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HE DOES WHAT?

Scott Rohlfen and the zaniness of maintaining five different courses. Plus, our nomadic managing editor celebrates the people behind 9-holers

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ON THE COVER:

A rare sight: Iowa superintendent Scott Rohlfsen pauses for a moment.
Photo by Jacob Spiekermeier

VOL. 34 NO. 9

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PRESENTED BY **BAYER**

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\$75 TO SPARE

I attended a golf tournament funded by the Public Investment Fund of Saudi Arabia staged at a golf course owned by the Trump family.

Label me. Judge me. Dismiss me. Praise me. Stop reading. It doesn't matter. I slept fine the night of Friday, July 29.

I happened to be in New Jersey gathering content at the same time as the LIV Golf Invitational at Trump National Golf Club Bedminster. I follow golf, study golf history and work in the industry. The launch of LIV Golf represents the biggest golf story since the emergence of Tiger Woods in the 1990s. I don't have children and my wife never frets when I extend a work trip. I had \$75 to spare — yes, I paid full price for a ticket — and had a prearranged visit at one of Trump National Bedminster's golf neighbors earlier that morning. I would have regretted being so close and not attending the tournament.

I planned on attending the tournament solely for observational purposes. I then needed material for this column!

Because I attended the event as a spectator, I opted against bothering Trump National Bedminster director of grounds **Rob Wagner** and his team. I walked the rolling property surrounded by New Jersey farmland admiring how Wagner's crew presented championship conditions on short notice for a global event in the middle of a cruel summer. I also felt a bit dispirited knowing that Trump National Bedminster lost the 2022 PGA Championship — a career-defining event for somebody in the industry — for non-golf reasons. The decision likely cost a region battered by the COVID-19 pandemic more than \$100 million in economic impact. The hotel where I spent five nights and the diners where I ate are among the hundreds of businesses affected by moving a major championship.

Unlike smarter content creators, I'm not qualified to interpret the relationship between geopolitical affairs and golf. Learning the people and places of this industry represents a 24-7-365 pursuit. I don't have the time or intelligence to understand the desires and motivations of the nearly 200 countries on this planet. I can only describe what my eyes saw while walking around Bedminster on a 90-degree afternoon.

I parked in a field across a two-lane road from the course. I boarded a shuttle with two dozen fans. I turn 42½ this month. For the first time in 28 years of following golf, I was the oldest person in a shuttle headed for a course. The shuttle deposited us at the entrance. I heard high-energy music. A friendly worker scanned my digital ticket, and I trampled across a drought-stressed field to the Fan Village. I heard more music, and saw putting contests, dancers, bars, food trucks and a videoboard. I noticed hundreds of young men carrying booze and wearing untucked golf shirts. Many of them were accompanied by young women.

Trump National Bedminster covers more than 600 acres and the walk from the Fan Village to the practice green took 10 minutes. Seeing major champions such as **Sergio Garcia**, **Graeme McDowell** and **Patrick Reed** on golf carts traveling from the range to the practice green proved strange. When 2022 started, I never expected to observe four dozen tour pros scurrying to holes in anticipation of a 1:15 p.m. shotgun start to begin a three-day event with a \$25 million purse. Once play started, it felt like any other non-major tournament, with players methodically grinding out putts and assessing wind and yardages with their now-highly paid caddies. The tournament sounded different, because speakers pumped music through the grounds.

The rise of LIV Golf resembles what the game has experienced over the past two years. New ways to consume and engage with golf and lifestyle changes stemming from the pandemic are bringing new people and investors into the business. Besides the handful of turf teams that will be hosting these tournaments, LIV Golf will have little impact on the people who provide playing conditions despite all the noise it has produced.

It's one more option for people with \$75 and free time. Those options tend to make astute owners and operators in the same space better. **GCI**



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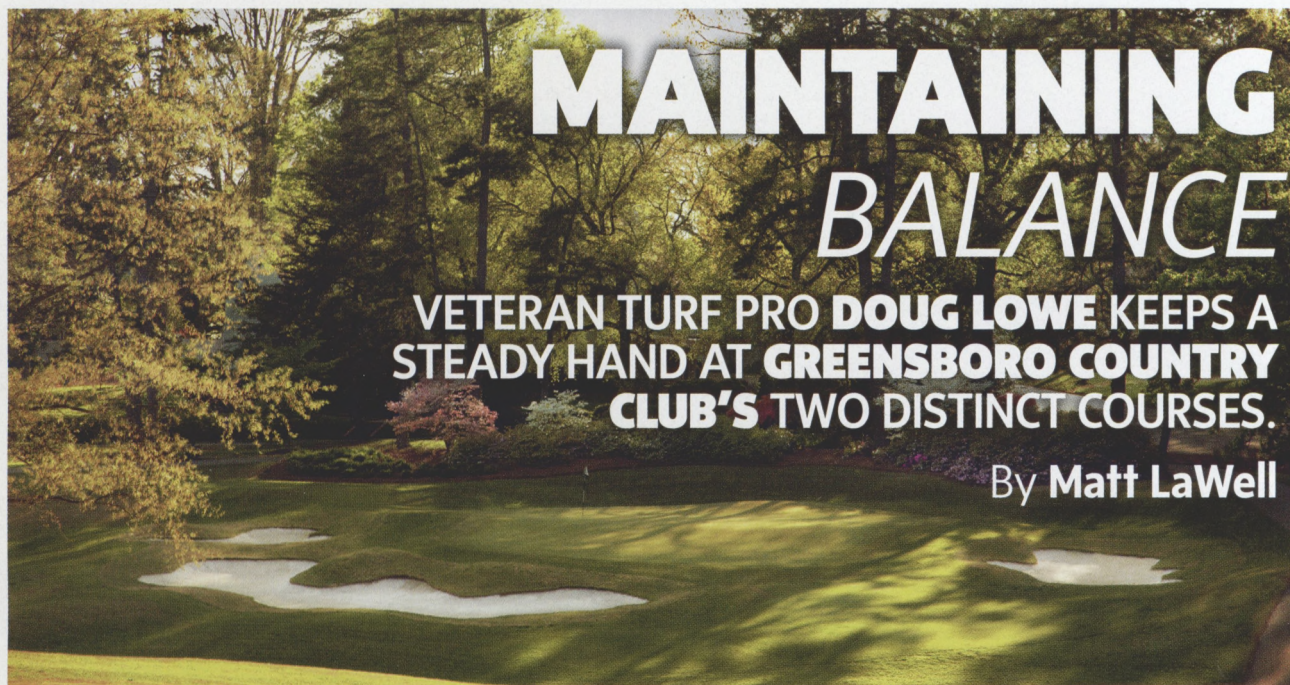
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MAINTAINING BALANCE

VETERAN TURF PRO **DOUG LOWE** KEEPS A STEADY HAND AT **GREENSBORO COUNTRY CLUB'S** TWO DISTINCT COURSES.

By **Matt LaWell**

When you spend more than two decades maintaining the same grounds, the real highlights and challenges tend to shuffle toward the middle. You remember only the greatest and the worst days.

After 22 years at Greensboro Country Club, which features a pair of courses on separate central North Carolina sites, Doug Lowe is quick to recall not his most enormous success but his most trying days. "There was one major accomplishment," Lowe says about the 2008-09 Donald Steel renovation of the Ellis Maples-designed Farm Course, about 10 miles northwest of downtown Greensboro. "It was basically like doing a new golf course, all new irrigation, drainage, cart paths, greens, all new features, regressed the entire property. I don't remember taking very many days off that year. I just lost a year of my life, but it was well worth it. That was a nice accomplishment." But Lowe talks longer about what happened on that course almost a decade later, during the worst winter weath-

er of his career.

"We had a period of about 10 days where it never got much above freezing, and it got down into single digits," he says. The Farm Course greens had been swapped earlier that year from bentgrass to ultradwarf Bermudagrass and were still fragile. Lowe covered them, but those covers didn't prove effective. Who knows how more mature greens would have reacted, he says, but this was close to disaster. New greens, withering. Every one of them needed to be resprigged. "We had one green that we were having problems with, and we pine strawed and covered it, and that green was absolutely perfect come spring. We've learned that once we approach single digits, pine straw doesn't make it bulletproof but it's definitely an added layer of insurance."

Lowe knows the courses about as well as anybody, and not just because he has tended to them for so long as director of golf and grounds maintenance. He grew up in High Point, about 20 miles southwest of both courses, and played The Farm Course throughout his high school career. Landing tee times at

the downtown Irving Park Course, a 1909 Donald Ross design, was a little more difficult.

He has been teaching some of the finer details to new superintendents Kyle Gentry, who was a second assistant for five years before heading to assistant superintendent positions at Caves Valley Golf Club outside Washington, D.C., and Pinehurst No. 2, and Martin McMillan, who moved from Salem Glen Country Club in Winston-Salem. Both started within the last year, following longtime superintendents Brooks Turner, now at Starmount Forest Country Club in Greensboro, and Wes Proctor, now with Davey Tree. Turner and Proctor had both worked at the club for more than 20 years and "just were phenomenal," Lowe says.

Chemistry and plant protectants are among those finer points, and they tend to be "more of a feel thing," Lowe says. SePRO's Cutless MEC and Legacy plant growth regulators are in regular rotation.

"We'll use Legacy in the spring and in the fall, and then we'll switch to Cutless on the bentgrass in the summer months," he says. "I use Cutless at my Irving Park Course on my bentgrass in the summer

months. It seems to be much safer versus maintaining some type of straightforward program. I don't get the weird growth effects or the yellowing."

At The Farm Course, which has not experienced another stretch as extreme as the 2017-18 winter since those 10 freezing days, Lowe uses both products on Zeon Zoysiagrass. "I don't get the bronzing that I get from straight applications" of other products. "Legacy is a good product for us, and it's a good mix ratio. If we go out with straight Legacy, a lot of times we'll bump up and add straight Cutless MEC to that tank mix depending on what we're looking for. Sometimes, if we have a big tournament, we'll go out with straight Cutless.

"We see a little bit of yellowing. The Zeon Zoysiagrass is already a lime green — it doesn't have that deep dark green that some of the grasses do, it just naturally wants to go a little yellow on you — so we spend a little extra money on the Cutless to basically maintain better aesthetics." And better aesthetics help every day be at least a little more memorable. ■

NOTEBOOK



TRUST IS A PROCESS

Kansas City turf pro Bill Irving treats his team at Wolf Creek with deserved respect.

By Matt LaWell

Bill Irving considers himself the turf pro equivalent of a player's coach. Now in his seventh season as the director of agronomy at Wolf Creek in Olathe, Kansas, about 30 miles southwest of downtown Kansas City, Irving (opposite, top middle) provides his superintendent, assistants, mechanics and dozen or so full-time crew members with as much freedom and respect as possible. Have scrap wood at home that needs to be pitched? Bring it in for the burn pile. Need equipment from the maintenance facility for some yardwork? Take it with you after your shift — “just know,” he says, “that you're responsible for it when it leaves.” Celebrating a wedding or an anniversary? Or a birthday? Perhaps a big one like a quinceañera or a sweet 16? Go ahead and treat it like the big deal that it is.

Treating people like adults — like human beings, with full lives outside their professional work — seems like a simple and straightforward idea. But it remains an idea worth sharing because so many work environments still seem to think of the people they trumpet as their most important resource as unable to think and act for themselves. Culture is key and developing that culture can spark incredible results.

At Wolf Creek, which is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year with a significant clubhouse expansion project, those results include the sort of work environment where superintendent **Sean Berger** (top left) assistants **Clayton Schwarz** (bottom, second from left) **Nick Reedy** (bottom, second from right) and **Austin Banzet** (bottom, middle) and longtime crew members like **Mike McClelland** (top right) **Edwin Car-**

© MATT LAWELL (5)

illo (bottom, far right) and Antonio Calva (bottom, far left) are provided with the freedom and trust that everything the course needs will be accomplished.

“It’s big, whether people want to think it is or not,” says Irving, whose player’s coach ethos extended to renting a mechanical bull for a recent holiday party. “Resources like that are few and far between, and we’re lucky to have them.”

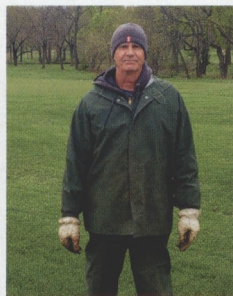
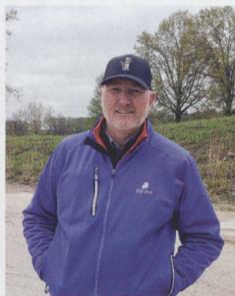
For as fun as Irving can be, Wolf Creek can feel like a serious place. Tom Watson lives just minutes away and considers it to be his home course, and Irving estimates that more than half of the 260 members carry single-digit handicaps. Irving weighs every potential shot whenever walking or driving the course before ever-so-slightly altering it. He removed hundreds of trees over six years in an effort to open the corridors between holes. He purchased 150 ball pit balls to better determine how wind was blowing in certain areas, then presented his findings to the board.

“It’s interesting to see the evolution through the years — projects here, projects there — but for the longest time, they didn’t do much,” he says. “In our region, from St. Louis to Kansas City on down, if you got asked to play Wolf Creek, it was a treat. You were out in the middle of nowhere, widely regarded as the best greens in the region. A lot of that was because of Dr. Marvin Ferguson” — a soil scientist who designed course in the late 1960s and early ’70s and carried encyclopedic knowledge of turf.

On an overcast Monday morning earlier this year, a quintet of crew members was hours into hunching over that same turf, fitting sod cut from the 12-acre Meyer zoysiagrass farm on site. This is one of so many jobs this day, this week, this month, this season that Irving trusts them to do, do well, and do on time. He doesn’t micro-manage because he doesn’t need to.

The player’s coach trusts his incredibly talented team.

Matt LaWell is Golf Course Industry’s managing editor.



Tartan Talks 74

Don Knott started playing golf as a master’s student studying building architecture at the University of California, Berkeley in the early 1970s.



▲ Knott

He never designed a building. Instead, he has spent nearly five decades helping design and renovate golf courses.

Two-thirds of Knott’s golf architecture projects have come overseas. It’s unlikely he would have seen places such as Japan and Australia had he stuck with designing buildings. His career path changed when he joined **Robert Trent Jones II’s** budding golf course architecture firm in 1973. He prolonged his career by forming a partnership with **Gary Linn** in 1999. That partnership still exists in 2022, with Knott joking on the Tartan Talks podcast that the pair considers themselves “semi-retired,” although they are currently building a short course in Idaho and remain involved in several overseas efforts.

“I’d love to do more fun, playable courses for the average player,” Knott says. “The golf world ought to go to shorter courses, more playable courses and courses that save money.”

To hear more of Knott’s candid thoughts and observations — and stories from his long-distance journeys — download the podcast on the Superintendent Radio Network page of any popular podcast distribution platform.



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as a standalone company, contingent on the successful close of Cinven's acquisition of the business from Bayer.

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"As a trusted industry leader, we know that ensuring continued customer success requires strong partnerships and a renewed perspective," says Gilles Galliou, president of the Environmental Science Professional business at Bayer and future CEO of the new standalone company. "That's why Envu will be dedicated to bringing customers innovative solutions to help them push their business forward and tackle the toughest challenges our environments face today."



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For the seventh consecutive year, we are opening our December issue to let you think out loud and share your story — whatever you and your team might have accomplished this year, whatever lessons you want to share, whatever *anything* you want to share — in Turfheads Take Over. Any industry topic that you think is relevant and important is fair. Topics covered in 2021 included:

- The financial realities facing those who want to build a career in the industry
- Boosting assistant superintendent engagement



"With GreenActivator, I've noticed much lusher fairways. **For me, it was like mowing on a cloud because the grass was standing up.** The grass is thicker, but not higher, so the ball sits up better for golfers and improves playability. I get positive comments from golfers constantly."



Scott Rohlfen

Jesup Golf & Country Club
Jesup, Iowa

- A superintendent's relationship with architects
- The importance of first impressions
- Building a community
- Customer service
- Recruiting
- The ridiculous adventure of buying a golf course
- How to know when to retire

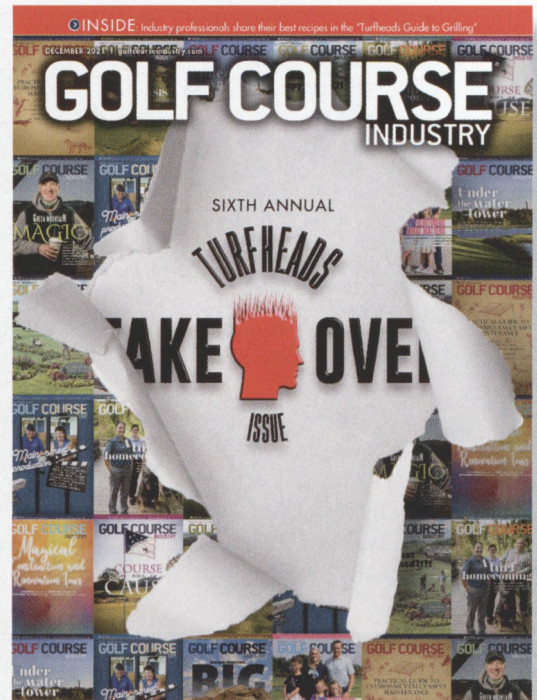
And you don't need to be a superintendent or assistant superintendent to contribute. Over the last six years, architects, designers, teachers, students, researchers, consultants, sports field managers, and manufacturer and distributor representatives have all landed bylines in the issue.

There is no word limit but all submissions should be at least 600 words and include accompanying photos or images, and be sent to editor-in-chief **Guy Cipriano** (gcipriano@gie.net) or managing editor **Matt LaWell** (mlawell@gie).

net). If you need any help writing or editing, feel free to call or send an email. We're happy to help you through the process.

Turfheads Take Over VII will also include the second annual Turfheads Guide to Grilling, a printed insert sponsored again by AQUA-AID Solutions and packed with recipes submitted by *Golf Course Industry* readers and followers. Those that wind up in the cookbook will earn their grillers impressive #TurfheadsGrilling swag and an opportunity for a 2023 team cookbook.

The deadline for submissions is Friday, Nov. 4. Keep writing. **GCI**



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Kristen Liebsch

PHILADELPHIA ASSOCIATION OF GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENTS

Kristen Liebsch has a unique perspective on the turf industry. She has served as the executive director of the Philadelphia Association of Golf Course Superintendents since January 2001.

And she is married to a superintendent. Her husband, **Joe**, tends to the turf at Northampton Valley Country Club in suburban Philadelphia. The couple has been married for 27 years.

Appearing on the Wonderful Women of Golf podcast with **Rick Woelfel**, Liebsch reflected on how her role evolved as the profession of golf course superintendent did the same. At first, her position was essentially secretarial in nature.

“It was sending out mailings and tracking the database and sending out notices through the newsletter,” she says. “As time went on and superintendents became busier, families became more demanding . . . dual incomes . . . and it became the standard for the (PAGCS) board members and the superintendents and members of the association as a whole to do the tasks that were required. It became more of an executive director’s position.”

Liebsch notes that superintendents are spending increasing amounts of time on administrative responsibilities. Some have administrative assistants but many handle those tasks themselves. “I see my husband doing some of that work at home and some of that work during what should be off time,” she says. “And I’m sure that’s true of most superintendents.”

One of Liebsch’s passions is the First Green program, which made its debut in the Philadelphia area midway through the last decade. PAGCS members hosted two First Green programs last fall. Liebsch is quick to note that the support of First Tee, the Philadelphia Section PGA and the Golf Association of Philadelphia have been instrumental to the success of the program, which she and others believe is instrumental to the success of the not just the turf industry but the golf industry as a whole. “It’s going to take all of us being collaborative to make sure this industry has the labor that it needs, not just on golf courses and in the maintenance department,” she says.

Liebsch is particularly impressed by how parents and educators react to the First Green efforts to educate their children and students about the career options available in turf.

“It’s the parents and the chaperones and the teachers who have no clue that (turf) is even an option, and they’re as blown away as the kids are,” she says. “We need to build these relationships. I think we’re going to get a lot further along in the future of the sources of labor.”

Liebsch adds it’s important to compensate assistants properly if the industry is to maintain an adequately sized labor pool. “You cannot bring in a quality assistant superintendent on some of these salaries that are being floated out there,” she says. “That’s an advocacy (issue) we all need to work on. If your biggest asset is your golf course, you’ve got to put the money into it.”

As someone married to a superintendent, Liebsch is keenly aware of the demands that come with the job. She says it’s essential for a superintendent to have a quality team around them so they can prosper professionally and personally.

“The head superintendent or head of grounds is also a mentor and puts a lot of faith, trust and effort into training their staff,” she says. “And that has great rewards for many facilities and builds the future of the industry. If you don’t enable your staff, you’re stuck.”

That quality team often includes a spouse who understands the demands of the profession but is willing to let their partner know when they are pushing themselves beyond what is reasonable.

“Most spouses hopefully know what they’re getting into from the get-go and realize the demands, but also have the strength to put their foot down and say, ‘Enough is enough,’” Liebsch says. “If you don’t have a quality network around you, I think that hurts.” **GCI**

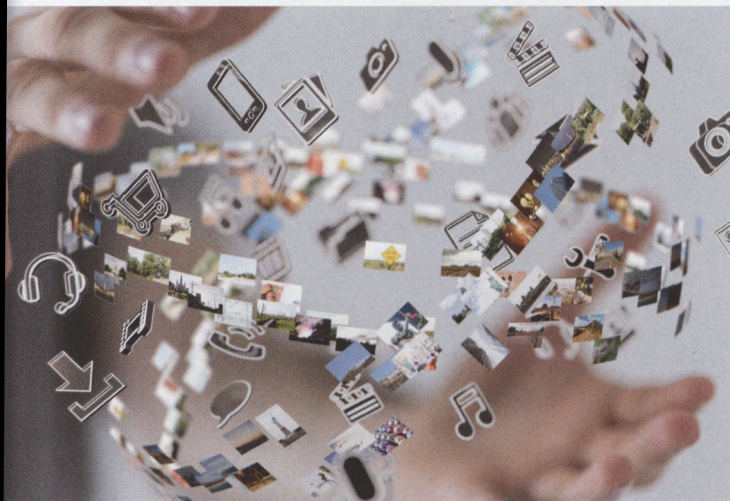


The head superintendent or head of grounds is also a mentor and puts a lot of faith, trust and effort into training their staff. And that has great rewards for many facilities and builds the future of the industry. If you don’t enable your staff, you’re stuck.”



SUPERINTENDENT
R·A·D·I·O N·E·T·W·O·R·K





COMMUNICATION IS A SCIENCE

Among the many subjects superintendents focus on in their preparation for nurturing and maintaining the agronomic health of a golf course, communications is probably not a top priority. One reason is that superintendents are not by nature a blabby bunch; many would prefer to let the results of their efforts speak on their behalf.

But when it comes to keeping key stakeholders informed, reticent and retiring are not characteristics you want applied to you. Reserved and tight-lipped superintendents can damage their credibility and undermine trust through no fault of their own. Communications shouldn't get short shrift. And the best way to check all the right communications boxes is to plan. As **Yogi Berra** once observed, "If you don't know where you're going, you'll end up someplace else."

To make sure you don't end up somewhere other than your intended destination, here are three important communication-focused considerations.

1. WHO ARE YOUR PRIMARY AUDIENCES?

Your communications responsibilities start with your crew. Most team members want to do a great job; the best take as much pride in their work as you do. But they need guidance, which starts with clear and consistent communications. Conditions and priorities change and are often largely out of your control. And crew members can become frustrated if it appears that what they thought was the plan is no longer. You keep morale and performance high when you explain exactly how their work is affected and reinforce your appreciation for their contributions. Beyond your team members, your communications need to acknowledge other functional areas at your club or

course. These teammates can be your first line of support if you keep them informed, and explain problems and how you are dealing with them.

Owners, managers and board members want to know that you have complete command of the course and its condition. This is the facility's primary asset and any change in its quality — real or perceived — has a significant effect on the business. Stay ahead of their questions and uninformed conclusions with proactive communications that lower the temperature while helping them manage expenses and projections.

Your customers are a third key audience segment. They want to know three things that relate to you and your job: What changes are planned for the course? What quality of course conditions should we expect on a regular basis? How do you plan to deal with challenges such as flooding and ground-under-repair and projects such as aerification and irrigation repairs?

2. WHAT DO YOU NEED TO COMMUNICATE TO EACH AUDIENCE SEGMENT?

The most important message a superintendent can send and continuously support is "I've got this." Communicate your timeline, tasks and methods well ahead of the season and provide updates throughout the season. Your strategy with each group of stakeholders should be to anticipate their questions and concerns and to stay on offense through ongoing communications. Relying on communications tactics to play defense on contentious topics is not a

comfortable position.

Club leaders want a superintendent who is proactive, accurate and unflappable. Use a variety of media and techniques — email, websites, focus groups, field days — to communicate that you are the right person for the job.

3. HOW DO YOU IMPROVE COMMUNICATIONS?

Developing your communications plan is done in the relative calm of the off-season and relies on the following points of focus:

- Identify your audience segments: crew, facility managers, ownership/board/management.
- Identify and prepare primary and secondary messages for each audience segment.
- Determine the method of communications and the frequency with which each audience will be reached.
- Seek out those who can help develop, design and distribute content that is the backbone of your communications plan, if these areas are not personal strongpoints. Remember that a key part of how your communications are received is based on the professionalism of its execution.

Finally, think of your plan as existing in wet cement that never fully dries. Monitor its effectiveness by asking stakeholders how a specific message was received: Did it answer your questions? How could it have been more valuable to you? Then make mid-course corrections and revisions. Remember, a revised plan is better than no plan. **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.

COVER STORY

Scott Rohlfen is the superintendent at five separate 9-hole courses in Iowa.



FIVE COURSES. ONE MAN.

SUPERINTENDENT SCOTT ROHLFSEN MANAGES THE TURF (AND MORE) AT FIVE DISTINCT 9-HOLERS IN IOWA. HOW IN THE WORLD DOES HE DO IT?

By **Matt LaWell**

S **COTT ROHLFSEN** arrived at Willow Run Country Club in Denver, Iowa, two minutes ago and is already heading toward a golf cart to go out on the course and cut cups when his cell phone rings.

His cell phone rings a lot.

“Hey, man, what’s up?” he asks. “Uh-oh,” he says. “Where you at? What hole are you on?” His face scrunches. “OK, get it off the green. I’m in the shop, I’ll be right over.”

Rohlfesen hops in the same cart he was going to drive to the first hole and heads in the opposite direction. “The greens mower says he thinks the mower is leaking oil,” he says. “All I can do is hope it’s not.” Without stopping, Rohlfesen explains the situation. “He’s a high-school kid. Usually starts at 5:30, but he had weightlifting today. He probably started at 7:30. Good thing I’m here.” He laughs an enormous laugh, because what else do you do when oil is probably leaking on a green at 8:32 in the morning?

In less than a minute, Rohlfesen pulls up next to the green. Morning dew still covers the turf. The oil leak will be more visible later this morning and afternoon, eight parallel passes of a light gold-brown. It’s still difficult to see them now, but **Jordan**, the teenage mower, spotted them. So does Rohlfesen.

“Oh, good call, man,” he says, hopping out of the cart and walking over to the first streak. “Way to notice that. How did you notice that? You can see that tiny, little trail. Thanks for noticing that. The old guys never notice that, they just keep mowing.” Again, without stopping, Rohlfesen jumps ahead to the next step. “Why don’t you drive that back up to the shop?”

Back in the maintenance facility, Rohlfesen troubleshoots his way through the problem, first thinking about borrowing a hose from another mower before grabbing a wrench and working on prying the leaking hose off himself. “It doesn’t want to budge,” he says. Thinking. Got it. He hops in his Nissan Sentra — more on that later — and drives three quarters of a mile west down Main Street to Davis Farm & Auto. Trusted friends. Great mechanics.

“Imagine if I had been in Jesup right now and I get that call,” Rohlfesen says behind the wheel. “Be like, ‘OK, I’ll be there in an hour.’”

Thirteen minutes after Jordan called him, Rohlfesen drops off the hose with **Byron Davis**, exchang-

ing hellos and catching up on the last round of mechanical challenges. “This is where a lot of our problems get solved,” he says. Thirteen minutes after that, Davis hands him the hose, good to go.

The details of this morning are not normal for Rohlfesen, but the pace is. Rohlfesen is the superintendent at five different 9-hole Iowa golf courses — Maple Hills Country Club in Tripoli, where he started his workday before 5:30, Willow Run in Denver, Jesup Golf & Country Club in Jesup, Vinton Country Club in Vinton, and Dysart Golf Club in Dysart. All five are just east of Cedar Falls — where Rohlfesen lives with his wife, **Sarah**, and helps her run a coffee shop, Sarah’s Espresso Cafe — and four of the five are within 60 miles of one another along Interstate 380.

All five courses opened during the 1960s, when Iowa provided funding for cities to turn farmland into golf courses and all are owned by members and run by boards. None of the five shares any equipment or crew.

None is joined to another by any bond other than their home state and their superintendent.

NO STATE IS home to more 9-hole golf courses than Iowa, which boasts 246, according to the National Golf Foundation — one for every 12,969 residents. How did one man wind up tending to five of them?

“I grew up around the golf course,” Rohlfesen says about his

NUMBERS TO KNOW

14,033

Golf facilities in the United States

3,676

9-hole facilities in the United States

\$21

Average green fee of a public 9-hole course

1974

Last year there were more 9-holers than 18-hole courses in the United States

246

9-hole facilities in Iowa

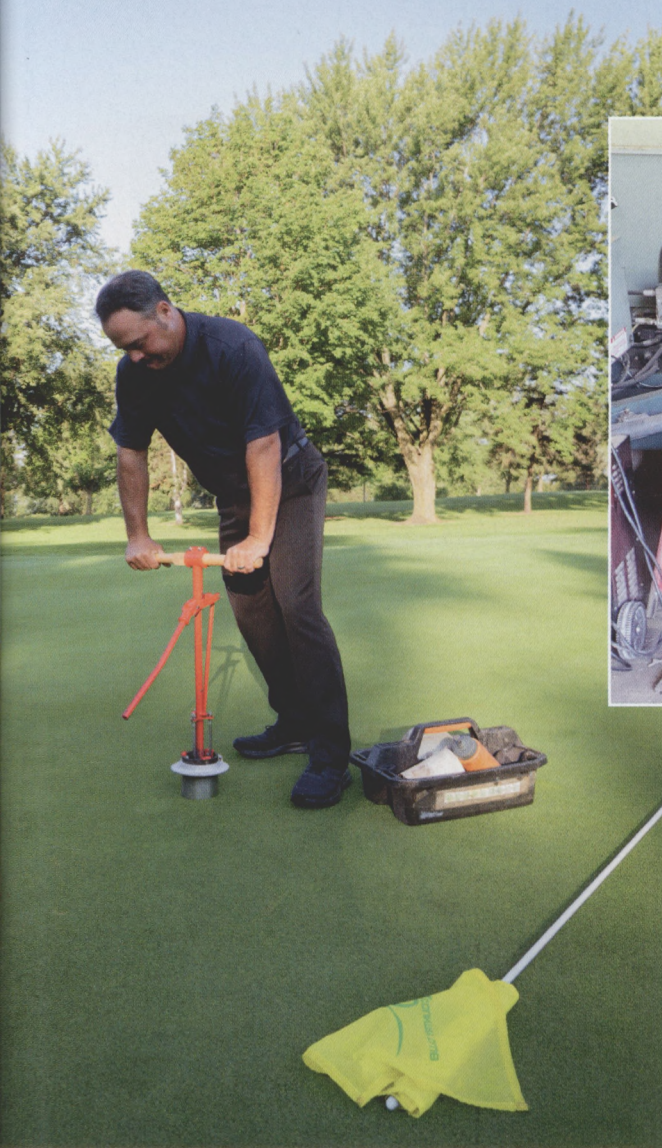
132

18-hole or more facilities in Iowa

7

States that still have more 9s than 18s (Alaska, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota)
Source: National Golf Foundation





literally Rockwellian childhood at Linn Grove Country Club in Rockwell, about 100 miles north of Des Moines. “I was out there every day. My uncle’s friend was the superintendent and my uncle was his assistant. They did everything.” Rohlfsen played “all day long” and, like so many turf pros, eventually gravitated more toward maintenance. His first responsibility was emptying trash, then cutting cups.

After high school, “I didn’t know what I wanted to do other than I wanted to do something with plants,” he says. “My mom, **Renee**, wanted me to go into TV broadcasting. I was like, no. My dad somehow found out about turf management — I didn’t even know that was a thing — so

that’s not possible.”

“And here we are! My goal ever since then was to run more than that.”

Leave it to parents who know next to nothing about one industry to inadvertently provide perfect advice. Rohlfsen’s dad, **Bill**, has been an entrepreneur all his working life, so juggling three, four, five, maybe even six projects isn’t unusual. Despite his initial ignorance about the turf industry, he has even developed products that were once used on golf courses.

After studying turfgrass and golf course management at Kirkwood Community College in Cedar Rapids, Rohlfsen, still just 21 years old, landed his first superintendent position

I decided to go that direction. He somewhat jokingly said, ‘There you go, you could take over all these little 9-hole golf courses. You could run three of them.’ I still remember him scribbling that down. ‘Dad,

at CARD Inc. Golf and Country Club in Clarksville. “I turned that golf course into a masterpiece,” he says with a laugh. “I figured it all out on my own. If I broke down, I was normally the only one there. The first couple years I was there, the irrigation didn’t start on its own, so I had to be out there at night to turn it on.”

Rohlfsen added Maple Hills to his responsibilities in 2007, then, when two courses proved to be not too much more challenging than one, worked as a consultant for Willow Run in 2008. Red Carpet Golf Course in Waterloo followed in 2012, then River Ridge Golf Course in Independence, Jesup, and Hickory Grove Golf Course in Oelwein all followed in 2014, Willow Run in 2016, Vinton in 2017 (and, after leaving in 2018, a return in 2021), and Dysart this year.

It sounds overwhelming. But Rohlfsen has it down to a science. Smartphones, simplicity, size and a Sentra are key.

“When I started out, I had a cellphone but not everybody had a cellphone,” Rohlfsen says. “So I’d call a clubhouse and leave a message, or ask, ‘What hole’s he on? Do you see him out there?’” His processes have evolved. He used

▲ Cutting cups and fixing equipment are all part of a hectic day’s work for Scott Rohlfsen.



to chart hours on Sunday nights for every crew member at every course — the current count is 29, all of them employed by the various courses and almost none of them full-timers, with Rohlfesen preferring they work only mornings with the rest of the day for themselves. Now he keeps everything in his head and texts each crew member Sunday night with a call Monday morning. Smartphones, he says, changed everything.

He also tends to keep crew mem-

bers on one job, maybe two, rather than jumping from one to the next day to day, and he tends to be particular, if not exacting. “I used to flip it up all the time,” he says. “Someone else would do this, someone else would do that — but it’s easier for people to just get really good at something. ... I have very, very specific ways I want things done, and to be honest with you, I don’t like to hire people who worked at other golf courses or are already working at the golf course when I take over, because

they usually have habits I don’t like.” There are exceptions, but Rohlfesen still pursues uniformity.

The size of each course also plays into Rohlfesen’s system. The differences between 9- and 18-hole courses, he says, are enormous.

“I’ve worked at two different 18-hole courses and just to try to get everything done ...” He trails off in a rare moment of quiet. “If I wasn’t with you, I could cut cups in 20 minutes, easy. At an 18-hole golf course, it would take me two, three hours.”

SCOTT’S TROTS

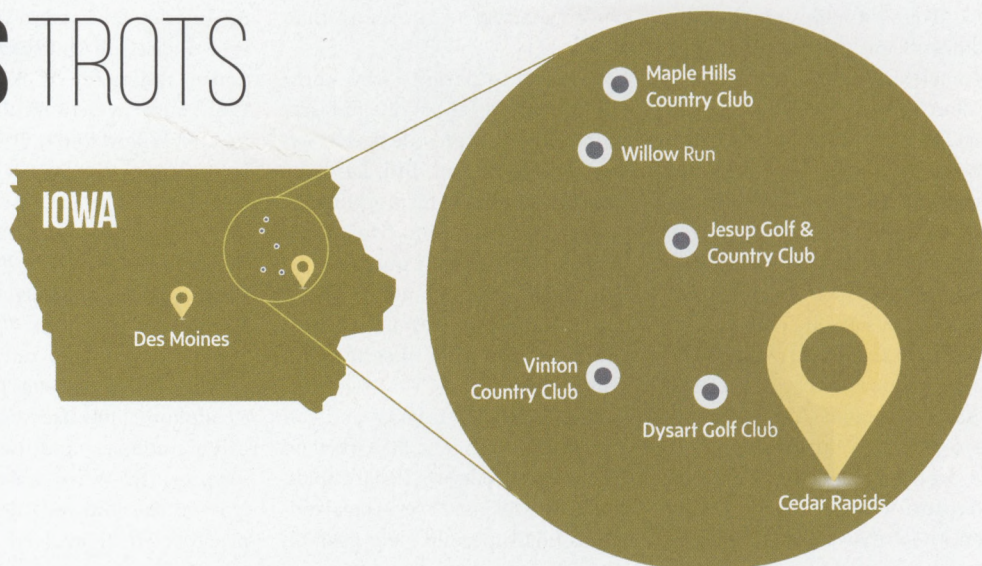
Maple Hills Country Club:
Tripoli (population 1,191)

Willow Run:
Denver (pop. 1,919)

Jesup Golf & Country Club:
Jesup (pop. 2,508)

Vinton Country Club:
Vinton (pop. 4,938)

Dysart Golf Club:
Dysart (pop. 1,281)



44

Everything at 18-hole courses is magnitudes larger. Three of the five courses Rohlfesen currently maintains are exactly 80 acres — half of a quarter section of farmland, a common size for courses developed during the 1960s Hawkeye State golf boom — with the other two about 60 acres. He can drive to any hole in minutes at most. At some courses, he can see the whole property from the maintenance building or the parking lot.

Speaking of parking lots, Rohlfesen steers clear of the golf course superintendent's usual pickup truck for two unusual reasons. First, because each of his five courses operates under separate boards and with its own machinery, he almost never has to cart equipment or products from one stop to the next. Everything he needs is already on site. Second, each of the five courses is about 30 to 40 minutes, give or take, from his Cedar Falls home and the farthest distance between any two is just shy of 60 miles. Stopping at all five in the same day, which he normally does twice a year, totals almost 140 miles. Driving a Nissan Sentra just makes fuel-economy sense.

On the course, Rohlfesen is not a taskmaster, and he tends to be more of a golfer's superintendent — “So many superintendents are so protective of their golf courses,” he says. “No carts! Ropes everywhere! That’s not how you make money. We want to make money. I want it to be a nice golf course, but you can’t baby the shit out of it” — but his top goal is pretty straightforward.

I DON'T EVEN KNOW HOW I'D DO THIS WITHOUT MULTIPLE COURSES. I THINK I'D BE BORED TO TEARS. I ALWAYS SAY, THERE ARE 300 THINGS YOU COULD DO ANY DAY, YOU JUST HAVE TO DO A COUPLE THINGS YOU KNOW NEED TO GET DONE.”



“All I want,” he says, “is for everything to be as perfect as possible at all times.”

ROHLFSEN WAS FIRED one time, but not because he spread himself too thin and neglected the course.

The board changed over and the new members just wanted a fulltime superintendent they could see every day. They later rehired him.

He has never worried about losing a position. He believes in the quality of his work, the quality of his work ethic, and his ability to improve the turf at any golf course. He tends to pick up new skills, too. He is quick to say he loves cutting cups — he cut all 27 at the three courses he visited on a recent Wednesday — but he dives into engines and is the mechanic at all five courses. He is also a state-licensed applicator. He formed an LLC to purchase products at a bulk rate. He even learned to make a variety of fancy coffee drinks alongside Sarah and he used to sing in heavy metal bands.

“I don’t even know how I’d do this without multiple courses,” he says. “I think I’d be bored to tears.

I always say, there are 300 things you could do any day, you just have to do a couple things you know need to get done.”

Even though he is particular about training and can keep the needs of five different courses in his heads, Rohlfesen says he would prefer to keep working as a superintendent rather than develop into a course maintenance management company or system.

And can he maintain any more than

five courses?

“Everyone always asks me, ‘Well, would you do more?’” he says. “Yeah, probably.” **GCI**

Matt LaWell is Golf Course Industry's managing editor.

FULL MEANING

MANAGING EDITOR MATT LAWELL TAKES A MULTI-STATE JOURNEY TO UNDERSTAND THE PEOPLE AND PLACES THAT MAKE 9-HOLERS CRITICAL PARTS OF THE INDUSTRY.

TELLING YOUR STORY

MICHAEL VESSELY REFLECTS ON HIS FIRST DECADE AT CULVER ACADEMIES GOLF COURSE — AND THE FIRST CENTURY, GIVE OR TAKE, FOR THE STORIED TRACK.

The Culver Academies Golf Course is easy enough to find on a map. Drag your finger about 125 miles north of Indianapolis, exactly 100 miles southwest of Chicago, and just shy of 50 miles south of South Bend. Finding it in real life, burrowed deep within a grid of northern Indiana farmland backroads, is another matter — especially when the sun is still climbing and those backroads are still dark. The entrance is easy to miss and easier to pass.

But the destination is well worth the journey, as so many breathless stories and reports about the course have raved ever since **Bobby Weed** restored the almost-100-year-old **William Langford** and **Theodore Moreau** classic. The real reward, though, even more than nine incredible holes, is walking the grounds and talking with superintendent **Michael Vessely**, who has tended to the course for almost eight years and is equal parts caretaker and advocate.

Vessely might share stories about that course restoration, or about the nine decades of play that preceded it, or about how he appreciates course architecture much more now than he did a decade ago. He might discuss the rich history of Culver Military Academy, which has educated business leaders, sports team owners, a few crown princes — and counts a handful of Augusta National members among its alums and friends. Or he might just dive into what makes 9-hole courses special.

“With as busy as everyone is, just life in general, spending four and a half hours on the course is a long time,” he says. “We’ll get faculty who come out here and play four holes at lunchtime or after work, then they’ll bring their kids at night. They go practice for two hours, or go play nine holes, or go play four holes.”

The course is a magnet. The quick play and the legendary layout appeals to students, faculty and alumni, of course, as well as to campus guests — Vessely laments that former secretary of state **Condoleezza Rice** was unable to play during a recent stop — writers, architects and fellow superintendents. Course developer **Mike Keiser** visited a few years ago and needed a fourth. “Grab your bag,” Vessely recalls Keiser telling him. “You know, Mike Keiser tells you you’re going to

play golf, it’s hard to say no.”

Vessely maintains the 70-acre course with crew members **Randy Sellers**, who has worked on it for more than 30 years, and **Justin Binkley**, who recently marked six years. He works without an assistant, a regular internship program or seasonal crew members, though he would love to add any or all between now and the course’s centennial — which, for the record might be celebrated in 2023 (100 years after ground was broken), 2024 (100 years after the course opened) or 2026 (100 years after its dedication).

As far as the turf, “There are still some improvements I’d like to make to the playing surfaces,” Vessely says. “And I’m still not done combing through the archives to find the nooks and crannies and things I’d like to get back to where they originally were. I’m still motivated to make it better. I don’t feel like we’re in the coast-and-just-maintain mode. There are different things I still want to accomplish here, and I want to make it a great place for kids to learn golf.

“That’s what’s motivating me now.”





ALL IN THE FAMILY

HIDDEN WISCONSIN GEM EAGLE SPRINGS HAS NEW OWNERS — BUT THE 129-YEAR-OLD COURSE IS STILL IN FAMILIAR HANDS.

What stories can land itself tell us? If we tuck low and cup an ear to the soil, if we really listen, what rich history might bubble up?

At Eagle Springs Golf Resort, the stories start in 1866, when a pair of Irish immigrants named **John** and **Mary Touhy** arrived in Eagle, Wisconsin, by way of Boston. They acquired 600 acres over a quarter of century before the land proved too rocky, and they passed it along to their son **William**. He developed a hotel, cottages and — as family legend goes, with the help of sporting goods magnate **Albert Spalding** — an 18-hole golf course. The resort thrived as long as the farm before did John's daughter **Agnes** died of tuberculosis. Heartbroken, John ordered the hotel to be demolished. Early during the Great Depression, the Touhys sold some of their land and the course halved to nine holes. The resort remained opened but the plot shrank. The golf course, at least, remained.

Today, on the brink of its 130th anniversary, Eagle Springs is still in the family, now operated by **Anne Krug**, part of the sixth generation of Touhys, and her husband, **Matt Krug**. Anne grew up on the grounds, five doors down from her cousin, **Tom Walsh**, who's also back in the fold as the new superintendent and has to be one of the few turf pros in the country with an MBA in data analytics.

"I didn't picture doing this when I was growing up," says Anne, a UPS executive for 12 years before she retired to raise her daughters. Her uncle, **Mike Bolan**, part of the fifth generation, suggested she should take over, telling her, "It's easier than what you were doing." She watched him run the resort in 2020 — an interesting year — learning plenty about the business before taking over last year. Operating from behind a laptop, she normally sets up her office in the pro shop cottage.

Anne played whatever holes she liked —

normally 7, 8, and 9 — but never played a full round until she brought Matt to Eagle Springs in the fall of 2005. "The first time I played," Matt says, "I hit the second green with a tee shot and there was a dead mouse next to my ball with his legs in the air, and Anne said to me, 'You have to putt around it. You can't move it. Play it as it lies.'" He fell in love so much with both Anne and Eagle Springs that he later proposed to her on the course.

"I think this place can be great for the game," says Matt, a psychologist by trade. "You could have four eagle putts, or you could play alongside your 16-year-old and get just as much enjoyment out of it, because it's not super easy. A beginner could go out there and play. I've had really good golfers who can't break the course record.

"I think golf is struggling to find something that fits all demographics and I think, selfishly, we might be able to do that."

They just might, if the lands tell its story.

WRITE YOUR OWN RULES

NOT FAR FROM THE TWIN CITIES, MUNICIPAL SUPERINTENDENT JOHN LINDMAN JUST WANTS TO MAKE GOLF FUN.

Despite the old saying that they are remarkably similar, kindergartners tend to be more unpredictable and more difficult to corral than cats. They do whatever and go wherever they want. They move on their own time. They seem to listen to maybe half of what they are told. Cats are largely similar, but they also have the excuse that they don't speak the language.

All of which makes the trio of YMCA camp counselors working with young golfers on a postcard-perfect Twin Cities Tuesday afternoon so

incredible. Each of them walks half a dozen campers out to the first, second or third tees at municipal Brookland Golf Park in Brooklyn Park, Minnesota, and instructs them about how to play the game — and, more important, how to act on the course. It doesn't matter what club the kids use or where their ball goes. Their joy grows just from being with friends and being outside.

This is all in line with what manager and superintendent **John Lindman** has tried to bring to Brookland over the last 22 years.

When Lindman arrived from nearby Edinburgh Golf Course, Brookland operated as a standard executive par-3, 9-hole course. After the Great Recession hit both rounds and revenue, he expanded his ideas and creativity, renovating layouts, adding tees and cups to the course, and broadening his definition what golf is and could be.

"Nobody says you have to play from the same color the entire round," he says.

Lindman tries out new concepts and events throughout the season, including zombie

golf, where each golfer receives a pink brain ball and each hole is patrolled by a pair of "zombies" who tilt and lurch toward shots over the course of the special round. If a zombie reaches a ball before the player does, the zombie keeps the ball. Whichever group has the most brains at the end of the round wins. The seemingly silly Halloween idea teaches younger and newer golfers about pace of play and aiming shots.

Lindman also wrote new guidelines (*not* rules) and a new philosophy for the course, both posted near the first tee. Among the highlights:

- You can tee your ball up anywhere on course, throw it out of a sand bunker, and play from different tees. Move it from behind a tree.
- Remember the three R's — REPAIR ball marks, REPLACE divots, RAKE the sand bunkers.
- Please be courteous and pleasant to everyone on the course.
- Each hole should take only 9 minutes to play.

That last guideline is more-so just a suggestion to those campers, who wield their clubs like lightsabers and eventually listen to their counselor and walk up the fairway. And nobody minds. Because at Brookland, the most important part of the game is the last bullet point Lindman wrote on the course's philosophy:

"The only thing that matters is that you have a good time."





ON AN ISLAND

THE SMALL TEAM AT MICHIGAN'S IYOPAWA ISLAND GOLF CLUB FOCUSES ON COMMUNITY.

Marty McKitterick was certain he had signed himself up for the biggest mistake of his life.

This was back in the summer of 2008, on the brink of the Great Recession, and McKitterick had recently entered into a five-year lease to operate Iyopawa Island Golf Club, just over the state border in southern Michigan and at the almost-equidistant center of Ann Arbor, Fort Wayne, Kalamazoo, South Bend and Toledo. He was already running a retail golf shop at a nearby mall but the homeowners who own the course persuaded him to double up. Really, how hard could it be?

"And I'm just thinking, What the hell did I do?" McKitterick says now with a decade and a half of hindsight. "It was 15, 16 hours a day, seven days a week. I could do one, but to do both of them right? It was a lot, yeah."

McKitterick survived that first season — and the two after that, when he was the superintendent too — then worked through the Great Recession, turning a profit each of the last 15 seasons. "It's as close as it can get to a well-oiled machine. We've got it running as lean as we can without sacrificing anything."

McKitterick manages the golf course, runs the pro shop and mows greens on the weekends, but he's quick to credit superintendent **Mark Fasick**, who arrived two years ago from nearby Coldwater Golf Course, and crew member **Rollie Arsenaud**, who mows rough,

for everything running so smoothly.

Fasick "knows grass," McKitterick says. "He knows how to grow it, he knows how to take care of it. He and I think so much alike we can go through a half a day and get all the stuff done. It's just so automatic. He's reliable. I told him he has to stay as long as I do." As for Arsenaud, "Just put him on the blue tractor and let him go. He's really good."

The course is at the center of Iyopawa Island, ringed by vacation homes on Coldwater Lake for the last 75 years. The regulars who return weekend after weekend, year after year, provide McKitterick with a good idea of how many rounds to expect most weekdays, weekends and holidays, with about 80 percent of rounds played by homeowners and guests.

Many of those were out on the course last summer not to tee off a round or two but to help clean up after the season's biggest storm pushed in off the lake.

"It rocked us," McKitterick says. "I came in Thursday morning and was like, Oh, my God. We have the island party in two days, a big golf Saturday. A lot of people called up, 'Hey, Marty, I got a tractor,' 'I have this and that.' People just came out and started helping pick up stuff, making piles. It was 5 a.m. till 10 p.m., chainsaws, tractors, and we got it done, we got the course playable. It was pretty humbling. It's a neat place. I wouldn't be in the golf business anywhere else."

HEART OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD

WITHIN SIGHT OF DOWNTOWN ATLANTA FOR MORE THAN A CENTURY, ANSLEY GOLF CLUB PROVIDES A TEMPLATE FOR FILLING UP TEE SHEETS AND PLANNING AHEAD.

There might be no other 9-hole golf course in the world with operating and maintenance budgets as big as Ansley Golf Club's.

This is a technicality, of course. Ansley opened its Midtown Course in 1912 just three miles outside downtown Atlanta — and given the metro area's population growth and various construction booms, it's probably closer to a mile and a half these days — then acquired Settindown Creek Golf Club in Roswell in 1999, adding 18 holes and a second more suburban offering. Still, each course operates with its own maintenance equipment and, outside of a handful of the club's 385 employees, such as general manager **Calvin Bolling** and director of agronomy **Courtney Young**, its own staffs and crews. The Settindown Course handles about 20,000 rounds annually, the Midtown Course about 25,000 — which, because most golfers play twice from different tees, works out to about 50,000 9-hole equivalents.

"We couldn't survive without this," Bolling says about the Midtown Course. "It wouldn't be the same place without it. It has defined us, and Settindown has enhanced us. Which makes it pretty special."

Bolling started his professional career at Ansley back in 1982, when he was still an undergraduate at Georgia State University. He worked at the club for seven years, meeting his future mother-in-law, **Marie Marshall**, early on. Marshall mentored Bolling and took such a liking to him that she told him she would love for him to marry one of her three daughters.

"She just helped guide me as a young professional," Bolling says. "I had never been in clubs, I had never been in business. I was still in college." She taught him how to write business letters, how to dress for various occasions and, yes, how to tie the knot. Bolling eventually married Marshall's



daughter **Carolyn**, who, as a teenager, worked as a lifeguard at Ansley.

These days, Marshall's early lessons still kick in as Bolling, who left Ansley in 1989 and returned in May 2020, is making major decisions like master plans and course management through future renovations.

"We're going to be redoing (Settindown) in the next three or four years," Bolling says. "And when that's the case, then we're looking at possibly doing 9-hole rounds" at the Midtown Course for probably about

five months. With so few tee times available — 26 each day, equally divided between the morning and the afternoon, and filled within five minutes of when they become available on Wednesdays and Sundays — that could provide another challenge. What would reaction be from members?

"We don't know yet," Bolling says. "We were just debating that. We know we've got some time to deal with that."

No matter the decision, the Midtown nine at least will be as perfect as ever.

BISHOP'S LEGACY

NEARLY A DECADE AFTER ITS FAMOUS REVIVAL, SEWANEE IS STILL STUNNING.

During his first 18 months as superintendent of The Course at Sewanee, **Justin Browning** has thrilled at details enormous and miniscule across the nine historic holes, from the breathtaking Columbia Plateau out beyond the third green to seeing holes from the slightest different angle while walking the course during his weekly round. Perhaps his greatest — and most instructional — thrill? Seeing another **Gil Hanse** course on television during what has been a banner year for the architect.

Hanse famously renovated Bishop **Albion W. Knight's** original design in 2013, giving new life to what Browning describes as the course's "really good bones." He also renovated Southern Hills, the site of this year's PGA Championship, in 2019. Watching that course on television, Browning says, "You really get to see the identity of Sewanee and Gil Hanse's handiwork. There's a lot of likeness in all those courses — not just the bunkers but the whole layout — and you kind of see what he's thinking and where everything ties in together. That's been fun this year."

Browning arrived at Sewanee, located on the campus of Sewanee: The University of the South in southern Tennessee, from Clarksville Country Club, about 135 miles northwest. His philosophy has already evolved.

"I find myself being able to focus a lot more on everything,

instead of just getting done what we can get done," he says. "You can treat every hole with the same amount of love in every aspect, the roughs, the natives, the bunkers, which is where we're lacking" — and which might be the focus of an upcoming maintenance project. "The greens are still youthful, and in great shape, and up here in the mountain climate they thrive. So as opposed to me being in the Transition Zone and having to focus my time on bentgrass that doesn't want to live, I can focus a lot of my time on the rest of the golf course and let the greens kind of work for themselves."

Browning normally maintains the course with four full-timers, a mechanic and a student or two during the summer, and he works closely with golf course manager **Matthew Daniels** in the pro shop to promote the course. The course is famous in certain circles, but Browning says he thinks its profile could expand.

"The people that know about it are very golf knowledgeable, they have heard about it through the right grapevines," he says. "And I think that's about to change. I think we're going to get a little bit more involved on some social media outlets. It's a great course, and it's kind of hard to learn about or know about it.

"A lot of people drive up and down this mountain and don't even know it's here."





AHEAD OF HIS TIME

GOLF IS CATCHING UP TO GEORGE VITENSE'S 1950s VISION OF WHAT THE GAME CAN PROVIDE.

The best dreamers, the ones whose visions meet reality and thrive when they get there, tend to be thought of as at least a little out there if not totally bonkers. By all accounts, **George Vitense** was far more measured, but his friends still described his biggest idea as a pipe dream.

Vitense, a longtime PGA professional and the onetime owner of Nakoma Golf Club in Madison, Wisconsin, veered away from the country-club life in 1955 to open Vitense Golfland — at the time, two miniature golf courses, a double range and a lighted 9-hole, par-3 golf course, regularly open until midnight to accommodate first- and second-shift factory workers — a little more than five miles outside the center of the state capital. Miniature golf was experiencing a revival at the time — **Don Clayton** launched his first trademarked Putt-Putt course a year earlier in Fayetteville, North Carolina, and the Professional Putters Association followed by the end of the decade — but Vitense wanted far more than just putting. And he was ahead of his time.

Walk around Vitense Golfland on a sunny summer Monday and the whole grounds are packed. All three miniature golf courses — an indoor option opened in 2006 — teem with teens and families. Both ranges are full. So is the par-3 course, which is still, almost 70 years later, the only lighted course in the state. Vitense's daughters, **Yvonne**, **Georgene** and **Vicki**, operated the family business after George passed away in 1988, and Georgene's son **Joel Weitz** purchased the property in 2001. Over the years, they added indoor golf simulators, Toptracer technology and footgolf, along with a variety of other family fun center options.

The bevy of golf is not dissimilar from what many public courses and private clubs offer today. Who cares what brings people to the sport as long as they have a club in their hand — even if it is a brightly colored rubber putter — and a smile on their face? Vitense knew decades ago that today's golfers, miniature in both size and course persuasion, might grow up into regular range users and 9-hole players. The rest of the industry is finally catching up.



SPREAD THE LOVE

A ROUND OF FOOTGOLF AT DISNEY'S OAK TRAIL SHOWS MATT LAWELL THAT THE GAME CAN BE BETTER WITH FAMILY.

Road trips are both exhausting and renewing. My Summer 9s trek to 18 golf courses — all of them 9-holers — across 12 states in 11 days was no different. By the end, my body both ached and thrived. My mind was both jammed and clear. My visits included a trio of esteemed 9s, ranked in so many top 50s, a variety of municipals and mom-and-pops, and far more publics than privates, all of them filled with great people on the course and in the maintenance facility.

My favorite stop, though, was the one where I never picked up a club.

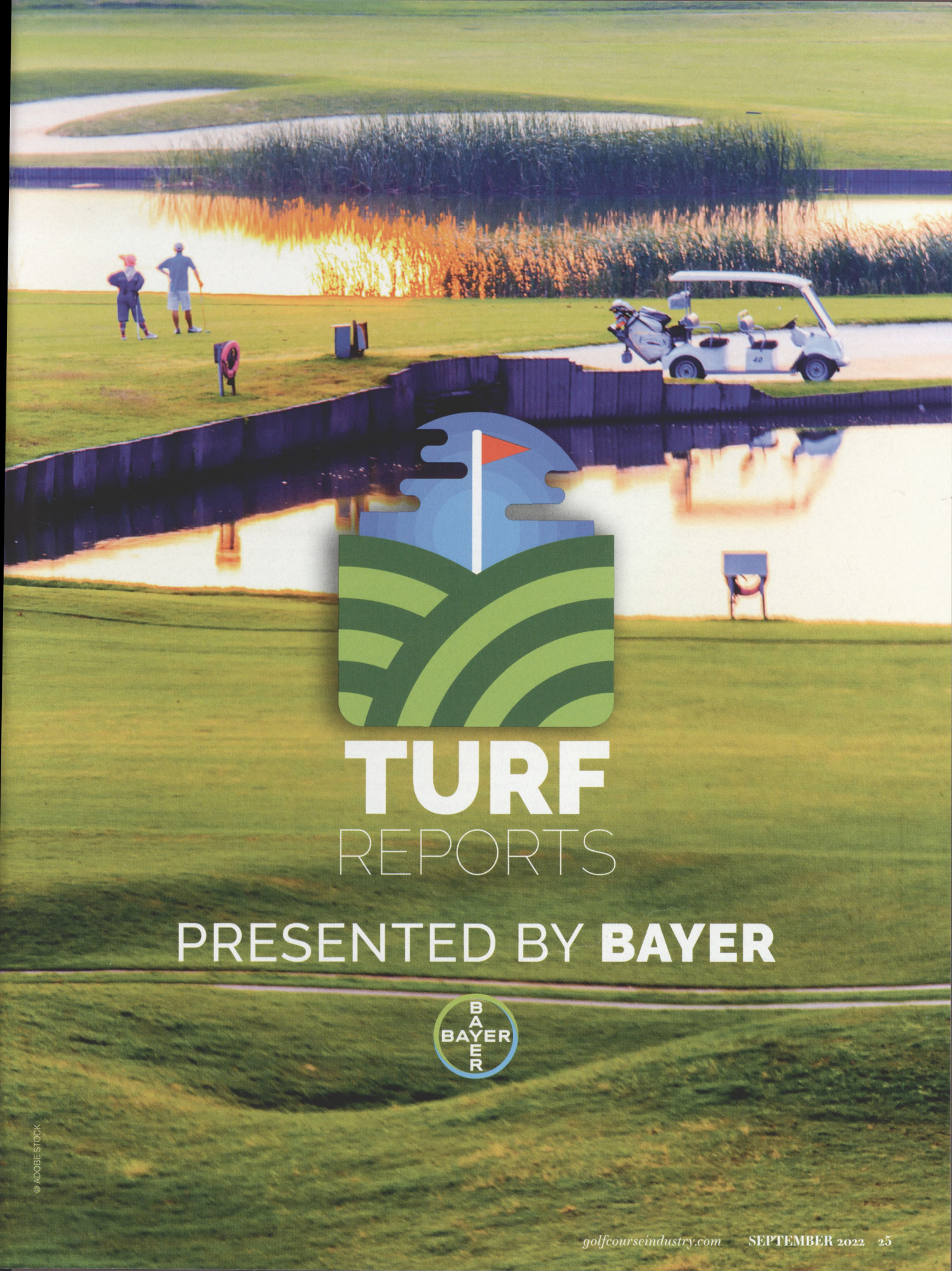
Ten days in, my then-5-year-old daughter, **Margot**, joined my parents, **Cheryl** and **Mike**, my wife, **Carolyn**, and me for her first round of footgolf at Disney's Oak Trail Golf Course. The course features the familiar rainbow umbrella of **Arnold Palmer** Golf Management, which operates it for the Mouse, and is Audubon International-certified as a Cooperative Wildlife Sanctuary. Golf carts surround the pro shop but run only on other Disney courses; Oak Trail is a trail in more than name and allows only walkers.

The course was just the third Margot had visited and all have been gems. Her second was Firestone Country Club when **Larry Napora** and his team had the South Course humming for the 2021 Bridgestone Senior Players Championship. Her first was an enclave so perfect and exclusive I am legally barred from writing about it. But only her third featured Mickey, Minnie, Donald, Daisy, Goofy and friends.

And only her third allowed her to kick a soccer ball up the fairway.

Who knows what athletic pursuits my first grader will dive into over the years? I would love for her to pick up a club, build her bag and fall in love with a game she can play all her life. For one overcast afternoon, though, just watching her chase an orange ball into oversized holes — more dribbling the ball than ever letting it stop and taking distinct kicks, and often shouting back that she had recorded "14!" or "12!" — was plenty.

Like so many of the greatest things in life, golf is a game that can be enjoyed with family and friends. For those of us who are the only members of our family who play the game, footgolf is a perfect entry to draw the rest of our brood out onto the course. **GCI**



TURF

REPORTS

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TURF REPORTS PRESENTED BY BAYER

The Environmental Science business of Bayer is proud to sponsor the following report on managing white grubs and annual bluegrass weevil (ABW) as well as tracking the use of GPS technology.

The golf industry continues to struggle with ABW as it spreads west and south from the Northeast United States into areas previously undetected. The longer ABW resides in a particular area, the chances increase for both insecticide resistance and multiple overlapping generations, making control more difficult. Control of ABW revolves around season-long multi-pronged programs with multiple insecticide applications targeting primarily overwintering adults and 1st generation larvae as well as later generation larvae. Rotating insecticide modes of action is critical to limit the chance of resistance development in ABW populations at your course.

Though white grubs traditionally have been more problematic in the eastern half of the country, turf managers throughout the U.S. are now accounting for these insect pests. Unlike ABW, insecticide resistance has not been documented in white grubs and likely will not occur since they have only one generation per year. However, we are seeing population shifts in white grub species. Where Japanese beetles and northern or southern masked chafers were the most predominant species, we are now seeing more oriental beetles, Asiatic garden beetles and May/June beetles. The white grubs themselves rarely cause significant damage; it's actually the raccoons, skunks, feral hogs, and other vertebrates foraging for the larvae that cause the most problems. Controlling larvae in late summer with long-lasting soil insecticides should minimize the damage from the foraging animals.

Earlier this summer, Bayer officially launched Tetrino™ – an exciting new tool in the fight against ABW and white grubs. Featuring the active ingredient tetraniliprole, Tetrino is a new diamide insecticide that joins the ranks of other Bayer favorites like Merit and Dylox. This new active ingredient is taken up quickly into the turf plant providing knockdown within days of application. It offers unrivaled control of white grub and ABW larvae, as well as billbugs, black turfgrass *Ataenius*, and caterpillars like armyworm and cutworm. As is the case with all insecticides targeting soil larvae, optimum application timing of Tetrino is when adults are present in order to control the larvae appearing shortly thereafter. Tetrino offers tremendous flexibility to the superintendent with two rates and up to four applications per year depending on your geography and pest pressure. You can learn more about this game-changing new technology at es.bayer.us/tetrino.

Again, Bayer is honored to support the following ABW and white grub report based on a survey administered by *Golf Course Industry*. If you have questions regarding controlling these pests or others on your course, our Green Solutions Team of turfgrass technical specialists are just a phone call, email, or text message away, as is our nationwide team of area sales managers. Let us know if we can help!



Zac Reicher, Ph.D.
Rob Golembiewski, Ph.D.
Green Solutions Team, Bayer



SPONSORED BY BAYER



ABW, white grubs and a few more

By Guy Cipriano

Our popular “Turf Reports” surveys are back for a second season!

After a successful debut in 2021, we’re partnering with Bayer for a pair of pest-and disease-focused surveys beginning with a numerical plunge into how superintendents and their teams control insects. The survey includes general insect control data, plus a deeper exploration of the potential annual bluegrass weevil, white grub, billbug and caterpillar issues turf teams face. We also asked a few

questions at the end about triplexes and walking greens mowers. Those results will be published at a later date.

How did we accumulate the numbers in this section?

Working with the independent New Jersey-based research firm Signet, we sent a 20-question survey to a list of print and/or digital subscribers who are directors of agronomy, superintendents and assistant superintendents. We added a twist on the survey this year, sending it

to subscribers on our list who hold those above positions not only in the United States, but also in Canada and other countries. The survey was distributed via email from July 15 until Aug. 4. Results are based on 255 completed responses and the confidence level is 95% with a sampling tolerance of approximately of +/- 6.1%.

The 2022 “Turf Reports” series will conclude in November with a look at how superintendents and their teams control disease.

Where is your course located



NORTHEAST

26%



SOUTHEAST

14%



CENTRAL

34%



WEST

18%



CANADA AND ELSEWHERE

8%

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NORTHEAST'S TOUGHEST TURF PESTS

New Jersey rests in the middle of the annual bluegrass weevil's East Coast corridor.

Handling the pest is akin to enduring traffic on the state's freeways and parkways: a reoccurring and frustrating experience.

"Annual bluegrass weevil is something that, I think, will continue to be a bigger challenge," says Michael Campbell, the director of golf course operations at Montclair Golf Club. "I'm a little frustrated by it. We do a pretty good job at it, but it just seems like there's so much effort that goes into it and so many sprays. I don't understand it. It's becoming more and more difficult

to be successful with it."

ABW isn't the only pest Campbell's team must contend with on the 36-hole grounds. But it requires the most attention for the longest stretches.

"Without a doubt, it's the toughest pest we deal with," he adds. "We worry about ABW from April until the end of August. It's something that's basically an every two- or three-week spray. It's constant. Last year we had a little bit of a blow through with it and had a couple of banged-up collars. This year we learned from last year a little bit, changed some of our monitoring practices, caught it a little bit earlier than we normally would and changed

up some chemistries. We have done pretty well with it to date. But annual bluegrass weevil is pretty frustrating."

Mendham Golf & Tennis Club operates 25 miles to the east of Montclair and longtime superintendent Chris Boyle can relate to part of the frustration, although he concedes, "I don't feel like the pressure on this property is real bad." Collars and approaches are where Boyle focuses his ABW control program.

"On tees, I let them chew the *Poa* away," Boyle says. "They are mostly bentgrass tees anyway. I don't really have them in the fairways too bad, which I know some people do.

Satisfaction with available insecticides

1 Very dissatisfied	4%
2	5%
3	24%
4	43%
5 Very satisfied	24%



I have two acres of spray in the tank. When I go out for weevils, two acres is all I'm spraying. I spot treat where I know I have had damage and where I don't want to see damage. If I start to see them on fairway edges, I might start thinking about it on fairways."

Monitoring programs, site history and observations obtained via scouting are among the methods used to time ABW applications. Don Asinski, the superintendent at 36-hole Forsgate Country Club in Monroe Township, relies on plant indicators such as forsythia, dogwood and rhododendron blooms to time applications.

"Exiting full bloom, when the plant is half green, half gold, that's when I do my first adulticide," Asinski says. "And then the most important application after that would be the larvicide, which I'm doing when the rhododendron is in full bloom. I don't remember the dates, because I'm not attention paying to dates. I'm paying attention to the bloom, because in my opinion, that's the best indicator what the other plants are doing."

While they don't require as many sprays, white grubs are another potential insect problem in the Garden State. Boyle, for example, treats 29 acres of fairways and step cuts and another 26 acres of rough for white grubs, with an application typically occurring in late May or early June. Unlike his ABW control methods, Asinski uses a calendar-based approach when treating for white grubs. "That I do look at dates," he says. "It's the beginning of July."

At Fiddlers Elbow, a 54-hole private facility in nearby Bedminster, director of grounds and facilities Matt Willigan treats all low-mow playing surfaces and selected rough areas for white grubs. Fifty-four holes, after all, cover a vast turf footprint. "We do the appropriate amount of rough," Willigan says. "If it's a big area, we'll go three or four laps with the sprayer. If it's a tight area, like up on our Forest Course, you're just doing one lap around the outside."

Description of your insect control program	PREVENTIVE	37%
	CURATIVE	8%
	COMBINATION OF BOTH	50%
	NO PROGRAM	5%

Areas of course treated with insecticides

	Preventive	Curative
GREENS	85%	69%
COLLARS/APPROACHES	75%	49%
TEES	71%	45%
FAIRWAYS	69%	43%
ROUGH	37%	33%
BUNKER FACES	27%	21%
DON'T USE PREVENTIVE OR CURATIVE INSECTICIDES	8%	15%

Insect pressure in your region compared to five years ago

	ALL	NORTHEAST	SOUTHEAST	CENTRAL	WEST
MORE	31%	34%	18%	35%	30%
SAME	56%	61%	73%	47%	55%
LESS	13%	5%	9%	18%	15%

Number of insecticides included in your insect control program

	ALL	NORTHEAST	SOUTHEAST	CENTRAL	WEST
NONE	4%	0%	0%	1%	12%
1	11%	2%	3%	8%	29%
2-3	64%	45%	76%	78%	56%
4-6	21%	53%	21%	13%	2%
MEAN	2.7	3.5	2.9	2.6	1.8



PUZZLING AND RESILIENT

Even as more control chemistries and academic research become available, Phoenixville Country Club superintendent Rob Fochtman still has many unanswered questions about annual bluegrass weevil.

“I would say the biggest thing I’d like to know is do they fly?” he says. “It’s crazy how they came from the North down here and they were so prevalent. I’d like to hear more about how they overwinter. You always hear they are in the pine straw bed or they are in the leaf litter. They are fascinating, that’s for sure, as far as their resilience to a lot of things. It’s weird you have all these adults going around and they don’t do much damage, and you have this tiny, little larvae that just decimates turf. It’s pretty impressive, if you think about it.”

Phoenixville Country Club is a 9-hole private course in suburban Philadelphia, a golf-rich region where ABW tussles are immense. Insecticide resistance concerns are real in Philadelphia, and Fochtman makes a concerted effort not to overuse a control tool. Multiple new chemistries entered the market last year and Fochtman is hopeful they will be rotated carefully so they remain effective for years.

“There was concern and fear with guys overusing new chemistries when they came out. The mentality was, ‘There’s an ABW, let’s load up the tank,’” he says. “I have worked at a few places that were overanxious with seeing a few ABW, so we have kind of done it to ourselves.”

Insects treated to control/prevent damage

	ALL	NORTHEAST	SOUTHEAST	CENTRAL	WEST
WHITE GRUBS	80%	90%	74%	94%	60%
ABW	32%	84%	6%	21%	10%
CATERPILLARS	22%	23%	47%	23%	10%
BILLBUGS	20%	18%	18%	26%	24%
NONE OF THE ABOVE	15%	2%	21%	6%	31%

Potential concern of ABW damage

(ONLY AMONG COURSES THAT TREAT FOR THEM)

2%	11%	28%	29%	30%
1	2	3	4	5
(NO CONCERN)			(MAJOR CONCERN)	

This year, Fochtman adds, his program worked. But there’s always concern about next year ... and the following year ... and the year after that.

“For ABW, we’re scouting pretty early to get a good inventory of how many adults we have crawling around there,” he says. “The last two years have been tough because the springs have been so cold and dry, so I feel like it’s throwing them off. One day you think you have seen a lot, then they just disappear, and then they are all over place.”



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INSECT CONTROL BUDGETS

Annual insecticide budget

NONE	1%
\$1 - \$4,999	42%
\$5,000 - \$9,999	25%
\$10,000 - \$19,999	23%
\$20,000 - MORE	9%

Mean: \$8,733

GRUBS AND THE GREAT LAKES

The Great Lakes region hasn't escaped insect challenges, although superintendent Drew Paxton admits Spring Lake Country Club resides in a fortuitous spot. The western Michigan course is less than five miles from Lake Michigan. White grubs represent the biggest insect concern in Spring Lake's growing environment.

"Our insect pressure is probably not as high as somebody who's in the Detroit area," he says. "We still treat all the playing surfaces with an insecticide and our rough gets a second app through late July to just keep the damage from skunks and raccoons in September to a minimum."

Spring Lake's low-cut playing surfaces consist of three acres of greens, three acres of tees and 25 acres of fairways, and application timing is based on soil temperatures. Additional insecticide is applied to a few sprayer laps beyond the fairways on an "as-needed" basis later in the summer. That rough area can range from three to 10 acres depending on conditions.

"Thankfully, the products that we use cover everything," he says. "It's nothing too crazy. A lot of what we base it on are historical records that we have. We tend to get damage in certain places, and we will treat preventively. I haven't seen any significant damage in my three years here."

Despite avoiding major damage, Paxton resembles his peers in the Great Lakes and beyond: he follows trends and demonstrates a desire to learn more about all things turf maintenance, including white grubs.



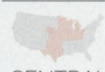

"I'm always looking to gain more knowledge," he says. "I guess the hardest part for me is when we are trying to diagnose an issue on a golf course and we're saying, 'Hey, is that grubs? Or is that drought stress?' The symptoms tend to be fairly similar. The grubs generally infect the roots. I wish there was a better way of diagnosing them."

Potential concern of damage

(ONLY AMONG COURSES THAT TREAT FOR THEM)

	(NO CONCERN)		(MAJOR CONCERN)		
	1	2	3	4	5
WHITE GRUB	2%	20%	33%	28%	17%
BILLBUG	6%	31%	39%	10%	14%
CATERPILLAR	9%	20%	39%	18%	14%

Average annual insecticide budget by region

	2022	2021
 NORTHEAST	\$11,064	\$11,983
 SOUTHEAST	\$11,257	\$10,686
 CENTRAL	\$7,675	\$8,169
 WEST	\$6,243	\$5,846

Insecticide budget change over last three years

INCREASED 20% OR MORE	10%
INCREASED 10% TO 19%	20%
INCREASED 1% TO 9%	33%
NO CHANGE	33%
DECREASED 1% TO 9%	2%
DECREASED 10% TO 19%	1%
DECREASED 20% OR MORE	1%



LOOKING FOR A NEW JOB 101

As part of my company's current services, I find superintendents to fill open positions at clubs across the country. I really enjoy this work, plus it gives me great personal satisfaction to help a club while helping one of our own with a new career opportunity or the chance for professional advancement.

But it never fails to amaze me how unprepared or uninformed people can be about getting a new job. What's bugging me right now are misconceptions about the most basic principles of a job hunt and how even the best candidates can shoot themselves in both feet by neglecting the simplest, common-sense concerns.

Here's what set me off.

A candidate with whom I'd spoken several years ago, and who had asked me to keep him in mind for specific levels of positions, was introduced to and under serious consideration by a high-level, private club. His résumé was presented, he made the cut, interviewed and eventually was offered the position. As part of the offer, he received a signing bonus, significant raise, and a position he told both me and the committee would be the high point of his professional career. He accepted the job and signed on dotted line.

Then, two days later, he changed his mind. His family didn't want to move.

That's a perfectly valid reason. But didn't he know about their reluctance earlier in the process? Had he not discussed it with them? It wasn't as if the job search was a quick affair, and he didn't have time to hold a family meeting and talk about relocating.

I wasn't upset because he changed his mind. He never should have let things get so far along that his about-face embarrassed the club, the selection committee and me. We put a lot of time and effort into

the search. His actions showed a lack of respect and integrity.

Let's go over some basics of job hunting:

DOS

- Be honest throughout the process: to yourself, your family and the club.
- Do your homework before throwing your hat in the ring: about the club, membership, community, cost of living, school systems and health care. Ask yourself if the opportunity meets or exceeds your current situations.
- Do due diligence about the club. Acquire every bit of information the club is willing to make available. Use your network to find out more than what's publicly available.
- Talk about the situation with your children, particularly teenage children. This is going to impact friendships, schooling and more. And don't wait until late in the process to involve the family. Talk with them as soon as things begin to look serious.
- Let personal and professional references know in advance that the club might be reaching out to them.
- If you're offered the job and then decide you don't want it, that's fine. Just tell them no and thank them for the opportunity and consideration.

DON'TS

- Don't use the opportunity to play your current employer against a potential new one. If you're only using the process as a financial lever with your current club, word will get out. You don't want to be

known as that kind of candidate — or person.

- Don't forget other members of your family. Will it make it harder for grandparents to see their grandchildren? For kids in college to come home? What about your spouse's job?
- Don't underestimate problems from teenagers. In my experience, they're often the wild card when it comes to both accepting a job and creating a happy home in a new location. If you're worried about rocking the boat at home, don't interview.
- Don't take for granted the club's financial generosity regarding a visit and interview. If you have no intention of considering the opportunity, why interview and underperform? Say thank you and pass.
- If you get deep into the process and still aren't 100 percent sure that you're interested, inform the committee as soon as you can, even after the interview. It's not fair to take the opportunity away from someone who is really motivated while you're being wishy-washy.
- Don't leave the club at the altar. Signing a contract and then backing out is a career-ender, and word will travel faster than *Pythium* on a hot, humid morning in New Jersey.

It's all about integrity personal and professional integrity. Don't think only about yourself but also the other lives that will be affected. If you're good enough — and handle these situations properly — other opportunities will come along. **GCI**



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Oh,
what to
wear!



By **Cassidy Gladieux**

Not all multi-faceted morning decisions involve playing surfaces. Here's how a few of your peers approach dressing for work.

Working on a golf course is a never-ending and sometimes even an unpredictable job. When you have to think about things like the weather fore-

cast, what plant protectants to apply, where to cut the holes, and how to ensure the soil and turf remain no less than pristine, certain things may consume less of your thoughts. One of those being what you wear each day.

You may not be trying to make a statement or stand out in any way, because you aren't the one playing golf most of the time. You often blend into the shadows and fall into the background, getting your work done and then going home. But what you wear might be as important as what topdressing sand you select. Functionality, quality, style and comfort are just a few things that you consider when choosing your outfit in the morning, without even realizing it. Recognizing the importance may lead to better productivity and maybe even a little motivation to get dressed in the morning.



Turf's Mr. Fashion

Why bold clothing has become part of a fun-loving Oklahoma superintendent's brand.

By Cassidy Gladieux

David Jones takes the "look good, play good" mentality literally.

The superintendent at Indian Springs Country Club in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma, has played every golf course in the Sooner State and is known for his brightly colored and unique outfit choices while doing it.

"It kind of started with my grandfather in Minnesota," Jones says. "We would play golf and he would always wear extravagant clothing and everything, even when he wasn't playing golf. I got some hand-me-downs from him and that was where it started."

At the start of Jones' fashion journey almost two decades ago, he had to get a little more creative chasing down his looks. "I would go to eBay or thrift stores to try to find some of the older clothing that was bright colors, but now everybody seems to be selling them so it's great," he says.

Making it easier to shop may come at the cost of closet space in his home, though, something he and his wife, **Erin**, can agree on.

"I always blame her because she kind of started this, too," Jones says. "Any time I would have a birthday or for Christmas, she would buy me some Loudmouth pants or whatever. She doesn't do it anymore because I've probably got two closets full of stuff compared to her half a closet, so it's pretty bad."

"I was working at home during the pandemic and packages just kept arriving like every single day," **Erin** says. "I remember saying to him, 'When is enough enough? You're already busting out of our closet, our garage is full of shoes.'" Erin compares her husband to **Imelda Marcos**, a Filipina politician who amassed a reported 3,000 pairs of shoes before she and her husband were deposed from power.

Despite maybe losing some closet space of her own, Erin is fully supportive when his wardrobe gets recognition from fellow golfers.

"I think it's funny. I really think it's funny," she says. "So, I will offer to take a picture, have that person be in a picture with David. I think the first time I saw that was when we were at the PGA Championship here in Tulsa at Southern Hills, and I cannot tell you when we walked over to the merchandise tent and back, the number of people that stopped him.

"There was one guy that stopped him and said, 'Hey, you're David Jones! It's so nice to meet you. I follow you on Twitter.' People get really amped by it," she says.

Jones has nearly 2,200 followers on Twitter, where he will post his outfits, dogs, and daily superintendent duties on his @GolsoupJones

account. He recently shared his experience at The Open Championship at St. Andrews.

"I just got back from the Open and there were several times when people even took my picture because of my outfit and they just wanted a picture to show friends and family or whoever," he says. "My wife, it kind of embarrasses her because about every 20 or 30 people will say, 'Hey, nice outfit!' or 'Nice colors!' so it's kinda fun."

But fun is what it's all about for Jones.

"I just kinda like to be different," he says. "I hate seeing guys that are just wearing the normal, you know, bland colors. That used to be me when I was in high school and I was like, 'You know what, I just want to be different,' so I started doing that."

Although Jones may not wear candy corn pants and a neon orange top when he shows up for work or just lounging around the house, he does still find small ways to make his everyday wear unique.

"I still kind of wear bright colors, not quite as extravagant as I do when I'm playing golf," Jones says. "When I'm at home, it's usually just shorts and a T-shirt. I'm trying to be comfortable."

"We were at a wedding ... and he wore this floral button-up shirt. I saw when he went to the food table, you know, everybody was commenting on his shirt," Erin says. "But he looked really good! He was wearing a plain pair of trousers and then this floral shirt. It was really fun."

For those also willing to be bold and express themselves through their clothing, Jones says you shouldn't be afraid to match *everything*.

"I would like to see more people match more stuff instead of just wearing a crazy shirt or whatever," he says. "Accessorize and you know, make everything match, really stand out because you'll be amazed at how many comments — and it makes you feel good, too. To me, it makes me play better."

Although Jones might not come close to 2,700 pairs of shoes (or maybe he will?), you can't put a number on style.

"I want to be unique and that's why I do it, to kind of stand out a little bit I guess," he says. "You could probably call it a sickness, but I like to call it a passion."





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▶ Hoodies are common work attire for Kasey Kauff and the Trinity Forest team. Kauff even wore one when a former president visited the Dallas course.



KNOW YOUR COURSE

Every golf course and maintenance team possess unique traits and quirks. You might have a dress code or guideline, an assigned uniform, or none of the above. Knowing what your course expects can help you prepare and experiment with different options.

For example, **Thad Thompson**, superintendent at Terry Hills Golf Course in western New York, requires his team to wear some type of shirt with sleeves.

“Me and my assistant really are the only ones that wear collared shirts. Everybody else is pretty much shorts and a T-shirt,” he says. “I do not like the unprofessional look [of no sleeves — we have a reputation as it is.]”

For **Kasey Kauff** at Trinity Forest Golf Club in Dallas, his team is all about breaking the superintendent and maintenance team stereotype.

“We are trying to change the look from the khaki pants and collared shirt,” says Kauff, the Texas club’s



director of grounds. “We feel the golf course superintendent wearing the khaki pants and collared shirt is now a thing of the past.”

Trinity Forest even began selling the logoed sweatshirts his team typically wears in the pro shop because the members were such fans of the look. “My guys wear more shorts and T-shirts, or shorts and hoodies or shirts and untucked collared shirts,” Kauff explains. “It’s just more relaxed. ... Even our club, our members will play in T-shirts out here. It is a very relaxed place.”

By contrast, Toscana (California) Country Club director of agronomy **Jared Stanek** and Country Club of Detroit superintendent **Ross Miller** provide their respective teams with collared uniforms.

“Our entire team is outfitted,” Miller says. “They all get five polo shirts each year with the club logo on it. They also get five pairs of khakis as well. Full-time staff get a shoe and clothing allowance of \$400 a year so they can get new boots and everything. We provide galoshes and OSHA-approved toe caps.”

BEING INCLUSIVE

If you have women on your team, you may need to consider an alternate uniform option or style.

The Country Club of Detroit provides a stipend to women on the team, allowing them to purchase their own pants.

“(Ross) provides our shirts with the logo on them, they’re polo shirts,” Country Club of Detroit horticultur-

“We are trying to change the look from the khaki pants and collared shirt. We feel the golf course superintendent wearing the khaki pants and collared shirt is now a thing of the past.”

— Kasey Kauff

ist **Cassandra Budzik** says. “Because I’m management staff, we have a better choice of the shirts we want to get, so he’ll let me choose a certain style within reason.

“I would just say it’s hard when some companies, if they don’t have as many women there, it’s hard for them to special order products just for women sometimes. You’re stuck with the menswear, and it just doesn’t fit at all, it doesn’t have the same shape. At least if they allowed for you to have them altered, that would be a nice option for some companies that don’t want to special order something just for women.”

Budzik adds that it doesn’t happen as much now, as companies have begun accommodating women, but it all depends on the course and their budget.

INDUSTRY FAVORITES AND ESSENTIALS

With each course varying in policy, dress code and budget, there’s a lot to take into consideration. Things like functionality, longevity and comfort are atop the list.

“A lot of times it’s hard to find look and functionality,” Budzik says. “Because I’m doing so much more manual labor, I need

something a little more rugged and veer more towards functionality. It’s hard to find functionality and style. With Patagonia, I can get a little bit of both.”

Depending on where your course is

located, you may value certain items over others.

“I think functionality and comfort go hand in hand,” Miller says. “We don’t do anything with cotton, everything is more



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polyester, breathable. Again, in the summer, more functionality and comfort. Everyone has a sunhat with the course logo on them.”

“(Functionality) is vital,” Stanek says. “For the crew, it’s long pants and long sleeves year-round because I need to make sure that they are safe and protected when they are running the equipment. Then, you have to be comfortable, so I make sure we’ve gotten the right fabrics for them. I need something that keeps them cool.”

Sun, heat and cold protection are essential. For Kauff, whose course is in Dallas, where temperatures swell past 100, Maui Jim sunglasses are a necessity.

“The ‘mandatory’ thing is sunglasses,” he says. “I need my sunglasses,

Numbers to know



Sources: Retail prices pulled from company websites



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the one thing that I literally cannot go without. I can go without a hat, but I cannot go without sunglasses.”

For a superintendent in New York, gloves are a must.

“I mean, I probably have six or seven different pairs of gloves in the file cabinet behind my desk,” Thompson says. “Just in case something gets wet, you want to be warm. I’m prepared for almost anything, I think.”

In Southern California, the UV rays can be harmful.

“For us, it’s definitely about sun protection,” Stanek says. “It gets so hot here, so sun protection is vital and that’s kind of how we always approach it here. It’s funny, in the winter, I wear lots and lots of layers, even though it ends up being 80 degrees; in the morning, it’s down

in the 40s or even 30s.”

From the top of your head with sunhats and sunglasses to the very bottoms of your feet, a quality pair of work shoes can make or break your level of comfort.

Thompson, a self-declared shoe addict, will even go as far to contact manufacturers about the quality of their shoe.

“I wear the same pair every day until they wear out, but I probably have 10 different pairs of boots and a whole bunch of others,” he says. “They have to hold up to what I’m doing. I have very specific critiques about a lot of different brands of work boots. Carolina work boots are, in my opinion, some of the best but the eyelet will wear out.”

“For me, I have to get a really good

orthotic shoe, really good quality,” Budzik says. “I usually try to get waterproof because once you get wet, you’re done. I fluctuate between the two, either a really good waterproof shoe or I have a lightweight, mesh shoe that dries really quickly and also has good foot support.”

It’s clear everyone has their own personal preferences and some value certain traits over the other. You must decide what is important to you when it comes to work wear. There may even be some trial and error before you find the perfect brand or product. Either way, you should make it your own. **GCI**

Cassidy Gladioux is a Kent State University senior participating in Golf Course Industry’s internship program.

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SHOW & TELL

I have always thought that superintendents could help themselves by being more upfront with members and golfers. It might be more difficult at a conventional daily-fee layout to call a meeting, but at a municipal course or a private club it's possible to gather the occasional audience for an educational Show & Tell.

My hunch was put to the test in early August at Burl Oaks Golf Club in the Twin Cities suburb of Minnetrista, Minnesota, 21 miles due west of downtown Minneapolis. The club is considering an ambitious master plan by architect **Jay Blasi**; it would address the half-century-old facility's infrastructure deficiencies while rerouting some holes to make ideal use of the terrain. The plan will create space for a new 9-hole, par-3 layout and expanded practice area. Full disclosure: I've been hired to help the club in its planning.

But this isn't about the virtues of the proposed plan, or even whether the membership will embrace it. What's relevant here is that during member education sessions devoted to explaining the proposal, superintendent **Nathan Peters** stepped up and put his expertise on the line to explain the club's present condition. He was not there to sell a particular version of the plan, nor to advocate one way or the other. That's the responsibility of the board.

Now in his 10th year at Burl Oaks, Peters has been concentrating on improving cultural practices. He had previously made a few hands-on presentations to the board showcasing his work, but never to the membership.

It's one thing to bring in hired experts to explain infrastructure and agronomic issues. But there's nothing like having your locally trusted, well-known, trained professional get up there and explain

to members what he or she does every day. Which is why it is so effective having the superintendent do a Show & Tell.

The members at Burl Oaks know very well who Peters is. That's obvious from members calling his name with a wave or grin during his tours of the course. They know he is out there working hard. What they don't — and cannot know — is what he is dealing with.

It's one thing to tell an audience that the club has greens of three completely different structures and that only some of them fully work. It's quite another to stand up there with core plugs and show the differences between a USGA spec green, an old push-up green, and a poorly constructed "modified" putting green with heavy thatch and a black layer. The first plug showed roots of 5 to 6 inches and held firm in Peters' hand. The second sample crumpled right there in front of everyone for lack of structure. The third sample looked like it was sitting in black pudding.

Peters was equally effective in showing what a blown irrigation joint looks like. "We're dealing with this throughout the golf course," he said. "It's like playing Whac-A-Mole."

His 10-minute share of the hour-long presentation was by far the most effective segment. It focused on issues the master plan was addressing and seemed to impress upon the audience the extent of the infrastructure challenges. The beauty of his talk is that he simply showed what he's been dealing with and left it up to the members to decide what to do about it.

That doesn't guarantee a particular outcome or plan will be implemented. But the club now has forged a better understanding between everyday golfers and their superintendent, one that's based on respect, professionalism and evidence of technical expertise.

Too often, highly qualified superintendents end up — inadvertently — being their own worst enemy. Their skill, dedication and willingness to drive the crew that extra yard or two masks underlying infrastructure issues and ends up making the golf course appear problem-free. The costs of compensating for degraded irrigation, drainage or turf conditions get hidden. Those costs are considerable in terms of money, labor hours and sleepless nights.

Ironically, at many clubs, the case for needed renovation would be easier to make and more evident to golfers if the superintendent were less skilled and more apt to let the decay show. But as I pointed out to the folks at Burl Oaks, would you really trust a superintendent like that to manage you through the renovation and to function well with new equipment and pipes?

When you have a highly skilled superintendent like Peters on board, someone capable of making the best with less-than-ideal infrastructure, imagine how much better the facility would be with the proper hardware in place.

Show & Tell goes a long way toward opening eyes to what the superintendent can do and is dealing with. Anything that achieves that is a plus for the facility and the industry. **GCI**



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




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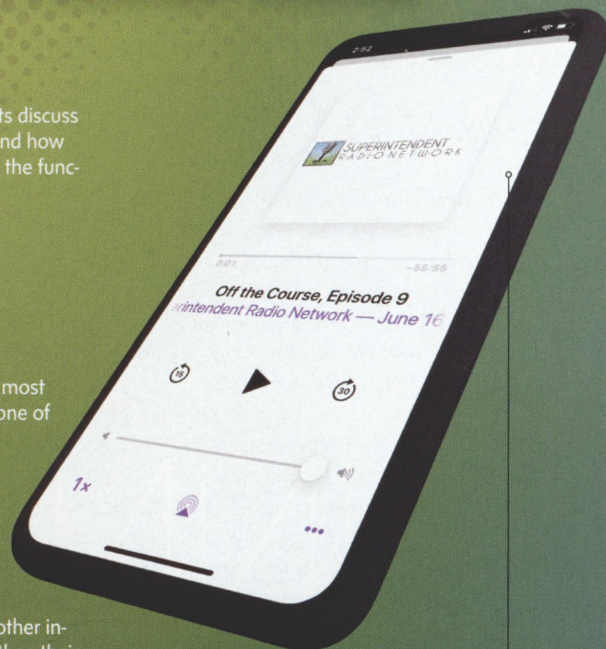
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ENVY**

Editors Guy Cipriano and Matt LaWell discuss the many (many, many, many) courses they've visited during the last month. Guy brings the decades of play and maintenance; Matt brings the fresh perspective of a hack golfer who appreciates the beauty of courses and the work required.



AVAILABLE ON:





MINNESOTA MAP watchers

In the middle of a golf-crazed state, superintendents are required to demonstrate year-round mettle to handle weather extremes.

By **Judd Spicer**

Imagine the legend of **Paul Bunyan** depicted with mower and hose in lieu of axe and ox.

Across the budding Brainerd Lakes golf region of Minnesota, 140 miles northwest of the Twin Cities, superintendents achieve their own Bunyan Land lore with a strength and mettle befitting a succinct season paired with brutal winters.

Ever ascending as a destination for players across the country, the area's 30-plus courses are meeting heightened player demand with a combination of flexibility and fortitude.

For a golf season that runs from mid-April through late October, planning for fickle weather patterns doesn't hurt either.

"I watch the weather constantly, always looking at the forecast ahead," says **Matt McKinnon**, director of golf course maintenance at The Legacy Courses at Cragun's Resort. "I use a lot of National Weather Service and Weather.com. I think it's good to use multiple sources and then formulate



eponymous design firm, Cragun's augmented golf land has McKinnon keeping watch on conditions and crew across a terrain that will soon sport the 27-hole Dutch Legacy Course, a reversible 9-hole par-3 layout and the Lehman 18 championship course.

"We've got over 400 acres of playable area and it can take almost 20 minutes to get from one point to the other," says McKinnon, who has been at Cragun's since 1998. "And when there are 35 of my crew members spread across this terrain and, say, a lightning storm pops up, it's not just a matter of a quick call on the radio. It can be dangerous. I always have to be on the lookout, to care about my guys' safety."

Some Brainerd superintendents are forecast freaks. Others get freaked out with an omnipresent watch of the radar.

"I've been able to do this job a long time because I don't stress over the weather constantly," says **Lucian Greeninger**, superintendent at Madden's Resort. "It's probably why I'm not selling fertilizer or something at this point."

Prepping for weather unknowns is a Minnesota known.

"You never know what you're gonna get, can never plan on Mother Nature," says **Ed Thomas**, superintendent at Deacon's Lodge, part of Breezy Point Resort. "Some days, it'll be a washout, some days it'll be a drought. I do check the weather quite frequently, but never rely on the forecast, which can be a bad habit. I always need to have a contingency plan in place."

Unlike popular golf regions in the West or Southwest with dependable weather patterns, Brainerd superintendents always need a backup in place.

"I can't just show up the morning of and tell my crew, 'OK, let's do this or this today,'" McKinnon adds. "I need to have a plan the day before, and also have a Plan B in place just in case the top option isn't gonna work."

To borrow a cross-sport reference

from *Bull Durham*: "Sometimes you win, sometimes you lose, sometimes it rains."

"It's always fluid," says **Dave Sadlowski**, head golf professional at Ruttger's Bay Lake Resort in nearby Deerwood. "Last year, we had the worst drought conditions I've ever seen. This year, coming out of a late spring, we had the most water I've ever seen. It's about extremes. Our superintendent, **Dale Lundgren**, sometimes I don't know how he sleeps at night."

From popular, long-established resorts to a new kid on the block, the weather watch remains the same.

"I think a lot of it is water control," says **Brandon Myers**, superintendent at the newly debuted Gravel Pit, a 13-hole par-3 course in Brainerd just two years removed from being, yes, an actual gravel pit. "I really watch the weather for when to turn the water off and being ready when to turn it back on. And making sure I have the right wetting agents is also key. I use one that penetrates and one that holds. I've tried every combination, tried using them separately, but this combination seems to do well in sand."

Speaking of sand, Myers is breaking Gravel Pit's maiden season with a unique threat all his own.

"There's a turf disease, take-all patch, which actually originates in gravel pits. That's persistent right now and we need to keep a watch on it daily," he says. "The last chemical I used on it was a propiconazole, but I'll soon start using something a little stronger."

LAKE LEASE ON LIFE

Handling resort maintenance and golf grounds in concert is often the Brainerd norm, with lake country getaways an overnight staple. As spring temperatures (eventually) break for eager players, strong communication with members and guests proves paramount to prepping for a season debut.

"It takes a lot of good communication, even if it's mildly technical, especially with our members," Sadlowski says. "Whether that means email

◀ Ruttger's Bay Lake Resort in Deerwood, Minnesota.

your own opinion. You can't just rely on one site. And I'll use that every day — every hour of every day — and not just for open and close dates. We have to plan ahead constantly so I'm in a position to get the job done the following day and schedule my staff accordingly."

In the homestretch of a massive, \$10 million renovation and expansion project guided by **Tom Lehman's**

MAINTENANCE

updates every week or three times a week, I need to let them know where we're at, especially if they see other area courses opening a bit earlier. So, it's important to educate them on the 'why,' which works best for everybody in the long run."

For Greeninger, whose four-course count includes The Classic at Mad-den's, the golf onus isn't always on par with his additional responsibilities.

"I have 63 golf holes, and then all of the resort grounds," he says. "So, along with the courses, that includes 2,000 feet of beaches, 100 annual flower beds, all the shrubs, all the resort landscape. Working those non-golf grounds can be more pressure than the courses are for me."

Akin to staffing concerns across the country, keeping course maintenance crews intact for seasonal work presents its own challenges. Greeninger oversees a team of more than 50, though he says it "should be at 60," including four full-time employees. The rest are seasonal.

"We patch that together each spring, which has been a challenge the last couple of years," Greeninger says. "The retention is probably about 75 percent and a lot of them don't mind the seasonal aspect. My guys in key spots, like my second assistant, spray techs, irrigation guys, they'll be back here April 1 regardless of the weather. The rest of the maintenance crew will start dependent on the weather."

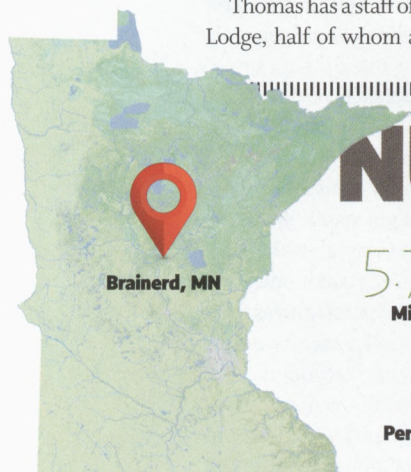
Thomas has a staff of 20 at Deacon's Lodge, half of whom are part-timers



and half of whom are full-time seasonals. Come winter? He's on his own.

"Get it all in across the other six months," Thomas says. "There's a lot of prep work in fall, and then catching up

on everything else as we ready to open in spring. I have some international members on my crew, and I also rely a lot on the retired market looking for a little something to do in the mornings;



NUMBERS TO KNOW

5.7 million
Minnesota population

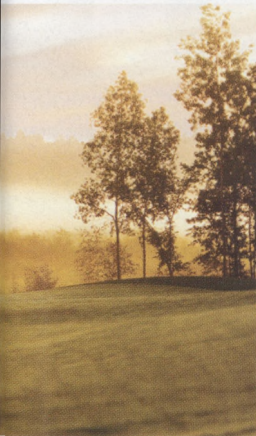
642,333
Golfers in Minnesota

376
Public golf facilities in
Minnesota

11.3
Percentage of Minnesotans who play golf

422
Golf facilities in Minnesota

Sources: National Golf Foundation and U.S. Census



◀ Top: Ongoing construction at Cragun's Resort. Bottom: Deacon's Lodge at Breezy Point Resort.

philosophies generally run akin with deep tining of greens.

"We topdress greens before putting them to bed, we cover some greens, including all our new greens last year," McKinnon says. "Over time, we've dabbled with the covering of greens. If you know that a particular green will blow the snow off and be

mostly mowing jobs, get in and get out. And then college kids who are good for three or four years with the more hands-on labor jobs before they're moving on."

**LET IT SNOW,
LET IT SNOW
... BUT NOT**

FREEZE!

As winterizing sets in, much of the grueling work begins for the Brainerd superintendents.

"The toughest days are the days we blow out the irrigation system," McKinnon says. "I've done it in sub-20-degree weather. It's no fun. You're dealing with water, of course, and we're on a big property. It's six guys working 10-hour days for two days to get it done. We've done it in the snow, done it in the rain, done it in freezing temperatures. If you aren't prepared, you're not going to have a good day."

Along with addressing wetlands, winter responsibilities also equate to tree season.

"We do a lot of winter work on the

course. For us, winter means trees," McKinnon adds. "We'll trim, cut down anything that's dead or dying, and burn piles of wood we cut during summer."

With climates across the country less predictable than ever, the Northwoods holidays aren't always cloaked in postcard snow anymore.

"And then we have ice, which is our worst nightmare," McKinnon continues. "Last year, it rained well over an inch December, so I did have some turf death in the fairways here and there. You have to keep your guard up. You just don't know. You'd think that in the middle of December, at 30 degrees, you wouldn't have to worry about rain. After that rainy day, we squeeze every green or fairway that had any standing water."

As the Gravel Pit readies for its first post-play off-season, its superintendent does have some concerns about the site's lack of drainage.

"We have such undulated greens out here that, with the runoffs, we saw some ice buildups heading into our first season," Myers says. "So, we shaved down the front of the greens, mowing into the fringe or low areas to allow the water to penetrate past that instead of turning into a dam."

Snow mold prevention is the norm for most, if not all courses, while

open to the elements, ... it's not something you want. But the chances of that are pretty slim. I mean, last year, we had hip-deep snow on the course."

At Madden's, Greeninger has experienced success with sandbagging green edges to combat winter runoff. "We don't cover the greens," he says. "At courses I've worked at before that used the impermeable covers or evergreen mats, that always made me a little nervous. I've come to the conclusion that the big advantage to using the covers is the jumpstart it gives you in the spring. But I was always thought about the gas exchange, and the impermeable covers kinda go against that."

Despite its taut golf seasons and harsh winters, the Brainerd region is well-reputed for retaining its superintendents at the same locales for decades. Like the tale of Paul Bunyan, it's a narrative where the strong survive.

"To be a super up here you have to love the outdoors, like a bit of cold weather and have some thick skin," Thomas says. "Although the skin does get a little thinner the older you get." **GCI**

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



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Strong start ... as expected

A fungicide waiting in reserve for nearly a decade is quickly finding a fit in programs designed to elevate playing conditions on fairways.

BY
GUY CIPRIANO

Dollar spot can wreak havoc on bentgrass during much of the year (image above). Encartis fungicide has exceeded expectations for providing exceptional control.

The confidence surrounding Encartis fungicide stems from longevity. Although the solution didn't become available to golf course superintendents until last fall, the BASF team involved with the research and development of Encartis fungicide understood for almost a decade the possibilities of the formulation waiting in reserve.

Encartis fungicide features a pair of active ingredients, including boscalid, the active ingredient in BASF staple Emerald fungicide. The reliability of the other active ingredient, chlorothalonil, required little explanation. Nearly everybody reading this article has experience using chlorothalonil to control disease.

"When I look at some of the other products that we brought to the market, we didn't have to use quite as much energy for this, because there are two proven products in it that we have been using: Emerald and chlorothalonil," BASF senior technical representative, Kyle Miller, says. "Plus, we had Encartis already poised eight years ago to bring to the market. We're really pleased with superintendents now thinking, 'You know what? There's really a nice fit for Encartis in my spray program.'"

That fit resides where Miller and his BASF teammates envisioned. Encartis is becoming a reliable fungicide in helping control dollar spot on fairways. Unlike some other fungicides, no geographic or turfgrass barriers exist with Encartis. Courses from

Newport, Rhode Island, to Newport Beach, California, can potentially benefit from integrating Encartis into their disease control programs.

"This is a product we use all over the country," Miller says. "We have had it in university trials from the West Coast to the middle part of the U.S., to the Northeast, to the Mid-Atlantic, to the South, to the desert Southwest. You name it, we have had it everywhere. That's how we get a real good feel for how the product is going to perform regardless of what part of the country you're in. There's a nice fit for it everywhere, so we wanted to test it everywhere."

The first full year of availability is further boosting confidence in Encartis fungicide. From drought in parts of the Northeast, Mid-Atlantic, Great Plains

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and West Coast to soggy stretches in the Midwest and Southeast, the summer of 2022 allowed the BASF team to observe the fungicide in myriad conditions.

“Every year is a little different,” Miller says. “Somewhere in the country, it’s a really tough year. Because this product is nationwide, we have been in those places, whether it’s places that haven’t had enough moisture, or places that have had too much moisture, or places where it has been really, really hot. We have seen it used across the board. Once again, it has been stellar.

It has performed super in all sorts of weather conditions.”

As expected, superintendents are using Encartis fungicide as an early and late-season spray in dollar spot tussles, especially on cool-season turf. But superintendents are beginning to find other uses for the fungicide. In the Southeast, for example, Miller says Encartis fungicide is being applied on seashore paspalum and Bermudagrass fairways late into the growing and tropical storm seasons. Encartis fungicide can also be used on greens,

collars, approaches, and tees. But BASF remains steadfast about positioning Encartis fungicide as a fairway-focused solution.

“It definitely fits best as a fairway application,” Miller says. “You have two AIs in there that do a nice job on some of the issues that we have in fairways. It’s priced for fairways. It’s an economical way to control dollar spot and several other diseases. Have we seen it used on greens, tees and greens surrounds? Heck yeah. But I would still say this product has been very popular as a fairway spray.

“It’s simply because so many superintendents were using Emerald and they were adding chlorothalonil, because the time of year they were using Emerald they were also having leaf spot in those areas. They were tank mixing the two. We have

made it easy for them. Now they have this built-in pre-mix that controls a lot of those problems that they have early in the year.”

BASF recommends a trio of usage rates for Encartis fungicide:

- 3 ounces per 1,000 square feet for up to 14 to 21 days control
- 3½ ounces per 1,000 square feet for up to 21 to 28 days control
- 4 ounces per 1,000 square feet for up to 28 days control.


“Do you remember Ron Popeil?” Miller says, referring to an infomercial and marketing personality. “One of his favorite sayings was, ‘Set it and forget it.’ I feel like Encartis is like set it and forget it.”

More will be learned about Encartis fungicide over subsequent years. The fungicide’s presence complements a portfolio that includes SDHIs such as Emerald and Xzemplar and the DMI Maxtima. “It fills up the toolbox for us,” Miller says. From the innovation reserves to the active toolbox. Encartis fungicide represents a carefully crafted solution worth the wait.

“I have been to a lot of field days this year and I have seen Encartis be ‘Steady Eddy.’ It has delivered what we said it was going to deliver,” Miller says. “One of our sales reps came up with something ... and it makes a lot of sense. He said, ‘What we put into the jug is science. What you do with it once you take the lid off is art.’ There’s a lot of truth to that. A superintendent, regardless of what product it is—in this case it’s Encartis—fine tunes a product for their golf course. We know we are bringing great science and a product that can perform at a high level. But you need to tweak it so you get the most that you can out of that product.” ■

■ • BASF

We create chemistry
Always read and follow label directions. *Emerald, Encartis, Maxtima and Xzemplar are registered trademarks of BASF.*



Brown patch on bentgrass is a concern during the warm/humid summer months. Encartis fungicide can provide excellent control when used in spray programs.

A FEW OTHERS

Dollar spot isn’t the only disease Encartis fungicide can help control. Here’s what BASF senior technical representative Kyle Miller has observed when assessing performance against other common diseases.

Brown patch and anthracnose

“The chlorothalonil component is doing most of that work. It’s a 14-day product, so it’s not like one of these long-lasting products. If you use it like the label says, you’re going to get what you want it to deliver. It’s very good on brown patch, and anthracnose is another one that chlorothalonil picks up on and does well on. It’s not as long lasting as some other products like a Maxtima on anthracnose, where we can get up to 28 days. But that’s OK.”

Leaf spot

“Down South, they really like it for leaf spot. Up North, in the spring, when the turf is coming out of ‘semi dormancy,’ leaf spot is pretty much the first disease that we encounter in that cool, wet weather. It has done a great job on that. We have been pleased across the board with what it’s doing against these key diseases.”



The Hickory Course at Hamilton Farm Golf Club blends a big challenge and significant par-3 footprint with high-level maintenance.

By **Guy Cipriano**

From template holes to pricey resorts adding similar amenities, the upper echelons of the industry frequently transfer proven and safe ideas between divergent locations.

Consider the current short course movement. Compact courses are being designed, constructed and branded to fit themes and dimensions on existing properties. Owners and operators are then banking on receiving carryover play from the “big course.” Somebody in Oregon or North Carolina builds first. Somebody in Florida, Wisconsin or California follows with a similar concept.

The Hickory Course at Hamilton Farm at Hamilton Farm Golf Club in Gladstone, New Jersey, represents an anomaly in the high-end short course sector. For 21 years, it has surprisingly yet to attract a follower.

The private club sliced within one of the world’s private club meccas—the area encircling New York City simply known as “The Met”—might boast the biggest 18-hole short course in America. The par-3 puncher plays

3,080 yards from the back tees with four holes of 200 yards or longer, including the punishing 229-yard 17th.

The Hickory Course at Hamilton Farm opened in 2001, the same year as the regulation Highlands Course. **Dana Fry** and **Dr. Michael Hurdzan** designed both courses. Fry, a bold golf development thinker and now a partner in Fry/Straka Global Golf Design, still hasn’t seen anything like the Hickory Course in his jet-setting journeys.

“It’s not the typical par-3 where they are just all flip wedges,” says Fry, whose firm returned to Hamilton Farm last fall for a bunker renovation. “You’re hitting 3 wood to lob wedge. You’re really hitting every club in the bag and it simulates the type of shots that you have on the golf course, where you have to hit high cuts and draws, and some where you can roll it on and some where you can’t. It’s a real, real test of golf.

“There’s awesome par-3 courses now at places like Sand Valley and Bandon Dunes—and we did a really nice one at Shelter Harbor—but there’s nothing like the par-3 course

at Hamilton Farm.”

The golf shots aren’t the only big aspect of the Hickory Course. Hamilton Farm director of grounds **Jason Harrison** and his team are maintaining a par-3 course that traverses 130 wooded acres within a 730-acre property. The scale of the Hickory Course fascinated Harrison when he accepted the Hamilton Farm job in 2015 after stints maintaining Golden Age golf courses, including Worcester Country Club and Philadelphia-area stalwarts Merion Golf Club and Huntington Valley Country Club.

“Our par-3 course is the acreage of a normal, 18-hole golf course. Now, I’m including the woods in that,” says Harrison during a July tour of the Hamilton Farm property. “But I worked at Merion for a number of years and one of the courses at Merion is just over 100 acres.”

Different eras, pars and footprints. Same giant expectations.

The Hickory Course is maintained like an elite Northeast private layout. The daily Hickory Course crew includes around 10 employees prepar-

▲ The eighth hole of the Hickory Course at Hamilton Farm.

ing four acres of greens, three acres of approaches and surrounds, and two acres of tees for daily member and guest play beginning at 7:30 a.m. The philosophies mirror those on the Highlands Course. “We do everything here as if it’s a championship golf course,” Harrison says.

The regimen includes daily course setup and bunker rakes, regular mows and rolls, calculated fertility and spray programs, and diligent top-dressing and other cultural practices. Playing surfaces on both Hamilton Farm courses are maintained to thwart an unwelcomed weed from overtaking bentgrass. “From an agronomic perspective,” Harrison says, “we are *Poa* killers. Everything we do is to give bentgrass a competitive advantage. We have very little *Poa* on the golf courses.”

Native areas are critical to the Hamilton Farm aesthetic. The hilly site, secluded in an area where mansions and horse owners are the norm, served as the country estate of the Brady family from 1911 until 1978. The family enjoyed horses of nearly every kind and the United States Equestrian Team Olympic Training Center and Headquarters border the club. The land’s grazing days were numbered decades ago, but the two courses possess 85 acres of native areas, according to Harrison. Twenty of those acres mesh with the woods, hillsides and wetlands to give the Hickory Course a soothing palette.

Patrick Critchley, who grew up 20 minutes from Hamilton Farm, is the assistant superintendent responsible for monitoring everything from the native areas to cultural practices on the Hickory Course. He never played — or even visited — the course until interviewing for his current position last year. Leading the maintenance of a par-3 course without a peer attracted Critchley to his current job, making the Hickory Course one of the few short courses capable of attracting members and employees.

“I haven’t seen anything like this,”

Critchley says. “I always tell people, imagine a really high-end par-3 hole, but 18 of them. The holes are actual legit par 3s course that you would see in a magazine. And every hole is like that.”

By the time Critchley landed in central New Jersey last October, a bunker renovation on the Hickory Course had commenced. A bunker renovation on a par-3 course? Again, this isn’t like other short course stories. The work left the Hickory Course with 34 bunkers with modest, yet detailed, grass faces contrasting the original fingers and high sand flashes. “We really wanted to make more ‘old-school’ looking bunkers,” Fry says.

Recent infrastructure upgrades on the Hickory Course also involved renovating 3.2 miles of cart paths. Instead of just toting a Sunday bag with a few wedges, a putter and a trio of balls, golfers likely require at least a dozen clubs to handle the Hickory Course, thus the need for cart paths. Steep falloffs, dense woods, ponds, and wetlands surround and front multiple holes, making the potential for multiple lost balls another abnormal par-3 course occurrence. Coincidentally, the only hole without a bunker is the 17th, which plays 250 yards from the back tee.

Memorable holes and distinctive features dot the course. The first hole is near the stately Brady mansion and plays over a valley, the eighth plays along a ridgeline with a “Sugar Shack” and horse jumps from the land’s agrarian past bordering the green, and the



10th and 18th leap over ponds and wetlands. Producing conditions to match the challenge and intricacies of the layout drive Harrison, Critchley, and the Hamilton Farm team.

“We want to be the best par-3 course in America,” Critchley says. “That’s our goal. We don’t want to settle for anything less than the best. The bunker renovation gave us a good step forward and there’s still work to be done.”

The Hickory Course, according to Fry, originated because Hamilton Farm lacked the suitable land for two regulation courses, but the site possessed enough land for a par-3 course. Despite the vast acreage, Hamilton Farm was one of the toughest projects of Fry’s career because of rocky, hilly, tree-covered land, an abundance of wetlands, and a rigid permitting process. Twenty-three years after breaking ground, a similar par-3 course hasn’t been attempted.

“They make really aesthetically beautiful par-3 courses that are really fun to play nowadays,” Fry says. “But I’m surprised nobody has really ever built a par-3 course like this where you can work on your game and not just your wedge game.” **GCI**

▲ Hamilton Farm director of grounds Jason Harrison and Hickory Course super Patrick Critchley.

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.



DECORATIVE & SECURE RETAINING WALL

Steel “H” beams (8¼ inches by 7¼ inches) are purchased in 20-foot lengths and then cut into lengths of 8 feet or less that can be handled without heavy equipment. Holes are dug at least 24 inches deep with power augers, and the “H” beam is installed and plumbed. It is then backfilled with concrete and sets for two days minimum. The “H” beams are placed on 105-inch centers. The standard size of 8½ inches by 6½ inches by 8 feet used “relays” railroad ties are creosoted when new and they were not retreated. Deadman anchors are installed into the existing terrain by using scrap “H” beams connected to 3/8-inch stainless steel cables, attached to a v-shaped bracket welded onto the beam, connected to a ½-inch-diameter turnbuckle with a 12-inch draw, followed by backfilling. As each railroad tie is slid horizontally into place, they are backfilled as they continue to rise. The “H” beams cost about \$10 per lineal foot a decade ago and the installation labor time varies because of different soil conditions, terrain and weather delays with improved production moving forward. **Brad Fellrath**, superintendent at the 36-hole Raintree Country Club in Charlotte, North Carolina, is well-versed on in-house projects. **Jim Cervone** is the club’s architect.



RETRACTABLE DRIVING RANGE TEE ROPE

The reel with hand crank (\$52.99) was acquired from Northern Tool (item No. 49587) and mounted on a 2-inch by 12-inch by 24-inch pressure treated board with wood screws. The Par Aide ¼-inch yellow hollow braid polypropylene rope (item No. 12950, \$52 per roll) is 200 feet in length, which is the width of the driving range tee. The rope has duct tape wrapped around the rope every eight feet, which is the hitting width for each tee station, where yellow pine 2-inch by 4-inch by 48-inch tee dividers are placed in front of the rope, painted white with a 45-degree double-cut point at both ends. Each morning the yellow rope is moved four feet behind the previous day’s divots, the boards are wiped down for a fresh appearance, the divots are removed and divot mix soil is applied to the Tifway 419 Bermudagrass turf. The golf bag stands, benches, divot fill containers, club cleaners and waste containers are put in place. **Brad Fellrath** is the superintendent at the 36-hole Raintree Country Club in Charlotte, North Carolina. **Jim Cervone** is the club’s architect.



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.

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REQUIRED TURF READING

The Old Course at St. Andrews is arguably the most widely recognized golf course in the world. It earned the Home of Golf moniker more than a century ago and golfers make pilgrimages from all over the world to walk and play its hallowed grounds.

I first met former St. Andrews Trust director of greenkeeping **Gordon Moir** in January 2019 while traveling with a group to the BIGGA Turf Management Exhibition in Harrogate, England. We stopped in Scotland prior to the conference where we met with **Craig Boath** at Carnoustie for a course walk and **Gordon McKie** (course manager of the Old Course) for a tour of the Jubilee Greenkeeping Center at St. Andrews. The highlight was playing the Old Course with Gordon and his neighbor **Alex Rowe**.

When I learned Gordon had written a book chronicling his career in greenkeeping, I did not hesitate to snag a copy. Gordon was born in the northeast of Scotland in the town of Fraserburgh and joined the greenkeeping team at Fraserburgh Golf Club as an apprentice in 1976. By 1980, he had ascended to head greenkeeper of FGC, the fifth-oldest golf course in Scotland and seventh-oldest in the world.

But after spending 11 years leading the team at FGC, Gordon took a leap of faith. And, in 1991, with the blessing of his wife, **Pauline**, Gordon decided to pursue other opportunities. Having been actively involved with the Scottish and International Golf Greenkeepers Association, the precursor to BIGGA (the British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association), Gordon parlayed his contacts and networking into an interview to become head greenkeeper of the Eden Course at St. Andrews under the direction of then-links supervisor **Walter Woods**.

And thus began a 27-year career at the planet's most famous golf facility. "St. Andrews—The Greenkeeper's Tale" is the firsthand account of Gordon's work and life experiences during that time and chronicles his rise from head greenkeeper of the Eden course to eventually becoming director of greenkeeping over all seven courses managed by the Links Trust prior to his retirement in late 2018.

Over that period, he saw many changes. There were only four golf courses — the Old, New, Jubilee and Eden — when Gordon was hired and the greenkeeping department worked from one shared, antiquated facility. The Strathclyde course was established in 1993 along with the newly redesigned Balgove course. Plus, he oversaw many changes to the Eden, New and Jubilee courses as well as the Old Course, including a few revisions deemed controversial by some golf course architecture enthusiasts.

The addition of the two new courses led to the creation of the Eden Greenkeeping Center servicing the Eden, Strathclyde and Balgove courses, and the newly redesigned Jubilee Greenkeeping Center became the hub for the Old, New and Jubilee courses.

Gordon also oversaw the creation of The Castle Course (opened for play in June 2008) designed by **David McLay Kidd** of Bandon Dunes fame. Gordon dedicates an entire chapter to this period. Because I had read "The Seventh at St. Andrews" by **Scott Gummer**, which tells the story of the creation of the Castle course from McLay Kidd's perspective, I really enjoyed Gordon's recollec-

tions and perspectives.

Gordon's tenure at St. Andrews parallels a great period of innovation in greenkeeping. Many readers may be surprised to learn about some of the earlier rudimentary working conditions but will witness the evolution to upgraded modern facilities, the adoption of precision turf management practices and data collection, and countless environmental sustainability efforts — not to mention the vast number of committees and other regulatory entities required of the world's most famous greenkeeping team.

In the 27 years Gordon worked for the St Andrews Links Trust, he was involved with five Open Championships (1995, 2000, 2005, 2010 and 2015), two Women's Opens (2007 and 2013), one Senior Open (2018) and numerous European Tour Alfred Dunhill Championships. The reader gets Gordon's take on each major as it relates to that period of his career along with the unique challenges brought about by Mother Nature and the R&A in each.

The book is filled with numerous stories and anecdotes from Gordon's travels and adventures, whether it be attending industry-related events or just carving out some holiday time visiting with friends and colleagues he met along the way. If anything, this book shows you the power of networking and the building of lasting relationships possible within our wonderful industry.

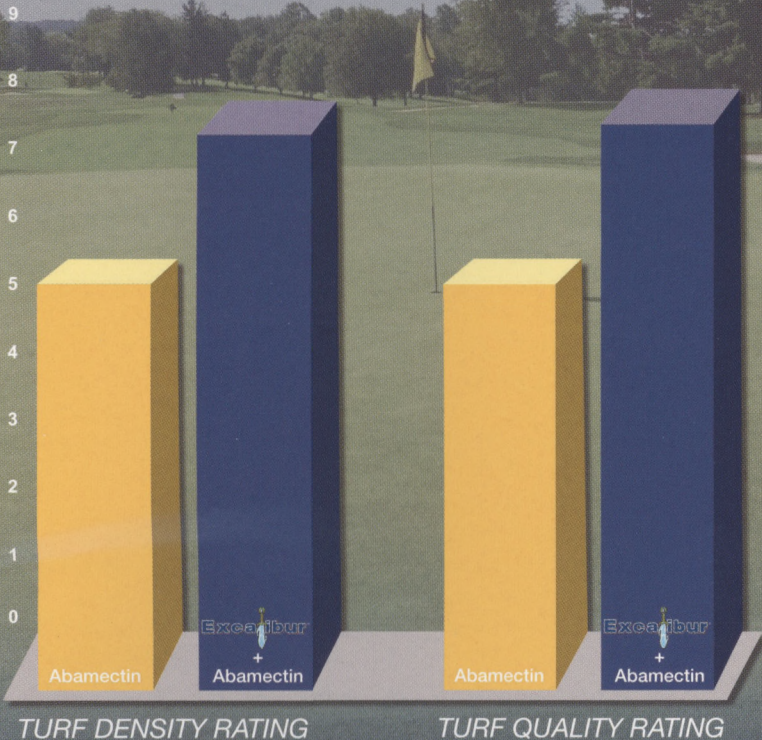
Whether you are young or old, a turfgrass newbie or established veteran, there are lessons to be learned from "The Greenkeeper's Tale." **GC**



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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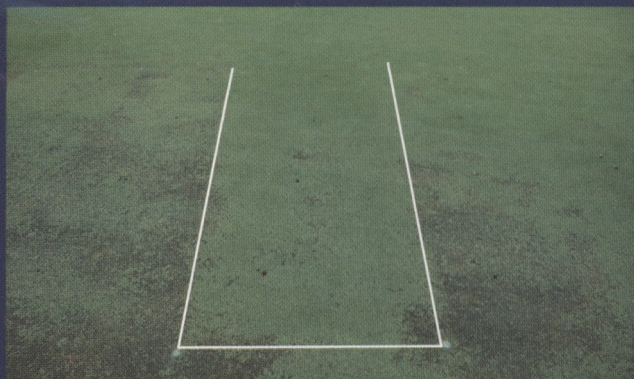


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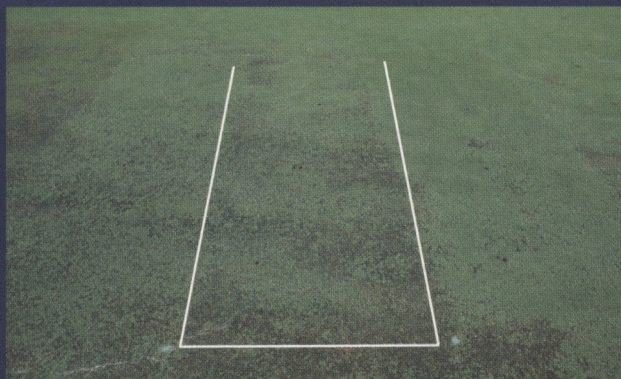


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