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Renovate, restore, refresh

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HEART OF THE BUSINESS

Matthew Woodcock studies dollars and cents more than the science of fairways and tees. Woodcock is the superintendent at Old Erie Golf Club, a 9-hole in Durhamville, New York, pop. 901. Woodcock and his wife, **Jill**, purchased the 77-acre facility property last year, so he doubles as the co-owner. Woodcock is just 32. He wears jeans and cowboy boots to the course. He has a deep voice and speaks freely, because, well, he doesn't have a boss. Standing on the eighth green — which borders his in-law's backyard — on a sticky September morning, I asked Woodcock what's tougher: maintaining turf or operating a business?

"The business is the hardest part, 100 percent, and it's not even close," he says. "I think every superintendent worth their salt will tell you the grass is the easy part. It's the time, the mental part, managing employees, all that stuff, that's the hard part."

Woodcock employed a bigger crew in 2022 than he did in 2021, a positive in his quest to preserve and elevate a course he grew up playing. A pair of students pedaled their bikes to Old Erie on summer mornings and executed myriad tasks, a local man mowed rough on an as-needed basis, meaning he worked anywhere from zero to 20 hours per week depending on turf growth — "There were three weeks in July where he didn't work," Woodcock says. "We were that dry" — and a family friend helped fix equipment. Woodcock's mother, **Susan**, assisted with mowing. His father, **David**, "loves to give away free beer," Woodcock says.

Selecting kegs for a rotating tap and keeping the clubhouse cooler well-stocked are important parts of the job. Good drinks keep customers around longer. When annual memberships are just \$405, up \$15 from last year, and green fees are around \$20, beer sales matter. The businessman in Woodcock understands the correlation between course setup and beer sales.

Low scores are good for business. Old Erie possesses no bunkers and approaches are wide open. Woodcock avoids tucking pins or placing them close to slopes. Too many three-putts hurt the business.

"I try to make easy pins, because if a seven handicap comes out here and shoots a 39, they are going to be excited and go in and have a couple beers," Woodcock says. "If somebody goes out here and is a three handicap and shoots 47, they are going to be pissed and go home, and now we lost out on maybe an extra \$20."

Old Erie is one of the most fascinating courses I have visited in 2022. I could have spent days riding, walking and talking with Woodcock. I observed a few Tuesday-morning regulars playing the course and then sipping beer in the clubhouse. I tried processing how the Woodcocks get everything done — including raise four children. I calculated in my head operational costs, revenue streams and possibilities, and how a young family can sustain a comfortable lifestyle while owning a golf course in a seasonal market saturated with affordable facilities.

Two of our columnists, **Matthew Wharton** and **Tim Moraghan**, also recently visited charming public courses. Wharton and his wife, **Darless**, made what has hopefully become an annual trip to the Scottish Highlands and experienced Golspie Golf Club (p. 74). Old Erie and Golspie are separated by more than 3,000 miles, but their respective superintendents can relate to each other. Golspie's **Muir Ross** maintains a lovely course with a crew of 2½ workers.

I have no doubt that if Moraghan and Woodcock ever meet they will instantly click. They are both candid and passionate. Moraghan is at his let-it-fly best this month (p. 26) with his examination of why public facilities should be embraced more by the industry establishment.

Seventy-nine percent of the 529 million domestic rounds in 2021 were played at public courses, according to the National Golf Foundation. Woodcock and I discussed this reality and how facilities like the one he owns aren't proportionally accounted for when industry leaders make decisions.

We'll keep the details of that conversation to ourselves. **GCI**



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NOTEBOOK



MY FRIEND TOM

Terry Buchen reflects on the life, career and personality of a champion golfer-turned-successful architect who always wanted to learn more about agronomy.

I first met the late **Tom Weiskopf** in 1979 when I was an agronomist for the PGA Tour. He aspired to be a golf course architect and we had some nice conversations regarding the agronomy side of golf course design and construction. Tom and **Jay Morrish** became partners in 1985 and they designed more than 25 memorable courses over their 14 years together. Tom used to marvel at Jay's many talents, especially how he could draw a topographical map of a new golf course design by hand without the aid of a CAD system.

In 1990, I was the first employee hired at the Double Eagle Club outside Columbus, Ohio. Jay had open heart surgery shortly after construction started, so Tom made site visits every seven to 10 days from his home in Phoenix. One day, Tom called me up and asked me to go to the sixth hole, a par 5. At exactly 11 a.m., he wanted me to stake a target bunker on the left side by placing wire flags at 275 yards from the back tees exactly where the tree shadows lied, which famously became The Shadow Bunker.

Tom was playing a practice round at Double Eagle prior to the grand opening and he sank a long putt on the fifth green and said to me, "Terry, sinking a long putt is better than having sex!" I said, "Are you sure about that, Tom?" He replied, "You better believe it," and he started laughing hysterically, like he did quite often. His passion for golf

course design was endless, and his most famous design feature was the drivable par 4, along with playable, enjoyable, risk-reward courses for all skill levels.

Tom and I ate lunch many times at a local restaurant when he was doing site visits at Double Eagle. His fans used to come up to our table to talk with him and he completely ignored them, as he did not like to be disturbed while eating meals or in the middle of our conversations. Once we were done with lunch, he would graciously sign autographs and talk with his legion of fans just like nothing happened.

Shortly after Tom and Jay went their separate ways, Tom partnered with **Phil Smith**, a very talented **Jack Nicklaus** protégé. When I started my agronomy consulting business after leaving Double Eagle in 1996, I worked with Tom on his projects with Jay and Phil. His enthusiasm and excitement for design was contagious. He did not like leaving each site visit because he was having so much fun.

Tom and I used to talk on the phone a lot during the past 30-plus years. He would call me and always ask what was new in the golf business, and then we would share stories about what he was up to. Tom had a mind like an elephant. He could recall any topic about his storied career. It always fun to listen to Tom laugh, so I really liked telling him funny human interest stories about our mutual friends in the golf business.

Tom famously did not like to use emails or texts, so I would email or text his wife, **Laurie**, to run something by him and I always would get a warm, quick response. When Tom did not feel like answering his cell phone, I would call Laurie and she would put him on the line.

When Tom was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in 2000, Laurie performed extensive research about where he should receive treatment, settling on MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, regarded as the best pancreatic cancer hospital in the world. Tom went through a 13-hour

surgery where they rebuilt his entire digestive system. He subsequently lost more than 30 pounds and weighed the same as he did during his prime tournament days. He then went on a strict diet, which he followed religiously. Tom and Laurie went back to MD Anderson in 2021 for a follow-up visit and he was diagnosed 100 percent cancer-free. It was one of the most exciting and happy times that I have witnessed after being a friend of Tom for all these years.

I once asked Tom his thoughts about his possible future enshrinement into the World Golf Hall of Fame. He replied, "It is for the voters and committee to decide," and he never said another word about it, even when I prodded him further. Tom had a reputation for having a temper during his prime tournament career, but I never saw that side of him. He quit drinking 22 years ago and he said his wild side from the 1960s through the 1980s was long over, and that he was never happier — especially after he married Laurie.

In spring 2021, Laurie ordered a new Mercedes-Benz Sprinter RV, customized for them to travel and to go dry camping during Tom's passion for hunting. I volunteered to drive the RV from Reno to their home in Big Sky, Montana. Tom was very excited when I pulled into his driveway in July 2021. Their first road trip was to St.

George, Utah, for a site visit to Black Desert, one of Tom's and Phil's new course designs. They had a great time. While I was in Big Sky, Tom, Laurie, Phil and I had dinner and spent quality time together. Tom told many of his great, entertaining golf stories and he let me hold and be photographed with his 1973 The Open Championship winner's trophy, which he won at Royal Troon.

One of the saddest times in my life was when Tom's pancreatic cancer rapidly and extensively returned in April 2022. Tom and I spoke over the next four months, and he never complained about the pain he was going through. He always remained positive, upbeat for his love of life, and we still had very nice conversations until the end on August 20, 2022. Tom was 79 when he died.

I miss Tom a lot and think about him every day. I miss his sense of humor, friendship, enthusiasm for life, laughter, insight, passion for golf course design, loyalty, family ties, friendship with Phil, love for Laurie, watching his fantastic golf swing and his friendly smile. Tom is in a better place. He surely is missed.

Terry Buchen, CGCS, MG, is Golf Course Industry's senior contributing technical editor and author of the monthly "Travels with Terry" column.

In Memoriam

Kohler executive chairman and golf developer **Herb Kohler, Jr.** died Sept. 3, in Kohler, Wisconsin. He was 83. His bold ideas and hands-on leadership transformed the plumbing products manufacturer founded by his grandfather into a global and diverse family of businesses synonymous with unmatched quality, creativity, and bold innovation. Kohler devoted decades of time and effort to building golf in Wisconsin, helping launch **Pete Dye's** Blackwolf Run in 1988 and Pete and Alice Dye's Whistling Straits in 1998, among other courses. He received the GCSAA's 2016 Old Tom Morris Award. ... ASGCA past president and ASGCA Fellow **Gerald (Jerry) Matthews** died Sept. 15 in Mackinac Island, Michigan. He was 88. Part of multiple generations of Matthews who have positively impacted golf in Michigan — including his father, **Bruce**, and nephew, **W. Bruce** — Matthews designed or renovated more than 200 golf courses. He started in the golf industry when he was 12, working for his father on the maintenance crew at Green Ridge Country Club.



▲ Kohler



▲ Matthews

Tartan Talks No. 75

Brian Costello attended college to learn how to design outdoor landscapes in urban settings. His career has been defined by his ability to design outdoor spaces that help people escape the urban bustle.



▲ Costello

Costello, a longtime partner of JMP Golf Design Group, joined the Tartan Talks podcast to discuss a 33-year (and counting) run as a golf course architect. His jump to golf followed a stint as a landscape architect in his native Bay Area.

Designing golf courses resulted in Costello becoming more well-traveled than he ever imagined. His firm has designed and renovated courses in Asia, South America, Europe and the United States. In fact, Costello says "he cut his teeth" as a golf course architect by working in Japan during the country's golf boom of the late 1980s and early 1990s.

"Even though sometimes there might be a language barrier, there's a universal understanding of golf," Costello says. "Birdie, bogey, par translate across a lot of different countries. One of the best experiences for me is to see how golf is appreciated across so many different cultures."

Costello and his partner, **Bob Moore**, have worked in Asia more than any other continent. To learn more about Costello's career and how he has helped introduce golf to new places, download the podcast on the Superintendent Radio Network page of any popular distribution platform.





Are students surging back to turf school?

Not necessarily, according to multiple professors. But the passion and industry job prospects continue to soar.

By Cassidy Gladieux

While the COVID-19 pandemic initially closed nearly everything, one thing it opened was people's minds to golf. The National Golf Foundation reported a net increase of 800,000 golfers over the past two years, the largest surge in almost two decades. And with more golfers comes more responsibility.

For young job seekers hoping to jump into that responsibility, getting a certificate or degree may be their first step. With more than 60 schools offering turfgrass management programs, it seems like the options are wide, but they are, in fact, very limited.

"Turfgrass programs are an endangered species across the U.S.," says **Timothy Marten**, an associate professor at SUNY Cobleskill. "They are one of the fastest-declining program areas in the broader bookshelf that is plant science. So, if you're looking for species that are on the endangered list, turfgrass programs are sliding all the way over into the critically endangered."

Low enrollment numbers and interest levels have caused some universities to adjust by adding their program as a minor or

implementing a new certificate program.

"At Oregon State, we have started a certificate program that a person can accomplish in a year," says associate professor **Dr. Alec Kowalewski**. "I think what that does for the current industry trend is you have a lot of people that are working in golf courses that don't have formal education. Now there's another way for them to get educated, continue working on that golf course and now have to go and get a degree."

The certificate program at Oregon State currently has around 20 people.

Despite having to make new course and program accommodations, the danger of losing the program does nothing to thwart aspiring and current turfgrass management students' attitudes toward the profession. They are still eager to enter the workforce toting the valuable experience and knowledge these programs provide.

"I think there's a lot of excitement in turfgrass management because the golf courses have been so busy," Kowalewski says. "It seems like for a long time, it was not a popular thing to do, but with all the golfing now there's a lot more intense attention to-

ward golf as a recreation event, which then I think draws more employees in because there's just more energy going into it."

It takes a special type of student to pursue turfgrass management.

"The ones that are coming in are the ones that are more diehard," SUNY Cobleskill professor **Dr. Alex Ellram** says. "They are mainly students that have already worked on a golf course, or they have played golf, and so they have a stronger — it seems to me at this point, anyway — desire to stay in the industry."

And they have plenty of reason to, with higher wages and more benefits.

"The job opportunities are obviously amazing, right?" Ellram says. "They are trying to make it more appealing by not making the hours quite as demanding. There's more of a tendency to do that. And there's also more of a tendency to try and recruit from within and really push the people that are already there to stay and maybe go on for education than maybe there used to be in the past."

For professor **Dr. Doug Linde**, being successful involves making a conscious effort to promote the program at Delaware Valley College in suburban Philadelphia.

"Years ago, I used to make a brochure to print and send those out to students," he says. "And now instead of that energy, I'll take some pictures and put them on social media."

Not only have professors and faculty had to change the way they recruit students, but once they get those students, they must keep them around and ensure their success. One way to do that is by adapting and appealing to the generational learning differences. "My teaching style has changed because you notice and get feedback like, 'Well, that isn't working' and most of my colleagues have adjusted a little bit as well," Linde says.

The future of turfgrass management programs nationwide remains precarious despite the golf surge. But those within the industry continue exuding passion about developing the next generation of turf managers.

"The ones that are coming in are strong," Ellram says. "There's just not as many of them."

Cassidy Gladieux is a Kent State University senior and Golf Course Industry contributor.

INDUSTRY BUZZ

The GCSAA recently created the **Larry Powell** Scholarship, named for the longtime superintendent of Clearview Golf Course in Canton, Ohio. The scholarship is administered by the GCSAA Foundation and will focus on students in underserved populations seeking a career in golf course and turfgrass management. Clearview was established by Powell's father, **Bill Powell**, in 1948, and remains the only course to be Black-designed, -constructed and -owned. The Powell family, including Larry's sister, **Renee Powell** — the second African-American player in LPGA history — was awarded the GCSAA's Old Tom Morris Award in 2019. ... **Kevin P. Sunderman**, CGCS, is the new chief operating officer for the GCSAA. Sunderman has more than 19 years of experience in professional golf course management — including the last 17 as director of grounds at Isla Del Sol Yacht Club in St. Petersburg, Florida — as well as years of experience in the financial services sector. He has served on the GCSAA Board of Directors since 2017 and was elected vice president earlier this year. He succeeds 46-year GCSAA member Bob Randquist in the position. ... **Bryce Koch**, CGCS at Cypress Lake Golf Club in Fort Myers, was elected as the Florida GCSA's 21st president last month. ... Elsewhere in Florida, the new Panther National in Palm Beach Gardens announced **Steve Ehrbar** as its first director of agronomy. He moved over from Old Marsh Golf Club along with director of golf **Tom Dyer**. **Julie O'Neill** is the club's first director of membership. ... **Austin Marsteller** recently joined Central Turf & Irrigation Supply as its new turf category director for chemicals. ... **Colin Ewart** is the new key accounts manager for Profile Products, working mostly in the Western United States. ... Private label manufacturer Hocking International recently promoted Scott Messer and Joe Enciso to director of the agriculture business unit and director of the turf and ornamentals business unit, respectively, and hired former superintendent Eric Skorich and Jeremy Buhl as area sales managers. ... Audubon International recently partnered with the Diploma in Turfgrass Management program at the University of Guelph in Ontario, Canada, to assist in training students in environmental sustainability, ethical land stewardship and stakeholder communications. ... SePRO's Cutless MEC and Legacy PGRs were recently approved by the EPA to be used on non-golf turf, including sports fields. ... Prime Source announced the registration of its new Triad T Select herbicide.

COURSE NEWS

Chris Wilczynski, ASGCA, completed a bunker renovation project and master plan for the Hills and Dales Courses at Community Golf Club in Dayton, Ohio. The work, executed

by golf course construction company Topp Shape Enterprises Inc., included converting several existing bunkers to grass hollows, rebuilding existing bunkers and adding new bunkers to improve maintenance, playability and golfer experience. Following the bunker project, a 36-hole master plan for both Hills and Dales courses was also completed by Wilczynski to help guide future improvements



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and the renovation of the entire golf facility. ... Pinehurst No. 8 reopened last month following agronomic and infrastructure enhancements highlighted by new TifEagle greens, fully restored bunkers with fresh sand, improved drainage throughout the course, and the removal of invasive trees limiting views and inhibiting sunlight. Additionally, the existing Bermudagrass turf on tees and fairways was fraise mowed to remove thatch throughout the course, tighten up lies and foster more rollout on tee shots. ... Southern Trace Country Club in Shreveport, Louisiana recently completed a two-year, \$4.2 million golf course renovation and enhancement project. The project focused on irrigation and drainage system upgrades, green complex enhancements and the addition of a new short game practice area. Golf course designer and Southern Trace member Jim Lipe oversaw the course renovation, with Wadsworth Construction, Black Creek Construction and Winterberry Construction performing the work. ... **Andy Staples** is set to begin work on a strategic plan to upgrade



Community Golf Club Hills Course in Dayton, Ohio.

Phoenix Country Club, which was originally built in 1899 and moved to its current location in 1921. The Arizona club was designed by **Harry Collis**. ... Landscapes Golf Management


and Sioux Falls, South Dakota, extended their operations partnership. Landscapes has run the city's Elmwood, Prairie Green and Kuehn Park golf courses since 2018. **GCI**

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**2** What's the best way for superintendents to get the best bang for their buck?

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3 For returning GreenTrust 365 customers, what's new this year?

This year we've enhanced the Plan It Your Way Rebate, to make savings available on additional brands. Superintendents

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\$5,000 to < \$10,000	2%	5%	7%
\$10,000 to < \$20,000	2%	6%	8%
\$20,000 to < \$40,000	3%	7%	10%
\$40,000 to < \$70,000	3%	8%	11%
\$70,000 to < \$100,000	3%	9%	12%
\$100,000+	3%	10%	13%

can earn up to an **additional 6-12% rebate** on qualifying purchases of **Posterity®** brands, **Daconil®** and/or **Secure®** fungicide brands. **New for 2023**, once qualified, superintendents also automatically earn the Plan It Your Way rebate on purchases of Acelepryn® 0.5 gal., Ference® and Provaunt® WDG insecticides for leading control of grubs, turf caterpillars, annual bluegrass weevil (ABW) and more.

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4 What resources does Syngenta provide superintendents to better understand and access their rebate in one place?

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5 What other benefits does GreenTrust 365 offer that superintendents should know about?

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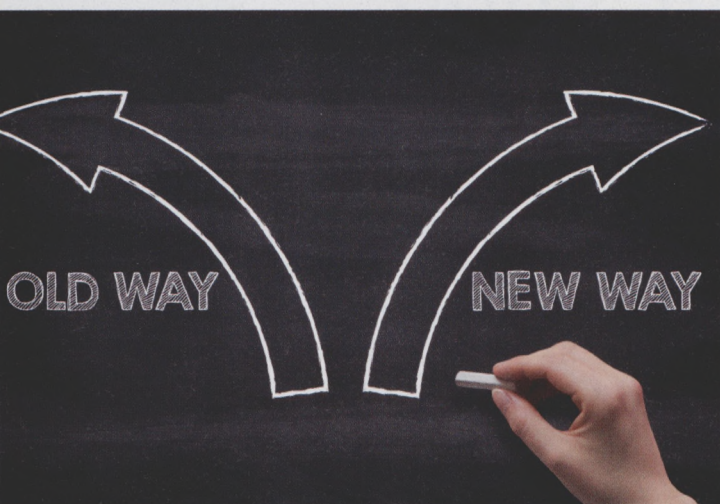


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ADAPT WITH THE TIMES

Work used to be so much simpler: Employers needed workers; workers needed jobs. As the economy cycled through good and bad times, labor was a function of supply and demand, with employers competing for the best and brightest in good times and workers competing for fewer and fewer openings in lean times.

Now we hear economists and human resources professionals debating the future of work and it sounds like we've entered a parallel universe with its own language. The pandemic introduced us to the "Great Resignation," which saw nearly 48 million people leave their jobs in 2021, many in retail and hospitality. There were multiple reasons for the mass exodus, but the impetus for many was that they discovered they had their choice of better ways to earn a living.

More recently, we've learned a new term: "Quiet Quitting," which describes workers who have not actually quit but have delineated clear barriers to what they consider their job description. The concept is summed up as: "I'll show up and do my job, and do it well, especially if it interests me, but don't expect anything above and beyond."

According to the management consulting firm Gartner, the pace of employee turnover is forecast to be 50 to 75 percent higher than companies have experienced previously; the issue is compounded by an 18 percent increase in the time it takes to fill roles than it did pre-pandemic. "Increasingly squeezed managers are spending time they don't have searching for new recruits in an expensive and competitive market," according to **Sarah Ellis** and **Helen Tupper**, co-founders of career counseling firm Amazing If.

Today's smarter strategy — which has always been the smarter strategy — is to refocus on retention, to keep top performers

performing by meeting more of their post-pandemic needs. Although executing on that strategy is harder by the day, here are three ways to make it work in your organization:

- Foster a sense of "belonging."** People stay where they feel valued, respected and an important part of the team. Look at military organizations where small-unit structures preserve and embody the values and purpose of the force overall. Small-unit squads (fireteams) make small knots of people interdependent and accountable to one another. This is a key to effectiveness because cohesiveness within small groups is easier to maintain and direct to specific purposes. Bring the concept to your facility by asking team members to help reorganize into smaller and more mutually accountable work teams built around geographic location, task orientation and agronomic specialties. Guide those small groups in goalsetting that becomes the backbone of your agronomic plan. Consider performance standards and measurable results, operational efficiency and "reach goals." Finally, recognize teams meeting and exceeding goals. Celebrate their successes in ways that are important to them.
- Make it personal.** The ways of managing people that club leaders learned from their baby boomer bosses are outdated. It's no longer command and control. Workers joining your team want to know how

their work connects to the bigger picture and why it's important. Their expectations demand that club leaders:

- Explain how tasks associated with each job contribute to the team's overall success and increase golfers' satisfaction. "Because I said so" is no longer an effective answer — if it ever was.
- De-institutionalize their management approach. Make time to speak with each team member to confirm they understand expectations. Give your team the opportunity to buy in and respect their suggestions for changes or improvements.
- Workers are not looking for you to be their buddy. But they do want to know that you recognize, respect and appreciate the jobs they do. Eye contact, a word of encouragement and a real conversation are more meaningful than ever.

- Lead the way.** On D-Day in June 1944, Brigadier General **Norman Cota** famously reorganized the soldiers trapped on Omaha Beach with clear-cut guidance, finishing with the order: "Rangers, lead the way!" Although the circumstances are not so urgent for turf managers, the importance of leadership can never be taken lightly. Your team wants your leadership. They may challenge you, disagree from time to time and test your patience. But that doesn't mean they don't want you to demonstrate your knowledge of turf management and resource allocation. **GCI**



HENRY DELOZIER is a partner at GGA Partners, trusted advisors and thought leaders. He is currently Chairman of the Board of Directors of Audubon International.



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2023 EARLY ORDER PROGRAM



Q&A WITH LARRY LENNERT

Regional Sales Manager, AMGUAARD™ Environmental Technologies

How does AMGUAARD's new website, Amguardtech.com, help superintendents?

Amguardtech.com is the new dedicated website for non-crop and specialty technology solutions from AMGUAARD™ Environmental Technologies. The new site has many helpful features to make it easy to find information quickly. A "Where to Buy" button quickly connects superintendents to nearby distributors. Visit the Media Library to find product labels, SDSs, and sell sheets in one convenient location. From any page, superintendents can quickly sign up for AMGUAARD emails to be notified of our latest news and promotions, like the current PCNB fungicides offer for snow mold control. Please visit us soon at amguardtech.com. We welcome your feedback.

What unique chemistries does AMGUAARD Environmental Technologies have, and are you developing new products?

The proprietary chemistry we're best known for is pentachloronitrobenzene, or PCNB. PCNB is a multisite contact fungicide and the only FRAC Code 14 fun-

gicide available for use on golf turf, making it a very valuable fungicide resistance management tool. PCNB is also widely recognized as the most effective single active ingredient for control of all three major snow mold pathogens. More recently, PCNB has also been proven to be one of the most effective fungicides for anthracnose control. AMGUAARD has three PCNB-based fungicides: TURFCIDE® 10G (granular PCNB), PREMION® FUNGICIDE (PCNB + tebuconazole), and TURFCIDE® 400 (PCNB).

In addition, we are the exclusive supplier of imazaquin for the turfgrass and landscape industry with our SCEPTER® T&O 70 WDG herbicide brand. Imazaquin is also featured in SUREPYC® IQ — a selective, warm-season turfgrass herbicide with the only premix combination of sulfentrazone and imazaquin. SUREPYC IQ provides excellent control of tough weeds like *Kyllinga*, nutsedges, and doveweed, as well as broad-spectrum control of a variety of listed weed species.

AMGUAARD also provides the only granular soil fumigant on the market, BASAMID® G. Containing the active ingredient dazomet, BASAMID G controls labeled weeds, includ-

ing bermudagrass, *Poa annua*, nematodes, and soil diseases. BASAMID G works quickly and allows new seeding or sprigging of greens, tees, or fairways in as little as eight days after treatment.

It is a very exciting time at AMGUAARD. We have made a very significant investment in not only new product development, but also new technology discovery. Stay tuned.

You mentioned PCNB is the best fungicide for snow mold control. Winter is approaching, so what are some of the best ways to use PCNB in a snow mold control program?

As a Regional Sales Manager for AMGUAARD Environmental Technologies in the Midwest and a Wisconsin native, I'm very aware of the damage snow mold can do to unprotected golf turf.

I've found that one of the best and easiest ways to incorporate PCNB into a snow mold control program is to use TURFCIDE 400 instead of chlorothalonil as the contact fungicide component in snow mold fungicide mixtures. PCNB consistently outperforms chlorothalonil in snow mold field trials, so you will get much better snow mold protection simply by making

the switch from chlorothalonil to TURFCIDE 400.

Another great way to use PCNB is to use one of the four performance-guaranteed TURFCIDE 400 snow mold fungicide programs in our 2022 TURFCIDE 400 Snow Mold Assurance Program.

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SHOULD YOU SAY “I do” TO WEDDINGS?

Absolutely! Why maintaining grounds where couples tie the knot can be a big boost to your course.

By **Judd Spicer**



Between overseeing course maintenance and marriage sites, superintendents rarely find opportunity to get on one knee ... at least on the job.

Fueled by a pandemic-era rise in wedding patrons seeking outdoor spaces for nuptials, courses and clubs of all manner — private, semi-private, public, resort and municipal — have seen a dramatic increase in golf locales serving as multi-purpose facilities. According to the wedding-centric site TheKnot.com, 8 percent of all domestic weddings were held at golf clubs last year. Additionally, if not moreover, the chance to wedge further into a domestic wedding industry valued at nearly \$60 billion annually (and that doesn't even include honeymoon spending!) has myriad course owners and operators across the nation deferring to superintendents for double duty of aesthetic oversight.

And with apt recognition that the median cost for an American wedding is more than \$25,000, it isn't lost on agronomists that what's good for the goose is good for the grounds.

A UNION OF MAINTENANCE

Even considering the ascent in golf rounds during recent years, weddings still butter the bread for many facilities. The superintendent's responsibilities for ensuring that nuptial and banquet sites are on par with course conditions is paramount to keeping ceremonies on the books, even at the sacrifice of occasionally diverting time and staff away from golf turf.

At Southern California's Temecula Creek Inn, a pair of all-seasons wedding sites sees upwards of 150 ceremonies a year, with the name venue, the Stonehouse, located directly adjacent to the course of the same name.

"The bosses understand the vast

amount of acreage out here to maintain on the courses, but I also respect that the wedding venues are also very much a part of my job," says **Brett Wininger**, head superintendent at the Inn's 27-hole Temecula Creek Golf Club. "I don't complain. About anything. Golf is more profitable nowadays, but the weddings, they're very lucrative and getting positive reviews. It can snowball for a property."

Enhancing profits by way of weddings can, in turn, lead to more on-course resources.

"For me, it's easily understood, in that we know that's where the revenue really comes from," says **Tom Height**, superintendent at The Golf Club at Frosty Valley Resort in Danville, Pennsylvania, a member club with wedding facilities open to the public. "So, the better that does, the more funding we'll have access to for our operation."

Concurrent to the club hosting well over 30 weddings a year, Frosty

\$27,063

Average cost of a wedding in 2021

Infographic sources: Wedding.Report, The Knot, Zippia and Brides.com

Valley's warm welcome further presents 20 cottages on property.

"From a golf standpoint, our memberships are doing really well and bringing in revenue, but the ROI on weddings is much, much higher than the golf course," Height adds. "An understanding of that makes sure I set aside time and labor to keep our wedding venue in as good a shape as I do the course."

From the coasts to the Upper Midwest, geography doesn't alter the mindset.

"Making money on golf alone in Minnesota is very difficult for anybody. We need all of it: the golf course, the restaurant, and the banquet side," says **Matt Cavanaugh**, superintendent at public-access Rush

Creek Golf Club outside of Minneapolis. "When one of those is not doing well, it's felt."

Rush Creek is slated to host 90 weddings in 2022.

"For my duties, if the banquet side asks me for something, there's no such thing as 'No,'" Cavanaugh adds.

"I'll give them anything they want."

Giving "anything" means no pause for seasonal conditions.

"We had nearly two feet of snow on the day of a wedding — in April," Cavanaugh half-laughs. "As far as the maintenance staff goes, I live the closest to the course, and, literally, nobody else could get there. But the wedding continued. People showed up in the early afternoon, and, by early evening nobody was going to get out of our parking lot. I hand-shoveled every car out, and there were hundreds of cars. I was at the course from about 8 a.m. until around 2 a.m. the next day. And I got everybody out."

Snow and sleet aside, the wedding onus on superintendents doesn't pause for any climate or crew.

"Every Monday I head to the venues and do inventory on what needs to be replaced. Then I order my sod, lay it by Thursday and have it ready for Friday, Saturday and Sunday weddings. Every single week," Wininger says. "And it can range from one palette to four or five palettes — and that's about 2,500 square feet, which is a



lotta work to take everything out and then put everything back. That sod work alone can take five or six guys off a crew, where we can fall behind on mowing.”

Big Day expectations come with big workloads in spurts. While hosting a more modest approximation of eight weddings a year, the affluent private club environs of The Olde Farm in Bristol, Virginia, presents earnest off-course duties for grounds’ staff across an on-site lodge, adjacent outdoor space, large pavilion and a restored “party barn” site.

“We’ll typically handle all the furniture moving in the lodge, and then, depending on the reception preferences, we’ll work on the whole pavilion setup or any kind of tenting, which can sometimes be massive, and might also require a flooring setup,” The Olde Farm superintendent **Josh Pope** says. “That can be quite a bit of work, and then we’ll also address all the landscape and mowing for those same areas.”

Labor concerns shared across the country can impact the extra workload.

“The weddings are huge. Certainly a major part of our overall operation and basically a weekend ritual during our season,” says **J.P. MacPherson IV**, superintendent at the semi-private Great River Golf Club in Milford, Connecticut. “In

the past couple of years, we’ve come up with some unique solutions for how we maintain the course, our clubhouse lawns, landscaping and wedding venue area. We’ve kind of come up with a hybrid situation, utilizing local nurseries and landscapers to help us with our major plantings throughout the year during the turnover seasons.”

With particularly attractive, course-centric sites often in full view of nuptials, a little extra love may need be ensured for wedding and photo backdrops.

venues overlooking the grounds’ Firecliff Course.

“For our event lawn, we treat it



At Great River, 60 full-sized weddings are held annually, along with several smaller nuptial gatherings of about 40 people.

“Our wedding venue runs directly adjacent to our 10th tee box complex, and our lawn space next to our stone patio is where the post-wedding events move to,” MacPherson adds, noting that his staff has recently beautified or renovated golf spaces next to wedding sites.

At Desert Willow Golf Resort in Palm Desert, California, the upscale municipal facility bustled to the tune of 104,000 rounds across its 36 holes in the past calendar year. The popular locale’s terrace and event lawn space host around 60 annual weddings, with both

Decorative flourish

2.6 million

Expected number of weddings
in 2022



much like the golf courses. It's overseeded at the same time, it gets mowed and fertilized," Desert Willow superintendent **Christopher Bien** says. "Overall, the courses do take precedence. They're what I'm looking

at every single day of the year, because we have people playing here every single day of the year. The courses get more attention, but at the same time we always ensure that the wedding lawn is in great shape."

Frosty Valley's The Barn site hosts ceremonies of 300 people, all with

full view of the course.

"And there's an extraordinary amount of landscape around the space, including our driving range, which is right outside The Barn ven-

ue and can be seen from the inside," Height says.

On occasion, intrepid parties like to venture beyond the ceremonial confines for lasting images.

"People will go out a little ways onto the course for images, and I've seen wedding photos on occasion where I go, 'Dude, why did they take the photo there?'" Cavanaugh says. "Maybe that spot isn't looking perfect, or maybe an irrigation head went out and there's a big brown spot in the background of the picture. I notice that spot in a photo every single time."

BEAUTY OF A BUFFER

Clubs and courses with the benefit of an event planner or clubhouse manager on-staff (including all locales referenced herein) provide superintendents with a welcomed buffer between grounds and guest. Communication channels prove key for balancing time, resources, man/womanpower, and ensuring agronomists can stay (far) away from potential Bridezilla situations.

"Yeah, I've had a few Bridezillas," smiles Wining. "One wanted me to inspect for poison oak, and I'm thinking, 'You know, there's poison oak everywhere down there,' so I just had to let her know not to go outside the confines of the venue. I've heard concerns about snakes or total last-minute flower requests on a weekend. That stuff can get a bit frustrating, but, again, it's my job, so I do it."

Height adds, "That communication is handled by our management. On occasion, there are things that we can do to alleviate any pressure, and it's typically something pretty simple.



© LEAH FONTAINE
PHOTOGRAPHY (TOP LEFT AND
TOP RIGHT)

105
Average number
of wedding
guests in 2021



So, thankfully, I don't have to directly deal with that at all."

Lines of concise communication run across the altar of conveyance.

"I've always made it pretty clear to our event planner and her staff that I need proper notification for every-

thing to be able to work smoothly. If there's not, they're not going to get our help," Pope says. "Ultimately, I have to look out for the golf course and make it known that, without great communication, there can be some issues. Personally, I always

make it happen, so it works out for both golf and events."

A fine line can exist between feedback and fuss.

"There will, on a rare occasion, be a weed here or there that we're asked to address, or maybe there's a re-



923,123

Americans employed by
the wedding industry

quest to trim back some plant material just so we make sure that a wedding dress doesn't get caught up on it, which happened once," Bien says. "But, most often, I don't really hear about the wedding itself, just like our wedding coordinator doesn't hear about a three-putt because somebody thought the greens were too slow."

While golfers continually swing for that special round — superintendents recognize that weddings

are, for many, among the biggest moments in somebody's life.

"We know it's the most special day in their lives, so there's a drive to really keep your eye on the ball, so to speak," MacPherson says. "A lot of attention to detail. We work tirelessly on the golf grounds, but, as most know, coming here seven days a week, you can run through the motions sometimes. But we know with weddings, it's a day that's particularly special. And that's how we approach it as a team, that extra touch, even though it can be exhausting sometimes."

Property pride can scorecard with a personal connection for wedding days.

"We really do have a beautiful spot, surrounded by all these mature oak trees. And I actually got married there myself, back in 2014, before I even worked at this course," Wininger concludes.

"Because of my own great memories there, I do have a special tie-in, so I'm proud to make that venue shine and there is an extra motivation to make it look really good." GCI

Judd Spicer is a Palm Desert, California-based writer and a senior Golf Course Industry contributor.

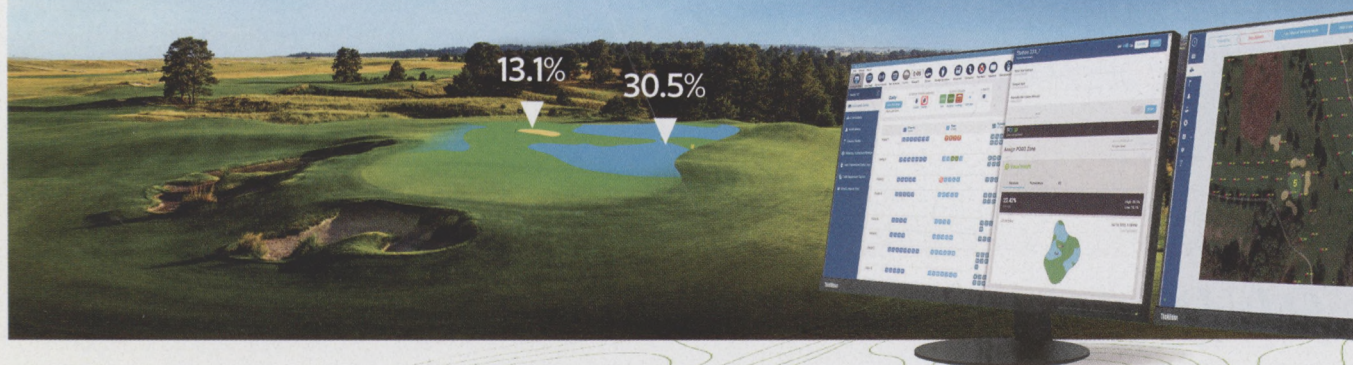


1 year

Average time spent
planning a wedding



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PUBLIC WELCOME

Joe Six Pack.” You hear that term thrown around a lot these days, usually referring to politics and economics. We also hear it attached to the daily-fee golfer. I don’t like it. It’s demeaning and in just three words discriminates against about 75 percent of all golfers. Should we start calling the other 25 percent, those who play at private clubs, “Francois Merlot” golfers?

Like it or not, the golf world looks down — even if just a little bit — on the daily-fee, public golf facility and the golfers who play them. Which is ridiculous. There are three times as many public courses as private, and the vast majority of rounds are played on them. Publics and “munis” are the real connection to the spirit of the game.

Some people — and organizations — get it. It’s why the USGA takes the U.S. Open to the Black Course at Bethpage State Park in New York and Torrey Pines in California, along with occasional visits to the likes of Chambers Bay, Erin Hills and Pinehurst. The U.S. Open is supposed to be just that, open, and playing it on a course patronized the other 51 weeks by anyone with a credit card sends the right message.

I’ve noticed some snootiness among superintendents, with those who tend to private courses thinking less of their public-course brethren. Which is pretty funny. Is the soil under their fingernails laced with gold? Do they get higher-quality weeds? Are their mowers powered by magic dust? Are their golfers doing something besides using a stick to hit a ball into a hole?

If you work at a private club, I strongly suggest you head across town and see how the other half lives — and works. Then invite your crosstown peer back to visit your facility. You’ll both learn

some things.

Golf cannot afford a public vs. private battle. We must work collectively for what benefits golf the most if we want to sustain the current boom. Sharing ideas will only accrue to the greater good.

The PGA of America does this well and has been doing so for years. Their members aren’t differentiated by the type of facility they work at. The same is true for our GCSAA. But, in both cases, I see members gravitating more and more to their “own kind.”

Let’s give credit where it’s due. Many daily-fee courses host a significantly greater number of rounds than nearby private clubs. They are set up to accommodate the bigger numbers and the common people, using the routing, conditioning and other features to get them around at a good clip while — and this is key — having fun.

Public courses won’t survive if they don’t show customers a good time, which surveys continually show means solid conditioning and a welcoming environment. Contrast that to the attitude of many private clubs, which appear set up to guarantee that members four-putt at least three times a round.

If you’ve already paid the private-club initiation fee and annual dues, how likely are you to walk away if the course is too hard? If the daily-fee patron thinks the course is too hard, they won’t return. Simple as that.

Now think about this: Who has the harder job?

Years ago, when I was overseeing the conditioning at five courses owned by the City of Miami Beach, I focused my energies and limited resources where they mattered most: on the greens, where roughly half of the strokes are taken. Golfers blame themselves for a shanked 7 iron. They blame the green for a lipped-out putt.

Today, as I travel the country, I look up daily-fee courses nearby and try them out. I get a good experience at a fair price. More important, I see what really matters to the person paying the green fees. It’s an important perspective to keep in mind no matter where we work.

I also think it’s going to be public courses that will show us the way to golf’s future. Take what’s happening in Southern California, where the Southern California Golf Association has seen a 25 percent increase in its affiliate club program — what we call “clubs without real estate.” There are now 800 of these independent clubs in So-Cal bringing together like-minded golfers for fun, friendly competition and socialization, both on and off the course. That’s what golf should be about.

One Easter Sunday a few years back, I was in Texas and stopped at a public course to break up the drive. For \$45, I got a hot dog, chips, a bucket of balls, a cart, nine holes of golf — and the course pretty much to myself. I had a great time, but what I remember most was a sign by the first tee that spelled out the course’s only rule: “Be Nice or Leave.”

Pretty good advice. **GCI**



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

Renovate, restore, refresh

Course enhancements are happening everywhere. Let's look at how facilities are offering golfers improved products.

inside

- 28. Lines matter
- 31. DIY
- 36. NINE renovations?!?
- 40. Always getting better
- 46. Sometimes it's personal



The line is king

Grass-line changes are among the more subtle alterations on a course, but they can lead to some incredible results.

By **Mark Leslie**

Just as a masterpiece painting is improved using the finest bristled paintbrushes rather than a spatula, so sometimes the most dramatic improvements to a golf course can be achieved by the simplest touch: altering grass lines.

"Surely, you can argue that if you reroute golf holes, or reverse them, or take them onto adjacent land, or blow up entire greens complexes, those are dramatic changes. But they're also very disruptive," says golf course architect **Raymond Hearn**, ASGCA. "Greens, tees and bunkers typically take the spotlight in golf course restoration and remodeling. But grass-line changes—sometimes the finest touches of all—can accomplish maximum, and even powerful, results with minimal amount of work."

The bonus, Hearn adds, is that "everyone can do this—from private clubs to public courses, munis and resorts."

The proof is at Washtenaw Golf Club (1899) in Ypsilanti, Michigan; Metedeconk National Golf Club (1987) in Jackson, New Jersey; and Midlothian Country Club (1898) in Midlothian, Illinois, among others.

Midlothian and Metedeconk were both grass-line and bunker projects, "so the angles and options there were completed by flipping fairways this way or creating or extending great runoff areas, and while doing that, adjusting this bunker or that bunker," Hearn says. "At Washtenaw, it was 100 percent grass-line improvements."

"We didn't want to make drastic changes and blow up a **Robert Trent Jones Sr.** golf course," says Metedeconk general manager **Derek Kopp**. "All of

Ray Hearn calculating a new grass slope on his work at Midlothian (Illinois) Country Club.

Ray's fairway-line and bunker changes and bentgrass areas around the greens increased shot values, created a lot more options, and provided a fresh, modern look.

"When you make these changes and alter the grass lines, you increase shot values and strategy as Ray promised and delivered. Here, it almost softens the course a bit for the higher-handicapper, but maintains the level of difficulty for the scratch golfer."

"It's like fixing a bad haircut," says **Dave Kendall**, PGA professional and part-owner at Washtenaw. "We didn't have to tear it all down and rebuild it. We've learned some things over the last two years that will help us in the future."

At Midlothian, club historian **Mark Wheeler**, a past president who chairs the club's restoration committee, declares that Hearn's grass-line changes on holes 4 and 6, in particular, dramatically improved play and "made the golf course look bigger."

"It appears more manicured — a classic look," he says, "and everybody absolutely loves it."

"All superintendents involved with each project" — **Mark Pappas** at Washtenaw, **Andrew Mallick** at Metedeconk, **Chris Flick** at Midlothian and **Cory Von Tungein**, the previous superintendent at Midlothian — "have done a terrific job," Hearn says, "and Mark's work turning that amount of rough into fairway on No. 11 at Washtenaw was masterful and extraordinary."

LOWER COST, BETTER PLAYABILITY

Some may consider changing grass lines simply to reduce the costs of mowing and maintenance.

"This can be true," Hearn says, "but what you do too often is create plain vanilla ice cream. I'm saying you can save money in mowing and spraying but at the same time you can create more angles and options — a new look without spending all the money on new greens, new

The finished 10th hole at Metedeconk National Golf Club in Jackson Township, New Jersey.



bunkers, irrigation, etc.

"On many holes, we remove fairway from one area but add it elsewhere if it improves sightlines and play-angle choices, heightening the golfing experience."

While bunker work and tree removal are often included in these restorations, Hearn says grass lines are the most crucial and least expensive in impacting play options.

At Metedeconk, Mallick says, "Shot variety has been greatly improved around fairway edges and especially next to green complexes. Players have more options: chipping, putting, laying up, punching, flopping. And that has reinvigorated our membership. They love Ray's improvements. Along with playability, aesthetically, these changes force players to think more carefully about their next shot."

HOW IT'S DONE

Hearn gives accolades to Google Earth technology, with the ability to clearly show aerial views of each hole on a course as it stands. His team Photoshops into those aerial photographs his proposed grass-line and other adjustments, showing what they would look like.

"At private clubs, this gets members excited," he says. "At public courses, it gets patrons enthused.

The next step is when the project's complete, we do the actual before-and-after aerials. Our Photo-shop before-and-after images look so real it's almost the same."

Hearn takes his strategy from famed golf course architects **C.B. Macdonald** and **Alister Mackenzie**, who often declared that architecture, when reduced to its simplest form, is "thoughtful angles and options for a variety of players."

"When looking at an aerial, I immediately judge the golf hole by its different angles and options that are available — initially based on tree lines and grass lines," Hearn says. "On those sites that are overplanted, the grass lines have to be thought of at the same time as tree removal. On courses that are not overplanted, or are links-style with few trees, it's easier to look at the aerial photo and focus on the angles and options of just the grass lines."

"At some courses, I ask, 'Why, in this area of the hole, does the fairway have to be so wide? Let's narrow it and use that fairway we're removing and move instead to more strategic parts of the hole. Perhaps I can increase an angle, or option, or width at a landing zone with multiple attack options, or add a widened strategic run-up area to the green or new run-off area beside a

green. Sometimes we can eliminate a stereotypical string of bunkers and create a new ground-game feed to the front of the green.”

Examples abound.

WASHTENAW NO. 11

Washtenaw’s 11th hole, for instance.

“It’s incredible what Mark Pappas, the superintendent, has done,” Hearn says.

Pointing to the 11th hole, and to the new left green run-off area, in particular, he adds, “It’s like you’re building a new home. You have to have the foundation set before proceeding. Here, the foundation was establishing the grass lines. New green edges were also instituted, the lost corners of the green were found, and the fairway edges have been restored to early 1900 images.”

The fairway cut to the left of the 11th green and three new bunkers took 18 months of scalping, overseeding and watering, but it was worth the effort, Pappas says. “You can scalp two inches down to a half-inch fairly easy. But you can’t scalp to square the greens. Going from a half-inch down to an eighth or lower doesn’t work.

“In the future, when we do more greens, I’m going to just sod the corners and get it out of the way.”

Meanwhile, Pappas says that while he has in the past had four heights of cut around the green edges, that will change.

“It was just too busy,” he says. “Now we mow green height, the collars with triplex mowers, fairway heights, then roughs. Doing that, we either take the green out wider or have really wide collars. It looks neat and creates a lot more options. Before, you could only flop out of there. Now golfers have more options and can play to their strengths. I appreciated Ray’s creativity.”

MIDLOTHIAN’S NO. 1

Another prime illustration of grass-line changes is the first hole at Midlothian, where the course remained open while contractors rebuilt bunkers and recontoured fairway lines

under Hearn’s guidance without disrupting play.

Wheeler, a long-time member of the club, calls the changes “stunning,” pointing especially to added runoff areas around seven of the greens and returning a number of the putting surfaces to their original square shape.

“Really,” Von Tungein, the former superintendent, says, “the main thing is that we were able to shave off a decent amount of fairway that wasn’t being used — like the first 30 to 40 yards of the fairway where nobody ever hits the ball — and use that grass to help create other grass lines and runoff, new angles, runways. That was the core fundamental for me. We didn’t have to purchase sod, just flip it from one area to another part of the fairway to change the contour and line of that fairway.”

“It’s amazing what you can accomplish just by moving some dirt around, too,” Wheeler says. “Ray created new tee boxes that showcase some very unique angles off the tee shot. And, like the mowing changes, the cost was minimal.”

Flick says, “Ray’s grass lines define the course’s historic features and new creative play angles. They also create sense and streamline our work from a maintenance perspective. I love how they look.”

Hearn explains the two fairway bunkers were “floating off the site, on hole No. 1,” so he replaced them with two that are in play for mid-range and lower-handicap golfers. And by removing the greenside bunkers and replacing them with one that partially fronts just the left side of the green, he was able to add “a thrilling bump-and-run avenue into the green and an exciting new run-off area.”

Eliminating the right greenside bunker created “a wonderful runoff area that has a slight depression,” Hearn explains. “So, when you miss the approach shot and roll down into this area, now you have four dramatic recovery options: you can pitch it, lob it, putt it or chip it. How exciting is

that in terms of recovery, multiple options plus considering where you are in your match, the wind conditions, is it wet or dry? That’s exciting golf.”

With all these changes, Hearn adds, “the star of the show is the grass lines.”

METEDECONK’S 7TH, A MASTERCLASS

Hearn calls No. 7 at Metedeconk “a master class in grass-line changes.”

A sophisticated membership wanted to take the course from good to great. On No. 7, a significant portion of the bunkers was replaced by fairway and a new green run-off area that “increases the shot value and adds an intimidation factor,” Hearn says.

“In the past,” Kopp, the general manager, says, “you’d simply aim for the bunker at 250 yards, then hit your second shot out of the rough onto the green. Now, it creates that visual drama that the ball could roll into the bunker. It changes the dynamic.”

Replacing the rear greenside bunker, Mallick adds, was a controversial move. “But once the work was complete it didn’t take much convincing to proceed in Ray’s advised direction on other areas of the course. Shockingly, even the naysayers were on board.”

ARTWORK

“To a degree, golf courses are works of art,” Hearn says. “I’m putting up an aerial image on my ‘paintboard.’ I’m taking out my smallest paintbrush. I’m painting these adjustments that are like fine-tuning a piece of art that’s already well-received. This is carefully thinking out every paintbrush stroke.

“And what I find interesting is how powerful these grass-line adjustments are.” **GCI**

Mark Leslie was the founding editor of Golf Course News, which became Golf Course Industry in 2001, and has been writing about the golf industry since 1988. He has written 13 books, including “Putting a Little Spin on It: Design’s the Thing!” and “Putting a Little Spin on It: Maintenance is the Thing!”

What can **you** do **yourself?**

No matter the scope of a project, there is always something you and your crew can contribute.

Veteran turf pro **Ron Furlong** shares some of his many DIY adventures.

It wasn't too long ago that when deciding to renovate or upgrade something on the golf course, we immediately turned to sourcing the work out. An irrigation system revamp, or a renovation of a green, or building a new tee, it was fairly common practice for superintendents to farm this work out, allowing for the maintenance staff to continue on with the general upkeep of the golf course.

Although this is still done, it seems more and more of these projects are now being accomplished in-house.

Several factors have influenced our decisions to try to tackle many of these tasks in-house in recent years. Equipment advancements have definitely made it easier to do many of these projects. Another major factor is monetary. Skyrocketing prices across the board for almost everything have made us take a long look at seeing if a particular project can be DIY. I think another factor would be the education of the superintendent over the years. We have more knowledge along with the confidence and ability to accomplish things that in the past we could not or were afraid to try.

When considering, planning, and ultimately deciding to go ahead and tackle a project on the golf course, the overall final cost of doing it in-house or sourcing it out has to be weighed. But it can't be just a

monetary decision. Sure, something may ultimately be cheaper to do in-house, but if it comes at the cost of sacrificing quality and playability of the daily maintenance of the golf course, it probably isn't worth it.

Over the years we've been in-house-project heavy at Avalon Golf Club here in western Washington. If we've been able to do it inhouse, we've usually taken that route. But this isn't always feasible. As I mentioned, if you are adding something new, or making something better, that is great. But in the end, if you can't do it without sacrificing conditions on the golf course, or if you simply don't have the means to do it, then it might be better to pay a bit more and keep your maintenance staff focused on, well, maintenance.

In the 20 years I've been at Avalon, we've made these project decisions over and over, identifying the need for the project and then deciding if it's indeed something we can put our own maintenance resources into.

One benefit for us that has made this decision a little easier than at a lot of golf courses is our geographic location. We are open year-round, but with the benefit of being open in the winter while also having significantly less play November through February. Those four months have allowed us time and

space to tackle certain projects in an "off-season" window that a lot of golf courses in different climates simply don't have.

Here's a list of a few different projects we have tackled in-house over the years, and a brief description of not only how we accomplished it but what led to our doing it ourselves.

NEW TEE CONSTRUCTION

One of the major things we have done at Avalon over the last dozen or so years has been the construction of several new tees. This includes forward tees to shorten the course and actually being able to offer Playing It Forward, or building back tees to lengthen some of the shorter holes, ultimately creating more separation between our five sets of markers.

Right away, we determined this was something we were going to be able to do in-house and out of season in that winter November-February window.

Although we don't own an excavator, we do trade out golf with one of our members in the winter for the use of his excavator. The use of that excavator at certain periods throughout the year has made many of our DIY decisions much easier.

We usually limit new tee construction to one tee per winter. In the last 15 years, we've added 13

hassle-free as possible.

Most of the new tees are much smaller than the original tees but much better suited for our needs as well as golfer experience. This ongoing project has been a huge success with members.

BUNKER SHRINKAGE

Avalon was built in the early 1990s, when everything involving the construction of golf courses was big, bigger and biggest. Many of the bunkers on the course were massively overbuilt. We decided about 15 years ago that shrinking many of these bunkers was in our best interest. The benefits included fairer playability, quicker play, and easier and less expensive maintenance of the hazards.

Like our long-term plan to tackle one new tee addition per year, we also decided to shrink one bunker per year. Again, having the use of the excavator and the ability to tackle the project in the winter has made this annual DIY project pretty straightforward for us.

We have altered or removed 12 massive bunkers over the last dozen or so years, and have a plan for shrinking another eight to 10 in years to come.

DEAD OR DANGEROUS TREE REMOVAL

The golf course was built 30-plus years ago among a forest of alder and cottonwood trees. Neither one of these two species of tree is desirable in our location. The alders, especially, have a short life span. Everywhere the trees were left between holes on the course, they have reached — or are at least on their way to reaching — their short life cycle. We had to make the decision of how to annually remove these dead or dying trees.

Again, a pretty easy decision to tackle this project in-house. Like new tee construction and our shrinking bunkers, the dead alder removal has become an annual project for us. Each year we identify about 10 to





20 dead or dying trees that need to be removed.

Having a crew trained on the safe removal of trees and safe chainsaw practices is critical for us. Having the right equipment and knowing which trees we can handle—and which do, indeed, need a professional arborist—is imperative.

We also keep and sell the wood each winter and use the money for fun crew events throughout the season. A win-win.

DRAINAGE

The golf course was built on a pretty massive layer of clay, which has required both a ton of topdressing over the years as well as adding to the original insufficient drainage.

Most of the big drainage additions were identified and addressed over the last 25 years, so we don't execute a lot of drainage additions annually anymore. But when we did, this too was an annual "identify the worst and tackle it ourselves" project similar to the others listed above. Having the time, space and right equipment made this DIY project pretty straightforward during the winter months.

TEE LEVELING

One of the design flaws I've noticed on golf courses over the years is

building tee boxes on par 3s that are too narrow. The divots get condensed in the center of these narrow tees (especially on short par 3s) and, as the divots are filled on a daily basis over and over and over, the tees begin to mound in the center.

In recent years we have taken to leveling some of these tees. Again, a project we were quite comfortable handing in-house, doing one mounded tee per winter.

In addition to those in-house projects, there have been several we made the decision that we could not do ourselves. Weighing each project on its own and realizing that you can't do everything yourself is also imperative.

A good example of this was a few years ago, when we determined we needed to expand our water retention storage. We needed a 30-acre-foot reservoir to hold our water in the summer when we were not able to draw from our well.

There was no way we could have done this project in-house, although we did end up doing a lot of the prep and the cleanup of this massive project ourselves.

I think that is an important point to make here: the "fusion," if you will, of doing improvements or renovations in-house and that of sourcing

work out. Certain projects will arise on the golf course that may be a good fit for your crew doing a portion of and then sourcing out the rest.

An example of this kind of "fusion" was last winter, when we had a pavement company come in to grind down the cottonwood roots on our cart paths. The company grinded and we came in behind and did the cleanup.

Bigger project examples could be working alongside an irrigation company that is installing your new system, or doing the prep work, cleanup and even sodding or seeding after a construction company renovates one of your greens.

A good rule of thumb when sourcing out a project is to keep in mind that you are never sourcing out *all* of it. There is always something you and your staff can do to reduce the time and resources the outside company and workers will have to do—and the money it will cost you.

DIY, source it out, or a combination of the two: Figure out what is right for you on your next big project. **GCI**

Ron Furlong is the golf course superintendent at Avalon Golf Club in Burlington, Washington, and a regular Golf Course Industry contributor.

2023 EARLY ORDER PROGRAM



Q&A WITH ROB GOLEMBIEWSKI, PH.D.

Green Solutions Team

1 We've been hearing a lot of buzz around Densicor®. Can you tell us more about this fungicide?

A: Densicor® is an exciting DMI fungicide that was built to tackle the toughest diseases across the golf course while providing remarkable turf safety. It offers both preventive and curative control for up to 28 days of the most challenging cool- and warm-season turf diseases, including dollar spot, brown patch, anthracnose, gray leaf spot, Microdochium patch, fairy ring and mini-ring. And it features all the qualities you need in a great fairway fungicide including an ultra-low use rate and convenient packaging while also delivering powerful efficacy for greens applications.

2 There are many broad-spectrum fungicides on the market. Why should golf course superintendents choose Densicor to address the top five turf diseases?

A: A national survey of golf course superintendents indicated that the top five turf diseases are dollar spot,

brown patch, anthracnose, gray leaf spot and snow molds. DMI fungicides are typically applied because of their broad-spectrum control of both foliar and soilborne diseases. However, not all DMIs are created equally. Some products only have two or three of these top five diseases on their labels, leaving critical gaps in disease control. Densicor not only includes all of these diseases on the label but it also shows outstanding performance against each of them. In total, Densicor controls 14 different cool- and warm-season diseases.

3 Turf safety is important, and some DMI fungicides are known to cause growth regulation and/or thinning. Is Densicor safe on turf?

A: Plenty of fungicides are "safe" on turf, but many DMIs can lose their broad-spectrum appeal due to negative growth regulation and phytotoxicity when the weather heats up. Densicor shows excellent cool- and warm-season turf safety under any environmental condition with or without plant growth regula-

tors. This feature allows Densicor to be applied up to three times per year on greens, tees and fairways with no concerns, including in the heat of the summer.

4 Can you elaborate on the use rate of Densicor?

A: Densicor simplifies disease management for golf course superintendents by offering a single, ultra-low use rate (0.196 fluid ounces per 1,000 square feet or 8.5 fluid ounces per acre) in a convenient bottle size. Densicor is tailored for fairway applications with one bottle treating six acres, resulting in less time spent measuring, loading and rinsing.

5 Is Densicor available for purchase as part of the Fall Solutions program?

A: Yes it is! The Fall Solutions program runs from October 1 to December 5, 2022. You can stock up and save big on Densicor, Tetrino®, and all of the latest innovations and agronomic solutions from Bayer. Learn more at es.bayer.us/fall-solutions.

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*Dollar spot, brown patch, anthracnose, gray leaf spot and snow mold were the five most common diseases according to a national survey among golf course superintendents.

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Nine is more than enough

PGA WEST is in the middle of nine — count 'em, *nine* — restorations of courses designed by some of the game's biggest names.

There are a lot of moving parts.

By Judd Spicer

For any course owner, operator or manager, the prospect of a restoration project can be exciting, if not a bit daunting.

Looking at *nine* course restorations? That's gonna take some serious vision and organization—not to mention a good spreadsheet.

From its mountain surrounds in the Southern California desert, PGA WEST in La Quinta, California, known as the The Western Home of Golf in America, has been one of the nation's more recognized, bustling and, yes, complex complexes since its stated debut with Pete Dye's Stadium Course in the mid-1980s.

Sporting a unique, if not singular scorecard of architects — Dye, Jack Nicklaus, Greg Norman, Arnold Palmer and Tom Weiskopf — across a nine-course umbrella portfolio that includes the two Dye-drawn tracks

at nearby La Quinta Resort & Club, the volume of play includes resort guests, homeowners, members, daily-fee golfers and the annual January visit from the PGA Tour's American Express.

Got that spreadsheet prepped?

Starting in the pandemic summer of 2020, under the new ownership of Century Golf Partners, PGA WEST endeavored a massive restoration purview that aims to eventually touch all 162 of its holes across its five public and four private courses.

A STUDY IN COURSE

The work began at the Nicklaus Tournament Course, one of three tracks (along with the Stadium and nearby/historic La Quinta Country Club) to serve in the AMEX rota.

"When COVID hit, we took a chance that summer, because we knew we needed to redo the greens, which had shrunk over the years,"



PGA WEST executive director **Ben Dobbs** says. We got rid of the old Bermudagrass, put new TifEagle down and expanded the greens back to their original shapes and sizes.”

Positive reactions from Tour players, club members and daily hackers alike set the stage for further projects.

“And then, last summer (in ’21), we did two more courses: the Palmer Private and the Greg Norman,” Dobbs continues.

At the Palmer Private, a reshaping of greenside bunkers, addition of new greenside bunkering and fresh sand across all traps made for a full slate.

“For the Palmer, we brought in **Brandon Johnson**, (senior architect) for Palmer Design, who expanded the greens back to original size and design intent,” Dobbs says. “We also changed up the back nine along the Santa Rosa Mountains a bit. Specifically, Nos. 14 and 16 featured basically the same shot over the canal with the mountains behind. So we made them a bit different, adding some bunkering and highlighting the rocks.”

Concurrently, PGA WEST was restoring its most modern course, the Greg Norman, which debuted in 1999. Known for a unique scarcity of turf outlined by decomposed granite and desert-scape, the standalone track received a singular treatment, including removal of outlining landscape that proved a scoring hindrance for many.

“At the same time last summer, we redid the Norman, putting in TifEagle greens,” Dobbs says. “And the Norman is unique; it was designed as a desert course, but cart travel often involved driving across desert, and neither ownership nor members really cared for that, so we expanded the turf and gave members and guests areas where they can now drive the cart directly from path to grass.”

STADIUM SCENE

Entering the summer of 2022, PGA WEST began a two-phase restoration on its most famed course, The Stadium, recognized as a seminal chapter in the Pete Dye portfolio since its debut at the AMEX in 1987, when that event was still called the **Bob Hope Classic**.

Overseeing the project is Indiana-based architect **Tim Liddy**, who worked with Dye for more than 28 years, starting with Kiawah Island in 1992.

“Stadium is now 36 years old, so it’s not uncommon to upgrade to today’s standards,” Liddy says. “We’re looking at the infrastructure, from drainage to sand to irrigation, items that have a typical lifespan. We don’t plan on changing the design. And, of course, it’s also common for greens to shrink over time, because the mower doesn’t want to scalp the surface. So, we’ll regrass the greens (to TifEagle) and get them back to their original sizes and original contouring, which may have been lost over the years.”

Sharpening bunker edges, reshaping of some bunkers and a total replacement of original irrigation will be part of the plan across two summers.

“Landscape in the desert can be complicated, so we’ll also look at some improvements in that area,” Liddy continues. “Plantings in the desert can overgrow after a while, and then other things may have passed away. There are some newer varieties of plant material that we’ll look at, to soften some of the edges between the architecture of the homes and the course.”

Closing nine holes at a time for consecutive summers, the Stadium work will further involve reestablishing solid turf in rough areas and tree removal.

“Over time, trees have been planted on the course, which take away from Mr. Dye’s original shaping and mounding. Much of the mounding follows the mountain terrain, mimicking the mountains,” Dobbs says.

"Sticking a tree in the middle of that takes away from the original intention, so we're removing those to really open up the true beauty of the course."

With a studied palate, Liddy intends to carefully paint the changes.

"I think Stadium is one of Pete's truly iconic courses. Actually, I know it is," Liddy says. "With Stadium, it was a direction that he started to develop, and shows a style for many courses which were to come. He used contrast very, very well at Stadium. And by that, I mean, where he wanted you to hit the ball — from fairway to green — those locations have the sharpest angles or the deepest shadows. It takes your eye to that target. It's very conscious broad-brush work from Pete."

The designer is also well aware of the course's penchant for bold aesthetic, both nuanced and dramatic.

"What also makes it so good is that, because of being in the desert, Pete could go vertical, more so than he typically could," Liddy says. "Take, say, TPC Sawgrass in Florida. Those vertical elevation changes are maybe three or four feet at the most. At Stadium, the shaping is eight feet, up and down, and then the mounding, of course, is upwards of 20 and 30 feet. The shaping, the shadowing, the dimensions make for, artistically, one of Pete's best."

The restoration project is also one of a personal nature, going deeper

than blueprints.

"It's a great opportunity," Liddy says. "And the fact that they've put their trust in me, ... I'm just very, very excited to be working on this and future projects. When I'm out there, it brings back memories of Pete. Walking down the PGA WEST fairways, I can hear him talking to me."

EXCELLING AT EXCEL

With three restorations completed and a fourth underway, Dobbs will soon turn his attentions to subsequent work on Dye's Mountain and Dunes courses, and then the Jack Nicklaus Private. Eventually, projects will begin on the Weiskopf Private and Pete Dye Private Citrus courses, respectively.

The broad task is not one for the timid, especially with all work slated for the triple-digit off-seasons of Coachella Valley summers.

"I need to really think about everything we've got here: Private members, resort play, tournaments, a PGA Tour event — when you take a golf course down, it takes a lot of planning to consider all the ways that will impact the rest of the property," Dobbs says. "If I take a resort course down, it's, 'Will my resort guests still have enough places to play?' and if it's a private course, 'Will my members still enough places to play?'"

Amid a time of national worker and product concerns, a Socratic method of leadership proves helpful. Asks Dobbs: "Especially right now, I need to ask, 'Can we get construction crews to do the job?' and 'Can we get the products? Are they available right now?' Some of these are in my control, but some

of them aren't."

And for a property of stature, it's not just getting the services of anybody — it's hiring somebody.

"Once we determine the scope of a project, **Chris May**, our director of agronomy, starts the process of reaching out to different companies to see who's available and to give us quotes," Dobbs says. "Sometimes, we'll even get so granular as we want to know exactly who is on these teams. The golf industry can be small, and we may know that we prefer one shaper over another."

Reliance on a 'pod system' of superintendents across the course count has proved a best PGA WEST practice.

"We have what we call 'pod leaders,' and three head superintendents, each of whom oversees three courses, and then each has one or two superintendents under them," Dobbs explains. "It's a great way to communicate, and we really share a lot of crews and equipment, so if there's an issue on a course, say a mainline breaks, we can have all of our resources go over and fix that. We say that everybody is responsible for everything, so that there's no, 'Our course is better than your course.'"

The appreciation of balancing projects has provided a lesson learned.

"Last summer, we did two of the courses at the same time, which was an aggressive move," Dobbs says. "What that resulted in was pushing back the overseed windows to November and December, and, therefore, we didn't have as good of winter conditions as we could have. Going forward, we'll focus energy on one course at a time."

Dobbs' own energies are tangible via the master plan, which he tracks and organizes using a master Excel calendar. He uses the same calendar to track equipment. From calendar to courses, organization equals aspiration.

"It's a great challenge to ensure I'm on my game, have everybody in place and everything organized," Dobbs says. "Our goal is to be a top-five resort in country, so we want to elevate PGA WEST to that premier experience." **GCI**



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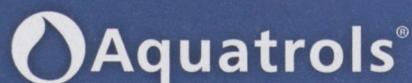


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The **little things**

After a major remodel, Mission Hills Country Club superintendent Justin Hunt turns his eyes to the details.

By Matt LaWell

© MATT LAWELL (2)



Keith Foster and Kevin Hargrave, included full bunker and minor tee renovations. Foster guided a full course remodel back in 2007 that updated the original 1914 **Tom Bendelow** layout. The latest project further enhanced an incredible course, removing some bunkers, widening some fairways, adding tee areas, squaring tees, and giving a thoroughly Midwest course a somewhat East Coast aura. Hunt

breaking down the difference between warm- and cool-season grasses, and how different varieties might react to weather and maintenance. All tees and fairways are now Meyer zoysiagrass, with tee and approaches mowed at .300" and fairways mowed at .375" — which he calls "probably some of the shortest Zoysia around." A1/A4 bentgrass is reserved for the greens.

"We have three to four guys who can walk mow the tees in about four hours," Hunt says. "The benefit of the forward tees is we mow them with a fairway unit. I couldn't have another fifth or sixth box and have to walk mow them. That would have been eight more boxes to walk mow, so this is huge.

"But when you have a lot more cool-season grass than warm-season grass, it's just naturally more labor-intensive. There's more push mowing, there's more walk mowing. We walk mow greens, approaches and tees, whereas on a warm-season golf course you could probably get away with a couple triplexes in there to help out your labor budget. I like the combination. I really like being in the Transition Zone for that reason. You can have different looks. When the zoysia is going dormant, the leaves are changing and the rough is dark green, it's a really cool contrast."

Hunt loves showing off the course and the work of the crew. With two young children at home, he has far less time to play than he used to, but he still breaks down each hole as if he played three or four rounds in the last week.

"This is 334 yards and we have at least 10 guys who can drive the green," he says while heading toward the 14th green. "But you have that big bunker in the front now with the little trail, you got

◀ A Tom Bendelow design and a Keith Foster redesign give Kansas City's Mission Hills CC an almost-East Coast feel.

Justin Hunt piled up plenty of golf course construction experience early during his career but when he interviewed almost seven years ago for what would become his first head superintendent position, at Mission Hills Country Club, he acknowledges something else likely earned him the job.

"I think it helped," he says of his background executing projects. "But I think the main reason why I got hired was I came from places that really focused on playability, and that's what they were looking for. You don't sometimes find that at country clubs, but this is a very competitive membership. We probably have some of the best players in the state, and it's fun to watch."

Hunt had never even visited Kansas City before landing at Mission Hills. Now he feels entrenched — and he knows the course well enough to help plan and pull off any number of major and minor projects. The most recent, which wrapped up last fall with the assistance of golf course architects

says the course feels like some in Virginia that he remembers playing and working on when he was growing up.

The tight layout contributes to that feel. Mission Hills is surrounded by homes — more on that later — and the property is only about 110 acres, with about 100 of those devoted to the course. The fairways are narrowed and now squared. The course measures just 6,454 yards from the back tees. And the topography is rolling enough to make you question whether you're still in Kansas.

"One of the things we kind of changed was the style of the fairways: The zoysia fairways run right into the bunkers," Hunt says. "By doing that, we got more width. And by getting more width, it just feels bigger.

"It was Foster's idea to widen the fronts to make it feel bigger. I think our look is trying to be a picture frame at the front," Hunt pauses. "I just came up with that," he adds. The revisionist phrase works just fine.

Hunt studied Transition Zone science before and during the renovation,



▲ Justin Hunt



the creek coming into play, you got the oak you have to sail, and then if you bail to the right . . . and the rough, hitting out of the rough, we have the greens pretty firm. It's pretty hard to stop."

"This is a pretty nasty green complex," he says a few minutes later about 15. "If you go for it, you're probably going to bogey. When I got here, there was a little bubble of zoysia, but we ran the zoysia all the way up to the approach."

On the next hole, he says, "I was trying to get Foster and Hargrave to put in some kind of Hell's Half Acre scenario and they both looked at me like, 'Are you an idiot?' And I said, 'OK, this is where I'll stop talking. I'll just grow the grass.'"

Mission Hills Country Club is almost exactly the same age as the most famous Hell's Half Acre, but its origins are far different. Like many more modern courses, Mission Hills was designed to help sell real estate.

According to *A Standard History of Kansas and Kansans, Volume 5*, by state historian **William Elsey Connelley**, real estate developer **J.C. Nichols** "realized . . . the immense loss sustained

by larger cities through the shifting and declining of residence sections as a result of the intrusion and encroachment of business and factories. Thus, in the development of these residence districts around Kansas City" — the planned Mission Hills neighborhood among them — "he has worked out restrictions to anchor and protect permanent residence sections. Wide open spaces are carefully provided."

In short, Nichols added a golf course in the middle of a neighborhood with every intention of using it as a natural lure to sell homes. More than a century ago.

The city of Mission Hills is just two square miles but remains among the wealthiest anywhere around Kansas City. That should provide Hunt with more than enough capital for some more projects in his seventh year at the club and beyond.

And what might be next? More fairway connections, for starters, in an effort to make the admittedly tight layout feel and play a little bigger. The first and the 18th, the second and the fourth, and the fifth and the 16th should all be connected by the end of

the 2023 season. There will definitely be more fairway squaring, too.

Off the course, Hunt will soon help build a wall, of all projects. The club is starting to incorporate more of what Hunt calls "the pickleball scene." He says he doesn't mind what is often described as the country's fastest-growing sport. "The only thing I don't like is that it's very loud," Hunt says. "The plastic ball and the plastic paddle, when you get four groups going down there, it's so loud we're putting in acoustic fencing around the courts."

Oh, and Kansas City Country Club, which was designed by **A.W. Tillinghast** and later redesigned by **Robert Trent Jones Sr.**, is within sight across Belinder Avenue. Brush Creek runs through both courses. The most errant of shots sometimes cross the street.

"We just need to buy them," Hunt says with a laugh, "and then build one massive golf course."

A pipe dream, of course—and one that would require every last nugget of project experience. **GCI**

Matt LaWell is Golf Course Industry's managing editor.

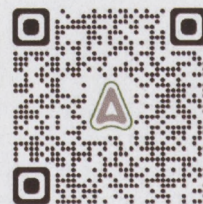


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2023 EARLY ORDER PROGRAM



Q&A WITH JUSTIN WATTS

National Accounts Manager at Prime Source

Justin Watts, National Accounts Manager at Prime Source, discussed the 2022 Prime Source Prime Rewards program and how the company has made the program even easier for end users. “Over the years, Prime Source has remained focused on one thing: bringing superior post-patent products and proprietary formulations that support our ever-expanding portfolio of fungicides, herbicides, insecticides, turf growth regulators, and other innovative solutions for the green industry” says Watts. “This year, we’re bringing what we believe is a superior approach to EOP that opens our extensive portfolio of proven turf management products to unlimited earning potential for end-user customers.”

What can customers expect for the 2022 Prime Rewards program? Prime Rewards really is EOP made easy, and this year our goal was to make it even easier. We’ve taken the guesswork out

of it with a simple points-to-dollars system that helps end users earn more rewards with less hassle. They can choose from any of our 22 most popular products and earn points for each case purchased. Points can be redeemed for prepaid debit cards so you can spend your rewards your way.

What products qualify for Prime Rewards? We’ve included our 22 most popular products in the Prime Rewards line-up, so you could say we have everything from Azoxystrobin™ fungicide to Zelto® insecticide on the program. And, this year, we’ve also added our newest herbicide products: Sublime™, Quintessential™, and Surmise® SpeedPro XT.

How do you accumulate points with Prime Rewards? Points are easy to accumulate. Each product has a point value per case. Several products are offered in varying case sizes this year, each with different point

values. End users can mix and match and watch the points add up. Qualifying purchases must be made between September 1 and December 2, 2022. A minimum of 200 points (\$200 in gift cards) is required to qualify for the program. After that, every 100 points earns \$100 in prepaid debit cards. There is no earning limit.

Are there any online tools to help customers know exactly what they can earn with Prime Rewards? We are excited to be able to offer an earnings calculator on our Prime Rewards website this year. Customers can go to www.thesourcematters.us and use the online calculator to evaluate different purchase scenarios so they can see their earning potential. This tool is also available as an Excel file that can be downloaded for offline use.

How do you redeem Prime Rewards? The redemption process is easy. Go to www.thesourcematters.us

and complete the online submission form. Qualifying distributor invoices dated between September 1 and December 2, 2022, must be uploaded with the form. Submissions must be received by December 31, 2022. End users should allow 4-6 weeks from the final submission date for processing and receipt of their prepaid debit card.

The fine print: Prime Rewards is an end user promotion. Distributors and dealers are not eligible for this offer. Purchases used to qualify for this promotion are not eligible for any other free goods, cash back or rebate programs. This offer may not be combined with any other offer, promotion, discount, or incentive. Prime Source is not responsible for late, lost, or misdirected mail. Prime Source is not responsible for lost or expired prepaid debit cards. Redemptions that do not meet the terms and conditions of the Prime Rewards program will be rejected. Internet orders do not qualify.

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Sometimes it's personal

Renovating bunkers and other parts of a central New York course hold special meaning for a superintendent and architect.

By **Guy Cipriano**

A superintendent helped Cavalry Club, which owns a bucolic plot of central New York greenspace where horses once trained for war, install an irrigation system in the early 2000s. That superintendent worked long hours and embraced all aspects of the job.

Pat Carroll regularly brought his son to work. The son relished spending his childhood at a golf course. The son admits that, back then, seeing dirt and rock flipped atop vibrant turf proved jarring. How many kids truly understand golf course irrigation?

On a nearly 90-degree early September afternoon, in the middle of a year that started with a devastating

freeze, Ben Carroll inspects a course with rope surrounding recently installed bluegrass-fescue sod, exposed gravel in bunkers and uncovered dirt on fairways. New friends are operating bulldozers and backhoes.

Cavalry Club doesn't need an irrigation system upgrade, thanks to the effort Pat Carroll guided nearly 20 years ago. But the club needs new

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bunkers—and construction scenes aren't as jarring anymore to the current superintendent.

"I remember being a little kid and riding around here and going, 'What in the hell are they doing to the golf course?'" Ben says. "But the irrigation system they put in is great and my dad overdid everything. He taught me you always have two of everything. He was very well-prepared for anything to happen."

Ben is well-prepared for anything that occurs at Cavalry Club, including working with an architect, builder and shaper. He knows the bucolic land, which features Limestone Creek flanking three sides of a property defined by a strong 57-year-old **Dick Wilson** and **Joe Lee** layout, because he was raised on the bucolic land. At just 32 years old, Ben already possesses five years as Cavalry Club's superintendent. He succeeded his father, who held the position for almost three decades before accepting a job as grounds manager at nearby Syracuse University.

Pat achieved numerous feats at Cavalry Club, but he never received a chance to execute a bunker renovation. The project is intended to elevate maintenance logistics and aesthetics while reintroducing what Wilson and Lee crafted.

"My dad was a big part in making the course what it is now," Ben says, "and I'm now coming in and doing everything he wanted to do but he couldn't do while he was here. He was big on getting this project done."

The Carrolls spend hours discussing the renovation and their respective turf jobs. Pat, who leads a crew of around 150 employees at Syracuse, occasionally visits the course, especially when it's time to blow out the irrigation system in late fall. "He likes to drive around in a cart and bark orders on the radio," Ben jokes. Only one employee from Pat Carroll's final Cavalry Club crew



▲ Ferris

works for Ben, although a team of consultants Pat utilized helps Ben navigate tricky situations such as the crown hydration on *Poa annua* greens following a rare flood-freeze event earlier this year.

Ben and his team scurried to get the greens into playing shape for spring play. The bunker renovation commenced in August. A demanding year? Sure. But Ben still exudes the energy of a kid driving around the course with his father.

"This is my home," he says. "I don't have kids. I'm getting married next year. I haven't had a day off in a couple of months. I spend about 14 hours a day here and it gets daunting at times, but I'm happy to be here. I'm really happy the project is turning out this way. I love it here. It's my heart and soul. I have my fiancé, my dog and this."

Neither central New York nor Cavalry Club are **David Ferris's** home



— not anymore. Ferris relocated to South Florida decades ago. The lower part of the Sunshine State is a good place for a golf course architect to build

a career. Ferris and his partner, **John Sanford**, don't need to search far to find quality clients.

Some projects, though, are worth frequent multi-flight journeys. Cavalry Club is one of those projects. Ferris also exudes the joy of a Cavalry Club kid. His father, **David Ferris Sr.**, worked as the club's pro in the 1970s. Some of Ferris's earliest golf memories involve chilling with his father in the pro shop. Ferris spent his childhood in the Syracuse area. He then earned three degrees at a pair of central New York universities, SUNY Morrisville and Cornell, and developed into a well-traveled architect making the



game his family loves better.

Ferris had been eyeing an opportunity to help the club since playing the course with his father in the early 2000s. Cavalry Club represents a central New York anomaly: a Wilson/Lee design in the middle of **Robert Trent Jones Sr.** country. Jones, who learned the game in nearby Rochester, designed or renovated 68 courses in the state, according to a project list on the Robert Trent Jones Society website. When Cavalry Club added golf in the 1960s, the selection of Wilson, Jones's fiercest rival, proved curious. Wilson died on July 5, 1965, nine days after Cavalry Club debuted its course.

The club boasts the lone Wilson/Lee design in the region.

The club hired Ferris in 2021 to concoct a plan to not only renovate bunkers, but to reintroduce short grass around greens, restore fairway cuts and width in landing areas, assist with tree clearing, renovate tees, add native fescue areas, improve drainage, and elevate practice areas.

"I never thought I'd get a project like this," he says. "I kept hoping. I have interviewed for

multiple projects up there before, but a couple of them never came to fruition. You don't see a lot of renovation work in that area. And if they do renovation work, a lot of times they will do it in-house."

Work will be executed in phases. The current phase involves renovating 74 bunkers, placing 115,000 square feet of new sod around those bunkers and adding 7,400 square feet of short grass. George E. Ley Company and New York resident **Kevin Wager** are the builder and shaper. Hundreds of trees have been removed over the past two years, including some maples Ben Carroll says he helped his father plant.

The square footage of bunker sand will decrease from 83,000 to 54,000. Ferris is restoring jagged bunker edges and free-form shapes found in a 1966 aerial guiding the plan.

Visits are rekindling various stages of Ferris's life. He recently noticed a copy of his golf course architecture book "No Risk, No Reward" in the Manlius Library. One of the librarians grew up five houses from him.

"Everywhere I go in the town is like a flashback," he says. "I wrote a book and now that book is in the library, and it sits in what was my kindergarten at one point. It's so cool. The little ice cream place, the Little League field ... that's all the same. My family is still there. I'll play golf with my brother when I'm in town. I can't escape it."

On a late-summer site visit, Ferris bumped into **Bob McCarthy**, who followed David Ferris Sr. as the club's head pro. The architect asked McCarthy for his feedback on the completed work. "He said, 'Looking pretty good.' I said, 'Not bad for somebody who used to run around the pro shop in diapers.'"

Somebody who used to run around the course in diapers has similar thoughts about the results.

"Being around this course for so many years, I'll drive around, or I look down another hole, and I feel like I'm now at a different course because of what we are doing," Ben Carroll says. "It's really neat." **GCI**

◀ Ben Carroll is the second-generation superintendent at Cavalry Club in Manlius, New York.



2023 EARLY ORDER PROGRAM

 **BASF**
We create chemistry

Q&A WITH JEFF VANNOY

Senior Product Manager of Turf Solutions at BASF explains how their 2023 Early Order Program offers a simplified approach to planning, ordering and saving to help superintendents prepare for a successful season.

What does the theme “STRAIGHT FORWARD” mean for turf professionals, and what should their expectations be for the BASF 2023 Early Order Program (EOP)?

Customers should expect that when they partner with BASF, they will experience the most seamless EOP in the industry. Nobody has an easier, more viable program. We work hard to give our customers great savings and a great portfolio, and we don't make it complicated. Stock up on powerful chemistries and save big with industry-leading rebates up to 25% so you can deliver amazing turf conditions for your course. That's what Straight Forward is all about.

How does the BASF EOP help simplify the planning process for superintendents?

Our EOP consistently scores the highest among end-users and DSRs because we have a simple and rewarding program. We put superintendents in control so they can buy exactly what they need in the quantities required for their course. A few years ago, we discovered that superintendents had excess products from pre-arranged pallet

orders they couldn't use, which wasn't in the best interest of the customer; therefore, we discontinued pallets and created an EOP where customers could design their own programs without the stress. For example, we have eight fungicide brands — start an order with any three of those brands and start unlocking savings. Unlike some other manufacturer programs, you can buy for the acreage your course needs, earning higher rebates the more you spend.

What new role do Intrinsic® brand fungicides play in this year's EOP?

With Intrinsic brand fungicides, you get amazing disease control, but you also get plant health benefits that have been scientifically demonstrated. In 2009, Intrinsic brand fungicides became the first plant health brand to get an EPA-approved label — before plant health was a common discussion. BASF was the original pioneer of plant health in many ways, and our customers know that. Intrinsic brand fungicides are the perfect anchor for foundational spray programs. Whether superintendents are currently using them

or are looking to try them, they can earn an additional 1% rebate with our new Intrinsic Brand Fungicide Kicker when they add any Intrinsic product to their plan. The extra 1% rebate will then be applied to everything in their Design-Your-Own Program fungicide order. It's a smart way to try a new solution or to stock up on well-known, trusted brands.

Tell us about Across-the-Course Solutions. How do they bring versatility to EOP?

BASF has products in almost every category that can truly be used all over the golf course. Some of our best solutions are herbicides, insecticides and spray colorants, and those products make up our Across-The-Course Solutions offering. Anyone who spends \$25,000 on the Design-Your-Own Program fungicides will automatically earn an additional rebate of 10% on these products.

How does this year's program reward superintendents for reaching those top qualifying purchase levels?

We truly believe BASF has the best and most well-round-

ed Early Order Program with a combination of incredibly generous rebates and some of the industry's best chemistries available. You can't ignore an EOP program where there's an opportunity to earn up to a 25% rebate — that's a rewarding incentive, and any superintendent willing to invest in their course can earn great savings. With competitors, you have to spend \$50,000-\$100,000 to get 10% and buy pallets with excess products that may not fit your needs. To us, it's important that customers don't end up with products that they won't use.

If you had to give one reason why superintendents should start their season by ordering through BASF EOP, what would it be?

The BASF 2023 Early Order Program offers superintendents top-tier innovations at the year's best rebates, with no hassles. We offer extensive savings on some of the most cutting-edge products in the industry, ensuring superintendents can buy exactly what they need while maximizing their rebates. This year, point your turf success in the right direction — Straight Forward.



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THE SPINAL TAP EFFECT ... AND MORE

Whether observing a course renovation or participating in one as a consultant or co-designer, there are a lot of small things you learn about what it takes to help a project along. Here are a few takeaways about seemingly minor stuff I've gleaned over the years that could help guide a project.

MORE RED FLAGS

You never have enough construction flags. Before the start of any project of any scale, buy 1,000, then get another 1,000. And don't try to tell me you can reuse old ones. Once a flag gets used, it gets bent and rusty. If you have to save on flags, then you have seriously under-budgeted the project.

Flags need to go deep in the ground, and they must endure all sorts of weather, vehicle traffic and foot stomping. Take the trouble to insert them carefully and deeply by hand.

SCALE UP THE TREE WORK

Normally, you want to be doing some annual tree work. It's probably best to keep it at a modest, steady rate of 30 to 50 a winter so no one will realize how much you are actually getting done in the long run.

But if you are doing a major course renovation project that involves the partial closure of (some) holes or even the entire golf course, that's the time to get everything done at once. It's also not the time to hold back out of caution because you will likely only get this one big chance in your career — or at least this phase of it — to

get tree work done on a massive scale without anyone standing over your shoulder.

THINGS EXPAND IN THE FIELD

Maybe it's ego during any construction process. More likely, it's a matter of appropriate scale as a two-dimensional plan on paper gets converted into three dimensions outdoors. Rarely do features — whether greens, tees, bunkers or fairways — get smaller as they are getting built. Most of the time they expand to fill the space available and achieve a more viable shape without seeming small. For those who know their rockumentary films from 1984, we'll call it "The Spinal Tap Effect."

As things get bigger, they absorb more materials — whether sand, gravel, pipe, seed or sod. That should not be covered by contingency. Instead, that should be planned for ahead of time into the working budget. A good rule of thumb is to design on paper, calculate volumes and add 10 to 15 percent into the capital budget to cover the likely expansion of features. If that growth in the field doesn't materialize, you will look like a genius to your managers at having come under budget. And when "The Spinal Tap Effect" takes hold, you'll have properly filled the acreage of your golf course while looking efficient in the process.

NEVER ENOUGH SOD

You will never have enough sod no matter how carefully you budget or harvest what you already have. Plan accordingly. If you cut a green to rebuild or resurface it, take the sod and use it for green expansions elsewhere. The same goes for areas of dis-

turbance when you build bunkers or forward tees; any sod you got should be rolled up, transported elsewhere and reused for tees, fairway expansion or green surrounds. Don't waste a square inch of the stuff.

ALLOW FOR FLEX IN THE FIELD

Not only do things get bigger in the field; their shape and depth will also change. That's not a matter of changing one's mind. Rather it is — or should be — allowing one's thinking to evolve while still adhering to a recognizable process.

The key is to allow flex in the shaping of a green or bunker without having to change your mind and undo what has already been built. You achieve that by rough shaping something, looking at it, taking a step back and then honing in on the details only after you have thought through issues of perspective, scale, playing strategy and aesthetics.

If you build exclusively what you have designed on paper, you'll end up with one of those cookie-cutter courses from the 1990s that were built by contractors rather than designed by architects. If you approach everything more from the standpoint of design/build in the field — even in collaboration with a contractor for building basic elements of the project — you can take a position that allows features to develop and assume proper form in the field.

We'll discuss in a follow-up column the proper role of the superintendent in any renovation project. For now, prepare yourself for what is involved overall. And remember to plan for "The Spinal Tap Effect." **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).

Sally Jones

GENERAL MANAGER AND SUPERINTENDENT, BENSON GOLF CLUB



What has helped me is to live in the moment. To sit back and think about the past, that's depression. And (worrying about) the future, that's anxiety. Staying in the present was what I needed."



SUPERINTENDENT
RADIO NETWORK



When Sally Jones took a position as the superintendent at the Benson Golf Club, a public facility in Benson, Minnesota, she was returning to her roots, to the club where she grew up and was introduced to the game of golf. Jones worked at the club as a teenager and started to think about a career in turf while researching the industry for a high school project. Looking to further her education in the subject, she headed to Penn State, "because it was the farthest from home," she says.

After earning her degree in turfgrass science and serving a number of internships, Jones returned to her home club in 2003 as the superintendent. In 2016, she was named general manager while remaining in the superintendent's post.

While she continues to spend the bulk of her time tending to the turf, Jones tells Rick Woelfel on the Wonderful Women of Golf podcast that her responsibilities often vary from one day to the next.

"We're a small course," she says, "so I fill in wherever needed. If we're well-staffed, ultimately I get to spend most of my days out on the course but there are times when I'll have to fill in in the clubhouse. I have filled in on the beer cart, which is not where I'm good but I'll do it if I need to."

At one point in Jones' career, she found herself struggling with severe mental health issues, including anxiety and depression. Those challenges impacted her relationships with her husband and her two children, who today are 12 and 15.

"I was in denial," Jones says. "It took me many years of dealing with high anxiety and depression before I realized that, 'This is real, this is something that really can affect a person mentally and physically.'"

Seven years ago, Jones underwent inpatient treatment. The progress she has made in the years since has been hastened by the support she has received from and extended to other women in the turf industry. She recalls attending the inaugural Women in Turf event in North Carolina three years ago.

"Women in Turf has been a huge help for me," Jones says. "Professionally, but most importantly personally." That 2019 event "was the first time I had ever had the opportunity to be in a room

with more than just a handful of females within our profession. I was honored to be part of it. I had no idea of the impact that event would have. It was moving, it was inspirational and it was overwhelmingly a positive influence for me that came at just the perfect time."

Since then, Jones has volunteered at the last two U.S. Women's Opens, in 2021 at the Olympic Club and this year at Pine Needles. She notes that the women she has connected with in the industry offer mutual support and encouragement to one another.

"The support group has been overwhelmingly amazing," she says, "and I am blessed that I've had the opportunity to meet all of those women."

Jones says that having the opportunity to connect with other women in the industry has recharged her emotional batteries.

"Every group that I've been a part of has been so therapeutic," she says, "and rejuvenates me and gets me more excited. Every time I go to something it gets me even more excited about my career and this industry. I wish everybody, male or female, could experience something like that to keep them going."

Jones' strategy for contending with her mental health issues is to take things one day at a time.

"What has helped me is to live in the moment," she says. "To sit back and think about what was in the past, that's depression. And (worrying about) the future, that's anxiety. Staying in the present was what I needed to do."

"Plan ahead, you can do that — but don't let it consume you." GCI

2023 EARLY ORDER PROGRAM

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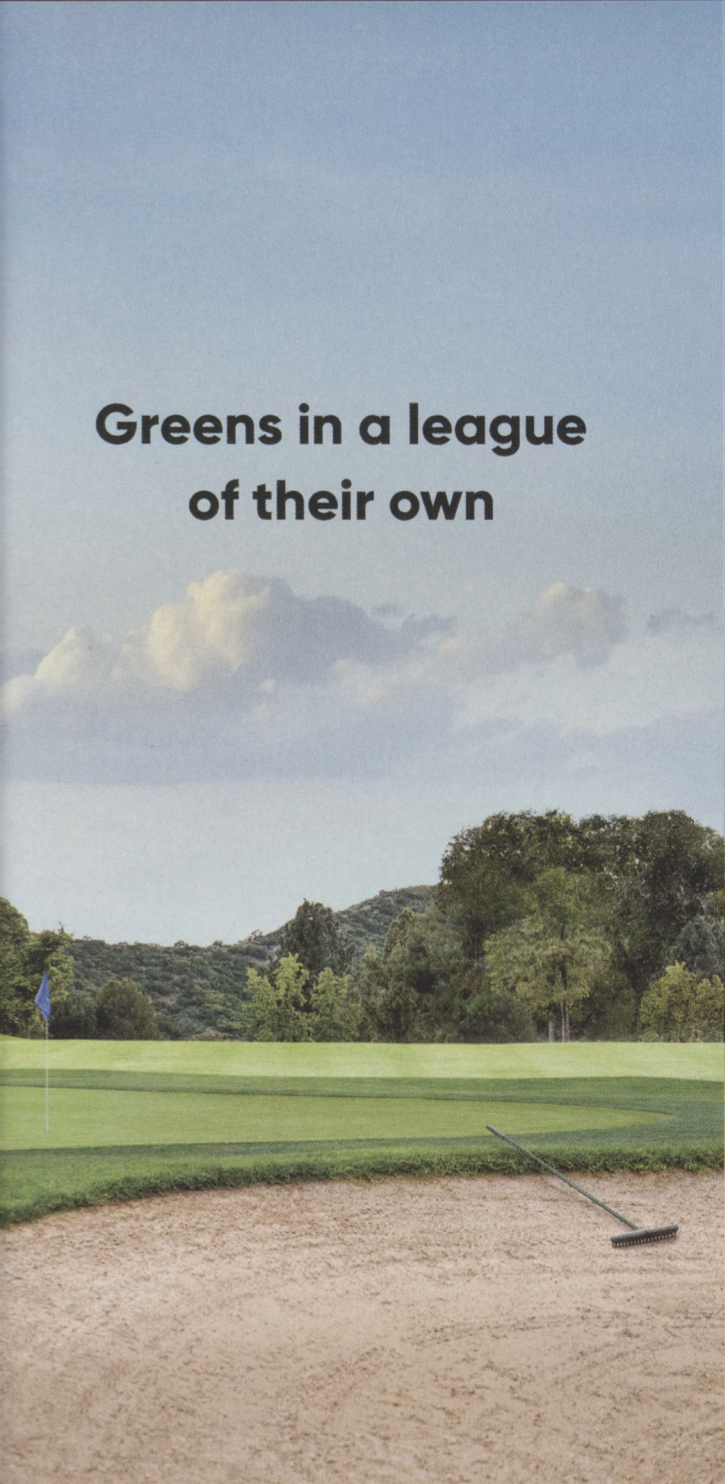
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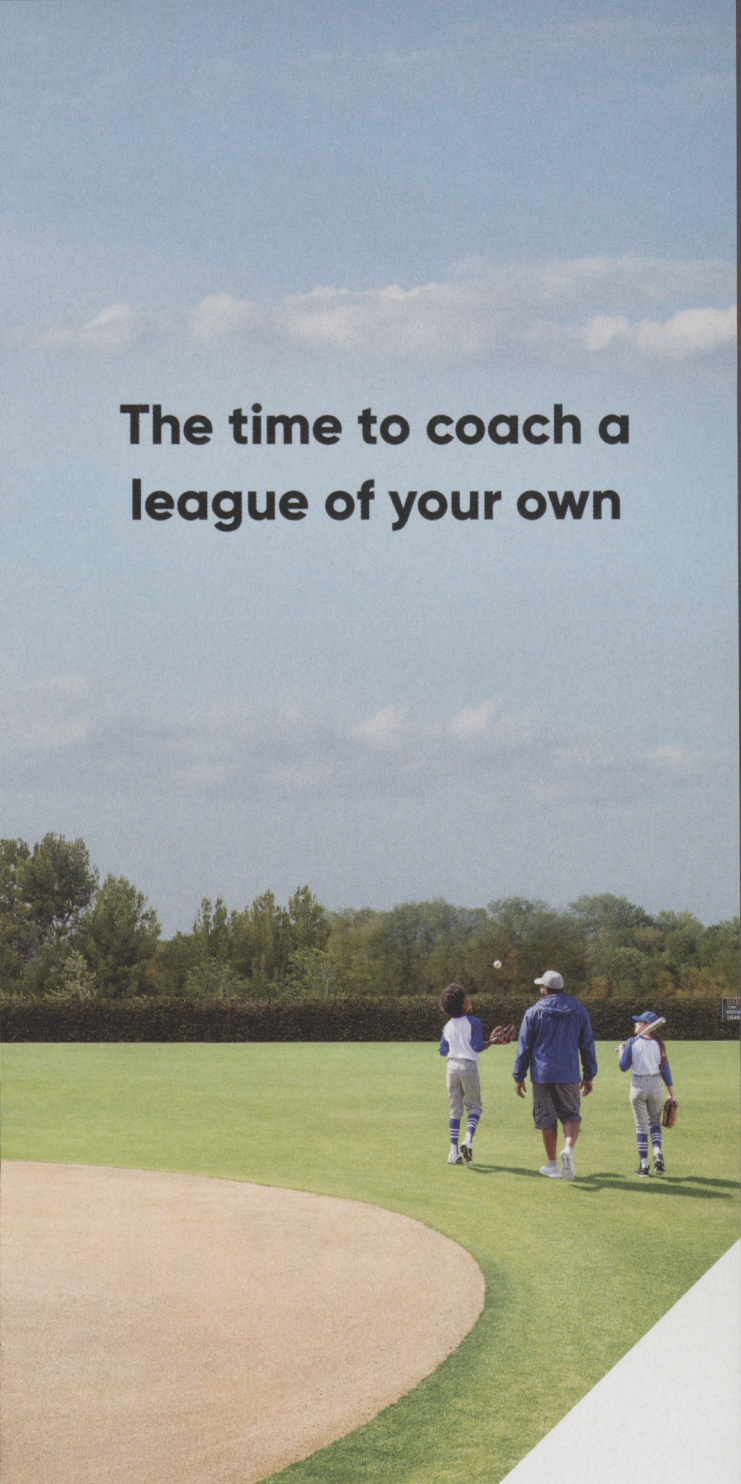
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TORO



Maintenance along the wonderful rocks

By **Guy Cipriano**

A veteran superintendent reflects on how evolution, adaptation and hard work reintroduced what makes a course unique in a golf-rich county.

Nick Lerner is wearing a lightweight black jacket while walking the front nine of Bonnie Briar Country Club on an early September morning. When he reaches the third hole, an uphill par 3 playing over a branch of a serene river, past rock he helped expose and onto a green covered with healthy *Poa annua*, Lerner begrudgingly removes the jacket. It's shortly after 9 a.m.

Of all the days, weeks and months since Lerner became superintendent at the private club in Westchester County, New York, many of the toughest have



come this year. Lerner documents activity inside “At-A-Glance” planners. He records temperatures, precipitation, sprays and personal observations. He uses a color-coded system to highlight practices on greens, tees, fairways and approaches. He has kept daily records since starting at Bonnie Briar on October 20, 2003.

Summer 2022 brought eight straight days at or above 90 degrees, numbers you expect to see in an agronomic log in Memphis or Atlanta or Charlotte, not a greenspace 20 miles from Midtown Manhattan. Lerner isn’t bluffing when he says, “this is the most difficult summer I have ever experienced.”

Throwing a jacket over a blue golf shirt, both sporting Bonnie Briar’s scripted logo (mirrored Bs atop interlocking mirrored Cs), parking a utility vehicle by the first tee, entering dynamite Devereux Emmet-designed golf ground, and walking and discussing gritty work presents a needed change-of-pace morning. As expectations soar because you’re always unfairly compared to other private clubs in one of America’s best golf neighborhoods and crew sizes continue to shrink, superintendents in Lerner’s situation seldom find time to trot, stop, chat, reflect and explain.

Is the third hole too soon to remove the jacket? Will carrying a jacket lessen the enjoyment of a comfortable walk? “I don’t mind carrying it,” Lerner says. “It’s well-deserved this time of year to wear a jacket.”

So much has happened in the 101 years since Edward Lyman Bill established Bonnie Briar Country Club. Heck, so much happened *before* then, including the British establishing a Revolutionary War encampment on the site in 1776. Some believe a form of golf was played on the land surrounding the ninth tee before the “Apple Tree Gang” knocked shots around the Westchester County land where Saint Andrews Golf Club started introducing golf to the Northeast in 1888. Bonnie Briar and Saint Andrews are 12 miles apart. Famed Winged Foot Golf Club is across the street from Bonnie Briar. Quaker Ridge Golf Club and Wykagyl Country Club are a few par 5s away. Did we mention Bonnie Briar resides in a great golf neighborhood?

Bonnie Briar unveiled its first nine Emmet-designed holes in 1922. The 18-hole course debuted the following year. Bonnie Briar survived the Great Depression and World War II. Artist Norman Rockwell, a mega-celebrity in the pre-digital era, called Bonnie Briar

his home club. Golfer Doug Ford, who hoisted a Wanamaker Trophy and donned a green jacket, practiced and played at Bonnie Briar. The club almost lost Emmet’s wonderful routing over and through rocky terrain, but a group of persistent members in saved a significant part of the course from being converted into housing during the 1990s.

As the club faced an uncertain future, challenges recruiting and retaining members led to deteriorating conditions. Weeds and shrubbery stifled Bonnie Briar’s defining features: a series of rock outcroppings along every hole. When resources dwindle, essential agronomic practices are bypassed. The people who deeply cared about Bonnie Briar understood how the prolonged tussle of thwarting the sale impacted the quality of the course.

“There was a wide agreement among all the members that the golf course was the key to the future of Bonnie Briar,” former club president Ira Goldfarb says in the recently released documentary “Bonnie Briar a Centennial history” compiled by former member Paul Lieberman. “Once we were able to save it, we were presented with the challenge of revitalizing it.”

On his first day, which was “cool, clear and nice” for late October, Lerner’s team started the revitalization with a drill-and-fill procedure scheduled by legendary agronomist Ed Etchells, whom the club hired as a consultant. Lerner and his crew worked into darkness and the project lasted multiple days. “The course was in need of a lot of help,” Lerner says nearly 19 years later while walking toward the raised ninth green as his team aerifies fairways. “It was a really intense process, but well-needed. The greens were in really poor condition. From there, it has been nothing but upward.”

Through the years, Lerner

◀ Nick Lerner has worked as the superintendent at Bonnie Briar Country Club in Westchester County, New York, since 2003.





▲ Bonnie Briar Country Club uses the all-electric Toro Greensmaster eTriFlex 3370 to mow its green.

has polished the turf and reintroduced at least two acres of rock outcroppings. The first hole is a stout par 4. It plays 451 yards from the middle tees, bends right to left and descends to a green with a front-to-back slope. From the green, a golfer sees a boulder bordering the sixth green that's actually two boulders with a sliver of rough between the grayish rock. "It looks like it got hit by lightning and split into two," Lerner says. The second hole descends deeper, with a branch of the Sheldrake River intersecting the fairway. To the right of the green sits a rock outcropping, more evidence of the implausible construction feat achieved by Emmet and his team in the 1920s. After a golfer exits an alley of rocks and trees on the fourth hole, it becomes apparent that unique visuals are omnipresent.

And to think, Emmet's crew built the course using horses, scrapers and mules. And to further think, a period existed where most of it was hidden.

"Members will say to me, 'Nick, why did you put the rock there?'" Lerner says. "Those were there from the start. That's how they were back when Emmet and others wandered the property."

Lerner uncovers as much rock as

time and labor permit. He admits the process has slowed because of less time and labor. Lerner's summer crew reached 17 workers in 2022, a nearly 30 percent decrease from the pre-pandemic total. The year-round staff includes assistant superintendent Chad Lemere, foreman Carlos Montero, mechanic Leonel Baez, 40-year employee Eddie Garcia and Ricardo Gomez.

Superintendents everywhere, including those in the hyper-competitive New York Metropolitan market, have adapted practices and programs to handle current labor realities. For Lerner, that meant exploring triplexes to mow greens.

"We would verticut with a triplex machine occasionally," he says. "But to use a designated triplex mower on a regular basis was not a usual practice from my experience. When COVID hit, I quickly realized we're not going to have labor. As the COVID world forced us all to do, we needed to adapt. It was no different for me in my world. I had to adapt to using a triplex on greens because I didn't have labor to get done what we needed."

Bonnie Briar lacked a triplex setup for greens, so Lerner rented a ma-

chine in 2020. He studied various models and learned Toro had released the all-electric Toro Greensmaster eTriFlex 3370. Homes with wooded backyards rest on property boundaries and reduced noise levels generated via lithium-ion batteries presented opportunities to mow greens earlier. The absence of hydraulics on the Greensmaster eTriFlex 3370 also intrigued Lerner.

Once he found the right triplex for Bonnie Briar, Lerner shifted his attention to helping operators maneuver triplexes on small, perched greens. Operators have been taught to extend turns into the rough and deploy no-mow backups passes on pinched greens. Walking mowers are used for cleanup passes. Bonnie Briar has two Greensmaster eTriFlex 3370 to maintain three acres of regulation, practice and nursery greens. A worker accompanies each triplex operator, fixing ball marks and blowing clippings and debris as greens are mowed. That worker doesn't have much time to complete those tasks. Mowing the 13th, 14th and 15th greens took just 22 minutes on the early September morning Lerner walked course.

"We used to mow greens with five guys," he says. "We're now using two and a half, or at most three guys. In the world, right now as we are standing here today, the labor situation hasn't changed. We're competing against every industry that's out there and they're paying more on an hourly basis. We're in a seasonal business and people don't want that. They want that year-round position. It's been a challenge to find staffing and having this tool allows us to get the job done with the same, if not better, results."

For 101 years, Bonnie Briar has endured. For 19 years, Lerner has quietly found ways to position the club for future prosperity.

"Sometimes you forget all you have done because you're here every day," he says.

Sometimes you need to walk and reflect to appreciate it. **GC**



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SUMMER'S GONE, **but not forgotten**

Big demands, punishing heat and humidity, little natural irrigation. We visited the epicenter of a region with high expectations to learn how well-trained superintendents handle the toughest part of the growing season.

By **Guy Cipriano**



There's a difference between rain and irrigation water. There's also a difference between a brutal and a tolerable summer.

Don Asinski succinctly articulates the differences — even when rain and unforgiving weather are non-existent.

On a late July Monday morning, Asinski traverses Forsgate Country Club. Whenever his utility vehicle stops, he glances upward. Gray blends with blue. Asinski desperately wants gray to fully overtake blue.

Forsgate Country Club needs rain. Thirty-four years in the business, including 6½ years as the superintendent at the 36-hole central New Jersey private club, have taught Asinski natural water produces healthier turf.

“The reality is,” Asinski says, “your irrigation is never going to be as pure as your rainfall. When you are stuck on irrigation for an extended period of time, the grass just looks a little weaker. After a good, soaking rain, it’s amazing how quickly the turf bounces back.”

Minds need rain, too. For nearly six weeks, Asinski and his team have been pulling four hoses per day, trying to keep 8½ acres of predominantly *Poa annua* greens and 53 acres of fairways alive and playable. The last six weeks have brought three-tenths of an inch of the good stuff.

“Around Week 4 of something like this it starts to get a little concerning,” Asinski says. “My assistant and I spoke about it the other day. We’re burned out. It’s not just, ‘OK, I’m working harder. Or I’m working longer.’ The main thing is just the stress of worrying about losing turf.”

“To me, it’s a life-and-death kind of thing. I guess it would be justified

© GUY CIPRIANO (6)

if you lost turf, but we're always looking for perfection."

The rain Asinski expected in the afternoon never arrived. During a tough summer, it seems like everybody else gets the good stuff.

Anthony Hooks and **Patrick Husby** are everybody else. The pair leads the maintenance of Due Process Stable, an exclusive private club 25 miles east of Forsgate

to learn how humans and turf overcome the enormous stress.

I saw bloodshot eyes and tanned skin, yet beautiful *Poa annua* and bentgrass playing surfaces. Courses were brown around the edges, yet green where it matters. Most members will never comprehend what it takes to provide an inspiring blend of playability and aesthetic, especially when the number of July days with temperatures exceeding 90 degrees surpasses the New York Yankees' win total for the month. I learned more about the analytics behind moisture management, the golf industry's version of "Moneyball." I also realized there's still a gritty art to keeping grass alive through heat, humidity and drought.

Perhaps insight from their experiences will help you when it gets brutal again in your area.

TURF TACTICS LESS MECHANICAL STRESS

Mowing and rolling are huge parts of a golf course maintenance routine, and crew sizes have swelled to peak-season sizes by July. The temptation exists to allocate available labor to mowing. With bentgrass under enormous stress, Due Process Stable started a July week by mowing its entire short-grass palette, a sward consisting of 60 acres. The crew didn't mow fairways, tees, approaches or collars again that week.

"We don't have any problem doing what's best for the plant," Husby says. "That means if we go through a stretch where we don't mow anything for days, so be it. If we mow greens one day, roll them or do nothing to them the next day, then so be it. We're not under the gun to constantly be mowing and keeping up an 11 or 12 on the Stimpmeter. We explain it and let the members know what we're doing is for the betterment of the course so we're around for September."

The Due Process Stable team

alternated between greens mowing and rolling each day. The greens, according to Hooks, never fell below 10½ on the Stimpmeter.

Labor resources are reallocated to hand watering, with employees covering six-hole circuits. Mowing less frequently means Due Process Stable can devote as many as eight workers to syringing greens.

DON'T FEAR DRY

Chris Boyle's 25 years as superintendent at Mendham Golf & Tennis Club have taught him that drier is better — for plant health and for golfers. Temperatures went from comfortable (think low 80s) in advance of the club's invitational conducted the weekend following July 4th to toasty (think reoccurring 90s) following the tournament. Boyle stayed patient as July went from nice to nasty.

"I'd rather it be dry than wet, because when you have problems with wilted and dormant grass, most of it is just dormant," Boyle says. "When it starts to rain, it will green up again. Give me dry anytime."

Lower fertility and a decade of topdressing "the heck out of" push-up *Poa annua*/bentgrass greens help Mendham Golf & Tennis Club's putting surfaces withstand tough stretches. Boyle will often run overnight irrigation on greens and then only hand water hot spots the next day. Wetting agent usage helps retain moisture.

"Drier is better," he says, "and golfers like fast and firm. We don't go crazy hand watering. Some people would never want it, but our greens are push-up greens with XGD drainage. I don't want anything else."

Asinski also strives for Forsgate Country Club's *Poa annua*/bentgrass greens to play bouncy without losing turf. "If you get your greens too lush, maybe they are going to look nice from a distance, but they are not going to play nice," he says. "You



▲ Due Process Stable's Anthony Hooks and Patrick Husby.

Country Club. Hooks and Husby are maintaining bentgrass greens, but they are enduring the same ordeal as Asinski. Little rain. Lots of heat. Abundant turf and personal stress.

"I have been talking to so many people and they'll say, 'We've never had a summer like this,'" Husby says a day after the potential dousing misses central New Jersey. "We have had summers like this, and I can remember them because I went through the entire summer. We haven't been through the entire summer — yet. But this is a tough one."

How do superintendents tactically and mentally handle the toughest stretches of the growing season? I visited central and lower northern New Jersey, a region filled with world-caliber clubs — and unworldly member expectations — in the middle of the summer of 2022

are walking that tightrope. I want to keep our greens fast and firm, but I want to keep them alive. The quickest way to kill grass is by overwatering it. It's a concern, especially when you are training new people on a hose and trying to make them understand that overwatering is the quickest way to get into trouble."

DECISION TIME

Montclair Golf Club director of golf course operations **Michael Campbell** employs two superintendents and two assistants to help him manage 36 holes. In July 2022, soil moisture readings consumed their end-of-day discussions. Irrigation runtimes are based on volume amounts. A paid meteorological service removes further guesswork from summer decisions.

"We have become more pinpoint in our watering," Campbell says. "I'm probably smarter on when to do it and when not to do it. I feel like I'm in tune with the universe when it comes to humidity and stuff like that. I just know at 3 o'clock the humidity levels are going to drop. Our watering practices are driven more by what the humidity is than the heat."

At Due Process Stable, evapotranspiration (ET) levels guide irrigation practices during dry stretches. Comfortable levels, according to Hooks, range from 0.16 to 0.18. Levels swelled above 0.2 for most of July. "You just can't replace that amount of water out there," Hooks says. Heavy irrigation on Sunday and Monday nights — Due Process Stables receives little Monday play and is closed for half of Tues-

I have been talking to so many people and they'll say, 'We've never had a summer like this. We have had summers like this, and I can remember them because I went through the entire summer. We haven't been through the entire summer — yet. But this is a tough one.'"

— **Patrick Husby**

day for maintenance — and hand watering greens are practices adopted via using ET data that keep turf playable without causing disruptions on key golf days.

Data still doesn't dictate decisions at every high-level private club. Golf course maintenance remains a gritty art for many superintendents. Forsgate owns one soil moisture meter. Asinski uses it for training new employees.

"I have been doing this for a while, and I kind of rely on a little bit of instinct more, just sticking a soil probe in, feeling the soil, seeing the soil," Asinski says. "I will stop on the green when the guys are cutting cups just to put my hand on the soil to feel it. Do I rely on a soil moisture meter that much? When I'm training a guy, I will give him the

moisture meter so he can get a better feel. It will help him."

PEOPLE-FOCUSED TACTICS DAYS OFF AND DELEGATION

Fiddler's Elbow supports 54 holes, making it the largest private golf club in New Jersey. The family-owned entity is striving to become an employer of choice in a market saturated with private clubs. Achieving that distinction means adopting a policy designed to ensure employees spend more time with family and friends. One of those policies involves giving assistant superintendents consecutive days off — even in the summer.

"They get Friday-Saturday or Sunday-Monday," director of grounds and facilities **Matt Willigan** says. "We're paying them more to work less. We're not where we want to be with staffing yet, but it's getting closer because of the employer-of-choice attitude the club has."

Willigan, coincidentally, finds it tricky to get away from the course in the summer — or any other season. His family lives on the 600-acre property. "I have a 6-year-old and she's smiling when I get home," he says. "How can you be upset when you see that? And the club treats us so well. It's tiring, but family doesn't want me bringing work home."

The brutal stretches — Fiddler's Elbow received less than an inch of rain in July, a half-inch in the final two weeks of June and multiple weekends when temperatures exceeded 100 degrees — enervate Willigan less as his career progresses and he learns to delegate more.

"I have realized I can't do it all," says Willigan, whose team maintains 100 acres of fairways, 12 acres of greens and approaches, 10 acres of tees, and 250 bunkers. "I need people to help me do it, so I'm trying to build up the staff. Two days off a week for an assistant? Are you kidding me? I would go weeks without a day off when I was com-



◀ Fiddler's Elbow director of grounds and facilities **Matt Willigan**.

MAINTENANCE

► Forsgate Country Club in Monroe Township, one of many New Jersey courses that experienced long periods without rain.

ing through the ranks. The club is committed to it. Let's get more staff and ease the burden on everybody's shoulders. Life is too short."

AN AFTERNOON AWAY

The Due Process Stable team boarded a luxury bus on August 3 and headed north on the Garden State Parkway and Interstate 95 to gaze at verdant turf brilliantly maintained by somebody else. Never mind that the New York Yankees lost to the Seattle Mariners. One afternoon away from the course, especially with relaxed co-workers, can reenergize an employee or turf team.

Taking the crew to a baseball game in the middle of summer is one example of how Hooks and Husby have evolved their summer

management style. The pair also occasionally encourages fatigued employees to arrive later than usual in anticipation of an intense afternoon or take longer breaks in the middle of steamy days. Employees receive every other weekend off.

"I have been a pretty intense guy for the most part," Hooks admits. "I stereotype, and I believe they really don't make the young guys like they

used to. I feel like we have to 'coddle' them a little bit, and we try to do different things to do that. The good news is when you do that, it shows great reward for them and us. It's a double win. Sometimes I might call it 'coddling,' but really it's what they need. We just didn't know any better back then."

X'S AND O'S OF TURF MANAGEMENT

Campbell studies the words and philosophies of football coaches. The season his team must demonstrate unyielding alertness consists of the three months before college and NFL teams begin their seasons. Decisions and discussions during the other nine months are designed to put turf into favorable summer positions. "Everything we do is to get through August," Campbell says. "Everything."

Campbell reiterates to his team that no lead—or, in this case, seemingly thriving turf—is ever safe.

"A lot of grass gets lost on Sundays for a reason," he says. "Everybody is tired. We spend a lot of time in the winter talking about anything and everything that gives us an upper edge. We're constantly



▼ Calculated moisture management helped turf teams handle a tough summer.



“

rewriting the playbook. The trick, after a number of years, is how do you keep finding improvements? You can't just slip into complacency.”

BUT ... STUFF HAPPENS

Decades of experience have taught Boyle that all cuts of turf will encounter tough summer cycles.

“I feel like every summer we lose a little bit of grass,” he says. “It doesn't matter if it's from being too hot or too wet or too dry or too much play, whatever. We peak in June, we try to hold until our member-guest invitational weekend, we lose some ground in July and August—some years you lose it more than others—and by the last week of September, you're usually back.” **GCI**

Guy Cipriano is Golf Course Industry's editor-in-chief.

If you get your greens too lush, maybe they are going to look nice from a distance, but they are not going to play nice. You are walking that tightrope. I want to keep our greens fast and firm, but I want to keep them alive. The quickest way to kill grass is by overwatering it. It's a concern, especially when you are training new people on a hose and trying to make them understand that overwatering is the quickest way to get into trouble.”

— **Don Asinski**



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Q&A WITH THE EXPERT



Q&A WITH AARON HATHAWAY

Technical Services Manager, Turf & Ornamental, Nufarm

1 How does your product save time?

Premium herbicides like Horsepower®, Cool Power®, Escalade® 2, and Change Up™ broaden the overall spectrum of broadleaf weed control. This broadened spectrum means more consistent control on more properties. Since no one set of properties has all the same weed issues, premium herbicides allow an applicator to mix one product and be confident that it is up to each unique weed challenge. It also means an applicator doesn't have to meticulously scout each property to determine an appropriate tank mix for effective control of the different weeds. For those properties with crabgrass breakthrough, consider Quincept® and Sure Power®. They can provide excellent control of the crabgrass and any lingering broadleaves – again, saving time by reducing scouting and mixing needs at each site. In short, premium herbicides offer premium active ingredient combinations to broaden the overall spectrum of weed control, making them more reliable at more sites and requiring fewer tank mixes to boost weed activity.

2 How does your product save labor?

Difficult to control weeds are not well-controlled by typical 3-way herbicides and are a main source of costly customer callbacks. Effective weed control with use of

premium herbicides increases customer satisfaction and reduces labor-intensive return trips for repeat applications.

3 How does your product save materials or fuel?

Premium herbicides can save a second trip and repeat applications by better controlling difficult weeds in one spray. For example, ground ivy is a difficult broadleaf that isn't well-controlled by a typical 3-way herbicide (2,4-D + MCPP + dicamba). However, Horsepower and Escalade 2 both contain premium pyridines (triclopyr and fluroxypyr, respectively) that provide better control of ground ivy in conjunction with the other active ingredients. These premium pyridines provide excellent translocation through ground ivy stolons and better specific activity on the weed. One effective application not only saves herbicide product, but saves fuel from a planned or unplanned repeat trip to a property to finish the job.

4 How do your products help generate additional revenue for landscape and lawn care companies?

The use of one or two main premium herbicides with relatively broad spectrums of control can allow applicators time to focus on other aspects of turf management like plant nutrition and

soil health. Because premium herbicides are more effective on a broader list of broadleaf weeds, applicators can rely on effective control, worry less about possible misses or callbacks and upsell other services.

5 In what other ways do your products make landscape and lawn care companies profitable?

Some premium herbicides not only contain pyridines that broaden broadleaf spectrum of control, but also contain PPOs, which speed visual activity and aid increased efficacy – especially in the early spring or mid-summer seasons by helping to break down plant cuticles. Sure Power and 4-Speed® XT contain a PPO herbicide (flumioxazin and pyraflufen-ethyl, respectively) and can provide a boost on difficult weeds during less-than-ideal control conditions. 4-Speed XT has proven to be a great early-spring broadleaf herbicide and Sure Power is a hammer for tough broadleaf weeds, like ground ivy and wild violet, in cool-season turf. Sure Power also has some activity on crabgrass and nutsedge which makes it a great mid-summer herbicide as broadleaf weeds can be especially difficult to control at this time. These fast and ultra-effective herbicides can easily increase customer satisfaction and help grow a positive company reputation.

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MORE THAN AN EQUIPMENT MANAGER

When a Wisconsin superintendent needed to fill a key position, he turned to the young person he knew best.

By **Guy Cipriano**

▲ Matt Radatz, CTEM, and Neil Radatz, CGCS, spend most of their bonding time at either Hawks Landing Golf Club or Pioneer Pointe in Verona, Wisconsin.

It snows hard in Verona, Wisconsin, a fast-growing suburb of Madison, the capital city where the Badgers play on Saturdays and the Packers halt Sunday afternoon activity. **Matt Radatz** has spent most of his life in the pleasant area, thanks to his father's job as superintendent at Hawks Landing Golf Club.

The population of Verona has nearly doubled since 2000, the year **Neil Radatz** moved his family from southern Michigan to southern Wisconsin. The opportunity Neil received to build and maintain Hawks Landing while raising a family in an appealing and safe community proved too good to bypass. Matt is 25 years old, so nearly every one of his life memories stems from events in Wisconsin, including

one involving the snow and Hawks Landing's par-3 eighth hole.

A craving for winter adventure and Neil's diligence for inspecting and protecting the course led to a father-son truck ride through Hawks Landing's thickly covered turf. Neither Radatz recalls the exact day, but Matt remembers the tires on his father's red truck flinging polar-bear-white snow, then muck.

"You don't remember being in the dozer?" Neil asks as Matt tells the red truck story. "You don't remember watering every day for eight hours a day when we had a drought?"

Matt officially started working for his father as a high school junior. Of course, he remembers executing essential golf maintenance tasks. But father, son, snow and red truck make

for a fun story.

"We were just cruising around, seeing if we could do it," Neil says. "We buried the truck. It was down to the axle. We had to shovel it out. I think I crawled out the window. It was pretty bad. That was my fault."

If something gets stuck on the course this winter, Matt will be responsible for determining the cause and solution. The father-son relationship entered a new phase when Matt reached adulthood, and most of the bonding occurs at the same place where the red truck got stuck.

Matt and Neil are telling stories and showing a visitor the Hawks Landing maintenance facility on a dreary Sunday morning in late August. In front of Matt sits a broken mower used to maintain the bluegrass at Pioneer Pointe, a nearby 13-hole, par-3 course that opened in 2021. Neil helped build Pioneer Pointe and he also leads the course's maintenance efforts for his bosses. Neil is confident he's employing the right person to fix the mower.

"We have a lot of equipment that's aging," Neil says. Matt quickly interrupts, calling the club's aging older equipment "gremlins." In today's golf maintenance environment, gremlins must be resuscitated.

"Before we had Pioneer Pointe to maintain, we could shut down a mower and wait," Neil adds. "We only have two fairway mowers here and only one at Pioneer Pointe. We have nothing left in case something happens. We're in a tough spot. Ordering equipment is now ridiculous. I'm waiting on a mower we ordered last year and I'm not even expecting it to be here. So, what do you do? You need somebody who can ..."

Neil, who admits he can "go all over the place," shifts his thought. But the answer is obvious. His operation needs somebody like his son.

Matt is in his fifth year as Hawks Landing's equipment manager. He recently became one of the first professionals to complete the GCSAA's Certified Turf Equipment Manager program. Neil, a native Ohioan who started his career at famed Inverness

Club working for **Tom Walker**, is a longtime Certified Golf Course Superintendent. They are the first father-son pair to complete both certification programs. Working on Sundays doesn't fluster Matt. His father, after all, has worked nearly every warm-weather Sunday for decades.

"He was always working and busting his butt out there," Matt says. "I saw that he loved it. He has a passion for this. That's where some of my work ethic has come from, wanting to push and succeed."

Matt relishes hands-on learning and demonstrated mechanical aptitude from a young age. Initially, he wanted to be become a heavy diesel mechanic, and he participated in a local youth apprenticeship program for automotive mechanics. Through the program, he landed a job as a mechanic at a local auto dealer. He found automotive work monotonous and his co-workers to be territorial. He returned to Hawks Landing and figured he'd try to follow his father's path and become a superintendent. When the club's equipment manager suddenly and unexpectedly left, Matt filled the position.

"I figured, 'I guess I know how to turn a wrench,'" he says. "I filled the role and ever since then I have fallen in love with it."

The variety of the work, the rela-

tionship with his father, and observing members enjoy sparkling playing surfaces all make it easy to forget Matt once wanted to maintain machines with large engines. "To be able to walk out that door and see what we have accomplished, ... I couldn't ask for anything more," he says.

Passion and knowledge place Matt in a terrific career position. With the industry struggling to attract young talent and supply-chain challenges producing lengthy shipping delays, equipment managers capable of keeping pricey mowers operating at high levels for longer periods are being offered six-figure salaries. Matt has cultivated strong relationships with his Wisconsin peers, so he understands the demand for somebody with his skillset and experience. He also realizes the quality of his current gig.

"I'm probably going to stay here for a while," he says. "I still have a lot to learn. I'm fortunate to have a dad who's been in the industry for ... how long?" Matt leans on a mower and looks over at Neil.

"A long time," Neil responds.

"I'm constantly learning," Matt adds. "I think this is a great duo we have."

Neil regularly ponders Matt's future.

"He's my son, we get along great, and I get to see him every day," he says. "How much more can you ask for? I

try to take good care of him and pay him well. I know the owners know that he's a valuable asset. It's difficult with two golf courses. I think a lot of guys would say they can do this job without an assistant, but they certainly can't do the job without an equipment manager. I'd hate to lose him, and I'll do everything possible to keep him."

Wisconsin's outdoorsy surroundings fit Matt's lifestyle. He enjoys skeet shooting, just started fishing and plays golf when time permits. Matt and Neil used to race remote control cars, but Matt has outgrown that hobby. They spend most of their father-son time at Hawks Landing or Pioneer Pointe.

"I don't do too much of anything besides work," Neil says. "I enjoy it too much. The one thing I love to do, and I wish I had more time to do, is sheep herding with my dogs. It takes too long to get where I need to go. It's something I like to do in the winter. Both dogs are trained on sheep and do really well."

Winters remain the slowest stretch at Hawks Landing and the best turf innovations and ideas are often concocted during the coldest months. Matt and Neil spent the gap between the 2021 and 2022 golf seasons creating a system to herd equipment updates using QR codes. Operators must scan the code on a tablet or phone and input data such as oil and coolant levels and

usage hours into a Google Drive file. Matt studies files and stores printed records in a thick white binder he keeps next to the shop computer.

The computer files and printouts tell the technical story of what occurs inside the Hawks Landing maintenance facility. The enduring stories are saved elsewhere. **GCI**

◀ Hawks Landing Golf Club opened in the early 2000s and Neil Radatz has been the only superintendent in its history.



BEST USE OF FUNGICIDES

Fungicides account for a significant portion of a golf course maintenance budget and not understanding how to use them properly can prove costly for a superintendent.

The first — and often best — reference point in applying products as intended lurks directly in front of an applicator.

"There are a lot of educational resources available," says BASF senior technical specialist Emma Lookabaugh, PhD, "but the fungicide label is where you would start. Most labels are fairly comprehensive. They not only tell you how to apply products and what rates to use for specific diseases, but they also tell you what not to do."

Labels are carefully constructed by manufacturers who spend years researching, developing and positioning fungicides to help superintendents. Proven manufacturers such as BASF also offer highly trained technical and sales specialists who study solutions in myriad conditions and speak with superintendents everywhere about product usage and performance. Add in the brainpower of university extension specialists, and ample resources exist to ensure fungicides are being applied effectively, thus saving superintendents two things they can't afford to squander: money and labor.

Once base knowledge is obtained from the label, a few technical tasks must be executed. For starters, a disease or potential disease threat must be properly diagnosed. "Taking time to send in samples and get an official diagnosis before you treat

will save you time and money in the long run," Lookabaugh says. "You won't be wasting those apps and you won't have to go in and re-treat a week later with the correct product."

Depending on the disease, the next step is understanding the relationship between the targeted disease and moisture. "For some diseases like take-all root rot and fairy ring, you need to water in the application immediately to get good control," Lookabaugh says. "Failure to water in with the right amount of water can be the difference between excellent control or complete failure."

A correlation also exists between rate ranges and efficacy. "With some diseases, like dollar spot, your rate range might be lower than what it is for soil-borne diseases," Lookabaugh adds. "Always make sure you are applying the right rate for the specific disease you're targeting. When disease pressure is high, you'll want to be on the higher end of the rate range to extend control."

Since being launched in 2019, BASF has learned plenty about where, when and how to use Maxtima® fungicide, a DMI that is safe on cool- and warm-season turf species during any point of the growing season. Maxtima fungicide is labeled for control of dollar spot, anthracnose, leaf spots, brown ring patch, mini ring, fairy ring, take-all



Maxtima fungicide provides excellent control of soilborne diseases including fairy ring, take-all root rot, spring dead spot (pictured above) and summer patch.

root rot, spring dead spot, take-all patch and summer patch.

"For foliar diseases, like dollar spot, anthracnose and some of your leaf spots, we recommend using spray volumes of two to four gallons per 1,000 square feet for best results," Lookabaugh says. "But let's be real, most people are probably going out closer to one to two gallons per 1,000 square feet, especially on fairways, and we're seeing really good performance. For soil-borne diseases like take-all root rot, spring dead spot, summer patch and especially fairy ring, we recommend you water in with at least a quarter inch of irrigation immediately following the application. Using a regular soil wetting agent every two weeks will help maximize efficacy. For best results, apply Maxtima fungicide preventa-

tively before you see symptoms."

Maxtima fungicide can be applied on any part of the golf course, although best-use tendencies have emerged over the past three years.

"If we're talking cool season, it works best on bentgrass fairways for dollar spot, anthracnose and patch diseases, and it's also very popular on bentgrass and *Poa* greens, where anthracnose can reduce turf quality in the summer months," Lookabaugh says. "Maxtima delivers excellent control of fairy ring, take-all root rot and spring dead spot on Bermudagrass greens. On Bermudagrass fairways, it provides a cost-effective solution for spring dead spot and even some of your leaf spot diseases. It's also a great foundational application for dollar spot programs on seashore paspalum fairways in the South." ■

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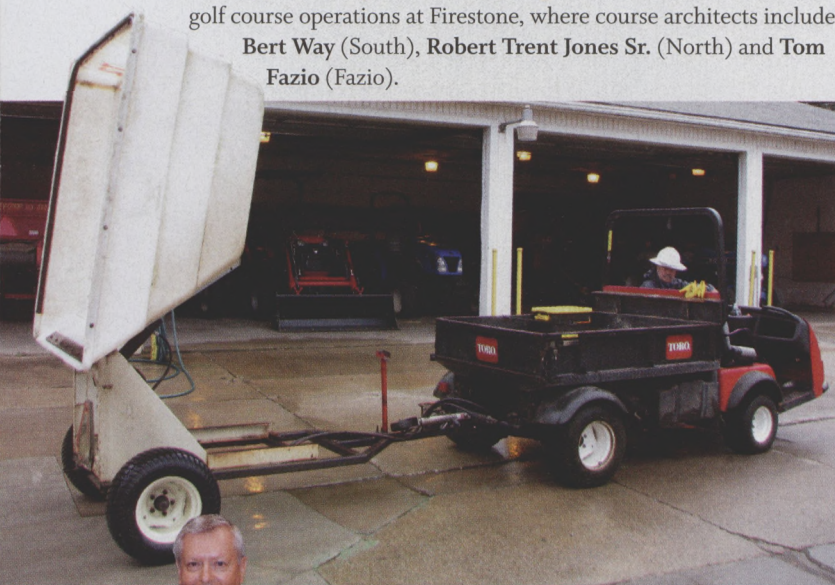
TRAVELS WITH TERRY

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.



GRASS CLIPPING DUMP TRAILERS

Brian Mabie, the former director of golf course maintenance at Firestone Country Club in Akron, Ohio, and another employee designed and built the original grass clipping dump trailers in the 1980s from scratch, used when mowing fairways. The trailers were originally attached to each fairway mower but are now towed in a series of four trailers at a time by a Toro Workman, strategically placing them around the golf holes. The 2-cubic-yard refuse containers were originally sold by Cushman. There are two sets of four trailers each, used daily. The hydraulic lift hoses are connected to the Workman's dual hydraulic ports that lifts and lowers the bed, where a trailer jack stand keeps them vertical for easy hook-up. In 2021, a new dump trailer was built by a third party, with the total labor time unknown. The 2-cubic-yard Roto Hi Dump by Peregrine, Inc., with lift cylinder and framing cost \$6,315, the custom trailer was \$3,550, with the hopper costing \$1,700. **Larry Napora** is the current director of golf course operations at Firestone, where course architects include **Bert Way** (South), **Robert Trent Jones Sr.** (North) and **Tom Fazio** (Fazio).



Terry Buchen, CGCS, MG, is president of Golf Agronomy International. He's a 51-year, life member of the GCSAA. He can be reached at 757-561-7777 or terrybuchen@earthlink.net.



FUZZY BUCKETS

Beau Backstrom, the superintendent at the Spanish Peaks Mountain Club in Big Sky, Montana, and crew used to use a broom before mowing the greens to stand up the lateral growth. Backstrom produced the idea to do two jobs at once by using a cocoa mat installed on the bottom of the John Deere 220E walk mower's grass catchers. Each mat measures 24 inches by 7 inches, using four sets of two washers, bullets, with locking nuts. A new 4 foot by 6 foot Par Aide cocoa mat (SKU: COC4x6) costs about \$695, replacing the old one, which was cut into pieces for the Fuzzy Buckets. It took about three hours to install them on five grass catchers. **Ryan Blechta** is director of grounds and mountain operations. **Tom Weiskopf** and **Phil Smith** designed the course.

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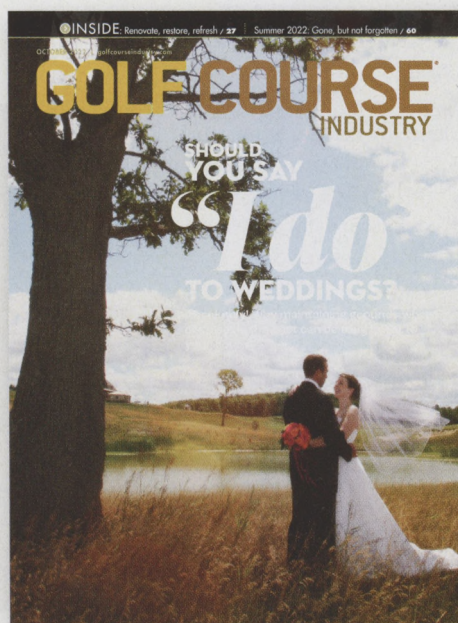


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A NUMBERS GAME

Iwrote about a trip to the Scottish Highlands and my love for the region last year in this space. Recently, I returned from another Highlands adventure where I discovered another golf course worthy of praise — Golspie Golf Club.

Golspie is in the village of Golspie in Sutherland on the North Sea coast. The village has a population of just over 1,300, but it boasts a phenomenal golf course designed by five-time Open Champion **James Braid**.

Founded in 1889 and redesigned by Braid in 1925, Golspie is one of the most unique golf courses in the world. It boasts a collection of true links holes, plus some heathland and parkland holes.

The course opens with a par 5 followed by a par 3 set just inland from Nos. 3, 4 and 5, which are along the coast with the sea on your left. The sixth hole is the second par 3 and turns inland straight away from the sea.

Following the sixth, you have a brief walk back to the tees of the par-4 seventh that continues to play inland over a tall dune to a plateau on the property. The par-4 eighth turns left and the course now resembles a British heathland with heather lining the sides of the fairways and Scotch pines providing the backdrop to the green in the distance.

The ninth, 10th and 11th holes continue through this pine forest creating more of a parkland feel and you are certainly sheltered from the ocean breezes at this

juncture of your round. The 12th begins with the tee still sheltered in the trees before exiting out into the open heathland adjacent to the eighth. The 13th continues on that same portion of property before one reaches the 14th, which runs past the maintenance facility parallel to the road leading past the golf course.

This is where sea views return. Although not directly on the sea, the final four holes meander their way out and back to the clubhouse. True links holes to close out your round.

One of the things that struck me about the course was how much the heathland- and parkland-type holes reminded me of Pinehurst — minus the exposed sand scrapes. The landscape and nature of those golf holes were quite similar but with heather instead.

The par-3 16th featured one of the more intimidating two-tiered greens I have ever seen. It truly deserves to be featured on the @GreatGolfHoles Twitter account.

The most impressive thing about Golspie? The condition.

The turf was perfectly manicured, and the greens were firm and true. I can't say anything about the golf course seemed out of place. The course is

maintained to a high standard.

Head greenkeeper **Muir Ross** and his team set an incredible standard — and the team is what I want to highlight. The

Golspie team consists of just three employees: Muir and two other greenkeepers. Actually, Muir told me, that team is just 2½ employees this year. Muir has one seasonal helper.

How do they do it? I honestly don't know. My wife and I had the pleasure of meeting Muir for a drink and a chat before our round. He shared their soil is a rich loam which creates an optimum growing environment for the turf, compared to their rustic neighbor to the north.

Golspie is just six miles south of Brora. In recent years, the crew from No Laying Up helped shine a spotlight on Brora, a Braid design on the North Sea famous for sheep that help keep the golf course "cut."

A round at Brora resembles stepping back in time. I find it immensely appealing. But that rustic charm will not always appeal to everyone. This is where I think Golspie has the edge. Golspie is a multi-course experience in a single round. And the level of condition and manicure will appeal to all.

Earlier this year, our team was struggling to meet our expectations when our numbers were low. We then managed a few new hires and received reinforcements from the H-2B cap relief. Once we reached our full strength of 18 workers, we were off to the races.

I certainly understand each golf course is unique, with varying soils, microclimates and more. But if three people can manage 18 holes at Golspie to the standard maintained by Muir Ross and his team, then we in the United States still have much to learn. **GCI**

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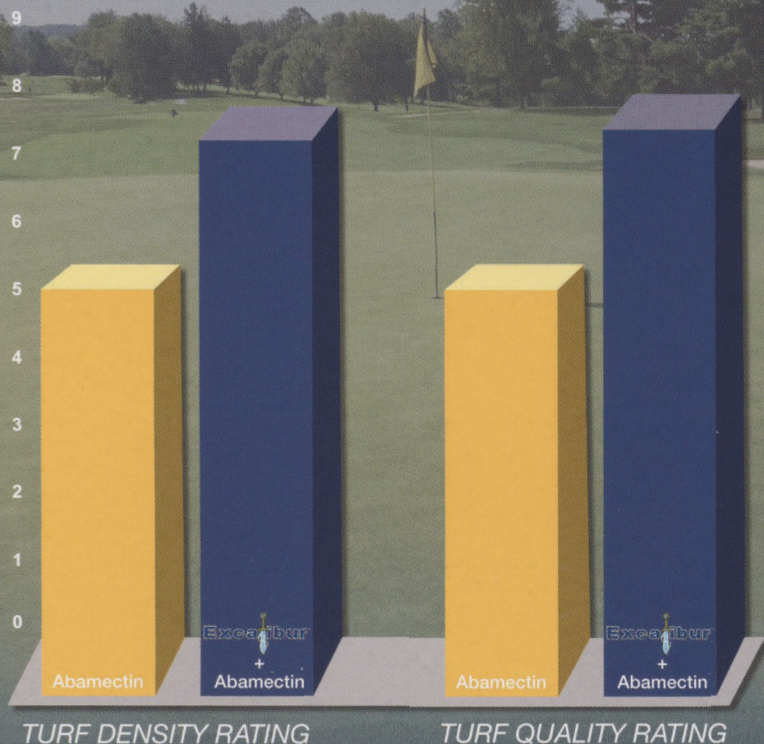
Golspie is a multi-course experience in a single round. And the level of condition and manicure will appeal to all.”



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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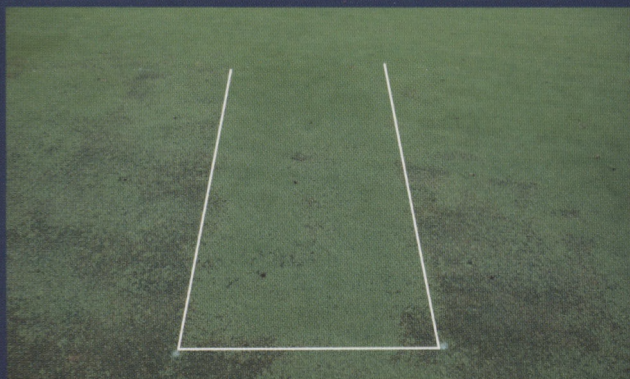


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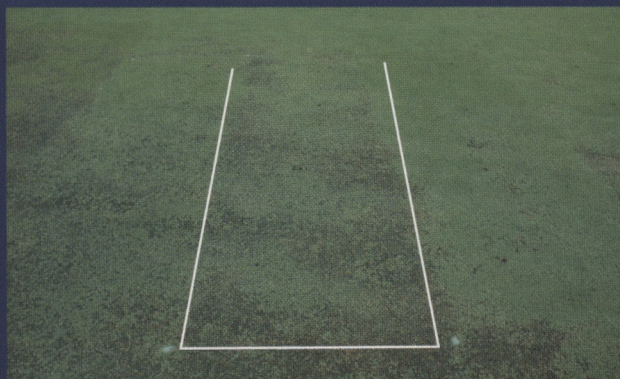


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