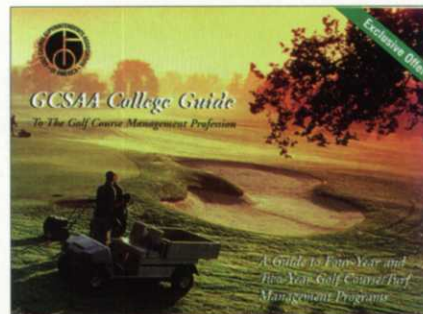
For additional information about the golf course superintendent profession or the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, write to 1421 Research Park Drive, Lawrence, Kan. 66049, call 800/472-7878, or visit GCSAA Online (<http://www.gcsaa.org>).

Editor's Note: This is the second in a series of three syndicated articles released nationally by the GCSAA to promote the golf course superintendents role in the industry and the community.

GCSAA guide profiles collegiate turf programs

During my career, I have been approached many times by young crew members expressing an interest in pursuing a career in turf management. We all know a lot of the major turf programs available out there, but few of us possess complete knowledge of all the possibilities. The GCSAA has just released a guide book that could be a very beneficial resource to the mentor and the prospective turf student: *GCSAA College Guide To The Golf Course Management Profession*.

This new and exclusive 300-page guide provides a concise profile of each turf management program offered by two- and four-year colleges and universities. You may order the *GCSAA College Guide* by calling the GCSAA Bookstore toll free



at (800) 974-7272. The cost is \$15 for members. \$18 for non-members.

Users of the guide will find information on faculty, special research and laboratory facilities, types of degrees offered, number of hours required for a degree, internships required, career placement assistance, tuition costs and much more. This guide will help students select the program that best fits their needs.

“Education is the cornerstone of GCSAA’s existence, and we’re pleased to expand this service to those individuals who are interested in pursuing a career in the golf course/turf management industry,” said Tommy D. Witt, CGCS, GCSAA director and career development committee chairman. “Students, parents and career counselors will benefit from the information contained in the college guide, and the industry will benefit by identifying educational opportunities for tomorrow’s turfgrass professionals.”



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Turf management career tips:

- Working at a golf course, ideally on a superintendent's maintenance staff, is a good way to explore a potential career in golf course management.
- More and more modern-day superintendents must possess formal education or training to be competitive in today's job market.
- Eighty-eight percent of all golf course superintendents have some type of formal education. Sixty-seven percent have completed a two- or four-year degree program.



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