

[REPORTER'S NOTEBOOK]

GETTING IT JUST RIGHT

Oak Hill's Jeff Corcoran tells GCI's Bill Brown how he and his team worked closely with the engineers at John Deere Golf to tweak the JD 8000 in preparation for the PGA Championship.

I caught up with Jeff Corcoran, Oak Hill Country Club's director of golf and grounds, on the eve of the 2013 PGA Championship to talk about Oak Hill's fairway mower of choice -- the John Deere 8000 E-Cut Hybrid. During our discussion Jeff told me about his relationship and the support he receives from the team at John

Deere, which went far beyond Championship week.

For example, prior to the public release of the JD 8000 e-cut hybrid, Jeff worked closely with Tracy Lanier, John Deere Golf's product manager, to put the unit through its paces at Oak Hill.

So what were some of the changes Jeff wanted to see from the initial prototype? As Jeff and I looked over the JD 8000 e-cut hybrid, he pointed out the smooth tires with beveled edges along the outside.

"The initial tire that came with the prototype were more aggressive,"

Jeff says. With Oak Hill's height of cut between .325 to .350 they started seeing more wear than they were comfortable with. Jeff worked closely with Tracy Lanier and the team at Deere to get it just right. As a result, the tire you see today is a product of that close working relationship.

What does Jeff like most about the John Deere 8000 e-cut hybrid? Compared to a traditional four-tire, five-unit fairway mower, Oak Hill is seeing the same quality of cut that type of mower produces, but with less of a foot print. For example, the smooth, three-tire configuration of the JD 8000 e-cut hybrid provides a lighter pounds-per-square-inch footprint, while still maintaining enough down pressure on the cutting units to get a great cut.

With the typical topography of a Ross design, the JD 8000 e-cut hybrid's anti-scalp wheels on the individual cutting units allows the units to "land" softer on the undulated turf. This essentially eliminates any scalping as a mower pass is initiated. — **BILL BROWN**

FOR MORE

Check out the app version of this story to read Bill's complete account and to view additional images from his time at the PGA Championship.



Be a master...of invention

The next time you come up with a great idea, a product that would help make other superintendents' jobs easier, follow through on it. You never know what could happen. That's what Patrick Sisk, CGCS, superintendent at Milwaukee Country Club did, and now his idea is hitting the market.

Called the Green Sweep, his product is a simple attachment that fits onto virtually any push blower. According to the website (greensweeptech.com), it "utilizes air redirection technology to move both heavy and light applications of topdressing material safely and efficiently into the canopy of your turf

— without the abrasion and turf stress caused by drag brushes or mats."

"So we're taking that abrasive [topdressing] material, and the standard corporation is to tag it in with a drag mat, or have an army of staff workers with push brooms, taking that abrasive material and pushing it across the surface of the turf," says Sisk. "We've come to accept the damage, because there's a benefit of the addition of sand, and we know how to promote turf growth to eventually have that seal."

Sisk's product will take away the damage.

"There've been a few attempts at

doing this with air," he says. "I'm not the first, but I am the first to take a vehicle off the green."

The best part about the Green Sweep is that it can be used in multiple ways, making it ideal to have on hand.

"I wanted to make a machine you could take on a putting green," Sisk says. "I love it on the putting greens, but I really, really love it on tees and approaches that are irregularly shaped and often difficult to incorporate the sand using the standard method of dragging. Often we have to send staff



Patrick Sisk

From THE FEED



On the weekend of the club championship at The Country Club at Castle Pines Golf Course in Castle Rock, Colo., a hailstorm tore into the course, leaving greens beaten and scattering bunkers, and superintendent Sean McCue shared the results – and probably a little misery.



Sean McCue@SKMQU

Well this is nice! Haven't seen anything like this in 18 my years here.



† **Justin VanLanduit@TurfTank**

We are only a pawn in Mother Nature's game.



Sean McCue@SKMQU

It keeps getting better.

Sean McCue@SKMQU

On the positive side, my anthracnose is looking much better than yesterday.



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back behind the vehicle... With this device, I can do the clean up, I can get the sand in, and there's really no additional time."

Sisk says he has a friend who runs an asphalt sealing business and even he uses the Green Sweep to help.

For any superintendents with an idea, know that bringing it to life won't be easy, but it will be worth it.

"In the course of life, 10 years later you may look at a product and say 'man I thought of that, I should have done something with it,'" he says. "I don't want to be that guy."

"It's scary," Sisk goes on to say. "It's really scary...I guess there are two fears: fear of failure, so that keeps me plugging along, then also fear of success. I've got a lot on my plate right now, do I really want to put myself through all of this stress? The answer is yeah I do, because I'm having a blast."

Bee motivated

If you think maintaining a 36-hole golf course is a tough job, imagine also maintaining 10 beehives. That's what Scott Witte, superintendent at Cantigny Golf, does every week.

"In the fall of 2011, Cantigny Golf partnered with the USDA to assist in developing Best Management Practices (BMP's) for honeybees by getting involved with the 'Bee Informed Project,'" says Witte. "In recent years, honey bee losses have been soaring due to Colony Collapse Disorder."

"At the end of the season, we input our hive management practices into the 'Bee Informed Project surveys' developed by the USDA. Over time, the power of this international consortium will help to pinpoint the best strategies for keeping honey bees healthy in our region."

The honey and beeswax produced by the bees are used in the candles sold at the club's gift shop. Some of the money from those sales was recently used to buy three bee suits and two smokers for a high school beekeeping club in Ghana.

"Marcus Hagberg (Project Manager for Education Development Projects Trust) is the son of Susan Hagberg, a personal friend, and owner/President of Wild Goose Chase/Migratory Bird Management. Since Susan Hagberg is well aware of our passion for bees and the environment at Cantigny Golf, she informed me about her son and the Awutu-Winton School's Bee Club. When I was approached by Susan and Marcus about this group of ambitious students in Ghana, it just clicked. It was extremely gratifying to see how our support for the Awutu-Winton High School was so well received.

"My hope...is that the students continue to gain positive experiences while being connected to others through common passions and goals. Though diverse in culture from place to place, when people with similar interests come together, great things can happen for the common good."



GLOBAL SOIL SURVEY

Over the past few years, sustainability has become a popular word, and superintendents are looking at ways to keep their turf green, while also keeping their fertilizer and pesticide inputs at a minimum.

In response to these concerns, PACE Turf and the Asian Turfgrass Center have launched the Global Soil Survey, a research project created in the hopes of making a positive change in the way turf is fertilized.

For more on the Global Soil Survey, including how your course can get involved, check out our app edition.

