



StriCore™
Herbicide



THE **NEW** PRE-EMPTIVE STRIKE AGAINST WEEDS



STAY INFORMED
BECOME A STRICORE™
INSIDER TODAY!
STRICOREHERBICIDE.COM

COMING OCTOBER 2024

First New Pre-Emergent Herbicide
Active Ingredient In Over A Decade!

Always read and follow label directions. StriCore™ is a trademark of SePRO Corporation. ©2024 SePRO Corporation.

JULY 2024 | golfcourseindustry.com

GOLF COURSE[®] INDUSTRY

Humanity in habitat

Southern California
superintendent **Brett Winger**
is taking protecting monarch
butterflies to another level at
Temecula Creek Golf Club.



FLEX APPEAL.



A FAST ACTING DUAL-ACTION GRANULAR THAT TREATS AND PREVENTS LOCALIZED DRY SPOT

AQUEDUCT FLEX contains an exclusive dual-action formula specifically designed to give turf care professionals superior performance with flexible options for dealing with stressful conditions, including water repellency and localized dry spot.

Benefits of Aqueduct Flex:

- ✓ Provides rapid recovery of stressed turf with visible results in as little as **3 DAYS** when used at the treatment rate
- ✓ Provides up to **30-DAY PROTECTION** against the development of localized dry spot when applied on a monthly basis at the preventative rate
- ✓ Safe to use on all turf varieties



READY TO LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW **AQUEDUCT FLEX** CAN BENEFIT YOU?
Contact Your Local Distributor or Visit: [AquatrolsCompany.com/hydration](https://www.AquatrolsCompany.com/hydration)

HUMANITY IN HABITAT

Southern California superintendent **Brett Winger** is taking protecting monarch butterflies to another level at Temecula Creek Golf Club.

14

COLUMNS

12 GAME PLAN

Henry DeLozier: Restoring Hogan's Alley

22 OUTSIDE THE ROPES

Tim Moraghan: Wisdom from a turf 'pirate'

35 GOLF THERAPY

Bradley S. Klein: An everyday English course

50 AMERICA'S GREENKEEPER

Matthew Wharton: Only you ...

DEPARTMENTS

4 **TEEING OFF:** A change at the top

6 **NOTEBOOK:** Bye, bye Bermudagrass

10 **WONDERFUL WOMEN:** Raquel Schwartz

48 **TRAVELS WITH TERRY:** Equipment ideas

49 **CLASSIFIEDS / INDEX**

FEATURES

Cover story

14 HUMANITY IN HABITAT

SoCal superintendent Brett Winger is protecting monarch butterflies at Temecula Creek Golf Club.

Spotlight

24 BUSY TIMES ON THE PRAIRIE

A different ownership model and lots of commitment have packed a popular South Dakota course.

Technology

32 TECH TROUBLES

Cutting-edge technology can increase productivity and improve turf maintenance operations.

People

36 TURF DREAMER

Walter Chavez knew no English and had no maintenance experience when he arrived from Argentina. Now he's a respected Florida superintendent.



36

Short course stories

42 NEXT STEP OF A VISION

Why did a passionate decision-maker at a Kansas City-area club focus on adding a par-3 course for his next big project?

Facility management

44 WORK WITH WHAT YOU HAVE

Most turf pros will never have a new maintenance facility. But there are practical and affordable ways to overcome.



44

CONTINUING WHAT WE'RE GROWING

Golf Course Industry has a new leader. And he's a familiar name to many of you. Our parent company, GIE Media, recently elevated **Guy Cipriano** to the publisher role. Starting out as an assistant editor in 2014, Guy has advanced his career at GIE Media through the last decade with promotions to associate editor, senior editor, editor, editor-in-chief and now his new role as publisher.

What does this news mean for our readers and partners? In an era where publishers and editorial teams are trying to serve multiple markets, we have a team solely focused on covering the growing golf business. Like many golf facilities, we're in a growth mode. Guy's golf zest, industry knowledge, relentless work ethic and authenticity make him the ideal person to lead our business.

His credentials are nearly unmatched in B2B and golf industry media.

Guy's dynamic approach to covering the industry has led to an impressive résumé that includes three awards from the Golf Writers Association of America in 2018, 2021 and 2024. Guy is the first person from an "industry publication" to be honored in the prestigious contest against brands such as *Golf*, *Golf Digest*, *ESPN*, *Sports Illustrated*, *The New York Times* and all other media outlets that cover golf.

Throughout his journey, Guy has visited golf facilities in 35 states. In 2018, he was named to the *Folio:100* list honoring trendsetters, thought leaders, newsmakers, and innovators in the magazine industry. His passion and drive have played a crucial role in developing and executing sponsored content offerings, expansion of our podcast network, and fueling industry-leading metrics on



Guy Cipriano chats with Willow Run Golf Course superintendent Barry Anderson during a visit to Sioux Falls, South Dakota, earlier this year.

social media and in the Fast & Firm newsletter. Whether it be going the extra mile for interns, befriending grounds crew workers at municipal golf facilities or presenting the latest golf data to clubs and associations across the United States, he consistently delivers and continually raises the bar for the standard of excellence in the golf market.

Guy even worked a part-time "hobby" golf maintenance job at the Penn State Golf Courses for flexible superintendent **Rick Pagett** around a full-time sports writing job during his days in central Pennsylvania. Turns out, hand-mowing tees, raking bunkers and combining with co-workers on projects (some of whom are now

superintendents) was preparing Guy for what awaited later in his career.

For those of you who enjoy our print, web, social media, audio and newsletter content, Guy's not going anywhere on that side of our operation. His business card now says Publisher + Editor-in-Chief. But Guy will be the first to tell you *Golf Course Industry* is a team effort.

We're confident he can handle both roles because we're surrounding him with incredibly talented and dedicated people. Continuity and culture are *Golf Course Industry* pillars. Anybody who has been around Guy, managing editor **Matt LaWell**, national sales manager **Russ Warner**, accounts manager **Jimmy Clark**, creative director **Jim Blayne**, our writers and columnists, and members of our internal GIE Media support team know how much we care about your stories and goals. Our group also knows how to have fun and develop enduring relationships along the way. Since Guy took over *Golf Course Industry's* editorial team in 2019, we have maintained the same nucleus of contributors.

Consider it rare continuity in a volatile media landscape. Consider it a reflection on our new leader. 🌱



Dave Szy
Group Publisher

GOLF COURSE INDUSTRY

MISSION STATEMENT
To provide an independent, innovative and inclusive voice for today's — and tomorrow's — golf industry professionals.

Vol. 56 No. 7

GIE Media, Inc.
5811 Canal Road
Valley View, Ohio 44125
Phone: 800-456-0707
Fax: 216-525-0515

GROUP PUBLISHER

Dave Szy
dszy@gie.net

PUBLISHER + EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Guy Cipriano
gcipriano@gie.net

EDITORIAL

Matt LaWell
Managing Editor mlawell@gie.net

Terry Buchen

Senior Contributing Technical Editor

GRAPHICS / PRODUCTION

Jim Blayne
Creative Director

Kaitlin Sellers

Advertising Production Coordinator

SALES

Russell Warner

National Sales Manager
rwarner@gie.net • 216-393-0293

Jimmy Clark

Account Representative
jclark@gie.net • 216-393-0220

CORPORATE

Richard Foster

Chairman

Chris Foster

President and CEO

Dan Moreland

Publisher Emeritus

James R. Keefe

Executive Vice President

Kelly Antal

Controller

Christina Warner

Director of Data Acquisition

Michelle Wisniewski

Production Manager

Maria Miller

Director, Conferences and Events

Irene Sweeney

Marketing Director

Golf Course Industry is a member of:

Golf Course Superintendents
Association of America

National Golf Foundation

Golf Course Builders Association of America

The Irrigation Association

Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment

Beat seasonal diseases. Boost plant health.

Better protection against diseases helps keep your turf as healthy as it can be. By combining Mirage® Stressgard® fungicide with our new fluoxastrobin fungicide, Castlon™, you have the power of two complementary active ingredients fortifying your turf's core and preventing foliar and soilborne diseases.

Learn more about how our portfolio of solutions can boost your overall plant health: us.envu.com/planthealth



envu Golf

ALWAYS READ AND FOLLOW LABEL INSTRUCTIONS. Environmental Science U.S. LLC, 5000 CentreGreen Way, Suite 400, Cary, NC 27513. For additional product information, call toll-free 1-800-331-2867. www.envu.com. Not all products are registered in all states. Castlon™, Envu, the Envu logo, Mirage® and Stressgard® are trademarks owned by Environmental Science U.S. LLC or one of its affiliates. ©2024 Environmental Science U.S. LLC.

NOTEBOOK



BYE, BYE BERMUDAGRASS

Hawaii's Kohanaiki has built a solution to ensure its most prized surfaces can handle a tropical environment.

By Kelsie Horner

While living on one of Hawaii's eight main islands may sound like a dream for most, maintaining golf courses in the Aloha State carries many challenges.

For Kohanaiki director of golf course maintenance and grounds **Luke Bennett**, maintaining the greens on The Big Island has proved difficult due to the location and climate.

Kohanaiki is home to an 18-hole course, with six of those 18 holes on the oceanside. It also offers a private country club and residential community.

Starting in April 2023, Bennett and his

team took on the project of building their own sod farm on the course, to grow seashore paspalum to replace Bermudagrass infestation on greens.

Bermudagrass is used by many golf courses worldwide, being one of the most popular playing surfaces. But it can also grow as a weed, as it has for Kohanaiki.

Seashore paspalum has a higher salt tolerance than other turf options, making it a solid choice for Kohanaiki, Bennett says. It has been known to be a good option for courses in tropical climates with fast-growing turf.

"I wouldn't say it's the best playing

surface for our membership," Bennett says. "There's a lot of choices out there, but it's the appropriate turf choice for the water quality that we have and it's the appropriate turf choice for how close we are to the ocean. And it is a very popular turf type in Hawaii and other tropical areas for those reasons, and it primarily revolves around water quality. It is still a fantastic turf. However, if we were in a different location, paspalum would not be the turf of choice."

Located between the first and fourth hole, the sod farm has successfully grown paspalum to replace the Bermudagrass on two holes. Bennett says the project is about halfway done and will continue until resources run out.

While most golf courses looking to replace Bermudagrass will hire the job to outside sources, Bennett and his team face the difficulty of living on an island with limited access to resources for sod farms and the necessities involved in the project. For cost efficiency, they took the job upon themselves.

"Being in Hawaii poses some challenges," Bennett says. "Typically, we would go out and we would contract all this work out. Southern Turf, our grower, does have a sod farm here on the island but it is a very small acreage, and we needed a large amount of acreage. So, we had to go out and find the ground."

The sod farm's location onsite has proved to have environmental benefits for Kohanaiki. The course prides itself on being a silver certified Audubon sanctuary golf course. "Everything that we do here at Kohanaiki is very thoughtful, and we do it in a manner that is responsible for all aspects of the environment," Bennett says.

Removing Bermudagrass reduces the use of pesticides, fertilizers and other chemicals that could impact the environment.

"It's kind of a restoration project," Bennett says. "Golf courses restore themselves all the time. And when you do restore them, it puts everything back in place that allows you to move forward as intended, which is just more efficient in terms of environmental impact."

While the project has produced many

START EVERY TANK WITH SEA 3

Sea 3 is The Most Complete Carbon Based Product on The Market

- Increases the Efficacy of your Fertility Program
- Grows New Roots
- Improves Wear and Stress Tolerance
- Delivers Results at Low Use Rate
- Reduces Worm Casts
- Contains 75 Nutrients and 25 Amino Acids

EarthWorks 

A Deeper Respect

www.EarthWorksTurf.com



LISTEN



WATCH

benefits, it also has encountered challenges.

To grow a successful sod farm, a new irrigation system needed to be installed, adjusted and modified on multiple occasions. Bennett says new challenges arose in each step of the project, but the biggest issue has proved to be the weather.

The sod farm is grown on plastic, meaning one bad rain could send them back to the beginning.

"So there really is no soil and there is just a tremendous amount of risk involved with doing that," Bennett says, "So when we are propagating the turf, if there's a heavy rain event, it could wash everything out, we have to start over."

Bennett does not recommend golf course maintenance crews take on a project like this themselves. He recommends contracting the project to outside companies if the necessary funding is available.

"Don't do it in-house," Bennett says.

"This is not something that we did for cost savings. This is not something that we did for fun. We 100 percent would have contracted out this work. ... 100 percent. We would have hired a grower to grow the sod somewhere off property and have them deliver it to us when we were ready for it, and we would also have hired a construction company to install the sod.

"It is just being in this location, not having the sod grow or being able to produce the amount of sod that we needed, and then not having a local contract company that could work within timeline at a reasonable price that sort of forces down the avenue of doing it in house. So, for large regrassing projects, you are better off contracting



the work out and letting your team handle what they are supposed to do, which is the maintenance of the grass, not necessarily the

construction and restoration work."

But if you do decide to grow a sod farm yourself, Bennett credits a skilled staff for success. "It's all about staff," he says. With eight salaried managers beneath him, Bennett has a talented staff to assist with the project. "I learned that I'm surrounded by the best people in the industry," he adds. "We could not have done this with the full team effort of all of my managers as well as some of the executives here."

Kelsie Horner is a Kent State University senior participating in Golf Course Industry's summer internship program.

Tartan Talks 96

Jim Wagner graduated from UMass Amherst in 1999.

He never imagined a golf course industry career would mean living in Asia. Now, he's preparing to reside in the world's largest continent for a second time.

Wagner squeezed in a *Tartan Talks* podcast appearance before his recent return to Manila, the capital of the Philippines. Manila is centrally located among Asian spots where Wagner and his new partner, **Brian Curley**, are executing and pursuing numerous projects.

"Everything in this business is timing and networking," Wagner says. "I feel very fortunate coming into this situation. Our partnership and the different backgrounds that we have come together nicely, and I think it really set us up to be a force in coming years in the Asian market."

Wagner's work — and life experiences — in Asia extend to 2004, when his then-bosses at Nicklaus Design approached him about moving to Hong Kong. Besides a recent three-year stint in South Florida, Wagner has spent most of his career in Asia.

"Yes, I have left a lot behind here," he says, "but working over there has given me a lifetime full of experiences and created relationships and friendships all over

the world had I never moved to Hong Kong in 2004. As distant as childhood seems, there's a lot to look forward to."

To learn more about Wagner's background, philosophies and partnership with Curley, visit the Superintendent Radio Network page found on all popular podcast distribution platforms.



▲ Wagner

INDUSTRY BUZZ

The Pro/Angle line of quartz bunker sand is now part of the Best Sand portfolio for golf and sports fields. Best Sand's parent company, Covia, recently acquired Pro/Angle sand. ... BASF introduced Aramax Intrinsic brand Fungicide, a dual-active product to control 26 warm- and cool-season turf diseases. ... June saw the release of Envu's new Castlon fungicide. The product delivers control of 26 turf and 22 landscape/ornamental diseases. ... BRANDT launched GRIGG Rezadone, a thatch-targeting liquid to enhance turfgrass. ... Nufarm's Southpaw Herbicide received EPA registration. The combination formula was developed for post-emergent control of numerous weeds in warm-season turf. ... SGXL is now being offered as an all-granular spreader by Steel Green Manufacturing. ... The Scandinavian Turfgrass and Environment Research Foundation, The R&A and the USGA have launched the International Turfgrass Research Initiative, a project designed to make golf course and turf maintenance more sustainable.



COURSE NEWS

Greenwich, Connecticut's Tamarack Country Club kicked off the season by unveiling its newly renovated course guided by architect **Brian Schneider**. The nine-month plan featured the restoration of the original bunkers, alongside restored green surrounds, rebuilt tee complexes, new bunkers, berms and mounding. ... Cantigny Golf is celebrating the start of its three-year renovation project with architect **Todd Quitno**. The project will evolve and modernize all three of its 9-hole courses in Wheaton, Illinois, including an updated irrigation system and site lines... Tifway 419 Bermudagrass has been selected for the fairways and tees at South Carolina's Broomsedge Golf Club. The course, set to be ready for preview play in October, is designed by co-architects **Kyle Franz** and **Mike Koprowski**, and superintendent **Shawn Fettig** has managed the process.... In the mountains of Driggs, Idaho, The Tributary has completed the renovation of its 18-hole course. **David McLay-Kidd** led the project, which consisted of the removal of 35 bunkers to help create a "perfect middle ground for modest and experienced golfers," he says. ... The International's Pines course will open for limited play this fall, following a two-year renovation to replace

The Tributary



the course's emphasis on length for a more natural and refined golf experience. Led by architects **Bill Coore** and **Ben Crenshaw**, The Pines will now feature fescue grass on tees, fairways and in the rough... Heathrow Legacy Country Club became the first private facility in central Florida to install Toptracer Range bays. The 10 new outdoor bays are a part of a \$3 million renovation project, alongside irrigation system improvements and 18 new Champion Bermudagrass greens on the Garl

Course. ... Travis Pointe Country Club in Ann Arbor, Michigan, selected **Chris Wilczynski** to create a master plan for course improvements. ... Sherrill Park Golf Course No. 2 in Richardson, Texas, announced Landscapes Unlimited will oversee renovations to the course. Through installation of a new irrigation system and remodeling of tees, fairways, bunkers and greens, the course will be brought up to modern standards, says **Larry Barefield** of Landscapes Unlimited.

Tamarack Country Club



TOP: ©NEWTHTOUGHT MEDIA INC.
BOTTOM: TAMARACK COUNTRY CLUB

Raquel Schwartz

STONE HARBOR GOLF CLUB

Raquel Schwartz has a lot on her plate. As an assistant superintendent at Stone Harbor Golf Club in Cape May Court House, New Jersey, working under director of agronomy **Jay Ewan**, she's responsible for everything from scheduling and overseeing the crew and spraying, to teaching crew members the ins and outs of applying fertilizers.

"I have a pretty big teaching role right now for the rest of the staff," Schwartz says, "just to kind of free myself up to make sure everything's running smoothly."

A South Jersey native and a graduate of Rutgers University, Schwartz planned to make a career in microbiology. But the legendary **Dr. Bruce Clarke** convinced her to take his turfgrass pathology course. For Schwartz, it was a life-changing experience.

"He wasn't my official advisor at Rutgers" she says, "but I always went to him with questions about what classes should I be taking, what should I be doing. My parents know him. He's pushed me to apply for scholarships. He's had a very big impact on my career."

Busy as she is, Schwartz took time to join the corps of volunteers who supported the recent U.S. Women's Open at Lancaster Country Club. Speaking with **Rick Woelfel** on the *Wonderful Women of Golf* podcast, Schwartz recalled how she came to be part of the crew.

"The second that I heard the Women's Open was going to be in Lancaster I was like, 'I have to get here, I'm going to get here,'" she says. "And my boss was like, 'I'll make it happen, I'll reach out to (director of agronomy **Josh Saunders**).'"

Schwartz also was invited to work the event by Syngenta's **Madelyn Tappan**, who was assembling a team of female volunteers for the event. She received permission to work the Women's Open despite the fact she would be missing Stone Harbor's member-guest event.

Once on the ground in Lancaster, Schwartz spent her early mornings mowing greens. Her afternoons and evenings were spent raking bunkers.

"I was mowing greens on the back nine

every day," she says, "starting on 18 and then kind of leapfrogging throughout the back. I don't get to go out and just mow greens and rake bunkers too often (at Stone Harbor). I'm always out managing and making sure things are getting done, so it was nice to be able to focus on this skill and muscle memory for the most part. I was happy to be able to do it and meet all the other volunteers and get to socialize and network. It was an incredible week to say the least."

Schwartz noted the collaborative atmosphere that she said was evident throughout championship week.

"We were all looking at this like we were one big team," she says. "It wasn't the Lancaster crew and then the volunteers. I really got the feeling that we were all one big unit. Everyone took a lot of pride in what they were doing. So, we all kind of shared that together."

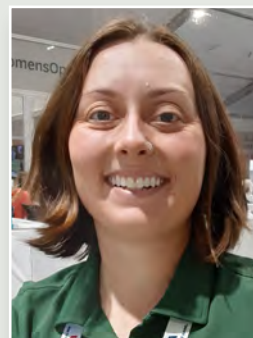
On Thursday, the first day of the championship, Schwartz had a moment to take in the scope of what the team had accomplished.

"On Thursday, I think the only thing that was running through my head was, 'It's showtime,'" she says, "and thinking about all the work we had been putting in leading up to this critical moment."

"I could not have enough pride in the work this group had been doing. Not just our group but Lancaster's crew in general" — which numbered just 18 — "taking care of not just (the championship course) but another nine that wasn't getting played on. They really set the bar for us when we got in." 🏌️



I have a pretty big teaching role right now for the rest of the staff — just to kind of free myself up to make sure everything's running smoothly."



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



StriCore™

Herbicide



THE **NEW** PRE-EMPTIVE STRIKE AGAINST WEEDS



New Solution for
Goosegrass control
& other grassy weeds



Does not
prune roots



Controls herbicide
resistant Poa annua



Safe on warm- and
cool-season turf



STAY INFORMED
BECOME A STRICORE™
INSIDER TODAY!

STRICOREHERBICIDE.COM



Always read and follow label directions.
StriCore™ is a trademark of SePRO Corporation.
©2024 SePRO Corporation.

COMING OCTOBER 2024



HUSTLING TO RESTORE HOGAN'S ALLEY

Imagine how the architects who were commissioned to restore the Notre-Dame Cathedral to its original magnificence felt in 2021 when awarded the project and given an ambitious timeline for its completion. Or how a surgeon feels with **Tiger Woods** on his operating table.

Welcome to the emotion-charged worlds of Colonial Country Club CEO **Frank Cordeiro**, director of agronomy **Rich McIntosh** and renowned golf course architect **Gil Hanse** when the decision was made to fully renovate one of the most historic courses in America.

Their job was to bring Colonial back to the way it played in its early days — say, in 1941 when **Craig Wood** won the U.S. Open over the track that came to be known as Hogan's Alley, so named for **Ben Hogan's** five wins there.

They were tasked with reintroducing a ruggedness to the landscape — a more natural look and feel — and bringing the added influence of the Trinity River into play. While the patient was on the table, why not also revamp the course's irrigation systems?

Oh, almost forgot: They would have less than a year's time to complete the project before PGA Tour players struck their first shots at Colonial in the long-running Charles Schwab Challenge. Under more normal circumstances, such an undertaking would require 18 months.

Hanse, whose résumé includes restorations at Los Angeles Country Club, the Olympic Club, Oakland Hills and Baltusrol,

had faced aggressive deadlines before in his celebrated career. But those challenges didn't come packaged with Texas's unpredictable weather. The renovation's success hinged on the course's recently planted turf making it through the winter without significant setbacks. On that score, they surely found no comfort in the state's recent history of record-breaking ice and snowstorms.

Nor would there be any mulligans. The timeline allowed for no adjustments — the pros would be the first to play the course, even before any members.

Intimidating? Daunting? Risky for men with their estimable reputations?

As Hanse said — and many others no doubt believed — failure was not an option. “When you have a deadline like this, you really can't fail. There's so much riding on it.”

Those who took on the challenge — a group that also included Caveman Construction, LaBar Golf Renovations, Heritage Links, Michael Kuhn & Associates and Colonial's own agronomy staff — followed in the bold footsteps of Colonial founder **Marvin Leonard**. Some eight decades ago, Leonard envisioned a golf course and club unlike others in the Lone Star State. He wanted bentgrass greens when others warned against it. He conceived of an invitational event for the world's best players. He persuaded the USGA to bring its national championship to Colonial only five years after it opened.

The team swung into action almost as soon as the last putt dropped in the 2023 Charles Schwab Challenge. In all, they moved upwards of 30,000 cubic yards of dirt as part of a \$25 million budget.

A supportive membership surely relieved some anxiety. “The project received well over 80 percent support at the time of the project approval vote,” Cordeiro says. “Throughout the project, the members were patient and supportive. No complaints, just encouragement, support and excitement.”

By now, we know the project was successful. Reviews were unabashedly positive in the days leading up to May's tour stop and during the tournament.

“The project was executed without a single change order. Amazing on a project of this scope, complexity, and schedule. Not possible without great partners,” Cordiero marvels.

Even some of golf's notoriously harsh critics were impressed.

“I imagine it's tough for a course designer to bring a course back in time, but accommodating the modern game, making it maybe more playable for an average member 51 weeks of the year, but still a championship golf course making it as or more difficult for us,” **Jordan Spieth** said on the eve of this year's Charles Schwab event. “I guess time will tell over the next four days, but it really seems like he's somehow done that, and that's really cool.” 🌱



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.



WHAT THEY SEE. MADE BETTER BY WHAT THEY DON'T SEE

Take water efficiency to the highest level with best-in-class Hunter Golf solutions! From our intuitive Pilot® Cloud Software to our top-of-the-line TTS-800 Series Golf Rotors, our complete lineup of industry-leading products is designed to ensure long-lasting performance, simplified maintenance, and maximum efficiency, so you can keep your course green with less effort — and less water.



GOLF IRRIGATION | Built on Innovation®
Learn more. Visit hunterindustries.com/golf

Hunter®



Superintendent Brett Winger has helped boost the monarch population at Temecula Creek (California) Golf Club.

HUMANITY **IN** HABITAT

Southern California
superintendent **Brett
Winger** is taking protecting
monarch butterflies to
another level at Temecula
Creek Golf Club.

By **Judd Spicer**

For those who played golf in the pre-2000s, seeing monarch butterflies on the grounds come summertime was as synonymous as drawing squares on a scorecard.

Today: Not so much.

Whether it be commerce, climate change, deforestation, products — or a combination thereof — threats to thousands of acres of migratory monarch habitats have seen a dramatic decline in population of the nation's most notable and noticeable butterfly across the past quarter century.

By 2021, the population was so low as to warrant the monarch being listed as “endangered” by



I've always been interested in environmentally friendly design. So, when I got into the position of being able to make landscape decisions, I jumped at the opportunity to take a step back and ask, 'What can I do?' with this responsibility of managing 150 acres of manicured turf. Then it was, 'What can I do with our sustainability efforts to give back to the environment?'"

— Brett Wininger

the International Union for the Conservation of Nature; in years subsequent, a slight flutter of hope saw the species reclassified as “vulnerable.”

The domestic golf community has played its part in the slight orange-and-black rally.

“There’s been a pretty well documented loss in the monarch butterfly population, with some experts charting it as much as over 90 percent,” says **Frank LaVardera**, Audubon International’s director of environmental programs for golf. “And a number of factors have contributed to that, in particular through what they call the major ‘flyways,’ where the monarchs make their annual pilgrimage, coming down from Canada to the United States and then down to Mexico.”

In 2018, Audubon International, buoyed by a later grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, unveiled its “Monarchs in the Rough” program, an endeavor that enabled Audubon International to provide, gratis, regionally correct milkweed seed — the sole plant on which monarchs can lay eggs and their caterpillars can feed — to golf properties that would guarantee an establishment of at least one acre (not continuous) to creating monarch habitat. In addition, Audubon provided participants with a wildflower mix, habitat signage and a guidebook to assist with garnering positive results.

“The typical golf course, in general, has somewhere around 90 acres of what we call ‘managed turf,’ and, of course, the 90 typically sits on much larger pieces of property,” LaVardera says. “So, the thinking was if we could promote the establishment of monarch habitats, that could contribute to help offset the decrease in population.”

Offset achieved, in part. While tracking numbers have evidenced a rebound from the 2020 monarch count nadir, today’s quantity is still dramatically lower when compared with pre-millennium monarch stats.

Yet, swing by swing and wing by wing, “Monarchs in the Rough” has found ample fairway, with the Audubon International initiative resulting in more than 800 participating courses across the country, collectively establishing over 1,800 acres of new monarch habitat.

To ensure such progress, however, further program fuel is welcomed. With the grant funds now expired, “Rough” is only available to certified member courses of Audubon International’s celebrated Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Golf program, and the non-profit is now actively interested in a finding a sponsor to back the “Rough” endeavor anew.

THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT

The monarch is as well known for its striking color aesthetic as it is for the species’ unique fortitude and instinct.

The only butterfly species known to make a two-way migration, consider that the monarch’s annual autumn western migration, as they come up and down the California coast, traveling to Southern California and as far as Baja, Mexico, accounts for an impressive 2,000-mile trip. The migration east of the Rocky Mountains? That’s an even more astounding 3,000 miles from Canada to central Mexico, seeing the little 0.5-gram dudes traveling as far as 100 miles a day, and climbing to elevations of approximately 1,200 feet. Of even further wonder is that the monarchs migrating north will die long before their descendants head south again, something of a miraculous journey considering that autumn migrants have never been to their destination.

In Southern California, where the monarch migration makes a spring or early summer pitstop, one popular resort destination has found particular humanity in habitat.

The 27-hole Temecula Creek Golf Club, wound about the Temecula Creek Inn, took full flight with Audubon International’s “Rough” program



Counting **CRITTERS** and **CONSERVATION**

For most maintenance and groundskeeping crews, arriving at work before the sun is fully risen describes a typical workday. For Harbour Ridge Yacht & Country Club's director of greens and grounds maintenance **Tim Cann**, this means interacting with animals other residents on the property might never see if not for the early rise.

Watching otters scurry across the greens or seeing wild boar feeding are just some of the wildlife scenes Cann has encountered on the Palm City, Florida, course.

But how can golf courses know exactly what species reside on their property?

Audubon International, an independent non-profit environmental organization, created a competition to bring awareness to just that. BioBlitz is a species-identifying and -counting competition offered to golf courses worldwide. The 2024 program ran from May 18 to June 17.

Courses registered for the free competition received the necessary equipment to explore their courses with the assistance of employees, golfers, volunteers and community members.

From an environmental aspect, golf courses are frequently questioned for their safety for plant and animal life, and this program helps shine light on what the industry is doing to benefit its environment, Audubon International environmental program specialist **Kelsie King** says. "Our goal, overall, is for this program to

By **Kelsie Horner**

provide our members with the opportunity to promote their property, enable courses to demonstrate their environmental stewardship to their local communities and really taking off that bad reputation that a lot of courses would get," King says.

Harbour Ridge, home to two 18-hole courses, a private yacht club and 695 homes, won first place in the "Biodiversity" category of the 2023 BioBlitz competition. With the help of club members, 607 different plant and animal species were identified within the property.

The club first began identifying and tracking species in 2018, carefully documenting their employees' findings in a database. Cann says this practice is part of what made their 2023 results so successful.

"We started building on what we knew was out there, and that's why we were so successful come 2023," Cann says. "We had such a good list to go by that the residents were able to identify more of what hadn't already been documented."

To protect these identified species, the course features numerous areas deemed environmentally sensitive. Golfers and residents are not permitted to enter these areas to prevent damage to plant and animal species' homes. This is done to preserve the areas as best as possible, Cann says.

Through identifying the wildlife on the property, Cann says employees have become more aware of which areas and animals should be avoided during certain times of the year.

"This time of year, you have to be careful about going into areas, because the bird and wildlife is messy," Cann says. "This would be the time of year that you really need to back off. Let's let them raise their young, get them out of their nest. And then if there's something that you need to go maintain — such as exotic would be one example — you just wait for that opportunity so that you don't disrupt the normal cycle."

Harbour Ridge has learned to share their property with the wildlife residing on it. "With the environment in mind, we coexist with nature and we do a really great job at it," he says.

This Florida course is just one of many to compete in BioBlitz. Courses from as far as Africa have participated, and superintendents across the U.S. are making efforts to be more environmentally friendly, leading to preservation of plant and animal life.

"When people are submitting, I like to look for animals that would be listed as threatened and endangered because it kind of shows you, you know, all of these umbrella species, which are the species that are selected for making conservation-related decisions that would typically protect other habitats and species," King says. "So by tracking that it can help you to make better decision making in the future."

Kelsie Horner is a Kent State University senior participating in Golf Course Industry's summer internship program.

three years ago and has derived results both environmental and educational.

"I've always been interested in environmentally friendly design," Temecula Creek superintendent **Brett Wining** says. "So, when I got into the position of being able to make landscape decisions, I jumped at the opportunity to take a step back and ask, 'What can I do?' with this responsibility of managing 150 acres of manicured turf. Then it was, 'What can I do with our sustainability efforts to give back to the environment?'"

Holding a degree in landscape architecture from Cal Poly Pomona, Wining sought to design a habitat space that advantaged the attention of both those on-course and the property's ample non-golfer foot traffic.

"I didn't want to just throw the milkweed seed in the peripheries, and have it just come up in the rough or O.B. areas," he says. "I wanted to take the opportunity to construct not only a habitat for the monarchs when they make their migration here, but to also create an educational space."

Wining ultimately selected a 9,000-square-foot space close to the

golf shop, close to resort lodging and close to the course, but also out of the way of any errant balls; the area, en route to the opening tee of the grounds' Oaks Course, had previously been a canvass of ornamental turfgrass.

"I wanted a space that was fun for everybody — that would allow guests to meander through and see everything," Wining says. "And after looking at the signage which Audubon provided us, and then looking at the space I chose — which is kind of a longer shape — I thought it would be cool to create the habitat in the shape of a monarch. Basically, the D.G. pathways in the habitat are based off of the signage, with the butterfly's body and

wings, and the planter areas basically filling in the color of the wings."

Spread across four planters, Wining was strategic with his design, color palate, flower choices and milkweed spread.

"Every planter has milkweed, which is a combination of common milkweed, narrowleaf milkweed and some tropical milkweed, which I get from a local source," he says. "And milkweed, being a pretty invasive species, it reseeds itself very readily, so once you plant one, it'll reseed itself multiple times. And it's kind of a beautiful thing about that — if it's provided an environment in which it'll thrive, you plant one and it expands on





itself. So, you don't need to go back and purchase it year after year."

Every planter was planned with purpose for both monarchs and property guests. The superintendent also added trellises throughout the space, created for the caterpillars to hang and create their chrysalises.

"The first planter is essentially an entryway with native grasses, which serve as shelters for other insects and pollinators," Wininger continues. "There are also sundrops, and then I spread some California poppy, which is the official state flower, which I put in every planter. And then, in another planter, we have three different kinds of citrus trees—orange, lime and lemon. That's because the butterflies not only like the nectar on the pollen, they'll also feed on any decaying fruit. So, I planted those as a secondary food source."

Flower and plant options for the insects—including *Rudbeckia* (black-eyed Susan), *Echinacea*, *Lantana* and *Helianthus* (sunflowers)—were a key part of the habitat plan.

"Even with the milkweed, if the butterfly doesn't have multiple options

of different flowers, they can kind of get bored and move on very quickly," Wininger says. "And you also don't necessarily want flowers with one big flower on a plant, but with multiple different flowers providing multiple feeding opportunities."

Space for all manner of non-monarch visitors has also proved vital to success and visibility.

"The back two planters, one of them has three 4x4 posts with 1/8th-inch holes drilled in, and I did that because carpenter bees are known to be better pollinators than your standard honey bee," Wininger says, "and they're also solitary bees, in that they don't have a queen that they protect. So, they don't necessarily sting you. They do have stingers, but it's pretty rare that a carpenter bee will sting a person."

Per Audubon International's hopes and aims with "Rough," a domino effect has taken hold with monarch habitat spaces.

"It has brought awareness to this species' declining numbers. Participating courses have received a fair amount of publicity for this program

and golfers have noticed what's going on," LaVadera says. "And this amount of attention also has spun off to others near the participating courses—individual property owners, commercial property owners—creating their own habitats. We've received a number of calls from people at non-golf properties, and we've referred them where to get seed and so forth."

Wininger's phone has also been ringing.

"Right by the golf course, there's a botanical garden which focuses more on roses and things like that," he says. "The year after we built our monarch habitat, they had some of their people come out here to see what we did, and then they built their own."

Along with working to save a species, concurrent benefit has come by way of eliminating peripheral turf. Changing the area to a habitat space has resulted in Temecula Creek saving more than 250,000 gallons of water annually.

"That area had three irrigation heads, so, by removing those, that's 600 gallons of water a night we're saving in that one specific area," Wininger says. "And we've replaced that with drip irrigation for the habitat, which doesn't have any loss through evaporation from the soil or any runoff from overwatering. It's all getting absorbed in the soil and used by the plants."

Along with earning Temecula Creek Inn the 2023 "Good Earthkeeping Award" from the California Hotel & Lodging Association, Wininger believes that the habitat passion project has filled his mantle with much more than mere hardware.

"If you're passionate about anything you'll make time," he says. "I mean, if you have the land—and, really, you don't need that much land for this—it's a great thing to do, a responsible thing to do and we've all found it a fun thing to be a part of." 🦋

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



FIND A DISTRIBUTOR



Powerful control
of both broadleaf
and grassy weeds.



Always Read and Follow Label Directions. Checkered Flag® and 04® are registered trademarks of PBI-Gordon Corp. 4/24 672902

Ya know, we're happy to **mix that for you.**

Q4® Plus saves time, labor, and money...

And it works. Q4® Plus Turf Herbicide for Grassy and Broadleaf Weeds controls crabgrass and other listed grassy weeds, plus broadleaf weeds - all with one product. And when you let us do the mixing, you know the formulation is perfect.

After all, we're PBI-Gordon: Precise mixing is what we do. So put us to work. Q4 Plus.





A PIRATE LOOKS AT 40

If you've never heard it, I strongly recommend the **Jimmy Buffett** song "A Pirate Looks at 40." And even if you've never heard the whole song, you've no doubt heard a phrase from it that continues to change in meaning as I get older: "If I knew then what I know now...."

If I knew then ... In my 30s and 40s, I was invincible. Rugged and tough, resilient, running marathons. I could work long hours, under the sun and in the swamps, drink a few beers, and come back the next day to do it all over again. Happily.

... what I know now ... There are few pieces of advice I wish I had paid closer attention to back then. If I had, some aspects of my life, particularly my physical well-being, might be very different now. Not that I'm complaining: Life is pretty darn good at the moment. But with age comes wisdom and the urge to share this wisdom — whether others want to hear it or not. Starting with my fellow superintendents.

Maintaining physical, mental and emotional health equates not only to a balanced life, but, potentially, a longer, more fulfilling and comfortable life.

Moving naturally and maintaining good cardio health is a great starting point. Get out of the cart and take a walk. Only two to three miles each day can make a big difference. Notice I didn't say run or jog. Just walk. If you are a step counter, set goals. I get a charge out of checking my Fitbit after logging an 18,000-step day in the yard and the gym.

If you must regularly haul heavy hoses and equipment, or love lifting your kids or grandkids over your head, make sure your body is up for the task. As you get older, strength training can be the difference between independence and the nursing home. Or as someone recently posted, "strength training is my retirement and insurance plan in one."

And stretching is just as important. It can keep you mobile and prevent injuries.

Sleep has been an issue my entire life. I never got enough of it. I'd wake up in the middle of the night worrying about something, then worry about missing the alarm, then worry about not being able to get back to sleep. These days — without the 3:30 a.m. wake-up call — I'm logging a few more zzzzs and the results are noticeable. If you don't get enough sleep, there are plenty of products and tools to help, from special sheets to sound machines, gravity blankets to different mattress types, and lots of apps that can help.

Same with what you eat and drink. I used to be able to down the double burger with everything, plus a chocolate milkshake and large fries. Do that now and I can hear my arteries hardening. I'm very careful to watch the fat, minimize the sugar and, especially, control portion size. A healthy, nutrient-rich diet will make you feel good and keep your mind sharp. It'll even help you sleep better.

As for alcohol, people in most blue zones (the places around the world where people live the longest) drink alcohol regularly, but moderately. Careful drinkers outlive non-drinkers, but the

trick is to drink only one to two glasses per day and do so with friends and/or with food.

But that's not the only drinking that makes a difference. Hydrate, hydrate, hydrate. The reasons are too numerous to list here.

Focus on the present. Much of our job entails planning and anticipating, looking to the future. But in our personal lives, we are well advised to live in the moment. While I know that's easier said than done, especially in the heat of the summer, you must put things in perspective. As I say all the time, it's just golf. Furthermore, we can't control Mother Nature. So, breathe. Find ways to reduce stress, which leads to chronic inflammation, ulcers, heart attacks and every major age-related disease. Start a daily exercise regimen, use a mental-health app or adopt some other regular routine that helps lower your anxiety level.

In agronomics, the grass is always greener where you water it. In relationships, make the same investment to nurture and grow your interpersonal skills. Prioritize family, cultivate friendships. You're sure to feel better and possibly gain inspiration as well. Put the phone away and be present at least a few hours a day for your spouse, your children and yourself.

When time permits, give back. To your community, to a cause, to the greater good. Remember, we can all find some higher purpose, and along with helping the rest of the world, it will likely ease some of your stress.

Finally, save and invest — in your bank account, in your family and, most importantly, in yourself. 🍷



TIM MORAGHAN, principal, ASPIRE Golf (tmoraghan@aspire-golf.com). Follow Tim online at Golf Course Confidential at www.aspire-golf.com/or on X at @TimMoraghan.

Tournament Flagstick

Royaline™ Flagstick

Practice Green Rod



Same old favorites, **new natural look**

Introducing three faux-wood flagsticks

Change the look of your course

By popular demand, we are proud to introduce three faux-wood flagsticks: our Practice Green Rod, 7 ½' Royaline Flagstick and 7 ½' Tournament Flagstick.

Now featuring a classic, timeless wood grain appearance while still maintaining their solid, resilient, fiberglass construction and veil-wrapped coating.

The best part? No splintering, splitting or color fading!

MORE INFORMATION ON
WOOD GRAIN FLAGSTICKS



- Solid, resilient fiberglass construction
- Royaline Flagsticks and Practice Green Rods are standard with a veil-wrapped coating
- Regulation flagsticks are standard with our Smart-Fit™ Pro Ferrule



Setting the Standard in Golf Course Accessories since 1910
866-743-9773 · StandardGolf.com © 2024 Standard Golf Company. All rights reserved.



Busy times on the prairie



Packed tee sheets became the norm when a new ownership model altered the business and workflow at a course in one of the Midwest's fastest growing cities. What can you learn from how superintendent **Barry Anderson** handled the sudden shift at **Willow Run Golf Course**?

By **Guy Cipriano**

BARRY ANDERSON leads the maintenance of GreatLIFE Golf & Fitness Willow Run Golf Course on the far east side of Sioux Falls, South Dakota. The large, modern homes above the 13th, 14th and 17th holes didn't exist when Anderson arrived as assistant superintendent in 2005.

Accessing the nearby Big Sioux River, the public

course's emergency water source, meant Anderson traversed dirt paths and cattle pastures. And he always needed to remember one task before returning to the course. "My boss would drive down there and shout, 'Go shut the gate!'" Anderson says.

Anderson was promoted to superintendent in 2008. Cattle no longer roam the land between Willow Run and the Big Sioux River. Willow Run now draws



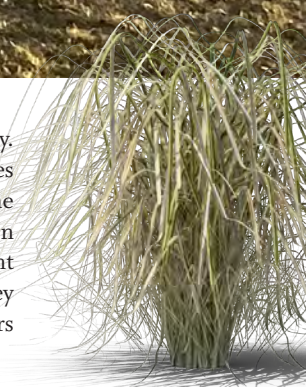


water from two wells. The last time Anderson checked the river's viability as an emergency water source, he says, "It was all streets and signs up there. I didn't know how to get back down to the course again."

The scenes Anderson encounters on the 38-year-old course mirror

what he observes on the periphery. Like the neighborhood above it, and the city where it resides, Willow Run has gone from sleepy to bustling. The Sioux Falls metropolitan area surpassed 300,000 residents in 2023, a sharp and speedy increase from the 187,000 residents inhabiting

the region at the turn of the century. Homes occupy former cattle pastures on every side of town. When the families living above Willow Run glance downward during daylight hours from April to November, they are almost guaranteed to see golfers on every hole.



SPOTLIGHT

► From left: Willow Run pro Erik Hansen, GreatLIFE director of golf Jason Crisp, Willow Run superintendent Barry Anderson and GreatLIFE director of agronomy Brent Venenga.

Willow Run supported 48,167 rounds in 2023, according to GreatLIFE Golf & Fitness director of golf **Jason Crisp**. The number marks the highest single-year rounds played total among the six GreatLIFE courses in Sioux Falls and surrounding markets. “And we were a little bit slow out of the gate because we had snow in April,” Anderson says.

Pushing 50,000 annual rounds in a climate with heavy snow and prolonged below-freezing stretches seemed unimaginable in December 2013 when **Tom Walsh Sr.** announced plans to meld golf and fitness in Sioux Falls. Walsh, a revered Burger King franchisee, was motivated by the healthy mission concept implemented at the GreatLIFE-branded courses in Kansas.

Willow Run and Bakker Crossing were Walsh's initial golf purchases. Separated by 12 miles, the courses featured pleasant layouts — Willow Run boasts surprising elevation changes for a prairie area code; Bakker Crossing has a links-style feel—and generated steady business, with annual rounds played in the mid-20,000s. Rounds played reached the high-20,000s during busy years.

GreatLIFE offered prospective members affordable, all-inclusive monthly golf and fitness memberships. Volume increased following the ownership change, and Willow Run and Bakker Crossing suddenly started attracting more than 40,000 annual rounds.

Remember, this growth occurred in a post-recession golf economy hampered by rounds decreases and course closures. “Barry and I got really close because we were thrown into the fire,” says GreatLIFE director of agronomy **Brent Venenga**, who spent



22 years as Bakker Crossing's superintendent before moving into his current role in 2023.

Anderson and Venenga related to what peers experienced when play increased without a tapering period during the COVID-19 pandemic. The pair, after all, endured instantaneous play surges six years earlier. Asked how the pandemic affected Willow Run, Anderson says, “Basically the tee sheet filled up faster.”

HOW DOES A superintendent know their work life has suddenly changed? Or that a new model might work?

Anderson reverts to the tee sheet. “We were busy before,” he says, “but you looked at the tee sheet and it was packed earlier in the morning and later, too.”

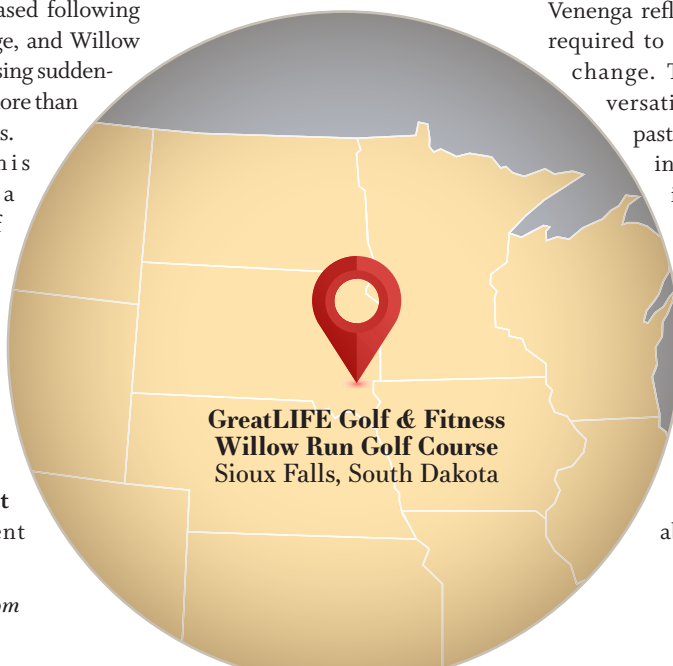
Whenever Anderson or a Willow

Run co-worker turned a corner — a frequent occurrence because holes bend right or left — they encountered a golfer. Midday tasks such as fixing a sprinkler head or edging had to be handled earlier or later with heightened alertness. Adapting to a frantic pace that never slowed tested Anderson and his team.

“You figure out early that you're either in or you're out on this,” he says. “If it's too busy and you can't handle it, then we'll find somebody else. You get back to developing everyone and they buy in.”

Anderson and Venenga remained happily employed and living in one of the Midwest's trendiest metropolitan areas by finding ways to evolve and flourish. Sitting in a second-floor clubhouse conference room with Crisp and a visitor on a March afternoon, Anderson and Venenga reflected on the mindset required to handle an ownership change. The 70-minute conversation about their work pasts, presents and futures inspired, informed and included guidance to help peers navigate ownership and business changes.

Anderson: “Just be transparent and be yourself. Don't try to be something you're not when they come in because you're not going to be able to uphold some-





Filling a market need

The Sioux Falls, South Dakota, private golf scene has yet to grow with the population. Only two private courses reside within the city limits. Both facilities are full-service country clubs experiencing heavy demand. The youngest of the two clubs opened in the 1960s.

Danny Amundson mentions the demographics multiple times while trudging through dirt and sand and around former cattle fences on a 210-acre site in early March. Amundson, a Sioux Falls native, is the managing partner of Mapletøn Golf Club, a private golf-centered club scheduled to open in 2025. When Mapletøn debuts, it will become just the seventh private facility in South Dakota, a 900,000-resident state with 120 golf facilities.

"There's a need," Amundson says.

Construction on the **Scott Hoffman** design commenced Oct. 30, 2023. The Landscapes Unlimited crew had the ninth, 10th and 18th green complexes — the putting surfaces closest to the future clubhouse and entranceway — preliminary shaped by the end of winter. The property features dips, a creek, an old silo from its previous life as a farm, sandy subsurface in random spots, and views of a neighboring hillside and Interstate 229. Downtown Sioux Falls and Sioux Falls Regional Airport are less than 15 minutes from Mapletøn.

"This club is meant to be a city club," Amundson says. "There's big business right at the footsteps of the club. When we were trying to find a location, we were obviously trying to find a location for beautiful, scenic land, but also a location close to Sioux Falls."

Discussions involving Amundson and Landscapes Golf Management President **Tom Everett** about the viability of adding another private club in Sioux Falls started during the COVID-19 pandemic. Everett was close friends with Amundson's father, **Mark Amundson**, a South Dakota golf legend who died in a 2014 car accident. Mark was a key figure in the early 2000s development of highly regarded Sutton Bay. Landscapes Golf Management has operated the City of Sioux Falls's three municipal courses since 2018.

Landscapes Golf Management will manage Mapletøn, which is using Lost Rail Golf Club, a Hoffman-designed course outside Omaha, Nebraska, as an operating model. Opened in 2022, Lost Rail generated instant buzz in a growing Midwest market.

Bentgrass will cover Mapletøn's greens, approaches, fairways and tees. Prairie-like aesthetics in the form of native areas on peripheries should create a memorable sense of place. Solid playing conditions from the start — Landscapes Golf Management had not announced a superintendent when this issue went to press in mid-June — are vital to helping Mapletøn achieve its business goals.

"We'll have a pretty good measure on success by 2026, 2027, because by the time this place opens next summer, people will have been waiting for it for a long time," Amundson says. "First impressions and people coming out here and playing their first five rounds ... we're going to know really quick what type of job we did building the golf course. We know this is going to be a first-class golf course."

— Guy Cipriano



▲ Mapletøn Golf Club managing partner Danny Amundson.



thing anyway. Be authentic.”

Venenga: “When the transition was happening, it was, ‘Hey, I am who I am.’ You were the first one there and the last one to leave. I remember thinking the same thing ... be who you are. If it didn’t work out, it was time to move on.”

GreatLIFE employees wear shirts with the *Live. Play. Better.* mantra on them. The wellness-themed mission statement: *To enrich the lives of families and individuals through golf, fitness and healthy lifestyles.*

Skepticism surrounding the concept of offering golf and fitness for low monthly membership rates eroded when Walsh started making improvements to the golf courses and clubhouses. Walsh immediately remodeled the Willow Run clubhouse, “knowing that probably in another year he was going to tear the whole thing down and blow it up,” Anderson says.

“And,” Anderson adds, “he did.”

A fitness center occupies the lower level of the clubhouse. Run

on a treadmill. Walk 18. Lift. All at the same location. All potentially on the same day.

Course improvements followed the clubhouse remodel. A par 3 Anderson calls an “ugly” hole was replaced with a hole playing from elevated and neatly landscaped tee boxes to a green fronted by a pond with mounding behind the surface. A photograph of the par 3, the current 16th hole, occupies the scorecard cover.

In the second year of Willow Run’s GreatLIFE existence, an expanded practice area opened and a wayward space near the 18th hole was converted into a 3-hole practice/warmup course. Bakker Crossing created a 3-hole practice course a few years later. Every GreatLIFE course in Sioux Falls has added family tees. Willow Run received two big-ticket items, a new pump station and an irrigation system, in 2019 and 2022, respectively.

Membership increased as Walsh acquired and enhanced more golf

courses and fitness centers. Many of the facilities Walsh purchased lacked the capital or capacity to invest in capital improvements in the early post-recession economy.

Consumers embraced the reinvestments. GreatLIFE ended its first year in Sioux Falls with 5,000 members, according to Crisp. Current membership exceeds 43,000.

Consumers also embraced affordable rates. An annual 2024 single unlimited walking golf and fitness membership offering access to all Sioux Falls-area GreatLIFE facilities is \$84.99 per month. A single membership with unlimited cart is \$147.49 per month. Central Valley Golf Club, Fox Run Golf Course, Rocky Run Golf Course and Worthington Golf & Fitness Club join Willow Run and Bakker Crossing as GreatLIFE-owned and -operated courses in and around Sioux Falls.

“The concept is very low membership rates, but it’s driven by volume,” says Crisp, who worked as the head pro at Bakker Run before moving into a corporate director of golf role last year. “When you have full golf courses, you have people buying food and beverage, and they are buying items at the pro shop.”

GreatLIFE courses are open to the public, although Crisp says member rounds account for 85 percent of play. Tee-time competition is fierce. Bakker Crossing hosted 387 rounds *in one day* last year, topping the previous high of 368 during Venenga’s and Crisp’s tenures at the facility.

WILLOW RUN REMAINS GreatLIFE’s busiest Sioux Falls-area course and will likely maintain that status for the foreseeable future. A fast start to 2024 puts Willow Run on a pace to exceed 50,000 rounds if favorable weather continues, according to Crisp.

The conference room where Anderson, Venenga and Crisp discussed their jobs, organization and backgrounds on the early March af-





ternoon has windows on three sides. Temperatures reached the mid-40s and wind gusts approached 20 miles per hour, yet two dozen hearty South Dakotans dressed in multiple layers were playing the course.

Anderson and Venenga layered up after the conversation for a course tour. Approaching golfers, many of whom Anderson knew by face or

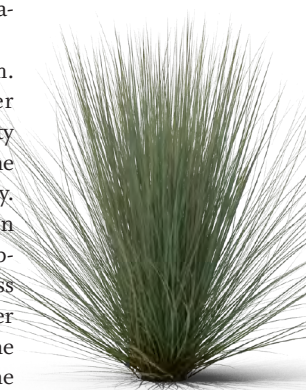
name, redirected multiple fairway conversations to the rough. Remember, March golf means bonus golf in Sioux Falls.

Willow Run carried a pre-GreatLIFE reputation as a scramble-friendly course, and Anderson says the course hosted as many as five sizeable team events per week during the peak season. Scrambles

and outings became less frequent as the philosophy shifted to providing tee times for GreatLIFE members.

Member-focused philosophies altered how Anderson and his team maneuvered. Instead of frequently preparing the course for 9 a.m. shotgun starts, the crew must be in position to accommodate peak-season tee times beginning at 6 a.m.

The hustle begins at 3:30 a.m. when a veteran fairway mower reports to the maintenance facility bordering the par-3 sixth hole on the northwest corner of the property. Using a Toro 6700 unit with seven reels that cuts 11 feet wide, the operator mows all 18 fairways in less than seven hours. A rough mower begins his day around 4 a.m. and the remainder of the crew reports one



Keeping you on top of your game.

Calling U.S.-based golf course superintendents! Enhance your business skills through the Syngenta Business InstituteSM partnership with the **Wake Forest University Executive Education** program. The four-day program, Dec. 3-6, will feature:

- Negotiations
- Tools for managing employees
- Leadership decision-making
- Work/life balance
- Networking with peers

Apply by August 19, 2024

To apply* and read insights from #SBIAlumni, scan the QR code or visit GreenCastOnline.com/SBI



syngenta.

*To be eligible for application you must be a current GreenTrust[®] 365 member AND employed in the U.S. as a golf course superintendent, director of agronomy or similar position.

All photos are either the property of Syngenta or are used with permission.

© 2024 Syngenta. GreenCast[®], GreenTrust[®], Syngenta Business Institute[®], the Alliance Frame, the Purpose Icon and the Syngenta logo are trademarks or service marks of a Syngenta Group Company. All other trademarks are the property of their respective third-party owners.

✕ @SyngentaTurf #SBI24



hour before the first tee time. On days with 6 a.m. tee times, the prac-

tice green is mowed as a cup cutter heads to the first green a little after 5 a.m. "If you're here at that time, you just see lights going everywhere," Anderson says.

An assistant superintendent who understands the pace and philosophies required to maintain Willow Run eases Anderson's workload. **Elias Peterson** joined the crew as a high school junior in 2008 after his father, **Eric Peterson**, a Willow Run golf league participant, asked Anderson if he needed somebody to help rake bunkers in the morning. Elias juggled working at Willow Run with a gig at a local restaurant. Anderson promoted Elias to assistant superintendent in spring 2022.

Flexibility helps Anderson retain staff, especially retirees, in a tight

Sioux Falls labor market. "The first time I bring somebody in, I try not to scare them by saying, 'When you get here, you'll be working at 4 a.m.'" Anderson says. "I say, 'We'll probably start somewhere around 4:30, 5,' and we'll go about it that way. Some of them will ask, 'Is it OK if I start a little bit earlier and leave earlier?' I'll say, 'Absolutely. Go for it.'"

Early beginnings. Filled tee sheets from sunrise to sunset. More homes under construction around the course. Stories are the only reminders of Willow Run's sleepy days on the Sioux Falls outskirts.

"All of the sudden we are in the middle of town," Anderson says. 🏌️

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





**GROUND MAINTENANCE
SUPPLIES IN STOCK**



PLASTIC PAILS



CORRUGATED TRAYS

ORDER BY 6 PM FOR
SAME DAY SHIPPING

COMPLETE CATALOG **1-800-295-5510** uline.com

STRENGTH THROUGH INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGY

FOUR HIGH PERFORMING PRODUCTS FROM TURF FUEL



VERTICAL

- Improves rooting
- Prime soil biology
- Supports soil health



- Amazing color
- Optimizes photosynthesis
- Fine-tunes plant function



- Reduces LDS symptoms
- Fortifies drought tolerance
- Balances soil moisture

ELEMENT 6

- Enhances metabolism
- Re-enforces plant structure
- Strengthens plant defense



info@target-specialty.com
target-specialty.com
turfuel.com
TargetSpecialty

TargetSpecProd
Target Specialty Products
targetspecialtyproducts





TECH TROUBLES

When integrated well, cutting-edge technology can increase productivity and improve turf maintenance operations. Is it fail-safe? Absolutely not. But a way forward always exists.

By Lee Carr

"I think people are afraid to change what they have been doing for 30 to 40 years," says **Drew Boekholder**, superintendent at Finkbine Golf Course at the University of Iowa in Iowa City. "I have always enjoyed technology and think we should be using it for everything. It hasn't failed me yet."

Boekholder admits some tech work can be tricky but explains that problems can be caused by user error. At Finkbine, they are working through an issue with a GPS sprayer. When it's not a user error, and it's something that can't be fixed in the field, the issue escalates to the course's equipment technician.

Ben Beard is the equipment technician at American Dunes Golf Club, in Grand Haven, Michigan. He is a former service manager for a John Deere distributor and is well-versed in troubleshooting. "We solve problems based on our individual expertise," Beard says. "If it's something that none of us can figure out, we put our heads together."

Beyond that, help is available. "The Reel Turf Techs community has a WhatsApp group with over 150 techs worldwide," Beard says. "Ninety percent of the time that's where I go first and within a matter of minutes, there is a response steering me in the right direction."

Whether the equipment is leased or owned, and under warranty or not, affects the next move if the equipment technician can't fix it. As more complicated technology is adopted and integrated into golf course maintenance, there's a growing need for advanced troubleshooting and customer service.

Benton Hodges, a former assistant superintendent and owner of Mountain West Turf Technologies, says, "There's a cool opportunity to remote in to technology and to help

people through online platforms. Tech does go wrong and there will be hiccups. It will be frustrating, so pick your partners carefully. Pick someone who will be there to help."

Because autonomous mowers and GPS sprayers are becoming more widely embraced, sales representatives and customer service teams are growing in experience. Problems are being resolved faster. Early adopters of technology help pave the way for others, the second-hand market grows, as does the variety of products being offered. There are more models, more brands and more choices.

"There are businesses that do a good job," Hodges says. "Some technology companies are trying to get into the turf game and they just don't get it. Superintendents that have pivoted into turf technology or experienced reps are going to be more useful than a run-of-the-mill tech company looking to make a quick buck."

Depending on the issue, the equipment and the situation, if troubleshooting remotely doesn't work, a technician may be sent to the course or the equipment may be picked up and taken in for service. Usually, someone can find a fix. Ideally, integrate new technology slowly so the team and the course technician can adapt. Try things out and determine what is useful.

The largest barriers to entry are a fear of the unknown and costs or perceived costs. "If you think all technology is too expensive, you are definitely wrong," Hodges says. "If you think some is, you are on the right track. It is more accessible than most people think."

"People need to keep an open mind," says **Justin Harper**, the superintendent at Deercreek Country Club in Jacksonville, Florida. He has experience at Frederica Golf Club on St. Simons Island, Georgia, The Dye Course at White Oak in Yulee, Florida, and recently transitioned from be-

ing the assistant superintendent at Atlantic Beach Country Club in Atlantic Beach, Florida. "Some people who try GPS sprayers decide, 'I don't like them' and write them off. You have to give it a fair chance."



▲ Hodges

The spectrum of attitudes surrounding technology results from personal experience. Seasoned superintendents will accomplish what they need to without new technology because they always have. New technology requires leaving your comfort zone and wrestling with new problems, believing the benefits outweigh the effort. Less experienced staff have grown up with technology and they trust it.

As a student, father, coach and veteran of the United States Marine Corps Reserve, and having completed a tour in Iraq, Harper has experienced life in many ways. "I grew up without a computer in the house but started using them in middle and high school," he says. "I had to adapt to it. I am young enough to embrace it and know how to use things that older superintendents may not feel comfortable with." Younger workers troubleshoot fearlessly because they always had to.

At Atlantic Beach, the team is led by superintendent **Chesley Scott** and they are using TDRs and taskTracker. They don't have a GPS sprayer, though Harper has been at properties that use them.

"To me, it's easier to spray with the GPS because you don't worry as much," he says. "It's a lot more like playing a video game than it is spraying and it's easier to teach people how to spray using a GPS. It's good to have skills where you don't need it, too." Both methods have merit. Techno-

TECHNOLOGY SECTORS

Mountain West Turf Technologies owner **Benton Hodges** simplifies the tech landscape using five sectors:

Digital management platforms. Build on data and statistical findings, weather monitoring, equipment repair schedules and anything that digitally assists with operation organization.

Robotics and automation. Includes range ball pickers and mowers that move themselves.

Sensing technologies. Cover handheld meters and in-ground sensors, as well as multi-spectral imaging.

Next-generation spraying. Includes guided systems, drone spraying and retrofit kits.

Aerial turf management. Uses drones for plant-health checks, irrigation system mapping, yardage book surveys and more.

logical progress will vary by property.

“Technology 100 percent requires buy-in from everyone, from the crew to the top,” Hodges says. “It’s going to make your life better.” Tech can help leaders be away from the course and have the data they need to relax about what is happening on property. Empowering employees to learn how to use tech, and all the functions of the technology being invested in, will maximize returns.

Technology and troubleshooting cannot be covered through formal education the way that learning happens on the job, so enabling interns and new employees to learn helps everyone.

“I am not afraid to let them hop on a sprayer and let them get the experience they need,” Boekholder says. “That makes it easier for them to go and find that next job.” That also gives them the experience to encounter and solve more problems.

Fin k b i n e works with Above Par Tech, which helps set up the course’s GPS sprayer. “They mapped all of our fairways,” Boekholder says. “I think

the hardest part was getting all of the nozzles and solenoids onto the sprayer itself and they did that for us. **Sam Schmidt** taught us how to use it. They are rock stars. I can call Sam any time, any day and he is going to troubleshoot with me.”

You have to have support. “There is a lack of accessibility with troubleshooting information — it’s not just a simple parts manual,” Beard

says. “Now we plug a computer in. I had a machine we had to send back to the manufacturer because it was throwing an engine code and I had no way of knowing what that code means.

You need the software from the manufacturer.”

Many facilities are working with both gas and electrical power. “The gasoline engine is more visual,” Beard says. “You can see if a component is bad or good. You can see the tests being done. With electrical, there is more testing and tracking down something specific. If an engine is broken, you have to rebuild it. With electrical, it’s basically a component that goes bad, or wiring. One is easier to find the problem but harder to fix. One is harder to find the problem but easier to fix. It’s a toss-up.”

It’s also about determining what technology is most appropriate for your situation. If you have trouble with cart traffic, a GPS system that limits where the golf carts can go might make sense. For play congestion, carts using GPS to display the distance to the hole with exact yardage might help.

The more informed you can be before making an investment in technology, being guided by necessity and motivated by the potential for improved operations, the easier it is to find the resources for troubleshooting. It’s an investment rather than an extra.

TALKING TECH

To receive backing for integrating new technology into operations, the projected value must be demonstrated. As the technology is adopted, report on how it’s going even if there are some hurdles. This is a chance to show how your team works for progress. When the investment begins to show a return, share that news, too. Sometimes technologies improve operations but there may not be changes that golfers and the administration perceive. Let everyone know how and why things are improving, whether you are creating better working conditions, improving sustainability or reducing expenses due to efficiencies. Promoting your technological capabilities will help you garner greater support moving forward.

Cost savings and peace of mind can be huge benefits of GPS sprayers. Autonomous mowers can help with safety in tricky areas. Shout about the wins. Make sure people hear about any savings and progress, regardless of the technology you are integrating. Larger properties have more economies of scale to work with, but the same fundamentals apply.

“There are properties where people don’t want to learn and want everything the old way,” Beard says. “Unfortunately, one way is going to thrive and one is going to die. Technology is here to stay so embrace it.” And the troubleshooting that comes with it? Embrace that, too — it’s part of stronger execution.

Remembering fundamentals, “You can never thank your staff enough,” Boekholder says. “No matter if they are driving a piece of equipment that has 100 percent technology on it or driving something fully manual, I thank my crew for the hard work they do.”

A tight crew and the right tech partners make shouldering any trouble easier. 🌱

Lee Carr is a northeast Ohio-based writer and senior Golf Course Industry contributor.

IF YOU THINK ALL TECHNOLOGY IS TOO EXPENSIVE, YOU ARE DEFINITELY WRONG. IF YOU THINK SOME IS, YOU ARE ON THE RIGHT TRACK. IT IS MORE ACCESSIBLE THAN MOST PEOPLE THINK.”

— BENTON HODGES



AN EVERYDAY ENGLISH GOLF COURSE

A long-promised vacation in the northwest English countryside of Yorkshire yielded my first real break from work in years ... almost. My wife is the serious gardener, and I am very much the yard laborer, but we share a penchant for classic landscaped parks, and so we set off for a self-guided tour of various Royal Horticultural Society properties without any golf clubs in tow. I almost stayed away completely.

But there we were, in the castle and historic market town of Skipton, midway between the Lake District and the historic walled city of York, and a local map indicated a golf course just a mile from our B&B. Off I went for a quick hike, and the visit proved enlightening as to the state of golf in the country.

In golf reporting, it's easy to get carried away with the elite, championship facilities. Yet famed venues like Birkdale, St. George's and Sunningdale are no more representative of English (or British) golf than Augusta National, Winged Foot and Cypress Point are models for golf business in the U.S.

Case in point: Skipton Golf Club, a pleasant club with an active local membership that is also open to the public. That's the case with most of the everyday courses across England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and Ireland. They don't hide behind a veil of secrecy, and they rely on the additional income from casual day play to supplement their operational budget. The difference is that unlike premier facilities such as Dornoch, Muirfield and Portmarnock, these clubs don't have steep guest fees of 150 to 250 pounds per round.

At places like Skipton GC, about two-thirds of the club's annual operating budget of £730,000 (\$934,000) derives from the £1,200 (\$1,536) annual membership fee paid by the club's 500 members. The rest of the club revenue accrues from guest play, outings and F&B.

Skipton GC developed in 1893 with nine holes. It gradually expanded in fits and starts — 12 holes, 15 and finally 18 in the 1970s — and as recently as six years ago got three new holes on the north side in open country that relieved some of the routing pressure. It sits on the rolling hillside of the Yorkshire Dales, and combines open meadow, parkland and 105 feet of elevation change for what is a pleasant country walk.

Almost all play is on foot, with most golfers utilizing various incarnations of battery-powered trolleys to convey their golf bag. The club registers 18,000 rounds a year, 20 percent of it guest play. That suggests the average member plays 29 rounds a year. Skipton GC is open year-round. While winter play is limited, snow coverage or frost is a rarity and only fleeting in impact at most.

Greenkeeper **Ian Brown**, 37, has been on the job for 14 years. He comes from a farming background, studied horticulture and sports turf in college, is a BIGGA member, and regularly attends the association's annual meeting and trade show in Harrogate, only 28 miles to the east.

At Skipton GC, Brown manages a budget of £230,000 (\$294,000), 72 percent of which goes to labor and benefits. There are four full-timers (including himself) and one seasonal laborer. That total is

well under half of what is spent on a comparable U.S. course for maintenance, while the share of labor is much higher — reflective of the mandates of the British social economy.

The overall site comprises 156 acres, with 54 acres of rye/*Poa* fairway that have no irrigation. There are only system heads encircling greens and on tees. The greens are relatively small, averaging 3,500 square feet and they feature a lot of contour. Two triplex mowers handle the putting surfaces. The rest of the equipment fleet includes two fairway mowers, one tractor-trailed rough mower, two deck mowers, a ProCore aerator, a Greens-Iron roller unit, three tractors and three utility vehicles. Off peak-season, the staff mechanic generates additional facility revenue by grinding reels for area lawn bowling and tennis clubs.

There is a distinct sense of informality to the golf at Skipton GC. The clubhouse looks and feels like a converted old farmstead. I counted 16 kegs of beer outside the main entrance to the building — evidence of hearty activity après golf. The club's PGA professional, **Peter Robinson**, has been on the job for 40 years — and he's only 57. In an effort to maintain green grass loyalty by members, his shop is part of the 560-club TGI Buying Group across the UK and Europe that networks buying power to price match online shops and provide quality service “on your doorstep.”

I didn't get to play. This was, after all, a vacation with other priorities. But a few hours spent at an everyday English club provided plenty to admire and learn from about the golf business. 🏌️



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 X at @BradleySKlein.



His passion for the game is what drives him, and motivates him, and that's what's gotten him to where he is today. All he needed was a chance."

— SETH STRICKLAND





Experiencing *the* turf dream

← **Walter Chavez** spoke no English and had never worked a golf maintenance job when he arrived in America. A passion for the game and the right mentors helped him develop into one of South Florida's most respected superintendents.

By **Trent Bouts**

Not so long ago, **Walter Chavez** found himself on the receiving end of a prolonged ovation. He wasn't the only one on stage that day but the large crowd of members at Hollybrook Golf and Tennis Club in Pembroke Pines, Florida, made it clear he was the star of their show. They were grateful for the leap in conditions he'd delivered since his arrival two years ago.

As the applause continued, Chavez admits getting a little emotional. "It made me think about where I came from," he says.

Geographically, that was Argentina, where Chavez was raised the youngest of three brothers in a "very

rough neighborhood" about four hours from the capital Buenos Aires. When he landed in Miami in 2001, he was just "18 or 19" and spoke no English. "All I knew how to say was good morning," he says, with a grin.

Still, he found work cleaning a yacht three times a week and picking balls on the range at Miami Shores Golf Club. Outside those part-time gigs, he had a lot of hours to feel adrift and think about home. So, on a bus ride one day, his ears pricked up when he recognized an Argentinian inflection to the Spanish being spoken by another passenger. Chavez introduced himself.

The speaker happened to work on a golf course. "When I tell him I have seven or eight years of expe-

rience in golf, he says, 'I'll call my boss,'" Chavez says. "I never specified what type of experience. I was just looking for a job. I didn't know what they had to offer."

So, on his first day at Indian Creek Country Club, of all places, Chavez found himself standing in front of a walk mower. "The assistant superintendent points at it and says, 'You know?' I'm thinking to myself it's probably like mowing my dad's backyard with a little push mower," Chavez says. "So, I said, 'Yeah, yeah.' I am young and I am from Argentina. We think that we know everything."

But Chavez's "experience in golf" was not in golf course maintenance. He had been a caddie from the age

of 11, and later took care of a driving range.

“So, the assistant took me to a green, and says, ‘Here it is.’ I crank it and start mowing. You can imagine what I did, right?” Chavez laughs. “I destroyed the green. He stops the mower and yells at me. Then he took off, just left me in the middle of the golf course.”

Had Chavez known his way off property, he would have taken it, at speed. “Indian Creek is very exclusive,” he says. “I’d seen a police officer with a gun when I came through the gate. I’m thinking, ‘Oh, my God. This guy has gone to get the police.’”

Eventually, the assistant returned and shuttled Chavez back to the shop for a meeting. A translator explained that his new employers wanted to know why he couldn’t mow a green when he’d claimed to have all this experience in golf.

When Chavez detailed his time caddying and on the range, he remembers a staff member turning to the boss and saying, “See, you need to fire him.” The boss, **Joe Pantaleo**, didn’t hesitate in response. He said, “No. We need to train him. He’s the only one on the crew who knows the game. So, we’re going to train him.”

Chavez had no idea how his fate turned for the better in that moment.

PANTALEO IS ONE of the pillars of the profession, a past president of the Florida GCSA and recipient of the Distinguished Service Award and President’s Award for Lifetime Service. One of the secrets to the success of the best is seeing beyond the moment. Which is how Pantaleo came to give the kid another shot. Truth be told, he had to give him several.

“When I was young, I didn’t know the system, didn’t know how the real world worked,” Chavez says. “It was my first time on my own. I’m just a kid living with a bunch of young guys and girls. A party every night. All the guys at Indian Creek were showing up 30 minutes before their start time, but I was showing up at 5:59 with the nightclub clothes on.”

Over the years, Chavez has wondered what might have become of him had Pantaleo not been so patient. “He had all the right to let me go. I think any other superintendent would be like, ‘All right, man. Sorry, but you need to go.’”

Instead, Chavez spent two years at Indian Creek, learning “the system,” the job and, little by little, the language. **Jim Torba**, a Pantaleo protégé, offered him a chance to work for \$2 per hour more at Miami Beach Golf Club.

Torba, a golf nut and accomplished player, soon learned that Chavez was a great golfer. His current handicap index is 0.1.



Miami, Florida

Buenos Aires, Argentina

“So, we were playing every day after work. At 2 p.m., he would say, ‘Walter, grab your clubs,’” Chavez says.

“That’s how I learned a lot. Because he was not only playing golf, he was sharing a lot of things. And I would ask a lot of questions.”

Those rounds might as well have been turf classes given that just a year later, Torba recommended Chavez for the assistant’s role with a first-time superintendent, **Seth Strickland**, who had just taken over at Miami Shores.

“I asked Jim, ‘Why are you sending me there? I can’t even communicate properly with you guys,’” Chavez recalls. “I could do the job, but how was I going to tell an employee to go and do something. Turns out, Jim was right. Seth was one of the best things that happened to me. I think we were good for each other. We started very early in the morning and worked ‘til late, then 6 or 7 o’clock we’d go to the range.”

Chavez was still learning English, but he clearly commanded the language of golf, the quality Pantaleo identified as valuable back on Day

▼ Walter Chavez played host to colleagues for the 2023 South Florida GCSA, which he also happened to win.





1. So, he was in his element with Strickland, another golf nut, who won his sixth national superintendent championship earlier this year.

Even though the golf industry was booming at the time, with opportunities aplenty, Chavez's ascension to the assistant's role at Miami Shores was exceptional. Just three years earlier, he'd been picking the range there, with nothing but "good morning" to offer anyone who spoke to him in English.

AT THIS POINT, it's worth addressing the reason he left home and his family in the first place. Those tears in his eyes at Hollybrook weren't just because of how far he'd come. He was also remembering how tenuous life itself can be.

The driving range he worked in Argentina was across "a big empty field" from the family house. At the end of each day, after washing balls and restocking dispensers, he and a buddy would lock up and, with the

day's takings in a bag, ride their bikes in the dark.

One night, "A couple of guys come out of nowhere, push us to the ground. They have guns and they tie us up, hands and feet. They were very intoxicated, either drink or drugs."

The robbers took everything, down to Chavez's tennis shoes. "They left me and my buddy lying there, tied up," he says. "And we're freaking out. I mean freaking out. It was a big shock for me. The guns were no fun at all, no fun."

At the same time, civil and political unrest was rising in Argentina. "I could see the country was going downhill," Chavez says. "Within a month or two, I was here (in the U.S.)."

At Miami Shores under Strickland, Chavez felt like he'd found a home. Then **Ricky Reeves**, who later became Florida GCSA president, took over at Miami Beach after Torba left. Through golf and the superintendent network, Reeves had come to know Chavez and wanted him on his team.

Chavez was hesitant.

"I told Seth I was going to stay with him for the rest of my life," he says. "I said, 'I am going to retire with you.' Seth said, 'No, it's a better job, better opportunity, bigger club, you've been there already, you know the system.' And the money was a lot more too. So, I took the job."

Chavez spent several years under Reeves before taking an opportunity off course with Lake Masters, a Florida-based lake, pond and wetland management company. "It was fun, great. Early-morning starts, done by noon, no weekends," he says. "They gave me a truck, nice truck, a better truck, bonus, full benefits. All the stuff was great." But after several years, Chavez wondered if there was enough opportunity in front of him, like there had been in golf course maintenance.

So, he returned to golf under **Bob Harper**, a three-time Florida GCSA golf champion, at The Club at Emerald Hills. Then Reeves came call-

PEOPLE

► Assistant superintendent Jose Vega is a key part of Walter Chavez's Hollybrook Golf and Tennis Club team.

ing again. He'd lost his assistant and had always been happy with Chavez. "I went back and after three or four years, Ricky got moved up to director of golf and they made me a superintendent," Chavez says.

"Two years ago, in May, I got the offer for this job (at Hollybrook)." His own place for the first time.

That day on stage back in March, all of the above and more flashed through his mind while the applause rang out. Of the *more*, much of it

centered on family. As the youngest, there was always an expectation Chavez would live with his parents into their old age. "I'm sure my parents thought I would stay, like a lot of guys my age back then," he says. "Build an apartment in the back or

on top of the roof and live there. But today my parents are very proud."

Though neither has traveled to Florida for a visit. "They've never been on a plane. Never left the country," Chavez says. "My mom says she is afraid of escalators, and



© TRENT BOUTS

Aim to Please.

TORRENT 2 DEBRIS BLOWER



In today's workday, it's all about getting the job done fast, yet right, so staff can be as productive as possible. We calculated the optimum angles, so operators can go to one of 5 different stops, and be sure the angle is right. Whatever the assignment, we have the stop for you. You'll be pleased with the aim of the new Torrent™ 2 taking MagniPoint™ Technology to a new level.

That's the Beauty of being more Productive.



CALL US AT (800) 679-8201 OR VISIT TURFCO.COM

Were You Featured In This Issue?

Reprints enable you to reuse your article and simply place it into the hands of your target audience. Having been featured in a well-respected publication adds the credibility of a third-party endorsement to your message.

Give yourself a competitive advantage with reprints. Contact us for more information regarding reprints and additional applications designed to meet your challenging market needs.



Use Reprints As:

- Sales Aids
- Recruitment Tools
- Managed ePrints
- Trade Show Handouts
- Media Kit Supplements
- Educational Programs
- Employee Training
- Sales Presentations
- Conference Materials
- Direct Mail Campaigns

**Call 800-456-0707 or
email reprints@gie.net**

she is worried that she will pass out in an elevator." In 23 years, each of his brothers has visited once. So, when Chavez makes the trip home, it is always bittersweet.

"A lot of emotions, good and bad," he says. "You go back there, and you see the reality that you maybe didn't fully realize when you were living there. Still, it's always tough getting on a plane to come back. Still today, that's the worst part. Mom always does the same thing, standing there looking at me when I'm leaving in the taxi ... it's just so ... yeah ..."

Chavez's professional family is also proud.

"To look at where he is now and what he has accomplished, it's incredible," Strickland says. "He and I are similar in a way, where we don't have the educational pedigree of some superintendents in South Florida. Both of us have worked our way up through the ranks. His passion for the game is what drives him, and motivates him, and that's what gotten him to where he is today. All he needed was a chance."

Chavez took GCSAA and Florida GCSA classes at every opportunity, checking off his licenses and BMP certifications — both golf and green industry — along the way. There were never enough hours to attend formal turf school. Since 2010, Chavez has simultaneously operated his own interior landscaping business, providing and tending plants for hotels and businesses, often before getting to the golf course and sometimes afterwards.

Now 43, he has set superintendent certification as a goal. "I know it's difficult but I've done a lot of things so I don't see why I cannot do that one," he says, grinning again. "Since I don't have a degree, I think that would be a great thing for me if I want to keep getting better."

That would not surprise Pantaleo, who laughs at the memory of that first encounter with Chavez, "fresh from Argentina."

"That was interesting," he says. "We put him on a nursery green. Improper mowing lines, scalping. Basically, he didn't know how to turn a mower. Or lift it up or set it down. Didn't know just about everything. But he was an enthusiastic learner, and he knew golf. I gravitated toward that, the guy who wanted to be better as a player and in the profession. I'm proud of him. And I'm

sure he'll continue to grow."

Strickland is similarly proud: "Hard-working guy who put his nose to the grindstone, and it's paid off tremendously for him. His story is like, it's like the

American Dream, really." 🌱

Trent Bouts is a Greer, South Carolina-based writer and frequent Golf Course Industry contributor. This story first appeared in *The Florida Green*.



Savvy superintendents know. They call DryJect.

Every course is different. So a cookie-cutter treatment won't work. Now you can tailor soil modification while you aerate.

SOME COURSES need 4" - 5" depth for drainage, like ❶.

Some need to break through organic matter, like ❷. And some need to increase infiltration rates, like ❸ with DryJect® Maximus®.



Tell us your agronomic needs.

DryJect modifies your root zone just how you want it with wet or dry materials of your choice.

AND JUST LIKE THAT, your course is back in business with few if any closed days or discounted rounds. Affordable? It's better than that. DryJect pays back thousands by being open for play within a day or so versus weeks with core aeration.



Aerate and Amend in Just One Pass™

DryJect.com or 800-270-8873



Short course

VISION

Why a passionate decision-maker at a Kansas City-area private club made adding a par-3 course his team's next big project.

By **Guy Cipriano**

Editor's note: This is the first of a two-part "Short Course Stories" series about the process of adding a par-3 course at Oakwood Country Club in Kansas City, Missouri. The second part will appear in the September issue.

Working as a director of agronomy at a course guided by an ambitious developer with a longtime personal connection to the property requires inordinate patience and supply management.

Brent Racer demonstrates both traits. Racer oversees the maintenance at Oakwood Country Club in Kansas City, Missouri. His boss, **Ken Block**, organized a group of members to purchase the club in 2020. Block's relationship with the 143-year-old private club spans six decades. Re-energizing Oakwood, a former Jewish club that had experienced membership and prestige dips, represents a passion project for Block.

His goals are lofty. He strives to transform Oakwood into one of the Midwest's most desirable and innovative clubs. Sod trucks, architects,

contractors and frequent suggestions from Block following his whirls around the grounds are staples of Racer's professional life.

"I can't say enough about how important he is to our organization and where we are going with this," Block says. "We have so many little things planned that I keep putting on them. The worst thing is that I go out and play golf and I'm sending text messages, 'We have to fix this, we have to fix that.' He's very patient, which I appreciate."

Little things turn into big things at Oakwood. "People always ask, 'When are you going to be done?'" Racer says. "I don't think we'll ever be done. There'll always be something to change."

With the Memorial Day weekend unveiling of a 9-hole, par-3 course unlike anything residing at a private club in the Kansas City market, Oakwood is on a trajectory only Block envisioned a few years ago. Designed by Kansas City-based architect **Todd Clark** and golf course savant and writer **Ron Whitten**, the par-3 course represents an integral piece to Block's quest to make Oakwood an option for private club members from everywhere seeking a Midwest hub. "From Day 1, my idea, our vision for the club, was to turn it into something that has not been seen in Kansas City," Block says.

Before building a par-3 course on a 28.8-acre parcel Block's group purchased in 2021, the **Tom Bendelow**-designed regulation course needed enhanced. Clark and Whitten devised plans to improve every hole. In fact, Block acquired wooded land surrounding the course to build three new holes.

Tees were added, so the course can play anywhere from 4,500 yards to more than 7,150. Bunkers were renovated, allowing for improved maintenance and playability. Fairways were converted to zoysiagrass, a trendy and playable turf type found throughout Kansas City. Ten greens were rebuilt the first summer under



◀ Oakwood Country Club superintendent Brent Racer.

new ownership.

“That was only part of the job,” Block says. “The other part of the job was to try to create some additional amenities around it. How do you make it more than just a nice course?”

Block then addressed the practice range, which he refers to as a “performance center.” The facility is a tinkerer’s and beginner’s delight, with Trackman technology monitoring ball flight and simulators allowing for winter play and socialization. The short-game area features a system concocted by Whitten with pitch shots of varying distance found on the regulation course. “But,” Block says, “that wasn’t enough.”

Clark and Whitten then designed a 12-hole putting course, an amenity added by some of the nation’s more popular golf resorts in recent years. Oakwood’s iteration borders a waterfall surrounding the 18th green, and includes lights, speakers and a putting cottage with an outdoor grill and indoor snack bar. “From there,” Block says, “I felt like we had to go one more level.”

Enter the par-3 course.

Coincidentally, the heavily wooded land Block’s group purchased was once owned by his father, **Allen Block**. After his father and the club sold the property, it served as a home

for the Spofford Treatment Center for children. The land sits across the parking lot from the regulation. Most people saw useless clutter beyond the parking lot. Block, whose days playing at the club are among his fondest childhood memories, saw an opportunity to separate Oakwood from other Kansas City-area clubs.

“Looking at the holes now, you can’t possibly understand how they were sitting in that piece of property,” Block says, “But here they were, waiting to be uncovered. I’m probably as excited about the par-3 course as anything else we have done out on the course. It’s the extra piece that the great courses have, and that’s where the real fun is.”

Planning for the par-3 course commenced in 2021, as Clark and Whitten trudged through the woods numerous times to comprehend how and where to build holes. “The first time I walked it I came out of the woods with about 20 ticks on me,” Clark says. “It was rugged terrain to walk through without any center lines cut.”

The pair, with enthusiastic support from Block, created a concept honoring notable par-3 holes on architecturally significant courses such as Augusta National, Pine Valley, Royal Wimbledon Golf Club

and Spyglass Hill. Racer initially struggled visualizing what Block, Clark and Whitten were plotting. The woods were *that* thick. Plus, his team’s workload increased as it juggled the regulation-course renovation with daily play and other projects. The club kept 18 holes open throughout the renovation, limiting Racer’s opportunities to explore the course being planned.

“At first, you look at it and it wasn’t like a school, a building or that kind of thing,” Racer says. “It was hard to see.” For Racer, visualization occurred as staking commenced. “I knew it would be something special,” he adds.

Learning how to maintain high-level turf on a severely sloped site amid dense trees atop heavy-clay soils presents challenges. But the most challenging part of building a new golf course solidified by 2022. Somebody with a vision was ready to devote resources to making plans reality. When that golf development moment occurs, everybody on the payroll must adapt.

“There’s a process and you go through the steps every day,” Racer says. “You can’t get too excited, and you can’t get too worried about what’s coming. When you think too far down the road, it will overwhelm you. One day at a time, and you have to rely on people to do their job.”

Stay in the moment. It’s terrific advice for anybody working for an engaged owner with grandiose ideas stemming from a childhood love for a place.

“I would have never dreamt 50 years later that we would be opening one of the coolest par 3s in the country,” Block says. “The elevation differences and the surrounding of every hole by trees and forest by itself makes it unique. I play a lot of par 3s at a lot of different places. Most of them are on that extra piece of ground and they’ll say, ‘We’ll squeeze a par 3 over there. It will be really great.’ But there’s nothing like this.” 🌲



WORKING *with* *what* YOU HAVE

Sadly, new maintenance facilities will likely never become a reality for most superintendents. **Ron Furlong** reveals practical and affordable ways to help your course overcome the space deficit.

Although upgrades and new purchases can occasionally be a bit difficult for superintendents to get approved, they do occur each year. New pieces of equipment, new flagsticks, cups, benches, ball washers, sprinklers or even a new irrigation system. Difficult to obtain? Yes. But nothing lasts forever, and all things eventually need to be replaced or renovated.

The one area of the operation that seems the most difficult to get improvements on is the maintenance shop. Which, I suppose, makes sense. If golfers aren't seeing the improvement, it can be hard to justify the expenditure for those spending the money.

For this reason, the shop and the maintenance yard around the shop often get neglected. Everything ages, but improvements, renovations or replacements are not commonplace. The maintenance shop and yard are almost always last in line for seeing any money for improvements. Generally speaking, they are the sore spot of a property.

Creativity is frequently needed on the part of those who work out of these areas. Not only do our facilities often need a renovation, but as we acquire more things each year, space itself becomes a huge issue. And for most of us, that space is not going to suddenly get larger any time soon.

Last winter, at our course, Avalon Golf Club in Burlington, Washington, we purchased some used equipment from a golf course that had gone out of business a few years earlier. It was nice to add some depth to our inventory, even if most of the pieces we purchased needed some basic upgrades to get them up and running. The presence of the equipment created a new problem: Where were we going to store everything?

We were already tight on space before we got the dozen or so new pieces of equipment. Once the purchased equipment arrived at our course, our shop yard instantly resembled a junk yard—which is never a good look. We quickly realized we were going to have to devise ways to store our equipment in a tidy, organized manner, while also achieving the ability to have every piece of equipment at least covered.

Some of our equipment gets parked inside our shop nightly. Pieces of equipment like carts, walk mowers, triplexes, trap rakes, rollers, sprayer, blowers, string trims and hand tools all have a home inside the shop. While this sounds like a lot, it also means a heck of a lot doesn't get parked inside. Four tractors, rough mowers, fairway mowers, topdressers, trencher, excavator, aerif-

ers, sod cutters, electric brushes and a few other items must be parked outside.

Not being able to spend too much money on this, we concocted the solution of purchasing four 20-foot by 14-foot car ports. Considerably less expensive than having buildings or lean-tos built, the car ports, although not cheap at about \$3,500 apiece, did provide a manageable way for us to get everything at the very least covered and also give the shop yard an organized appearance.

Because of limited space inside our shop, we've also purchased a couple fairly large sheds we put up next to our shop. One of the sheds is used for woodworking and paint supplies (we make our own tee markers), and the other shed is utilized by the equipment technician to store extra parts taking over his space. We also built a loft for storage above one of the bays in our long existing lean-tos. Lofts are a great way to create usable space without sacrificing anything else.

Another thing most golf courses accumulate each year is a significant amount of compost. I don't know of a single golf course that doesn't generate and maintain their own compost. Being able to reuse this "waste" on new projects is a pretty nice perk if you do take the time to maintain your compost.





But having space for compost can be a huge issue, especially depending on how much you actually generate. If you don't end up composting and then reusing the material on the course, you could be stuck with yards and yards of soil that eventually will consume more space than you have. Some of the projects we use our compost on include filling in stump holes after we take down trees and grind the stumps and filling in bunkers that we have shrunk or actually eliminated during the winter. This is an ongoing project for us. We also use a fair amount of our compost each year at the clubhouse for flower and vegetable gardens.

We usually have three compost piles accumulating at any one time in different stages of composition. One pile is new compost we add to daily material such as grass clippings and sod. Another pile is in the "aging" stage that we turn with the loader from time to time. A third pile has composted fully and we use it on the course for projects any time we need soil. Having the space for these three piles is a constant challenge for us.

In addition to compost, many golf courses need a significant space set aside for wood debris. At Avalon, we cut down 20 to 30 dying or dead alders each winter. Before it was a golf course, the property was mostly alder and cottonwood forest, and the alders that were left between the golf holes

have slowly been dying over the years. Alder is a very quick growing, weedy tree with a short life span. When they die, they die rather quickly from the tip down. It doesn't take them long to become pretty unsightly. And the wood from these dying trees does not even include all the debris generated from windstorms throughout the year.

One way we deal with all this wood is to cut up and sell some of the alder each winter. We also end up having burn piles we throw a match to in the early spring each year. The wood we sell we put into a kitty for the maintenance crew that we use each year to have pools for the major golf tournaments or fun stuff for crew golf tournaments in the summer. Being able to sell some of the wood and burn the rest is the best solution we have devised to not have this impede on the limited space we have set aside.

Another space issue for golf course maintenance is the inevitable question of where to store the large amounts of sand and gravel most of us disperse each year. At Avalon, we have four different sand piles, each one almost always with some inventory: 1 millimeter, 2 millimeter, divot mix and bunker sand. Add to that a pile of crushed rock and a pile of pea gravel for drainage and a pile of landscape bark, and this can very quickly also become a space issue.

Keeping enough material available, but not too much, is usually the only

solution here. Landscape blocks or railroad ties can make a good border to keep the sand contained and not contaminated.

Another space issue we recently encountered definitely required creativity to address. The issue involved our customer parking. We have a spacious parking lot, but because of the increase in rounds played the last four years, it simply is not big enough. We are a 27-hole course and occasionally conduct shotgun tournaments on all three nines. This means 220 golfers on the course at once, most of whom most likely drove solo. That's a lot of cars. We simply don't have the parking space we need. Vehicles will often park along the side of our entry road, which is problematic in several ways.

We ended up using the excavator this past winter to clear an area next to our main parking lot along the property border and created an extra 15 parking spaces. Still not enough, but better than it was.

Creativity and ingenuity go a long way in making your workspace functional while preventing you from becoming overcrowded and having that unsightly junkyard appearance.

We can all do without that. 🌱

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

REAP FROM WHAT WE KNOW.

OUR INDUSTRY-LEADING EXPERTISE DELIVERS NEXT-LEVEL RESULTS.

Our decades of experience in turf and horticulture have resulted in a team of experts that are committed, connected and consultative. It's expertise that's led to a full line of superior products and agronomic solutions all designed to deliver vibrant plants and turf that are second to none.

See what Simplot Turf & Horticulture
products are right for you at

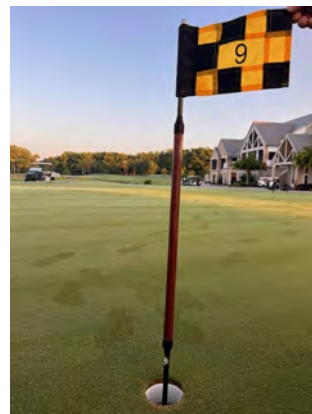
TH.simplot.com



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.

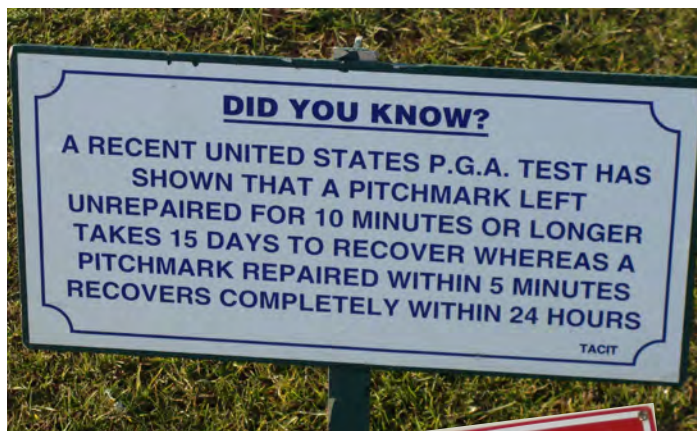
COCKTAIL GLASS HOLDER PRACTICE GREEN MARKERS

The Himalayas Putting Course is a very popular feature with the 36-hole membership during special events at The TwinEagles Club in Naples, Florida. In addition to the 18 checkered flag practice green markers, there are 18 custom-made markers that have four cup holders on each, placed adjacent to the practice green markers and numbered 1 to 18. The markers are made of wood, with a metal spike at the bottom to hold them in place, and the cup holders are made of composite material. The wood portions are stained, and the numbers are painted, at least once per year. Tee markers are not required, as the hole numbers are easily seen to provide direction to the next hole. Theft has not been an issue; they are repaired as necessary, and a few spares will be placed in inventory. The Himalayas green will be used much more in the future, as it will be lighted soon for nighttime events. **Darren Gafford**, director of agronomy, did extensive online research and visited the Streamsong Resort for the design concepts and then they were made locally.



SIGNS OF THE TIMES

I have seen plenty in my travels over the years. Here are some of the most creative signs I've spotted while on the road.



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.

FOR SALE

Discount Small Engines & Parts

Small engines & parts
from Briggs & Stratton, Kohler,
Tecumseh, Robin and more.

www.smallenginesuppliers.com

Also, look up your own parts
and buy online at
www.smallenginepartsuppliers.com

MERGERS & ACQUISITIONS

MILLER MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATES

GOLF COURSE BROKERAGE
COURSES FOR SALE

www.southeastgolfproperties.com

brett@mmagolf.com

828-775-7765

SEEDS

NATIVE SEEDS

Largest producer of native seeds
in the Eastern U.S. Hundreds of
species of grass and wildflower
seeds for upland to wetland sites.
Bioengineering material for riparian
areas and erosion control.
Contact **ERNST SEEDS** today.
www.ernstseed.com – 800/873-3321

NAMES INDEX

Danny Amundson Mark Amundson **Barry Anderson** Larry Barefield **Ben Beard** Tom Bendelow **Luke Bennett** Allen Block **Ken Block** Drew Boekholder **Ian Brown** Jimmy Buffett **Tim Cann** Walter Chavez **Guy Cipriano** Dr. Bruce Clark **Jimmy Clark** Todd Clark **Bill Coore** Frank Cordeiro **Ben Crenshaw** Jason Crisp **Brian Curley** Brent Downs **Tom Everett** Shawn Fettig **Kyle Franz** Darren Gafford **Matthew Gourlay** Gil Hanse **Erik Hansen** Bob Harper **Justin Harper** Benton Hodges **Scott Hoffman** Ben Hogan **Kelsey King** Mike Koprowski **Frank LaVardera** Matt LaWell **Marvin Leonard** Rich McIntosh **David McLay-Kidd** Rick Pagett **Joe Pantaleo** Elias Peterson **Eric Peterson** Todd Quitno **Brent Racer** Ricky Reeves **Peter Robinson** Josh Saunders **Sam Schmidt** Brian Schneider **Raquel Schwartz** Chesley Scott **Seth Strickland** Lee Strutt **Madelyn Tappan** Jim Torba **Justin VanLanduit** Brent Venenga **Jim Wagner** Tom Walsh Sr. **Russ Warner** Ron Whitten **Chris Wilczynski** Rick Woelfel **Craig Wood** Tiger Woods

ADVERTISER	WEBSITE	PAGE
AQUA-AID Solutions	aquaidsolutions.com	51
Aquatrols	aquatrols.com	2
BASF Corporation	basf.com	insert
DryJect	dryject.com	41
Earthworks	earthworksturf.com	7
Envu	us.envu.com	5,52
Hunter Industries	hunterindustries.com/hpc	13
JR Simplot Co	simplot.com	47
PBI-Gordon Corp.	pbigordonturf.com	20,21
SePro Corporation	sepro.com	belly tip, 11
Standard Golf Company	standardgolf.com	23
Syngenta	syngenta.com	29
Target Specialty Products	target-specialty.com	31
Turfco MFG, Inc.	turfco.com	40
Uline	uline.com	30



Once... Twice... Three Times Your Industry News

For news and stories we just couldn't fit into
the pages of our monthly magazine, sign up
for *Golf Course Industry's* newsletter, now
delivered three times per week.

GOLF COURSE
INDUSTRY



CONTENT IN EVERY DIRECTION.





ONLY YOU

Do you remember Smokey Bear? You know, he is only the face of the longest-running public service announcement campaign in U.S. history. Starting in 1944, Smokey's original catchphrase was, "Care will prevent 9 out of 10 forest fires." But, in 1947, Smokey said, "Only YOU can prevent forest fires." In response to a massive wildfire outbreak in 2001, Smokey's famous catchphrase was updated to say, "Only you can prevent *wildfires*" to help distinguish the difference between any unwanted outdoor fires versus prescribed fires.

I am here to tell you preventing fires is not the only thing YOU can do. Only YOU can prevent you from achieving the highest recognitions in our professions. I am talking about becoming a Certified Golf Course Superintendent and/or a Master Greenkeeper.

I received my newest CGCS certificate for my updated renewal cycle last month. Certified Golf Course Superintendents must renew their certifications every five years via continuing education and professional service.

I posted a photo of my new certificate to X and was struck by a response from good friend **Justin VanLanduit** (aka @TurfTank). Tank's response was simply, "One thing I wish I'd gotten done." And that made me think: Who else out there never achieved the highest accolades of our profession for one reason or another?

I know what you are thinking: Your reasons are/were good ones, even valid ones. But the truth is, deep down, your reasons for not getting something done were just the excuses you told yourself

“

What is holding you back? I know. Time, work, family, and more. But now is the absolute best time to start your journey for CGCS, MG, or even an MBA. Do not let YOU hold you back.”

to validate you for not getting it done. See, only YOU can hold yourself back.

Otter Creek (Indiana) Golf Course director of agronomy **Brent Downs** recently achieved Master Greenkeeper status through BIGGA. Brent became the 90th MG and only the 36th superintendent to be in both the CGCS and MG ranks. Sounds like an exclusive club, right?

I am here to tell you we are not. We want you to come and join us. We want you to achieve your full potential and reach the pinnacle of achievements of our profession. We are even willing to mentor, tutor and assist you in any way possible so that you too may join the ranks of those professional turfgrass managers willing to test themselves and grow to become even better managers.

I know there are hundreds of you right now who are the best of the best superintendents and course managers around the globe and aren't certified or a master greenkeeper. Achieving one or both designations does not make you better than your peers. But it does show a level of dedication to personal growth and professional development that only you can inhibit yourself from achieving.

And if becoming certified or a master greenkeeper is not

your thing, then maybe you will consider going above and beyond to become a certified arborist. What about a certified ir-

rigation auditor? Heck, how about an MBA? Why should pros like **Matthew Gourlay** and **Lee Strutt** get the opportunity to monopolize the alphabet with all the letters after their names?

What is holding you back? I know. Time, work, family, and more. We are all pressed for time and the last thing we want to do at this stage of our lives is give up precious time to prepare for exams just so we can call ourselves something that others do not.

Have you spoken with someone who is certified? Or have you asked a Master Greenkeeper what being an MG means to them? I know from both being one and having spent a good deal of time conversing with my peers they all say pretty much the same thing: the level of personal satisfaction and the sense of accomplishment far outweighs the amount of work required.

And now is the absolute best time to start your journey as the requirements for CGCS were recently modernized. I spent two years on the GCSAA certification committee that got the ball rolling on the new requirements. I have also spent several years on a BIGGA work group that has been overseeing the re-vamping and modernization of the master greenkeeper certificate.

So, there you have it. Neither are stuck in the past as they have been updated and refreshed to reflect the roles of the modern-day superintendent and course manager. So, what is keeping you from joining us? Do not let YOU hold you back. 🌱

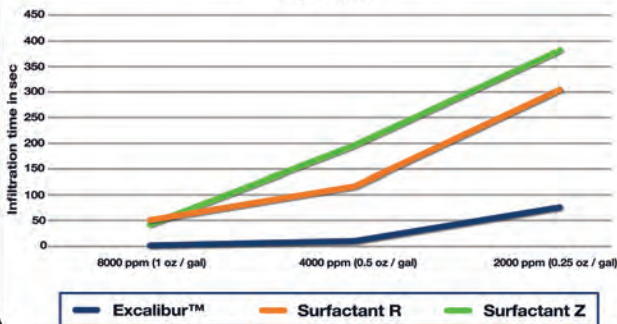


MATTHEW WHARTON, CGCS, MG, is the superintendent at Idle Hour Country Club in Lexington, Kentucky, and past president of the Carolinas GCSA. Follow him on X at @IHCCGreenkeeper.



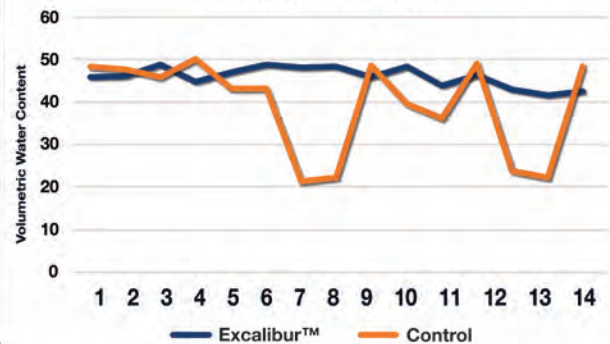
Rapid Infiltration

Infiltration times - Excalibur™ vs competitive products
Severely water repellent sand
wdpt > 3600s



Consistent Uniformity

Volumetric water content across transect
Stafford, NY - August 2022



Introduces a **NEW** surfactant chemistry standard that delivers *rapid infiltration* and *consistent* dry-down.

Helps achieve *consistent hydration* as well as *superior rehydration*.

Proven to *increase activity* in the rhizosphere, creating a more active and dense root system, leading to a *healthier turfgrass system*.



Solutions4Turf

Aqua Aid Solutions


Solutions4Turf




Fortify your turf from all sides

The stronger and healthier your turf is, the better it stands up to challenges you might face throughout the year – from extreme weather to an influx of traffic. That's why programs using Stressgard® brand fungicides, Resilia™ root health solution and Castlon™, our new fluoxastrobin fungicide, strengthen your turf from every angle – making it healthier, more resilient and more playable all year long.

Learn more about how our portfolio of solutions can boost your overall plant health: us.envu.com/planthealth

 **STRESSGARD®**

 **RESILIA™**

 **CASTLON™**



envu™ Golf

ALWAYS READ AND FOLLOW LABEL INSTRUCTIONS. Environmental Science U.S. LLC, 5000 CentreGreen Way, Suite 400, Cary, NC 27513. For additional product information, call toll-free 1-800-331-2867. www.envu.com. Not all products are registered in all states. Castlon™, Envu, the Envu logo, Resilia™ and Stressgard® are trademarks owned by Environmental Science U.S. LLC or one of its affiliates.
©2024 Environmental Science U.S. LLC.

TAKING INNOVATION TO THE MAX

The details behind a powerful new fungicide from BASF designed to help superintendents win the battle against fairway disease.

BASF
We create chemistry



BY GUY CIPRIANO

Sometimes, the biggest scientific advances don't occur in a research facility or lab. They occur in the field. By having a network of close relationships with customers and emphatically listening to their needs, BASF has again been able to create a solid disease control solution for the golf industry.

For a golf course superintendent, the field represents a large, diverse, and complicated place. Fostering the field conditions patrons desire means tweaking. The field changes daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, and annually. Altering philosophies and programs, input rates and timing, products, and solutions allows superintendents to overcome environmental and consumer changes.

How else can the continual elevation of golf course conditioning be explained? Superintendents are agile, adjusting based on what they observe in the field. The savviest companies listen to feedback, take notes, experiment, research, test and develop. They then unveil innovations designed to elevate golfer experiences while helping superintendents overcome challenges in the field.

The introduction of Aramax Intrinsic brand fungicide epitomizes the possibilities when a company such as BASF responds to the observe-tweak-overcome triad deployed by superintendents.

Aramax Intrinsic brand fungicide is the newest addition to the Intrinsic brand fungicide portfolio from BASF. Aramax Intrinsic brand fungicide contrasts with other fungicides because its origins stem from superintendents evolving their usage of Insignia SC Intrinsic brand fungicide and Trinity fungicide.

“This is a product that was created out of a need,” says BASF senior technical specialist Dr. Emma Lookabaugh. **“We had Insignia SC [Intrinsic brand fungicide] in the field, and we had Trinity [fungicide] in the field, and both were performing well. Over time, superintendents started tank mixing the products together and were saying, ‘Hey, this gives excellent disease control, it broadens the spectrum of diseases that I’m controlling, and I like the flexibility of both in the tank for resistance management and also for residual performance.’ So, we listened to what they were saying and developed the liquid premix.”**

Aramax Intrinsic brand fungicide is labeled for control of 26 diseases on cool- and warm-season turf, with fairways being targeted as the primary use site. The fungicide is a pre-mix combination featuring pyraclostrobin and triticonazole.



Both of these are tried and true chemistries that we developed in-house at BASF and superintendents know them and trust them. They have individual track records of solo products, and they have performed reliably alone. Together, these chemistries can become a go-to, broad-spectrum fungicide fairway brand for an effective way to treat the kitchen sink of diseases that superintendents can face.

Jen Browning, PCA
Senior Technical Specialist, BASF

Through listening to superintendents and with the subsequent formulation enhancements by a talented and experienced team of researchers and product development specialists, BASF created a solution that solves two important problems: snow mold and large patch.

“We’re always looking for ways to broaden the reach of our portfolio with new innovation,” says senior technical specialist Kyle Miller, a three-decade BASF veteran who has been involved in more than 30 product launches. **“With Aramax and its strong performance on snow mold in particular, this is a product that delivers real value to the superintendent not just in protective fall applications but all throughout the year.”**

The debut of Aramax Intrinsic brand fungicide especially excites Browning. Since she is based in Idaho and covers regions where golf courses get buried in snow, Browning was continuously asked when BASF will release a snow mold control tool. She now has a definitive answer.

BASF released Aramax Intrinsic brand fungicide for purchase in June, and it will be available for 2024-25 snow mold control applications.

“I can finally use all the [snow mold] data I have been collecting for years,” Browning says. **“It’s nice to roll that out and have people see the performance under different conditions. We’ve done work at different elevations, different amounts of snowpack, under winter desiccation and wet winters, and [Aramax Intrinsic brand fungicide] has been reliable and has done a really nice job. It works in different combinations with other products and as a solo product all over the geography under different climate conditions. We’re looking forward to getting it out ahead of snow mold.”**

Miller adds that Aramax Intrinsic brand fungicide will fit snugly into what he calls **“the buildable snow mold program”** on fairways. Aramax Intrinsic brand fungicide is labeled for pink snow mold (fusarium patch) and gray snow mold (typhula blight) control.

“While Aramax [Intrinsic brand fungicide] is very effective on snow mold, as you get into areas with extreme pressure, [long winters, or melt-refreeze cycles], everybody recognizes that just two active ingredients aren’t going to cut the mustard,” Miller says. **“This product allows you to add other active ingredients so that you can still get excellent control even in the toughest of conditions.”**

KEEP READING

15 YEARS OF INTRINSIC BRAND FUNGICIDE INNOVATION



2009
Insignia SC Intrinsic
brand fungicide



2012
Honor Intrinsic
brand fungicide



2019
Navicon Intrinsic
brand fungicide



2012
Pillar G Intrinsic
brand fungicide



2014
Lexicon Intrinsic
brand fungicide



2024
Aramax Intrinsic
brand fungicide



We create chemistry

MAXIMUM

FAIRWAY DISEASE CONTROL

Aramax™

Intrinsic® Brand Fungicide

DUAL ACTIVE | BROAD SPECTRUM
DEFENDS AGAINST 26 DISEASES

Introducing a new fungicide powerhouse that is ready to take your fairway spray program to the next level. Aramax Intrinsic brand fungicide is a dual-active, broad-spectrum solution designed to defend against 26 of the toughest turf diseases like snow mold, large patch, brown patch, and dollar spot while delivering the powerful plant health benefits of Intrinsic brand fungicides. Add it to your rotation and prepare your course to be **The G.O.A.T. - The Greatest of All Turf.**

betterturf.basf.us/Aramax

Always read and follow label directions.

Aramax is a trademark of BASF and Intrinsic is a registered trademark of BASF.

May not be registered for sale or use in all states. Please check with your state or local Extension Services.

©2024 BASF Corporation

Lookabaugh, who covers the Southeast and parts of the Transition Zone, is similarly enthused about offering a large patch control option on zoysiagrass, a turfgrass species consuming rapidly expanding fairway acreage as part of the golf construction and renovation frenzy. Large patch is a significant disease concern on zoysiagrass fairways, and multiple fall and early spring fungicide applications are preventive control norms.

“Aramax [Intrinsic brand fungicide] is going to be the backbone of our zoysia and seashore paspalum programs,” Lookabaugh says. **“With Aramax [Intrinsic brand fungicide], we finally have a fairway-focused large patch solution that is strong enough to carry fall preventive programs, deliver 28 days of residual control and can be used to clean up disease flares in the spring.”**



The best thing about this product is that it is versatile - whether it's large patch, dollar spot, snow mold, leaf spots and even fairy ring, you are covered.

Dr. Emma Lookabaugh
Senior Technical Specialist, BASF

Besides filling two voids in the venerable BASF fungicide portfolio, Aramax Intrinsic brand fungicide provides an everywhere fairway solution for superintendents. The fungicide can be applied on every widely used turfgrass species covering United States fairways, and trials have been conducted in varied conditions to learn effective uses. Brown patch, dollar spot, anthracnose, fairy ring, gray leaf spot, summer patch and take-all patch are among the many other diseases Aramax Intrinsic brand fungicide controls.

“When we married up Insignia SC [Intrinsic brand fungicide] and Trinity [fungicide], the Insignia SC [Intrinsic brand fungicide] label covers 26 diseases, and then the Trinity [fungicide] label covers many of the same, so what we're doing is elevating the level of control on these important diseases like anthracnose, dollar spot and the patch diseases,” Miller says.



When you think about Insignia SC [Intrinsic brand fungicide] solo, you are really getting a great bang for your buck. With Aramax [Intrinsic brand fungicide], it's making Insignia SC [Intrinsic brand fungicide] even better.

Kyle Miller
Senior Technical Specialist, BASF

To prepare for this summer's launch, BASF conducted demonstration trials with selected current customers in the field. The trial amounts were large enough to treat more than seven acres of fairways.

“You can show people data and have them talk to people and publish some of the results from those demos, but you also have to get people to try it and see what they think on their course, under their local conditions,” Browning says. **“That's really where the rubber meets the road. We want to get those early responses. Hopefully, people who have experience with Insignia SC and Intrinsic [brand fungicide] products will know they can trust a new Intrinsic [brand fungicide] product to do what it says and give them the protection and longevity that we have seen in the trials over the years and from other Intrinsic products.”**

The release of Aramax Intrinsic brand fungicide coincides with the 15th anniversary of the Intrinsic brand fungicide line's 2009 debut in the golf market. The venerable line started with Insignia SC Intrinsic brand fungicide and also includes Lexicon Intrinsic brand fungicide, Navicon Intrinsic brand fungicide, Honor Intrinsic brand fungicide and Pillar G Intrinsic brand fungicide.

A half-dozen plant health fungicides. A half-dozen unique innovation stories.

And, in the case of Aramax Intrinsic brand fungicide, a playing field, instead of a crop field, is where this development story started and will continue.

“This is really unique,” Lookabaugh says. **“We don't even have this active ingredient combination over on the crop side; it's unique to turfgrass, and it's what the turf market asked for. It was created just for turfgrass. We thought about what we could bring to the golf market, and what was needed was a fairway solution at an economical price tag. That's exactly what Aramax [Intrinsic brand fungicide] became.”**



Discover the latest plant health fungicide from
BASF - Aramax Intrinsic brand fungicide

BETTERTURF.BASF.US/ARAMAX

Always read and follow label directions.

Aramax is a trademark; Honor, Insignia, Intrinsic, Lexicon, Navicon, Pillar and Trinity are registered trademarks of BASF.

May not be registered for sale or use in all states. Check with your state or local extension service. ©2024 BASF Corporation. All rights reserved.