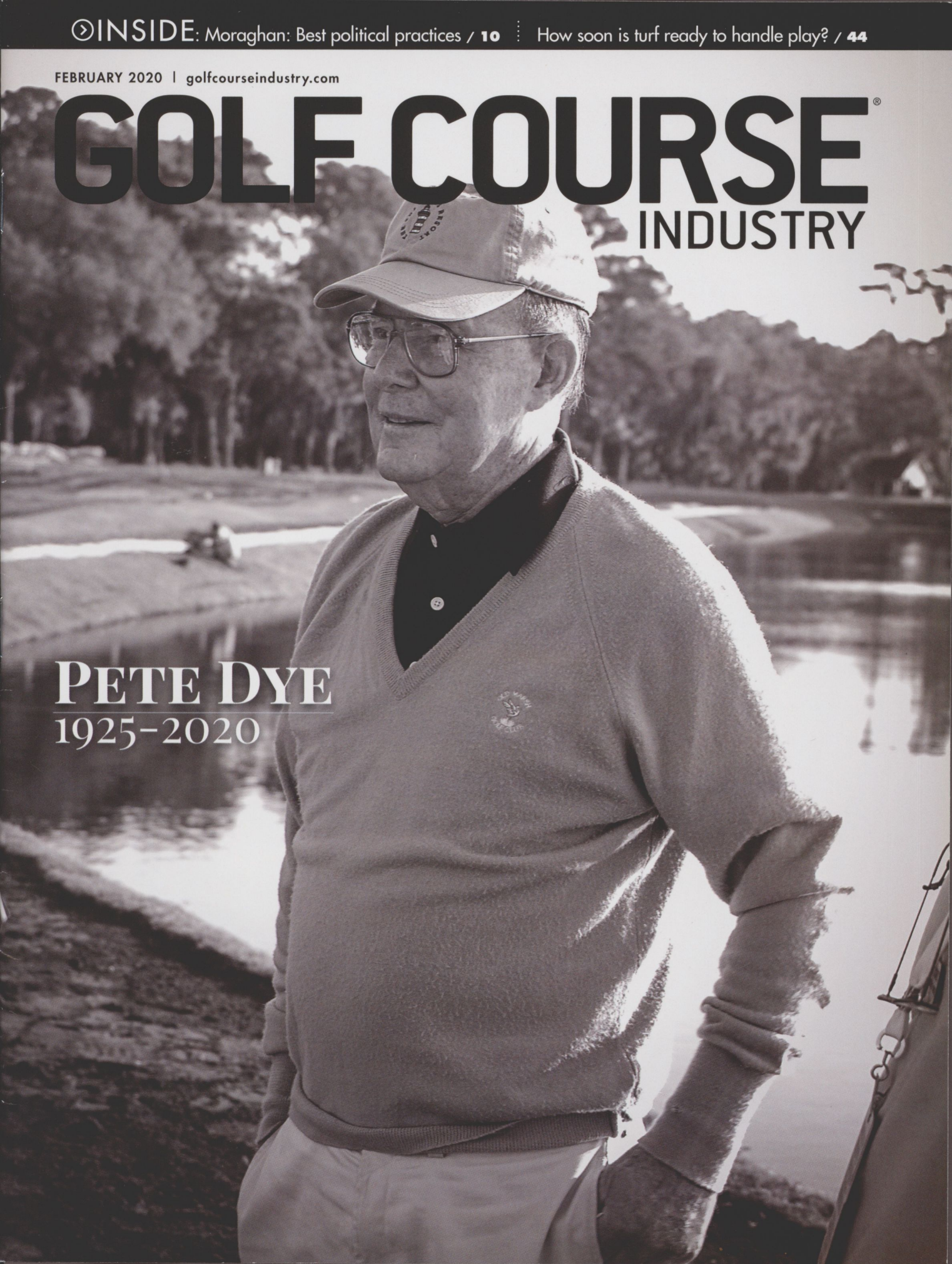


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A Deeper Respect

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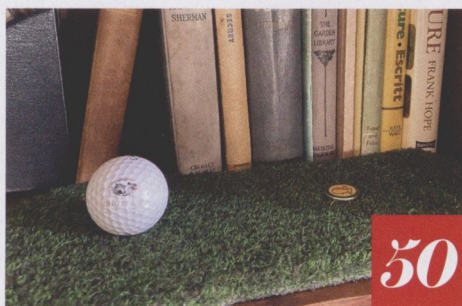
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PERFECT MEMORY, IMPERFECT SHOT

Unless you're feeding yourself or others via playing golf, numbers on a scorecard matter less as you age.

So, I can't explain why my hands and shoulders trembled. This was supposed to be a lovely fall round on Georgia land Henry Ford once owned. Hit a few shots. Enjoy The Ford Plantation's incredible turf and scenery. Take dozens of pictures. Conduct a few interviews.

I then saw him, thus the heightened tension. He was munching on an apple, staring into trees adjacent to eighth tee. He noticed our foursome approaching and walked toward the tee. He reached out his hand, "Hi. Pete Dye. Nice to meet you." I meekly mumbled, "Nice to meet you."

I wanted to say more. Golf became a serious part of my life in the mid-1990s, when Dye was constructing the boldest and arguably best courses of the era, including Mystic Rock at Nemaquin Woodlands, a public-access puncher 60 miles from my southwestern Pennsylvania hometown. I saw Tiger Woods for the first time and lost dozens of golf balls at Mystic Rock. The boulders, contours, deep bunkers and terrifying shot angles sparked my interest in golf course architecture.

I read "Bury Me in a Pot Bunker" after playing Mystic Rock. I found a copy of George Peper's "Golf Courses of the PGA Tour" and I intently studied TPC Sawgrass, Harbour Town, Kingsmill Resort and TPC River Highlands, a quartet of Dye designs the pros played.

Just maybe I'd eventually get to meet Dye.

I didn't have the time to chat with Dye on the eighth tee. We needed to keep play moving. Dye shifted his focus from the apple and trees to our foursome. Even as an 88-year-old in 2014, Dye studied how his products performed. The hole played 162 yards. Firing at the pin required carrying a pond. A miss short, left or right meant trouble. I grabbed a seven iron. Sweat. Swing. Splash! Dye looked at me. He glanced at the pond. "That's why it's there," he said. Everybody in our group chuckled.

A few hours later, I recorded a video interview with Dye. The nerves subsided. I was only six months into an aspirational gig at *Golf Course Industry* and the most recognizable living golf course architect made me feel comfortable. Flubbing a ball into the water with Dye watching and interviewing him about a cool project capped a memorable trip. I stayed in a cottage with two of Dye's closest confidants, architect Tim Liddy and construction guru Allan MacCurrach, and USGA Green Section veteran Pat O'Brien. I also met The Ford Plantation's terrific head agronomist Nelson Caron and a few of his savvy assistants. Replying to a media invitation has numerous perks and long-term benefits.

Spending time with Liddy, MacCurrach and Caron offered clues into how Dye impacted others. We contacted Liddy, MacCurrach, Caron and seven other people who worked with Dye for their perspective for our cover story about the architect's legacy (page 12). Halting interviews represents one of the hardest parts of the writing process. There's always another call to make, another document to examine, another anecdote to hear. Deadlines make it impossible to include every angle.

Anybody who worked closely with Dye emphasizes he never viewed a golf course as a finished product. His pursuit of greatness didn't end with a ceremonial tee shot. Deadlines (and finances) made it impossible for Dye to design the perfect golf course.

Magazine profiles are also never complete. People are complex and relationships evolve. Dye's influence will likely expand posthumously, because he changed the lives of some of the grittiest and smartest people in the golf industry.

I trembled worse while writing this month's cover story than I did on the eighth tee at The Ford Plantation. You don't want to flub any assignment, especially one about a subject whose work and humanity affected people from all walks of life, including yourself. **GCI**



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GOLF COURSE INDUSTRY

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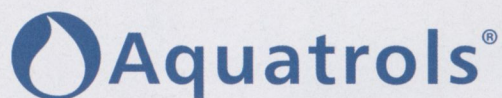


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NOTEBOOK



Valley (Colorado) Country Club's Zach Bauer was selected as the winner of Turfco's 100 Years of Thanks contest.



EarthWorks President Joel Simmons

That blessing of size is part of the reason Florida is home to 986 golf facilities and 1,306 courses, according to the National Golf Foundation — more than any other state — as well as to the Orange County Convention Center, which stretches out across more than 7 million square feet and once included an arena. The convention center was the site of the annual Golf Industry Show, which used a chunk of that space, registration and education and seminars spread across buildings, thousands of steps apart. Burn off breakfast before eating lunch!

Size aside, the show delivered two more days of quality education — there were far too many sessions to determine the absolute best, but my favorite was a two-hour panel designed for assistants that featured Colbert Hills' Matthew Gourlay firing questions and quips at Bellerive Country Club's Carlos Arraya, TPC Deere Run's Alex

IMPRESSIONS OF A GOLF INDUSTRY SHOW ROOKIE

Managing editor Matt LaWell walked, and walked, and walked some more, around a city known for its theme parks. What did he learn?

Years before Walt Disney decided Orlando would be the home of his second eponymous theme park, he considered Niagara Falls (which was, of course, too cold) and St. Louis (where August Busch Jr. might have called him crazy for not wanting to sell beer). A flight over the developing roads of central Florida — on the same day JFK was assassinated — cinched the deal. Disney loved those roads. He also loved the room.

"Here in Florida," he once said, ever promoting his products, "we have

something special we never enjoyed at Disneyland: the blessing of size. There's enough land here to hold all the ideas and plans we can possibly imagine."

► John Kaminski and Aquatrols CEO Matt Foster, front, join TweetUp winners Bill Bergin, Richard Brown, Maggie Reiter, Tyler Bloom and Trent Manning.





Jennifer Torres and her son Ricardo Jr.

Stuedemann and Bethpage State Park's Andrew Wilson — and a trade show where networking was, always, the key to everything. And for all the barbs about how much smaller the show is now than it was during the boom, there are still few other opportunities to catch up with peers from all corners of the country, sit in on sessions designed for professional development, check out the latest chemicals and equipment, then head out for dinners and parties.

This was not my first trade show, but it was my first GIS, and I was impressed. It is not CES, or IMTS, or Hannover Messe — a trio of gigantic, world-renowned trade shows. And no matter how often folks talk about what it was, there is no need for it to be like any of those other shows. Expansion, even in Orlando, is not always necessary.

The show app — which Gourlay, like the best pitchmen, mentioned again and again during his time as a session moderator — was close to perfect, providing a full schedule without lugging around and flipping through a program, and virtually connecting literally every registrant. The education was strong, with hundreds of speakers from all corners of the industry sharing stories and perspectives.

The show was not perfect, though. The larger footprint prevented the kinds of lobby conversations and random interactions more common at, say, chapter meetings. And the value of the trade show dropped after



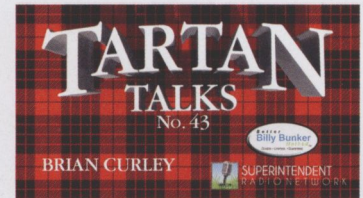
Armen Suny educates a crowd.

so many superintendents and other top turfheads headed home before Thursday. Those are both important, no matter your corner of the industry. A modest proposal: Start the trade show at least a day earlier and shrink the total space. GIS is about connections more than anything else.

We used those connections to bring together much of our team, including columnists Matthew Wharton, Tim Moraghan, Bradley S. Klein and Henry DeLozier, and contributors Anthony Williams and Trent Bouts for a spirited dinner. The ideas conceived by that group during hours of conversation will fuel our magazine and our website, as well as our podcasts on the Superintendent Radio Network, for much of the rest of the year. More ideas popped up during conversations throughout the rest of the week. Our attendance and interactions at GIS will help make *Golf Course Industry* a better publication in 2020 — even more attuned to what you need. We just need to give our legs a rest after returning from that blessing of size in Orlando.

Oh, and for the record, I covered 80,746 steps and more than 42 miles the Monday through Friday of show week. In a city so steeped in car culture that it owes much of its economy to the very creation of its roads (thanks, Walt), I consider that almost as great an accomplishment as Disney quietly gobbling up 48 square miles for a theme park.

Almost. **GCI**



Tartan Talks No. 43

Pete Dye didn't script his work. Developers wanted plans.

Early in his career, **Brian Curley** served as a liaison between the legendary architect and groups funding massive golf and real estate projects. Curley joined the Tartan Talks podcast following Dye's death last month to reflect on those



▲ Curley

experiences and what he learned from the World Golf Hall of Fame member. Curley was a 24-year-old employee of Landmark Golf Company when he met Dye during construction of the Stadium Course at PGA West.

Curley is now a principal in Schmidt-Curley Golf Design. His partner, Lee Schmidt, also worked numerous Dye projects for Landmark.

"I caught lightning in a bottle," Curley says. "I saw the commitment that he had. He didn't just give it a quick nod, wink and move onto the next thing. He was fully committed to making something as good as it could be. He loved what he did. I picked up that passion from him as much as technical skills."

Enter bit.ly/BrianCurley into your web browser to hear the podcast and follow @GCIPodcasts on Twitter for future Tartan Talks episodes with ASGCA members who worked with Dye.



MEASURE TWICE, CUT ONCE

Experts in the fields of economics, demographics and climatology tell us that recessions, housing booms, population shifts and catastrophic hurricanes are coming. They just don't know precisely *when* any of their predictions will come true, exactly *where* they will occur or *who* among us will be affected.

Closer to home, in the business of golf course and club management, it's also likely we will see irrigation system breakdowns, fertilization miscalculations and budget shortfalls. That's why it's wise to plan for what may well be the inevitable as well as the unknown.

Warren Buffett once observed, "Someone's sitting in the shade today because someone planted a tree a long time ago." In other words, before the benefits come foresight, a plan and action. With the optimism of the new year now beginning to blend with reality, it's time to make sure we have our most critical plans in place.

IRRIGATION PLANS are fundamental building blocks for every golf facility manager concerned about course conditions. Sound irrigation planning ties directly to the standards of excellence that are part of the overarching agronomic plan. Irrigation philosophy, methods and frequency must support and be consistent with the intended turf conditions for the course. Through attentive practices in most jurisdictions, golf has become an even more diligent user of water as many facilities now rely entirely on recycled water. A sound irrigation plan provides for three important factors: matching water consumption to expected results, measuring water consumption to ensure under-usage whenever possible, and seeking new options for further efficiency where sensible.

Rain Bird's Bryan Stromme encourages managers to establish

realistic expectations for what the superintendent wishes to accomplish. Stromme emphasizes that the system infrastructure and the intended outcomes – turf conditions – must be aligned. He adds that "having individual sprinkler control is critical. The faster you can water, the more efficient your system will be for energy and irrigation effectiveness."

FERTILITY PLANS are mission critical for most golf courses considering the high standards of care and upkeep demanded, as well as the advancing requirements of sophisticated hybrid grasses. The first step in developing a fertility plan is to determine the desired level of course conditions and the corresponding turf standard. While there is no "perfect" fertility plan, the key to the planning process is nitrogen supported by phosphorous. The best plan for each facility also prioritizes environmental impacts to the site.

Nick Kearns, director of greens and grounds at The Oaks Club in Osprey, Florida, says he begins with a review of the prior year's results and executes biannual soil and tissue sampling on each of his two courses. "Our two golf courses react differently," he says. "The Heron, the Bermudagrass course, requires routine nitrogen applications. When applying we try to use the BMP rule of thumb of a 50 percent slow-release blend. With the Eagle, the paspalum course, we very rarely apply a granular nitrogen prod-

uct because it can lead to an increase in disease pressure. The products that we apply to the entire course are 99 percent potassium based with minor elements blended in."

CAPITAL ASSET PLANS are a top priority for golf course and turf and facility managers because of life cycle demands and the time required to sequester and reserve needed funding. Craig Johnston, a partner at Global Golf Advisors in Toronto, says, "Clubs with golf courses and sports fields have an enormous appetite for capital." He points to three key steps for asset replacement planning.

"First, planners must identify every asset that requires replacement, from the water fountain to the irrigation system," he says. "One should have a depreciation schedule that lists all current fixed assets, the initial cost of the asset and the life of the asset. Start with this list to take a current inventory of your assets. Make sure that all assets owned by the organization are included on the list and any assets the organization has sold or disposed of are removed from the list.

"Next, establish the replacement dates required for each asset. Use the depreciation schedule to set a target date for replacing each asset. Finally, identify the financial resources that will pay for the assets that must be replaced. These days that's often a hybrid of capital dues, capital reserves, short-term debt and capital calls on the membership." **GCI**



HENRY DELOZIER is a principal in the Global Golf Advisors consultancy. He is currently Chairman of the Board of Directors of Audubon International.

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ALL POLITICS IS LOCAL

Politics are everywhere, and I'm not talking about what's happening nationally. Every day, whether you're dealing with your staff, your members or your club's board of directors, you're playing politics. What you say, how you say it, to whom, when, where ... Which is why, for you, "all politics is local."

However, while our industry is keen to train us on everything from growing grass to getting a job, there's almost no one out there to help you navigate the political jungle that is every golf course and club. Just like playing tournament golf, if you've never been in a political situation before, you don't know how you'll react (or hit the ball).

So, let me give you the benefit of 35-plus years in golf, from mowing greens to sitting on committees and hiring superintendents like you. If I sound a little paranoid, it's based on experience — and on my favorite definition of "politics," told to me by a golf bigwig from a previous generation: "Poli" means "many," and "tics" are blood-sucking insects. Got it?

NEVER FULLY TRUST ANYONE

As I said, I'm a little bit paranoid. But remember, no matter how much you want to believe that someone is your friend, or is looking out for you, he or she may have their own agenda.

YOU HAVE ONE JOB

One and only one: Serve your members. Never forget that, and never think that you are one of them. There's a big difference between someone being friendly and someone being a friend, so

be aware when a member, or anyone for that matter, seems to want to be something more than you think they should. In the end, as I was reminded many times, "you're just staff."

THERE ARE NO SIMPLE ANSWERS

One of the biggest parts of your job is answering other peoples' questions, particularly those of your members and your bosses. But there's a lot to giving not only smart answers, but the right answers.

- When someone asks you a "yes or no" question, there are only two answers. Your opportunity to explain, expound and give an opinion is effectively cut off. But we all know that yes or no aren't always what we want to say. So, when asked an uncomfortable "yes or no," respond with a question of your own: "Why are you asking me this?" Put the onus back on the questioner to explain what they're really looking for, and also buy you some time. Just as bad is when someone says, "You agree with me on this, right, Tim?" Be careful how you respond.
- When someone starts a conversation with "What is your opinion on ..." know that their mind is already made up. They already have their answer. Respond with the facts as you know them. If you don't have all the information, think before speaking. Who is this person? What am I getting into? Where is he or she coming

from? What do they want? Very often, "I don't know, let me get back to you" is the best answer of all. Don't be dismissive of the question (or the questioner). Say that what you've been asked is important and you need to do some research. Then do the research and get back to that person, as soon as possible, with a reasoned response.

- When someone is asking a question, don't think about your response until they are done. In short, listen — really listen — to the question. This gives you a chance to hear the entire question, gives you a chance to think and formulate a good answer, and shows the questioner that you're taking them seriously. For many people, listening is a lost art. Pay attention, make eye contact and really listen. You'll be surprised how popular it makes you. (It also makes you look smart.)
- Lastly, don't answer the question before it's asked.

IN THE BOARDROOM

At some point, you're going to be in front of your board or some other group of successful people who think they know a lot more about what you do than they actually do. How you look and speak to them can be critical to your success, both short and long term. If you're nervous in front of crowds, take a public speaking class. If you don't own a suit or at least good pants and a blue blazer, get them. Your appearances in



TIM MORAGHAN, principal, ASPIRE Golf (tmoraghan@aspire-golf.com). Follow Tim's blog, Golf Course Confidential at www.aspire-golf.com/buzz.html or on Twitter @TimMoraghan

any boardroom-type situation can mean a lot.

- Due diligence. Or “do your homework.” Use Google or ask others about the people you will be dealing with and talking to. Find out where they’ve worked and what they did, what they like to do, where their prejudices might lie. You want to learn about them so you can: 1.) form a good professional relationship and 2.) know where they’re coming from.
- You’re probably not going to want to talk and act in front of the board as you do with your peers, assistants and staff. First, you’re not the boss to the board. Second, be careful of your language. Third, really watch your language. Boardroom behavior and personality is an acquired art, honed from observing, listening and preparing.
- Be mindful of your body language — hands, facial expressions, body position. Unfortunately, I’ve always worn my heart on my sleeve. On my face, actually, as my expression is a dead giveaway of what I’m really thinking and feeling. I’ve worked on this for years and learned to always look both interested but neutral. Always keep your emotions in check and be mindful of your place in the room or at the table.
- Don’t cry wolf. If a big project or the weather has thrown you a curve, be careful how you state your case. Don’t go overboard, don’t make it bigger than it is. Be truthful about what happened and in giving timelines, costs and assessments

“

If a big project or the weather has thrown you a curve, be careful how you state your case. Don’t go overboard, don’t make it bigger than it is. Be truthful about what happened and in giving timelines, costs and assessments of what needs to be done.”

of what needs to be done. In and out of the boardroom, sometimes falling on your sword for the little things isn’t worth it. Pick your fights, setting some aside for later while just ignoring others. You want to win the war, even if you lost a couple of battles along the way. Seeing the big picture can help protect your future.

AROUND THE CLUB

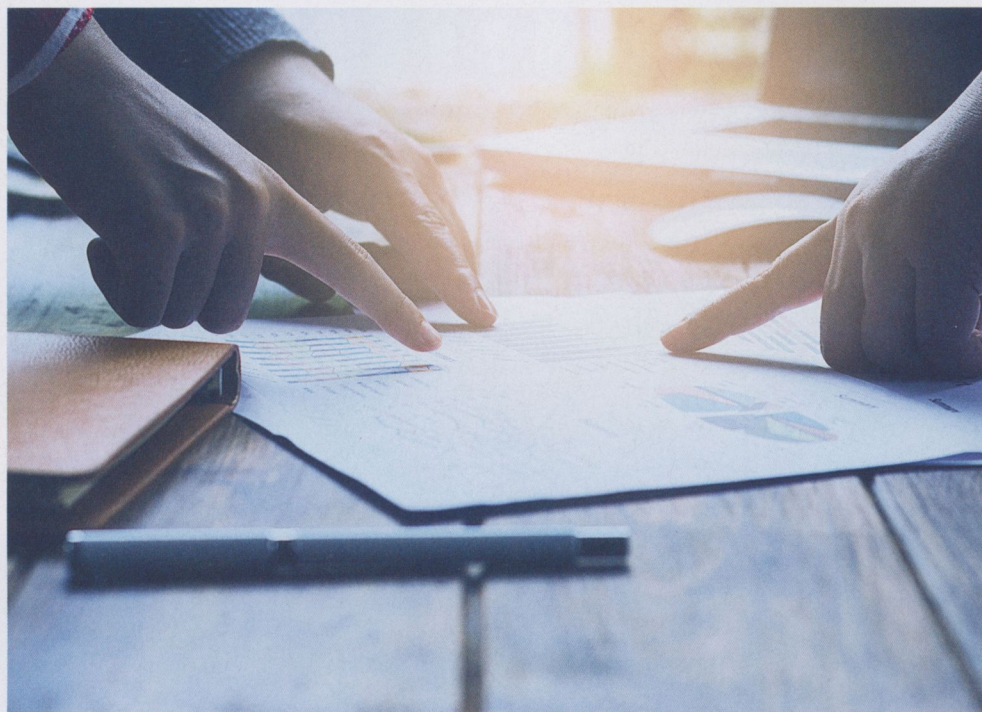
- Don’t take sides. Never talk

to one member about another. Ever. If the discussion is about someone else, listen without agreeing or saying anything negative. And if asked your opinion, the only smart response is, “It’s not my place to say.”

- Be wise when you socialize. There are going to be times you’ll have to be out in social settings with club members. My advice: Don’t drink. You may think a single beer or glass of wine

is fine, but all it takes is one detractor to see you with a drink in your hand to start the rumor mill. Same after a board meeting, even a round of golf. Be careful where you tread and with whom you share a cocktail.

- Finally, always remember this: The golf course does not belong to you. It’s fine to take pride in your work and the course itself. But at the end of the day, no matter how wrong you think a decision might be, it’s not yours. Even if you’re presented all the facts and made the strong case, you could still lose the argument. As I said at the top, you’re just staff.
- But even with the above, never, ever respond with, “It’s your club, I’ll do whatever you want.” Sore losers who let their emotions get the better of them will soon be looking for new jobs. GCI





PETE DYE

1925–2020

His courses were spectacular.

His impact on people within the golf industry
was even greater.

BY GUY CIPRIANO

Golf lost its greatest living example of ingenuity Jan. 9, 2020.

Pete Dye designed – and motivated people to build – courses on swamps, coal mines and air bases. He never officially moved mountains or oceans, but his designs hugged stunning landforms from the California desert to the Dominican Republic coast.

His creations transformed sleepy places such as Hilton Head Island, South Carolina; Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida; and Kohler, Wisconsin, into global destinations. Private jets and meetings with billionaires filled the back nine of his life. None of the glitz flustered Dye. Born Dec. 29, 1925, in Urbana, Ohio, a quaint town west of Columbus, Dye remained loyal to his Midwest roots. Developers sold seven-figure homes around his work; hourly employees saw their lives change because of the sacrifices they made fulfilling his vision.

A day with Dye offered glimpses of old and new ways of designing and building golf courses. Dye ordered gigantic machines to move millions of cubic yards of dirt, yet his hands represented his most valuable construction tool. He outlasted younger,

stronger workers on job sites. He always had another feature to examine, hole to inspect and site to improve.

He served in the Army during World War II, although he never made it overseas. Harry Truman ended the war less than a year after Dye reported to Fort Bragg to learn how to jump out of airplanes. Fort Bragg is 42 miles from Pinehurst, where Donald Ross lived. A Scot born in 1872, Ross died in 1948. Dye played and maintained the Ross-designed course on Fort Bragg with his Army superiors and Ross watching.

After selling insurance in his wife Alice's hometown of Indianapolis, Dye combined a passion for golf with business acumen to achieve what others struggled to accomplish in the decades immediately following World War II. Dye honored Ross and other Golden Age Goliaths using a style that modernized course design.

"He invented a golf architecture which did not shy away from showing the influence of the human hand," says Tim Liddy, a talented architect who worked with Dye the past three decades. "The contrast of the hard fairway lines, fairway edges, bunker edges and green edges built golf courses of clarity. They are powerful, dramatic."

"There's an overriding factor among the guys who truly worked with Pete. They are damn hard-working guys. For Pete to share with you, he had to respect you."

— *Allan MacCurrach*

Dye's tactics satisfied demanding clients and golfers with evolving tastes. Crooked Stick opened in 1965 and hosted the 1991 PGA Championship. The Ocean Course at Kiawah Island opened in 1991 and will host the 2021 PGA Championship. The courses are as dissimilar as two of

"Guys like me are going to do the best to carry on that torch and we're proud of what we learned from him. It's a tall order. You can't replace a guy like that. He was one in a million ... one in 10 million."

— Chris Lutzke

his favorite foods: apples and turkey sandwiches.

For all the complexities in his work, Dye remained a simple person shaped by a childhood spent outdoors. Like readers of this magazine, he worked on a golf course as a teenager, watering greens at Urbana Country Club, the nine-hole course where his father was a member. The club made a 16-year-old Dye responsible for its playing surfaces when the superintendent got drafted. "Somehow or another, I was able to kill all the greens," Dye joked in his 2008 World Golf Hall of Fame acceptance speech.

A collection of superintendents, shapers, builders and associates attended the induction ceremony. These were Dye's people. His name will forever be attached to Harbour Town, TPC Sawgrass, Whistling Straits and dozens of other innovative courses. Dye's people will tell you golfers who enjoy those courses will never fully understand his legacy.

ALLAN MACCURRECH HAS never completed his third week of work. Following a fight with his

father, the PGA Tour's first agronomist, a defiant MacCurrech wanted a job on the crew building TPC Sawgrass. He was just 14 in 1979. "I said to my dad, 'Give me a job out there building that golf course,'" MacCurrech says. "He said, 'You won't last two weeks.'"

MacCurrech started his career by picking up sticks. He was then handed a rake and told to work contours on the third green. On a sweltering summer day, a middle-aged man approached MacCurrech and two co-workers. The man circled the green, inspecting contours with an eye-level tool. The man wanted subtle slopes, not the smooth and slick surfaces the trio produced. The man jumped on a bulldozer and destroyed their work. MacCurrech gave his father an earful about the "crazy gardener" who ruined the third green. "That was my first introduction to Pete," MacCurrech recalls more than 40 years later. "My dad told me to quickly shut up and do whatever the gardener tells you to do."

Dye completed TPC Sawgrass in 1980. He then started building The Honors Course outside Chattanooga, Tennessee, and MacCurrech spent the summer of 1981 living with Dye and construction crew colleagues in the maintenance facility. MacCurrech graduated high school the following summer. One day after the ceremony, he drove from Jacksonville to Denver to help Dye build TPC Plum Creek. MacCurrech obtained a two-year degree in turfgrass from the University of Massachusetts and, in 1987, founded MacCurrech Golf Construction. The company's portfolio includes more than 20 Dye-designed courses.

"There's an overriding factor among the guys who truly worked with Pete," MacCurrech says. "They are damn hard-working guys. For Pete to share with you, he had to respect you."

Dye and Alice, who died last year, shared plenty with MacCur-

rach during the latter stages of their respective lives. MacCurrech frequently shuttled the pair from airports to projects, always stopping at Dairy Queen to satisfy Alice's ice cream cravings. MacCurrech ate cheeseburgers and watched the final round of the 2015 PLAYERS Championship in a Florida hotel room with the duo. Eventual champion Rickie Fowler went eagle-birdie-birdie on the heralded TPC Sawgrass closing stretch to enter a playoff with Sergio Garcia and Kevin Kisner.

"When the tournament ended, Pete's phone started ringing off the hook," MacCurrech says. "Everybody wanted Pete to say something after somebody brought the 'evil man's' golf course to its knees. He was cheering for Rickie like everybody else."

That crazy, evil gardener who MacCurrech met at the course where Fowler earned his biggest victory sure had a way with people.

"Those guys who had the opportunity to work with the man will forever remember it," MacCurrech says. "There were a lot of guys inspired by Pete. I guess the marketplace would call them 'small guys.' They aren't in *Golf Digest* today and they won't be tomorrow. But he shaped their careers, because they showed up to work at one place and met this guy named Pete Dye. And the next thing they knew, they were doing something pretty cool."

Or something they could be proud of whenever their father called. "Up to the point my dad died, he would call me and ask, 'How are you doing?'" MacCurrech says. "I would always say, 'Just going on that third week there.'"

DAVID STONE ANSWERED a call from the pro shop after guiding the Holston Hills crew through a morning shift in June 1982. P.B. Dye, one of Pete's two sons, and two other members of The Honors Course construction team planned



to play golf later in the day and they needed a fourth. Stone agreed to lead the trio around Holston Hills, an excellent Donald Ross design in Knoxville. After the round, P.B. and his colleagues drove the hundred miles back to The Honors Course, and Stone returned to the business of leading a team through the Tennessee summer.

Then, in September, Stone received another call. This one wasn't filtered through the pro shop. P.B. wanted Stone to visit The Honors Course to discuss the possibility of becoming the club's superintendent. "I was pretty happy with where I was at," Stone says. "I said, 'I don't know how interested I am, but I'd love to meet your dad.'"

Stone did more talking than Dye in their first encounter. Dye proved

uber-curious around agronomists. By the end of the conversation, The Honors Course had its new superintendent. Stone and Dye remained close friends following the opening of the course, with Dye frequently making pro bono visits to the club. Dye's grand vision inspired Stone. In the late stages of his 35-year run at The Honors Course, Stone convinced club leaders to move a road to clear room for a spacious practice range. "Pete taught me you can't be afraid to change something," Stone says.

Stone taught Dye as much about agronomy as perhaps anybody. Stone's turfgrass knowledge resulted in The Honors Course becoming the first Dye-designed course with zoysiagrass fairways. The periphery includes a variety of aesthetically

pleasing and wildlife-promoting native grasses recommended by Stone. Dye praises Stone in "Bury Me in a Pot Bunker," a candid account of the architect's career and work co-authored with Mark Shaw. "David is probably the best thing that ever happened to The Honors," Dye writes.

The book was released in 1995. Stone reflected on the unsolicited compliment shortly after Dye's death. "I wasn't aware the book was being written until it came out," Stone says.

Now retired, Stone is working with a few members on a club history. Dye is a huge part of the club's story.

"You read about how your life can be changed by a few people or one particular situation," Stone says. "If

▲ Pete Dye, third from left, with Charles E. Fraser, Jack Nicklaus and Donald O'Quinn at Harbour Town Golf Links.

PB and those two guys hadn't come up and played golf with me, it might have never happened. I just loved Pete's work and his courses."

SUPERINTENDENTS WERE

OFTEN Dye's point person at a club. This proved especially true at The Golf Club, an early Dye design in New Albany, Ohio, where Keith Kresina has worked and studied Dye's early work for more than 30 years. Kresina met Dye as an assistant superintendent in 1990. Five years later, Kresina had become the club's superintendent, so he frequently got the call ... *Pete Dye is visiting. He wants to meet with you.*

"Whenever he came on property, the superintendent had to be there," Kresina says. "He wanted to talk to the superintendent. He wouldn't step foot on the property when the superintendent wasn't there."

The pair would meet at the pro shop and walk the course – Dye

shunned carts even in the final years of his life – mostly in silence. Agronomy questions often broke the silence. Dye leveraged the expertise of superintendents to elevate his work. "He wanted to know about agronomy," Kresina says. "He wanted to know how to grow stuff in the shade, how the greens were performing."

Opened in 1967, The Golf Club is one of Dye's earliest designs and it melds Scottish flair (railroad ties) with enduring playability concepts (trouble left for low handicappers and room right for high handicappers). Neither its tasteful features nor decades of rave reviews mattered to Dye in a memorable exchange with Kresina during a quiet walk.

"I asked him, 'What do you see?'" Kresina says. "His answer was, 'Mistakes.' I thought that was an interesting response. He was looking at all the mistakes he made early in his career as a golf course architect. He wanted to make sure he was

improving."

Dye waited until his late 80s to receive the mulligan he wanted. He completed a major renovation at The Golf Club, just 63 miles from Urbana, in 2014. "I feel very fortunate to be in the right place at the right time," Kresina says. "It was the chance of a lifetime to work hand in hand with him on a project."

LESS THAN 30 miles from the Atlantic Ocean, on north Georgia land once owned by Henry Ford, Dye completed another major renovation in 2014. He ate soup – along with two scrambled eggs, two pieces of toast with jam, bacon and sausage – every morning he visited The Ford Plantation.

A big breakfast was needed. Dye looped The Ford Plantation course twice daily on his visits. An entourage accompanied Dye in the morning. Dye, who had a hearty appetite, would stop at the clubhouse and grab

▼ Chris Lutzke, left with Pete Dye during construction at French Lick Resort. Pete and Alice Dye paid Lutzke's way through Michigan State.



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COVER STORY

► Brian Curley is one of many accomplished architects who had an opportunity to work with Pete Dye.

a turkey sandwich and more soup for lunch. Once sunset approached, the group typically consisted of just four people: Liddy, lead agronomist Nelson Caron, green committee chairman Dr. Bill Thompson and a MacCurrach Golf Construction representative. "It was totally sunup to sundown," Caron says. "At the end of those days, you were totally mentally exhausted. He required you to be on top of your game."

Sacrificing for Dye yielded major rewards. Caron first met Dye in 2003 while working as an assistant superintendent at the River Course at Kingsmill Resort. Stone then hired Caron as an assistant at The Honors Course, which brought back Dye to rebuild a pair of holes in the mid-2000s. When the head turf job at The

Ford Plantation opened, Caron approached Dye about calling director of golf CW Canfield on his behalf. It took Dye multiple tries to get through, because Canfield didn't believe the caller was actually Dye.

"He called back two minutes later and said, 'This is P-E-T-E ... D-Y-E. Don't hang up on me!'" Caron says. "Then, of course, CW didn't hang up on him and they had a big laugh. I still had to come through and perform the interview, but that was quite the endorsement from Mr.

Dye. Without him, I wouldn't be sitting in the chair that I'm sitting in today."

The renovation allowed Caron to establish a personal relationship with Dye, who was more than twice his age. As the entourage discussed construction specifics, Dye frequently pulled Caron aside. The private



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chats left indelible impressions.

"All he wanted to hear about were my twin girls," says Caron, who created The Pete Dye Scholarship Foundation for young professionals with interest in golf course maintenance. "I thought about that for years. At the end of that 14-month stretch working with him, he knew everything about me personally and he didn't forget anything, either. Maybe one of the reasons he was so accomplished was that he got people like me to totally buy into what he was selling. It would be hard to not follow Pete. He was just that great of a leader."

DAVID SWIFT MET Dye when he was 21. He served as the host superintendent for a major championship contested on a Dye-designed

course at 27. He spent large chunks of his time at Whistling Straits trying to keep pace with the indefatigable architect.

"It was a love affair," says Swift, the current superintendent at Minnehaha Country Club in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. "You had to love what you were doing, because it was all day and all night. That's how we got things done. Looking back, it's like, 'Holy cow! Look at what we did!'"

Swift worked for the Kohler Company from 1999 to 2009. In preparation for the 2004 PGA Championship, Dye executed several alterations to the Straits Course, which opened in 1998. Dye visited Kohler weekly during the shoulder seasons and winter, leaving the crew with what Swift jokingly called "two

**"When I'm training my team,
I feel like there's a part of
Dye in me."**

— David Swift

weeks' worth of work" to be completed before his next visit.

"He was never done," Swift says. "You would be in the dirt with him, laying on your chest, looking at a bunker. And the next minute you're standing on the hood of a truck looking at something out in the distance. It was constant and you were looking at the world through a whole different set of eyes. I never knew that attention to a detail. I was just a grass guy."



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COVER STORY

Swift estimates his Minnehaha crew spends a third of its time executing long-range projects. Angles. Tweaks. Open-minded dialogue. "When I'm training my team, I feel like there's a part of Dye in me," he says.

SAEED ASSADZANDI IS

on his third general manager position, this one at Bethesda Country Club, a private facility bordering the Capital Beltway. Before wading through club finances and politics, he received a double dose of Dye.

Assadzandi led the agronomic efforts during the construction of Mystic Rock at Nemacolin Woodlands in southwestern Pennsylvania. His first interaction with Dye included a brief conversation about the work schedule. "He said, 'So, you're going to work on a Pete Dye golf course? I said, 'Yes, sir.' He said, 'Are you ready to work on the Pete clock? I said, 'Yes, sir. What's that?' Sunup to sundown, seven days a week."

When Mystic Rock opened in 1995, Assadzandi continued working at Nemacolin Woodlands as the director of golf, grounds and ski operations. Dye contacted Assadzandi in 1997 about assisting with a "little project" in Wisconsin on a former Army base with a runway through the middle of the property. "You don't tell Pete Dye no," Assadzandi says.

Assadzandi saw the results of hard work at Mystic Rock. He saw a humble genius operate at Whistling Straits. Wearing sneakers, khaki pants rolled up to his ankles, small jackets with different logos and a baseball or flat cap, Dye directed the movement

of 800,000 cubic yards of dirt and sand to build the Straits Course. Dye didn't work off plans, although Assadzandi sometimes noticed sketches from various courses under Dye's cap bill. Dirt sketches are part of Dye lore, so Assadzandi carried a camera to remember what the architect wanted. Besides wearing the same clothes, Dye ate salmon cakes nearly every day for lunch at Whistling Straits.

"When it came to designing a golf course, you couldn't find a more unpredictable person," Assadzandi says. "When it came to his daily routines, he was very predictable."

Assadzandi left Whistling Straits in 1999 to become the general manager at Champion Hills Golf Club, a course nestled within an upscale western North Carolina community. "I wouldn't be sitting in this chair if it wasn't for the lessons learned from him," says Assadzandi, who moved from The Country Club of North Carolina to Bethesda Country Club in 2018. "Those were seven of the best years of my career working under his direction."

A 2 A.M. PHONE call rarely ends well.

Dye wanted a stubborn coal magnate named James D. LaRosa to contact industry veteran Gary Grandstaff about becoming the superintendent at a course he was trying to build on an abandoned mine in Bridgeport, West Virginia. LaRosa picked an odd time to call Grandstaff, who was in his second year as the superintendent at Valley Country Club in suburban Denver.



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The call placed Grandstaff in the middle of two strong personalities involved in a project with seemingly no end. LaRosa commenced construction in 1979. The Pete Dye Golf Club officially opened 16 years

later as the only course bearing Dye's first and last name. LaRosa hired Grandstaff on April 15, 1989 to work alongside Dye.

"He told James D. LaRosa, 'This was one of the best courses I have ever designed,

so why don't you finish it?'" Grandstaff says. "They argued about finishing it all the time."

Dye never viewed any course as 100 percent finished. But the Pete Dye Golf Club had to open at some point, because, "you eventually run out of money," Grandstaff says. "We ran out of money, but we just kept spending James D.'s money."

LaRosa's money, Dye's creativity and Grandstaff's agronomic tact produced 18 distinct holes atop reclaimed land. Dye incorporated elements of the land's previous life into the design, using smokestacks as aiming points on the fifth hole and a mine shaft to connect the sixth green and seventh tee. His most wonderful West Virginia feat might have been handling LaRosa. Dye calls LaRosa "the toughest, most tenacious, never-give-up son of gun I've ever worked for" in "Bury Me in a Pot Bunker."

Watching Dye navigate LaRosa emphasized the importance of patience to Grandstaff, an Ohio native who wandered between projects and courses before landing in West Virginia. Grandstaff first met Dye and his brother, Roy, while touring Wabek Country Club outside Detroit in 1970. Grandstaff kept in touch with the Dyes and leveraged the relationship into finding a permanent home.

Grandstaff retired in 2019 after 30 years at the Pete Dye Golf Club. His career proves not all 2 a.m. phone calls end poorly.

"Pete gave me a chance when he didn't have to and he was a good friend," Grandstaff says. "I talk to a lot of young men in this business and they are all looking for a place to go. They want that break. Pete gave me that break."

PETE AND ALICE Dye paid Chris Lutzke's way through the turfgrass management program at Michigan State. Then they paid his way through the school's landscape architecture program.

Lutzke joined the construction crew at Blackwolf Run, the first Kohler project involving Dye, as an 18-year-old in 1986. He dug deeper bunkers and mounds than his co-workers. The boss quickly noticed and Dye asked Lutzke if he wanted to spend a winter helping build Old Marsh

continues on page 47

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PETE DYE'S LEGACY

Not a lot of golf course architects become household names. Pete Dye was one of them. His death on Jan. 9 at the age of 94 following a prolonged bout with dementia leaves behind a powerful legacy that reshaped architecture, maintenance and how the game of golf is perceived. Few of his colleagues – historic and contemporary – have close to such a significant presence.

It's arguable whether anyone achieved that popular status during the Golden Age of Architecture, the era between the two World Wars when golf was just gaining a foothold on the American sports landscape. Donald Ross designed the courses for eight of the 13 U.S. Opens held from 1919 to 1931 but was hardly a well-known figure outside the client base frequenting the Pinehurst Resort.

In post-World War II America, Robert Trent Jones Sr. achieved a measure of public recognition thanks to a combination of factors: his design vision as an advocate of power golf, the growth of the game as a recreational pursuit of middle-class America, and his considerable marketing skills as a self-promoter.

Pete Dye managed to achieve the status of a golf icon whose name and style became familiar to golfers and non-golfers alike. Televised golf had something to do with it. Who could forget the image of that wacky island green at the TPC Sawgrass Players Stadium Course when it debuted on national TV in 1982? Tournament winner Jerry Pate tossing Dye and PGA commissioner Deane Beman into the pond alongside the 18th green did a lot to convey the impression that here was someone who could take a joke. From then on, the references to Dye's architectural style flowed through the pages of golf magazines as if common curren-

cy. He was Dye-abolical, the Marquis de Sod and the master of railroad ties.

As Dye liked to say, there wasn't much he did that hadn't already been done in Scotland. OK, he had the ability to move more dirt than had ever been the case on any linksland course. But once the dust settled, the forms that resulted at a PGA West or Whistling Straits could find their counterpart at a Prestwick, North Berwick or Turnberry. And from the time he played in the British Amateur at St Andrews during his first Scotland study trip in 1963, he learned the value of ground contour as a way of thwarting aerial power golf.

The odd bounce, the severe deflection – it was all part of a natural game that he would emulate. The difference is that Dye had to create it. And in an era when the likes of Robert Trent Jones, Dick Wilson and Joe Lee were forced to rely upon big earth-moving equipment and small construction budgets, Dye managed to convince owners to open up the purse strings and diversify the equipment arsenal. Knuckle buckets, skid steers, back hoes, hand shovels – these were the tools of architectural intrigue.

That's what he taught a whole generation (or two) of aspiring designers who cut their teeth on his projects. The list of names is a virtual Who's Who of the Second Golden Age: Bill Coore, Brian Curley, Tom Doak, Ron Farris, John Harbottle, Tim Liddy, Chris Lutzke, Jason McCoy, Scott Poole, Dave Postlethwaite, Lee

Schmidt, Jim Urbina, Bobby Weed, Rod Whitman. Player architects also learned from him – Jack Nicklaus and Greg Norman.

And of course his own family got into the act. His wife, Alice, who died in 2019, was the savior of the business as well as an accomplished designer in her own right, and their sons Perry Dye and P.B. Dye were exuberant about proving their own prowess at outdoing their father in the scale of forms they built. A niece, Cynthia Dye McGarey, has proved herself a formidable design presence internationally, perhaps because her father, Roy Dye, Pete's older brother, had a knack for design that he deployed (sparingly) across the American southwest.

Dye's capacity to inspire those he worked with extended to everyday laborers and equipment operators. Everything was done in the field, often scarped out first and communicated to novice workers who had never built or even seen a golf course before. Dye preferred it that way; he could teach them his method rather than have to undo what they had done elsewhere for another designer.

Along the way he never forgot his roots in rural Midwest America. He was adamant at times about letting the site convey the special character of the course he was building.

Pete Dye changed the American golf landscape. Small wonder word of his transformation became part of everyday conversation. **GCI**



BRADLEY S. KLEIN, PH.D. (political science), former PGA Tour caddie, is a veteran golf journalist, book author (*"Discovering Donald Ross,"* among others) and golf course consultant. Follow him on Twitter (@BradleySKlein).



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TURF

EDUCATION

LEARNING IS UNIVERSAL, BUT EDUCATION IS PERSONAL

By **Lee Carr**

Steven Spielberg, Benjamin Franklin and you – all polymaths, to a degree. Polymaths have extensive knowledge of a wide range of subjects and you're aware of the spectrum of knowledge and skills required of superintendents.

You may not be as aware of the current choices in turf education, why they matter to you and how deeply – and exceptionally – involved you are in those choices.

There's work available, with assistant superintendent compensation starting in the mid-\$30,000s and extending well into the \$60,000s. Superintendent salaries start in a higher range and extend through to six figures for some properties. The education requirements nearly always list as "preferred," with the

two-year degree or certificate being most frequently mentioned, and some listings clarifying that experience can supplant a degree. Equipment and irrigation technicians are expected to have a high school diploma or the equivalent and their pay rates are increasing because qualified candidates are lacking in many regions.

According to CollegeCalc.org and based on the US Department of Education's 2018-19 Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), "The average annual out-of-state cost for a bachelor program in turf and turfgrass management is \$36,443 with an estimated average four-year degree total cost of \$145,772. For two-year turf and turfgrass management associate programs, the average total cost per year is \$20,211 with an average two-year total program cost of \$40,422."

According to *Golf Course Industry's* recent State of the Industry survey, roughly 14 percent of superintendents are "very likely" to recommend a golf course maintenance career to a young person. The survey also finds that 36

percent of superintendents surveyed believe the largest misconception family and friends have about the profession is that “it’s just about turf.” Collectively, these parameters influence choices regarding education.

WHO ARE THE STUDENTS?

The basic choices in turf education include: a high school diploma or GED, learning on-the-job, a two-year certificate or associate degree, a bachelor’s degree, a graduate degree and a doctorate. With those designations, students can apply for a job ranging from irrigation tech to director of agronomy. Beyond the accomplishment, there are innumerable smaller decisions that will shape the potential of a career and a student’s quality of life when formal schooling is finished. Coursework for continuing education and additional certifications are possible. The learning never stops. These elements coupled with external factors have seen a drop in interest in students choosing education in turf.

At Virginia Tech, and “across the

country in 2008, my colleagues and I saw our enrollment plummet when the economy collapsed. We are still in recovery mode, but it’s improving,” says Dr. Mike Goatley, professor and extension specialist in the School of Plant and Environmental Sciences. He remembers when turf was a popular major and recruiting students was unnecessary – major universities could have more than 100 students pursuing four-year turf degrees. Now, if there are 25 students, that program is considered robust.

“About half the students come to major in turf, usually with some idea that they want to be a superintendent or be in sports turf management,” Goatley says. Student interest increases when they find a professor they like or other students talk about their internships and generate enthusiasm for how they can turn what they are learning in class into a job. “About half the kids know they like sports and being outdoors,” Goatley adds, “but they need to be introduced to careers.”

Students do not need to know what they want to do as a career

when they apply for school. General offerings present an opportunity to introduce students to turf. It’s not about persuading kids to study turf but making sure they know what career options are available to them through turf management. Many schools have turf education as part of their offerings in agriculture, but high school students may not recognize how far into sports golf turf management agricultural studies actually extend.

There has been a dramatic increase in enrollment for the online program at Penn State (World Campus) and the two- and four-year programs are also seeing higher enrollment. “We are all going to see that uptick,” says Dr. John Kaminski, a professor and the director of the golf course management program. “College is expensive. People are looking at majors based on what is a hot job market. In turf, and specifically golf course turf, we are at 100 percent job placement. Students are getting good jobs. Salaries are increasing and employers are striving for a work-life balance. All these

▼ A major part of Dr. Mike Goatley’s job at Virginia Tech involves selling the value of turf education to students.



© PHOTO COURTESY OF DR. MIKE GOATLEY

things are happening at a perfect time. You are seeing career interest, so people go to school for it.”

Many of the students Kaminski sees in the golf course turfgrass management two-year program are older and determined to become superintendents. They usually have a four-year degree in sports management, teaching or something else, but those who have an undergraduate degree in business consistently perform well. “Those kids have a really high outlook in terms of success because it all clicks – turf, business and communications,” Kaminski says.

In Conway, South Carolina, at Horry Georgetown Technical College, a two-year school, this year has presented some atypical students. While the student body is usually a little older with some college experience (but no degree), this year they have several students with bachelor’s degrees. The school is also seeing “more young people who are straight out of high school,” says Ashley Wilkinson, professor for golf and sports turf management. Younger students have little experience, but it’s an encouraging sign that turf education is attracting more students as a first choice.

FINANCING

“The value lies in asking, ‘What is your purpose for getting an advanced degree?’” Goatley says. “A master’s degree doesn’t necessarily make you more employable. I don’t discourage the students, but I do encourage them to think it through.”

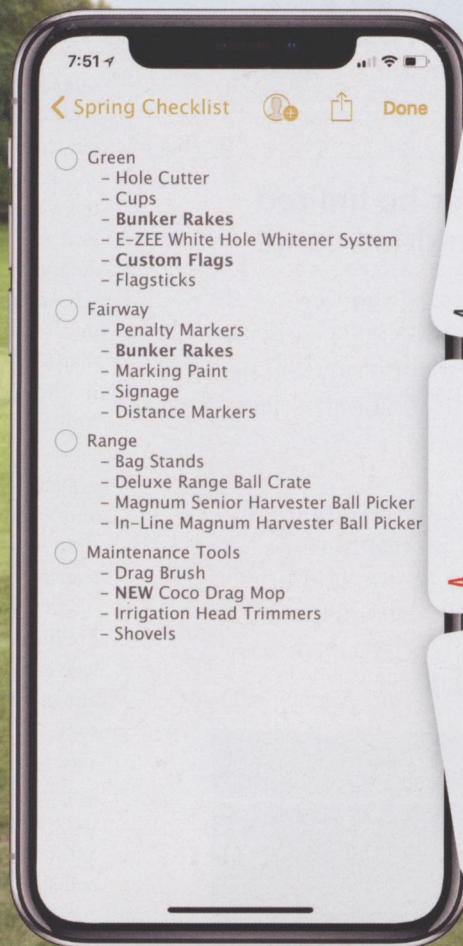
And how much education is optimal for success? Most will agree that a two-year certificate or degree will set you on a better path than no formal turf education, but there is additional value in the four-year degree.

“Some of the students are really book smart and take a liking to research,” Kaminski says. “We have the funds to hire them for it.” Two-year students don’t have time for that, but they have to make time to apply for at

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CAREER

least one scholarship.

"Our out-of-state tuition is \$22,000 for four semesters," Kaminski says. "If a student can pull in a good scholarship and work a six-month summer internship to make \$15,000 to \$20,000 more, the student can pay for tuition, room and board. But you have to be a really good student and you have to be aggressive. I make them put together a package for at least one scholarship because I know they are all qualified to get it but for some reason they aren't going to do it. It blows my mind. The big scholarships can be \$5,000 to \$8,000. Why would they not put a packet together?"

Financial aid creates potential when applying for admission and relief in making the decision to go to school, but scholarships help once you are in. Virginia Tech offers more than \$750,000 in scholarships in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, with more than 500 scholarships available. Goatley, Kaminski and Wilkinson all encourage their students to apply for scholarships.

"Previously, the college dream was to have the college experience, find yourself and enjoy yourself," Wilkson says. "That's expensive now. The new college dream is to graduate with no debt, be free the minute you get out and not have to worry about college loans."

Several second-year students receive scholarship money and the Horry Georgetown class schedule for all students is Monday through Thursday so everyone can work. Students are fully expected to be employed and 90 percent are. With year-round golf weather

and around 90 courses in Myrtle Beach, the students are spoiled for choice. Between working – which reinforces their education – and scholarships, graduating debt-free becomes possible.

To help students and hire graduates with one less thing to worry about, superintendents can be aware of scholarships (particularly any offered by local professional chapters and organizations) and encourage interns or other students to apply. Currently, there is a surplus of money and too few applicants – and this should change.

The valuable intangibles of education cannot be overlooked. David Lee, director of golf course maintenance at Forest Creek Golf Club in Pinehurst, North Carolina, has his doctorate in agronomy. He chose that path "because it was the ultimate degree in the field and could provide many opportunities in academics or industry."

In addition to the material, Lee says he learned independent thinking and problem-solving. "The science behind turf management is complex and there are many interactions," he says. "The Ph.D. process required learning how to break down these interactions to find answers on why and how things in the field are happening." Communication skills are high on the wish list of most employees, as are problem-solving and independent thinking.

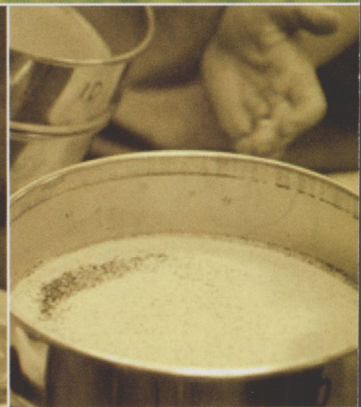
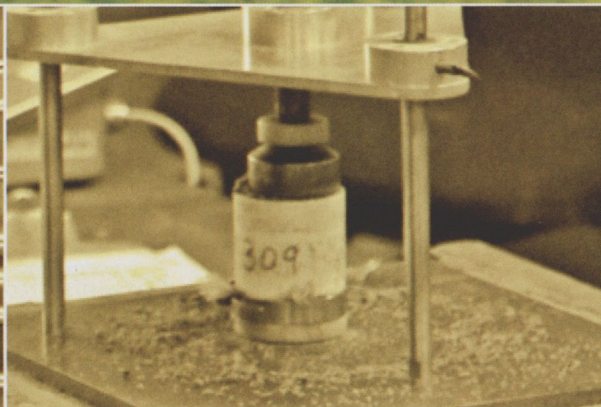
NETWORKS AND MENTORS

Goatley can clearly recall his start in turf education at the University of Kentucky, which was "purely by accident." As an undergrad

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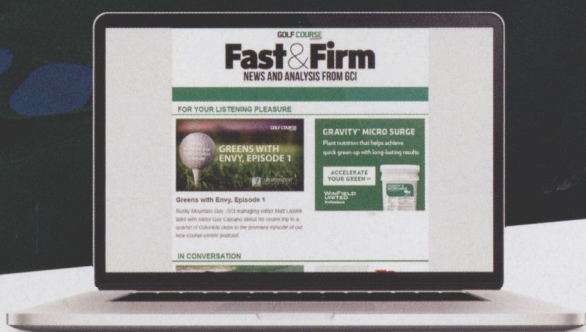
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CAREER

struggling to choose a major, he took a class taught by A.J. Powell and really enjoyed it. Powell “was not an easy teacher in terms of a grade,” but he became a mentor and a model for Goatley as an educator. “He had so much enthusiasm and he always made class fun,” Goatley says. That energy attracts students as much as anything.

Goatley tells students to prepare for everything required of a superintendent. “Every successful turfgrass manager will tell you that growing the grass is by far the easiest part of the job,” he says. “I tell the kids, ‘please take business classes, please take communications classes and please take HR classes, because that is what is going to differentiate you.’”

The best career advice he has been given is “to know your career network and know your support network at home. Don’t forget who those people are. Take care of those relationships because you are going to need them.” Every person on your staff has you as part of their career network, but you can also be a mentor, especially for young people getting their start.

Internships are a key element of education for learning new skills, addressing gaps in education and adding to a student’s knowledge. There simply aren’t enough credit hours to absorb everything that a career will demand – and rightly so.

Penn State students are required to do one official internship and there is a job fair every November, but even by then, most students have their internships secured. “Students are becoming more proactive to pick the best internship they possibly can,” Kaminski says. There is “an internship prep class where they learn about resume writing and cover letters and interviewing. They go through the whole process.” Multiple applications are encouraged – two is the minimum – as weighing opportunities and accepting and rejecting offers is part of the learning.

Kaminski visits students during their internships, leaving his clubs behind. He spends a few hours with each student, learning what they are learning, pointing out what the student might work on, and getting to know the course and the organization.





CLASSES

Does your employer encourage or subsidize classes to further your education? Do you want to brush up on technical writing or your understanding of specific turf pests? If there aren't any feasible classes nearby, check out what's available online. Here's an example of what students are taking:

Engineering Graphics and Machine Design: Sketching and CAD tools are used to visualize, communicate, rapid prototype and analyze engineering problems (Clemson)

Chemistry of the Vadose Zone: Chemical reactions occurring in geomechanics with emphasis on understanding molecular scale processes occurring at the solid-water interface, aqueous geochemistry and soil organic matter (Missouri)

Geospatial Agronomic Management: Utilize the basic tools of geographical information systems and geographical positioning systems technologies to analyze agronomic case studies (Mississippi State)

Kaminski will visit 17 courses this summer, more than a dozen of which are new to him, and he acknowledges that "It's getting crazy competitive" – one of his students was recently flown to an interview for an internship. When superintendents go out of their way to show how invested they are in an intern's success, "the students will bite on that almost every time."

So, what's next?

THE FUTURE

Lee believes there is a bright future in the turf industry, though it faces challenges – labor, rising costs, a flat market, increasing environmental regulations. He believes students need to be encouraged

to love what they do. "The golf industry is more than a job," Lee says. "It's a lifestyle that requires major sacrifices but has plenty of rewards."

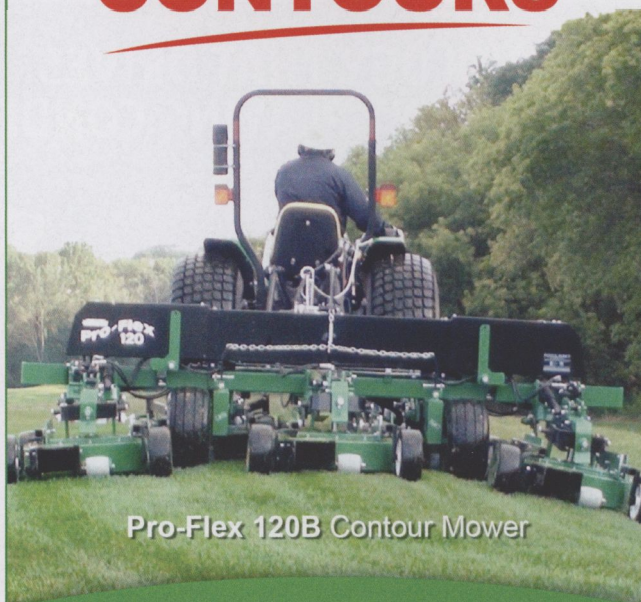
Being a superintendent means "dealing with people all the time – communications, customers, employees, up the chain, down the chain and we focus on that," Kaminski says. Technology is going to be paramount because productivity is going to be driven by technology: GPS sprayers, automated irrigation, drones.

"As we become more GPS capable," Wilkinson says, "with autonomous mowers and spray rigs – who is going to manage those machines? There are no mechanics pro-



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grams in America to handle these \$50,000 to \$75,000 fairway units. Who is going to do that work? Unless we find a way as an industry to partner together to train more mechanics and technicians, the superinten-

dents are going to become the mechanics and technicians. There's no other option."

While the gross cost of education continues to rise, opportunities for work and travel in the industry are robust. Parker Stancil,

who has had two overseas placements, knows the advantages an international experience provides.

Stancil graduated with an associate degree from Horry Georgetown and is continuing his education at Clemson for a bachelor's degree in agricultural mechanization and business. He has been abroad at courses in Denmark and Ireland, and now has "the confidence to go anywhere" and fend for himself. He enjoyed "studying the ways of organic management where pesticide restrictions are extreme but there is still responsibility for elite playing conditions."

Stancil notes that many of his friends have two-year degrees "throughout the country and they couldn't be any happier." Though the Clemson degree has an opportunity cost, and Stancil is cognizant of that, he is pursuing his choice with the confidence to complete it.

The research and academic dimension of turf and turf's daily realities must co-exist and are most productive in tandem. Wilkinson notes that education was not high on the list of desirable superintendent attributes in a recent survey in which he participated. "If you don't put education near the top of that list, then our decision-makers at the superintendent level don't foster the need for education in our next generation," he says.

There has to be a balance. As the labor shortage diminishes a more educated workforce will be desired, but with some high schools starting turf programs, and two-year degrees being maximized, four-year and graduate degrees may be in the minority for the foreseeable future.

Returning to our famous polymaths, Franklin wrote in his 1758 essay *The Way to Wealth* that "an investment in knowledge pays the best interest." It's still true but cannot always be measured monetarily. Equally true, Spielberg knows "the delicate balance of mentoring someone is not creating them in your own image but giving them the opportunity to create themselves." With the personal choices available in education and how much they matter, be aware – and proud of – how much you matter. **GCI**

Lee Carr is an Ohio-based writer and frequent Golf Course Industry contributor.

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Annual bluegrass weevil larvae under damaged turf.

Bayer TAKES AIM at ABW, white grubs

After more than six years of trials across the country, the time is near for an insecticide created to help control a variety of pests.

Bayer experts discussed a new insecticide featuring the active ingredient Tetraniliprole at the Golf Industry Show in Orlando. The insecticide offers superintendents a speedy and flexible solution to rein in annual bluegrass weevil, white grubs and a bevy of caterpillars.

"They know their insect issues, they know when those outbreaks and infestations likely take place, so they can use this product at their discretion and still get the efficacy they desire," says Paul Giordano, Ph.D., technical services manager in the Environmental Science unit. "It gets into the

plant quickly and it ceases the insect's feeding habits very quickly, within hours. We see that as a major point of differentiation versus other products in the market today."

In more technical terms, Tetraniliprole moves through plants through xylem distribution, which causes immediate feeding cessations and quick — and visible — benefits for those plants. Needs will vary among courses and regions, but most superintendents will be able to control ABW, white grubs and caterpillars with one or two annual applications, and Tetraniliprole will allow for those applications to be effective for longer periods.

Because Bayer has been running Tetraniliprole trials for more than half a decade in all regions — and in the teeth of some

The size of white grubs in June.



abnormal weather the last couple years — "we've been able to address a majority of those important pests across the country," Giordano says. All that remains is EPA registration, which Giordano and Xulin Chen, Ph.D., product development manager in Turf & Ornamentals, say they expect in the late second or early third quarter.

"You have one tool and it targets it all," Chen says. "That's the exciting part for me. It has this broad spectrum and it doesn't matter if the insect is living in the soil or feeding on the roots or the grass." Giordano adds that the product will "simplify insect management" by potentially eliminating the need for two or, for some courses, even three other insecticides focused on a single pest.

"Compared to the current standards, there have been products that have been used for decades that do a pretty good job of controlling grubs, but what they don't do is also control ABW or also control caterpillars, so it's picking and choosing and having to build programs with various different products," Giordano says. "Tetraniliprole is going to be that cornerstone for insect management for just about any golf course around the country."

And that, he says, is "what it inevitably boils down to — the customer satisfaction, the superintendent satisfaction. To allow them the flexibility to manage their insect issues the way they need to and want to based on their agronomic programs, that's what excites me. This is a flexible tool that they currently don't have."

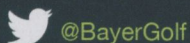
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**CHAMPIONS CLUB WAS
UNDERFUNDED AND
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PASSIONATE NEW OWNERSHIP
AND A DRIVEN SUPERINTENDENT
HAVE SAVED THE COURSE.**

TENNESSEE TURNAROUND

By **Matt LaWell**



Every club suffers through the valleys, pushing on toward the promise of the peaks to come. Champions Club suffered and pushed more than most.

There was the owner who filed for bankruptcy and turned over control of the club to a series of banks. There was the other owner who managed finances so tightly that the maintenance crew more than once forked over their own cash for the equipment and supplies needed to finish a job. There was the fleet of not-so-gently used equipment, often ordered direct from eBay, motors shuffling from machine to machine because only so many of them actually turned over. There was the Thanksgiving morning when a septic line ruptured, flooding the 18th green in sewage.

Finally, in December 2018, a little more than two decades after Champions Club opened in the Chattanooga suburb of Ooltewah, a group of homeowners frustrated with the state of the course and how it affected their property values provided a glimmer of hope. Jim Brunjak, Bill Cronin, John McCormick and Derek Steele purchased the course for \$2.1 million, more than three times the course's appraised value. They charged in, changed what they could, started the revival.

And then, less than five months later, Brunjak, the ringleader, the emotional heart and the passionate spokesperson of the group, died suddenly, just 62.

"I tell you," Cronin says. "We buy the place and we didn't really, truly understand what we were getting into."

Does any course owner ever really, truly understand what exactly they are getting into? Buckle up. The valleys in this revival story dip low.

CHAMPIONS CLUB OPENED

not long before the turn of the century, right at the height of the golf boom, a nine-hole retreat tucked among developing subdivisions, less than seven miles north of the revered Honors Course. Just six years later, market demand doubled its footprint to a standard 18 holes and more than 7,100 yards, the new course laid out by Jay Morrish and Associates. Those were some good times.

The real problems started during the Great Recession. Toby McKenzie owned the club at the time, his fame focused on the payday loan company National Cash Advance, which he founded in 1994 and sold five years later, his fortune tethered to so much real estate development around southeast Tennessee. McKenzie filed for Chapter

11 bankruptcy in December 2008, his debts more than \$150 million. Champions Club changed hands to one bank, then another, before Henry Luken, who built up a television broadcasting company that included The Family Channel and Heartland, took control.

Luken collected area courses, eventually owning seven and providing access to all of them as part of a package. Unfortunately, according to both Cronin and Champions Club superintendent Jason Lundey, the course "looked horrible."

"Oh my god," says Cronin, who was a member before he joined the current ownership group. "It was very unkept, there were weeds, they hadn't put down fertilizer or overseeded for four years to save money. It got in such a state

of disrepair. The greens were just overrun with intrusive species, so much so that the locals started calling it *crentgrass* — half crabgrass and half bentgrass. It was embarrassing to even bring people by the course."

"It's crazy to even say it, but there were plenty of times I was at work, wondering, 'What in the heck are you doing here, man?'" says Lundey, who moved to the Chattanooga area almost two decades ago and wandered into the golf industry about 11 years ago, when he started caddying at the Honors Course, then moved over to maintenance. "Under the old ownership, I was used to day to day. 'Let's get through Thursday without a

mower catching on fire.”

And that was always a possibility when most machines were ordered secondhand (or, who knows, third- or even fourth-hand) on eBay. “It would come out of a field and it might have been sitting there for two years,” Lundey says. “So, first, the mechanic’s got to get it to run and then you take it out and wait for that first hy-

draulic line to blow, which happens usually in about seven days, and then you bring it in and you either have to replace that or . . . It was a nightmare. We couldn’t plan a week in advance because we worried about what was going to happen in an hour. Every day, something happened.”

The single worst day was probably that Thanksgiving shower on the 18th green, which happened a little more than a year before the club changed hands.

“Hamilton County let the material condition of their septic system go and when it did,

one of their high-pressure septic lines ruptured,” Cronin says. “Think of a fountain of shit coming out of the green. It was just blowing it up into the air and everything it came in contact with died because the township didn’t get out there for days. They shut the sewage down right away, but they didn’t get out there to remediate it and put lime on it for probably five days because of the holiday weekend.”

The problems spread to the 17th hole, too, where a forwarding pump failed and flooded the green and fairway with raw sewage, “killing everything over there,” Cronin says. “All of 2018, it was out of service. They had to come in and cut up all the grass and recontour the earth and put new dirt and sand in. It was just



“Kind of hard to sell a 16-hole golf course. Fewer strokes, though. Really helps the score.”

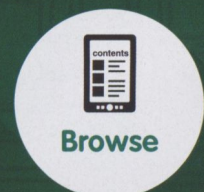
— JASON LUNDEY

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purchasing the club. That initial investment covered “windows, doors, roofs, carpets, a complete renovation of the clubhouse and all of our equipment,” Cronin says. And while the clubhouse has received the most attention, it’s the equipment, no

◀ New ownership has poured more than \$1 million into Champions Club, a good chunk of it on the clubhouse.

... it was ugly. We had a 16-hole golf course for a year and a half.”

“Kind of hard to sell a 16-hole golf course,” Lundey says. “Fewer strokes, though. Really helps the score.”

BRUNJAK, CRONIN, MCCORMICK and Steele stepped in in late 2018, putting down a little more than \$600,000, leaving a note of \$1.4 million, then pouring in \$1 million after

surprise, that has made the biggest difference for Lundey, now in his sixth year at Champions Club.

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of everything we needed, brand new, Toro," he says. "As far as appearance goes, just keeping up with weeds, keeping weeds sprayed out, and cutting — everybody said, 'You've done wonders on the greens!' No!

They bought us a brand-new mower and it cuts flat. Before, every other reel would be a different height. Just adding the new equipment made it seem like we were doing more. Having the right chemicals to put down

and treat everything, it goes a long way."

The most important accomplishment of the first year under new ownership, though, was the greens overhaul on the back nine — especially those two greens swamped in sewage — replaced for the first time since

the course opened and now featuring TifEagle Bermudagrass. "That's grown in and it's awesome." The front nine is still bentgrass and scheduled to be replaced this year.

Or maybe the most important accomplishment was just keeping the club at all, especially after Brunjak's sudden death in April. Over in Harrison, Tennessee, less than a dozen miles west of Champions Club, another Luken-owned course named Eagle Bluff Golf Club shuttered in July after the homeowners association there hired an attorney to ensure new home lots not replace the course. The two clubs provide a stark contrast in how to keep courses alive in what remain challenging times for golf.

HOAs in similar situations "need to make sure they have the support of the community," Cronin says. "We have it now, but when we first did

this, we didn't have the support like we thought we did. A lot of people said, 'I'm going to support you, I'm going to support you,' and then when the rubber hit the road and we started putting money down, they didn't support like they said were going to support. You think about Eagle Bluff, they're in the same situation we were in and Henry shut the golf course down. He's going to develop it and those people are trying to get a group together to buy it and maintain their

► During the first year under new ownership, the back nine greens at Champions Club were replaced with TifEagle.





property values. It's no different than where we were at two years ago."

Lundey said he feels like the ownership and the maintenance storms have passed. "I really feel like we worked through it," he says. "We have very open communication now and I feel like they're honest with me. There are a lot of things that need to be tackled, and they're still on the plate. The irrigation, I could work here for 15 more years and we might get it done — short of dumping all the money into it, and I don't think that's an option. ... Bunkers are a big complaint. We've got too many, and we've been filling some that are unnecessary. We filled probably five or six (last) year, we filled five or six (the) year (before), and we're still sitting at probably 50

bunkers on the course. More than we need.

"I feel more optimistic about it when I assess the last 10 months compared to the previous 60. I like the challenges, the ability to be able to do what you said you could do, and to bring something back to what it should be. And I have a great crew" — seven total, six of them full-timers — "that sees it that way, too. I've had 40 guys work for me in the last six years. The guys I've got now are all vested, too, and willing to do what

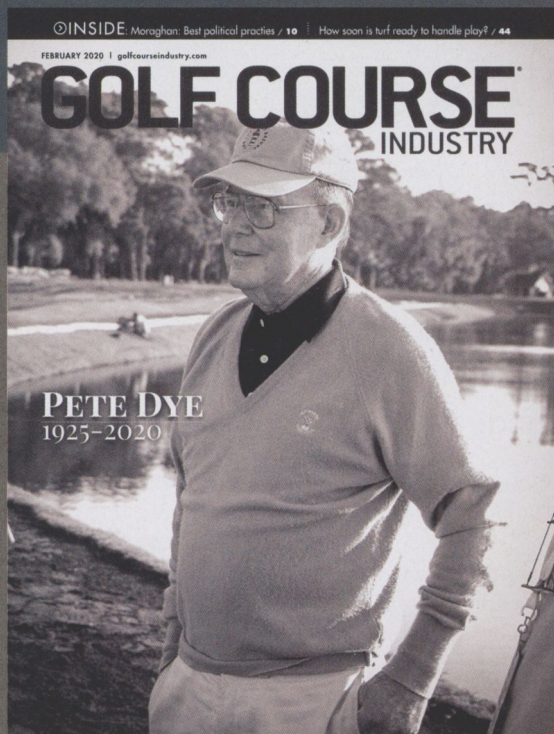
it takes, and that makes it to me like I've got 14 guys instead of seven."

Agronomic fortunes are turning. The peaks seem nearer than ever, and they could be glorious. **GCI**

Matt LaWell is *Golf Course Industry's* managing editor.

"A lot of people said, 'I'm going to support you, I'm going to support you,' and then when the rubber hit the road and we started putting money down, they didn't support like they said were going to support."

— **BILL CRONIN**



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GREENINGUP

Are your golfers or owners anxious to get back on the course after a quiet winter? We asked around for top advice on how to best prepare for spring.

By **John Torsiello**

Superintendents never know what they will see when the snow and ice melts from their courses. With the pressure on to get the course in tip-top condition, there is precious little time to remedy damage and push green-up.

But ... proceed with caution.

"Promoting early turf growth in late winter and early spring to open

early and generate income should be considered with caution and qualification," advises Dr. Roch Gaussoin, professor of agronomy and horticulture at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. "Regions that are prone to non-uniform temperature fluctuations may experience warming trends, where the superintendent increases growth and green-up only to get burned by a quick decrease in temperature, especially if coupled

with snow or ice accumulation."

Gaussoin says lush, actively growing turf is not acclimated to a sudden change in temperature and/or moisture and is highly susceptible to direct low temperature injury. "High winds, typical of many regions in the spring, in the absence of moisture, increases the probability of winter desiccation."

Turf species is highly correlated with the degree of winterkill. Annual bluegrass, according to Gaussoin, is

“far more” susceptible to injury due to crown hydration issues, direct low temperature injury and ice cover duration than creeping bentgrass. “Opening too early will cause significant traffic injury to the turf as it comes out of winter dormancy and increase the potential for more injury.” Regions with more “predictable” winter to spring transition can “buffer” the opening-for-play “dilemma” associated with these issues. But in northern areas where play is allowed all year, traffic associated with carts, maintenance equipment and even walkers intensifies winter injury.

Cold, open winters, especially if windy, can result in turf injury due to desiccation. “Ice cover is always a risk because crowns of the grass plant can freeze, and also because ice can impede gas exchange between the soil and atmosphere,” says Dr. Eric Miltner, agronomist, turf and ornamentals at Koch Turf and Ornamental. “It’s usually a good idea to try to remove ice cover if it happens.” Diseases, such as the various snow molds, are usually fairly easy to spot. Beyond that, superintendents need to keep an eye out for areas that are not greening up compared to surrounding turf, then investigate for underlying causes.

Identifying the cause of turf damage is the first step toward solving an unidentified problem. “Always remember your basic sound agronomic principles, such as soil management, mowing, fertility and nutrition, and pest management as the seasons change,” Miltner says. Some issues take a little patience as plants adjust to changing conditions. Try to not go overboard in addressing everything that seems unusual or different.

If the injury is extensive with appreciable turf loss, aggressive overseeding or even sodding may be needed. Aerification to alleviate compaction and improve surface drainage is often useful in avoiding winter injury in the future. Long term, improving surface drainage,

especially in low areas where ice accumulation is a perennial problem, should be considered.

Frost, of course, is always problematic. Frost injury can be superficial, but it can also be long-lasting under the right (or wrong) conditions. “Be diligent about keeping traffic off frosty turf,” Miltner says. “Pushing too much growth and succulence could result in problems if that cold blast comes.”

About that pressure falling heavily on superintendents’ shoulders to get players onto the course? “We absolutely feel the pressure, but that is what this business is,” says Timothy Palko, grounds superintendent at Boulder Country Club in Colorado. “Weather dictates course conditions in the spring and your efforts will not beat Mother Nature.” While Palko says preventing all damage isn’t practical, reducing damage to a “reasonable” amount is always the goal. “In order to deal with that pressure, you must answer questions before they are asked. Letting others know you have a plan in place and are handicapped by the weather eases their emotions.”

James Ritorto, Northeast regional agronomist for Troon Golf says, “Superintendents want to get the course open for play as soon as possible,” but pressure can develop from a lack of understanding. “Most golfers do not understand the long-term damage that can occur from maintaining turf for play too early in the season. Communication and a mutual understanding of expectations are key to ensuring the best overall product.”

Practices that promote a healthy turf stand and warmer surface temperatures will assist in early season growth, Ritorto says, include the use of new turf varieties; a sound agronomic fall fertilization plan (which is crucial); increased sunlight through tree removal; heavy topdressing, specifically with darker sand; the use of covers; and the use of turf colorants.

Palko limits cart use to paths



only from December through February. “Ball marks, divots that don’t heal until spring and other issues are part of being open in the winter in a climate where the ground freezes. If membership holds conditions to an incredibly high standard for spring, they can’t allow winter play. Helping membership understand the challenges you go through and explaining it helps highlight why you are so important to their club.”

Once his area gets an extended warm period in late February or early March, Palko has crews mow turf at a “very reduced” schedule. “Once we are at that point,” he says, “I feel confident we are through the window of snow mold pressure and I am more concerned with course cleanup and planning for repair where needed.”

Palko attempts to force turf out of

▲ Balancing turf health and finances presents tricky decisions during the freeze-thaw cycles as spring approaches.

► Winter can cause significant turf damage on every playing surface, including fairways.

dormancy “when the opportunity is there.” Mowing, brushing, soluble nitrogen applications and irrigation all play roles. “We can then assess whether we need to seed, sod, plug, punch or be patient and we try to get as much of that done as is reasonable before spring aerification”

“We all always feel pressure from ownership/management to open the golf courses,” says Scott Thayer, golf course superintendent at the Legends Golf Club in Minnesota, “but my ownership understands and agrees that the course is our No. 1 asset and pushing it can cause more damage than good.” He also recommends superintendents communicate as much as possible so their bosses understand the pros and cons of the possibilities of opening earlier than waiting. “Lay out all that could happen, have pictures of damage when opening early, and then let them make the final decision.”

According to Thayer, “rushing anything on a golf course” almost always is a danger in late winter/early spring because plants are so vulnerable with low soil temperatures and the plant not able to recover from anything that happens to it. The consequences can be dead or damaged turf, which can lead to serious problems.

To wit, Matthew Simon, golf course superintendent at Thendara Golf Club in New York, is “extremely cautious” with promoting turf growth: “The addition of growth regulators in my snow mold application hopefully slow down growth slightly in the spring. If things begin growing too early and then we get a sudden very cold snap, it can be devastating.”

Rick Tegtmeier, director of golf course maintenance at Des Moines Golf and Country Club in Iowa, says many superintendents in his area use turf covers for winter protection from the extreme temperature fluctuations. Leaving them on for a little longer time period in the spring can “jump start” bentgrass. “But in

some instances,” he says, “you can leave them on too long, and if you experience a cold period, it could stunt or slow down growth.

“If you have an extended long period of cold weather with no snow cover, you can have some direct low temperature kill off the turf, especially *Poa annua*. Too warm, and the turf can start to initiate some growth, which is not what you want in the late winter period.”

Tegtmeier “has seen superintendents spread black sand or sunflower seeds on ice to absorb sunlight and open up the ice. Many superintendents keep the snow cleared from their greens if they are worried about freeze/thaw issues and too much free water sitting on the turf. Shoveling channels in the snow also works to move that water out of the way.”

Gaussoin says if conditions have been favorable for winterkill, proactive superintendents will take cup-cutter samples in late winter or early spring, place them in a south-facing window in a heated area, and “see what happens.” As the sample warms up, observing green up and subsequent growth helps the superintendent plan for spring operations. “The obvious desired outcome is a quick green up followed

by active growth. If the core doesn’t green up, at least the superintendent can prepare the crew and golfers for needed steps to bring the turf back to playing conditions.”

“Getting the course ready should always be the superintendent’s call,” Penn State University turfgrass science professor Dr. Peter Landschoot says. “He or she has the knowledge and experience and knows the turf and soil conditions.” He advises not to push green up too forcefully through fertilization because “you may be pushing the growth of one type of grass over another” and get an uneven canopy as well as use up the plant’s food reserves too soon. In late winter, make sure there is no buildup or “puddling” of water, especially on greens and approaches. Small temporary channels can move away the water. Also, aerification should always be done when turf is growing so grass can recover quickly.

It’s always a balancing act, Mother Nature vs. man. Throw in management’s need to produce revenue in early spring and superintendents have their hands full. But when healthy turfgrass and long-term conditions are first on everyone’s priority list, the course — and the superintendent — will likely always win. **GCI**



© PHOTO COURTESY OF SCOTT THAYER

continued from page 22



Golf Club in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida. Old Marsh was less than 30 miles from Pete's and Alice's Delray Beach home. Weekdays digging alongside Dye turned into exhilarating weekends.

"I didn't care to know what day it was – and neither did he," Lutzke says. "He had tunnel vision. If the sun was shining, he was working, back then and even late in his career. It was a helluva ride."

Lutzke worked regularly with Dye for more than 30 years. Dye stressed the importance of academic training to his employees. Lutzke applied to the turf program at Lake City (Florida) Community College in 1988. But Dye pointed Lutzke to Dr. Trey Rogers at Michigan State.

Lutzke holds two degrees from Michigan State. He has worked hundreds of 80-hour weeks while helping Dye design more than

20 courses. The American Society of Golf Course Architects elected Lutzke as an associate member in 2018. Pete and Alice Dye, along with Donald Ross, are among the society's past presidents. Lutzke now owns a golf course architecture firm with Paul Albanese. "I have never worked with Chris Lutzke," MacCurrach says, "but I know that son of a gun must work hard because Pete had a lot of respect for him."

Dye's people ate turkey sandwiches from Subway under trees with him, kept an eye on his Belgian German Shepherd "Sixty" and made

sure he returned to the room in time to watch "The Andy Griffith Show." Work hard. Get an intimate glimpse of an incomparable legend.

"Guys like me are going to do the best to carry on that torch and we're proud of what we learned from him," Lutzke says. "It's a tall order. You can't replace a guy like that. He was one in a million ... one in 10 million." **GCI**



▲ Top: Pete Dye walks a fairway with Jack Nicklaus at Harbour Town. Bottom: The Pete Dye Room in the Harbour Town clubhouse.

TRAVELS WITH TERRY

Globetrotting consulting agronomist **Terry Buchen** visits many golf courses annually with his digital camera in hand. He shares 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.

TEE SETUP VEHICLE

Trash is placed in one Rubbermaid 33-gallon container and plastic bottles and aluminum cans for recycling are placed in the other, on each 2017 Club Car Carryall 500 Turf Vehicles, by the two tee setup persons at the 36-hole Giants Ridge Golf & Ski Resort in Biwabik, Minnesota. The 1-inch square tubing is used for the framework. A 1 1/4-inch square tubing “hitch” is welded to the vehicles’ framework underneath the bed, a 1-inch square tubing “male” is inserted into the 1 1/4-inch “female” and held in place with a lynch pin making for easy installation and removal. A 12-inch by 12-inch steel plate, 1/8-inch thick, is welded to the bottom of the framework where the bottom of the containers are positioned and held in place with a bungee cord. The tee setup person moves the tee markers, blows away any debris, moves golf cart traffic control, edges the yardage plaques, and empties and separates the recycling from the trash. Approximately 100 large black trash bags are recycled during a typical golf season. Each framework costs about \$20 and it took about eight hours to build all four. Legends Course superintendent Joe Marafiot, Quarry Course superintendent Jeff Simondet, former director of agronomy Luke Hoerig and mechanic Todd Lemmons developed this great idea.



GREENS SNOW REMOVAL

Critical snow removal timing on greens is done quickly and efficiently by modifying a Toro Trans Pro 100 trailer, pulled by a Ski-Doo Skandic SWT Snowmobile, to transport 2001 Honda HS928 Snow Blowers. No modification to the snowmobile or trailer hitches was required. The trailer’s wheels and tires were removed. A special bracket was built where a piece of 2-inch square tubing was fitted to a recycled snowmobile ski and welded to 1 1/2-inch angle iron that had two 1/2-inch holes drilled into it and a notch cut into it so it could be bolted to the wheel hub. The snowblowers are driven up on the trailer ramp, then turned sideways so both will fit. A 6-foot high elk fence surrounds the greens; the snow is carefully blown away from the bases of the fences. Snow removal is usually done during NCAA March Madness to protect against snow mold and possible ice. The trailer is used during the summer to transport walk-behind greens mowers. Director of agronomy Michael J. Valiant, CGCS, and equipment manager Robert “Skip” Rose at Glenwild Golf Club and Spa in Park City, Utah, have a lot of “equipment mods” up their sleeves.



Terry Buchen, CGCS, MG, is president of Golf Agronomy International. He’s a 41-year, life member of the GCSAA. He can be reached at 757-561-7777 or terrybuchen@earthlink.net.

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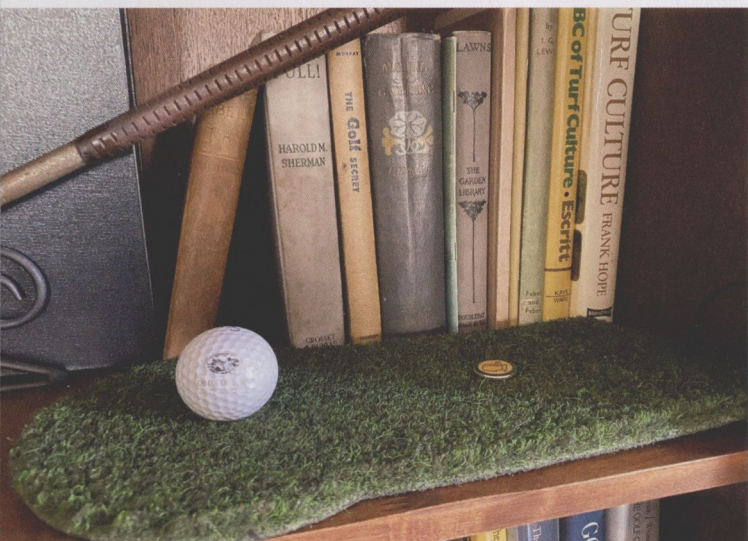
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WINTER PLAY FROM A MAT? WHY NOT?

Winter, the time of year when many of us in the industry are “recharging our batteries,” as they say. Some of you may live up North and your facility is closed for several months, some are open with moderate play if weather is mild, and others are busy with snowbirds playing every day expecting pristine conditions. Regardless of your location and situation, the decisions we make today will have an influence on the course conditions we produce come spring and early summer.

I will share with you a few tips that may help some of you — depending on your location and clientele — alleviate the poor winter conditions that translate into less than desirable spring and summer conditions.

My chapter, Carolinas GCSA, held its annual Winter Meeting in Wilmington, North Carolina, at the famed Country Club of Landfall, where director of golf and grounds Jeff Mack is implementing a cart policy called Blue Line for the second consecutive year.

Throughout most of the Carolinas, the primary turf for fairways and rough is Bermudagrass. With fewer courses overseeding, preserving and protecting the integrity of the dormant canopy over the course of the “off-season” can be quite daunting for a busy facility. All golf cart traffic is limited to the rough. The Blue Line rule allows carts to cross the fairways at one or two designated areas only defined by blue stakes and two blue lines — like a pedestrian crossway at professional tournaments.

According to Jeff, the membership bought into the rule the first year and it translated into better playing conditions throughout that dormant season, as well as a quicker green up the following spring. This is Year 2 of the rule being used on both courses. We abided by this rule during our chapter event and it was quite sim-

ple to follow once we understood the premise.

One of the first tips I learned after joining Twitter is the use of “winter wheels” on push carts in the United Kingdom. Contrary to popular belief, not every course over there is a links and some inland facilities are on clay soils and experience dreadful conditions during the wet months of winter. The winter wheel is much wider than the bicycle size tires seen on trolleys today and they’re designed to spread the weight of a full golf bag over a greater footprint in order to reduce and minimize the rutting caused by the narrower tires.

I recall a few winters back we conducted multiple conversations at my facility and even considered restricting push carts to paths only on specific holes as we were experiencing the same unsightly markings and ruts caused by players failing to avoid the wet, lower-lying areas of the fairways with their trolleys. I believe this type of damage is mostly superficial, but the “scars” do persist for a lengthy period.

For all the possible playing conditions one might encounter in winter, playing golf on saturated, dormant Bermudagrass is the absolute worst in my opinion. When we experience above average rainfall in the Southeast, playing conditions really suffer. But there is a way to avoid the dreaded fat shot and subsequent face full of mud. Play from a mat.

Last year, I had the good fortune to play the Old Course at St Andrews with the retired

director of greenkeeping Gordon Moir. Did you know St Andrews and other links courses in the U.K. require players to use a small mat during the winter months to preserve and protect the golf course as the turf is not growing and unable to recover from divots?

The small mats fit easily in the front pocket of a caddie bib or side pouch of a carry bag. The rules of use are simple: when playing from the fairway, the ball must be placed on the mat. If your ball lies in the rough, you may play it as it lies. If you’re playing a putter from the fairway, the mat is not required.

Hitting shots from the small mat takes getting used to. Gordon and his neighbor, Alec, were very adept and proficient, while I bladed my first attempt over the Swilcan Burn and first green. I struggled to make clean contact on a few attempts before getting the hang of it.

When Bermudagrass goes dormant, it no longer recovers from divots and the soft conditions caused by excessive rainfall cause much frustration to our players. The mat allows one to hit the ball cleanly and avoid the frustration — and the mud to the face.

I know this may seem odd from a traditionalist like me, but I don’t think the mat cheapened my experience of the Old Course in any way. Besides, if your members are only interested in getting fresh air and having a little fun, maybe there’s merit to it. And, if it’s good enough for the Home of Golf, who are we to disagree? **GCI**



MATTHEW WHARTON, CGCS, MG, is the superintendent at Carolina Golf Club in Charlotte, North Carolina and past president of the Carolinas GCSA. Follow him on Twitter @CGCGreenkeeper.

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