

## Inaugural tour



John Miller, CGCS

**J**ohn Miller, CGCS, at The Golf Club at Yankee Trace in Centerville, Ohio, will walk into uncharted territory as he takes the reins as the first agronomist for the Ladies Professional Golf Association.

Officially, the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America will employ Miller, but he will work closely with the LPGA to visit the tournament's host courses and help them prepare sites. He will work with the courses' superintendents and staff to make sure the courses have all the equipment and staff necessary to run an LPGA event.

This is the first position of its kind for the GCSAA and LPGA. When the LPGA created the position, it turned to the organization with the most experience with agronomists, Miller says. While some question whether a conflict of interest would arise working for both organizations, Miller says the partnership will only make each entity stronger because they're working together.

"It's going to be a win-win situation for both associations," he says.

Miller doesn't have to move from southern Ohio for the job, but he's required to travel a lot. He anticipates visiting about 34 tournament sites per year.

"Most sites will have been on the tour already, so there will be few issues," he says. "We'll look at any inconsistencies. If it's a new site, we will look at it to see what needs to be done to get it ready."

There are certain amenities the LPGA will require, and Miller will see those requirements are met. Most likely, he'll visit the

site of a tournament 10 to 12 weeks ahead of time and make recommendations, if needed, for the grounds and other amenities, including the locker rooms, hospitality areas and other accommodations a tour host provides. Miller will return to the tour site about a week before the event to assist with final preparations. By the time the tournament starts, Miller's job is done.

When the GCSAA announced its nationwide search for the newly created position, it piqued Miller's interest.

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— JOHN MILLER

"I've wanted to do this for a long time," he says. "I had been looking for a job with the PGA Tour before this opportunity came up. There's something about the challenge of tour golf I enjoy."

With increasing emphasis on faster greens and greener fairways, Miller hopes golfers' expectations will come back to reality eventually. Some courses are being passed up because of the increasingly rigorous standards.

"We need to look at what the architect was saying when the course was built," he says. "If we slow down the greens a little, we'll get some of those great hole locations back. People don't understand that courses are

peaked for that particular event. Golfers think it's that way all the time."

Miller will prepare for the job with a month of training – two weeks with each organization. He gained experience with tournaments while at Yankee Trace, hosting the Nationwide Tour's Dayton Open, which the club hosted from 1999 to 2003. He also has taught classes for the GCSAA about hosting tournaments.

Prior to his 14 years at Yankee Trace, Miller was superintendent at Indian Springs Golf Course

in Mechanicsburg, Ohio, and London (Ohio) Golf Club. He earned his bachelor's degree in agronomy from Ohio State University.

Miller serves on the GCSAA's standards/bylaws committee and previously was the vice chairman for the education and certification committees. He also is a member of the Miami Valley GCSA and served on the education planning committee for the Ohio Turfgrass Foundation. Additionally, Miller is past president of Play Golf Ohio.

Miller's assistant, Terry Taylor, took over as superintendent at Yankee Trace when Miller started his new role Aug. 13.

— Heather Wood

