

February 2006

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GOLF

COURSE NEWS

Serving the Business of Golf Course Management

Poised For GROWTH

Industry segments work together to improve the golf business

Jackson Hole Golf and Tennis Club in Wyoming

Inside:

Risk management
Sodding, sprigging or seeding
Preventing burnout
Adding a driving range

20 billion years ago
The Universe tees off with a bang.

150,000 years ago
Neanderthal man shows up and starts thinking about what to do with all that open land!

Born in 1821
Old Tom Morris is born. He soon joins a foursome, gets hooked, and becomes a noon-time regular at St. Andrews – golf enters the modern age.

Turf School opens in 1921
The Turfgrass Agronomy program is born at Penn State University. Dr. Burton Musser begins search for quality putting bentgrass for golf course greens.

Unknown
Dr. Joe Duich is born – eventually joins Penn State's Agronomy program, works with Dr. Musser, and assists his bentgrass breeding research efforts.

Debuts in '55
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The 80's
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The 2000's
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Poised For GROWTH

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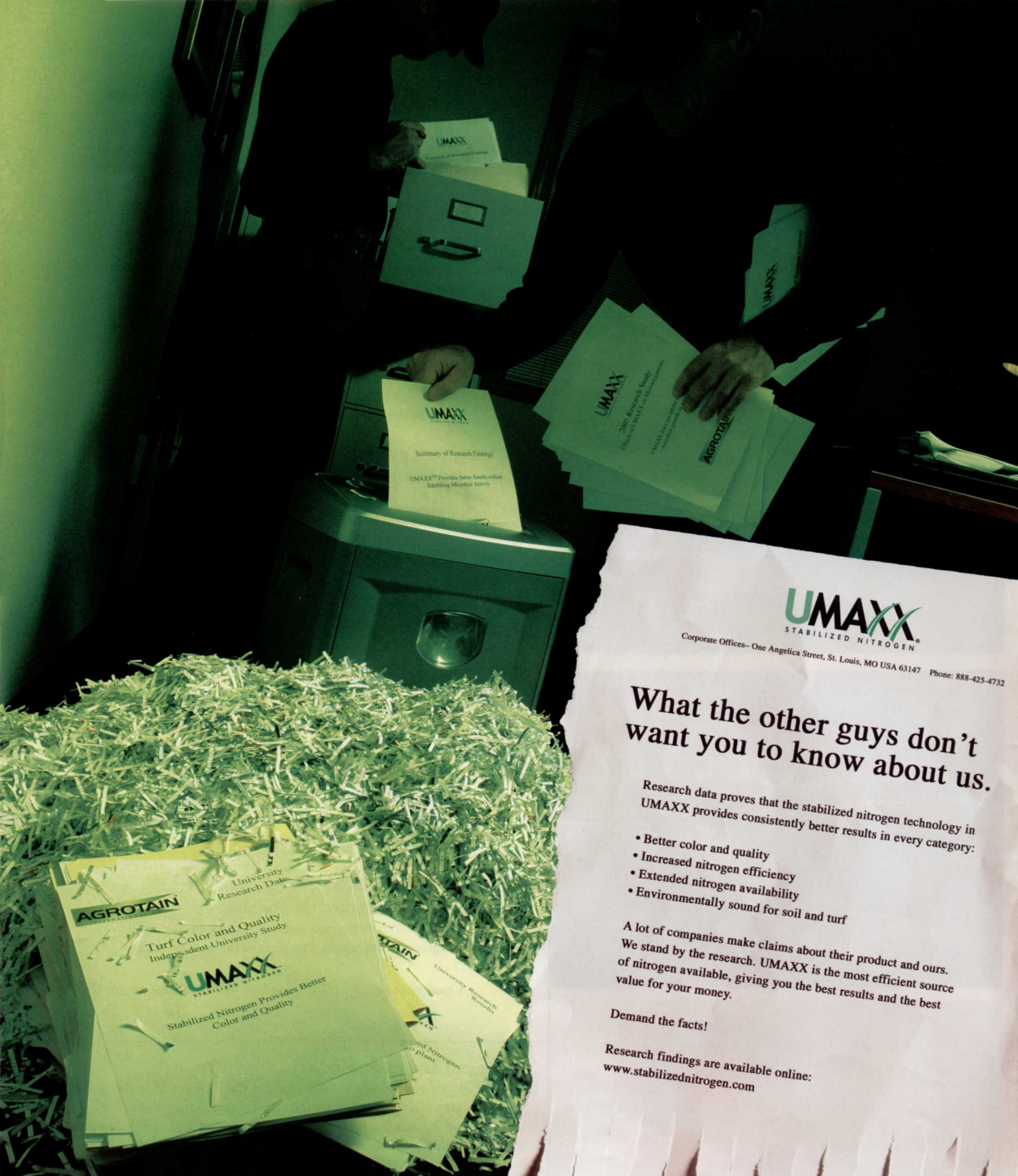
Proper material selection and care are key to successful turfgrass establishment regardless of the method used.

Cover photography courtesy of Vail Resorts Development Co.



EDITORIAL MISSION STATEMENT:

Golf Course News reports on and analyzes the business of maintaining golf courses, as well as the broader business of golf course management. This includes three main areas: agronomy, business management and career development as it relates to golf course superintendents and those managers responsible for maintaining a golf course as an important asset. *Golf Course News* shows superintendents what's possible, helps them understand why it's important and tells them how to take the next step.



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ONLINE-ONLY FEATURES:

OLD IS NEW AGAIN

Excessive rain, hurricanes and a change in fairway grasses in the 24th hour were just a few obstacles faced while renovating the Manakin Course at Hermitage Country Club in Manakin-Sabot, Va.

AFTER THE STORMS

Like many California golf courses, Soule Park in Ojai started the 2005 season poorly but recovered from considerable flooding en route to a solid year.

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John Walsh
Editor

Golfer relations

While talking with many golf course superintendents for a story about burnout (page 50), it was hammered home again that you love the technical aspect of your jobs. It's why most of you entered the business in the first place. Simply put, you like to work outside and grow and maintain turfgrass so golfers can enjoy it. That technical expertise translates into compliments from golfers, right? Well maybe sometimes, but unfortunately the more ignorant, negative and demanding comments from golfers are the ones that cause consternation among you guys (and gals) and stress you out. That's the part of the job many of you dislike – dealing with golfers.

At the average club, how many members understand your job and what it takes to maintain the course they play? That could be evident by the amount of complaining you hear. There's always a vocal minority (maybe it's bigger) who rub you the wrong way.

The superintendent position has evolved from strictly working on the course, with little interaction with club management and members, to one in which a larger part of the job involves dealing with management and golfers. Obviously, this varies from job to job, depending on the responsibilities.

Many of you are climbing the golf management ladder and thinking about becoming general managers. Dealing with golfers becomes more prevalent with that job. Jim Singerling, chief executive officer of the Club Managers Association of America, sheds light on what a typical general manager deals with (page 24). It sounds like many of you stress about the very thing you would be spending most of your time doing as general managers.

More communication between golfers and superintendents is needed and could help alleviate some of that stress. To deal with golfers more effectively, you should be getting pointers from general managers, especially those who used to be superintendents, as well as your peers. Sharing ideas usually helps.

Veteran superintendents have said that when they were younger they didn't want many golfers on the course because they were trying to maintain certain conditions and golfers didn't help that. But in their wisdom, they now realize, because

this industry is a business, the more golfers the better. However, it can be a double-edged sword. The more golfers there are, the more money in the budget, but the more wear the course endures.

If dealing with golfers is getting you down, something needs to be done about it because golfer/superintendent interaction is likely to become more involved in the future. Young golfers in their preteens and early teens are more sophisticated than their counterparts a generation ago. Their expectations are high and could add to the strain of the golfer/superintendent relationship.

You need to develop a clear, open line of communication with golfers – one that's not a one-way street in which golfers just unload on you, but one in which you can explain your side of the story. "The customer is always right" mentality is acceptable to a point, but you need to respond to golfers to help them understand why things are the way they are. Golfers need to listen. There are too many golfers who don't respect you enough.

This is a tough situation because you can't expect golfers to study or learn more about course maintenance. Many golfers have the mentality that they're on the golf course to have fun, not learn. So, unfortunately, the onus is on you to do more to improve communication and the relationship.

You could pick out the golfers or members who want to learn more about course maintenance and impart wisdom on them with the hopes that they will, in turn, tell others. Maybe the knowledge will spread.

I'd like to hear from those superintendents who have managed that line of communication with golfers successfully. I'd like to hear success stories in which golfers became enlightened because they actually listened to you. E-mail me at jwalsh@gie.net or visit the message board on the *Golf Course News* Web site to share these golfer-relation stories.

And here's to improving the golfer/superintendent relationship and hoping the worst part of your job gets better. GCN

John Walsh

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Calendar

Feb. 28-March 2

Western Pennsylvania Turf Conference and Trade Show

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www.paturf.org.

March 2-7

Canadian Golf Superintendent Association's 57th Annual International Turfgrass Conference and Trade Show

Vancouver (B.C.)
Convention Centre
Call 905-602-8873 or visit
www.golfsupers.com.

March 6

Western Regional Conference Buffalo/Niagra Marriott

Amherst, N.Y.
Call 800-873-8873 or visit
www.nysta.org.

March 6-9

New England Regional Turf Conference

Rhode Island Convention Center
Providence, R.I.
Call 401-841-5490 or visit
www.nertf.org.

March 7

California Golf Course Owners Association
Board and Member Meeting
Strawberry Farms Golf Course
Irvine, Calif.
Call 877-465-3122 or visit
www.californiagolf.org.

March 30

Adirondack Regional Conference
Lake Placid Resort (N.Y.) –
Holiday Inn
Call 800-873-8873 or visit
www.nysta.org.

CD, directory

A practical learning tool about soil wetting agents is available – Crop Science Society of America's "Soil Wetting Agents" CD. It provides information about how soil wetting agents work, water chemistry, how water moves in soils, soil water repellency, soil wetting agents and the use of soil wetting agents to address water repellency. The CD also features:



- Information about common turf maintenance and management;
 - Information for professors, students and practicing turf advisors/managers; and
 - Tools for staff training at golf courses, athletic fields and other turf facilities.
- It can be ordered online at www.societystore.org, by calling 608-268-4960 or by e-mailing books@croscps.org.

The **2006 University of Massachusetts Green Directory** is available. The 32-page comprehensive guide to educational resources for Massachusetts agriculture industry professionals includes:

- Contact information for agriculture specialists and faculty;
- Upcoming conferences, seminars and workshops;
- Plant diagnostic lab submission information for insect, disease and cultural problems;
- Soil- and tissue-testing lab submission information;
- Pesticide license information, including test dates, training workshops and how to get a pesticide license;
- Extension newsletters, Web sites and publications; and
- Frequently used phone numbers related to agriculture.

To receive the directory, send a mailing address to greeninfo@umext.umass.edu, fax 413-577-1620 or call 413-545-0895. It's also available online at www.umass.edu/agland. GCN

Contact Rob Thomas, associate editor, at rthomas@gie.net or 800-456-0707 to submit resource information.

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Industry news

Panel examines conservation

Pasadena, Calif. – Environmental and water conservation experts examined landscape irrigation conservation initiatives and strategies at the second annual Intelligent Use of Water Summit, which was hosted by Rain Bird Corp. The symposium panel focused on the relationship among water conservation and landscape water use, water conservation policies and legislation, and potential programs and initiatives to increase awareness of the need to conserve water.

Taking place after a recent release of a United Nations report predicting an eminent and devastating global water shortage by the year 2025, the summit provided a venue for panelists to encourage civic and business leaders to promote water conservation. Panelists urged leaders to abide by current water-conservation policies and impose more strict water-regulation policies on their organizations.

The panelists included:

- Eric Klotz, water conservation and education section chief, Utah Division of Water Resources;
- Stuart Styles, director, Irrigation Training and Research Center;
- Robert Glennon, professor, University of Arizona, Rogers College of Law
- David Minner, professor, Iowa State University;
- John Neylan, manager, AGCSA Tech, Australian Golf Course Superintendent Association;
- Mark Welterlen, publisher, Grounds Maintenance; and
- Tim Blair, program manager, Water Use Efficiency, Metropolitan Water District of Southern California.

Panelists' written submissions can be downloaded at www.rainbird.com.

PACE launches Super Journal

San Diego – Unpublished technical data generated by golf course superintendents, turf managers and researchers, and interns have a home in Super Journal, an online turf research journal published by the PACE Turfgrass Research Institute and accessible for free at www.paceturf.org.

Super Journal's submission require-

ments aren't as rigorous as an academic journal's, but PACE requires the basic principles of experimental design and data recording and summary be followed. A research guide has been provided on the Web site.

Super Journal includes reports by researchers such as Mary W. Olsen, Ph.D. and Michele J. Kohout, Ph.D., University of Arizona plant pathologists. Olsen and Kohout discovered Bermudagrass is a reservoir for the inoculum of the cool-season turfgrass disease, rapid blight.

Other articles are about insect management, reclaimed water management, conducting research projects and photographing turf diseases.

Super Journal seeks to provide a venue for:

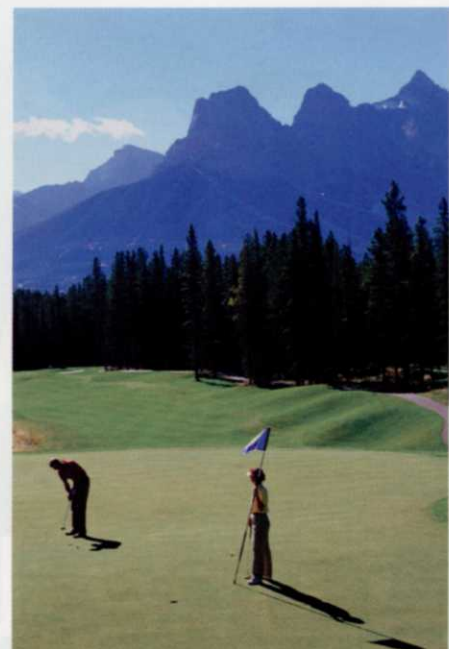
- Superintendents to publish the results of their turf research projects and to share their conclusions with fellow turf managers;
- Turf researchers to rapidly publish and disseminate their experimental results; and
- Superintendents who want help designing, carrying out, interpreting and/or summarizing turf research experiments.

Golf weather improves in 2005

Buffalo Grove, Ill. – 2005 closed with net favorable weather at the national level compared with 2004, according to Pellucid Corp. Golf playable hours in December was 4.6 percent higher than December 2004, which ensured the full-year weather comparison to remain positive – GPHs increased 1.6 percent in 2005.

National rounds in November outperformed weather for the first time in 2005 with a 10.4-percent increase, creating a weather-adjusted rounds index of 204 for the month.

"With half the country shut down for the winter, the weather information is now heavily influenced by the Sunbelt states where we saw double-digit gains in GPH across all three of the California reporting regions," says Pellucid president Jim Koppenhaver. "Florida and Texas also had positive Decembers, which added to their year-to-date increases. Positive results for 2005 were widespread with the breadth indicator showing 12 regions finishing with higher GPHs versus 2004 against six decliners producing a breadth



Weather for golf in 2005 was better than weather in 2004.

ratio of exactly 2:1."

For key state geographies where direct comparisons between GPH and rounds changes can be made, rounds generally have followed weather, but there's no linear correlation between the weather and rounds results.

"For every negative influence, there's generally an unheralded corresponding positive influence somewhere reducing the volatility of the weather variable across annual periods," Koppenhaver says. "By studying both local and macro results, we can paint a more accurate picture for serious business people regarding which direction and to what extent variances in weather helped or hurt them throughout the year."

Winners selected for environment

Lawrence, Kan. – Recognizing their commitment to environmental stewardship, Los Lagos Golf Course in San Jose, Calif., and its certified golf course superintendent, Alan R. Andreasen, were named the overall winners of the 2005 Golf Course Superintendents Association of America/Golf Digest Environmental Leaders in Golf Awards.

Syngenta Professional Products and Rain Bird Corp., Golf Division are the presenting partners of the award.

Judges selected winners in three national categories (public, private and resort courses), and an international winner, with an overall winner being selected from the group. The other national win-



Experts say water conservation awareness needs to increase.






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ners are (facility and chapter):

- National Private: David J. Faucher, CGCS, TPC at River's Bend, Maineville, Ohio; Greater Cincinnati GCSA.
- National Resort (tie): Troy E. Russell, Bandon (Ore.) Dunes Golf Resort; Oregon GCSA; and Anthony L. Williams, CGCS, Renaissance PineIsle Resort & Golf Club, Sugar Hill, Ga.; Georgia GCSA.
- International: Ben J. Marshall, Club Pelican Golf Course, Golden Beach, Queensland, Australia; Australian GCSA.

The winners were recognized Feb. 10, during the Golf Industry Show. Additionally, program sponsors will make donations to The Environmental Institute for Golf, the philanthropic organization of the GCSAA, in the names of all national and chapter winners.

The Environmental Leaders in Golf Award recognizes golf course superintendents and their courses for overall course management excellence in the areas of resource conservation, water quality management, integrated pest management, wildlife/habitat management and education/outreach. Additionally, these categories are judged on sustainability, criticality, originality and technology implementation/use.

Timeline extended for handicap index

Far Hills, N.J. – The U.S. Golf Association extended a grace period for golf clubs using the USGA Handicap System to be licensed to continue to provide a USGA Handicap Index until July 1. The original deadline was Jan. 1.

Licensing requires clubs to provide information demonstrating their compliance with the USGA Handicap System. Approvals can be issued directly from the USGA or from an authorized state or regional golf association. All clubs must contact an authorized golf association to initiate the licensing process, even if they're not member clubs of such an association. Visit the USGA Web site at www.usga.org for more information.



Survey reveals PGA perceptions

Palm Beach Gardens – A survey

commissioned by The PGA of America shows America's perceptions aren't reality and being a local PGA professional means more than just teaching.

Survey results show almost 90 percent of respondents think local PGA professionals spend as much as half their day giving golf lessons. Additionally, more than half of all respondents think local PGA professionals play more than four 18-hole rounds of golf in a typical week.

The PGA professional position has evolved, becoming more challenging and demanding. Results from PGA professionals show they rarely spend more than a quarter of their day giving golf lessons. Almost a third don't play an 18-hole round of golf in a typical week. PGA pros spend more time daily dealing with business matters in the clubhouse compared with giving lessons and working on their own game.



Additional results:

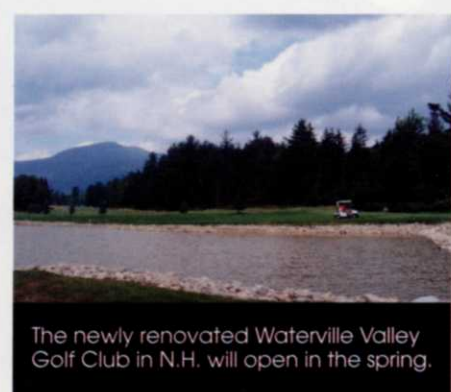
- 75 percent of PGA professionals surveyed work more than 50 hours a week.
- 15 percent spend more than a quarter of their day giving lessons, and 21 percent don't give lessons at all.
- Almost 60 percent of those who give lessons work with four or fewer students on an average day.
- Almost 90 percent of PGA professionals have played golf for more than 15 years.
- 68 percent took three or more years to become a PGA professional.
- 54 percent have a bachelor's degree.

Course news

Renovated course to open in spring

Waterville Valley, N.H. – A half-million dollar renovation of the nine-hole Waterville Valley Golf Club has been completed. The course, which will open in the spring of 2006, includes three new holes, the redesign of three existing holes, an irrigation system, new pro shop and a new half-acre pond. The course has four par-4 holes.

While improving the 108-year-old course, designers worked hard to retain the character and tradition of the club. The columns at the entry to the club's new pro shop are local timbers harvested



The newly renovated Waterville Valley Golf Club in N.H. will open in the spring.

on site, hand-peeled and resting on rocks taken from a stonewall that was removed during the renovation. The pro shop features a 24-foot-by-24-foot screened porch with views of nearby Mounts Tecumseh and Osceola, overlooking the new ninth green, which is nestled in the curve of a half-acre pond, which acts as a hazard, irrigation pond and safety feature.

The impetus for renovating the course, which generates about 16,000 rounds a year, came with a new residential development of adjacent land.

Monarch Dunes debuts out West

Nipomo, Calif. – Monarch Dunes Golf Club, the first 18-hole golf course constructed within The Woodlands – a master-planned community in California's central coast – opened for public play Jan. 1. The par-71 championship design introduces links-style golf to central California's wine country. Monarch Dunes is the handiwork of El Dorado Hills-based architect Damian V. Pascuzzo of Graves & Pascuzzo. PGA Tour professional Steve



Monarch Dunes Golf Club is a links-style course in central California.

Pate also contributed to the project as a design consultant.

Long term, the development will comprise 45 golf holes – two premier 18-hole designs complemented by a nine-hole executive course – in addition to a clubhouse and driving range, 1,320 homes, a shopping center, business park and full-service resort.

During the first two months of operation, the course will accommodate 80 rounds per day.

Engh designs Blackstone course

Peoria, Ariz. – Sheer rock faces, undulating fairways and cavernous bunkers are among the natural features that define the golf course at Blackstone Country Club, which opened in November 2005. Architect James J. Engh created the private, 18-hole championship course.

The Engh team explored the valleys, arroyos and ridges of Blackstone and used Mother Nature's dramatic features to achieve a course that's playable yet challenging. Each hole offers its own distinctive attributes, such as lakes, serpentine bunkers, nearly hidden greens and rock walls.

Tucked between the ninth and 10th holes will be the Hacienda, a 30,000-square-foot clubhouse. Construction is under way and will be complete in later this year. Until then, a temporary clubhouse will be operated.

Equity social memberships and a limited number of golf memberships will be available.

Blackstone at Vistancia is a joint venture between Sunbelt Holdings and Shea Homes, both headquartered in Scottsdale.

Weed completes renovation jobs

Ponte Vedra Beach, Fla. – Weed Golf Course Design recently finished renovation projects at the Pine Tree Golf Club and Brooksville Country Club. Pine Tree reopened to members in November 2005 following a select renovation to the 1962 Dick Wilson design. Bobby Weed and associate Scot Sherman molded the layout back to the flavor of the original course.

At Pine Tree, an upgrade to the irrigation system took place while all tees, fairways, greens and green surrounds were

fumigated and regrassed. All bunkers were rebuilt to the original design.

Additionally, a two-year, phased renovation was initiated during the summer at Brooksville. The renovation began with the construction of three new holes around an abandoned quarry. Future revisions are in the planning stages.

Beverly to host senior amateur

Far Hills, N.J. – The Beverly Country Club in Chicago was selected by the U.S. Golf Association as the site of the 2008 USGA Senior Amateur Championship Sept. 20 through 25. The 2008

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USGA Senior Amateur coincides with Beverly's 100-year anniversary.

The Beverly Country Club will be hosting its second USGA championship. Previously, the club hosted the 1931 U.S. Amateur. Beverly was founded in 1908 and features tree-lined fairways and the bunkering characteris-

tics of its architect, Donald Ross. Ron Prichard recently completed a revision of the course.

Beverly has hosted four Western Open Championships, three Women's Western Open Championships and the 1943 Chicago Victory National Open Championship.

Prior to 2008, the USGA Senior Amateur will be played at Victoria National Golf Club in Newburgh, Ind., Sept. 16 through 21, 2006, and at Flint Hills National Golf Club in Andover, Kan., Sept. 1 through 6, 2007.

Southern Hills to host amateur

Far Hills, N.J. — Southern Hills Country Club in Tulsa, Okla., was selected as the site of the 2010 U.S. Amateur Championship Aug. 23 through 29. Southern Hills has hosted eight previous USGA championships, including three U.S. Opens. Designed by Perry Maxwell, Southern Hills opened in 1936.

Prior to 2010, the U.S. Amateur will be played at Hazeltine National Golf Club in Chaska, Minn., Aug. 21 through 27, 2006; The Olympic Club in San Francisco, Calif., Aug. 20 through 26, 2007; Pinehurst (N.C.) Resort and Country Club Aug. 18 through 24, 2008; and Congressional Country Club in Bethesda, Md., Aug. 24 through 30, 2009.

KemperSports manages Newport

Mustang Island, Texas — Developers of an 1,800-acre resort community on Texas' Mustang Island selected KemperSports to oversee development and operations management of Newport Golf Club. The resort's first 18-hole layout, an Arnold Palmer Signature Golf Course, is part of the first phase of construction within the coastal community of Newport Beach and Golf.

When completed, the planned upscale community will include residential villages, multiple hotels, a marina, tennis and beach clubs and two golf courses. Newport Golf Club is scheduled to open in the summer of 2008.

People

Michael A. Stachowski and **Patrick Blum** were selected to receive the 2006 Excellence in Government Relations Awards for their commitment to government relations in the areas of advocacy and compliance. Both are members of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America and received the awards Feb. 10 during the general ses-

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sion of the Golf Industry Show. Colleton River Plantation Club in Bluffton, S.C., hired **Wesley Trawick** as assistant golf course superintendent for the club's Pete Dye course.

St. Joe Co. appointed **Stephen Hilliard** managing director of resorts and clubs – Walton County, Fla.



Hilliard

The Golf Course Builders Association of America appointed **Paul J. Foley** its executive director.



Foley

Members of the Erosion Control Technology Council re-elected their board of directors. The board members will fulfill one-year terms. The 2006 ECTC board includes: chairman **Tim Lancaster**, North American Green; vice chairman **Deron Austin**, SI Geosolutions; treasurer **Mark Myrowich**, ErosionControlBlanket.com; **Mark Theisen**, at large, Profile Products LLC; and **Tony Johnson**, at large, American Excelsior Co.

Ed Abrain of Sherman, N.Y., was honored as the 15th recipient of the Ernie Sabayrac Award for Lifetime Contributions to the golf industry. His 35 years of service were recognized last month at The PGA of America Awards Program in Orlando, Fla.

Sean Taylor was named director of golf at Wintergreen (Va.) Resort Golf Club.

Peter Burke, head professional at Camp Creek Golf Club on Northwest Florida's Gulf Coast, received Class A-1 membership in the Professional Golfers Association of America.

Mickie Gallagher III, a member of the PGA of America, was selected head golf professional at Trump National Golf Club, Bedminster (N.J.).

Ed Hodnett joined Agronomic Systems Design as executive vice president of North American sales and marketing.

Sean Casey was promoted to vice president, sales, turf and ornamental of

Nufarm Americas' turf and specialty group.

Michael Harmelink was named chief financial officer for PeakVision Sports.



Casey

Supplier news

A joint venture between **Agronomic Systems Design** and **Biologically Integrated Organics** led to bioPore – a combination of oxygen and microbes needed for a healthy root zone.

Every winter the population in Naples, Florida doubles which results in added play on the golf course. At Olde Florida Golf Club, the stress from the added traffic is compounded as there are no cart paths and our water quality is poor. The result is reduced water and oxygen penetration in the soil. To counter these effects, and reduce soil compaction, we rely heavily on our Verti-Drain 7416. It provides maximum results with minimal disruption!

Darren J Davis

Director of Golf Course Operations
Olde Florida Golf Club
9393 Vanderbilt Beach Road
Extension
Naples, FL 34120



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Agrotain International LLC, a supplier of stabilized nitrogen products, commissioned the second painting in the "Artistry of Golf" collection of paintings that pay tribute to the work and dedication of golf course superintendents. The painting, "The Gathering Tradition," showcases the 18th hole at The Tradition Golf Club at La Quinta, Calif. Superintendents who visited the company's booth during the Golf Industry Show and took the "Stabilized Nitrogen Challenge" received a commemorative poster featuring the artwork. Participants also registered to win the grand prize - the original framed oil painting.

An agreement between **Aquatrols Corporation of America** and the **Performance Products Division** resulted in a patent application that was published. Stanley J. Kostka, Ph.D., director of technology and innovation for Aquatrols, and Gregor Scheurmann,

Ph.D., with the company's technology development partner are named as inventors on the patent. The patent application covers the process of improving a root-zone growing environment and enhancing plant productivity through the application of methyl-capped, block copolymer surfactants - alone or mixed with other soil targeted materials. The patent also covers the preparation of these surfactants.

Bayer Environmental Science received registration from the EPA for use of Allectus insecticide on fertilizer. Formulators may now sell blended products containing fertilizer impregnated with Allectus.

Mancozeb, the active ingredient in **Dow AgroSciences'** Dithane and Fore fungicides, completed the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency reregistration process required for all crop protection chemicals sold in the United States. Under U.S. law,

all pesticides registered before 1984 must undergo reregistration, an evolving health and safety review process in which regulators seek new scientific data to address existing and hypothetical concerns.

Evergro Canada and **The Pickseed Companies Group** formed a distribution partnership for western Canadian professional turf seed. Evergro will take over the blending, marketing and distribution for all of Pickseed's Pro Turf varieties in B.C.

ProLink Solutions LLC, a provider of GPS services to golf courses, completed a transaction with Amalgamated Technologies. Members of ProLink exchanged their interests in ProLink for capital stock of Amalgamated Technologies. ProLink became a subsidiary of Amalgamated, will pursue a change in Amalgamated's name to ProLink Solutions and will apply for a new ticker symbol. GCN

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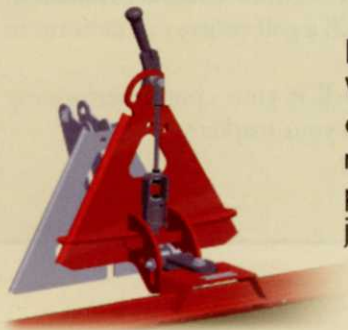
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Jack Brennan founded Paladin Golf Marketing in Plant City, Fla., to assist golf course owners and managers with successful marketing. He can be reached at Jackbrennan@tampabay.rr.com.

Rounds: Up or down?

I've been asked frequently by clients, potential clients and golf publications if rounds are really declining in the United States. From 2002 through mid-2005, it's been reported by the National Golf Foundation and Golf Datatech that rounds in almost every region of the country have declined consistently, and in many regions, have declined significantly from the previous year.

If we compare total rounds played in the United States, we'd see a decline – to 505 million rounds – shortly after 1992. But by the end of 2002, U.S. rounds were almost back to 1992 levels. However, a significant increase (23.9 percent from 1992 to 2002) of new course openings during the same period caused the "average" number of rounds per course to decrease.

So why are many reporting a decrease of rounds in markets since 2002? I don't see it in my research. Owners and operators seem to accept U.S. rounds are declining because it's reportedly so. It's a rare circumstance when I come across a market in which aggregate rounds have decreased. It's more likely these agencies are reporting average rounds per course are down or stagnant in a market but not total (aggregate) rounds.

I posed a few questions about rounds to Stuart Lindsay, president of Milwaukee-based Edgehill Consulting Group.

Jack Brennan: How can owners and operators access relevant rounds data to compare the health of their facility to their market?

Stuart Lindsay: There are several research issues that have discrepancies. Several important factors about market research are:

a) Market research generally provides trend guidance and has a margin of error based on sample size and balance.

b) Because of the nature of available data, NGF and Golf Datatech are using a same-store approach to report golf rounds. But what methodology do NGF and Golf Datatech use to adjust for new courses added to supply?

c) Even on a regional basis, local markets can have different characteristics of growth, income levels and age within a region.

d) Weather always will have an impact on rounds on all levels.

JB: So the rounds demand reported by

NGF or Golf Datatech aren't a true indicator of aggregate, or accurate, rounds demand in a region of the country? Explain your same-store research concept.

SL: Let's say Wal-Mart reports their overall sales increased 5 percent in 2005, and it opened 7 percent more stores in 2005. Simplistically, this means its same-store sales declined 2 percent.

Translating to golf, same-store rounds in a region could have declined 0.8 percent while 1.5 percent of new supply was added. If rounds are divided evenly, this means the number of rounds played (demand) increased in the region.

JB: Therefore, it's possible golf demand in a market is stable, possibly growing, even though individual courses might be experiencing a reported rounds decline?

SL: Correct. Any local market analysis should include supply dilution data. For example, if the dilution factor is 10 percent and rounds declined 5 percent, a course has increased its share of market demand. Operators also have to be careful when using only rounds data because the third leg of the supply/demand stool is price elasticity. If the same course also experienced a 5-percent decline of revenues, it was trading water in economic terms of market share.

JB: Elaborate on other research adjustment factors related to market demand.

SL: Historically, golf demand generally has been a function of population, along with the age and income mix of the population. Data suggests the number of rounds played in the United States increased during the past five years. Unfortunately, this increase hasn't been as great as the supply increase of the past 15 years and is only rising at one-fifth the rate of overall population growth. An operator still needs to understand the demographic fundamentals in a market. This calculation changes when one gets into tourist markets and also can be affected by racial and ethnicity issues; but it basically means if golf course supply growth and overall demographic growth are balanced in a local market, the market shouldn't have a decline of rounds per course.

JB: I've been trying to convey this research insight with operators for years. Can

you give me some specific examples.

SL: Kansas City has had 75 percent more courses (sharply above the national 53 percent) added since 1980 and population has increased by only 36 percent. As a partial offset, income growth in Kansas City has exceeded the Consumer Price Index by 22 percent during that period. But that still indicates a negative price elasticity of about 17 percent in the market.

On the other hand, Denver has had about equal growth of golf and population since 1990. There are some other nuances in Denver, such as Hispanic population growth, so there's been some negative pricing pressures, but not nearly as great as those in Kansas City.

JB: The market research key is to try and calculate these factors to determine how a course is performing in its local market. And using national and regional data is only a guide in the process. How does a golf course acquire all the necessary information available to them?

SL: We are an advisor to Pellucid Corp., an information and insight provider in the golf industry that attempts to weigh all market factors influencing golf

demand in its research. We're also members of NGF and use NGF and Golf Datatech for valuable research. We encourage any operator to participate in

benchmarking programs being developed, along with providing data to support initiatives by any agency collecting this data.

JB: I agree. Accurate rounds information input should be the industry's next collective goal.

We have outlined a simplistic look at a complex set of marketing research issues to assist operators with their marketing planning. There are other factors – course quality, comparative pricing and relative operational expenses – that also are important. In the final analysis, local knowledge is the most important ingredient to effective market evaluation of how well a golf course can perform in its market.

How well is your course performing relative to your market? GCN

IT'S A RARE CIRCUMSTANCE WHEN I COME ACROSS A MARKET WHERE AGGREGATE ROUNDS HAVE DECREASED.

Contour considerations

Despite the maintenance limitations of greens design, there's still a need to design greens for strategy, putting and playability – and there's always a debate about it.

For all the diversity of greens, most golf course architects likely will have a similar design process to arrive at the end result. We tend to settle big issues first, such as the orientation, size and shape of the green, bunker placement, and basic contours as they affect play. Then we focus on smaller issues, such as contour subtlety, to finish the design. We shape the green – within the confines of maintenance issues – considering the following play issues.

Natural land slope

The green shape, orientation, contours and any backdrop contours usually follow natural slopes. Running water uphill is always difficult, looks unnatural and usually requires catch basins above the green because the natural drainage patterns are disturbed.

While most greens slope from back to front to hold shots and improve vision, the natural spot for a reverse-slope green or at least a flat green is on a reverse-slope site, preferably on a downhill shot where the green is visible still, and preferably where architects can design enough room in front for run-in shots.

Flat sites get flatter greens, and steep sites require steeper slopes to make the entire green complex fit in, whether that slope is front to back or from one side to the other.



The 17th hole at Cowboys Golf Club in Dallas shows the difficulty of seeing a green for an uphill shot.

Vision

Good design allows golfers to see all or most of the green, with a few exceptions. If the hole is gently uphill, a steeper green upslope (near the 3-percent maximum) might assist vision. On uphill holes, even a slight ridge in the green might block visibility, so a simply contoured, flat-plane green often works well.

On steep uphill approach shots, architects often flash portions of the green (using steep slopes as much as 20 percent) toward golfers for vision. They can create rolling back edges, steep false fronts or steep tiers dividing sections of the interior of the green.

Conversely, downhill shots offer a chance to make greens flatter because vision is usually more readily attainable.

Holding shots

Most golfers need the course to help them a bit. Therefore, most greens should be higher at the back for green visibility and to help average players stop shots. Greens sloping upward at least 1.33 percent stop most good shots. Most golf course architects also help golfers by designing concave greens about equal to the upslope to kick shots to the middle of the green instead of to hazards.

For vision, the "steeper-for-uphill, flatter-for-downhill" theory also works naturally to create greens that hold shots. Downhill greens tend to have higher approach shots and can be flatter. Uphill greens often have lower-angled approach shots with reduced backspin requiring steeper slope (and possibly more depth) to hold shots. Downwind, downhill lies and uphill approaches benefit from slightly more upslope assistance. Uphill lies and headwind shots naturally stop faster, so they can have less upward pitch and/or be shallower. The side-to-side concave assistance contours might vary, typically increasing on both sides with approach length and surrounding hazards, and perhaps on one side with side hill lies, crosswinds, etc.

However, the goal isn't to create the exact same receptivity for consistency or easier play. Typically, when considering all factors affecting green contours, the greens will vary quite a bit in their ability to hold shots. Knowing some greens hold better than others, or others are steep enough to roll a high spin shot back off the green or down to a certain pin position is an integral part of golf.

Sunday pins

On most greens, varying degrees of difficulty among pin positions is desired. One or two pin positions per green are guarded using ridges encroaching from the edge of the green that kick short shots back or long shots forward. Golfers might play toward the pin or the middle of the green, leaving a longer putt and dramatically reducing birdie chances. These ridges can intrude as little as 10 feet on to the putting surface (which doesn't affect cup space) or can taper out midway across the green for more visual and putting drama.

Any small, precision approach green (less than 4,500 square feet) must be nearly all minimum slopes to maximize cup setting areas. Any greens with interior decks, valleys and rolls splitting the green into two or three targets also need to have flatter cupping areas to help stop runaway putts from upper to lower tiers.

Challenge, practicality

Short putts can be aimed directly at the hole without reading the break. This leads to green slopes flatter than an old tire.

While the range of contours is smaller, I still vary the basic slope of consecutive greens from 1.5 percent to 3 percent to keep golfers guessing about break. Within each green, I might vary the slopes in different areas, perhaps with a flatter front section and steeper back areas, or vice versa to make each green putt differently with different pin positions. Generally, a gently rolling green with many pin positions and the randomness of approach shots will yield enough diversity of putts to keep most golfers challenged.

Most greens should only do one thing well. It's best to avoid incorporating too many of the green committee's ideas into one green and let your golf course architect create balanced challenges throughout the round. It's also important for most greens to be balanced to the needs of all golfers, knowing a green designed to challenge top golfers severely will likely cause four times the problems for the rest of us.

While there are many theoretical ways to design a green correctly, the debate should end when the bulldozers start running. It's important to get them right the first time to deter a future green committee from temptation to rebuild again.

GCN



Jeffrey D. Brauer is a licensed golf course architect and president of GolfScapes, a golf course design firm in Arlington, Texas. Brauer, a past president of the American Society of Golf Course Architects, can be reached at jeff@jeffreydbrauer.com.

Respecting golf wins

Show me a well-managed golf program, and I'll show you a well-managed golf/country club. However, the reverse isn't always true, i.e., a well-managed clubhouse operation doesn't always translate into a well-managed golf program.

The reason for this divergence is because

those who care about golf won't allow it to be positioned within a less-than-completely professional environment, and those who care about clubhouse operations often know little about golf and its traditions.

The following two columns compare the tangible differences between admin-

istrative/operational quality when golf traditions are respected (left column) and when golf is primarily used as a profit center (right column). These comparisons apply universally throughout the private sector of golf, frequently throughout the daily-fee sector and less often throughout the public sector. GCN

When golf traditions are respected		When golf is primarily a revenue source
Rules of golf are visibly respected	→	Rules of golf are taken for granted
High number of single-digit handicaps	→	Decidedly fewer single-digit players
Handicap program is managed tightly	→	Handicap program is managed passively
Handicap chairmen serve extended tenures	→	Handicap chairmen turnover quickly
Golf is played at a consistent, good pace	→	Golf pace is slow and inconsistent
Course rangers are mature and effective	→	Course rangers are window dressing
Use 9-, 10- or 11-minute starting intervals	→	Use 6-, 7- or 8-minute starting intervals
Starting tee times are maintained on schedule	→	Starting tee times are under pressure or slide
Loose players can find a game	→	Difficult for individual players to find a game
Club tournaments are run at a PGA level	→	Club tournament quality varies at each event
Golf guest fees are set to accommodate	→	Golf guest fees are set to scalp
Golf prizes are appropriate in number and cost	→	Golf prizes are high in quantity but low in quality
Green speeds are up and consistent	→	Green speeds vary by hole and event
Bunker maintenance is a high priority	→	Bunker maintenance is a low priority
Golf course is firm and off-green	→	Golf course is spongy and green
Course cosmetics aren't the highest priority	→	Course cosmetics are a high priority artificially
Irrigation system is tightly monitored	→	Irrigation system is fixed when broken
Maintenance building is clean and orderly	→	Maintenance area resembles a rail yard
Maintenance equipment is stored indoors	→	Equipment is stored indoors and outdoors
Practice facilities emulate golf course conditions	→	Practice facilities are warm-up opportunities
Golf staff is respected for teaching ability	→	Golf instruction is hazardous to your game
Pristine range balls/rotated annually	→	Range balls rotated one-third each year
Locker rooms are living-room quality	→	Locker rooms are drop zones
Club staff knows member/player names	→	"Yes sir" and "Yes ma'am" predominate
Golf merchandise priced to serve clientele	→	Merchandise priced to maximize revenues
Restaurants aren't considered profit centers	→	Restaurants look to maximize revenues
Restaurant menus avoid a la carte	→	Restaurant menus use a la carte
Minimize number of outside golf outings	→	Maximize number of outside golf outings
Operating budgets correlate with reality	→	Operating budgets reflect hope and uncertainty
Operating revenues dues sourced	→	Operating revenues multisourced/user fees
Assessments are a priority	→	Assessments aren't a priority
Member entry-fee package responsibly set	→	Member entry-fee package aggressively set
Entry package is high bond/low initiation	→	Situation reversed to return less money
Minimum number of membership classes	→	Maximize membership classes/user fees
Boards are dominated by the old guard	→	Boards default to a new guard
Nominating process stabilizes leadership	→	Nominating process scrambles leadership
Nominating committee is conservative	→	Nominating committee is brash
Presidents move through chairs	→	Presidents rise quickly/skip chairs
Past presidents are respected and consulted	→	Past presidents are forgotten and ignored

Jim McLoughlin is the founder of TMG Golf (www.TMGgolfcounsel.com), a golf course development and consulting firm, and is a former executive director of the GCSAA. He can be reached at golfguide@adelphia.net or 760-804-7339. His previous columns can be found on www.golf-coursenews.com.

We would like to hear from you. Please post any comments you have about this column on our message board, which is at www.golfcoursenews.com/messageboard.





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The Roots® Challenge is designed to provide turf managers with season-long solutions from Roots biological technologies to attain the healthiest turf possible – even in the most stressful conditions.

When your course becomes a Roots Challenge Course, you receive discounts on all Roots products used in the program. You will also receive the one-on-one expertise of a Roots technical representative to assist and guide you through the turf management process, allowing you to make the best agronomic decisions for your turf.

Additionally, this elite group of Roots Challenge Course superintendents will be invited to attend a special symposium at the 2006 GIS Conference & Show to share experiences and exchange results and valuable information.



The Roots Challenge Program

Here's how the program works

Simply commit acreage (greens, tees or fairways) to participate in one of seven Roots Challenge programs for 28 weeks. Each program is tailored to the amount of nitrogen applied and whether a Roots disease-control product is used. Your Roots distributor representative, Roots territory manager and technical field staff will work with you to monitor the application and gauge the effectiveness of the program throughout the season.

Program Benefits

- The healthiest turf possible – incorporating Roots technology. Spring roots all summer long.
- A ten percent discount on all Roots products used in the program all season
- Guidance from technical field staff
- Roots Challenge Course plaque to highlight your use of environmentally compatible Roots products
- Invitation to The Roots Challenge Technical Conference at GIS Conference & Trade Show



A Customized Nutritional Program for Your Course

Your course is unique with its own nutritional requirements, environmental conditions and player demands. The Roots® Challenge turf management team will review your individual needs and recommend a complete nutritional program that's right for you and the environment.

TurfVigor®



microbial fertilizer 9-3-6

- Maximizes nutrient uptake
- Improves color & quality
- Maintains root mass under stress conditions
- Accelerates physical damage recovery

AGRIplex® micro-mix®



chelated liquid micronutrients

- Quick visual response without rapid growth
- Longest lasting green-up
- Will not stain surfaces - including concrete
- Highly concentrated with low application rate

KCS™ 0-0-14



biostimulant/nutrient blend

- Increases ball speeds
- Hardens turf for winter dormancy
- Stimulates faster recovery from ball & spike damage
- Improves soil CEC

Roots® Turf Food



granular fertilizers

- Outstanding and consistent color response
- Improves turf density and root mass
- Minimal roller and mower pickup
- Low soluble salts minimize any burn potential

endoROOTS® granular



mycorrhizal rooting stimulant 3-3-4

- Speeds up grow-in and establishment
- Increases turf density
- Faster recovery from ball marks, divots and wear
- Significantly improves rate of recovery from aerification

1>2>3® Premix Plus



microbially enhanced plant nutrition

- Deeper roots
- Greater root mass development
- Greener color without rapid growth
- Improved turf health

EcoGuard®



biofungicide

- Controls dollar spot and anthracnose
- Faster recovery from disease damage
- Perfect for resistance management and IPM programs
- EPA registered as lower risk pesticide

Fe8%®



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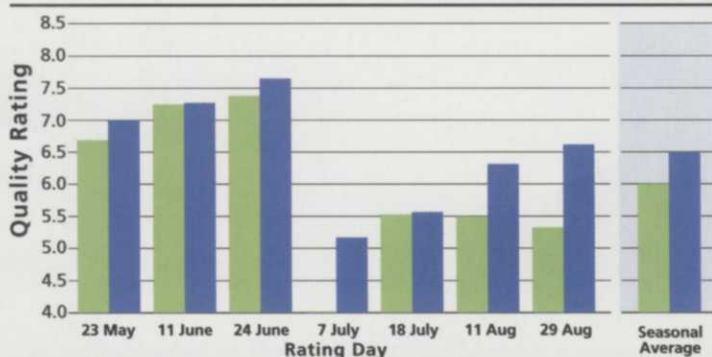
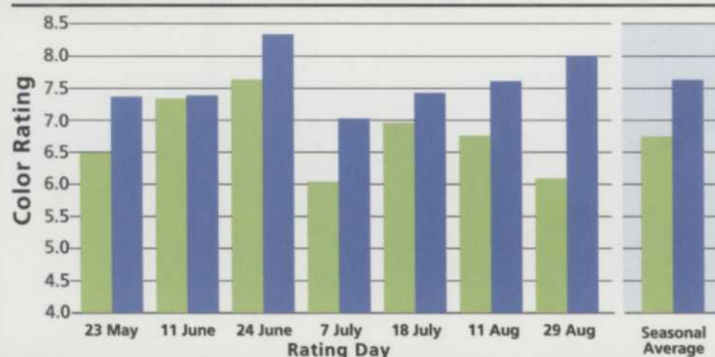
- Quick visual response without rapid growth
- Longest lasting green-up
- Will not stain surfaces - including concrete
- Perfect for tournament prep

Roots Challenge Course Stays Strong, Summer Long

The color and quality of this Roots Challenge course increased throughout the heat, humidity and overall

stress of summer play, while the ratings of the standard nutrient program fell significantly.

Roots Challenge at Blacksburg Municipal GC • Va. Tech - 2005 | Nutrient Control Roots Challenge



Here's what some Roots® Challenge Course Superintendents Say



Terry Hogan
Golf Course Superintendent
Big Run Golf Club - Lockport, IL

"The biggest difference was the color and overall health of the turf. The owner told me the other day that the greens look good, the best he's ever seen them."



Chad Oester
Superintendent
Bliss Creek Golf Club - Aurora, IL

"It's like night and day going on the Roots Challenge program. It has definitely given me job security and less stress about worrying about the dry spots. It's made my life a lot simpler."



Jason Funderburg (left) and **Jeff VerCautren**
Golf Course Superintendents
Rich Harvest Farms
Sugar Grove, IL

"We've got a lot more roots than we've ever had out there. Last year when we had only

3 days over 90 and a lot of rain, we still would have to go out and hand water a couple of greens. It was 104 degrees a couple of Sundays ago and we didn't put water on the greens. We didn't water the whole course, fairways or tees. It was hot and they were perfect."



Jeff Pozen
Golf Course Superintendent
Downer's Grove Golf Course
Downer's Grove, IL

"By far it's the color, density, the rooting and the tolerance to stress. I haven't even syringed all year and there's 60% poa out here. And, I'm using a lot less water."

Steve Partyka
Golf Course Superintendent
White Pines Golf Course
Bensenville, IL

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Andy Fassett
Golf Course Superintendent
Sugar Creek
Villa Park, IL

"The main thing is the constant color. The color has stayed so nice. Much richer color than last year. I'm not going to change now. I finally found something that works."



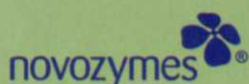
Andy Morris
Golf Course Superintendent
Country Club of Peoria
Peoria Heights, IL

"We held the Senior River Cup here the last part of August, which included participants from a three-county area. The local newspaper quoted a participant as saying that the greens during the tournament were the best he had played all year."



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Recruiting workers

With spring training starting, some are thinking about baseball, and with baseball comes free agency. Free agency and hiring employees for your club/course maintenance staff have a similar purpose: recruit and hire the best talent available. The course with the best talent has the best chance to meet or exceed golfer and green committee expectations. A poor or mediocre recruitment and selection process means the course will struggle to succeed, just like small-market baseball teams. Failing to attract the best maintenance staff workers will cause more stress and could mean longer, more frustrating hours throughout the golf season.

There are three prerequisites to a world-class recruitment process.

1. Know what you're looking for. We've all heard the adage "If you don't know where you are going, any road will get you there." The direct analogy "If you don't know what you're looking for, any candidate will meet the job requirements" is a bit strong. However, the probability of successfully choosing the correct candidate – including the difficult decision to start the process over because no candidate fits the position – is greatly enhanced by knowing exactly what you're looking for, which should be expressed in two forms:

THE COURSE WITH THE
BEST TALENT HAS THE
BEST CHANCE TO MEET
OR EXCEED GOLFER
AND GREEN COMMITTEE
EXPECTATIONS.

- Prepare a job description including the job title; a summary of the position including who supervises the position; typical duties and responsibilities including supervisory and management expectations; and the knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes required to succeed in the position.

- From the job description, identify and articulate three to five important competencies needed to succeed in the position, which will assist you in recruitment and selection.

2. Recognize attracting the best talent isn't easy, isn't necessarily inexpensive (view the cost as an investment) and is time consuming. But the time and money spent will be returned many times with successful recruitment and selection.

3. Develop a world-class recruitment

and selection process, which can be used over and over. Invest the discipline and time to develop and implement these procedures.

A marketing tool

Successful recruitment attracts a pool of candidates that contains one or more exceptional candidates who will succeed in a position. Thus, the objective of recruiting is threefold.

1. Quantity of applicants. Larger numbers increase the probability of success, so cast a wide net.

2. Quality of applicants. To ensure you don't have large numbers of unqualified candidates, include necessary job requirements that won't discourage qualified candidates from applying.

3. Spillover effects. We usually write recruitment materials as though only potential candidates read them. Not so. Research shows a large percentage of applicants are referred to recruitment materials – want ads, Internet sites, job announcements – by family members, friends and co-workers. Many also read the ad as they peruse other nearby ads. Some are potential golfers at your course. Recruiting is a component of the public face of your club/course.

So, recruitment can be viewed as marketing. When marketing, you're selling your company, brand and products/services. When recruiting, you're selling your club/course as a place to work, your image as an employer and the golf course maintenance position available. You must decide what it is about your club/course that will make you an attractive employer. This identified image will be part of every recruitment. And the recruitment message will be tailored to the position for which you're recruiting. This also will be the primary driver of how you target your recruitment including what labor pools you wish to emphasize.

The following are marketing ideas to consider when crafting a recruitment plan to market your course and position:

- Employees, young and old, want to join a winning team. The attributes of

your club/course that inspire you and other club leaders also can be used to inspire your employees. Your mission, vision and values can help identify the type of person the course needs and attract that person to apply.

- Identify the positive characteristics and attributes of the industry and position. Of these positive characteristics, which will sell or attract potential applicants? As you think about marketing your club/course to potential employees, don't focus on the business or the position from your perspective. Potential employees don't care about your perspective. Put yourself in their position. From their perspective, what's important, what's of interest, what would entice them to be a part of your team? Keep in mind truth in advertising is important. Be positive about what you have to offer without being deceptive. Promote the club/course and the current job offerings without distorting the facts.

- Even recognizing golf course maintenance work is difficult and demanding, there are attributes, such as the physical and interpersonal work environments, that can be emphasized. The work environment is safe, orderly, clean, pleasant, and tools and equipment are in good working condition. A comfortable physical environment is important, but great employers also work hard to be certain the social/emotional atmosphere in the business is upbeat and encourages positive attitudes and cooperation.

- Almost all employees consciously and/or subconsciously are looking for personal growth and development opportunities. This is especially true for the best employees – the ones you want to recruit and hire. Articulate and market personal growth and development opportunities offered at your club/course.

Most approach recruitment as a necessary evil. No wonder recruitment materials are so unappealing. Try a different approach. Envision your course and the winning team you wish to assemble. Describe the course and write about your winning team. Use the ideas and an upbeat frame of mind to write recruitment materials to attract the top free agents to the pool of candidates for your winning team. GCN



Robert A. Milligan, Ph.D., is professor emeritus from Cornell University and senior consultant with Madison, Wis.-based Dairy Strategies. He can be reached at 651-647-0495 or rmilligan@trsmith.com.

"Superintendents should play golf at other people's courses and look at someone else's problems. Superintendents always look for the worst on their course and never look for the good. If you play your own course, it will stress you out even more."

— **Riley Stottern**, CGCS, vice president of agronomy at SunRiver Saint George (Utah) Golf Club and partner with Resort Golf Management

"Don't think if you work 93 hours a week, the members will appreciate it because they don't know. They just know about the end product. Hard work pays off, but there's a limit. Work smarter not harder."

— **Don Hearn**, CGCS, at Vesper Country Club in Tyngsboro, Mass.

"The bomb squad came out and shut the project down for a half day. It was an area of concern, so the bomb squad told us what to look for. They took the mortars, hauled them off and blew them up."

— **Drew Sellenriek**, president of Sellenriek Grading Co., about finding World War I artillery while renovating Forest Park Golf Course in St. Louis

"QUOTABLE"

BY THE NUMBERS

98 The number of closings (18-hole equivalents) in 2005, according to NGF

124.5 The number of openings (18-hole equivalents) in 2005, according to NGF

13 The average number of years GCN subscribers have been in their current position, according to the 2005 GCN subscriber profile survey of 504 respondents

51 The percentage of 400 golf business executives who say the economic conditions in the golf industry will be the same in 2006 as they were in 2005, according to NGF

78 The percentage of 400 golf business executives who say competition from other courses or clubs is the biggest challenge for a golf facility

32,144

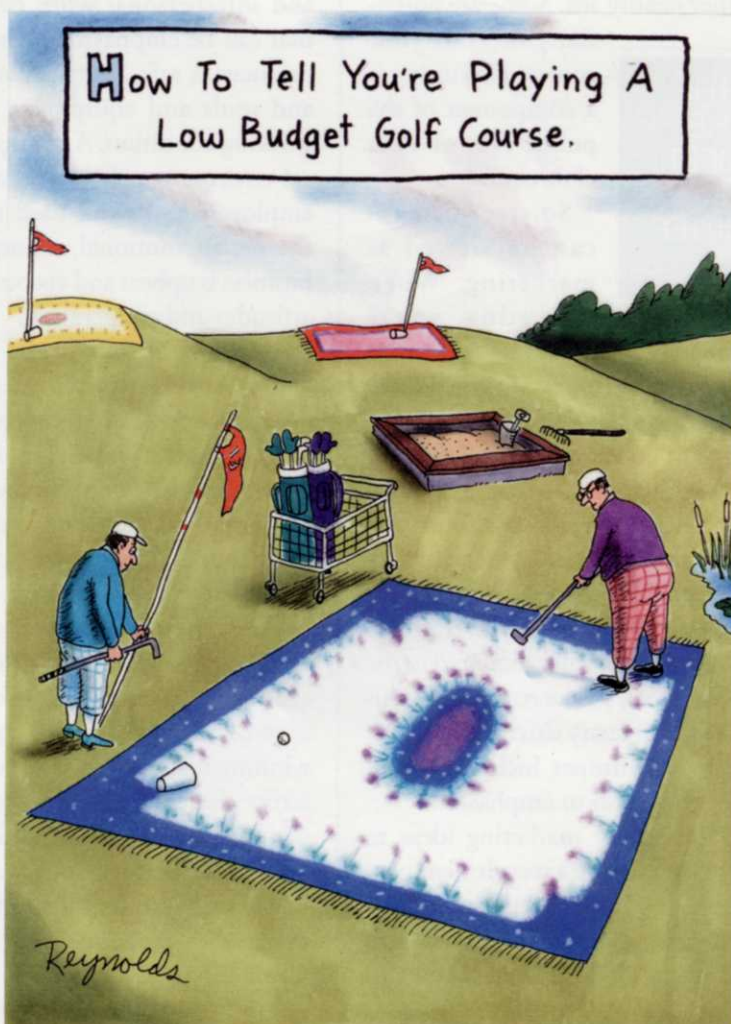
The projected average number of rounds per course in 2005, according to the 2005 GCN subscriber profile survey of 504 respondents

266 The number of new golf courses under construction as of Jan. 5, according to NGF

122 The number of golf course additions under construction as of Jan. 5, according to NGF

\$427,500 The average superintendent's maintenance budget, according to the 2005 GCN subscriber profile survey of 504 respondents

6,911 The average yardage of an 18-hole golf course, according to the 2005 GCN subscriber profile survey of 504 respondents



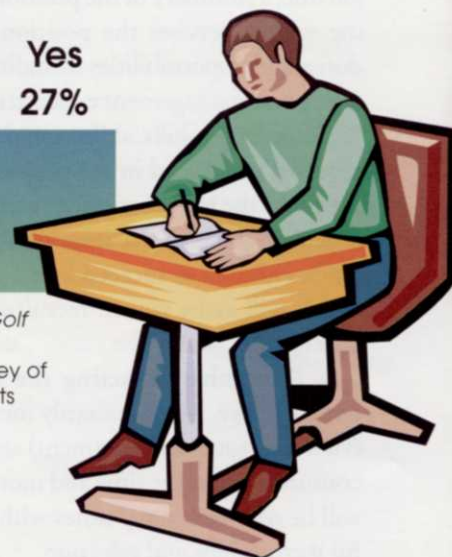
Source: Dan Reynolds

No
73%

If you are a golf course superintendent, are you certified?

Yes
27%

Source: 2005 Golf Course News subscriber survey of 504 respondents



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Managing change

A LOOK AT THE CLUB MANAGERS ASSOCIATION, ITS MEMBERS AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENTS

by
JOHN
WALSH

Q Explain the biggest changes in club management during the past 20 years.

The biggest change is the realization that a club is a business, not a hobby or something for committees to spend time on when they have time to do it. It's a huge multibillion-dollar business, and it needs to be managed as any multibillion-dollar business would. You're talking about small operations and millions of dollars. There needs to be a governed structure – a place that has checks and balances and accountability.

As a whole, the industry helped to better identify not just golf course management but the management of clubs as thriving, successful economic engines. They have been there, and they will be there for decades. They

don't come in for short periods of time and move on.

Q When did this change occur?

It occurred primarily during the '70s and '80s after clubs, for decades, were governed in many different forms by whoever had the time to do it. To a great degree, our individual professions, the CMAA and Golf Course Superintendents Association of America specifically, were focused on the professionalism of their individual members. Colleges and universities recognized this as a mode of professionalism that warranted degree programs. Significant dollars were committed to research, surveying, looking at trends and seeing the industry as futuristic rather than something that people did on their way to someplace else.

Q What's the percentage of members that belong to a club that has golf?

More than 80 percent of our club managers work at golf-related facilities. There's a strong focus on golf that's grown during the past 30 years. The number of city clubs that are represented by our members hasn't diminished, but there hasn't been any growth. The

growth has been within the golf industry – going from 1,500 or 1,800 clubs to close to 3,000 clubs.

Q How will the CMAA grow?

Our focus has never been on the number of members. We look at programs that drive membership. We want the entire industry to be able to look at the CMAA as that corporate office, as that resource that helps them do their job better.

We have members who are also members of the GCSAA, PGA of America, Hospitality Financial Technology Professionals and American Culinary Federation. Our membership base comes from allied associations in addition to those that have a core competency in the field of professional club management.

Q How many members belong to the CMAA and GCSAA?

We don't pull that number because we don't ask the membership to tell us what other organizations they belong to. If they're members of the CMAA and jointly a member of the GCSAA, PGA of America or the American Culinary Federation, the CMAA is a secondary or support structure to them in almost all cases.

Q What's the biggest need the association has to address?

The greatest need is to stay ahead of the curve and anticipate, through research and surveying, what the needs are going to be two to three years in advance of when that need actually surfaces. Strategic planning and direction of our programming is vital to the success of this organization.

Q What are needs you've seen change through research?

The most recent would be our health benefits program that benefits all employees at the clubs. It's the first national association program that covers all 50 states. It's available to every employee at a club as a health care program as if it were offered through Blue

Cross or any other agency.

For five years, our members have told us their greatest concern for the operation and management of their clubs was the ability to provide health care to their employees. So we responded to that. It took us about four years to put together a program that's verified by the U.S. Department of Labor. It's a federally overseen program.

For years, we've said benefit programs within the golf industry have been something that weren't necessarily a given to many people who work in it, but they are a requirement for everyone's quality of life. If you couldn't continue to offer quality health benefits to your employees, you become secondary to another job opportunity. Therefore, we had to be sure we had a health benefits plan that was going to be available to them and not be withdrawn or diminished because of the cost that was fostered on us by factors we have no control over.

Q How will the program impact retention and recruitment?

It's been received positively by our group. It's for the members or the clubs that have a member of the CMAA. The program doesn't benefit CMAA members only. It benefits every club employee the club wants to cover. It's at a rate about 10 percent less than what's being offered by health-care providers.

Photo: Fred Schilling



GCN INTERVIEWS JIM SINGERLING, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF THE CLUB MANAGERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA.

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Q How did you see relationships between club managers and superintendents develop?

When I came to the CMAA, I saw individuals who operated in their own little vacuum. In many cases, they operated independently of other professionals. That's what I felt I brought to the table here – looking at the association as a business, and from that, seeing you can't operate independently any longer. Now, individuals have too many aspects of their jobs that overlap.

So if you run a good operation, it goes back to my philosophy of strategically planning how you operate. We saw clubs needing a senior or designated individual. It didn't make any difference whether it was a club manager, golf course superintendent or golf pro, but someone had to be the team leader within that organization. It was natural in most organizations for the general manager to be that leader within the management team, if

you had all of the amenities available to the members of the club.

We also saw a need for there to be a greater appreciation among the members of the CMAA for the technical knowledge and professionalism of individuals they worked with. If they were operating independently, never getting together and talking, there was little that one could learn about who he's working with and what that person's professional background or knowledge was.

That's where we started to work much more strongly, making sure general managers had an appreciation for the other professions. Not to become experts, not to be able to do the job of the professionals they work with, but they needed to appreciate what background they have and identify the strengths and weaknesses of the people they work with. Then you can develop your organizational governments and structure around those strengths and weaknesses.

Q Explain how the CMAA and GCSAA became closer?

I can only speak to the 15 years prior to our announcement of being part of the Golf Industry Show. Steve Mona came on board the GCSAA after I was hired at the CMAA. The hiring of Steve as c.e.o. was a huge move because of the strength of his background with the U.S. Golf Association and the Georgia State Golf Association. He was a great addition to the profession and the government structure of the GCSAA. From the first day on the job, Steve and I have communicated based on a candid, trusting relationship. He never has done anything that would lead me not to have the highest regard for a decision he made, knowing it was made with all of the information in the best interest of everyone. He probably has the same feeling with me. We always get together and talk about issues and initiatives we have. Neither of us is surprised by the other.

When the CMAA and GCSAA first started talking about the Golf Industry Show and the ability to bring the decision makers to the same location at the same time, we knew there would be an opportunity to share educational knowledge and programs to a greater degree. If we could bring decision makers together to traverse the trade show floor and visit with vendors on a one-on-one basis, it expedites and simplifies the decision-making process. It didn't leave anyone in the dark. You can come together and talk to the top professionals in the world at the Golf Industry Show.

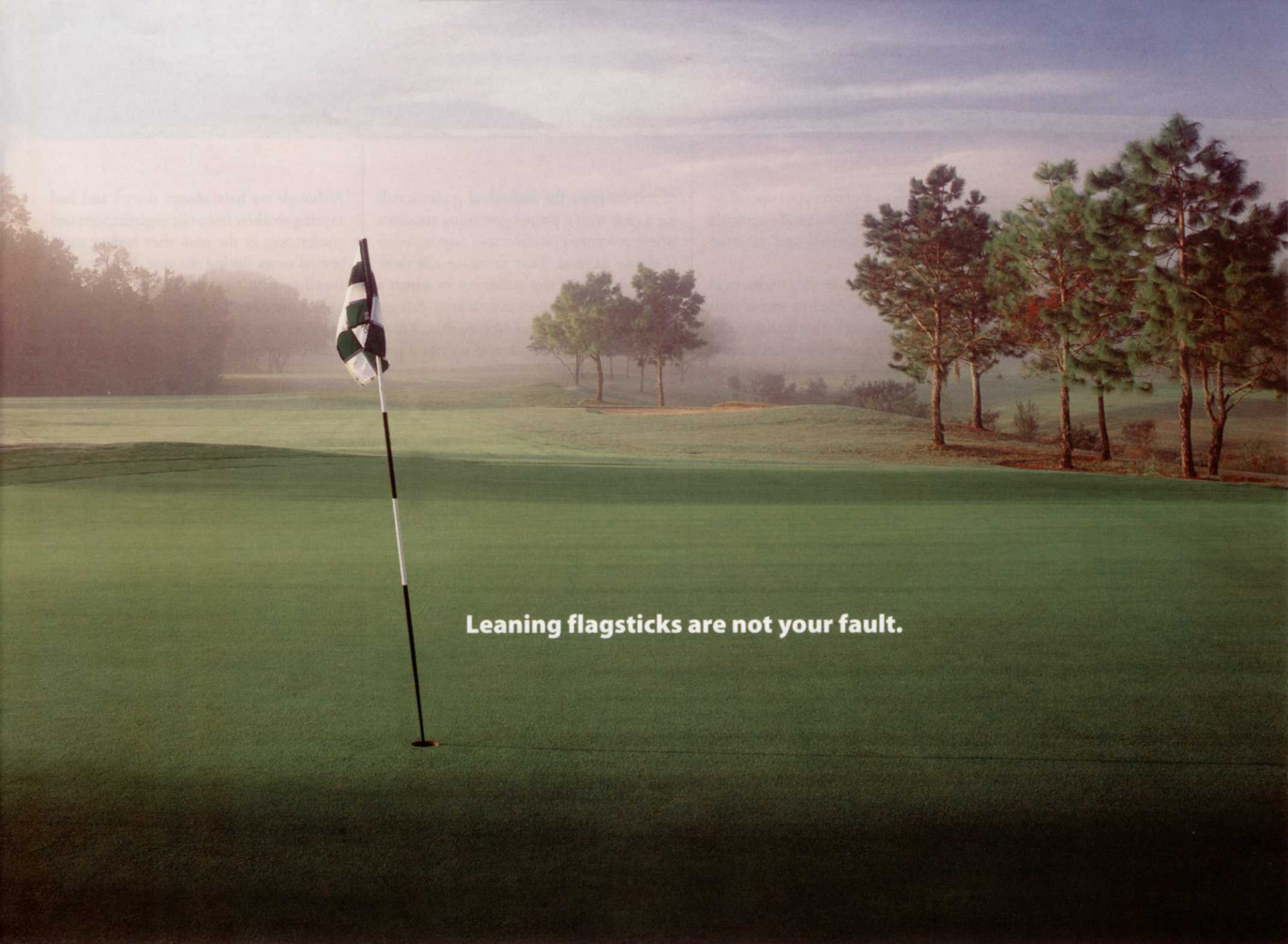
Q What are your thoughts about superintendents becoming general managers?

The obligation of our two associations is to make sure the professionals belonging to our associations make those decisions with their eyes open. The scenario the grass is always greener on the other side doesn't always play out. Individuals need to know they're talking about a lifestyle change in many cases. They're talking about a change in responsibility.

You have to have a broad-based peripheral knowledge about every aspect from accounting to finance to balance sheets, as well as operational expenses. You have to understand mortgage financing and depreciation values as they relate to the equipment purchased and many of the furnishings and fixtures around the facility. You have to have a basic knowledge about everything from the tennis courts, Jacuzzi and spa areas to the kitchens, locker rooms, dining facilities, and parking and common areas. You're also dealing with town councils and state and local govern-



Photo: Fred Schilling



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ments who have control over your operation when it comes to right-of-ways and easements when you're doing internal and external improvements.

Individuals should be sure they understand the face-to-face time needed to spend with members. When moving to that management role, you need to be able to have that human exchange with a lot of happy people and some unhappy people. You need to work well with members when trying to convince or explain to them something they have no knowledge of. Do you attempt to get them to understand things better, or do you simply take the approach that you're going to tell them this and because you're a professional they better believe you? Members don't buy that.

Then you also have that exchange from a club manager's perspective in which you're dealing with entry-level employees on an hour-by-hour, minute-by-minute basis, and then within seconds, you're dealing with the c.e.o.s of Fortune 500 companies. You need to transition quickly.

If that's something they're comfortable with daily, superintendents should look at becoming general managers. As an association, we need to be sure that they're able to make those decisions with their eyes open rather than making a spontaneous reaction to what a club officer or member might suggest would be a great opportunity.

Q Are club managers threatened by superintendents?

I haven't sensed anyone who's unhappy with someone because of where they came from – the golf course, pro shop, accounting office, kitchen, hotel or resort industry. In few instances, people lose their jobs to someone else by happenstance. In most cases, you can see that coming, so it doesn't make any difference where the replacement comes from. It's human nature that you don't care for the person that replaces you if it's a surprise. But if you're a professional who's made a decision to move on to a better opportunity, you want to transition the new person into your position no matter what position they held before in the best interest of the club.

We're seeing more individuals transition into club management that come from a thoughtful perspective by boards and clubs than the surprise of a Friday night massacre when you're told to clean out your desk. That just isn't happening much anymore.

Q Is there acrimony among club managers, golf pros and superintendents?

I haven't seen acrimony growing between the professions. There's an enormous amount

of respect from the individual professionals for a club with a proper governing structure where everyone's position and responsibility is clearly defined. That doesn't mean there isn't going to be any acrimony in which a facility doesn't have responsibilities defined and people are stepping on each other's toes. It's not a growing trend, and it's not a predominant issue.

Q Will the golf facility structure change?

We've seen it change during the past five to seven years. Club developers or owners have established this as a business, and if you look at any other business structure in the community, seldom is it run by three people with equal power. It's just not an efficient way to run a business. So you determine who the person is, depending on the needs of the facility, that should be designated as the responsible c.o.o. of that business and then give them the responsibility. That way the board can come back and say if things aren't running the way they ought to be run to that individual no matter what their background. It would be fine if it were a superintendent, golf professional or club manager.

The undergraduate programs taken by CMAA student members are based on a multifaceted leadership role the professional club manager takes. They have to understand what the other professionals do and are responsible for. You have to make sure everyone is in the loop. Probably the greatest shortcoming within the business operation of most clubs has been not making sure the c.f.o. has an understanding of your job other than giving him the monthly financial statements.

We've worked closely with HFTP during the past 10 years, but more directly during the past five years, to develop the uniform system of accounting that's used by more than 90 percent of the clubs as the bases for their financial reports. It's only through the work of the CMAA and HFTP that it has been accepted by all major accounting firms as the benchmark for financial reporting.

Q What are your thoughts about becoming part of the Golf Industry Show?

We see no drawbacks. It was a strategic decision, but we wanted to make sure we didn't make a major decision that wasn't in the best interest of our members. So we worked through many challenges. One of the most thoughtful decisions by the various organizations was that we needed to have our individual conferences separate from the exposition. We needed to be sure our individual professions had their own identity.

Although we have always shared and had visiting speakers from our organizations and conferences in the past, they had to travel several times during the year. Putting these together maintains the identity of our individual members by having the conferences separate but brings together the decision makers to one location.

Q Why is the CMAA coming into the GIS later than other associations?

All of us had planned and booked our conferences significantly in advance. Also, we diminished the venues where we could have a conference because there wasn't convention space or sleeping rooms available for us in many cities. When you take over most of a city, you have to make a significant commitment that carries penalties contractually if you pull out. If you drop out, the closer you get to the conference the bigger the penalty.

The National Golf Course Owners Association has a much smaller show, so it could make the decision spontaneously and join quickly. For us, however, we had contracts with cities and hotels in New Orleans last year and Honolulu this year that were made seven years ago. If we were to pull out of that, we would have to pay hundreds of thousands of dollars in cancellation fees.

We held off for three to four years making any more commitments knowing that we were in negotiations with the GCSAA about the Golf Industry Show. We hadn't signed any contracts so our window was dropped down to three years rather than five to seven.

Q Anything else?

People always ask about what I see for the future. Anytime you are talking about injecting change into the lives of thousands of individuals, you try to inject that change with as little pain and as much information as you can. The GCSAA and CMAA were cautious about getting information out to our members as best we could. Our industry is much stronger because of that alliance.

The vast majority of members of our two associations are working together. It's better for them as individuals and for our industry than working apart. The structure is in place, and all of the opportunities are there for us to continue to let those opportunities grow and see the challenges diminished on an annual basis for both of our associations and for the golf industry. GCN

Jim Singerling, CCM, CEC, can be reached at jims@cmaa.org.

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3336 Plus with ClearTec™ Activation Technology™ is a reengineered formulation of 3336™, the fungicide that superintendents have trusted for superior results for more than 30 years. New 3336 Plus provides better disease control by enhancing the effectiveness of the active ingredient (a.i.) in 3336, resulting in greater efficacy and longer-lasting control with less a.i. at effective use rates. And like 3336, new 3336 Plus is also an ideal rotation and tank mix partner with other fungicides.

3336 Plus increases the length of disease control on fairways up to 50%, when compared to standard 3336. Plus, it's backed by Cleary Chemical Corporation, a mainstay in the turf industry for more than 65 years.

3336 Plus Delivers Proven Benefits

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- **Excellent rotation partner with other fungicides.** By rotating 3336 Plus with other fungicides, superintendents can achieve superior control while helping to ensure that they have the most product options available for disease management.
- **Economical control.** Longer lasting control means the per-day cost of controlling diseases is less, saving superintendents money.
- **Excellent compatibility.** Can be combined with other common turf products.

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ClearTec Activation Technology (CAT) is an innovative new process that works specifically with 3336 F changing the way the chemical interacts with the plant and disease-causing pathogens. CAT is not a surfactant or penetrant adjuvant. CAT is a reengineering of 3336 that

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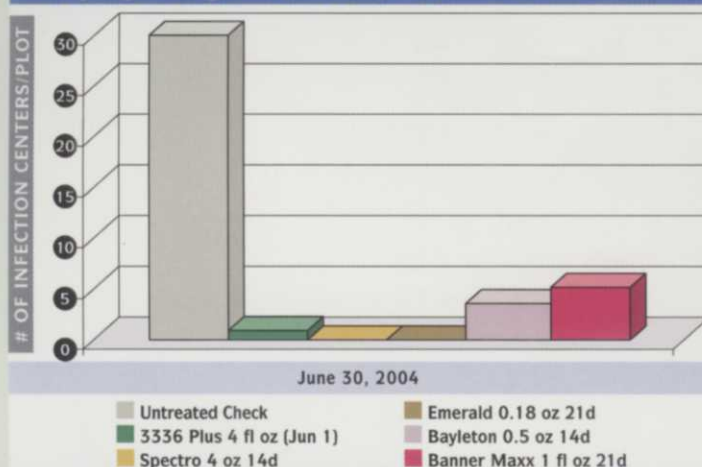
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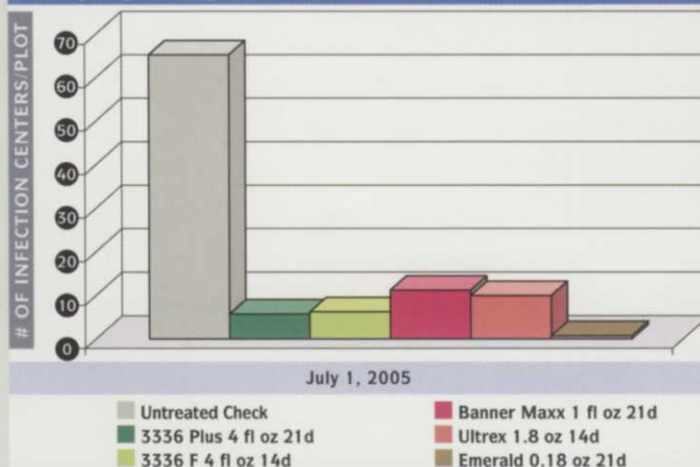
Dollar Spot Control - 2004
Creeping Bentgrass (FWY A)

B. Clarke
Rutgers University



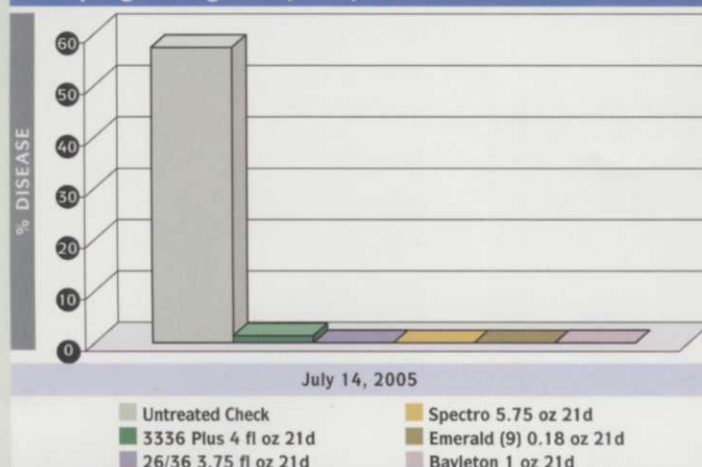
Dollar Spot Control - 2005
Creeping Bentgrass (FWY)

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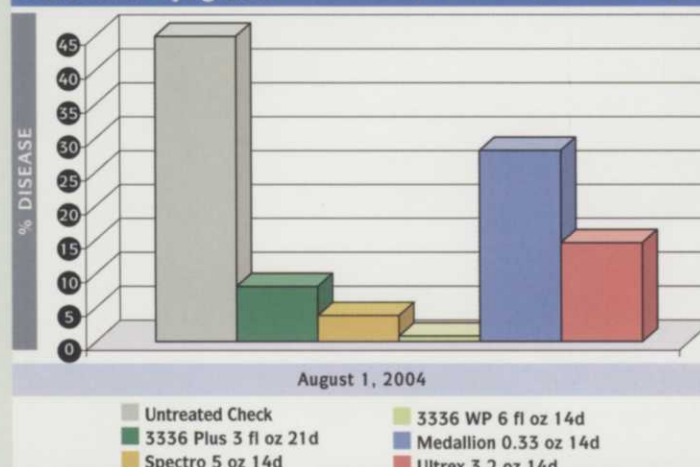
Dollar Spot Control - 2005
Creeping Bentgrass (FWY)

S. Askew, D. McCall
Virginia Tech. University



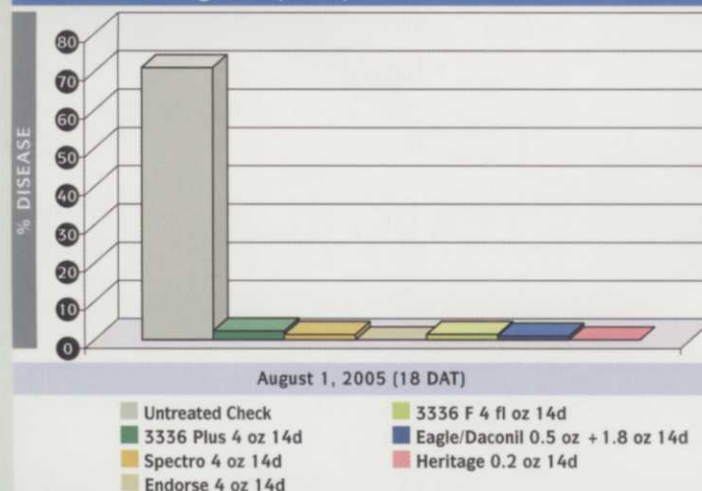
Gray Leaf Spot Control - 2004
Perennial Ryegrass

P. Vincelli
University of Kentucky



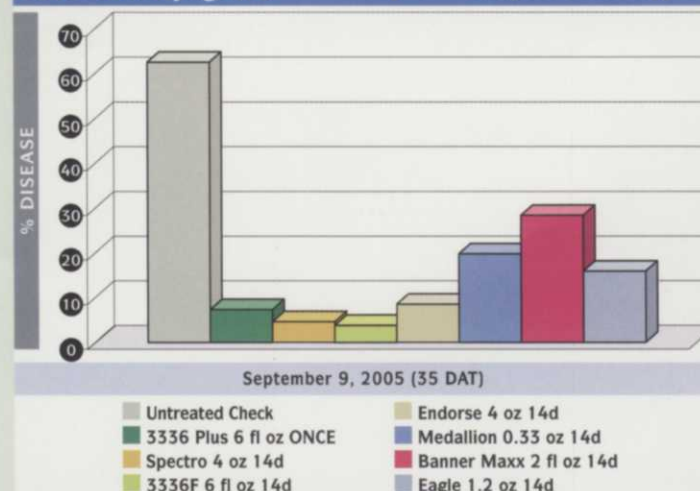
Brown Patch Control - 2005
Colonial Bentgrass (FWY)

P. Dernoeden
University of Maryland



Gray Leaf Spot - 2005
Perennial Ryegrass

B. Clarke
Rutgers University



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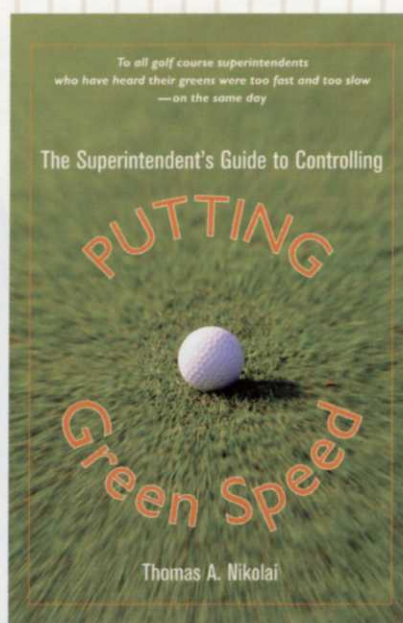


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AGCN0206

Poised for growth

VARIOUS SEGMENTS OF THE INDUSTRY WORK TO IMPROVE THE GOLF BUSINESS



Photo: Redstone Golf Management

by
STEVE
AND SUZ
TRUSTY

The mood about the golf industry is cautiously optimistic. Even though there were small declines in some areas and minor gains in others, the golf industry held steady in most areas of the country. Not a boom ... but not a bust.

Rounds increased 0.2 percent in November 2005 year to date, according to the National Golf Foundation. At press time, a year-end rounds report hadn't been completed. For same-store rounds played in 2005 vs. 2004, NGF projected rounds to finish flat to down one-half of 1 percent. (See a related chart on page 36.)

Weather conditions affected rounds in 2005 as hurricanes swept across the Southeast, prolonged drought opened the way for the wildfires in the Southwest plains and late-season rains washed away golf opportunities in the Pacific Northwest.

But the industry's challenges are greater than unpredictable weather. Corporate play has come under greater scrutiny from shareholders responding to economic pressures.

"The economy and reduced travel following 9/11 started an across-the-board decline impacting all types of courses in all regions," says Ricky Heine, CGCS, general manager of Golf Club Star Ranch in Hutto, Texas. "It's going to rebound equally. The golf industry is coming out of a period of flat growth and is about to see growth begin again."

The number of courses within a market is a considerable performance factor for many golf facilities.

"We've been able to hold our own business-wise, but not without a great deal of effort," says Charlie Birney, managing director for Edgewater, Md.-based Atlantic Golf and secretary of the National Golf Course Owners Association.

"When we opened our first upscale, daily-fee public golf course on the Eastern Shore in 1991, there weren't many other courses around. At that time, we didn't need to spend any money to attract players. Now, marketing is a huge part of what we do. Like many other regions, we're challenged by the influx of other courses around us."

Despite new courses in the market, play at



Heine



Birney

Golf Club Star Ranch has increased each year for the past five years, according to Heine, who also is vice president of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America.

"We're a new course, but there were 10 new courses built in a four-year period in our region," he says. "That's a lot of competition that didn't exist four years ago. To be competitive and successful, we need to be creative and energetic in attracting golfers and encouraging them to play."

In 2005, there were 124.5 openings (18-hole equivalents), according to NGF. This continues a steady annual decline that began in 2001 following a high of 398.5 openings (18-hole equivalents) in 2000. NGF also reported 98 closings (18-hole equivalents) in 2005, which is the highest number in years.

Alan Andreasen, CGCS, at the 18-hole Los Lagos Golf Course and the nine-hole



Andreasen

Rancho del Pueblo Golf Course in the San Jose, Calif., area, says Los Lagos has been open for three years and Rancho for five, so it's hard to talk trends. But he says rounds are increasing modestly – 1 or 2 percent – at both courses.

A nearby course that served mainly older and lower-skill-level golfers closed recently, and Rancho is attracting many of its players.

Growing the game

Aside from course development, the golf industry has identified important challenges it faces: the time it takes to play the game; the demands of family time; the cost of green fees, equipment and lessons; and the difficulty for new players to feel comfortable learning the game. Birney urges people in the industry to think outside the box.

"We hold an informal, early morning nine-hole event," he says. "People come in, have coffee and network, hit the course for a couple hours, raise a little money for charity and head out by 10 a.m. so they can go back to work. It fits the time and skill level of many players. Some will thank you for getting them back into golf."

"Courses can be stodgy and unwelcoming to beginners," he adds. "We need to promote beginner-friendly course programs to encourage more play. It's all about hooking people on golf and retaining them as players."

Though much progress has been made, more work is needed to grow the game be-

yond existing core golfers.

"I'm optimistic, but we have to do an even better job to improve efforts to attract and retain juniors, women and minorities using programs such as First Tee and Grow Golf America," says Greg Muirhead, an architect at Rees Jones and v.p. of the American Society of Golf Course Architects.

People still want to be outdoors, enjoy the camaraderie and exercise of golfing and experience the thrill of hitting a great shot, Muirhead says.

"Making golf part of their lifestyle choice depends on how we target them and fill their needs," he says. "Our designs are becoming more flexible to accommodate the greater diversity of skill levels of the golfers. That can include tees for women, tees for seniors and junior tees for family play."

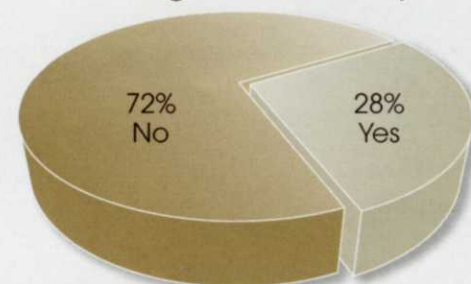
Additionally, advanced technology for balls and clubs increases the challenge to grow the game and improve the health of the industry.

"Courses are becoming longer and wider because the equipment and the ability of the player are getting better," says Tommy Sasser, v.p. of Weitz Golf International and immediate past president of the Golf Course Builders Association of America. "That requires more land and adds expense. Though the cost per acre might not be higher, there are more acres. The extra area drives up construction, development and maintenance costs."


Because those costs ultimately are passed on to the end-user, this impacts another challenge – the cost to play. To counter that, Muirhead says the ASGCA is championing the idea of building more practical facilities.

"Courses don't always have to be 18 or nine holes," he says. "A three-hole, par-3 executive course might be better received if it's in the right spot and is affordable, accessible and sustainable. The PGA tour fan base has grown

Do you plan to renovate your course during the next five years?



Source: 2005 GCN subscriber survey of 504 respondents

A large, reddish-brown wooden window frame with a 12-pane grid (two columns of six panes each) is superimposed over a photograph of a golf course. The window frame is the central focus, and the background shows a lush green golf course with a sand trap and a line of trees under a clear blue sky.

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Muirhead

35 percent in the past few years, so we're attracting interest to the game, but we're not getting those people as players."

Maintaining golf courses has challenges of its own, as well. Superintendents are continuing to find ways to do more with less.

"Budgets are holding flat or slightly increasing," Heine says. "Fuel is one of those basic, externally fixed costs, like electricity and water, and the one fluctuating most right now. As these costs rise, they cause superintendents to be creative and save in other parts of the budget as much as we can."

And management is recognizing the important role of course maintenance and conditioning. As additional revenue is generated, some of the funds are being allocated to the superintendent's budget to enhance the course.

A look ahead

The biggest challenge in 2006 throughout the industry will be continuing to increase play and keeping the revenues flowing to meet increased demand, Andreasen says. (See related chart below.)

Also, course and clubhouse renovations will continue. (See chart on page 31.)

"Many of the older clubs, if they have a good facility, are in great locations in relation to population centers," Sasser says. "Renov-



Photo: Atlantic Golf

Atlantic Golf, which owns Queenstown (Md.) Harbor Golf Links, is holding its own businesswise, according to managing director Charlie Birney.

vation or reconstruction will enhance their competitiveness."

Golf courses always must strive to improve. For Heine, bunkers are a continual improvement project. The in-house staff is rebuilding about 10 bunkers a year, rotating on a five-year cycle.

Muirhead says the ASGCA has made a push to educate club managers, owners and public golf owners about master planning

with an architect on retainer to consult with annually.

"Developing a master plan will allow the course to improve in phases throughout the years to better allocate funds and remain competitive," he says.

Yet optimism about the industry's future will continue to be tempered by reality.

"Discussion of a possible break in the home building bubble is a concern to all in the golf construction business because much of it is driven by real-estate development," Sasser says. "That would be a major hit. So we're keeping a

close eye on that real estate with the development of golf courses tied into it."

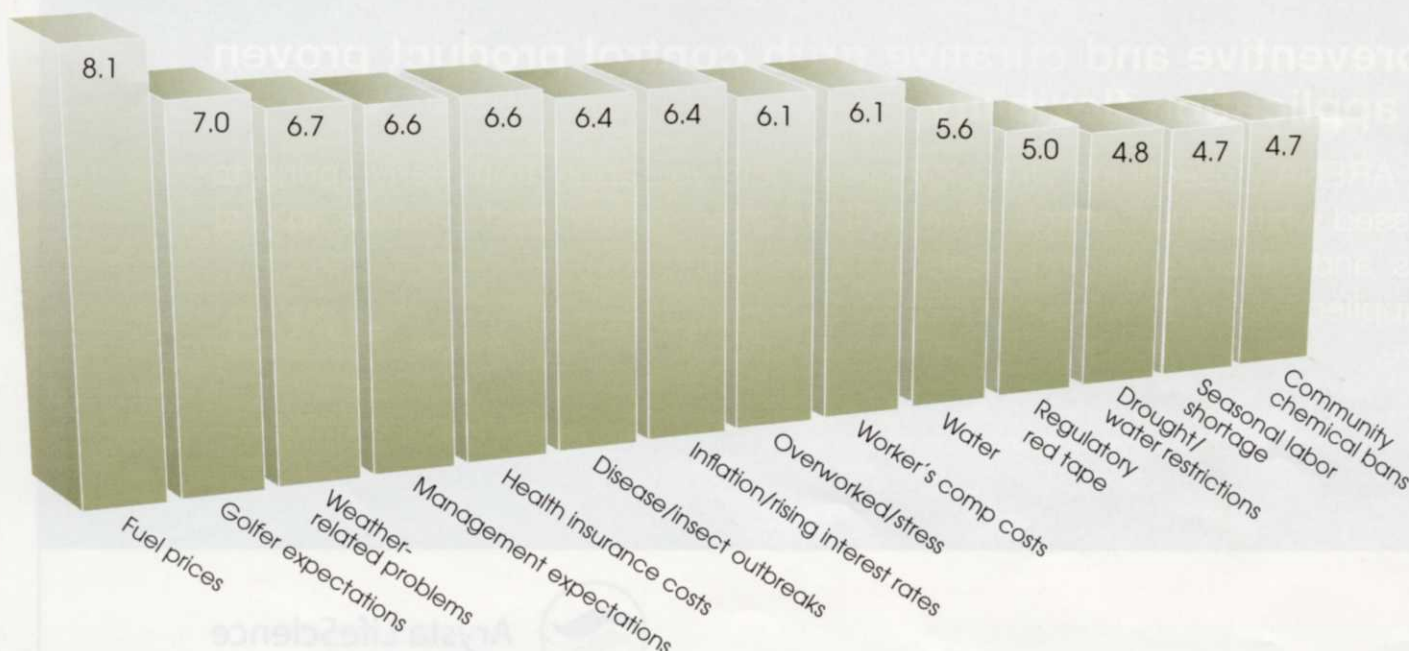
Golf also is competing with many other activities for entertainment dollars.

"It's not just the course, but the entire experience — the course, club and facility and the environment that we create," Heine says. "There needs to be a positive experience for golfers who want to commit their time and funds to it."

Older golfers have a new lifestyle attitude that's impacting the golf industry. People retiring are looking for a total package that includes greater access to those things they deem important to their quality of life. Climate isn't the only issue, they want to be closer to family and the advantages of a metro area, Birney says.

On a scale of 1 to 10 (with 1 being the lowest concern and 10 being the highest concern), please rate how much concern each of the following issues are going to be to your business successes in 2006.

Source: 2005 GCN subscriber survey of 504 respondents



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Approximately, how many rounds were played at your golf course(s) in 2004 and how many were projected for 2005?

Source: 2005 GCN subscriber survey of 504 respondents



The future of the game and its progression partly lie with junior golfers.

"I see the industry continuing to move forward with programs like Play Golf America and First Tee, introducing those at younger ages into the game," Muirhead says.

Heine agrees, saying these efforts have an impact on young golfers.

"Like many other courses across the country, our course provides play and teaching opportunities for the golf team of our local high school," he says. "It just happens to be the same high school I attended. Though the student body hasn't increased in size, the current 20 team members are nearly triple the number on our team 25 years ago. That's

a positive reflection on the youth growth in golf."

There also is a stronger commitment from various organizations working together on common causes to benefit the industry. Communications and relationships might be strong, but the industry needs to continue to work on those relationships to be successful.

"In the past, we fought the same battle, but did it alone," Sasser says. "Now we're jointly fighting it together." GCN

Steve and Suz Trusty are freelance writers based in Council Bluffs, Iowa. They can be reached at suz@trusty.bz.

Unlike 10 years ago, marketing plays a significant role in improving business at Atlantic Golf's properties, one of which is Potomac Ridge Golf Links in Waldorf, Md.

Photo: Atlantic Golf



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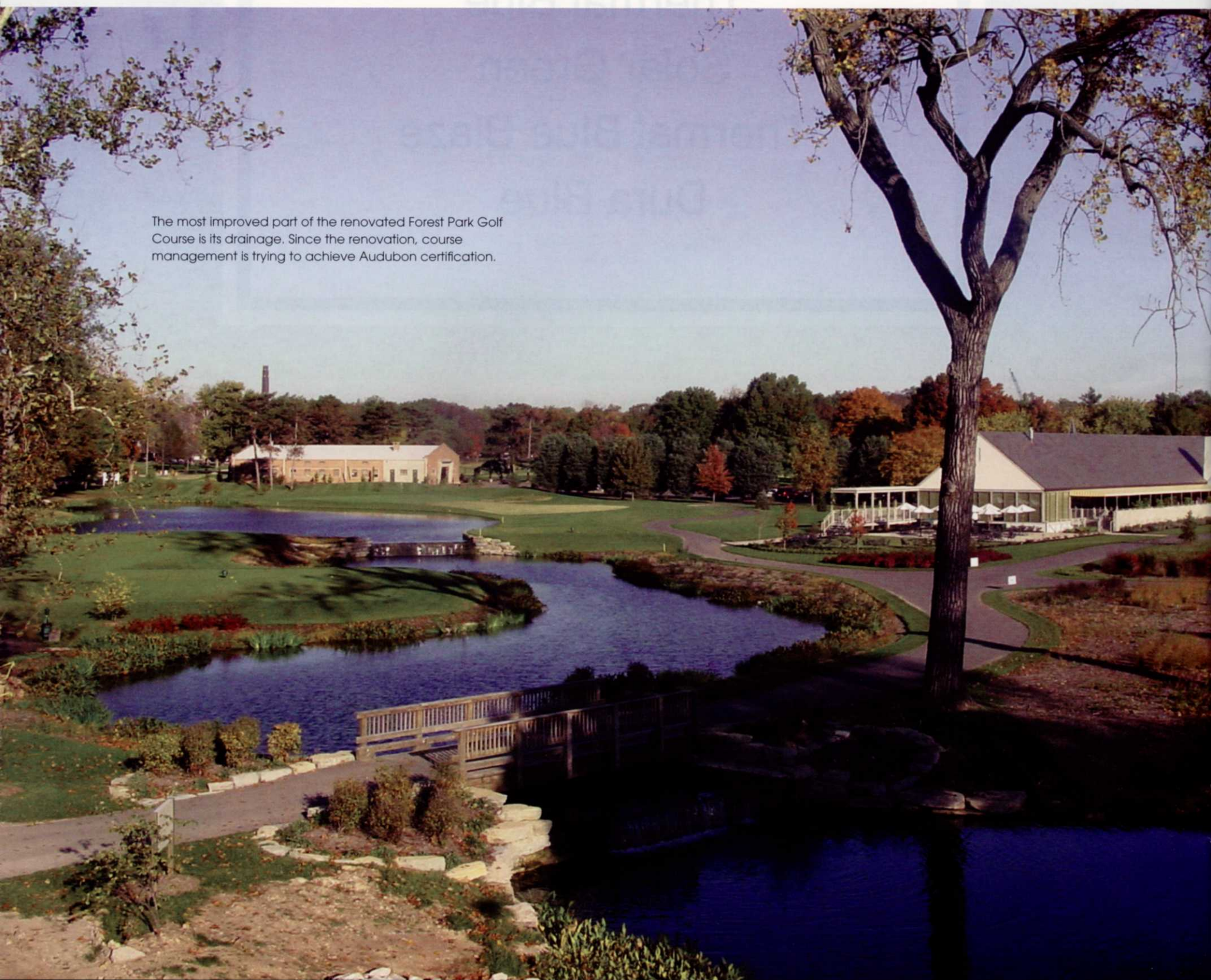
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Keeping that old-school feel

**PUBLIC, PRIVATE ENTITIES COME TOGETHER
TO REHAB A TIRED COURSE IN AN URBAN SETTING**

The most improved part of the renovated Forest Park Golf Course is its drainage. Since the renovation, course management is trying to achieve Audubon certification.





by
**JOHN
WALSH**

*Photographs by
Rob Geary*

Golfing on the site of the 1904 World's Fair is more enjoyable now that the 27-hole Forest Park Golf Course in St. Louis has been renovated. Even though the course has been updated, golf course architect Stan Gentry kept a similar design the course had when it opened in 1912. However, getting to that point wasn't easy, mainly because the course is part of a 1,370-acre urban park that features a zoo, memorial, outdoor opera, science center, planetarium, and art and history museums.

Get the ball rolling

During the early 1990s, the city brought together individuals and consultants to analyze the park because it was falling apart. The water quality in the lakes was bad, the roads were in disrepair, storm sewers were overflowing, the vegetation was old, trees were dying and the sidewalks were cracking, according to Gentry.

"We looked at the whole infrastructure – what needed to go and what needed to stay," he says. "It took about two years to provide a report."

The public also was invited to comment, according to general manager Jeff Raffelson, who says the first consideration was to avoid use conflict in the park. The committee analyzed the roads in the park to improve traffic for cars, joggers, bikers, etc.

The golf course, like the park, was run down. It had poor drainage, undersized tees, worn cart paths and heavy play.

"The course had deferred maintenance and hadn't been changed much since it was first built back in the early 1900s," Raffelson says. "There was a piecemeal approach to upgrading the course because of the number of rounds played."

In the early 1990s, the course generated 100,000 rounds annually. Shortly before the renovation, the course generated about

90,000 rounds annually.

But despite the piecemeal approach, the greens were in good shape, the Bermudagrass fairways weren't too bad, and the course is on a great piece of land, partly because of the elevation changes, according to Chad Carpenter, golf course superintendent at Forest Park.

Raffelson says the renovation project was challenging because there were a number of stakeholders involved. The course has three owners – the city; Forest Park Forever, a private nonprofit group that raised money for the renovation; and American Golf, the company that manages the facility.

"It's pretty unique to see public and private entities come together," Raffelson says.

"We needed to balance the issues among these three, but everyone was on the same page," Gentry adds.

Also in the mix were The Danforth Foundation, which donated a significant amount of money through Forest Park Forever, and the Probst family. Norm Probst was a St. Louis businessman and avid golfer who was the catalyst for the renovation and got things moving by donating \$2 million, according to Raffelson.

"It was his vision and donation that started the whole thing," he says.

Forest Park Forever raised millions of dollars for the park improvements and now is getting donations to help maintain the course, according to Gentry.

The budget for the course renovation was \$4.5 million, but the total cost ended up being \$12.5 million, which includes the course, parking, clubhouse and infrastructure.

Back in time design

The old 27-hole layout consisted of an 18-hole course that extended into the park and didn't have returning nines. Many of the holes ran along streets, creating conflicts with

AT A GLANCE

Forest Park Golf Course

Location:	St. Louis
Year built:	1912
Number of holes:	27
Type of facility:	Municipal
Renovation started:	September 2001
Renovation completed:	September 2003
Total cost:	\$12.5 million (\$6.5 million for course, \$4.5 million for clubhouse and \$1.5 million for new infrastructure)
Golf course architect:	Stan Gentry
Golf course superintendent:	Chad Carpenter
General manager:	Jeff Raffelson
Management Co.:	American Golf
Construction Co.:	Sellenriek Grading Co.
Greens:	L-93 bentgrass
Tees:	Quickstand Bermudagrass
Fairways:	Meyers zoysiagrass

joggers, bikers, in-line skaters, etc. The old nine-hole layout was a flat course plagued by poor drainage.

Some of Gentry's guidelines were to provide initial pools and waterfalls for the park's new connected waterway while solving the drainage problem, as well as provide three nines that could be paired in different combinations.

Added to that, American Golf was worried the course would be too difficult for the average golfer after the renovation. So, Gentry says he didn't have a lot of room to work.

"We tried to create land forms that would help drainage and tie it to the new layout," he says. "We tried not to destroy the beautiful trees. We didn't want to move a large amount of land to create forced land forms."

A tree survey was conducted, and that was overlaid on the existing topography.

"I looked at the center line and decided on the trees we wanted to save and which ones could go," Gentry says. "We started grading that way. I found out where I could cut and fill. With one grouping of trees, we didn't change the grade. We had to figure out where the water wanted to go and tie the new

lagoon system to it to minimize the amount of drain pipe we needed to use."

Because the course was old, Gentry wanted to use characteristics of teens architecture that hadn't been used in a while. For example, part of a green and collar slope off into a bunker.

"We were told that's a no-no, but it was a characteristic back then," Gentry says.

Gentry also designed a punch bowl green; a Biarritz green with big swales; an 8,500-square-foot green, which is the biggest on the course; and a rectangle green with cut-off edges. Some greens are flat with the fairways so balls can roll up on them. The bunkers are flat, but some have steep faces with zoysiagrass.

Gentry opened the views of the course by removing growth but still kept the course intimate and easy to walk.

Raffelson says the new design mirrors some of the signature holes from the old course, such as one that went in front of the art museum.

In the end, Gentry created three nine-hole courses: the 3,000-yard Hawthorne, the 3,200-yard Dogwood and the 3,200-yard



Golf course architect Stan Gentry created land forms that helped drainage.

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design case study



A \$4.5-million dollar overhaul of the clubhouse was part of the \$12.5-million renovation of Forest Park Golf Course.

Redbud. Eight of the holes on Redbud used existing corridors, but the majority of the other two courses had to be rerouted.

"We tried to create landing areas on one hole that were not near the landing areas on the hole next to it," Gentry says.

Building it

Construction, which was done in two phases, started in September of 2001. Phase I was 15 holes. Then Sellenriek Grading Co. was off for three months and came back and did Phase II, which was 12 holes. Construction ended in the fall of 2003, and the entire course reopened in May 2004.

When Sellenriek started pushing dirt, it found interesting things that were buried, such as wooden box culverts for water to travel through and four Stokes mortars — artillery from World War I.

"The bomb squad came out and shut the project down for a half day," says Drew Sellenriek, president of Sellenriek Grading. "It was an area of concern, so the bomb squad told us what to look for. They took the mortars, hauled them off and blew them up. But that didn't slow the project down. It took us one year to find the mortars. After we found the first one, it wasn't a concern because the bomb squad knew what they were."

Carpenter was the grow-in superintendent, and from his perspective, weather slowed things down a bit.

"[Eventually] the course opened sooner than I liked, but there wasn't a lot of flexibility with the grow-in," he says. "We wanted to keep nine holes open at all times."

Carpenter says the new drainage has helped a lot, but there could have been more drainage. However, the irrigation budget was a little low. Irrigation was added in-house before the course was grafted, he says.

"When we first bid on the project, it was

overbudget, so the city cut irrigation," Sellenriek says. "But as we were laying out the irrigation, they added stuff back in."

"After consulting was done, we needed to put in more drain pipe," Gentry says. "It took Chad a while to figure out how much water to put down because he never had zoysiagrass fairways before."

"We went with zoysiagrass fairways to keep up with the competition," Carpenter says. "It does well in the winter and has better density than the old Bermudagrass."

Sellenriek says the more drainage the better, so water doesn't have to travel far. It also helps the superintendent and playability.

"This is the most drainage of any course we've built," he says. "Irrigation is an unseen amount, and developers hate to spend a lot of money underground because it's unseen."

Raffelson says the renovation went amazingly smoothly considering the project was operated in a public park and the potential for things to go wrong was high.

A done deal

Carpenter says the maintenance has been elevated on the new course. For example, bunkers are raked seven days a week, the course is aerified more often, tee markers are moved and divots are filled daily, there's mowing on weekends. In general, maintenance practices are done more frequently.

The course, which generated 85,000 rounds last year, has moved up to a gold level with American Golf, according to Carpenter. It was previously at a silver level.

"The drainage is the biggest improvement," Carpenter says. "The golf course is an improved product, and the perception of the golf course is better. The clientele seems to take care of the course better."

Carpenter says being involved with the renovation was a fun experience.

"It's great to be involved in the construction and seeing the transition," he says. "The new design fits into the park nicely. It has the same feel as the old course."

The fees increased after the renovation. It's \$37 to ride during the week and \$47 during the weekend. But Raffelson says the ability to cope with the level of play has increased greatly. For example, the sizes of the tee boxes have quadrupled, and golfers aren't literally dragging the turf with them as they leave the tee boxes.

Golfers' response to the renovation has been mostly positive, according to Gentry.

"Some people didn't hear of this design because the ideas are so old, so I had to explain it to them and why I used it," he says.

Raffelson says the most exciting thing is when someone who hasn't been there in a while plays a round.

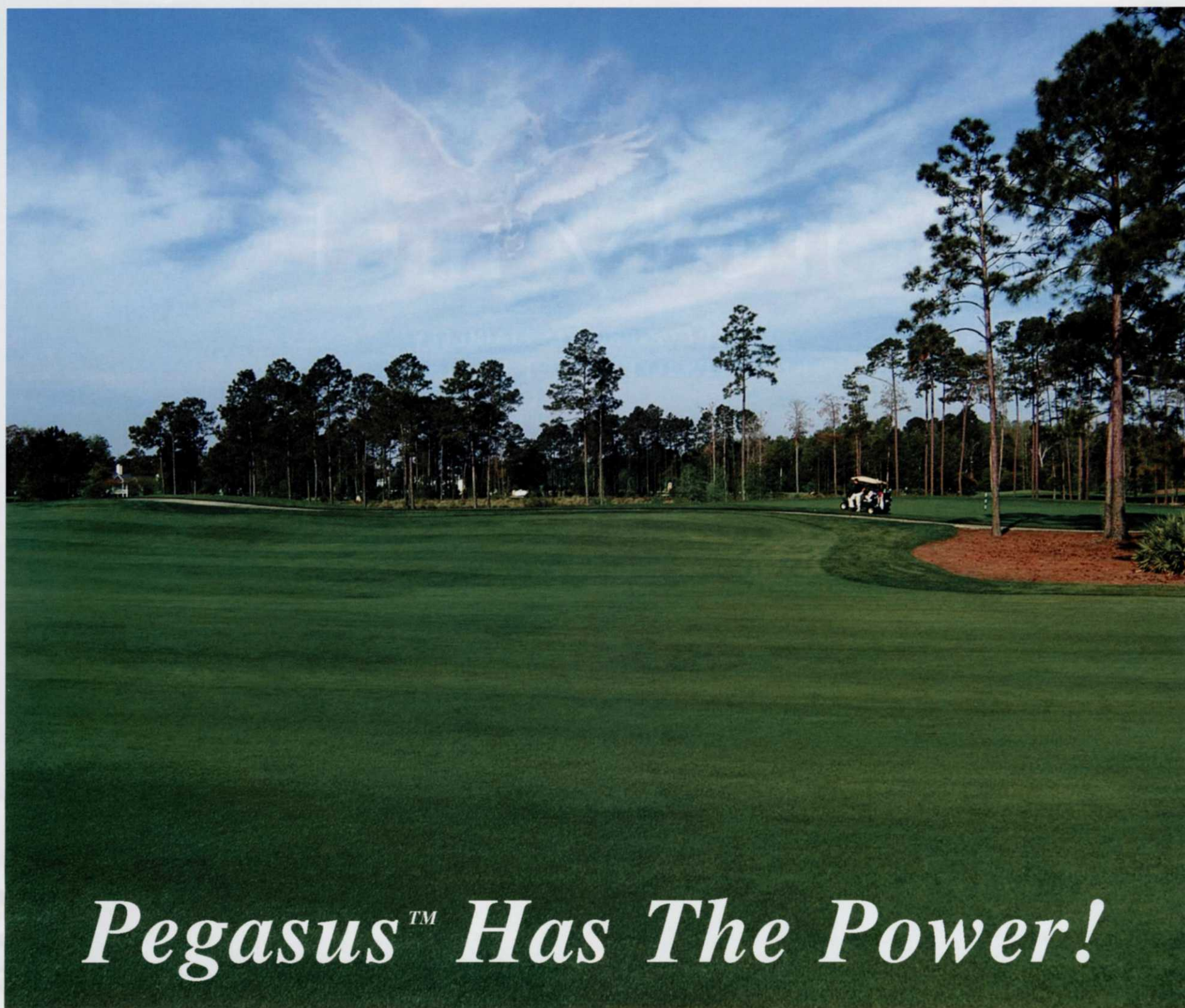
"You don't get to play golf on a course in this urban area very often," he says.

Additionally, the staff is working toward Audubon certification and hopes to have it by 2008 or 2009. Native areas were planted, including a half million dollars of plantings along waterways, Raffelson says.

"It's great to be a steward in the park," he says. GCN



Golfers at Forest Park seem to take better care of the course now that it has been renovated, according to golf course superintendent Chad Carpenter.



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Safety first

COURSE MANAGEMENT CONFRONTS LIABILITY ISSUES AND TAKES STEPS TO PROTECT ASSETS

by
**ROB
THOMAS**

Gone are the days when golf courses stretched over acres and acres of unencroached territory. Twenty years ago, developers would build a course on uninhabited land (with the possibility of homes being built nearby at a later date), but now, courses are built as the center jewel in tight housing developments. With land a precious resource and residential lots selling at a premium price, houses have become as much a hazard on golf courses as bunkers or trees.

Though laws differ from state to state and local rules change from one course to another, the issue of errant golf balls is becoming more prevalent. Whether it's a neighboring home, a passing vehicle or a maintenance worker tending to the property, course owners and managers are forced to deal with more than keeping the grass green and golfers happy.

Beyond safety lie myriad concerns when

it comes to remaining on the course and out of the courtroom.

"Anybody can sue anybody at any time," says Thomas Elkind of Boston, a member of the golf and resort services industry team at the law firm of Foley and Lardner LLP. "Don't put yourself in that situation."

The width of a hole is becoming a bigger issue as clubs and balls become more powerful and golfers don't get better, according to Elkind. The trend used to be allowing 250 feet for the width of the playing corridor. It's now as wide as 400 feet.

"You go to new courses, and they look so wide, with this in mind," he says. "Courses have to be aware of putting golfers in jeopardy. Architects are really aware of these issues."

But golfers must take ownership for their errant shots, according to Bill Herzog, partner in the group that owns Harbor Golf Club in Ashtabula, Ohio, and a senior vice

president with Sky Insurance.

"The golfer that hits the ball is responsible," Herzog says of any damage caused by an errant golf ball. "This is true whether it hits a person, a car, a home or whatever. Most homeowner policies will protect the golfer if it's determined they're liable for the injury or damage that occurs."

"At our course, we probably have four or five cars damaged per year because our parking lot is adjacent to the No. 9 fairway," he adds. "If the owner of the car is lucky, the golfer who hit the ball will tell someone he did it or leave a note."

That brings ethics and a conscience into play — two things that don't always go hand-in-hand.

"The best story I have for this is when a car was hit, the unknown golfer who hit it left a note. It said, 'Everyone thinks I'm leaving my name and address for you, but I'm not,'" Herzog recalls. "In a case like this,





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Once a golfer signs an agreement for use of a cart, the responsibility for damage to the cart is transferred to the golfer.

the car owner's insurance would pay, but the owner would be subject to a deductible."

Employee safety

David Boughter, superintendent at South Padre Island Golf Club in Laguna Vista, Texas, came from a more strict environment at Pelican Hill Golf Club in Newport Coast, Calif.

Boughter has instituted Occupational Safety & Health Administration-approved headwear as a part of the uniform. The safari hats, which cost \$18 apiece, must be worn at all times when on the course. He also requires the staff to wear safety glasses while operating power hand tools. And safety vests, like those worn by highway crews, must be worn while working near the road.

Boughter says his employees offered a little resistance at first but have fallen in line.

Crew members at Harbor Golf Club stand out for safety reasons as well.

"Our greens department employees wear bright colored shirts and wear protective glasses when necessary," Herzog says. "All of our employees have been trained to identify dangerous situations and deal with them appropriately once they're discovered."

In addition to the apparel and accessories, Boughter has put together a safety handbook

and has monthly meetings with his staff. The meetings cover topics such as sexual harassment, lightning safety, lifting, protective equipment and golf etiquette.

Because of all the extra precautions he takes, South Padre Island receives preferred insurance rates.

"As long as we institute the recommendations they have while they're here, we get a break," he says of his insurance company. "It doesn't cost us anything ... aside from the helmets."

Boughter credits safety training for the low number of days called off because of illness or injury. The staff took only 22 sick days last year.

Herzog sees effective safety practices benefiting the bottom line.

"Workers compensation rates are directly related to loss history," he says. "The more safeguards put in place that reduce employee injuries will have a positive affect on those costs."

"In addition, most insurance carriers will inspect the premises and will make recommendations to make the premises safer and less likely to suffer claims," he adds. "Following these recommendations and eliminating certain conditions that might give rise to a claim will affect the overall risk

and should lead to more favorable pricing for the facility."

To understand the environment better, Boughter instructs his employees to play at least nine holes a month.

"It's important for them to get on the golf course and see where a ball goes," he says. "I like to make my guys as aware of the golf course as possible. It gives them a better sense of what's happening on the golf course, and it makes them more sensitive to golfers."

Golfer safety

Inside the clubhouse or on the course, slip-and-fall accidents are a common occurrence. The use of railroad ties as an aesthetic feature expanded when they were implemented as steps. The problem: They get slippery when wet, according to Elkind. This was less of an issue when steel spikes were worn, but with soft spikes mandatory at most courses, injuries on these steps increased.

Many courses are adding handrails or using materials with rougher surfaces as steps. Boughter added handrails and went one step further when he tried gripping paint made with crushed pecan shells. He decided to rip the steps out altogether and replaced them with Bermudagrass steps.

With so many areas that can lead to accidents, Herzog says diligence is needed when running a safe golf course.

"There are many issues that can give rise to potential claims," he says. "The condition of sidewalks, driveways, carpets, rugs, chairs and anything else that is used in the day-to-day operation of the facility needs to be reviewed to be certain there is a safe place for the public to enjoy. When you operate a public facility, you need to maintain that facility in a manner the public expects."

Trespassing

Trespassing, such as people using the course for exercise or walking their dogs, creates problems because many people aren't aware of the course's routing and places miss-hit balls tend to land. For the same reason Boughter requires his employees to familiarize themselves with the layout, passersby might find themselves in harm's way.

In Massachusetts, it's the golf course's responsibility to keep the balls on the course, according to Elkind. Golfers hopping a fence and entering neighboring property, can be considered trespassing or a nuisance.

Legal-definitions.com defines nuisance as "some condition on your property or some use of your property that interferes with a neighboring owner's ability to enjoy



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Course management must be conscious of golfers who have consumed too much alcohol and be willing to limit their intake.

their property" and trespass as "the entry to another's property without right or permission." Vagueness leads to as many questions as answers.

Alcohol

Like most courses, South Padre Island doesn't allow outside beverages on the course. Unlike most courses, the club is in the heart of spring break territory, which makes alcohol control a priority. Servers and the beverage-cart operator are given the discretion to cut off alcohol consumption if they feel a person has become intoxicated, according to Boughter.

Herzog says a preempted strike might be in Harbor Golf Club's future for dealing with alcohol.

"We're considering sending our lounge employees to classes dealing with patrons of

the lounge," he says. "The issue of overserving anyone is something we take seriously and need to be certain our employees understand the signs of a patron who has already consumed enough alcohol.

"The club has a responsibility not to serve drinks to anyone who has already consumed too much," Herzog adds. "This is a priority of ours."

Carts

At South Padre Island, golfers sign a waiver when taking a golf cart on the course and are responsible for anything above-and-beyond normal activity that might result in damage. That would include carts ending up on the nearby beach, which has happened at the vacation destination.

A similar policy is in place at Harbor Golf Club.

"This will vary from course to course, but normally if the golfer signs an agreement for the use of the cart, this agreement would transfer responsibility for damage to that cart to the golfer," Herzog says. "It's important for the pro shop to recognize any damage on a cart prior to allowing its use and to inspect the cart when it's returned. Once the golfer has left the premises, it might be difficult to determine who's responsible for the damage. Damage to a cart needs to be addressed as soon as it's noticed."

Battle of the sexes

Whether it's discrimination or harassment, golf courses are conscious of male and female employees and customers. Similar to South Padre Island, Harbor Golf Club has a specific set of guidelines guarding against sexual harassment.

"There's a process an employee is to follow if this situation arises," Herzog says. "It's important for you to have this policy in place and be certain that employees know the process."

As for discrimination, what once was a common practice of having men-only tee times certain days or times has met more resistance. With the growing amount of women in the work force, having tee times set aside for one sex is no longer practical.

Future

Boughter believes the industry, as a whole, has yet to act on requiring the added safety features, but some management companies are ahead of the curve.

"Insurance companies are going to require this more and more," he says. "It seems only natural they would gravitate toward that."

Though he's confident the ongoing training is sufficient for his full-time crew, Boughter makes sure he covers three basics with seasonal employees: He reviews the company policy and procedures, ensures the worker is properly outfitted and covers the safety issues of equipment they're using.

"Don't assume anything," he says. "I make sure they know how to use [the equipment] and check the fluids."

Elkind sees continued efforts to prevent dangerous situations.

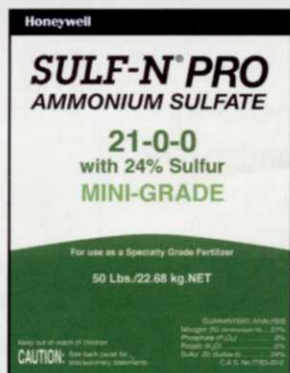
"Safety, in general, is becoming a big concern," he says. "I've seen a lot of nets going up along boundaries."

Elkind suggests golf course management be proactive rather than reactionary.

"Planning to prevent these incidents is key," he says. "Pay now or pay later."

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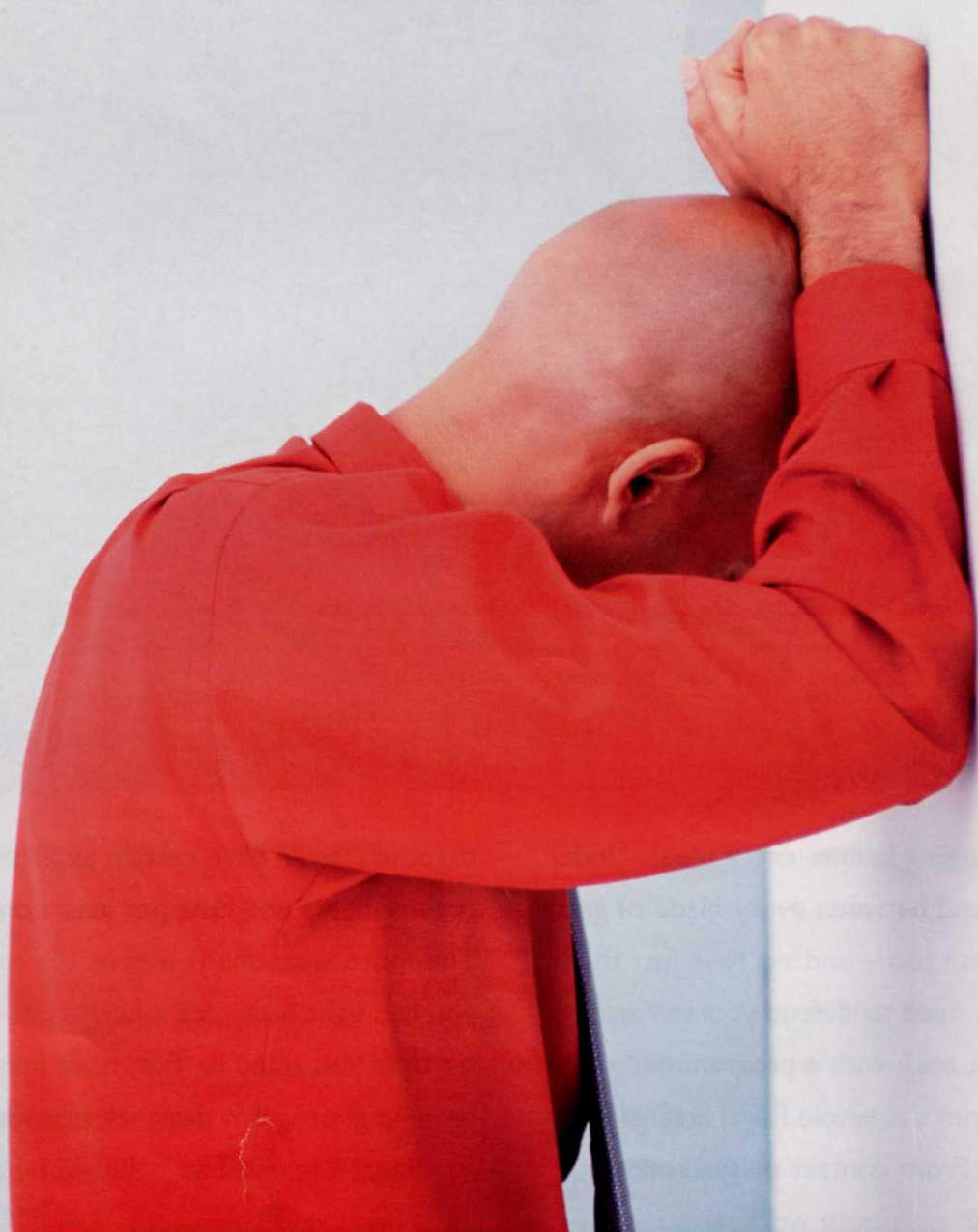
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Preventing burnout

SUPERINTENDENTS DEAL WITH STRESS CAUSED BY GOLFERS AND LONG HOURS



by
JOHN
WALSH

"I've had enough of this. I'm going to look for another job."

Most likely, there have been golf course superintendents who've uttered these words. Some even went through with it. Many have not.

Stress, caused by dealing with golfers and working long hours, contributes to burnout among superintendents. Not every superintendent burns out, but they all have to deal with stress.

Mike Bavier Sr., CGCS, at Inverness (Ill.) Golf Club, says he never felt burned out during his career, and if he felt like that, it was a fleeting moment of wanting to do something else.

"It only lasted a week or month, usually during a hot, busy summer," he says. "But then I realized I better stay. I don't drag myself out of bed to come to work. I get out there, see the sun come up and cut grass. That makes it fun. We have the ability to make things green and make people happy. I tell people if they don't like getting up in the morning, don't take the job."

But Mike Brown, CGCS, green superintendent at Starmount Forest Country Club in Greensboro, N.C., has experienced stress-related and boredom burnout. Brown, who's been at Starmount for nine years and in the industry 16 years, experienced stress-related burnout when he was involved in rebuilding Starmount's golf course during 1999 and 2000.

"Many people warned me it would be worse going through the first year after the course was done," he says. "There were two years of high stress. I went from one crisis to another. I felt like I was never on top of a situation."

"But one thing I found was to take a step back and make sure there was enough time for Mike Brown," he adds. "I played basketball, and some days, there's nothing better than committing some hard fouls with friends."

Brown's boredom burnout came after the renovation was complete.

"I coasted for one year when things evened out," he says. "Looking back at that hectic time, I realized I was never more alive, but I didn't appreciate it then. I eventually settled into a routine and was unmotivated because everything ran itself. I felt like I wasn't using my creative, energetic ideas."

"Hard work pays off, but there's a limit. Work smarter, not harder."

- DON HEARN, CGCS

Dealing with golfers

Perhaps the biggest element of a superintendent's job that can wear him down is dealing with golfers. Don Hearn, CGCS, who's been at Vesper Country Club in Tyngsboro, Mass., for four years, says he's been frustrated when dealing with the vocal minority.

"That gets me down," he says. "Club memberships don't appreciate the guys that work on the courses. They're seen as an inconvenience. Most superintendents I speak to love the technical aspects of the job but are frustrated with the demands of the players. That makes going to work difficult. The demands now are much higher than when I first got into the business. It's taken the desire out of a lot of superintendents."

"Players want X, and they don't care what it costs," he adds. "But money isn't always the solution. It's hard to reason with some golfers because they're not interested in science – just the end result. It's tough to win an argument with an ignorant person."

A lot of pressure is put on superintendents when something doesn't come out well, Hearn says.

"The demands of members and the way members act get the younger superintendents down, and it won't change in their generation," he says. "As soon as they get into the business, they're finding this out. Twenty years ago, people were more respectful and less demanding. Young superintendents are experiencing a hard-ass attitude from members."

Hearn, who's been a superintendent for 35 years, reminds assistants the course isn't theirs. He tells them not to get upset with the amount of money in the budget and to do the best job they can with the money they have to work with.

"Don't think if you work 93 hours a week, the members will appreciate it because they don't know," he tells assistants. "They just know about the end product. Hard work pays off, but there's a limit. Work smarter, not harder."

Hearn says that wasn't always his philosophy. That realization came when he was asked to leave The Weston (Mass.) Golf Club where he worked for many years prior to Vesper.

Riley Stottern, CGCS, vice president of agronomy at the 18-hole SunRiver Saint George (Utah) Golf Club and partner with Resort Golf Management, says there came a time when he, too, realized a project or golf course wasn't his.

"Younger superintendents put a lot of time into a project or course, but it's the owner's and members' course and project, not theirs," he says. "Members don't care how many hours you put in as long as the course looks good."

Bavier says members travel all over the country to play golf and they come back with many ideas for their golf courses and superintendents have to explain why they do the things they do.

"One challenge is to address your critics," he says. "If someone is complaining about the greens, the challenge is to talk to them and give your side of the story. You can't ignore members. You need to talk to them face to face."

Mixing it up

Breaking up the monotony of the job can help prevent burnout. The 62-year-old Stottern says he's always had construction projects to work on in addition to maintaining golf courses. Stottern says he's worked for owners who have wanted to improve their courses.

"When I've been at a course, that's what I've wanted to do – large and small construction projects," he says. "It's peaked my interest. I don't have the fire with just day-to-day maintenance. I'm always looking for that creativity. I've built four golf courses while being a superintendent."

Bavier says being active in associations, coming up with new ideas, attending the Golf Industry Show and becoming certified



Hearn

keep superintendents sharp. Brown agrees.

"I realized I was no longer a young 30-something up-and-comer," Brown says. "I was established, so I became involved with the Carolinas GCSA. This year I'm immediate past president. I'm also chairman for the academic advisory council to the turfgrass program at Gilbert Technical College. I'm also looking to establish a First Tee program."

The 44-year-old Brown believes personal growth should never end and wants to move to the next level of management.

"I want to become a general manager and carry the CCM and the CGCS designations," he says. "I have always had an excellent rapport with the g.m., chairman and board. I work for good people who believe in that type of growth."

The g.m. position at Starmount is open, and Brown says he's one of the candidates.

"My role and responsibility might increase even if I don't get the g.m. position," he says.

Dole it out

Delegation is another way to help relieve stress and prevent burnout. Stottern, who's been at SunRiver Saint George six years, suggests superintendents give some of their staff more responsibility. But he says there's an abundance of good superintendents who stress about someone taking their job for less money.

"Build your staff with quality people so while you're gone, things don't fall apart," he says.

Bavier says young superintendents are always challenging the older superintendents, asking them to do things differently.

"They're keeping me on my toes, and they keep me thinking," he says. "You have to be



The vocal minority at Vesper Country Club can frustrate superintendent Don Hearn.

up with them, or they'll take your job in some situations."

The 62-year-old Bavier says he'll phase himself out but won't retire.

"At the end of this year, the assistant superintendent will take over for me, and he'll run the show; but I will be here to help," he says.

Brown says the secret to his success is that he surrounds himself with young, energetic types who want his job. His position involves an executive-style management.

"I get here at 8:30 or 9 a.m.," he says. "I work more bankers-style hours because that's what the club requires. My assistants get the crew moving in the morning. I plan the entire next day for everyone in a meeting with my assistants every day."

Time off

Stottern, who's been in the industry 36 years, says there's a lot of burnout and many divorces in the industry because superintendents spend too much time at the golf course and forget the priorities in life. He says it's good for people to take their full allotment of vacation.

"You have to take a weekend off," he says. "I work long hours five days a week and take two days off, and the assistant takes two days off a week. I've seen guys work seven days a week, and they're just fried because they take no time off at all."

"Superintendents should play golf at other people's courses and look at someone else's problems," he adds. "Superintendents always look for the worst on their course and never look for the good. If you play your own course, it will stress you out even more."

Bavier hasn't taken any extended time off during the summer because the golf season in Illinois is short and he needs face time with members on Saturdays and Sundays, even though it's a pain for his family. But in the winter, he travels.

"I look forward to getting away in the win-

"Don't be afraid to vent.
Nothing is perfect."

- MIKE BAVIER SR., CGCS





Photo: Vesper Country Club

ter," he says. "I've been able to travel a lot."

Superintendents should pursue their other interests and be involved with their families, Bavier says.

"People always have to make a choice of the family or their job coming first," he says. "Well, they all come first, but you need to give them equal time."

Hearn says he never took a vacation, but has taken an extra few days off around the Golf Industry Show.

"I left tons of vacation on the table with Weston," he says. "No one told me I couldn't take the vacation. Now I take more time off during the off-season. In the summer, I work 5.5 days a week. More times than not I can do that unless there's a tournament."

Hearn tells the younger superintendents to take more time off.

"Many of the guys are working seven days a week and feel they can't leave the golf course, and I understand that," he says. "You should have an assistant that can run things. The course should still run if you're sick or aren't there. Share the load on weekends. Take time off. The club will still be there."

Brown says his staff is large and sophisticated enough to allow him to take a vacation in August.

"If a guy is off one week, he is more valuable for two weeks than having a burned-out guy for three weeks," he says.

Blow off steam

Bavier recommends speaking with neighboring superintendents to help blow off steam. He says he used to meet once or twice a week with other superintendents.

"Superintendents need to talk to their comrades," he says. "Don't be afraid to vent. Nothing is perfect."

Brown blows off steam a few days after the Carolinas GCSA show by hanging out in smoky jazz clubs for four nights in New York with the Starmount g.m.

"It's a great stress reliever because it's so far from golf," he says. GCN

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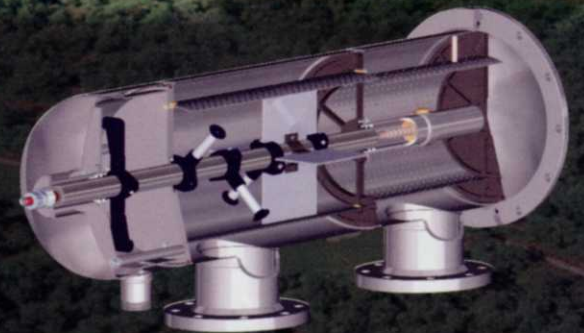
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A DRIVING RANGE CAN HELP INCREASE PARTICIPATION, ENHANCE GOLFER SATISFACTION AND GENERATE REVENUE

by ROB THOMAS

As golf facilities try to increase revenue in crowded and competitive markets, some are converting unused land into driving ranges, which can add dollars to the bottom line.

While revenue is immediately advantageous, the added benefit might be an increased customer base for years to come. Advanced golfers often are side-by-side with novice players, and even their children, because skill doesn't deter players from visiting the driving range.

Much has changed since the addition of a driving range at the nine-hole Sugar Creek Golf Course in Villa Park, Ill., according to general manager Dave Anderson.

"We noticed a whole different type of customer," he says. "People who don't necessarily play a lot of golf ... bring their families, their kids. They're new customers. It's another way of growing the business. It creates more enthusiasm and excitement. People come in to eat at the grill or have a beer at the bar. It's the extra stuff that adds on."

Sugar Creek – a joint venture between the Elmhurst Park District and Village of Villa Park, with a golf committee overseeing operations – took advantage of an abandoned school on neighboring land.

"There was an opportunity to purchase property adjacent to the golf course," Anderson says. "They took a look at it and decided to purchase it."

In the West, Incline Village on Lake Tahoe in Nevada recently opened a new driving range with pitched target greens – ranging from 75 to 200 yards – and sand bunkers. It makes great business sense to have a range, according to Jake Bader, head golf pro at Incline Village's 18-hole Championship Course.

"Every single facility needs a driving range," he says. "If there's no driving range, it takes away from the enjoyment."

If players are able to properly stretch out on the range, they can lessen the chance of

Business booster

The ability to warm up at a driving range before a round of golf provides the added benefit of golfers reducing the chance of injury.



The driving range at Jackson Hole Golf and Tennis Club has the added feature of the Grand Tetons serving as a backdrop.

Photo: Vail Resorts Development Co.

injuring themselves. Economically, a range can generate profit. Of the golfers using the range at Incline Village, 70 percent are playing the course, according to Bader. He says the other 30 percent are stopping to hit a bucket of balls on their lunch break or just practicing. Many of them purchase golf gloves, tees, beverages, etc., at the range, which adds to the bottom line.

The Jackson Hole Golf and Tennis Club in Grand Teton National Park in Wyoming moved its driving range because of a renovation of 66 bunkers, 20 tee boxes and an irrigation system. A driving range is a necessity at the semiprivate 18-hole Jackson Hole course, according to Pat Donovan, vice president of club development at Vail Resorts.

"It's not an option to not have a driving range," he says. "Golfers expect to be able to warm up and practice. To not have that, we wouldn't be able to represent ourselves as a high-end course."

The range, with target greens and all-grass tees, is scheduled to open this summer. The new range is much the same as the old range, with one exception – added length, according to Donovan.

"We extended the range to accommodate today's technology," he says.

But adding length wasn't an option at Sugar Creek. Being a confined space – 300-feet wide and 600-feet deep – the land-locked site needed creative solutions. Contractors cleared the property, and golf course architect firm Martin Design Partnership of Batavia, Ill., provided a blueprint. Netting is tiered to reach a maximum height of 100 feet at the back of the range. The golf course sits behind the range and to one side. A residence is on the other side. Additionally, the range uses restricted-flight balls (10-percent shorter), which lose speed sooner than regulation balls.

The range has four target greens at 80, 100, 140 and 170 yards and features 30

divided hitting stations with 10 feet reserved for each section. Artificial turf mats are used in the stalls for daily play. There's a 20-yard area of grass in front of the mats used mainly for instruction.

"The length of the range is our concern," Anderson says.

There's also a practice bunker at the end of the tee line for golfers to work on their games from the sand.

Traffic, which has been good the first year according to Anderson, is enhanced by several instructional programs, including a program for junior golfers that has more than 350 participants. Sugar Creek also offers private instruction.

Promoting golf

Growing the game is also a priority for Todd Sickles, general manager at Diamond Mountain Golf Course in Susanville, Calif. Diamond Mountain, an 18-hole public course that formerly was a nine-hole course known as Emerson Golf Course, added a driving range and practice facility in addition to nine holes, cart paths and 100 trees.

"It promotes golf," Sickles says of the driving range. "We live in a community where we need to develop rounds of golf. If you look at Pebble Beach, they don't need a driving range because they've got rounds piled up."

The range at Diamond Mountain has 30 concrete hitting stations and 15 to 20 yards of grass tees with five target greens.

Like Anderson, Sickles implemented junior and adult programs to promote the game.

Budget concerns

With a tight budget, a considerable part of the planning process at Sugar Creek was keeping the cost at a minimum, according to Anderson. That was done by limiting labor costs. Sugar Creek uses a ball

washer/dispenser to eliminate a step in the operating process. Range customers can pay with an e-key – a magnetized prepay key that takes credits from an account. Seasonal memberships – good from Jan. 1 to Dec. 31, weather permitting – are available for \$350.

As for purchase programs available, customers can buy 10 small baskets of balls for \$35 and get a bonus basket, or purchase as many as 30 small baskets for \$105 and receive 12 bonus baskets.

Small (35 balls for \$3.50), medium (70 balls for \$7) and large (105 balls for \$10.50) baskets are available for purchase via tokens.

Over time, the range will pay for itself, Anderson says.

The grow-in of the range was done by hand. Anderson says the staff got lucky during construction because there was good weather in the fall of 2004. With the drought conditions of 2005, the Sugar Creek staff was forced to hand-water because there was no irrigation installed.

Most courses in the area where Sugar Creek is located don't have a driving range, according to Anderson. He says their initial research showed Sugar Creek was the first to have a range within a five-mile radius.

"Compared to other nine-hole facilities, there aren't many that offer the full amenities we have here," he says. "It makes us unique."

Whether the plan is to increase revenue, add participation or enhance golfer satisfaction, a driving range can help drive business. GCN

Photo: Vail Resorts Development Co.



High-end courses like Jackson Hole Golf and Tennis Club are expected to have driving ranges available for golfers, according to Pat Donovan.

Seeding, sprigging or sodding?

PROPER MATERIAL SELECTION AND CARE ARE KEY TO SUCCESSFUL TURFGRASS ESTABLISHMENT REGARDLESS OF THE METHOD USED



Sodding greens, once considered a poor choice, is now more popular.

by
KEVIN
J. ROSS,
CGCS

*Photographs also
by Kevin J. Ross*

Establishing a new turfgrass stand, whether on a new golf course or during a renovation project, is one of the most important areas of concern for a golf course superintendent. No matter what type of establishment technique is used (seeding, sprigging or sodding), many procedures are similar and produce first-class results. Achieving maximum turfgrass establishment makes a project successful from the beginning.

Planting window

The first principle to consider during the germination and initial growth phase, by seeding or sprigging of any turfgrass species, is the planting window – the time when soil and air temperatures are at their optimal level for germination and initial growth. This period encompasses the time from initial seeding and sprigging to the time of the first mowing. It can be four to eight weeks long.

When establishing by sodding, this planting window isn't such an important factor.

Whether dealing with cool- or warm-season species, the planting window varies throughout the country. It's important to establish the dates of the planting window, and then design the project to hit the time frames as close as possible. However, in the real world of construction and renovation, many superintendents realize it's difficult to accomplish. Even the best plans encounter poor weather conditions, material problems and design changes, which add up to delays and trying to establish turfgrass outside the planting window.

Maturation window

The second principle of establishing a turfgrass stand – after germination and the initial growth stage – is the maturation window, which is when turfgrass becomes established enough to support traffic and be a playable surface for golf. Many refer to this as the grow-in stage, which isn't accurate. Nonagronomists believe the grow-in stage is finished when there's complete turfgrass cover. This isn't the case. A more mature plant is needed to support golf traffic. The maturation window is much longer than the germination and initial growth period. Depending on the method, maturation can be as short as three or four weeks for sodding and as long as six months for seeding.

Seed establishment

The most popular choice for turfgrass establishment is seeding. However, not all grasses (especially warm-season ones) produce seed and must be established vegetatively. Seeding is the fastest and easiest method of planting a turfgrass stand, yet it has its share of disadvantages.

A big concern is the initial care. Watering is critical with all methods but is most critical during the longest period of time with seeded turf. Initial watering is needed for the seed to imbibe water, swell, crack open and have root radicle emergence. This time varies among different species, from as little as seven days to as long as 28 days. The faster the seed is able to accomplish this, the quicker a seedling plant will emerge. At the time of radicle emergence, the seedling plant is in its most delicate form. Watering at this time can't be underestimated. A tiny root is responsible for the water uptake and survival of the new seedling plant. Just an hour or two of hot and windy conditions can be disastrous. Many times this is when seeding failure occurs.

A big drawback with seeding is the susceptibility to erosion from wind and water. Even when protective mulches are used, nothing can match a bout with Mother Nature. Areas of channeling-type washouts can occur, as well as a floating and movement of seed with no soil wash. Floating tends to redistribute the seed and leave areas with high and low concentrations of seed.

Another result of erosion problems is

the contamination of different species. For example, if a fairway is seeded with creeping bentgrass, and the seed washes/floats into the rough area, which is Kentucky Bluegrass, it becomes contaminated. This becomes a playability problem with almost no control options. This doesn't occur with sod and rarely occurs with sprigging.

Also, some seeded species take a long time to mature. For example, Kentucky Bluegrass, a popular species for rough areas, has a slow establishment rate. Even with optimal germination, it can take 14 to 21 days, and maturation can take as long as six months.

Although often overlooked, wind also can cause problems with seeded areas. Depending on location, consistent high winds can make it almost impossible to keep the upper surface moist. As the surface dries, wind can carry seed easily.

Another benefit of seeding is cost – it's the cheapest method of establishing turfgrass. However, those cost savings can disappear if a few problems occur. The cost of repairing an area once or twice from a major washout can nullify the initial savings. This also can be a problem from an environmental standpoint, creating siltation issues with water sources.

Sod establishment

An establishment method gaining popularity is sodding. Years ago, sod was hardly considered, and sodding an entire golf course was out of the question. However,



Young turfgrass seedlings require extensive care.

turfgrass establishment



Sprigging is the common method of establishing warm-season grasses, but sodding (inset left) continues to gain popularity with golf course construction. The advent of big roll sod (inset right) has made sodding much faster and easier.

it's much more commonplace. Sod use originally started as a method to combat erosion problems on steep-sloped areas such as bunkers, pond bankings, and green and tee surrounds. They were initially wrapped with three to four feet of sod to help guard against erosion and provide better definition. When the benefits became apparent, sodded areas continued to grow, encompassing entire pond banks and green, tee and bunker complexes.

As sodding popularity grew, the next step was sodding entire golf courses. Although this is an unusual practice, it's becoming more popular. The major drawback of sodding is cost. Depending on the species, sod can range from as cheap as \$0.20 per square foot to as expensive as \$2.00 per square foot installed. Furthermore, obtaining quality sod isn't easy. Many projects are forced to use poor-quality sod because it might be the only kind available. Some of the common problems with poor sod quality are *Poa annua* contamination and excess thatch.

Another problem, which is often overlooked (especially when sodding greens), is the compatibility of the material the sod is grown on. When two materials aren't compatible, layering occurs, often resulting in a lack of rooting. This compatibility problem spurred the development and use of washed sod (soil/sandless) for greens. Washed sod has many success stories but also has its share of problems. Although there's no layering problem, rooting can be difficult because the material dries quickly.

Layering problems are rare when adding a soil-based sod to a soil-based area, such as fairways and rough. Many projects have sod custom-grown to their specifications.

This occurs about a year in advance, while dirt work takes place on the course. This custom-grown approach usually results in minimal problems and guarantees great sod quality for success.

Two benefits of sodding are the virtual elimination of washouts and the speed the golf course matures. Many feel these factors alone outweigh the cost. Opening months earlier can mean generating revenue more quickly. Practically eliminating washouts also can mean a cost savings from the extra money used to repair washouts. However, sod wash can happen when rooting hasn't developed and a hard rain occurs.

Sprigging

Most warm-season grasses aren't seed producers and must be established through sodding or sprigging. Sprigs are small plant parts, which usually contain rhizomes or stolons. Sprigs are produced from tearing turf into plant parts. The sprigs then are kept under controlled conditions and shipped to the site. This is the first major hurdle of sprigging. High-quality sprigs, clean of orphan grasses, are critical for success. Once sprigs are planted, new plants are developed from the nodes that start to grow and produce roots and shoots. The young plants develop additional plants, and as they mature, a sod-forming turf occurs.

Watering also is critical for successful sprigging, however, the initial watering might be the most critical. From the immediate time when sprigs are cut in the ground, for about a seven-day period, watering is vital. The small plant parts can dry down and die quickly. Watering sprigs starts immediately after planting and may be

watered as often as every 20 to 30 minutes. This is the time that most often dictates successful sprigging.

While sprigs aren't as susceptible to washouts and floating, it still can happen. When sprig floating occurs, sprigs tend to dry up and die, eliminating potential contamination problems. Sprigging costs much more than seeding but not as high as sodding, ranging from \$1,500 to \$3,000 per acre.

Combination

A seed/sod or sprig/sod combination to establish a turfgrass stand is the standard method that has evolved. The two combine the best of both worlds while keeping costs under control. With a seed/sod or sprig/sod method, sod would be laid around green and tee surrounds, bunkers and erosion prone areas, while seed or sprigs would be used for the other areas. The amount of sod used would vary. The low end might be only a couple acres of sod. The high end might be as much as 25 to 30 acres. This method has provided great results.

Successful establishment

Regardless of the method used for establishing turfgrass, they all can be successful with the proper material selection and care. An important factor for success is to obtain quality/certified seed, sprigs or sod. The second is water management, which will determine the success of turfgrass establishment. GCN

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travels with TERRY



Terry Buchen, CGCS, MG, is president of Golf Agronomy International. He's a 35-year member of the GCSAA and can be reached at terrybuchen@earthlink.net.

Globetrotting consulting agronomist Terry Buchen visits many golf courses annually with his digital camera in-hand. He will share helpful ideas relating to maintenance equipment from the golf course superintendents he visits – as well as a few ideas of his own – with timely photos and captions that explore the changing world of golf course management.



The need for speed

Patrick S. McHugh, CGCS, director of golf course and community maintenance at the Boca Grove Golf Club in Boca Raton, Fla., wanted to increase the speed of the Club Car Turf 2 utility vehicles he, his supervisors and equipment manager use when touring the club's golf course and grounds. Equipment manager Mike Lukz heard about a new way to increase the speed of the vehicles used by the supervisors – not the regular maintenance staff – from Chet Waddell, equipment manager at The Polo Club of Boca Raton: By increasing the size of the rear wheels and tires, the ground speed of the vehicles could be increased. Originally, Waddell used 8-inch-by-5-inch wheels with 20-inch-by-10.5-inch-by-8-inch turf tires from a Scag zero-turn-radius mower on the rear of the Club Car Turf 2 vehicle.

Club Car uses a speed-control device on the rear axle that acts as a mechanical governor. Sometimes a mechanic or someone on the maintenance staff will use a wire tie (pictured) or bend the brackets to limit the spring travel forcing the cables to pull the carburetor to a wide open position. When operated in a wide-open position, the engine will reach its maximum revolutions-per-minute range quickly, at which point the electronic governor interrupts the ignition system killing the spark to the coil, causing the revolutions per minute to surge up and down while traveling at top speed. This protection is sometimes bypassed to stop the surging and to gain more speed leaving the engine to rev freely beyond its capability, which can result in catastrophic engine failure.

By using a larger rear tire, the drive ratio is changed between the engine and the ground, allowing for a much higher ground speed with a lower engine rpm. This method allows for the vehicle to go as fast as 18 mph using the unmodified speed control spring and as fast as 24 mph when limiting the speed control's spring travel. Modified or unmodified, the larger tires provide a speed increase without tampering with the engine's rpm limiter, keeping the over-rev protection in tact.

Because the aforementioned Scag rims are somewhat expensive, Lukz uses 8-inch-by-4-inch rims with a 4-on-4-inch lug pattern and 22-inch-by-11.5-inch-by-8-inch four-ply tires. The narrower rim size compresses the tire width enough to clear the leaf springs and brake cables while allowing the tallest tire (8-inch rim size) available.

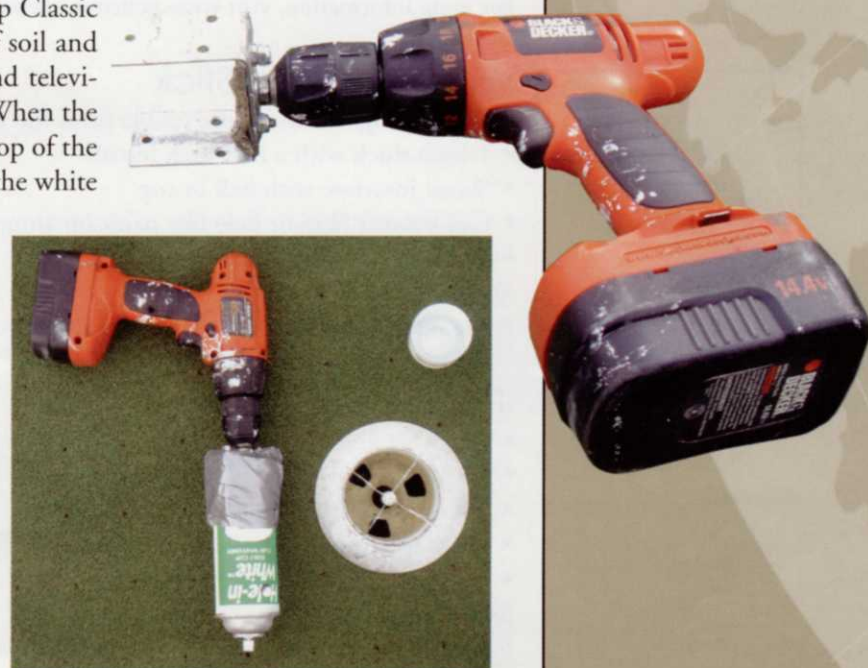
Paint it white

Sean Duffy, CGCS, at The Club at Twin Eagles in Naples, Fla., hosts The ACE Group Classic on the Champions Tour annually in February. During the event, the top one inch of soil and thatch/organic matter above the hole liners (cups) is painted white so the players and television viewers can see the cups more easily. Hole-in-White Golf Cup Turf Whitener is used. When the Hole-in-White aerosol can is inserted upside down into the metal bracket that fits into the top of the 4 1/4-inch-diameter cup, the can is pushed down and turned with a flip of a wrist to spread the white paint around the cup.

Martin Rojas, a member of the Twin Eagle's maintenance staff, wanted to apply the paint better and more evenly. He came up with the idea of attaching the aerosol can to a metal bracket that attaches to an electric, cordless drill.

The two L-shape brackets, which were bought at The Home Depot in the doors and knobs department, were attached together to form a U-shape bracket. Rojas drilled a hole in the middle of the brackets joined together and used nuts and a bolt to attach the brackets to the cordless drill adjustable bit holder. He also attached nuts and bolts in the existing three holes in the brackets to help secure them. The aerosol can slips smoothly into the U-shape bracket. It's secured to the bracket with duct tape.

To prepare applying the whitener, a cotton towel is measured to fit and placed around the cup so the whitener isn't accidentally sprayed onto the turf. The aerosol can is pushed down to release the whitener simultaneously as the variable speed of the cordless drill is adjusted as needed to apply the whitener quickly and evenly. GCN



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7. Total Course Acreage _____

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- ☐ 1-Full Reconstruction
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- ☐ 7-No Renovations Planned

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The way we were

I absolutely despise Barbara Streisand, but her stupid song “The Way We Were” is stuck in my head right now. (“Memories. Like the corners of my mind.”) If you also suffer from “crappy-tune-repeating-endlessly-in-your-brain” syndrome, you probably can feel my pain right now. I guess my options are to shoot myself or to exorcise this demon by writing about it. I seem to be out of bullets at the moment, so let’s try the latter.

I guess the whole “The Way We Were” thing started because I was talking with another former GCSAA staff member about the good old days of the conference and show. During our chat, it occurred to me this is my 20th national conference. Yikes! The “misty watercolor” memories came flooding back. Here are a few of my favorite unofficial memories of the big shows of yesteryear.

Working hard

GCSAA staff members generally are hard-working and focused at the show and always are trying to represent the association as professionally as possible. There were occasional exceptions. One such faux pas occurred at the 1994 show in San Francisco when we were preparing to make a big hoo-haw over the launch of “Par for the Course” on ESPN. We’d invited a couple of ESPN executives to the show and, at the last minute, decided to arrange an early morning golf outing for them at the famed Olympic Club. Transportation (a ridiculously large limousine) was set up and off we went for a fabulous round.

During our return from the course, the ESPN guys decided to break into the limo’s ample supply of booze to celebrate a memorable golf outing. Being a good host, I accepted a tumbler as well. Soon, our journey was over, and the megavehicle pulled up in front of the headquarters hotel. Without thinking, I blithely hopped out of the pimped-out, white stretch limo holding my golf clubs and a large glass of scotch ... only to find out that 30-some seminars had just ended and maybe a thousand association members were standing at the curb outside the hotel. With 2,000 eyeballs firmly planted on yours truly, I froze like a deer in the headlights. There was a brief, stunned silence before a loud voice from the crowd shouted, “Keep up the hard work, Jonesey!”

Autograph hound

Before the era of relative association austerity and various rescheduling attempts, the pinnacle of show week was the Gala. The seemingly endless dinner featured a gaggle of awards, bad speeches, a rubber chicken dinner, ill-fitting tuxedos and, of course, semibig-name entertainment like Neil Sedaka, Bobby Vinton, Tony Orlando, Kenny Rogers and even the Beach Boys.

One of my quasi-official duties was to serve as a liaison between board members – who wanted autographs – and whichever has-been (I mean “star”) was providing the entertainment. This was a source of much aggravation ... and humor.

One year, I literally broke into the room secured by the Beach Boys roadies to get the surf geezers to sign some albums for board members. Several band members gruffly complied. My last target was the legendary Mike Love (whose name is apparently a shortened version of, “Mike Loves to Be Hammered Out His Freakin’ Gourd”). I found him slumped in a chair and politely tapped him on his shoulder. He jumped about three feet in the air, screamed some gibberish at me and collapsed completely at my feet. My heart stopped, thinking that I had managed to kill a thoroughly pickled music legend. A roadie came over and nonchalantly said, “Don’t worry ... he does that every night.”

Near-death experience

In 1988, I wanted to get a good picture of the legendary Sam Snead, who was holding court in some exhibitor’s booth, so I decided to climb up to the catwalk above the trade show floor and take a shot looking straight down. This was in the day before staff members kept in touch with fancy cell phones and PDAs, so I was dutifully lugging around a huge walkie-talkie clipped to my belt. I took my picture and was climbing back down from 30 feet up when the walkie-talkie caught on a ladder rung and started falling ... directly at Sam Snead’s head. My heart stopped – again. Fortunately, it missed his noggin by inches but crashed and busted into a million pieces right next to him. I scrambled

down and started stuttering apologies. He stopped me and said calmly (in his thick Southern drawl), “Son, I’ve lived a long time and done a lot of things, but dying like that would have made for one hell of an obituary.”

Other memories

- Two decades ago, making the rookie mistake of being directly between the Jacobsen booth and the ribbon-cutting at the open of the show. Lesson learned: Never get between 4,000 superintendents and a \$6 hat.

- Making GCSAA scholarship winners go through fraternity-type hazing rituals (sending them on “snipe” hunts, having them lug boxes around and try to get autographs from pro golfers, etc.). Many of these “kids” are now industry-leading superintendents and turf researchers. Some even still talk to me.

- The Cushman girl. Enough said.
- Joshing with the late, great Robert Trent Jones Sr. about being his long-lost third son.

- Watching in horror as football coach Lou Holtz was enthusiastically introduced by the president as the keynote speaker to

a huge ovation from thousands of attendees at the opening session ... but knowing that Holtz was running late and wasn’t in the convention center yet.

- Stumbling down Bourbon Street with my old pal Mike and a few thousand of our closest friends. (Note to President Bush: Please, please fix New Orleans so we can go back.)

Okay, I’ve shared a few memories of “the way we were”, and the stupid song is out of my head now. But, I still have many, many other show stories – some perhaps even a little embarrassing to readers right now. So, unless you’d like to see those memories (some possibly too painful to remember) revealed in this column next year, make sure to track me down at the *Golf Course News* booth (#5315) at the big show in Atlanta. And maybe, if you offer me the right incentive (wink, wink), I’ll simply choose to forget.

See you at the show. We’ll make some new memories together. GCN

MY HEART STOPPED, THINKING I HAD MANAGED TO KILL A THOROUGHLY PICKLED MUSIC LEGEND.

We would like to hear from you. Please post any comments you have about this column on our message board, which is at www.golfcoursenews.com/messageboard.





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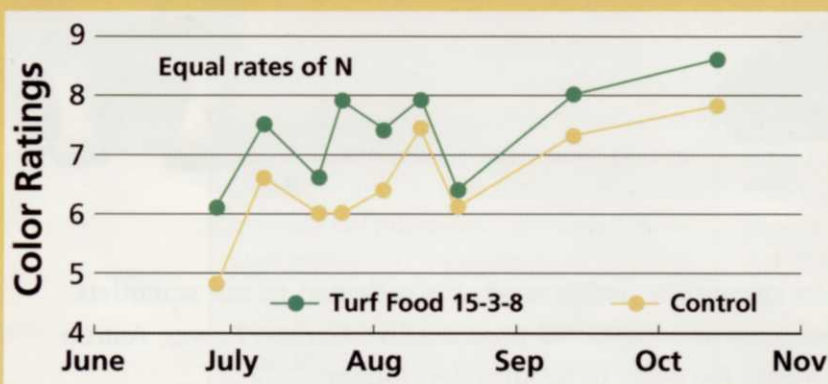
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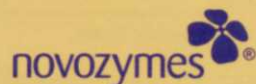
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