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Plymouth, Michigan

Mega projects, small-town passion plays, the big handoff and ... lights. Here's how courses are reimagining what they are offering to golfers.

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**2024 Course  
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**On the cover:** The Little Cardinal at St. John's Resort in Plymouth, Michigan. Photograph by Brian Walters.

VOL. 36 NO. 10

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# TEARS OF TRUST

Sometimes us writers/editors/podcasters/posters ask a question that makes somebody cry. The protocols are straightforward once it happens.

Shut up. Listen. Listen some more. Proceed with abundant empathy.

Tears mean somebody has enough confidence in your brand, reputation and demeanor to reveal powerful details about their lives or career. Trust yields fabulous stories. Once it's established, avenues open to receive insight and anecdotes somebody might not willingly share with others.

On a visit to Cable Hollow Golf Course in early August (*Injecting energy into the Pennsylvania woods*, page 24), I made **Joanne Martin** cry. Joanne is the wife of Cable Hollow superintendent **Jerry Martin**, a second-generation industry professional whose career spans five decades.

I interviewed Joanne and Jerry in Cable Hollow's new indoor pavilion, a modern, authentic structure. The pavilion meshes wonderfully with its rustic northwest Pennsylvania surroundings. Joanne is Cable Hollow's clubhouse manager. She has spent thousands of hours this year ensuring the seamless execution of the course's growing event and daily-play schedule. Joanne is 72, two years older than her superintendent husband.

Joanne, a northeast Philadelphia native, met Jerry in 1981, three years following the death of her father, **Robert Lintz**. Joanne had entered a transitional phase of her life. Jerry, who was raised in the small northern Pennsylvania and southern New York towns where his father, **Harold Q. Martin**, built, maintained and operated golf courses, offered stability and unyielding love.

"My father died in 1978 at 54," said Joanne, with tears falling from her eyes. "I was kind of lost, it had shaken my world. I then met him." The couple met in a bar in Wellsville, New York, where Jerry was the superintendent of the eponymous local country club.

Joanne and Jerry raised five sons. **Tyler Martin** is the only one working in the golf industry. Tyler balances his duties as Cable Hollow's general manager with a full-time energy industry career. He happened to be in the pavilion when I made his mother cry. He patted Joanne on the back and urged her to take "deep breaths" before continuing her thoughts.

"I told him that he was first person I met that came to the caliber of person that my dad was," added Joanne, staring intently at Jerry. "My dad would have loved what Jerry does for a living. My dad was a hell of a guy. He fought in World War II. Jerry filled a huge void in my life."

Silence engulfed the pavilion. I followed the pause by asking Jerry what it means for a superintendent to have a supportive spouse like Joanne. "It's huge," he said. "I can't even describe it. It's a very unique situation and not many superintendents have that. There are superintendents that get divorced because they put work before their marriage."

Sadly, divorce and golf course maintenance is a story for another issue.

The Martins have been married for more than four decades. When the couple started dating, Jerry quietly added Joanne to his crew.

"My parents were always good at taking care of the yard," Joanne said. "My dad had me stripe the yard before I worked on the golf course. We had an old reel mower with a roller, and I walked perfect lines. It came natural to me."

Joanne initially worked for free to help Jerry. That changed when the then-president of Wellsville Country Club insisted Jerry add Joanne to the payroll. They worked demanding jobs while raising a family. "If we had to get up at 2 a.m. and stay until 3 a.m., we did it together," Joanne said.

The days are still long. The memories are irreplicable. All five of their sons worked alongside them. "We didn't go to the babysitter, we went to work," Tyler says. "We didn't take the bus home. We took the bus to the golf course."

Sometimes the best family lives aren't always the easiest. Seeing emotion overcome the people who experienced them — and knowing they trust you to convey their lessons to others — can make a stranger with a notepad and a recorder weep. 



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# Buried with creativity

Former superintendent Steven Tingle is releasing a novel about a murder-mystery on a golf course.

By Trent Bouts

**M**aybe Steven Tingle's third book will be an autobiography. There's plenty of material, particularly for an audience with an affinity for golf and golf course maintenance.

Tingle grew up on a golf course and by the age of 12 was mowing greens and cutting cups at daybreak. He loved it. But by the time he went to college, he was tempted by the clean shirts and air conditioning of the pro shop, and so landed a part-time job in one. He hated it.

Thus, for his last three years in college, he worked back where he belonged: on the golf course. After graduating, he went all the way back to the course he grew up on, then known as Springdale Country Club. And became golf course superintendent. His parents owned it after all. They actually built it, with the first nine holes opening in 1968 and a second nine four years later.

They also helped build the National Golf Course Owners Association, as founding members, in 1986. Tingle's father, Fred, a keen intellect and former corporate executive in Manhattan — his subscriptions included everything from *The New Yorker* to *Smithsonian* — was elected president in 1990 and received NGCOA's highest honor, the Don Rossi Award, in 1994.

By the time Fred Tingle died unexpectedly in 2005, his son was a certified

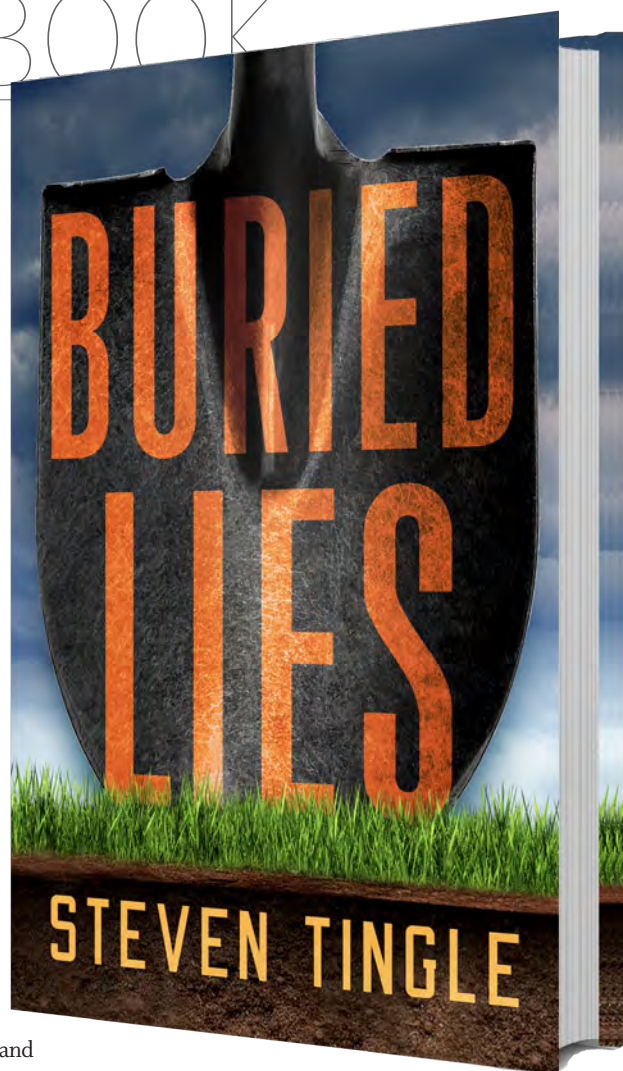
superintendent. The golf course had been his life, and he was committed to making it his future too. So, you can begin to appreciate how he felt when his mother, Eunice, fired him in 2008. It was devastating.

"It's your identity," Tingle says, setting the head of every golf course superintendent nodding.

Exacerbating the shock and grief was the fact that he'd also divorced six months earlier and was raising his two children alone. There was also real fear. Remember what also happened in 2008. The housing market imploded, sucking the economy into a black hole with it.

The Great Recession hit as the Tingles were deep in negotiations to sell the golf course, and all prospective buyers suddenly vanished. In short order, Eunice Tingle had lost her husband, a daughter-in-law, and her grip on a payday approaching eight figures, not to mention the comfortable retirement it would have ensured.

That period wasn't good for many people. But it was terrible for mother and son both. Already both emotionally strained, now there



were grave economic tensions. Something gave, which is why, abruptly, the son found himself out of a job.

But all that is for Steven Tingle's third book — if he wants to go there. For now, he is excited to see his second book about to hit the market, and he hopes people in golf course maintenance will be, too.

The cleverly titled "Buried Lies" is a novel, a golf course-based murder mystery. As in his first book, Tingle's leading character is former cop and private detective Davis Reed, who gets pulled back into the investigative saddle when all he wanted was peace, an IPA and to quietly enjoy his own wit. For the setting, Tingle leans into his background at Springdale, now Springdale Resort, and his golf course superintendent experience.

Indeed, another main character is a superintendent, who is helpful enough until he finds himself among the suspects. For the record, that is not a scenario Tingle draws from personal experience. Although now long removed from the profession, he confesses there were times when he felt







A young Steven Tingle on the pro shop porch with his mother, Eunice.

like leaving some golfers' toes up in a bunker like the victim in his book. More nodding perhaps?

"I'm not sure anyone who has never been a golf course superintendent can truly appreciate what it's like," he says. "The golf course becomes an extension of yourself. So, when golfers mistreat it, or complain about it, it's all you can do to not take it personally."

Today, Springdale is the biggest thing happening in the tiny community of Crusso, North Carolina, and the Blue Ridge Mountains. The nearest sizeable town is Canton, once home to a paper mill that filled the Appalachian valley with a sour smell but paid workers well. The most famous landmark, which overlooks the course, is Cold Mountain, the peak that gave title to **Charles Frazier's** best-seller and the movie starring **Nicole Kidman** and **Jude Law**.

Eunice Tingle eventually sold the course in 2018 but only after some hard years. Her son never returned as superintendent but with his mother aging and in declining health, he was present and dutiful in all other areas.

Along the way, Tingle himself turned to writing because superintendent jobs were hard to get when he needed one.

He'd drawn nourishment from his father's magazines all those years before, flicked through golf publications, and read his share of mystery novels. At some point, with prospects shrinking, he told himself that writing couldn't be *that* hard.

He landed his first freelance assignment before he'd written anything more than a letter. He confesses asking Google, "How to write a magazine article?" To veteran writers, that is the equivalent of a golfer searching, "How to maintain a golf course?" In both cases, those in the respective professions might reasonably ask a question of their own, "Who does this guy think he is?"

It turns out, in Tingle's case, the "guy" is the real deal on both counts. His early writing appeared in national golf publications like this one before he moved to broader fields, covering everything from food and travel to first-person accounts in a monthly Southeast regional column, *Man About Town*.

"Buried Lies" is available Oct. 15 and can be ordered in advance through major online retailers.

*Trent Bouts is a Greer, South Carolina-based writer and frequent Golf Course Industry contributor.*

## Tartan Talks 99

Keith Cutten is a

wonderful person to ask any golf course architecture-related question. Cutten, after all, authored



▲ Cutten

"The Evolution of Golf Course Design," a creative and insightful book released in 2018 that sold all 3,000 of its first-run printed copies.

So, when the rising Canadian architect joined the *Tartan Talks* podcast, we quizzed him about everything from impactful design figures to how the golf facility of the future might look. We also asked him to define design-build, a concept mentioned frequently in the industry and practiced by the busy firm Whitman, Axland & Cutten Golf Course Architects, which he operates with partners **Rod Whitman** and **Dave Axland**.

"Design-build isn't a marketing scheme," Cutten says. "It's a complete ethos and how we build golf, and how we deliver things to our clients. What it means is that our clients see a lot of us."

Strong relationships and results have led to Cutten and his partners receiving multiple new construction projects. Where are they working? And what type of golf are they designing and building?

For Cutten's calculated answers, download the episode on the Superintendent Radio Network page of popular podcast distribution platforms.





## COURSE NEWS

Dye Designs Group has completed the redesign of four new holes on the Copper Creek Golf Course at Colorado's Copper Mountain Resort. Holes 12 through 15 were reimagined by **Cynthia Dye McGarey**, DDG's principal architect, and her son, **Matt McGarey**, the firm's senior design associate... Hallö Properties is introducing The Dodger at Hallö Nelson designed by **Doug Carrick**. It will soon be Canada's only Troon-managed golf course. Course construction is slated to begin in early 2025 and be completed in 2027.... Invited announced TPC Craig Ranch has launched several reinvestment initiatives. Renovations include an overhaul of the existing course and new turf varieties. Golf legend **Lanny Wadkins** will lead the redesign efforts on select holes.... The front nine of King's North at Myrtle Beach National reopened earlier this month following a **Brandon Johnson**-guided renovation on its front nine. The back nine will be worked on in the summer of 2025.... Whistling Straits has been selected by the USGA as the host site for three future USGA championships, beginning with the 2028 U.S. Amateur. The 2033 U.S. Junior Amateur and 2037 U.S. Girls' Junior will also be played on the links-style Kohler, Wisconsin, courses.... The Chicago Park District's Jackson Park Golf Course is celebrating its 125th anniversary. The



Copper Creek Golf Course

popular **Tom Bendelow**-designed municipal course opened on May 11, 1899, and was named after former President **Andrew Jackson**. The course is part of the larger Jackson Park, which extends along Lake Michigan on Chicago's South Side.... Troon has been selected to manage Woodholme Country Club, a member-owned private club in Pikesville, Maryland, northwest of Baltimore.

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## INDUSTRY BUZZ

Nufarm announced the EPA registration of Allstar Herbicide, a new herbicide for use on cool-season turfgrasses developed to control grassy weeds, nutsedge and broadleaf weeds. Allstar will be included in this year's Nufarm Edge Rewards Program. ... LebanonTurf announced the launch of ProScape 20-0-4 100% PCSCU SOP 8% Ca with .08% Mesotrione, the industry's first mesotrione combination product that does not contain phosphorus and is designed for routine turf maintenance. ... JSM Services, Inc. has joined Husqvarna's Golf and Sport Turf dealer network. GST dealers are the exclusive providers of Husqvarna's lowest height-of-cut products and features through mobile sales and service. ... New England-based distributor Valley Green announced it will begin operating under the Advanced Turf Solutions name starting Jan. 1, 2025.

## PEOPLE NEWS

**Mark Johnson**, the director of environmental programs for the GCSAA, announced his retirement, effective Dec. 12. He was promoted to his current role in 2022. ... Landscapes Unlimited appointed **Marvin Cruz** to direct company operations in Mexico and the Caribbean. Based in Culiacan, Sinaloa, Mexico, Cruz will further expand Landscapes Unlimited's field teams and client base. ... Landscapes Golf Management named **Adam Brandow** as manager of training and development. Brandow is a 10-year company veteran and previously worked in developing food and beverage programs. ... AMGUARD Environmental Technologies promoted **Duffey Clark** to vice president of commercial operations for OHP. Clark will lead OHP's sales, marketing and key account efforts in the ornamental, nursery and greenhouse markets. He also will serve as a member of AMGUARD's leadership team. ... Munro named **Jeff Prell** as its new national sales director. Prell has more than 20 years of sales leadership experience. Munro also named **Aaron Presley** as its new Eastern U.S. regional account manager. He has more than 15 years of sales experience in the landscape and irrigation industry. ... Envu added **Dr. Adam Gore**, who has worked the last six years at Clemson University as a horticulture extension agent specializing in turfgrass agronomy and weedy plant control, to its Green Solutions Team. Gore brings 18 years of turfgrass experience to his new role. ... **Mark Claburn** (Tierra Verde Golf Club), **Steven Tierney** (Golfpark Zurichsee, Switzerland), **Kevin Ackerman** (Royal Wood and Country Club) and **Jim Pavonetti** (Fairview Country Club) were selected as recipients of the 2024 Environmental Leaders in Golf Awards by the GCSAA. The annual awards are presented by the GCSAA and *Golf Digest* in partnership with Syngenta and recognize superintendents and golf courses around the world for their commitment to environmental stewardship since 1993.



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# Chiara Ferrari

ROBERT TRENT JONES GOLF CLUB

**T**he Solheim Cup brought together some of the finest female golfers in the world. And **Chiara Ferrari** was in the middle of it as an intern at Robert Trent Jones Golf Club in Sterling, Virginia, where the 19th Solheim Cup was staged last month.

Even by the standards of her chosen profession, Ferrari's journey has been characterized by determination and drive.

Appearing on the *Wonderful Women of Golf* podcast with host **Rick Woelfel**, she recalls how her turf career was launched.

A native of Italy, Ferrari was studying at the University of Padua when one of her professors asked what was, as it turned out, a life-changing question.

"My professor asked the class, 'Would you like to go to California for six months?'" she says. "I said, 'Of course.' That decision made my journey in the industry start."

Ferrari headed to the University of California, Riverside, where she completed her thesis on warm-season grasses. From there she returned to Italy and finished her work for a bachelor's degree in land management and landscape protection.

While continuing her education, she worked as a greenkeeper at Montecchia Golf Club, a 27-hole facility located just outside of Padua and roughly 30 miles west of Venice. While there, she had the chance to volunteer at two Italian Opens and last year's Ryder Cup.

"I enjoyed the Ryder Cup," Ferrari says. "It was amazing. A really, really nice experience. I met so many people, (including) women. It's different in Italy, there are not (so many) women. It was incredible."

Ferrari adds her tournament experiences have left her with an abundance of memories. "Every time is different. Every time gives me a different feeling, different emotions, and I think different lessons. I really appreciate every tournament that I do."

Five years after first traveling to the United States, Ferrari returned this past April to begin a six-month internship at Robert Trent Jones Golf Club, where she was immersed in Solheim Cup preparations. "I'm very, very happy to work again in the U.S.," she says.

Ferrari says her time at Robert Trent Jones

Golf Club has been a learning experience in part because the club utilizes interns from around the globe. "They appreciate all the interns coming," she says. "I've learned so many things. I'm so happy to be here. I'm so happy to be learning something different every day."

Ferrari had the opportunity to volunteer at the U.S. Women's Open at Lancaster Country Club this past spring. As has been the case at other events, she savored the opportunity to engage with the other women who were part of the crew.

"I'm really, really excited for all the women around," she says. "They have, of course, more experience than me, and that's why I enjoy all of the moments together and asking about problems on the course, about different lives and different ideas. It's very, very powerful for me to listen to all the stories. It's amazing to share all of these stories. In our job, it's not easy to meet people like that."

*Golf Course Industry* spoke with Ferrari two weeks before the Solheim Cup. She was looking forward to the event and reconnecting with some of her friends in the industry who will be part of the crew.

"I can't wait to see all of my friends from last year," she says. "I have many friends coming, (including) greenkeepers from Italy. So, I'm really excited to work a special tournament. It's very important to me for my career." 🌱

*Note: Our conversation with Chiara Ferrari occurred as she was in the closing weeks of her time at Robert Trent Jones Golf Club. Following the Solheim Cup, she was scheduled to move on to another internship at Quail Hollow, where she'll be involved in preparations for the 2025 PGA Championship.*



It's very, very powerful for me to listen to all the stories. It's amazing to share all of these stories. In our job, it's not easy to meet people like that."



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# SUCCESSION PLANNING STRATEGIES

During his 20-year reign as chairman and CEO of General Electric, **Jack Welch** helped make GE the most respected and valuable company in the world. Along the way, Welch became a media darling, the poster image for rock star CEOs and the go-to source for business leadership guidance. But, as Welch admitted in the later stages of his life, he failed at one of a leader's biggest responsibilities: succession planning.

Welch's choice for the company's next CEO, **Jeff Immelt**, who ran GE from 2001 to 2017, is credited with several smart managerial moves. But he is equally criticized for dismantling some of the company's most profitable infrastructure and driving away talented managers because he didn't listen to their ideas. Compared to its former glory days, GE is practically irrelevant today.

Succession planning has emerged as a top priority for superintendents and other club leaders, no matter the size of their operation. How do you prepare a talented pipeline of capable candidates to take on leadership roles? And how do you ensure the person you choose is right for the job? In our work with golf clubs and facilities in North America and around the world, we have seen the most successful strategy involves a five-step model.

## START EARLY

Long before it's time to hand over responsibilities of your job, begin the process by identifying and developing top candidates.

- Know the career goals of your people. Do they aspire to a leader-

ship role? Don't let day-to-day work demands delay important career conversations.

- Construct challenging — but realistic — development plans that are mutually agreeable. Then build in the discipline to stick to them with timely and honest feedback and coaching.

## INVOLVE YOUR EMPLOYEES

Succession planning is not only something leaders do, but also something that should involve employees who are candidates for leadership roles.

- Formalize a schedule of conversations and reviews to allow candidates to offer feedback and ask questions about their career opportunities.
- Encourage direct reports to accept developmental tasks that require stretching beyond their comfort zone. Let them learn from their successes and their mistakes.
- Review progress regularly.

## USE MULTIPLE EVALUATION METHODS

Include reviews, skills assessments and potential assessments by co-workers. This provides a more comprehensive view of each employee's strengths and weaknesses. Options include:

- Regular performance reviews and on-the-spot observations and guidance.
- Co-worker or 360-degree evaluations to help you know what others on your team see.
- Peer reviews gained through project sharing. Help your assistant learn from a respected neighbor superintendent while you return the favor for a peer.

## PROVIDE MEANINGFUL PROFESSIONAL GROWTH AND LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Watch for opportunities to expand the knowledge of high-potential team members:

- Third-party feedback and guidance from academics, vendors and trusted peers.
- Coaching from leaders and team members brings perspective and serves to ID skills and knowledge gaps.
- Job rotation opportunities help employees acquire the skills and knowledge to take on more senior roles.
- Special event opportunities, including tour events and events at other courses, where top performers handle new responsibilities and challenges.

## EXECUTE REGULAR REVIEWS AND UPDATES

Begin with the understanding that everyone is learning every day. Formalize the review process with quarterly or biannual reviews to keep the rising superintendent engaged and enthused with the learning experience.

Several keys to remember:

- Make it personal and make it challenging.
- Provide a written summary for your subordinate and your file. (The faintest ink is stronger than the best memory.)
- Discuss progress and what needs to be learned, tested and evaluated next.

Planning for the future of your facility is one of your greatest responsibilities. Leaving the leadership of your course or club in the best hands possible is a lasting legacy. 🌱



**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.





## ENVU IS PROUD TO SPONSOR THE 2024 STATE OF THE INDUSTRY — INSECTICIDES REPORT

**T**here is hope that the war against two of the more destructive insect pests on annual bluegrass and bentgrass—the annual bluegrass weevil and the pathogenic nematodes—will be won. Each year, golf course superintendents fight to fortify turfgrass plant health, ensuring it will remain playable. But the invasive insect pests can be quick to adapt, which is why it's important the industry talk about research and best practices to control the annual bluegrass weevil (ABW) and pathogenic nematodes. By controlling pests together, we can continue to grow healthy turfgrass to further grow the game of golf around the globe.

The ABW can severely damage annual bluegrass and bentgrass golf turf in the Northeast, mid-Atlantic, Midwest, states in the south, and recently in Wisconsin and Canada. ABWs attack bentgrass and annual bluegrass at all stages of life. Because the ABW adapts to its environments, researchers and golf course superintendents are constantly sharing best practices to prevent turfgrass damage. Multipronged control programs should be a focus and target overwintering adults and all stages of larvae. Consistent rotation of insecticide products will help limit chances of ABWs evolving to withstand singular products.

One of the leading ABW controls, Tetrino® insecticide is a diamide insecticide that features tetraniliprole as its active ingredient. Tetraniliprole is taken up quickly into the plant, providing knockdown within days of application. Because the insecticide's efficacy is proven on all stages of ABW larvae, Tetrino can fit into any agronomic program. In addition to stopping ABW, Tetrino is effective on billbugs, white grubs, black turfgrass atenius and caterpillars like fall armyworm that destroy turf throughout the Midwest and North Central United States.

Although not usually considered insects, nematodes are a serious issue that we want to highlight. Pathogenic nematodes: lance, ring, root-knot, sheath, spiral, stubby root and stunt, can cause tremendous damage to warm- and cool-season turfgrasses year round. Symptoms of nematodes may look similar to nutritional or environmental pressures like summer heat stress. Above ground, look for yellowing of the turf, followed by wilting, and eventual thinning. Below ground symptoms may show short turf roots nearby longer healthier roots; roots may have galls, crooks or a “hawk beak” appearance, and be brownish in color. Additional symptoms might include fungal issues like summer patch and Pythium root rot. Suspect a nematode issue if the turfgrass is unresponsive to fertilizer applications.

Management strategies show healthy turf with a strong root system can typically tolerate nematode feeding with minimal damage. Consider adding a true nematicide to an agronomic program to improve overall root health. Indemnify® nematicide is one option that is approved for use on greens, tees and fairways. It controls on-contact root-feeding nematodes, and can be used in a preventive or curative way to control infestations. Following periods of significant turfgrass stress, add a nematicide to ensure roots can take hold. In addition to applying a nematicide, cultural practices focus on the basics: raise the cut height, properly irrigate, minimize turf compaction by using a lightweight mower or roller, apply balanced fertility, and routinely aerify.

Our Green Solutions Team and area sales managers are ready to keep turfgrass pest-free and healthy.

Let us know if we can help!

**Envu Golf Team**



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# ALL THINGS INSECT CONTROL

**C**ontrolling turfgrass insects requires alertness, relationships, adaptability, and staying current with industry trends and migration patterns. Reliable products help, too.

For the fourth straight year, *Golf Course Industry* has partnered with Envu to understand how superintendents develop programs and select

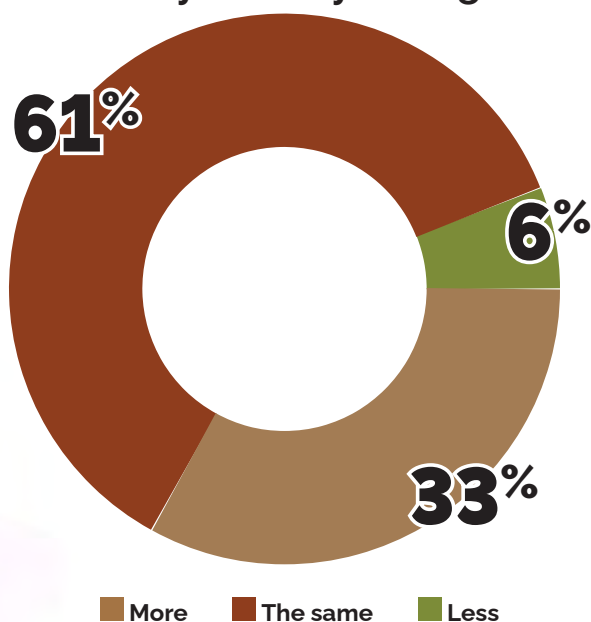
solutions designed to thwart pests capable of hindering playing conditions.

The numbers in this "Turf Reports" section originate from a 20-question survey *Golf Course Industry* produced in collaboration with Signet Research, a New Jersey-based independent research firm. The survey was distributed from July 23 through Aug. 14 to an email list of subscri-

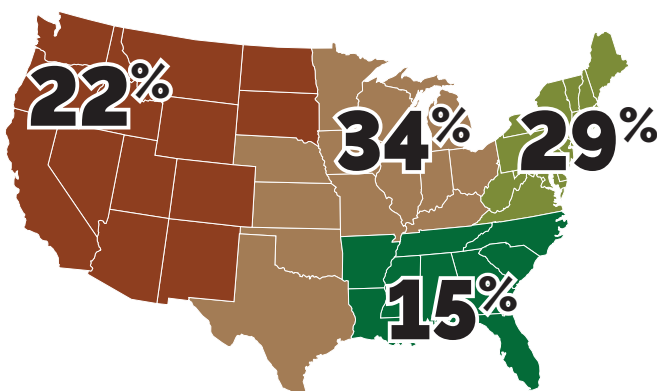
ers holding director of agronomy, superintendent or assistant superintendent titles. Results are based on 141 returns at a confidence level of 95 percent.

The stories in this section originate from your peers.

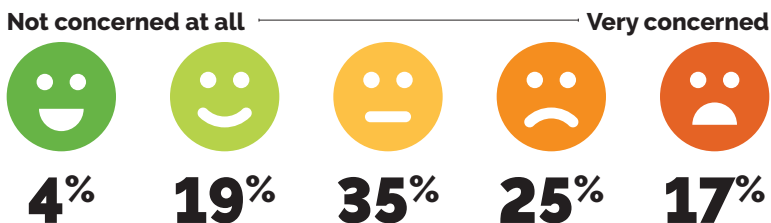
## Insect pressure in your region today vs. five years ago



## Where is your course located?



## Concern about insects negatively impacting playing conditions



# SHOO FLY

**A pair of western New York superintendents share how the 2004 crane fly arrival still impacts insect control today.**

**A**t Transit Valley Country Club in suburban Buffalo, New York, superintendent **Adam Mis** has avoided major insect infestations. But he hasn't always been so lucky.

Before arriving at Transit Valley, Mis spent 19 years as superintendent at nearby Brookfield Country Club. During his time there, in 2004, a non-native species of crane flies migrated to western New York. They are known to have traveled south from Ontario, with the first infestations found in Erie and Niagara counties.

Crane fly can be damaging to turfgrass and crops, making golf courses a prime target for infestations. After they made their first appearances, Mis and his peers figured out how to treat the roughs and greens, so the flies would flee to surrounding neighborhoods.

"When the golf course is protected, they go to the neighbors," Mis says. "So, if you have a lot of homeowners that don't have a service, they end up getting their yards eaten up with the crane fly."

As with most infestation preventative programs, timing is key for treating crane flies. Mis has found that spraying for the crane fly right before the larvae comes out of the ground is the key time. Mis uses a treatment with a contact insecticide applied typically in November. While the crane fly remains a consistent problem in western New York, they can be controlled using the proper program.

Along with treating for crane fly, Mis uses a preventative insecticide to control white grubs on short-turf areas. However, New York recently passed a law banning that insecticide on golf courses, so Mis plans to switch products next year.

For rising superintendents and assistants, or anyone involved in golf course maintenance, Mis recommends continuing education for insect management. Seminars are frequently available from local GCSAA chapters and turf schools, and gaining knowledge is important no matter what stage of the industry you're at.

## Threats and control

Insect	Potential to damage turf	Use insecticides to control
White grubs	<b>81%</b>	<b>76%</b>
Cutworms	<b>68%</b>	<b>62%</b>
Ants	<b>66%</b>	<b>53%</b>
Annual bluegrass weevil	<b>45%</b>	<b>39%</b>
Armyworms	<b>42%</b>	<b>38%</b>
Sod webworms	<b>31%</b>	<b>30%</b>
Billbugs	<b>24%</b>	<b>20%</b>
Chinch bugs	<b>21%</b>	<b>16%</b>
Mole crickets	<b>18%</b>	<b>15%</b>
Crane flies	<b>14%</b>	<b>8%</b>
Bermudagrass mites	<b>13%</b>	<b>9%</b>

"If you're a young, aspiring turf student or assistant or superintendent, everything is online," he says. "You can find the information. There's so much continuing education."

Transit Valley Country Club isn't the only western New York course that has successfully thwarted potential major grub or ABW infestations. Superintendent **Scott Dunbar** has been with Diamond Hawk Golf Course since ground broke 19 years ago.

Through his time as superintendent, he hasn't endured any major insect infestations. Ants and crane flies are his two biggest concerns.

Dunbar applies bifenthrin on the greens, fairways and tees from May through September. His program prevents ant infestation, as well as grubs. Ant mounds can cause damage to greens. If mounds form, Dunbar and his team will plug the areas and remove them.

Dunbar, like Mis, has learned how to handle crane flies. When the flies first made their way down to the area, Dunbar and his peers didn't know what they were or how to treat them. Experience makes the infestations easier to handle. He now only treats for crane fly once per year, applying a November insecticide alongside his snow mold application.

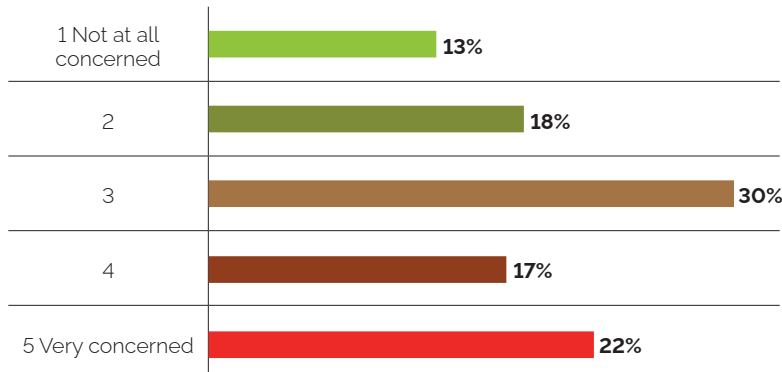
Although Diamond Hawk deals with minimal insect problems, Dunbar realizes each property is different—something he recommends

rising superintendents keep in mind when building control programs.

"Just breathe, talk to other guys," he says. "Kind of give them the information, if you can, on how to deal with what certain ones you have and how to pre-treat for them. Get ahead of the populations. Each place is going to be different."

— Kelsie Horner

## Concern about insecticide bans in your region





# EEVIL WEEVILS IN MICHIGAN

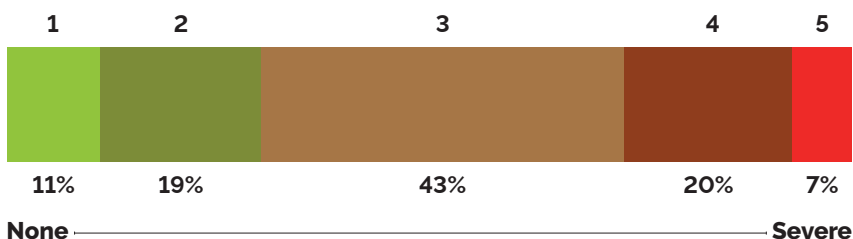
**S**uperintendent Ryan Moore has worked at Forest Lake Country Club in Bloomfield Township, Michigan, since 2004. He was elevated from assistant superintendent to the top turf job in 2011. He went nearly two decades without enduring a serious annual bluegrass weevil infestation.

His pest situation changed in June 2023, when assistant superintendent **Shannon Storey** found some odd-looking turf. Moore conducted an extensive investigation in and around the spot. To his surprise, ABW had made its appearance. After finding the one patch, Moore discovered the pest in other places on the course. “There are just random spots,” he says, “and it’s mind blowing.”

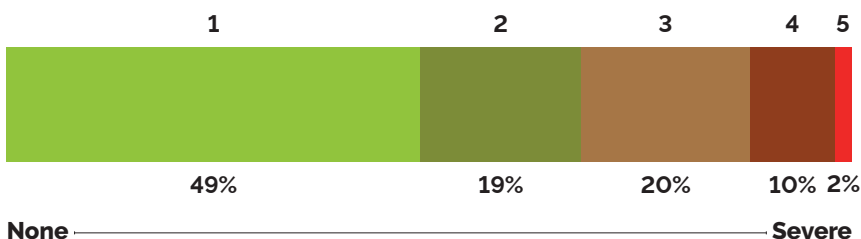
Forest Lake’s insect control program didn’t target a potential ABW infestation. Forest Lake and its Midwest golf neighbors focus on more prevalent insects in the region such as white grubs. By the time the infestation was discovered, there could have been at least three generations of ABW present.

Moore and his team didn’t fully know how to eradicate the weevils, but they started by applying insecticides on the affected areas. Moore soon realized a blanket treatment was needed, and the crew applied bifenthrin and Tetrino. He also treats 65 acres for grubs.

## White grubs pressure at your course



## Annual bluegrass weevil pressure at your course



The weevils returned — fortunately, in lesser numbers — in 2024. They were first noticed in mid-May. “This season, we kind of implemented a bigger, better strategy, less damage, but they’re still there,” Moore says. Moore adds it’s possible they have been there for three to four years but went undiscovered or misdiagnosed.

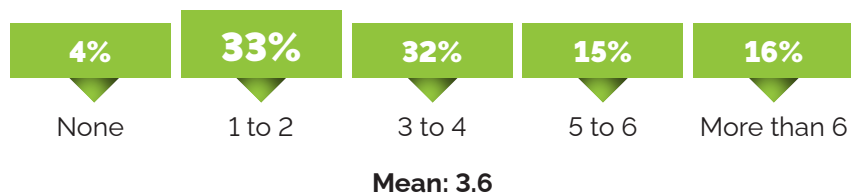
The emergence of ABW in the region surprised him. He had heard about its dangers from colleagues in other areas, but never suspected their presence on the course. A fellow Detroit superintendent, Country Club of Detroit’s **Ross Miller**, forewarned Moore of the weevils. “I remember talking with Ross probably four or five years ago, and I’m like, ‘What are you talking about? I know you’re afraid of this thing, but whatever,’” Moore says. “And then it started to dawn on me like, we’re a 100-year-old golf course. We have annual bluegrass fairways, we have a bentgrass mix, then the annual bluegrass roughs.”

Moore, a past Michigan GCSA president, leans on other superintendents in the area to help him handle potential issues such as ABW. “They have different experiences, different vendors, so they make awareness,” he says.

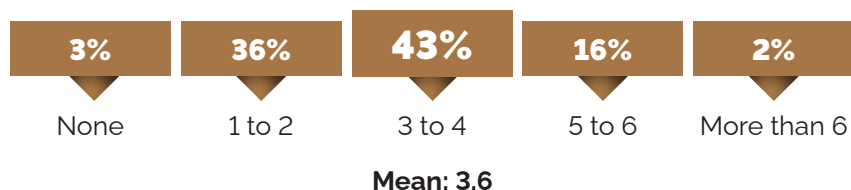
Uncontrollable ABW creates uneasiness for a superintendent. “You start to stop sleeping at night,” Moore says. There was progress from 2023 to 2024 — and Moore hopes the weevils will depart by 2025.

— Kelsie Horner

## Insecticide applications made by year at your course



## Number of insecticides in your rotation



# MOVE ALONG, MOLE CRICKETS

**W**hen he was a student, **Richard Brown** was a Fighting Mole Cricket at South Carolina's Horry-Georgetown Technical College. Now, in his second year as the superintendent at Florence Country Club, he's fighting mole crickets. As Brown is learning more about the course every day, which is just 55 miles from where he attended college, he has come to rely on consistent programs to thwart disease and insects.

During his first year on the job, Brown found that mole crickets had taken over collars and parts of greens on the **Donald Ross**-inspired course. Mole crickets become more difficult to kill with age, and when Brown had found them in the fall, the majority were full-sized.

In the 2023 season, he had not used a preventive program to avoid the infestation, but he pursued a different route in 2024. "The second year has just been trying to implement what I've learned from the first year," Brown says.

Brown began using a preventive treatment of a systemic insecticide, with his first application in April. He applied the solution in spots on the course where conditions were ideal for mole crickets to infest. Following the treatment in April, two applications of bifenthrin and imidacloprid are used in the summer months.

For Brown, timing the applications has proved to be the most challenging part of controlling the insects. "Make sure to get

them early enough before they get too big and difficult to control, because once they get later in their life cycle, they're a lot bigger and harder to kill," he says.

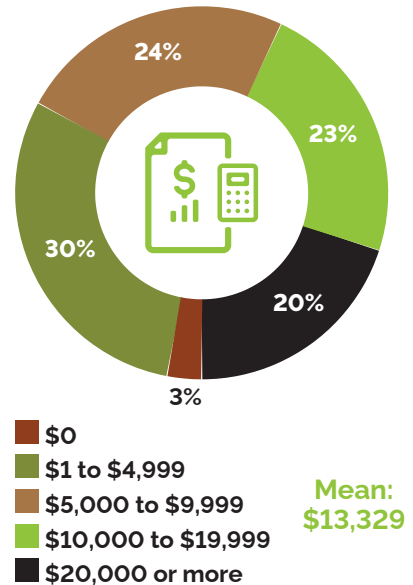
Mole cricket infestation will build piles of dirt, so for Brown, a successful program looks like not seeing any mounds formed on the course. "That's kind of your telltale sign that you have them, and I haven't seen any signs of them yet this year since I've been on that preventive program."

Another telltale sign of success? Dead mole crickets. "One of my favorite things about mole crickets is, if say you have an area that you know there's mole cricket, you pressure spray over it, and the next day you come back, and you can see them either dead or they'll be shaking or trying to crawl away," Brown says. "And maybe that sounds kind of morbid, but it's good to see that insecticides do still work."

Brown uses a comprehensive program for disease control on the course but elected not to start his time as superintendent using a program for mole crickets, which he says he later regretted.

"I think with my disease program, since I'm on such a comprehensive program, knock on wood, I haven't had any major outbreaks since I've been superintendent here," Brown says. "And that's the way I like to keep it, versus with the way I managed mole crickets the first year, which was I thought I'd just kind of wait and see, and I didn't see anything. I didn't see any of

Annual insecticide budget



them, so I didn't treat for them. And then that came back to bite me in the fall when they were growing up."

Brown is continuing to learn from past mistakes and experiences to be the best superintendent he can be. "My first year was all just kind of a blur," he says. "It was pretty much just surviving and trying to figure out how the golf course reacts, what it's going to do, dry spots and where the heavy weed pressure is, the biggest challenges disease-wise, biggest challenges insecticide-wise. So that's probably the biggest thing, is just still being the new guy, in a sense, adding on to what I've learned from the time has probably been the biggest challenge, and just figuring things out."

—Kelsie Horner

## Annual insecticide budget





# TRANSITION ZONE TRACKING

**W**hen Greg Caldwell started his role as superintendent at Pete Dye River Course of Virginia Tech in 2020, he was unaware of any annual bluegrass weevil infestations. Once he found some of his collars going sideways in the Virginia summer heat, he soon realized the weevils were alive and present.

With Transition Zone weather acting like “Jekyll and Hyde,” as Caldwell says, using proper control programs and treatments is important. Along with ABW, June beetles made their presence known in the mid-July weather.

“This year was really bad for those around here for whatever reason. You could see them flying everywhere,” he says. “You would ride in your cart down the fairway and get hit in the face.”

Caldwell, the Virginia Turfgrass Association president, has found a preventive treatment program to be most effective in his battle against ABW. When spring rolls in, Caldwell starts his program with an adulticide application. From there, he monitors for insects and treats any areas that show signs of infestation with a bifenthrin solution.

Following the adulticide application, Caldwell uses two applications of Tetrino. The insecticide is used on all the greens and collars. It is also applied to fairways and tees, as well as half-rate in the roughs. Tetrino also helps prevent white grub infestations. “Thank goodness for Tetrino,” Caldwell says. “That really changed the control strategy around here.” His program continues with insecticide applications in July and then August.

Caldwell uses many resources to stay current on insecticides and infestation

## Resources used to time insecticide applications

Personal observations and notes	77%
Historical course data	70%
Distributor and manufacturer representatives	45%
Peers at other courses	40%
Weather reports	32%
Researchers and extension agents	30%
Digital apps or platforms	23%

## Factors that would result in you adding a new insecticide to your rotation

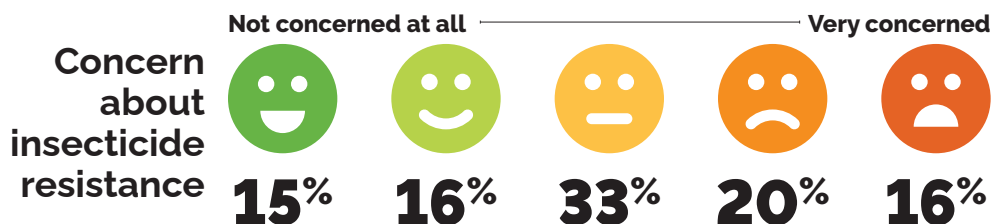
New technology/active ingredients	67%
Cost	65%
Peer recommendation	57%
Resistance concerns	55%
New insects entering your region	51%
Distributor/manufacturer recommendation	48%
EOP offer	21%

trends. He and his team frequently study ABW migrations and progressions. He also speaks with representatives of major plant protectant companies to get advice. “They can keep you up to speed on what’s coming down the pipeline and what other guys are seeing,” he says. “It’s always good to communicate as much as you can with the guys that are out and about, seeing everybody else.”

Caldwell gives some of the credit for his

program’s success to his fellow superintendent peers. “I’ll come up with a program, but then I also run it by my core group of superintendents because this is my fourth full year of being a superintendent here,” Caldwell says. “I’m still figuring things out a little bit, and it’s always good to run it by your peers, the guys that you trust.”

— Kelsie Horner





## Eliminate pests. Increase your savings.

**Save on Tetrino® insecticide with our Fall Solutions program.**

**October 1 through December 6, save on Tetrino® insecticide** and get fast-acting and long-lasting control of annual bluegrass weevils and white grubs. It's the perfect solution for any schedule or agronomic program. And with savings of \$25 per bottle with the purchase of four or more, it's perfect for any budget too.



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SUPERINTENDENT  
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# TUNE IN TO GOLF COURSE INDUSTRY'S PODCAST SERIES

**TARTAN  
TALKS**

Guests from the American Society of Golf Course Architects discuss their career paths, current and past work, design trends, and how they work with superintendents and operators to improve the functionality, playability and marketability of golf courses.

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**beyond**  
the page

A conversation that expands the scope of a story from the most recent issue of *Golf Course Industry*, including a chat with one of our columnists on their latest work.

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**GREENS WITH  
ENVY**

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



AVAILABLE ON:





## MAKING A GOOD JOB GREAT

A well-known course was ready to retire its long-term superintendent. For whoever would fill his shoes, it was sure to be a good job. But, for the right person, it could be a “great” job.

What’s the difference? If you don’t know, then it’s possible you’re not up to achieving greatness.

In this case, the membership had a clear mandate for the new superintendent, something made clear to all the candidates. Theirs was a historic course with an excellent architectural pedigree. But they wanted change. Not that there was anything “wrong” with the course; it just didn’t shine like it used to. The members — now younger, more affluent, and with new, higher standards — sought a more spirited superintendent. Someone more in their own image who could take their perfectly good course and make it exceptional.

What’s the first element of going from good to great? Listening. You should be able to tell — from the interview, through the grapevine, looking at recent course ratings — what the people in charge want. If they can’t tell you, or if the constraints put on the job (e.g., money) aren’t sufficient, then greatness may prove out of reach. It’s difficult to turn a C+ course into an A+ if management isn’t 100 percent behind you.

But it’s the second ingredient that’s really important: Vision.

That is, your vision of what a great job looks like and how to get it there. Some of that is your “golf smarts” — not just your skills as a superintendent but your understanding of what greatness is. The other asset is your ability to find and develop the resources to reinforce your vision.

Some people have vision, either naturally or through hard work. In either case, it includes these factors:

- The ability to see the “big picture.” That means looking beyond each hole, or even all 18, and seeing the course as a reflection of its history, traditions and current membership.
  - The ability to find the right resources, be they people, products or inspiration.
  - The ability to listen. When you talk less and listen more, you instantly become smarter.
  - The ability to be open-minded. Or, if you prefer, to see beyond your own prejudices.
  - The ability to be a team player. No one can do a great job by themselves.
  - The ability to organize. You’re going to be responsible for a lot of their money, so they’re going to want to know how you’re going to spend it through long-term plans, budgets and regular communication.
- There are other requirements, of course, which will vary with the person and the job. But having conducted and sat in on countless job interviews, I promise you that

all of the above are top of mind with any membership that is serious about taking their course up a notch or three.

Let’s get a little more specific. How else can a good job become great?

**Architecture:** Recognize the architectural potential of a good course with sound bones. You should be able to see what’s there. If you can’t see it, how will you be able to bring it out?

**Forestry:** A fresh set of eyes should be able to see which trees have been planted in the right places and which haven’t. Determine which trees are there as hazards and which are there simply for optics, then remove those that don’t belong. What was the architect trying to do with trees? Is that vision outdated or unsustainable? Especially with classic courses, a comprehensive tree plan is an absolute must.

**Lost features:** Think like CSI. It’s a crime to see what has happened to many courses’ original intent and features. Review green shrinkage, back tees, shrinking fairway widths, bunker erosion and other evidence of time — and interfering committees — having taken a toll.

**Agronomics:** New practices, maintenance days, drainage mediation, alleviating ongoing problems to provide better conditions ... there’s always another way to approach these

**MORAGHAN** continues on 80



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



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# Injecting **golf** **energy** into the Pennsylvania woods

A hands-on owner is taking a solid course in a serene part of the Keystone State and making it even more memorable with the help of a devoted turf family.





**A**rthur Stewart owns an energy company in Warren County, Pennsylvania, a woodsy, watery and sparsely populated community along the New York border. He's passionate about his industry's contribution to the greater good. Over the years, he's taught himself and other Cameron Energy Company employees how to operate heavy machinery to make life better for residents of small northwest Pennsylvania towns.

"What really built this area were the natural resource jobs: the timber industry and the oil and natural gas energy," says Stewart, whose Russell, Pennsylvania, home is 45 miles from Titusville, where **Edwin Drake** successfully drilled America's first oil well on Aug. 27, 1859. "The foundation of the economy and those things are still here. It's just that natural resources aren't valued much in the general population's imagination. Even though we use those things, we don't think we use those things."

Stewart's other outdoor-centric passion became his secondary business pursuit in late 2022 when he purchased Cable Hollow Golf Course, a rolling 400-acre plot bordered by woods on three sides. Stewart grew up on a farm near the course. He acquired a solid product from **John Sr. and Marge Bortz**, who transformed a plodding former agricultural site into a solid-draining, well-irrigated, soothing-to-play golf course.

"You can't say enough about the Bortzes," Stewart says. "This golf course had the best infrastructure around. It was also the best in the sense that it has the most viability. You can put a lot of people on it, and they can have fun. As the golf economics get harder and harder in the future, this course is built to survive."

But entrepreneurs, especially those who know how to operate excavators, bulldozers and Morookas, are tweekers with a vision. Stewart purchased Cable Hollow to elevate what his predecessors achieved. He envisions attracting thousands of golfers from outside Warren County to Cable Hollow. He's also bringing elements of exotic golf locales to residents who have supported the charming course for decades.

To help fulfill his vision, Stewart leaned on familial connections. His son-in-law **Tyler Martin**, a former college golfer, doubles as Cable Hollow's general manager and Cameron Energy Company's environmental care coordinator. Stewart hired **Jerry Martin**, a second-generation turf lifer whose five-decade career involves improving small-town courses on both sides of the border, as superintendent.

Everybody in northwest Pennsylvania and southwest New York industry circles knows hiring Jerry, 70, means a package deal. **Joanne Martin**, 72, has worked alongside her

husband for 42 years, a stretch spanning employment at four courses: Wellsville Country Club, Conewango Valley Country Club, Holiday Valley Resort and now Cable Hollow. "She can run anything out there better than any of these guys," Jerry says.

Despite her mowing, edging, raking and irrigation perfection, Joanne sparingly works outdoors at Cable Hollow. Her current job is Cable Hollow clubhouse manager. "Everybody has this thing, you retire when you're 65," she says. "My family lived to be 90 and 100, so what am I going to do for 30 years? At this point, it isn't really the money as much as you love it and you feel you're capable of it. I feel very capable."

Jerry and Joanne have five children, all of whom worked on golf courses as children and teenagers. Tyler is the only one working in the golf industry as an adult. He's essentially handling two full-time jobs for Stewart and executes tasks with a superintendent-like work ethic. Tyler wants people to appreciate what Cable Hollow and the surrounding land mean to their way of life. He imagines propelling an overlooked part of Pennsylvania into the state's broader golf conversation.

The tweaking started in 2023, and it will continue for multiple years. Cable Hollow loyalists immediately noticed the equipment, more people on the course, and the New York and Ontario license plates in the parking lot.

"Many golfers stopped and watched what we were doing," Tyler says. "And many golfers stop and talk to you while you are working."

By  
Guy  
Cipriano



▲ Cable Hollow superintendent Jerry Martin, general manager Tyler Martin and clubhouse manager Joanne Martin.

**STEWART AND TYLER** have moved hundreds of rocks and boulders from the woods bordering the 18th hole, an uphill par 5 constructed by the Bortzes in the early 2000s, to other places on the property. They sit on a pair of those boulders on a comfortable patio with a view of the 18th green before golfers arrive on an early August morning. Tyler spots a fox trotting near mulch beds surrounding the green. The fox emerges multiple times throughout the morning.

Solitude and wildlife comprise a significant part of Cable Hollow's charm. Golf, after all, represents an escape. Life distractions seem distant as Stewart and Tyler describe why elevating Cable Hollow has become a central part of their busy lives.

Like millions of golfers, Stewart left the game as a young adult. Marriage. Children. Establishing a career. We all know — and understand — what happens when life happens. Stewart eventually returned to the game, and he now plays to a single-digit handicap. He travels to play and watch golf, often bringing Tyler along. Augusta National. Muirfield Village. Bay Hill. TPC Sawgrass. St Andrews. The deeper he delves into the game and industry, the more he relishes studying famous courses.

Light drizzle shifts the August conversation into Cable Hollow's new indoor

pavilion, a rustic structure with modern conveniences, including air conditioning. The pavilion fits almost 250 people. Stewart and Tyler place a laminated course routing plan across a circular table. They created the plan in collaboration with Michigan-based architect **Paul Albanese**, whom Stewart hired following prodding from Jerry. Albanese and Jerry worked together to enhance Holiday Valley's slopeside layout.

The printed plan for Cable Hollow includes proposed changes overlaid on the current routing. Stewart and Tyler spent an hour describing their hole-by-hole plans. Modifications will occur annually over at least the next five years.

Inspirations for changes derive from many sources, including one of Stewart's March 2023 trudges through a snow-covered course with **Mack**, an 11-year-old labrador mix. Fixing the fifth hole, previously an uphill, 200-yard par 3 with a severely sloped green with just two practical hole locations, back left and back right, ranked near the top of Stewart's to-improve list.

"The thing that frustrated me more than the green was that you had this gorgeous irrigation pond and the Bortzes spent a lot of money to have it dug out about 30 years ago," Stewart says. "When I was a kid, this was a swamp. It had become a gorgeous thing and now you stood on that tee box, and you couldn't see the water. We bought the course in December (2022), and I spent January and February out there thinking, 'How can I dig this pond larger and have it come into play?'"

A revelation occurred as Stewart approached the 17th hole during the wintry walk with Mack. He beelined back to the fifth hole. He visualized one of his favorite holes: the across-the-pond 16th at Augusta National. Finally, after hundreds of course walks and hours of deep thinking, he had identified the proper spot to honor the famous hole and its tiered green. "I looked over the old fifth green, and I realized, 'Oh my God. It's going to work,'" Stewart says.

Stewart knocked on John Bortz's door. They walked to the existing

fifth hole together. "John said, 'Arthur that's best idea ever. I never thought of that in all the years I owned the golf course.'" Stewart then called Tyler. "He was like a little kid," Tyler says.

Tree clearing to build the new fifth hole started in July 2023. The project officially commenced Aug. 3, 2023. Contractors were done with their work by early October. The biggest in-the-field change included expanding the sandstone rock wall in front of the green from 100 feet to 240 feet. Every rock was sourced from the property, and Stewart and Tyler worked dozens of 12-hour days to construct the hole.

They unveiled the hole on June 1 as part of a ceremony celebrating the opening of the pavilion and the first phase of course enhancements. With around 150 Cable Hollow supporters gathered around the amphitheater green and Jerry's crew cutting a "Sunday" hole location near the back-left ridge, Tyler dropped five balls on the green to illustrate the possibilities once shots hit the surface. Three balls rolled into the hole.

"Was it worth it?" Stewart says. "The grand opening was on a Saturday. I was glued to the couch that Sunday. I was exhausted. On Monday morning, I'm at the course and two guys are on





the tee box. One was teeing off and what was the other guy doing? He was taking pictures of the rocks in the background. I thought, 'Oh my God. We did it.' That's when I knew we absolutely hit the center of the bullseye."

Days like June 1 and its run-up temporarily exhaust, yet permanently excite anybody whose name or soul is attached to a public golf course in a small community.

"Everybody talks about the Pinehursts, Oak Hills, Oakmonts, Pebble Beaches, ... all these wonderful golf courses," Joanne says. "But it's really the little courses that have kept everything together."

**AFTER TRAVERSING THE** pond and tiered green on No. 5, the focus shifts to the revamped sixth, an uphill par 5, which, Stewart says, "turned out to be pretty cool ... the sleeper hole." The rebuilt green features a surface conducive to distinct hole locations; the previous green was severely sloped, limiting the crew to cutting "one realistic hole location," Stewart adds. Two step bunkers front the left side of the green. Two honey locust trees and a crimson king provide a pleasant backdrop. Views of hillsides

are omnipresent.

In a mulch bed surrounded by rocks behind the green, a sign with quotes from Stewart and Tyler describes the vision for the scenic and strategic hole. Communicating what's happening to golfers helps the Cable Hollow team stay ahead of concerns while building excitement for future enhancements. Questions about temporary greens proved frequent as June 1 approached.

"The temporary greens ran their course," Tyler says. "It's the only semi-negative. I told everybody, 'It's not part of the problem, it's part of the solution. And it's only temporary.' Everything else is positive."

The final major change during the project's first phase involved carving a new 13th hole into the woods on the north end of the course. The par 3 plays 105 yards from the front tees and 220 yards from the tips. The boomerang-shaped green is fronted by a grass hollow. A bunker with rocks inside its back face lurks behind the thinnest portion of the green.

At an age where many of his industry peers and friends are retired or curtailing their work, Jerry is contributing to the largest planned construction and grow-in effort of his career. Coinciden-

tally, Cable Hollow rests just 15 miles from Jackson Valley Golf Course, where his father,

**Harold Q. Martin**, helped build the second nine.

Jerry leads a seven-worker crew at Cable Hollow. All the sod for the new and expanded fifth, sixth and 13th greens came from an onsite source: the chipping green. Jerry's team worked furiously last fall to transfer existing sod to new locations.

Asked what his father would think of what he's involved with, Jerry says, "He'd be very proud. He'd say, 'Way to go.' Jerry is too humble to continue his thought, so Joanne relays a message she once received from Harold. "I remember one day Harold said to me that Jerry became a much better superintendent than he was."

Harold's career spanned 52 years, and he doubled as the golf pro at multiple clubs. Jerry is positioned to match his father's longevity. Cable Hollow should be his last — and likely most impactful — stop in a fabulous career.

He's working for an energetic owner in a county where he's spent a large part of his life. Family surrounds him on the job. Progress will be noticed and appreciated by supportive golfers.

What more can an industry lifer want for a closing act?

"I still can't wait to get to do what I do," Jerry says. 🌱

Guy Cipriano is Golf Course Industry's publisher + editor-in-chief. He's a Pennsylvania native and relishes small-town golf course stories. Send your course's story to [gcipriano@gie.net](mailto:gcipriano@gie.net).



This golf course had the best infrastructure around. It was also the best in the sense that it has the most viability. You can put a lot of people on it, and they can have fun. As the golf economics get harder and harder in the future, this course is built to survive."

— **Arthur Stewart**



© ARTHUR STEWART





# Cardinal wins

Golf course architect Ray Hearn was lucky enough to design a new course — and a new short course — at Saint John's Resort in suburban Detroit. Plus, more Michigan construction wins.

By Kelsie Horner

**W**hen golf course architect **Ray Hearn** met with staff from Saint John's Resort in Plymouth, Michigan, the team had three options for its golf facilities: restoration, renovation or redesign. "It was unanimous," Hearn says. "Blow it up. Start over." And they did just that. Saint John's Resort's, formally known as The Inn at Saint John's, opened its 18-hole course in 1979 and added another nine holes in the 1990s before a redesign plan commenced in May 2022.

As Hearn was handed a blank sheet of paper, he couldn't help but smile. "It's music to my ears," he says. "Not a lot of architects get to do something like this anymore — a new course."

Hearn designed 32 concepts for the course, which features a variation of topography with a mix of hills and flatland. On the course, you will find around 50 bunkers, seven ponds — one of which was added for irrigation — and up to five tees per hole. Hearn's office is less than three hours west of the resort, so he could



make frequent visits. "I had 20 site visits before the construction drawing phase," he says. "That's the only way construction drawings can be meaningful."

"This is a very dynamic parkland type. There's a lot of variety in the holes, in the multiple-tee systems. If you pick the correct tee, you could have a very, very enjoyable day."

Saint John's and Hearn partnered with Landscapes Unlimited and LaBar Golf Renovations for construction and contracting. Only a few ponds and corridors were used from the prior course. Everything else was new. Hearn collaborated with the Saint John's staff to get proper sunlight and air flow throughout the design.

The course, renamed The Cardinal, features a par 36 front nine, with five par 4s, two par 3s and back-to-back par 5s on holes 4 and 5. The back nine carries a more parkland-type feel, with trees and landscape views among the five par 4s, two par 3s and another set of back-to-back par 5s, making for par 36. The longest hole measures 555 yards from the back tees; the shortest hole, No. 3, measures 189 yards from the back and 100 yards from the front tee box.

For Hearn, his job at Saint John's is mostly complete. Now, he hands it off to superintendent **Kevin Peck**. "He wants the highest level of quality for him and his crew in the final product," Hearn says. "That's a high testimony. And it shows when you go out there and look at the finished product."

Peck joined the team in February 2022 after 12 years as an assistant superintendent at Country Club of Detroit. Peck was aware of the happenings at the resort, which he says attracted him to the position. He knew he was arriving amidst a huge project and was ready to take on the challenge—but not without his team. When Peck assumed his new role, he inherited at least 10 team members who had worked at Saint John's for more than a decade.

"They had a work-life balance, and they still had the ability to get time off and refresh," Peck says. "And me and my assistants kind of bore the brunt of a lot



## More Michigan

### Pine Lake Country Club: Built to last

After 10 years of concepts, approval and construction, Michigan's Pine Lake Country Club has reopened following a full-course renovation. The private course in West Bloomfield Township opened in July 2024, after architect **Drew Rogers** worked alongside superintendent **Terry Poley** to bring the plan to life.

Rogers, the owner of JDR Design Group, first visited the **Willie Park Jr.**-designed course in 2013, and was officially engaged in 2014, when he created a master plan. "Then it was just a matter of getting it through to the members, looking at funding, looking at trying to convince some of the naysayers that this is the right thing to do," Poley says. "There was a lot of pushback initially on it."

The biggest pushback from members was the idea of closing the par-72 course for a year. The plan was officially passed in 2016, and the plan with funding was approved in 2021.

Poley says the course prior to the construction could have been architecturally confusing for golfers, as it held design touches from Park, **Robert Von Hagge**, **Jerry** and **Bruce Matthews**, and **Craig Schreiner**. "The old course was kind of a mix-up," Poley says. "They've been touched a lot, and there were a lot of different things going on."

The course can now be described as homogenous, with width and options available to players. "You've taken a flat piece of land and turned it into something that's just really, really cool," Poley adds. "And it's something that was built correctly."

The course was built to last, no skimping out on any resources. Poley helped choose the best fitting contractors, materials and products. Material was also chosen with sustainability in mind.

"The fact is that the planet is getting hotter, and you have grasses like annual bluegrass, for example ... it doesn't perform well in the heat," Poley says. "It needs a lot of food. It needs a lot of fungicides, shallow rooted, it needs a lot of water. And those are all things that we don't need to put into the Earth every day."

Poley chose a Flagstick and Macdonald blend of creeping bentgrass on the fairways, and 007XL creeping bentgrass for the greens. "We've noticed that we're putting almost no fungicides on the fairways. And, I mean, that's huge," he says.

For Poley, dealing with non-turf related tasks and decisions was testing. Poley, a Michigan State alumnus, handled a lot of items he didn't learn in turf school. Part of rebuilding a course involves working with permits, banking and budgeting.

"There's always a ton of stuff that superintendents are asked to do that is outside of their area of expertise," Poley says. "And I guess that's a good thing when the membership of the club has the trust and the faith in you to do these things, but it's not necessarily your strong suit. I'm not an environmental engineer. I'm not an attorney. So, dealing with permitting and townships and ordinances and stuff like that are a little bit of a challenge."

Poley is excited for the course's future, once the greens have time to mature. "It'll take a couple years for a lot of these newer varieties of grass to really reach their full genetic potential, but once they do, then you can really start doing some cool stuff, turning off the food, turn off the water, and get them fast, get it firm, where it's fun for everybody."



## PURPOSEFUL PROGRESS

► Architect Ray Hearn, left, and superintendent Kevin Peck collaborated on the major project at Saint John's Resort.

of the overtime and working with the construction teams."

Since reopening the course, the maintenance team's shifts begin at 5 a.m., preparing the layout for the hundreds of golfers who could play each day. Peck has had to "bulk up" on part-time staff to assist with morning duties. "Maintenance has been very efficient," he says. "We just try to stay out of the golfer's way. We know this is most people's first experience on the course. We don't want to be in the way, unless we really have to."

Dominator creeping bentgrass was used for the tees and fairways, and 007XL creeping bentgrass makes up the greens.



On June 22, the night before the course opened to the public, Peck took one last drive around the property, alone, to take it all in. "It was emotional," he says. "A lot of blood, sweat and tears were put into it, and it doesn't end. Our job never ends."

### BEYOND 18

The new course was created with more than 18 holes of regulation golf

in mind. The Pulte family, the owners of Saint John's Resort, worked with Hearn to entertain people of all skill levels and ages. "If you need to work on your wedge game, come out, beginners, community involvement, the whole thing, it's there," Hearn says. "So, we're putting more of a bigger marketing campaign out together to get more eyes on this golf course, because that's where you're going to see families come out and play the



## More Michigan: An enticing entryway

Forest Lake Country Club's entryway received a top-of-the-line renovation, enhancing the private club's 18-hole course. The club's "Top of the Hill" project was completed through member funding and led by architect **Chris Wilczynski** and superintendent **Ryan Moore**.

The project commenced in August 2023 and included a new driving range with new synthetic tees, a 7,500-square-foot putting green, a new tee complex on the first hole and a newly located sixth green. The back nine also saw the repositioning of all greenside bunkers, as part of Wilczynski's master plan.

"People are really proud and really proud to bring guests," Moore says. "Between our amenities and now what we're doing with the golf course, we're showing continuous improvement."

Forest Lake resides in Oakland County, a suburban Detroit county filled with private clubs aggressively executing renovations. A spike in golf rounds and memberships following the

COVID-19 pandemic helped Forest Lake develop a case for executing parts of its master plan.

The 10-acre course was founded in 1926 and originally designed by **William Diddel**, whose greens feature slopes and undulations still on the course today. The par-71 layout was later partially redesigned by **Arthur Hills**. Although the course is considered short for yardage, Moore says golfers infrequently score their best rounds here.

"Don't judge a golf course by a scorecard," Moore says. "You'll probably score worse on this golf course than any other golf course."

Outside of the added features from the project, the back-nine holes saw bunker removal and repositioning, which has added more hand maintenance requirements for Moore and his team. The bunkers, though, experience fewer washouts.

"They're easy to rake, so there's kind of compromise," Moore adds. "But when we send out my guys on hand-mow day, it's like you can kind of tell. That's



why I mix it up."

Since recent renovations, the course has experienced a spike in membership and play. "There's a lot of continuation in member pride," Moore says.

The members even fully funded the addition of a clock tower between the putting green, practice range, first tee, sixth green, seventh tee and 18th green.

The course remained open with at least nine holes of play

available during construction. The construction team from MacCurach Golf Construction moved swiftly and efficiently, Moore says. "I found out that the construction crew does what they do really well, and we do golf course maintenance really, really well," he adds. "When we're a part of the construction team, the speed that they're able to go at is very different from a maintenance crew."

© LEFT: KEISE HORNER  
TOP: BRIAN WALTERS (2)





putting course. Other aspects of that, where we're just kind of being a more community resource."

Part of the project included the building of a lighted 18-hole putting course on the west side of the property, used for both practice and entertainment. Located next to the putting course is a concession stand with a variety of food and beverages, as well as picnic tables, music speakers and lounge chairs for guests to enjoy before, during or after their round. In addition to the putting course, a new short-game area was built.

As par-3 courses are growing in popularity in the golf world, The Cardinal expanded to include The Little Cardinal. Hearn, who has spent a portion of his career designing courses overseas, chose to design a seven-hole par-3 course based on his favorite greens.

Each green is inspired by a well-known hole overseas. Some examples include the third hole, "Sahara," which is inspired by a green at a famous Scottish course. A sign on the tee box reads, "The Prestwick Golf Club in Ayrshire, Scotland, is home to the Sahara hole, a legendary creation of **Old Tom Morris** from 1851. As the oldest championship

hole, its hallmark is a vast bunker flanking the green, presenting a formidable challenge and enriching the golfing experience with historical significance."

Other hole names include "Punchbowl," "Postage" and "Reverse Redan."

Although the golf project is complete, Saint John's is still full of construction vehicles and workers. The resort is nearing completion of a 16,000-square-foot pillarless ballroom and renovations to the resort.

A chapel resides on property built by the Catholic Diocese of Detroit for weddings. On a fully booked weekend, the resort can host around 20 weddings and can accommodate up to 800 guests. "There's epic beauty inside," Hearn says.

"They built an impressive chapel," director of golf **Nick Becks** adds. "It's like you're at the royal wedding."

The Cardinal is one of 959 golf courses in Michigan. So, what makes it so unique? It has a little something for everyone. The course offers a private club-like experience with public access. Membership is available but not required for access. With The Cardinal, The Little Cardinal, the putting course and practice areas, guests of all ranges of golf experience have an opportunity to enjoy themselves.

"The uniqueness is everything," Hearn says. "It's not just the golf course. It's everything." 🏌️

*Kelsie Horner is Golf Course Industry's assistant editor. She had a hole-in-one on the third hole of The Little Cardinal while reporting this story.*



© BOTTOM: BRIAN WALTERS  
TOP: KELSIE HORNER

## PURPOSEFUL PROGRESS



## More Michigan Oakland Hills Country Club: Restoring history

Oakland Hills Country Club, otherwise known as "The Monster," is completing a beast of a renovation project on its historic Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, property.

"When I drive down West Maple now and I look at that maintenance facility, it's like, holy cow, what is about to transpire here? And that's really exciting every day," director of agronomy **Phil Cuffare** says.

The "iconic and elite" South Course, as Cuffare describes it, has hosted 17 major championships over the years. **Arnold Palmer**, **Ben Hogan** and **Jack Nicklaus** have won at Oakland Hills, where **Tiger Woods** watched his son, **Charlie**, compete in the U.S. Junior Amateur Championship this past July.

Cuffare's team understands project mode. The South Course renovation, completed in 2021, included significant tree removal, vast increases in fairway sizes and new bunker positions. A PrecisionAire system was also installed to help maintain greens in Michigan heat and cold.

The "Next 100 Project" will add a new replica clubhouse and a new maintenance building for Cuffare's team. A fire took down the famed clubhouse in February 2022, and the club has survived and adapted without it since. The clubhouse project started Dec. 19, 2023, and the new structure is set to open in spring 2026.

For Cuffare and his team, the constant construction has been a challenge — but nothing they can't handle. The challenge, after all, keeps Cuffare going. "Being challenged is part of who I am," he says. "I love being challenged. And I think the day that I'm not challenged will probably be my last day."

With the addition of a new maintenance building, Cuffare says it will bring an opportunity for more organization, safety and community. "It's kind of always been our mantra, no matter where I've worked, it doesn't really matter," Cuffare says. "The facility doesn't matter. But so many of the people that are in the facility is what matters. I think it will be a good environment for a lot of people to be proud of and to do a lot of good things out of. So, essentially, it should be a lot better than what it is right now, and we're excited, and I think crew morale will be at an all-time high."



# Flying again



Golf, like life, like the resort business, is all about timing. Here's how Idaho's Osprey Meadows at Tamarack Resort went from dormant to delighting guests.

By **Judd Spicer**

**S**taving off a double-dip of bad timing, Osprey Meadows at Tamarack Resort in west central Idaho is again spreading its wings.

Debuted with ample fanfare in 2005, the **Robert Trent Jones Jr.**-designed Osprey quickly filled its mantle with recognition as one of the nation's best new courses. But the domestic downturn of 2008 soon spelled economic doom for the popular grounds, and the course eventually

went dormant, its aesthetic spread of meadows, marsh and mountain terrain eschewing grooming as the playing grounds returned to their natural environment.

Enter new ownership in 2019: Compliments of a \$40 million reinvestment in the resort property and a return of both Jones Jr. and RTJ II president and chief design officer **Bruce Charlton** to redesign and reimagine the grounds—and Tamarack was back on the roadmap.

Of course, such a rally timeline

was soon met with encumbrance anew, compliments of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Yet, evidencing a focus and fortitude that mirrors the genuine grandeur of its postcard surrounds, Osprey Meadows swept through the latter threat to its existence and officially reopened its tee sheet this past July. Now sporting a redesign with fewer bunkers and forced carries, the course offers a near-full rerouting from its initial design, all intended to make the experience more enjoyable for the resort golfer.





to learn to leave alone, because they're good; and some things require the tweaks here and there. And this is initially done in the dirt, before seeing the green grass. But then when actually playing it, my golfing eye kicks in and you feel the shots and those needed tweaks. I always like to say that golf is really designed through your hands and your feet."

bit. The tough parts were that there was no equipment here, no staff here. But the leadership here told me they'd get me what I needed and work with the landscape team to come up with a schedule and a plan. So, while everybody really did want to hit the ground running, I think it was my job to make sure that we had a real blueprint."

Before Osprey Meadows could truly hatch, Parsons explained his need to get soil samples, put down fertilizer and compost, endeavor rototilling, and to come up with a seeding plan.

Oh, and on the heels of the pandemic, he also needed to get creative with acquiring equipment.

"Getting the equipment was the biggest hurdle. After COVID, the wait times were 18 to 24 months," Parsons adds. "So, I just searched around and bought a couple of used rough mowers and walk mowers, greens mowers. Just picked up what I could to get us through the first six months until winter."

As for the long-unattended soil he was manning?

"I mean, when the soil, which is sand-based, just sits for almost a decade — everything leaks out of it. There was nothing left. I had to wake up the soil," Parsons says. "Top-layering all the fairways with truckloads of compost I had brought in from Boise, along with dozens and dozens of bags

"The goal was making it more player-friendly," director of golf **Dustin Simons** says, "and also, from the agronomy side, making the course more efficient for the grounds staff."

Golf, like life, like the resort business, is all about timing.

"Time is both my friend and my enemy," the poetic 85-year-old Jones Jr. said, smiling, at the course's grand reopening ceremony.

As for the renovation, the famed designer offered of his approach to the project: "Some things you have

**WHEN SEAN PARSONS** took the gig as Tamarack's director of agronomy in late summer 2022, the veteran superintendent wasn't saddling up for his first rodeo. What he soon realized, however, was that the in-process project required some organization to match the team's earnest motivation.

"It was a mess," he says with a smile of recollection. "There were just a lot of pieces that needed to come together. I'd been a part of some renovations and done a lot of irrigation installs, so I knew what I was getting into a little



of organic stuff that we were tilling into the top 2 or 3 inches of the greens, so that when we did seed, it was gonna be successful.”

Grounds gone fallow will do strange things to former turfgrass.

“When I got here, everything was so thatchy, it had turned into, like, bricks — tee boxes and greens,” Parsons says. “It looked like cobblestones. That thatch was about 7 inches deep. They’d let it go and it ran out of nutrients. A very weird look.”

**CHALLENGES DIDN’T CEASE** with cobblestones. Provided the resort’s remote locale — about 100 miles north of Boise — the labor pool for Parsons didn’t run as deep at that thatch. But rather than seeing his local prospects as French fried, the agronomist got to work mashing fresh spuds into shape.

Forming a maintenance staff of 12 golf first-timers (the self-coined “Dirty Dozen”), Parsons filled his team with multiple white-collar retirees — a former insurance salesman, a pediatricist — and hired a welder as his mechanic. Together, the new crew busted butt across 75-hour work weeks to get the rework ready for play in short time.

“I call it ‘speed agronomy,’ because we did do it in about a year and a half, and got the whole thing renovated in under two years,” Parsons

says. “And I called in every favor I could. At this point, it’ll be weird for us to not work a 12-hour day.”

Parsons relished the combo of turf work and construction. “I love the maintenance side, but it’s so exciting to be working with the construction side of it,” he adds. “When I took the job, I told my wife, ‘This really gets my mind going.’ And the chance to bring this course back, just a huge opportunity. There’s been a lot of excitement around this reopen.”

The hands-on enthusiasm was well-paired via a teamwork mind-meld with the designers. While some projects see egos force separate-but-equal task tables, the Osprey Meadows endeavor proved a true collaboration.

“Bruce Charlton is phenomenal to work with, just a wealth of knowledge,” Parsons says. “And talking with him over time with my maintenance point of view, it became, ‘Can we soften that edge?’ or ‘Can we widen this space, so I can get a triplex in there?’ And beyond that, it was an ongoing discussion about a sight line here or there, or sending him a photo for a part of the project that I wanted him to look at for when he’d get back here. And he was very receptive and excited to have that input.”

The result demonstrates the passion and hustle to get to the finish

line. Working with Pure Distinction bentgrass on tees and greens — and already cutting  $\frac{1}{10}$ th of an inch in just its second year — the putting prowess is matched with a bluegrass and ryegrass blend for the hitting surfaces, giving Parsons and his Dirty Dozen ample flexibility in mow lines along fairway and rough.

With Osprey perched to reclaim its original glory and renown, Parsons won’t pause in purview — but, after the renovation sprint, he does aim to finally trade work boot for soft spikes.

“There have been moments (of relief), but I still see all the little things that need to be done. And that, of course, is the curse of the superintendent,” Parsons says. “And while I have enjoyed the pressure of getting this done in under two years, I’ve just put so much focus on this goal and getting to this stage that I now really need to get out and play it and enjoy the grounds.” 🏌️

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



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# *You won't forget it*

A wealthy benefactor, a couple visionary architects, a talented maintenance team and a challenging turf variety are bringing a bold vision to life in the Sunshine State.

By **Scott Kauffman**





**G**n the historical novel “A Land Remembered,” a Florida family captivated generations of readers with tales about living off the state’s untamed land in the late 1800s and traversing through pristine places like the Myakka River Valley, where Native Americans and namesake Cracker cattle freely roamed among the intrepid pioneers.

More than 125 years later, another group of Florida pioneers is back in historic Myakka City, settling along the Myakka River and capturing the attention of another audience: the golf industry. This time, the captivating tales are about growing revolutionary new turfgrass varieties and creating one of America’s most extraordinary golf clubs in southwest Florida’s last unspoiled section of the rapidly growing Bradenton-Sarasota region.

If these modern Myakka pioneers can successfully pull off their namesake Miakka Golf Club as planned, this 1,100-acre pure golf property is also poised to be “A Land Remembered” for generations to come. At least that’s one way to describe the excitement building behind the significant scale of Miakka’s innovative Australian Sandbelt design aesthetics and construction techniques, led by architects **Dana Fry** and **Jason Straka** of Fry/Straka Global Golf Design, former PGA Tour star and native son **Paul Azinger**, newly hired director of agronomy **Terry Kennelly**, project manager **Owen Hester** of Melbourne, Australia-based Green Golf Consulting, and irrigation contractor juggernaut **John Leibold**, whose namesake company is synonymous with high-end golf.

The mastermind behind what the Fry/Straka design duo describe as a “pinnacle project” for golf and the environment is entrepreneur **Steve Herrig**, who is close friends with

Azinger and Leibold, both of whom have long ties to the area.

“This is going to be one of the very best—if not the best course—in the state of Florida,” Fry said during a groundbreaking event this past April. “And it’s going to be one of the great golf courses in the United States and in the world. And it all stems from Steve.”

Herrig, 64, says he didn’t start playing golf until he was about 25, after moving to the Florida Gulf Coast in 1985, which, interestingly, happened to be around the time when **Patrick D. Smith’s** popular novel was published and started to become an epic must-read about Old Florida.

An avid outdoorsman, Herrig is no stranger to the golf business, having been one-time business partners with Leibold, who went to high school with Herrig in Dubuque, Iowa. In fact, Herrig credits Leibold for figuratively planting the Miakka turfgrass seeds after seeing the picturesque parcel Herrig assembled in recent years with two miles of precious Myakka River frontage.

“This land where the golf course is, when it came up (for sale), I just bought it because I wanted to tool around in my ATV,” says Herrig, who became close to Azinger after 30 years of friendship as members at Gator Creek Golf Club in Sarasota. “There was like 200 acres of just beautiful, beautiful Old Florida. Old Hammock trails. ... One day, Leibold and I were sitting around out here, and he says, you should build a golf course.”

Herrig went on to say with a smile: “I’m like, ‘Why don’t you build a golf course?’ True story. And then I thought, what a great property for that.”

The rest is shaping up to be Miakka turfgrass and course construction history. Indeed, after growing up in Sarasota and going



on to a star-studded professional career, Azinger arguably put the Bradenton-Sarasota area on the golf map. Now, in tandem with Fry and Straka, the trio is poised to put this tiny Florida town on the global map.

**MIAKKA GOLF CLUB**, which adopted the town's original spelling used by Native Americans who once lived and fished along the scenic Myakka River, is already associated with some rarified recreational real estate. The club is adjacent to world-renowned TerraNova Equestrian Center and southwest Florida's premier new equestrian community, The Estates at TerraNova, both of which are developed and owned by Herrig.

Miakka is marketing a limited number of invitation-only local and national memberships that will likely be some of the priciest in the industry. Besides an 18-hole championship course designed to one day host high-profile events of international caliber, members will have an additional 12-hole par-3 layout, seven-acre short-game facility, 2½-acre lighted putting course, golf performance and fitness center, and a 450-yard-wide, 360-degree driving range.

At the architects' panel discussion prior to the groundbreaking in April, Straka said Miakka is "one of the best natural sites for golf and one of the best teams we've ever been affiliated with."

Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of Miakka is the design team's choice of zoysiagrass from tee to green. After years of using it as the go-to environmental and player-friendly turfgrass at numerous Asian projects, and seeing promising new strains in production at Bladerunner Farms near San Antonio, Straka and Fry convinced Herrig to use two newer University of Georgia-bred varieties: Stadium Zoysia for the tees and fairways; Lazer for the greens.

Not only was the contrarian turfgrass decision a daring choice for

Florida's Bermudagrass-dominant golf landscape: Herrig decided to go even bolder and bigger, sodding the entire 145-acre course except for the greens, which are being sprigged.

And to ensure Herrig never runs out of what he hopes might be the turfgrass of the future, Herrig purchased an additional 1,600 acres across the street with approximately 500 acres already prepped for zoysiagrass production. Herrig also gained distribution rights for a "big chunk of Florida," Straka says.

Situated just a couple miles from 37,000-acre Myakka River State Park, one of Florida's oldest and largest parks, Miakka is destined to be a course that looks and plays like no other in Florida when it opens in late 2025. Consider: Miakka is not only sand-capping the entire 7,700-yard layout, but crews are installing an additional 15 to 20 feet of underdrainage beneath the sand-capped surface.

In other words, Miakka is building an estimated 145-acre playing surface at "incredible expense," Fry adds, to deliver some of the firmest and fastest conditions imaginable.

"We want to have the fastest, firmest playing surface anyone certainly has ever seen in the state of Florida," Fry says. "Much like Congaree in South Carolina, which is probably the fastest, firmest course I've been to. I was just there (in April). It is so

very expensive to do that. But Steve's commitment is to have the playing style we're doing, and we've got to have fast.

"With all this underground drainage and the proper sand capping, we can get a 4-to-5-inch rain and, in a few hours, the ball's going to carry and it's going to bounce and it's going to go. Steve is going to extra length to make something really special."

**AS PART OF** their effort to design a truly distinctive new Florida course — or anywhere else in America, for that matter — Fry and Straka settled on one of their favorite architectural styles: the Australian Sandbelt. Inspired by places like historic Royal Melbourne, Kingston Heath and Peninsula Kingswood, Miakka will be a vast and wide-open layout with no rough. Greens will be maintained and mowed right to the rarely seen Aussie-style bunker's edge.

This is where Hester brings significant Sandbelt knowledge to Miakka, having grown up in Melbourne. Another reason Hester was hired to oversee the whole project is his background in managing large-scale global golf developments, including 12-course Mission Hills in Shenzhen, China.

On the subject of big-time builders, Miakka has six world-class shapers on site and, by last count, was moving some 3 million cubic







yards of dirt. Among the goals of this extraordinary amount of earthwork: digging a signature 40-acre lake and creating 48 feet of rare Florida elevation at the peak clubhouse setting that will feature 270-degree panoramic views of virtually the entire course. Fry says it will be reminiscent of his “favorite golf course in the world” Shinnecock Hills.

“The clubhouse at Shinnecock Hills is one of the most iconic clubhouses ever built in golf history,” Fry says. “What’s so cool about it is when you’re on the golf course you see it from about 15 or 16 different golf holes. (Miakka’s) the same way. Even from the par-3 course. So, it’s the vastness of the site, which is just unique.”

Other memorable architectural aspects about Miakka will be ribbon tees laid out throughout the course with wall-to-wall zoysiagrass maintained at fairway height.

“Here’s the interesting thing about the grass,” Straka says. “What we’re finding out is it takes considerably less water, considerably less fertilizer and considerably less pesticides.”

When asked why more Florida courses aren’t considering zoysiagrass, the cost of sodding this relatively slow-growing species is one clear hurdle when time is of the development essence. Ultimately, Straka says resistance just comes down to the “unknowns and being new.”

“In the United States, it’s got the

moniker of being the Transition Zone grass, but this actually is a tropical grass,” Straka says. “Dana and I do a lot of work in Asia, so when we’re in Singapore and Vietnam and other tropical places, the actual grass is predominantly zoysia. ... The biggest thing for us, going all the way back to **Mike Hurdzan**, we’ve always sort of pushed the envelope and cutting edge of things.

“Now you’ve got superintendents, especially being through El Niño, they come here and they’re like, ‘Oh my God, this is something we got to look at.’”

Another Miakka construction element that will certainly be a must-see for industry observers is the significant sand-capped nature of the course. According to Straka, after experimenting with 28 different types of sands, mixes and blends, and testing for water release curves and firmness ratings, the team discovered the “perfect blend to be six inches,” comprised of locally sourced sand blended with 10 percent Profile.

**AT TIMES, THE** sum of all the Miakka turfgrass and course construction parts seems too good to be true. But Kennelly, who joined Miakka as director of agronomy in July, knew the project was in the works for more than three years thanks to his decades-long friend Leibold, who convinced him to visit the property.

Timing notwithstanding, Kennelly, 55, concedes that the notion of going to such an ambitious project at this stage in his illustrious career and being tasked with overseeing an atypical unknown turfgrass in South Florida caused some initial hesitation when Herrig approached him about the job.

“I said, ‘I have some reservations and the biggest was probably the zoysia,’” Kennelly says. “I don’t care if it’s golf or any other type of industry, we all like challenges, but we all want to set ourselves up for success. No one goes into something like this

thinking failure, but you’re thinking, Man, I don’t know about this. I want to work 10 more years, and I want to go out on top.” After pausing for a second, Kennelly adds with a smile: “I don’t want to go out as the guy that tried to do something crazy.”

Nevertheless, with continued positive turfgrass tidbits coming out of Miakka, Kennelly’s cultivar curiosities were piqued again, and he made another trip to see Miakka’s zoysiagrasses. He left impressed and conducted more invaluable due diligence with superintendent **Brock Alexander**, whom Kennelly previously hired to work for him at The Concession Golf Club in Bradenton.

Due to their trusted relationship, Kennelly could be frank about the zoysiagrass and asked Alexander if he had any reservations after growing it in and managing the cultivars for close to a year.

“He said, ‘Well, you know, some,’” Kennelly recalls. “But I’ll tell you what, the more we looked at it, I was like, ‘I think I can make this work.’ And it’s not being arrogant or cocky because I like to think of myself as a humble person. But anybody in this business, I mean, when you see this grass, the texture, its foundation and root system, and everything else, you think, wow.”

“And never once did it ever register in my mind that we were the only place to do it. I’m not going to say it doesn’t mean anything to me, but my No. 1 goal is quite honestly to work for Steve and give Steve the best product I can. It’s not about setting a standard in the industry or trying to be revolutionary or anything. I just want to make sure Steve gets what he wants.”

In the end, if Kennelly and everyone else does their part in successfully building this innovative high-profile course, Miakka will undoubtedly be “A Land Remembered” in its own right for years to come. 🌱

*Scott Kauffman is an Orlando, Florida-based golf and golf business writer.*

EOP

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Q&amp;A

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\$10,000 to < \$20,000	6%	2%	8%
\$20,000 to < \$40,000	7%	3%	10%
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\$5,000 to < \$10,000	10%
\$10,000 to < \$20,000	12%
\$20,000 to < \$40,000	14%
\$40,000 to < \$70,000	16%
\$70,000 to < \$100,000	18%
\$100,000+	20%

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  - Contains Acelepryn Xtra, Posterity XT, and Secure® Action™
- Forte Solution Pallet
  - Contains Acelepryn Xtra, Posterity Forte, and Secure Action

Step 1	Step 2 <sup>1</sup>	
Purchase the following amounts of Posterity fungicide brands	Purchase the following <b>total amount</b> of Daconil, Secure and/or Posterity brands	Plan it Your Way Rebates <sup>2</sup>
\$3,000	\$10,000 to < \$20,000	6%
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\$9,000	\$40,000+	12%

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<sup>1</sup>You can qualify for the PIYW rebate by purchasing only Posterity brands

<sup>2</sup>The PIYW rebate will be applied to all purchases of Posterity, Daconil and Secure made from Oct. 1 – Dec. 10, 2024

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ENDURING GREATNESS

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# Continuous motion

**Knickerbocker Country Club** rests just 10 miles outside midtown Manhattan. Four years of hustle have reinvigorated a course with holes designed by two Golden Age greats.

By **Guy Cipriano**

**A**pproaches meld fairways into greens. For **Kyle Hillegass**, they symbolize golf in motion and remarkable progress at Knickerbocker Country Club.

Walking the northern New Jersey grounds in mid-August, Hillegass temporarily halts his morning motion. Pausing doesn't come naturally for Knickerbocker's superintendent. Hillegass completed the New York City, Philadelphia and Rehoboth Beach marathons in a five-week stretch following the peak 2019 golf season. A year later, he pursued a bigger challenge, accepting the top turf job at Knickerbocker, a lasting club with a course losing its Golden Age luster.

But sometimes pausing leads to reflecting. So, as he nears the 17th green, Hillegass stops and watches a duo hand mow a steeply slanted approach with Toro Greensmaster 1000 units. Hillegass then walks to the raised green — the par 3 is a “volcano” hole originally designed by **Donald Ross** — and points to the southeast. Haze obstructs what Hillegass mentions: the New York City





Studying history, though, can only take an individual or property to a certain level. At some point the interpretation must be acted upon. Hillegass started learning what faster and firmer surfaces can do for member enjoyment while working for industry legend **Dick Bator** at The International Golf Club in Bolton, Massachusetts. Hillegass affectionately refers to the experience as “Bator bootcamp,” and those two intense seasons in Massachusetts shape decisions he makes at Knickerbocker.

“I’m a strong, driven person, and I went to work for strong, driven people,” he says. “I got thrown into it right after college with Dick

Bator. It was a survive or not survive mentality. The best thing I learned from him, by far, was his watering practices. He was a leader in the industry at the time of faster, firmer surfaces.”

Following his stint at The International, Hillegass worked for **Michael Scott** at Wykagyl Country Club in Westchester County, New York. He then joined **David Delsandro**’s team at Nassau Country Club on Long Island. Hillegass received his first head superintendent job at Edgewood (New Jersey) Country Club. He brought several key members of his Edgewood team, including Rykaczewski, to Knickerbocker, where they swiftly implemented what Hillegass labels a “bullseye” philosophy of working from the greens outward to reenergize the playing experience.

“The greens are always the most important thing to any golf course,” Hillegass says. “Every member putts on the green, but every member doesn’t use that part of the fairway or play on that tee box. Sticking to that was super important the first year. As greens got healthier and fairways got healthier, we could start to move outward from that and work on more of the detail work, the edges,

skyline can be spotted from the green.

Later in the day, Hillegass returns to the hole with senior assistant superintendent **Brian Rykaczewski** and equipment manager **Jason Tangney**. It’s less hazy and glimpses of opulent Manhattan towers emerge.

The view didn’t exist in 2020, because trees cluttered an interior section of the course between the seventh, eighth, ninth, 10th and 11th holes. The majority of those trees have been selectively cleared over the past four years. “When you can deliver on a plan,” Hillegass says, “it starts to sell itself more and more.”

The current plan at Knickerbocker, a 110-year-old club just 10 miles from midtown Manhattan, involves melding a fascinating Golden Age heritage with modern playability and agronomic demands. Knickerbocker boasts a course with holes designed by Ross and contemporary **Herbert**

**Strong**, whose respective portfolios include layouts responsible for hosting some of golf’s grandest events.

Ross’s and Strong’s layouts promote the imaginative ground game, and Hillegass proved to be the ideal superintendent to reintroduce approaches and motion to Knickerbocker.

A native of Kutztown, Pennsylvania, a small town 75 miles from Philadelphia and 110 miles from New York City, Hillegass grew up relishing history. Kutztown rests between Valley Forge and Gettysburg, a pair of military sites Hillegass frequently visited as a child. As an adult, Hillegass frequently studies the yellowing course routings, aerials and club literature stored in his office blueprint file cabinet. He’s even dabbled in studying the history of the physical structures, including the “Golf House” style pro shop, on and surrounding the Knickerbocker grounds.

“Being in this area, the amount of history that has happened here, if you embrace it, it tells a really important story of why what’s here is here,” Hillegass says. “It’s special for the club, and it helps with the master plan and getting people to understand why we’re doing what we’re doing.”





▲ Knickerbocker Country Club superintendent Kyle Hillegass, left, senior assistant superintendent Brian Rykaczewski, middle, and equipment manager Jason Tangney.

the head edging, bunker depth. ... That type of stuff starts to take care of itself as you develop momentum.”

Hillegass works collaboratively with architect **Jaeger Kovich** on implementing elements of a master plan. Striking changes abound while walking the portion of Knickerbocker’s 180-acre property supporting the 18-hole course, a practice putting green, the Golf House, gravel parking lot and club lawn. The clubhouse, practice range and short-game area, paved parking lot and tennis courts are on the east side of Knickerbocker Road.

Standing on the perched fifth green and staring north offers the first glorious glimpse of the daring incline on the left side of the Strong-designed sixth green, a par-3 Hillegass calls the “catcher’s mitt.” Removing trees near

the green and adding fescue around the tee boxes make the epic green visible from multiple spots. Revealing the sixth green injected personality and strategy into the front nine, and further demonstrated Knickerbocker’s potential greatness. “When we cleaned those trees out on the left of six, as they were down, that gust of wind ... it was like a new start,” Rykaczewski says.

The walk up the seventh is equally memorable as it presents views of expansive fescue fields on the right where deep pockets of trees once resided. The green features a left false front flowing into a tightly mowed approach.

Knickerbocker’s playing footprint has expanded to 30 acres of fairways and six acres of greens and ap-

proaches, all intended to keep balls in motion. Adding more short-cut turf under and around fewer trees enthalls golfers standing on the 14th tee. Tree clearing yielded a cape-like tee shot, tempting golfers to take on the heavily bunkered left side instead of playing to the spacious right fairway. The second shot is flat, with a bouncy approach flowing into a Strong-designed green inside a restored horseshoe-shaped bunker featuring an interior grass mound.

“We have made changes to every surface, the way they are managed, mowing practices, mowing lines, to the types of equipment we are using, to aeration practices, to getting base saturations, to the chemicals applied. ... It’s all been a massive change,” Hillegass says. “Fourteen used to be





in shade for probably a third to half the day. We opened that up, which allowed us to have healthier turf and lower the mowing heights to get our faster and firmer surfaces.”

Maintaining Knickerbocker’s green complexes to play as intended requires nimble maneuvers executed by talented operators using advanced equipment. In addition to handling approaches with Greensmaster 1000s, the Ross- and Strong-designed greens are walk-mowed with Toro Greensmaster Flex 2120s. Mowers that can deftly handle slopes, undulations and knobs, on and around greens, allow Hillegass’s team to preserve features and playing options they worked diligently to reintroduce.

“Using flex mowers on the super steep Ross and Strong features really helps turf health,” he says. “We’re hand mowing with 1000s on the approaches, which wasn’t being done before. There was no real set definition of fairway to approach. There was a collar and a fairway, and there wasn’t good tie-ins of mowing practices. Getting the right mowers on the proper surfaces was instrumental.”

Like many enduring Golden Age

layouts, steep terrain dots the Knickerbocker landscape, making rough mower selection another important decision. Hillegass uses the Toro Groundsmaster Sidewinder 3500-D and Toro Groundsmaster 4300 on severe landforms. “Getting some newer rough mowers that can handle these undulations and slopes was super important,” Hillegass adds.

The need for precision extends to the spray program, and convinced Hillegass to incorporate a technology neither Ross nor Strong envisioned being used on holes they designed: a GPS sprayer. Using the Toro Multi Pro 1750 with GeoLink Technology on and around greens, including on turf-type tall fescue bunker surrounds, represents Hillegass’s and Rykaczewski’s first foray into GPS spraying.

Hillegass started pursuing a GPS sprayer after observing how it helped elevate a pair of prominent nearby New Jersey clubs. He then arranged a demo at Knickerbocker with Storr Tractor commercial customer support manager **Andy Berenty**. Improving subsurfaces instilled confidence that a riding sprayer could be used on greens in place of a walk-behind sprayer.

“I think the GPS technology has taken the place of it,” Hillegass says. “Labor is never going to get any cheaper, it’s only going to get more expensive. It saves a body GPS spraying with a 1750 that I can allocate to something else. The technology now has gotten so good. And we have really gotten the thatch out of our greens. We don’t see any tire tracking whatsoever.”

The tweaking at Knickerbocker will likely never stall as long as Hillegass, Rykaczewski and Tangney are leading the grounds department. Rykaczewski started his career in golf, went to work for the New York Mets and returned to golf because baseball proved too repetitive. Tangney worked nearly three decades as an automotive and industrial mechanic before shifting to golf in 2021 after a mutual acquaintance introduced him to Hillegass.

“The expectation level is high,” Tangney says. “I was not aware of the precision that goes into sharpening, setting heights and how many different machines they have. It’s a lot. You work very hard here, but what I like is you see it immediately out there. With other jobs, you do a bunch of work, and you don’t see the outcome.”

Intensity permeates at a New York metropolitan area private club like Knickerbocker — Tangney says as many as 18 mowers can be deployed in one morning — and executing parts of the master plan limit extended winter respites. But standing on a firmer green with exact mowing lines no longer suffocated by trees and observing sweeping sights of motion on a course routed by two brilliant Golden Age architects inspires motivated professionals to reveal even more hidden greatness to supportive members.

“I remember the first walk around with Kyle when he wanted me to see this place,” Rykaczewski says. “I was thinking: When do you shut down nine holes and start over?” That’s how far it has come. I wouldn’t have thought it could happen this fast when we started here.” 🌱

# Welcoming industry

**Jason Tangney** possessed scant golf knowledge when he accepted the Knickerbocker Country Club equipment manager position in 2021. He quickly learned the industry contrasted other lines of mechanical work. In his previous careers, Tangney repaired cars and heavy-duty industrial equipment.

“I never played golf,” he says. “I never considered how in depth they go and how intense it is, especially during the busy season. In the off-season, we are still busy here. There’s a lot of construction and tree work, so there’s always a lot to do here.”

Besides discovering golf’s steady-to-frantic pace, Tangney also encountered a welcoming industry, where help is a call or click away. The knowledge sharing, according to Tangney, doesn’t exist in many mechanical fields.

“The support in this industry is much better than the other industries I have been involved with,” he says. “The companies we work with, like Toro, everybody wants to help you. Where I come from, they don’t want to help you. It’s like they want to see you fail in the truck and automotive industry. That’s been a pleasant surprise here. People put in time to help you.”



# When the architect leaves

It's bittersweet when the status of a project shifts from "under construction" to "completed." The architect will leave, as expected, but the architect-superintendent-course relationship continues.

By **Lee Carr**

Some moments in life are more significant than others — like getting a driver's license, discovering someone truly loves you or attaining a hard-earned promotion. With substantive course improvements or a renovation, there's the significant moment when the planning, construction and grow-in have been executed and the architect has accomplished the contracted scope of work.

## WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

That depends on the master plan, the level of success for the work accomplished and the relationship between the architect and the project director. Scioto Country Club, in Columbus, Ohio, is enjoying its third season following an extensive renovation led by director of grounds **Bob Becker** and **Andrew Green**, president and principal architect of A.H. Green Design.

During the renovation, a new irrigation system was installed, fairways were widened and shaped, bunkers were rebuilt, the tees were leveled and the greens reborn in a sympathetic restoration of the original **Donald Ross** design. Thoughtfully planned over years, the course is technically finished, but the architect-superintendent-course relationship is ongoing.

"Whatever we do, there are opportunities to improve as the game and orga-

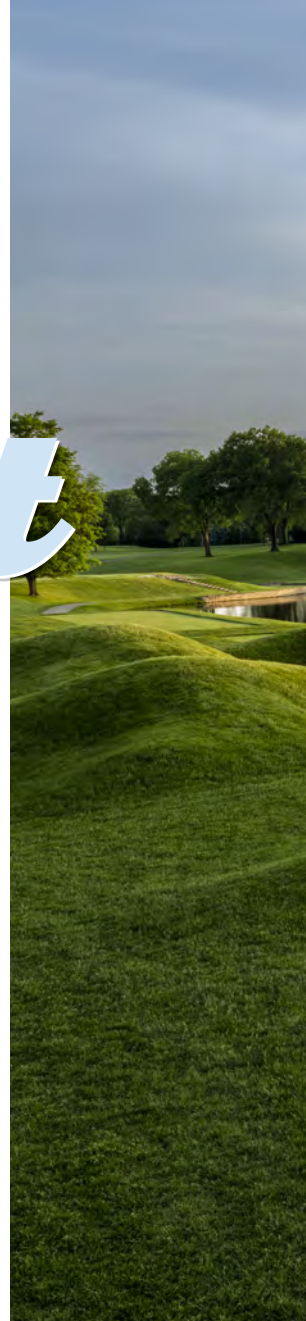
nizations evolve," Green says. "A lot of our post-renovation relationships revolve around that. Part of it is just a continued relationship and communication, particularly with the superintendent but also with the golf professional and the general manager in trying to service their needs as they arise."

Becker, laughing, can summarize in one word what makes the relationship between him and Green productive: honesty. "Knowing that whatever happens, no

matter how bad it is, Andrew needs to be the first to know," Becker says. "Being able to have that open relationship that you just say it and that's that. It doesn't work for everybody, but it worked with us." Likewise, Green kept Becker informed.

Their relationship started before Green was chosen to work on the project. Organizations interview architects, but architects interview them as well. Becker spoke with people who had worked with Green. The architect also did his homework.

"The most important thing for us is finding great projects with great people," Green says. "Having a solid team of leaders is critical. It starts with the superintendent and senior staff being well-aligned with great communication and a really nice vision. That's a good sign that the







project has potential. Momentum, consensus and a passion for the project also help.”

Getting the project off to the right start makes it run more smoothly and helps later. Becker and Green went on some site visits together and got to know each other. Everyone was focused on what was best for the project, without ego. It was all about the work.

Why does that matter when the architect leaves? You have to lay the foundation. “We say everyone is staying in their lane—doing what they’re good at,” Becker says. “I respect Andrew as an architect. My lane is our agronomics and being able to mow it and grow it, to maintain it at a level

that complements his design.”

“You really build that relationship through the master planning process as well as through the execution,” Green adds. “You rely on each other to be successful. The superintendent is relying on the architect to create something that is functional and can be maintained for success. The architect is relying on the superintendent to make them look good and to take care of the product. There is a shared ownership as projects are completed and become utilized.”

Whether undertaking a total renovation or completing work in phases, the architect is not going to constantly be on site, though several crews

may be. McDonald & Sons handled construction at Scioto and Becker’s crew was heavily involved. Green was hands-on with construction also.

“McDonald & Sons did a bunch of the bulk to get started and we would shape out and finish to see what a green would look like,” Becker says. “Andrew was here a day or two or sometimes three, but then he would have to go. It was like watching a series, with cliffhangers. I was like, ‘No! Let’s keep going. I want to see how this ends! This is awesome!’ And Andrew would be back in a few days. That’s the best way I can describe it. It was fun.”

In addition to changing the archi-





### Detailed communication

Listening and talking are critical to doing what is best for the course and establishing a productive superintendent-architect relationship. **Jason Ward**, superintendent at Money Hill in Abita Springs, Louisiana, and **Mike Gogel**, architect and owner of Mike Gogel Golf Design, call, text and email several times each week to catch up and work through plans.

In 2022, Gogel helped Money Hill move two holes and renovate tees, greens and greenside bunkers. This year, they improved the cart paths. Ward has been through construction projects at four different properties, and he appreciates the collaborative relationship with Gogel.

"When he was doing the master plan, I talked with and Facetimed him," Ward says. "Some of the plans he drew up I'm like, 'Yeah, I think it would be better if it goes this way.' He said, 'If that's more functional with what you are seeing, then go for it.'" They shared opinions openly and compromised comfortably.

Leveraging a background in engineering and construction, Gogel communicates numerous details. "I know the information they need, so I am specific," he says. "We work with correct sizes, detailed grading plans and attention to slopes. I provide accurate cut and fill quantities so everyone knows how much dirt is being moved. It's not just a guess."

Gogel also leads in the field. "He's on the skid steer building tees and it feels like he is part of your team when he does stuff like that," Ward says.

"Being hands-on helps the project move quicker and helps with communication," Gogel adds. "It helps with relaying messaging and helps everyone on the team understand where we're going."

Gogel uses visuals and Photoshop to manifest a common vision, and he embraces personal communication. "Most superintendents become friends. Most clubs understand it's a long-term deal," he says. "I am their architect in perpetuity if they want me to be. When they want to add a tee or make an adjustment, they call me."

"Jason and other superintendents see their courses day in and day out," Gogel adds. "They know their course better than I ever will. Opening those lines of communication, being on site, working with them and getting their feedback ensures it's a team effort."

"Mike has been adopted as part of Money Hill's family," Ward says. "The crew respects him and it helps when we are out there leading them."

Communicating with details, taking a personal interest and being sure to listen as well as talk is the ideal way to communicate for Ward, Gogel and Money Hill.



ture, projects address agronomic issues. The desire is to make the course better so it's both thrilling and a relief when the main scope of work is completed. It's also time to return the focus to maintenance.

### CREWS AND CONTRACTS

"Bob was a steady hand with talking about the challenges he was facing and what could be gained from doing the work. That's great perspective," Green says. "He was excellent about why we are doing something from an agronomic standpoint. He and his team did a tremendous job securing materials and getting testing done. We rely on the superintendent for that because we want them to have confidence that the materials that we are using are right for their maintenance practices."

Working side by side is a catalyst for investment and pride in the project. Day by day, the team's understanding of how to maintain the new product grows, as does their collective confidence. At times there were more than 150 people on site. When the extra people and the architect leave, the team knows what to do. Good questions get asked and answered along the way.

"Everyone was working together for a common goal," Becker says, "and it was neat. It's not easy. It's morning until night every day and you don't take days off. We had a core group of 25 people invested and that helps when the architect leaves because they know how to take care of it. They want to. Andrew worked out of our building and talked with everybody."

Being approachable helps with communication and makes course visits more productive, especially after the contractual obligations end. Some contracts include an annual retainer or an agreement to have a continued relationship as weeks or months pass. More often, there's a handshake and people hope their architect will be there as needed. Relationships matter. So do master plans.





Green establishes master plans for approximately a 10-year period and has already revisited five or six with his clients. “We look at the original conceptual design and we look at the work we have executed since then,” Green says. “Then we evaluate what’s left on the list or what we need to address.”

Occasionally, the organization and the architect move in different directions. Maybe the product failed to meet expectations, or the working relationship became an issue. If the superintendent decides to leave and the architect stays, there is a master plan in place. The incoming superintendent will arrive knowing which architect is responsible for the design and how that relationship is going.

“A superintendent and their staff can move due to success,” Green says. “The quality of the project has elevated the club and their personnel, and they are growing their careers. We do the best we can for a new person coming into the relationship.”

Superintendents have different styles of leadership and beliefs regarding mowing, irrigation, fertility programs and more, so there is an adjustment. The architect should be willing to listen and respond to different ideas.

Superintendents should keep in touch. “We don’t talk as much as we

would like to, but that’s a good thing,” Becker jokes. “If Andrew was back here a lot, it means we didn’t do a very good job!” Green met with members for a fireside chat after the course was open for a while. That was a special occasion, but Becker and Green regularly discuss design elements.

“I will ask questions or send him pictures,” Becker says. “Tree removal is an example. The discussion covers me and helps his understanding. We have a procedure for changes to the golf course that require Andrew’s approval.”

There is a policy and a set of guidelines that must be followed at the committee and board levels. “Our green chairman wanted to make sure we were protecting Andrew and that was smart,” Becker says. This makes the group more accountable than any individual, sustaining the team emphasis and striving for what is best for the organization. Committees and board members change.

Becker continues to manage the communication with the builder and with Green. “He and I talk a couple of times a month, part as friends and part about business,” Green says. “We discuss how the course is performing and challenges. It’s fun to hear about successes. Bob is a terrific communicator and conduit of information and

also a huge cheerleader for the project. It is the best set of circumstances.”

Even with honesty and quality communication, differences of opinion can still arise. “Andrew challenged us with some of the bunkers. We run the bent right into them,” Becker says. “It was something we had never done, and it would have been easy for me to say no. Instead, we said, ‘Let’s give it a roll if you feel it’s going to make a better golf course.’ And there are some areas I call the Rubik’s Cube. We are still trying to tweak our routines and solve it.” That’s normal and another reason why the relationship with the architect should continue.

Experienced architects will have a portfolio of several clients. If that portfolio contains courses hosting high-profile events, for instance — Scioto is hosting the U.S. Men’s Senior Open in 2026 — the attention is compounded. When the architect is publicly praised, it elevates affiliated work and more people take an interest. It’s another facet of relationships with architects.

People playing the courses also share images of them, often on social media. “I was giving an orientation to a new employee and we were covering fly mowing,” Becker says.

**ARCHITECTS** continues page 80

EOP


**BASF**  
 We create chemistry

Q&amp;A

## BUILDING A STRONGER FOUNDATION:

### INSIDE THE 2025 BASF EARLY ORDER PROGRAM

As BASF rolls out its 2025 Early Order Program (EOP), we sat down with Jeff Vannoy, Senior Product Manager at BASF, to discuss what makes this year's program unique and how turf professionals can take advantage of industry-leading savings on cutting-edge chemistries.

#### **What makes the 2025 BASF EOP one of the best programs in the industry?**

**Jeff Vannoy:** About five years ago, we decided to revamp our EOP to make it as user-friendly as possible. The goal was to create a program that offers significant savings while simplifying the ordering process. We left behind the old ways of thinking and were able to create more freedom for supers to buy exactly what they want, in the exact acreages they need. Now you can design your own program, stock up on the solutions that you need, and save big on the top BASF brands with an EOP that's straightforward and stress-free.

#### **What does "Foundation Builder" mean for turf professionals? What should they anticipate from the 2025 BASF EOP?**

**Jeff Vannoy:** No building stands strong without a sturdy foundation, and our products are designed to be the cornerstone of any effective spray program. This year's theme emphasizes the importance of using reliable, foundational products to manage your course. That's why we offer a range of foundational brands that are unmatched in our industry, particularly Intrinsic® brand fungicides that provide superior disease control and powerful plant health benefits. When a superintendent builds their turf management program around our chemistries, they're setting themselves up for success during the toughest parts of the season while saving big at the same time. For 2025,

we're offering rebates of up to 33% starting with an easy entry-level spend of \$3,000 to get in the game. In short, we've built a program that makes it simple to get a powerful and economical jump on the season ahead.

#### **With the launch of Aramax™ Intrinsic brand fungicide, how can superintendents leverage this new product during EOP to maximize their savings?**

**Jeff Vannoy:** Aramax Intrinsic brand fungicide is a significant innovation for us, and it's quickly emerged as an essential product for fairway management, defending against 26 of the toughest turf diseases including snow mold, large patch, brown patch, and dollar spot. We're excited about its potential; that's why we're offering a MAX OUT rebate kicker as part of this year's EOP. Superintendents can earn an additional 6% rebate on Aramax Intrinsic brand fungicide purchases of 2.5 to 5 gallons and an additional 9% rebate on 7.5 to 10 gallons. This brings the cost down to an incredible \$236 per acre, making Aramax Intrinsic brand fungicide a smart choice for superintendents looking to take their programs to the next level.

#### **What are Across-the-Course solutions, and how can turf professionals benefit from adding them to their orders?**

**Jeff Vannoy:** Outside of our industry-leading fungicides, we have a strong suite of solutions that benefit your entire course with our herbicides, insecticides, and colorants available

at incredible savings. When you spend \$20k or more on our Design-Your-Own Program (DYOP) fungicides, you automatically earn an additional 12% rebate when you purchase any of the Across-The-Course solutions.

#### **Given the recent shifts in the Southern warm season preemergent herbicide market, how is BASF supporting superintendents during EOP?**

**Jeff Vannoy:** The EPA's decision last year regarding oxadiazon, an active ingredient in Ronstar® FLO herbicide, has significantly impacted the preemergent market for Southern warm-season turf. Superintendents can now only treat 30% of their total maintained acreage with this product, creating a demand for effective alternatives like Tower® herbicide, which contains the active ingredient dimethenamid-p (DMTA-p). We're making sure that superintendents have access to this reliable alternative through EOP, allowing them to prepare their preemergent solutions in advance while enjoying significant savings.

#### CONCLUSION

The emphasis during the 2025 BASF Early Order Program is clear. Behind industry-leading savings, legendary chemistries, and innovative new solutions like Aramax Intrinsic brand fungicide, BASF is focused on helping course superintendents build a strong foundation for success.

For more information about the 2025 BASF EOP and the entire BASF family of products, visit [betterturf.basf.us/eop](http://betterturf.basf.us/eop).





We create chemistry

--- 2025 EARLY ORDER PROGRAM ---

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Start your season strong with the powerful combination of innovation and savings. The BASF 2025 Early Order Program simplifies the planning process by helping you easily stock up on the most advanced chemistries on the market with industry-leading rebates.

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# A course and its caretaker

The renovated and newly reopened Southern Delaware Golf Club and its superintendent have traveled remarkably parallel paths.

By **Matt LaWell**

**B**ill Kupfer is the first superintendent in the short history of Southern Delaware Golf Club. The course could remain open and in full swing for the next couple centuries and there might never be a more appropriate person to tend to its turf.

Both have deep ties to Delaware.

Both have deep ties to golf.

Both veered off course.

Both have returned — through struggle, through hard work.

If a person can resemble a golf course — in ethos, if not in turf type — it is Kupfer and Southern Delaware Golf Club.

Kupfer started his career when he was still in high school. The summer he was 17, he had a lifeguard job lined up, but his grandparents, **Louis and Doris Kupfer**, steered him away from “just sitting on the beach.” He wound up at Rehoboth Country Club in Rehoboth Beach, which was, as it happened, about to start an in-house renovation. That first season under superintendent **Ed Brown**, Kupfer filled drainage lines with wheelbarrows packed with pea gravel, helped rebuild greens, and did everything short, he says, of operating heavy machinery. And he was hooked. “It was what I wanted to do,” he says, “and I knew I was always going to do it.”

It just took him a while to find his way back. After earning a business degree at nearby Goldey-Beacom College in Wilmington, Kupfer wanted to do something more with his life. He drove to Dover, walked down a row of military recruiters, and enlisted in the U.S. Coast Guard. He was in boot camp two months later.

Over nearly a decade of service, he found himself aboard a boat in and around the Hudson River, providing security following 9/11, then





down in New Orleans, helping his neighbors recover after Hurricane Katrina. He was in Baton Rouge when the storm hit and rode it out on a small boat on the Mississippi River. Those years still stick with him.

“Just to be in New York,” he says. “The smells, the sights, . . . it was humbling. ‘We’re the strongest nation in the world. Who can touch us?’ And they touch us by stealing an airplane. And Katrina, you watch all these people suffer, people who lived down the street from you just begging for bottles of water or for help to get out of the water.”

Kupfer was almost halfway to a military pension, but the toll of those events — both in service and personally, as Katrina destroyed his home — steered him back toward golf course maintenance. He enrolled at Louisiana State University, where he had wanted to start studying when he was still a teenager, and started his next chapter. After earning his second degree, this one in the more practical field of turf and turfgrass management, he started his agronomic climb.

Assistant superintendent at Glen Riddle Golf Club in Maryland. Assistant superintendent at Concord Country Club in Pennsylvania, where he worked under **Greg D’Antonio**, whom he considers one of his two mentors. A run of projects with Billy Casper Golf. The head position at Black Bear Golf Club, part of Louisiana State Parks, which he figured would be his “forever job” until the state’s perilous financial situation turned a dream into a nightmare. Three years as one of so many golf course superintendents at The Villages in Florida, where the game is pretty much life.

At The Villages, Kupfer was responsible for 27 holes. “It was a great job,” he says, “but it just beat me down. Literally from sunup to sundown, there’s a tee time every seven minutes. Even when we overseeded, we were supposed to have water windows — they played right through it. It just got to the point where

it was too much. I had to get away from it.”

He moved back to Delaware with an old friend with whom he had reconnected — **Johnna Jensen**, who is now his fiancée — and despite planning for a break from the industry, wound up working at Wild Quail Golf & Country Club in Wyoming with **Kurt Wittman**, whom he considers his other mentor.

And then, in early 2023, he received an offer to close a circle he had opened decades earlier.

**Southern Delaware Golf Club** opened in May, but it has been a golf course, more or less, for the last 64 years. Long called Shawnee Country Club, the course opened in Milford in 1960 with nine holes, adding nine more in 1981. Kupfer played it back then. Ownership sold it in 2011 to another local group who renamed it The Rookery. Kupfer played it then, too.

The course and the club seemed fine until the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Unlike so many other golf courses that weathered the initial dips in play and revenue before the boom of the last four years, The Rookery struggled. The course closed on New Year’s Day 2021, its future uncertain. The land remained empty for two full years. Grass shot up. The outline of the golf course disappeared a little more every day.

Enter **Tim Johnson** and his son **Matt Johnson**, local business leaders steeped in construction. The pair purchased the course in December 2022 for \$3.8 million, according to land records. Within days of the purchase, they told reporters they planned to change the zoning but wanted to keep the golf course. That plan never wavered. They soon called Kupfer.

“I always loved the course,” Kupfer says. “They didn’t have to do any selling on that. What they sold me on is their word is in stone. I trusted them just with two interviews, knowing that everything else they’ve touched in this community has been gold. When they told me they were fully invested, I knew they were going to do it right. I knew they weren’t going to half-ass it.”

Kupfer started in February 2023. The grass, he says, “was three feet tall. You couldn’t see anything. It just looked like a big field.

“And we just kind of went from there.”

Kupfer hooked up a brush hog and mowed the whole property. Then he hopped on a zero-turn mower, raised it to its highest setting, and mowed the property again. Then he dropped the zero-turn another inch and mowed it again. By that point, a couple weeks in, “you could start to see the golf course,” Kupfer says.

He started to hire a crew, high school and college students early on, most of whom stopped showing up after a while. Then he started to find the right people. Most of the crew working today have been on the

course since the end of last summer, including assistant superintendents **Cody White** and **Mike Tkach**, and irrigation technician **Dawson Dillon**, one of the few high schoolers who hung on and who is now working on his turf degree online.

Matt Johnson was as invested as anybody. With plenty of construction experience, he operated most of the heavy equipment — which his Johnson Companies already owned — and shaped most of the course despite having never worked on a golf course.

“It was a relief to me because I didn’t have to explain it,” Kupfer says. “He could see it. He has an engineering degree, so he understands surface drainage, underground drainage, he

gets all that. And my God, I had so many superintendents ask me who our construction crew was because he was just amazing with all the shaping he could do.”

Kupfer also relished working with Tim Johnson, who, like his son, had never worked on a golf course but still shared plenty of lessons.

“He could see the numbers and the construction, but he didn’t understand how it really worked,” Kupfer says. “Having the chance to work with him and teach him, give him expertise, and also learn some stuff from him was fantastic. He had this way of laying sod, and of course it works much better.”

The course layout is largely similar to the longtime track on the property. Most greens are larger now and there are about a dozen fewer bunkers. Hundreds of trees have been cleared — some of which stood in the middle of bunkers. The drainage system is new. And the irrigation system is finally a little more modern. Thank goodness.

“The irrigation system was very minimal,” Kupfer says. “It was single-row. A lot was from the 1960s, a lot was from the ’80s, so one of the first projects we did, we replaced all eight satellite control boxes, we replaced every irrigation head on the golf course, and then we needed a new computer central system. We went with Toro Lynx. And then our pump panels had to be redone. And then there was an ungodly amount of leaks. We had three or four a week. It was a struggle.”

Kupfer opted for a variety of turfgrasses across the course, with Oasis Bermudagrass on the tees and fairways; 777 bentgrass on the greens, collars and half of the approaches; Innovation zoysiagrass around the bunkers; and, eventually, tall fescue for the rough, which remains a hodgepodge for now.

The whole project, from wild field to finished golf course, took less than 15 months.

**The weather this year has provided an extra challenge for Southern Delaware — both the club and the**

area. To be fair, the weather this year has provided an extra challenge *everywhere* and Southern Delaware has been no different. A little more exaggerated, perhaps. Almost a little more hyperbolic.

Nine inches of rain in a single night. Frost as late as April 26. More than 90 percent of average annual rainfall by Tax Day — and then 45 of the next 90 days at 90 degrees or warmer, with winds whipping at least 10 miles per hour and absolutely no rain. But Kupfer knows better than to complain.

“Everybody else in the Mid-Atlantic had this weather as well,” he says. “The Delmarva Peninsula has been horrible. I know some guys who have been in the industry 30-plus years and have never seen it this bad around this area.

“I literally threw up my hands with Mother Nature. ‘I don’t know what I did to offend you!’”

The wild weather pushed back the planned reopening exactly a month, from April 1 to May 1. There is still work to do. A new practice putting green. A covered hitting bay — “our version of Topgolf,” Kupfer says. A 19th hole some time next year. The response has been overwhelmingly positive. After two years of vacancy and another year and change of construction, Milford was ready for more golf.

“We sold out of memberships, 225, and we have a waiting list,” Kupfer says. “And the daily play! The ones who come out every single day, the seniors every morning, the ladies on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, they’re all a part of it.” Kupfer estimates that the semi-private course has averaged about 100 rounds per day, with a peak around 140. Depending on how long the weather holds, the club could hit 20,000 rounds during its first season.

Southern Delaware Golf Club seems to be all the way back. So does Bill Kupfer. 🏌️

*Matt LaWell is Golf Course Industry’s managing editor. He has now written a quartet of course revival stories since 2019. If you know of another good one, let him know at [mlawell@gie.net](mailto:mlawell@gie.net).*





# SOMETHING TO CONSIDER



More courses are adding the USGA's GS3 smart golf ball to their daily maintenance routine. What have they learned?

By **Matt LaWell**

**S**teve Eller describes himself as “an old dog learning new tricks.” In dog years, Eller would be somewhere around 9 or 10, depending on his breed. In human years, he is fast approaching 63. “My superintendents all use moisture meters,” he says. “I still get my pock-knife out and cut into the ground a lot, you know?”

And yet here he is, two seasons in to using—and fully embracing—the USGA's GS3 smart golf ball for daily maintenance at Colorado Golf Club, about 30 miles southeast of downtown Denver.

“It's been fun to have this information to track what you're doing instead of just relying on observation,” says Eller, the head greenskeeper, who has worked at the club for a decade and in the industry for about four decades. “It's really interesting to track your data. I'm surprised how much I look at it.”

What Eller looks at—in conjunction with course superintendent **Tauge Rux**, who normally measures three or four greens with the GS3 six days per week—is smoothness, trueness and firmness. They all have a number, day after day, that measures health and playability. And all those numbers, uploaded to the USGA's DEACON Management System, can have a direct effect on maintenance.

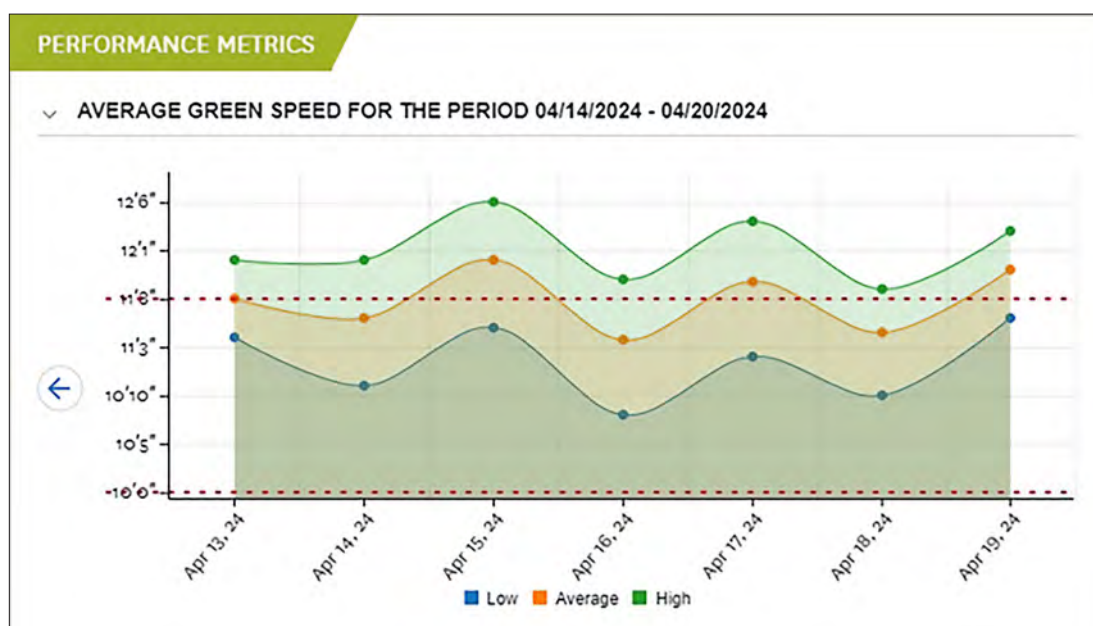
“We look at how our other maintenance practices affect those numbers and what we can expect from them when we do, say, a light topdress,” Eller says. Thanks to data gleaned from two seasons of GS3 measurements, “We've been able to reduce the number of topdressings this year and still manage our organic matter and our soil and our firmness and everything we want the greens to be,” Eller adds. “It's actually helped us reduce things we used to do instead of adding things.”

This year feels like a turning point for the still-new tech. The team at

Pinehurst Resort used the GS3 in advance of the U.S. Open (see *Open Season*, June 2024) and dozens of clubs and courses have added it to their toolbox. More discussion about the ball's readings and data have started to appear on social media—and, far more important in certain regions of the industry, at local meetings and at the bar *after* those local meetings.

“If it doesn't come up at the bar after the association event, it's not going to catch on,” says **Pat Quinlan**, the superintendent for the last six years at Fairmount Country Club in





Chatham, New Jersey. “But it has come up at our board meetings with the association.” Quinlan recalls a recent conversation during which a few local superintendents at clubs with larger budgets learned he was using the GS3. “Wait a minute,” he remembers them saying, “Why does Fairmount have something that we don’t have?” Now whether they go and get it, I don’t know, but I saw the look on their faces.

“When moisture meters came out, people were like, ‘Ah, I don’t need that. I know where it’s wet. I know where it’s dry,’” Quinlan continues. “And then it started just like this—all the top-100 clubs had it and it quickly generated to all levels of club had to have one. I bet you can go to even the mom-and-pops and they’re going to have one. I kind of see the (GS3) ball going the same route. No one wants to be the last guy—especially if your members are going to call you out on it.”

Like Eller and Rux, Quinlan started using the GS3 around the start of the 2023 season. He initially measured 10, 13, or sometimes even 14 greens every day before talking with USGA officials and learning that three or four would be plenty. Like anything else—in maintenance and in life—the

key is consistency. Quinlan has added measuring greens with the GS3 to his to-do list most days. And, because he considers himself a “boots-on-the-ground” superintendent, he often executes the readings. “I’m not wearing loafers,” he says with a laugh.

Quinlan relies on DEACON for a variety of data, including clipping yields. “We do clipping yields on four greens,” he says. “We don’t spray or fertilize each green differently—I guess you water them each a little differently—but does it matter if 14 has a little more clippings than 4? Are you going to do something different? Are your mowers cutting the same later on as they are at the beginning? That’s something that we’ve looked at with both the GS3 and clipping yield: Is the first green the mower is cutting as good as the last green it cuts?”

Quinlan also relies on the ball and DEACON off the course, downloading charts directly to include in presentations to boards and committees. “They love it because they’re all Wall Street people, they’re all Manhattan people, and that’s what they look at every day,” he says. “They look at charts, they look at data, and there’s no more guessing.”

Quinlan doesn’t know exactly how much he’s saved by relying on charts

generated by data he’s already plugged into DEACON, but he has saved at least time if not a little money.

“It’s difficult for me to say we’ve saved any money, but I think we’ve dialed our program in better and improved playability,” he says. “We’re not a daily-fee course, so how do you put a number on that?” As far as ROI, though: “I think member satisfaction has gone up.”

Elsewhere along the East Coast, **Scott Mauldin**, CGCS, is using DEACON to measure clipping yield data at Bayville Golf Club in Virginia Beach—he joined the team during course construction in early 2022—and has sketched out some back-of-the-envelope math about how much it can save him.

Looking at that clipping yield data, Mauldin is already able to determine whether greens need to be mowed with probably five people, or just rolled with one or two. “If I see clipping yields and they’re staying at a certain number that I like them to stay at, in theory, it can save me three or four people,” he says. “That’s where we want to be with data. How do we make a better plan with the data that we have?”

Mauldin calculates that if the clipping yield on a particular green





is about 128 ounces, about 13 to 14 ounces per 1,000 square feet, “then I know that following day I really don’t need to go mow,” he says. “I can go roll. Then I got three people at, call it \$18 an hour, that’s \$54 an hour that I’m probably not going to use for four hours. That’s \$216. Now how many times do I do that in a year? Twenty? Thirty? Forty? I haven’t had (the GS3) long enough to quantify that, but if you did it just five times a month, that’s \$1,000. It’s not to say you’ll do that every month, it might just be wintertime. But if you did it during most of our growing months, April 15 to November 15, you’ve more than got your money back. And that’s just one day a week.”

Mauldin says the GS3 allows him

and his team to have a better understanding of how the greens will perform due to the smoothness and speeds for that day’s play, and DEACON allows him to have several data points on file for the greens.

“With this information, I feel that I can make management choices for scheduling culture programs,” he says. “The GS3 allows you to have more information on your own golf course to relate it to what your members might want to see on a day-to-day basis.”

And information is king. At Colorado Golf Club, Rux normally measures from the same six or eight spots on greens. He normally skips Mondays—when the team vents and topdresses—then checks Tuesday numbers and compares them to the weekend. By

Wednesday or Thursday, the numbers are right back in line.

“Sometimes, it feels like a lot to try to get out on four greens every day, but it does feel like it’s worthwhile information,” Rux says. “I would love to find time to do it on nine holes one day and nine holes the next day. It’s a matter of finding the time right now.” Rux estimates that change would add somewhere between 30 minutes and an hour per day.

“Everything’s got a cost, whether it’s dollars or time to do it,” Eller says. “It’s just a matter of committing to it. What is the cost of *not* doing that kind of data collection? It’s something for a lot of courses to consider.” 🏌️

▲ Colorado Golf Club superintendent Tauge Rux and Maui using the USGA’s GS3 ball and DEACON mobile app to conduct drop and roll tests for firmness, speed, smoothness and trueness.



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EOP

Q&amp;A

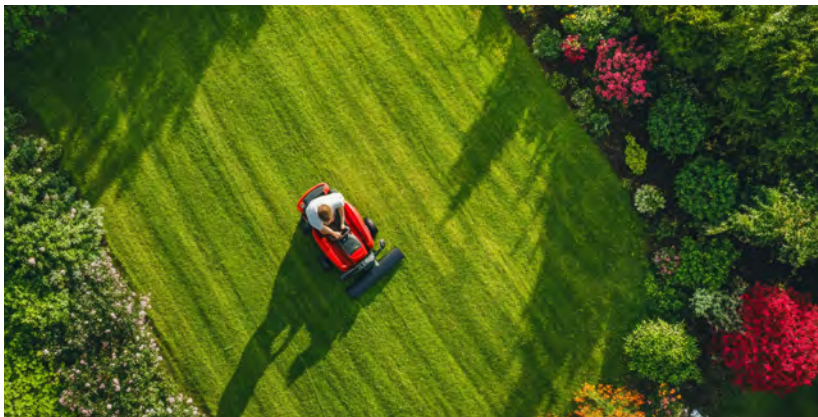


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# Rebranded, renovated and ready for the spotlight

The second generation of TPC Toronto at Osprey Valley's North Course epitomizes how design styles and business goals evolve.

By **David  
McPherson**

## Build it. They will come.


More than three decades ago, that mantra guided brothers **Jerry** and **Roman Humeniuk** to create a world-class golf facility 50 miles north of Toronto. With three distinct 18-hole layouts, Osprey Valley was a unique offering. Now, thanks to the recent North Course renovation—a “refresh more than a rebuild,” according to ar-

chitect **Ian Andrew**—combined with a new 65,000 square-foot clubhouse that features VIP suites, event spaces and a restaurant, practice facilities, and luxury stay-and-play cabins, this sprawling property is transforming into a golf mecca.

Flash back to 1992. That's when the Heathlands, modeled after Ireland's

Portmarnock Golf Club, opened. The course was the first of three **Doug Carrick** designs in the rolling hills of Caledon. The Hoot, inspired by Pine Valley and wasteland courses of the Carolinas, and the parkland-style Toot (now the North Course) followed in 2001. Finally, in 2018, the property entered a new era when the club





Carrick to start his own golf course architecture firm in 2005) to renovate the North Course. Before committing, Andrew asked Humeniuk to make sure Carrick was not interested in the project. With that hurdle cleared, design discussions started in earnest.

"I did a lot of the design on the original course, so it felt like I was renovating our work, not just Doug's work," Andrew says. "I did not want to undo Doug's routing or alter the original concept, but the North Course needed a refresh.

"I wanted to lean into something a little more brawny and try to separate it from the other two courses. It was more of a philosophical change — adding a few accents here and there and making it more challenging off the tee."

During one of his earliest walks of the property with Humeniuk to discuss design ideas, the architect recalls the client asking him: "Are we creating a public golf course where championships will be played or a championship golf course where the public can play?"

Andrew did not have an answer. The question referred to what North Course assistant superintendent **Aaron Hill** calls: "the worst-kept secret in Canadian golf" — that the property was in consideration to host Canada's lone PGA Tour event.

"There was a sightline on what the vision is for this place and on what we had to produce," says Hill, who has worked at Osprey Valley since 2013.

The renovation started in July 2023 when they closed the North Course. Thanks to a mild start to the winter, work continued right up until December. By the time the first spring flowers were showing, the refreshed course was ready.

"It was a tight timeline, but we got it done," Hill recalls. "Usually, if you are a superintendent and you know there is a Canadian Open coming to your course, you have at least three years to prepare. But I embraced that part and thank goodness we had a rainy

summer in 2023 or we would have lost a ton of sod. Your irrigation system can only do so much when there were days we were getting 30 to 40 skids of sod."

With Mother Nature's increasing unpredictability, another important part of TPC Toronto at Osprey Valley's recent renovation included a new irrigation system. What made this project unique is that Hill, along with TPC Toronto Osprey Valley head superintendent **Dave Hunter**, took on the installation rather than outsourcing it.

"Not a lot of turf bosses would decide to tackle this job," Hill laughs. "There were a lot of long days in the trenches. Dave and I had our hands all over that project. We had a few guys from Turf Care making side bets that we would not be able to pull it off in-house. But we proved them wrong and banged it out in one summer. That was a huge accomplishment. And now we can trust the system more because we had our hands on it. ... It was not just some hired gun that installed it."

FlightLine Golf was the only "hired gun" the TPC Toronto Osprey Valley turf team relied on. The golf course construction contractor worked collaboratively with Hill's team and Andrew to build and reshape all 49 bunkers on the North Course, creating smaller, softer and simpler hazards. They then installed Better Billy Bunker liners in each trap and replaced the drainage, the sand and the surrounding sod.

#### MAKING IT OFFICIAL

During a news conference in Osprey Valley's new clubhouse earlier this year, the secret everyone knew was made official when Golf Canada, along with Chris Humeniuk, announced that the North Course would host the 2025 RBC Canadian Open.

Despite Andrew and Hill not knowing for sure during the design and grow-in phases whether the Club would one day host a Canadian Open, they knew the property would be the site for other championships; it had already previously hosted The Osprey

aligned with the PGA Tour and the TPC Network, becoming Canada's only TPC property and rebranding as TPC Toronto at Osprey Valley.

Andrew worked with Carrick on all three of the original courses. **Chris Humeniuk** — who now leads the family golf legacy started by his father and uncle — hired Andrew (who left





## I wanna rock!

Music is in **Aaron Hill's** DNA. His vinyl collection numbers more than 1,500 and while the TPC Toronto at Osprey Valley assistant superintendent never took formal music lessons growing up, there was always an instrument lying around the house begging him to pick it up and figure it out. That itch to learn, to create and to make music still burns strong.

"It's the perfect balance," Hill says. "When I get downtime in the winter, I pick up my guitar and write like 20 songs. I love that the seasonality of this job allows me the time to express myself in another way."

Before taking his first part-time summer turf job to supplement his income — helping the grow-in at Otter Creek Golf Club near his hometown of Tillsonburg, Ontario — Hill spent many nights in dive bars across Ontario fronting a rock 'n' roll band. Back home, his father and brother both still play in bar bands. Highlights of Hill's sideline gig include sharing stages with Canadian rockers like Sloan, Big Sugar and April Wine.

Unfortunately, in 2019, Hill's band, The Red Party Pirates, lost their lead guitar player. "After he passed away, that stopped things abruptly and I told myself that turf is the priority now," Hill says.

But recently Hill reconnected with the remaining three members of The Red Party Pirates and let them know he had written close to 50 new songs. Maybe it was time to get the band back together? They agreed. Hill figured it was an opportunity to start from scratch and reinvent what he was doing, beginning with a new band name: Beware of Dogs. The first single, "Don't Tell Me", was released in June on all streaming platforms. Looking ahead, Hill plans to release a new single monthly for the foreseeable future.

"It's nice when you meet people in this business and learn about another side they have because turf can be such an all-consuming job," he says. "For some, turf is everything, but not for me. I have to put the brakes on and do something else once in a while."

Valley Open (a PGA Tour Canada event) and last month the course hosted the Fortinet Cup Championship — the season-ending tournament on the PGA Tour Americas. So, while Andrew's initial design had the public player front of mind, once it was clear that some of the world's best players would play the North Course, the architect pivoted. On the fly, he decided to narrow the fairways some more. "I changed my mind on just how skinny to go," Andrew recalls. "In the end, we removed 6.5 acres of fairway."

### GO BANANAS!

In 2007, when Royal Montreal hosted The Presidents Cup, Andrew watched bombers like **Tiger Woods** struggle hitting what he dubs "banana fairways."

"Tiger and the rest of the longer hitters struggled because they had to turn the ball over," he says. "That is a takeaway I've had in my pocket for a long time. Getting the fairways to slowly curve like a banana is a great way to deal with length off the tee. ... Have the fairways continue to curve, so to get in the ideal position the long hitters can't just bomb it. It's subtle. The bunkering and the fescue also slowly turn, putting a premium on your tee shot."

Besides narrowing the fairways, the North Course increased from 7,105 to 7,480 yards and the par was reduced from 72 to 70. To add more flexibility — especially for when the course hosts major tournaments like the Canadian Open — back tee boxes were added to make some of the par 4s really long.

The number of bunkers on the North Course was also reduced in the latest renovation with some relocated to more strategic spots, further tightening the course off the tee and narrowing the corners. As part of this tightening—and to improve the views—many trees were also removed. Finally, a nearly 6,000-square-yard grassy mound was added in front of the green on the 13th hole.

Hill says working with Andrew was a pleasure and the architect valued his input. "I love his less-is-more approach," Hill says. "There is nothing extravagant. There is a major flair, but everything is highly functional. The bunkers are all in the right spots without having to look like they were painted by **Picasso**. ... A bunker is a bunker is a bunker."

And the build is far from done. Besides course-specific clubhouses, still under construction and set to come are:

- An 18-hole putting course
- A 50,000 square-foot practice facility
- A golf academy
- Golf Canada's new home
- On-site stay-and-play accommodations

"It's so exciting," Hill says. "It is fast becoming a golf mecca. When you work in this job for more than 10 years, things can become routine. It's wild to see all of the development, but I just try to keep it simple. This project came at the perfect time. It kind of revitalized my career." 🏌️

*David McPherson is a Waterloo, Ontario-based author, writer and communications consultant.*

## TPC Toronto at Osprey Valley Timeline

**1992:** Osprey Valley Heathlands opens

**2001:** **Doug Carrick's** two additional 18-hole course designs: the Hoot and the Toot open

**2018:** Osprey Valley formalizes a relationship with TPC Network and rebrands as TPC Toronto at Osprey Valley, becoming the first — and only — Canadian course in the TPC network; the Heathlands is renamed The North Course

**2021:** Construction begins on a new clubhouse and other on-site amenities

**2023:** **Ian Andrew** renovates the North Course; a new irrigation system is installed, done in-house

**2024:** The renovated North Course, along with main clubhouse, opens and hosts the Fortinet Cup Championship

**2025:** TPC Toronto North Course set to host the RBC Canadian Open





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Q&amp;A



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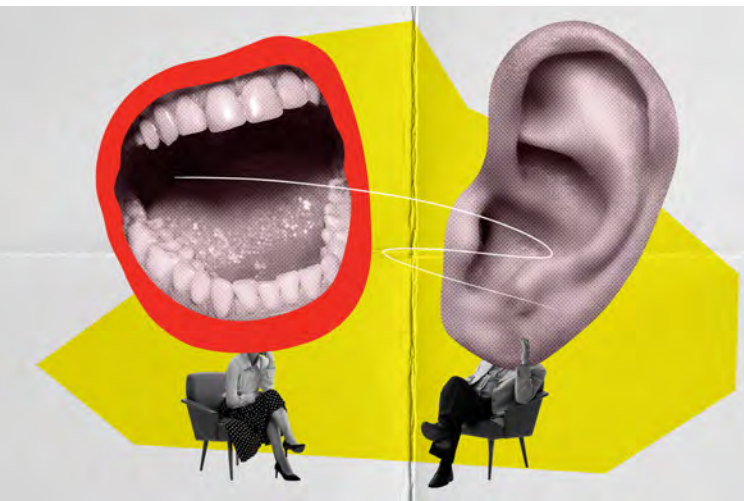
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## WHEN YOU CAN COMPLAIN

I've developed a little rule I think clubs ought to follow after a renovation or restoration, or even after they've just opened. Golfers should not be allowed to complain about the course until they've played it from one tee forward of where they normally play from.

Invariably, a new course, or a much-revised one, will spark issues, concerns and some disgruntlement from members and other regular players. It's in the nature of the work — whether it concerns the extent of the grow in, the placement and shaping of a bunker, or a green that seems too severe because it didn't handle the shot played onto it and left a player hopeful for a birdie struggling to make a double bogey.

One of the strongest lessons I learned from running a course ratings platform was that it's very hard for golfers to distinguish the architecture and maintenance of a golf course from how well — or how poorly — they played. Because golfers, like people everywhere, are reluctant to take responsibility for their shortcomings, they seem prone to displace the disappointment onto external factors beyond their immediate control. And what better place to project one's unhappiness than onto the varied, unpredictable and occasionally arbitrary playing surface of golf holes?

There's a complex, two-step process required not to succumb to this temptation. First, one must be self-conscious and mature enough to examine critically one's own swing failures and weaknesses. Second, one needs a fairly well-trained eye to discern flaws or creases in the playing surface that truly are unreasonable or overdone. This latter stage is all the more difficult to achieve because most golf courses, or at least the well-designed ones,

usually offer choices in terms of strategic options.

All too often, in my experience, architects and superintendents take the burden of a verbal beatdown over design elements, hazards and flora that could have easily been voided via a properly struck shot or a decision about achievement more in line with the players' actual skill level. In the process, the golf course gets viewed less as an aesthetic chess board and more as a battlefield of hidden and arbitrary dangers.

The simplest way to counter this is to ask the would-be plaintiff if he or she has ever played the course from a different perspective. It's probably too much to ask that they simply be smarter. More easily achievable is simply to play the course from a less taxing length — let's say, one set of tees ahead of where they normally start.

It's less a fix and more like enabling someone to adopt an entirely new perspective. Perhaps they'll be open-minded about the experience and allow themselves the opportunity to hit a few more greens in regulation than they would from 400 yards farther back. From different landing areas they'll at least see more of the hole from a new vantage point that might make them feel more comfortable and engaged in the process of evaluating options.

It's not easy to break with old habits and to experience the golf course from tees more compatible with one's actual playing skill. Guys, for instance, are reluctant to move from 6,001 yards to 5,800 yards because it suggests they are

achieving more senior status. And the game of far too many — I'm tempted to say most — women is ruined because they tend to play a social game from the same tee, even if one of them averages 185 yards off the end and two of them are lucky to hit it 110.

My preferred yardage is 6,100 and I never have any pretense of being able to play from 6,600 yards even when it means being the loner from the white tees when the rest of the fourball is playing from the blues. At the same time, I must admit how much more fun it is for me to play from around 5,750 yards, because my average 190- to 210-yard drive puts me in a position where I can see the intended strategy of the hole and the hazards are far more manageable.

The problem for forward-tee players is compounded because at too many courses the up tees are still 5,300-plus yards, meaning the vast majority of players from those markers do not hit a par 4 or par 5 in regulation all year. Like everyone else behind them, they would greatly benefit from forward tees totaling 4,600 yards and letting everyone else move up from their normal zone.

The goal is to get golfers to play more realistically spaced tees. While it's hard to solve universal problems all at once, at least a piece of the puzzle can be addressed by the rule I glibly recommend.

Until you play the course from the next set of tees forward of where you are accustomed, your complaints are banished to silence. 🏌️



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





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# Lights at night

Illuminating the course creates a different aesthetic experience and broadens the range of tee times. What are the bottom-line benefits, maintenance team challenges and bright options associated with adding them?

By **Lee Carr**

When you hear “night golf”, what do you picture? Events with fluorescent flagsticks, lighted balls, neon shirts and goofy giggles? Or do you think of powerful stadium lighting creating visibility for evening play? Lights at night can change an operation for the better, illustrated by two properties that are more than 7,000 miles apart.

Emirates Golf Club in Dubai in the United Arab Emirates is minutes away from the Persian Gulf. This semi-private property consists of three courses: The Majlis Course, The Faldo Course and The Par 3 Academy Course. It hosts The Hero Dubai Desert Classic, a DP World Tour event, and it recently hosted the Moonlight Classic, a Ladies European Tour event played at night on The Faldo Course. Redesigned by **Nick Faldo** in 2005, the championship layout has been fully lit since 2010.

**Matt Perry** has been part of Dubai Golf (which owns multiple properties) for 15 years and has been the superintendent at The Faldo Course for six. “The Moonlight Classic was an amazing event. It’s totally unique for the professional schedule,” Perry says. Lighting is trending and people are noticing what night golf can offer. “Other clubs are introducing floodlights,” Perry adds. “A few have nine-hole installations but we’re the only course in the UAE with all 18 holes floodlit.”

The Aero Club in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, is an 18-hole short course adjacent to Myrtle Beach International Airport, also entirely lit. Under the leadership of **Andy Apple**, director of agronomy at Atlantic Golf Management, the property was purchased in 2020.

“The lights were here when we bought it,” says Apple. “They were the old-timey flashlight, big bulb lights. We switched them to LEDs but the poles and everything were here. We have a contractor who did the work when we added speakers to pipe in





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▲ Matt Perry

music. There have been very few problems with the lights but if we need to, we call him.”

The lights at The Aero Club are on a timer that sits in the irrigation pump house. “They come on about an hour before dark and go off around 10 p.m., an hour after closing,” Apple says. The maintenance staff consists of two part-time greenkeepers who arrive early, work and leave by mid-afternoon.

The Faldo Course, a larger property, ensures the maintenance team is on-site during open hours and the lights are operated manually from a box in Perry’s office. “Our maintenance facility is centrally located,” Perry says. “A member of our engineering team switches the lights on and off, typically switching them on 30 minutes before play.”

The lights are turned off as play finishes. “We are sparing with the usage,” Perry says. “We essentially turn them off behind the players. For example, if the last group is on the sixth hole, we’ll switch off the lights on holes one through five.” This conserves energy and ensures that everyone is safely out of the dark before the lights are powered down.

The staff maintains the lights.

### Basic brilliance



Electricity — energy resulting from the movement of electrons between two places — powers irrigation systems, charges cell phones and lights up the night on an increasing number of golf properties. Whether electrical installations and troubleshooting are outsourced to specialists or done in-house, it helps to understand the basics. Electrical elements include *voltage* (V), *amperes* (A), *ohms* (Ω) and *watts* (W). *Voltage* is the amount of potential difference or the pressure moving charged electrons. An electrical current is measured in *amperes*, the volume of electrons moving across a place during a specific unit of time. The drag or resistance on a current is measured in *ohms*. Power is the energy used, the amount of work done by the passing electrons in a unit of time, measured in *watts*. Additional terminology includes *lumens*, which references brightness, and *LED*, which is short for light-emitting diode. LEDs are made from a semi-conductor material that illuminates when an electrical current passes through. Electrical work can be dangerous (friendly reminder: you are important!) so don’t be shy about seeking help.

“During installation, our engineering team went through a full training process with the manufacturer,” Perry says. “We don’t have to use a cherry picker to adjust or change the bulbs. The posts fold down to ground level with a machine we have that fixes onto them. The team works on the light at ground level and then we push it back up.”

Even the initial installation of the lights was easy. “We didn’t close the course,” Perry says. “I liaised with the contractors, concrete bases were built, cables and wires were laid and then the lights were up.” At first, halogen bulbs were used, but in 2018 the lights were changed to more efficient LEDs. “We have cut our electricity usage by more than 50 percent,” Perry says.

“There is less maintenance with LEDs and better lighting with a brighter shine.” Easy choice.

Upgrading to LED lights is something The Aero Club and The Faldo Course have in common. Modern installations are usually shielded or are full cut-off lights to avoid any problems with brightening the sky as opposed to the property. Neither place has residential issues.

“We aren’t dealing with any light ordinances,” Apple says. “The biggest thing is the airport next door. Planes come right over the course when they are landing so we changed a few directional lights so they weren’t interfering. We didn’t want a 737 on the golf course.”

“In our location, there’s not much compliance for the lighting system,” Perry says. “All lights are directed down onto our property. Sometimes we have the lights on all night.” The lights are used all year. Twice a year, they play a “Midnight Madness” tournament where players tee off at 11 p.m. and play until the sun comes up.

At The Aero Club, the lights are used from mid-April to mid-October with some flexibility for weather. “When the temperatures start falling and it gets cool not many people come out, so we quit using them,” Apple says. “We get more play during the day in early spring and fall. In the summer, we get more at night because it is so hot. We get a crowd early and golfers





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## Numbers to know



65,000

Rounds played last year at the Faldo Course at Emirates Golf Club in Dubai, U.A.E.



26,000

Number of those rounds that tee off between 4 p.m. and 9:45 p.m.

start coming back around 5 p.m.”

Evening play and the decision to install lights at The Faldo Course has been “a business decision for sure,” Perry says. “With the hot summers, and periods like Ramadan, there are times when play drops off during the day. With the option to play at night, people can avoid the heat and be flexible around work.”

In 2023, The Faldo Course hosted a total of 65,000 rounds. Night rounds, recorded as tee times from 4 p.m. until 9:45 p.m., accounted for 26,000 of those. During summer, people will play early until 9 a.m. and tee times pick up again around 2 or 3 p.m. The tee sheet is full all evening.

Golfers love it but there are maintenance challenges with extended play. There’s a lot of scheduling and watering can be a concern. “One of the trickiest things is that some people might not finish their round until midnight,” Perry says. “With staff arriving at 4 a.m. for morning set up, that’s a four-hour window to totally water the course. Anticipating this, when we in-

stalled the lights, we also installed a much bigger pump system for our irrigation. We can water the course in three hours.”

Additional hours require more staff. “We have a night duty irrigation manager who follows the last group and turns on the irrigation on each hole behind them,” Perry says. “That way, we maximize the amount of time we have to water. We also have an engineer on night duty, in case there are problems.”

Challenges met. “It sounds simple but when you offer night golf, you have to ensure your lights are working,” Perry says. “You can’t have a dark spot or a green not properly lit because you’re guaranteed to receive negative feedback. There’s more pressure because if you have one light that goes down, it can ruin somebody’s round. It’s just not something you have to contend with during the day.”

Certainly, the grass doesn’t stop growing. “It’s difficult to guarantee a well-conditioned course late at night,” Perry says. “There have been many hours of growth during the day and there may be pitch marks and bunkers

that aren’t in their best shape. For events, our team will do some extra prep in the evenings to ensure that extra bit of quality throughout the night.”

A testament to the conditioning is that people can’t seem to get enough. In addition to the income from extra tee times (even though more maintenance is required) the increase in revenue is compounded. “The amount of people on the property at night has changed dramatically,” Perry says. “It’s not just the golf. It filters into the clubhouse for food and drinks, and we have a lot of corporate evening events. It’s been very positive.”

Apple can relate. “We are really the only game in town at night. You can zip through here in an hour and a half. It’s popular and fun, especially in the summer,” he says. “Our business has grown and this place has been good for the community, too.”

Both The Aero Club and The Faldo Course are successful with the lights off. Managed properly, the lights make their impact even brighter. For many reasons — and who can resist watching a great drive sail across a moonlit sky? — night golf is a dream. 🌱



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Researchers and dozens of top superintendents tested Aramax™ Intrinsic® brand fungicide in warm-season regions and found that it's a great solution for patch diseases and other pathogens on bermuda and zoysia fairways.

**Aramax™**  
Intrinsic® Brand Fungicide

## By Pat Jones

Earlier this year, Aramax Intrinsic brand fungicide made its big debut as a broad-spectrum disease control solution for snow mold, large patch, dollar spot, brown patch and 22 other key turf diseases. Now it's time to head south and look at how the newest BASF turf innovation performs in some of the most challenging warm-season environments on patch diseases and a broad spectrum of other pathogens on bermuda, zoysia and paspalum.

## What is Aramax Intrinsic brand fungicide?

The concept and the components of Aramax Intrinsic brand fungicide are proven. It's a combination of well-known solutions from BASF — Insignia® SC Intrinsic brand fungicide and Trinity® fungicide — but the dual-active formulation and low usage rate are new. The result is a broad-spectrum powerhouse formulated to protect your fairways from 26 of the toughest turf diseases, delivering up to 28 days of effectiveness with proven plant health benefits.

"Aramax Intrinsic brand fungicide is built on dual actives with proven track records," says Dr. Emma Lookabaugh, BASF senior technical specialist. "Together, these chemistries become a go-to fairway fungicide brand with an expanded disease spectrum, longer-lasting residual protection, the power of Intrinsic plant health, and more consistent performance compared to solo fungicides on the market. Aramax Intrinsic brand fungicide delivers reliability."

## Backed By University Research

Large patch on warm-season turf like bermuda, zoysia and paspalum is a challenge for many of the superintendents who rely on research from Dr. Jim Kerns and his team at North Carolina State University to guide their spray

programs. "We conduct large patch efficacy trials on Zeon zoysiagrass each fall," says Kerns.

How did Aramax Intrinsic brand fungicide perform? "Our trials have demonstrated the exceptional control of large patch by Aramax," says Kerns. "The key to this success is ensuring adequate water volume during fungicide application for large patch management."

Kerns sums up their trial findings: "Aramax is an excellent tool for golf course superintendents who deal with large patch on zoysiagrass fairways. Moreover, having two different modes of action allows for a broader spectrum of control of other diseases such as dollar spot, fairy ring, and take-all root rot."

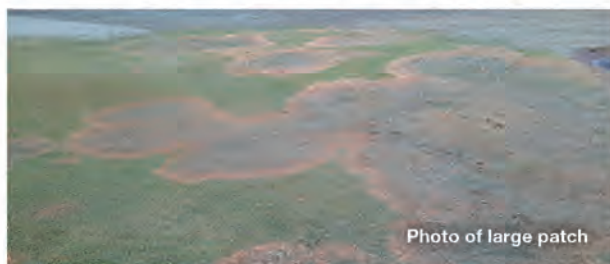


Photo of large patch

## Real-World Results

**Mike Fasy, The Plantation Golf & Country Club, Ft. Myers, FL**

When the folks from BASF told Mike Fasy about a new product called Aramax Intrinsic brand fungicide, his immediate reaction was, "I'd love to try it."

Fasy, the superintendent at The Plantation G&CC in Ft. Myers, Fla., was going through the same awful El Nino winter that hit courses hard throughout the state. "I have paspalum and I knew I was going to be dealing with dollar spot and large patch. In February, we received some Aramax to try, and we decided to test it on our driving range tee top. We then

*Continued on next page*



treated the tee tops around the course and had zero dollar spot despite the fact that we had mega dollar spot all around them. It was great."



Photo of The Plantation Golf & Country Club, Ft. Myers, FL

"This stuff is insane. It was almost like combining Lexicon [Intrinsic brand fungicide] and Maxtima [fungicide] control-wise. For patch control, I don't think there's a better product than a stroby on paspalum. But I had to worry about dollar spot. Now we don't."

The bottom line for Fasy is simple: "I think Aramax is the best new fungicide we've seen for paspalum in a long time. I told BASF to add it to my EOP order."

#### **Jeff Sexton, Evansville Country Club, Evansville, IN**

Evansville CC has had Meyer zoysia fairways and tees for 40 years. "It's bulletproof. We rarely have any winter injury with the zoysia," says superintendent Jeff Sexton. In fact, the fairways were largely left alone during Evansville's recent renovations.

Sexton has used Lexicon® Intrinsic brand fungicide, Navicon® Intrinsic brand fungicide, Maxtima fungicide and Xzemplar® fungicide in the past so he was more than willing to do a test of Aramax Intrinsic brand fungicide. For his trial, he applied his 2.5 gallon sample for four acres of tee tops. He sprayed tee tops twice last fall with it.

"I think it was identical in terms of the results we expect. The control was excellent. We paid a little more attention to green-up and thought that the Aramax-treated zoysia greened up a little faster than the untreated, which was interesting and might be a plant health effect from the Intrinsic components."

Sexton says it was a good trial and he will consider Aramax Intrinsic brand fungicide for greens. "We used to battle anthracnose and Trinity was always my go-to as a curative. I knocked the heck out of it and I never had any negative response from it."

Lastly, he loves the fact that companies like BASF are still creating new solutions. "I'm a huge new-product person and I love getting a chance to try stuff like this."

#### **John Reilly, Longboat Key Club, Sarasota, FL**

Paspalum guru and "Turfgrass Monkey" John Reilly got right to the point when asked about Aramax Intrinsic brand fungicide: "I used Pillar® G back in the day so I was very familiar with the combination. I really got a handle on paspalum disease management when I started using Pillar G preventatively. Now Aramax will fill that preventive role."

What else is attractive about it? "I like the fact that the use rate is so much lower and it's a way better return on investment," says Reilly. "Also, there's far less product exposure for the applicator and golfers."



Photo of Longboat Key Club, Sarasota, FL

Like other paspalum managers, Aramax Intrinsic brand fungicide will be a spot treatment tool for Reilly. "I also spot treat curatively and I know the symptoms will stop. Not all curative apps work that effectively on paspalum."

#### **Marc Muniz, The Golf Club at Lansdowne, Lansdowne, VA**

Ask Marc Muniz how he feels about his trial run of Aramax Intrinsic brand fungicide and he gets straight to the point: "My EOP will include an application of Aramax as my last preventative large patch application before we shut down in October."

Muniz tried Aramax Intrinsic brand fungicide the first week in May for spring cleanup and, even with the abnormally wet spring in the steamy mid-Atlantic, had great results. "I will 100% buy it and it will be part of my program this year."

And the Intrinsic plant health impact of Insignia SC Intrinsic brand fungicide matters to him. "We definitely saw faster recovery in the areas that were already banged up. Insignia has always been our go-to after aerification so we know it definitely helps."

#### **John Ballard, Valhalla Golf Club, Louisville, KY**

Let's give the final word to the host of the 2024 PGA Championship, John Ballard, who tested Aramax Intrinsic brand fungicide on his fabulous Zeon zoysia fairways in the run-up to a major.

Now, with a hugely successful championship behind him, Ballard had this to say about Aramax: "As we wrap up the 2024 PGA Championship and have an opportunity to evaluate what worked well and opportunities to improve, it was clear Aramax performed at a high level on our Zeon zoysiagrass. Large patch was never a factor and the playability of the surfaces was exceptional. BASF delivers once again with Aramax."



Photo of Valhalla Golf Club, Louisville, KY



Hear from more superintendents on their experiences with Aramax Intrinsic brand fungicide.





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## TRAVELS WITH TERRY

Globetrotting consulting agronomist **Terry Buchen** visits many golf courses annually with his digital camera in hand. He shares helpful ideas relating to maintenance equipment from the golf course superintendents he visits — as well as a few ideas of his own — with timely photos and captions that explore the changing world of golf course management.



### INEXPENSIVE GOLF CART CONTROL

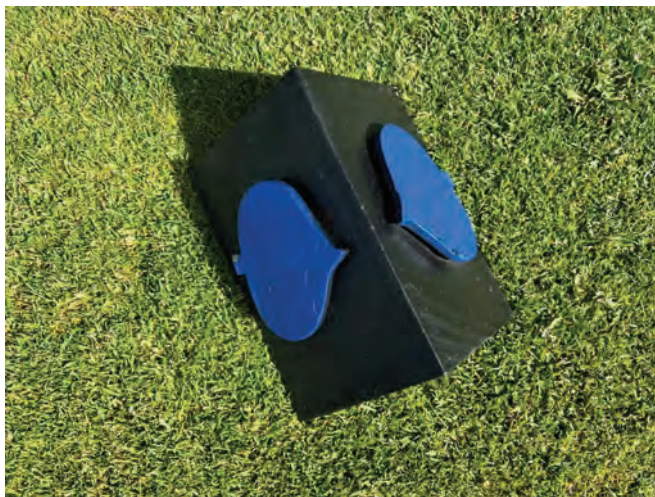
**T**he concrete cinder blocks and fence rails were recycled for golf cart control adjacent to the starter's building by No. 1 tee at the Aspen Golf Club in Colorado. General manager **Jim Pratt** came up with the

idea after seeing it being utilized outside a local Home Depot store. Superintendent **Dominic Lanese III** likes the ease of moving the cinder blocks and rails by his staff when mowing and edging adjacent to the golf cart parking area. **Jim**

**Sivess**, former superintendent at the Snowmass Club, is the president of the Aspen Golf Club Advisory Board. **Frank Hummel** was the original architect and **Dick Phelps** and **Rick Phelps** have been the remodeling architects over the years.

### THWARTED THIEVERY

**I**n the past, traditional tee markers were stolen on occasion, used as souvenirs by golf enthusiasts at the Aspen Golf Club in Colorado. Heavy metal angle iron tee markers, fabricated by Myer's Welding Company of Basalt, Colorado, weighing approximately 25 pounds each, stopped the thievery because of their weight since they were introduced in the mid-1990s. The club's logo was lasered out of steel and welded into place. The angle iron was painted black in-house, and the logos were painted black, blue, white and yellow, for each respective tee marker location, before being welded to the angle iron on both sides. Each pair of tee markers cost approximately \$75 initially and up to \$100 now. Superintendent **Dominic Lanese III** and general manager **Jim Pratt** like the results.



**Terry Buchen, CGCS Retired, MG**, is president of Golf Agronomy International. He's a 56-year, life member of the GCSAA. He can be reached at 757-561-7777 or [terrybuchen@earthlink.net](mailto:terrybuchen@earthlink.net).



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### ARCHITECTS *continued from page 49*

"Andrew likes real crisp bunker edges, and I was like, 'We focus on this because it is the architect's intent. Someone is going to play tomorrow and put this on Instagram, and I am going to get one of two things from Andrew.' 'Nice work on those edges! They look spectacular!' Or, 'Hey, why are you rounding those edges off?' The world tattles on us."

For that reason and more, Becker's effort to integrate his team has been worthwhile. "Bob had an amazing team that he encouraged to be part of conversations," Green says. "When you have assistants and second assistants, AITs and others involved, things come to light that wouldn't have in a conversation between Bob and I. With those extra ears and eyes, there was a lot of added value."

Maintenance practices, golf courses, technology, the game and those who play it continue to evolve. The "last visit" is indeterminate. Sure, some milestones will be more significant than others, but chances are there are wonderful moments ahead.

"I joke that I like to be invited back," Green says. "A lot of the reason we are doing this is that level of pride and craftsmanship. There is a connection. As an architect, you are putting your heart and soul into these projects. Leaving and never coming back seems like a waste of effort. I like having the relationship to care for things, to make them better and serve those clients." 🌱

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

## Seven considerations when working with an architect

1. Patience is essential.
2. Even the most thoughtful plans will be improved upon as the course matures post-construction.
3. Best management practices will be refined as superintendents and architects address features that are tricky to maintain, such as mowing lines that are labor intensive, native areas that may slow play, bunkers that are difficult to enter and exit, and potential trouble areas.
4. Double hazards can be accidentally created, and it may be necessary to remove additional trees that become exposed.
5. Sloped areas affecting the way the course plays near greens or fairway landing areas need special consideration before being altered.
6. Think about irrigation lines before work starts and note if any are buried under raised features so you know what will be required to access them if you need to.
7. With pollinator plots and native areas, communicate expectations early and often so everyone understands it will take years to achieve the desired functionality and aesthetic.

### MORAGHAN *continued from page 22*

and other practices. One strength that truly separates the good from the great is the willingness to try something different. Watch out for members who say, "But we never did that before."

**Professionalism:** Part of what makes a job great is what you bring to it. That means dressing the part, writing and speaking plainly and clearly, and, most important, communicating. Articles, emails and social media are key to avoiding misunderstandings, informing and educating your public, and showing them that you not only know your stuff but that you're willing to share it with them.

**Network:** Again, "no one wins alone" or can do a great job by themselves. Tap your contacts and bring in experts who have worked with the best of the best. See what other great courses are doing and don't be afraid to follow their lead. Bring the best practices, the best consultants and the best

opportunities to your club. It's also OK to bring in trusted resources to convince members that change is needed and that there are different ways to do things.

**Work ethic:** No great job is easy. Challenge is part of the fun. So be prepared to go all-in all the time. Nose to the grindstone 24/7. And not just you, your entire team. Make sure they understand what's expected of them every day. The best way to do that is to lead by example and make examples of those who don't live up to your standards. A team should be a reflection of its leader.

How did it work out for the classic course mentioned at the beginning? The new superintendent was brought in. He came from a good job at an A club, with solid training under a respected superintendent. But he brought his own vision, which he was able to communicate to the members.

One of the first things he did was look at the operation, recognize the obvious shortcomings, and say, "Wow, I can't believe none of this was ever fixed." He knew that the club was hungry for change, with its wallet open and the desire to move the club forward.

Using his expertise, modern methods and a network formed from his past positions, he was ready to implement practices and programs that his predecessor might have wanted to do but didn't have the backing, energy or knowledge to make happen. Among those ideas was looking through old photos and records to see how the course had been when it was new and as it evolved. He was able to convince management that a great course was right there, with hidden features waiting to be rediscovered.

He knew what they wanted, and he had the vision to make it happen, or the ability to look and see at the same time. He knew they wouldn't be happy until their course was great again, so neither was he. 🌱



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CONTENT IN EVERY DIRECTION.





## HOW ARE THE GREENS?

**O**n the eve of our putting green aerification, I was scrolling through Turf Twitter — sorry, but Turf X just does not sound right — and I ran across a post from our fearless publisher + editor-in-chief **Mr. Cipriano** asking if golf courses should discount their rates for a brief period following greens aerification.

I once worked for an upscale daily-fee facility in northern Virginia that reduced the greens fees by a certain amount for the first week immediately following aerification each spring and fall. The manager believed it created goodwill with the public customer base. The superintendent I worked for thought it promoted more play immediately after aerification instead of the greens getting a break because most golfers do their best to avoid playing on recently aerified putting greens.

But before I had the pleasure of that work experience, here's a true account of something that happened to me and **Mrs. Greenkeeper** before we were married ...

I had traveled with her to Richmond, Virginia, while she attended a continuing education event for an insurance license. I had mapped out a route on our way back to southwest Virginia that would allow us to play a nice golf course I had experienced several times during my undergraduate days at Virginia Tech.

We made the several-hour journey, and I promptly went inside the golf shop to check in. There were a few other people

inside and while I was patiently waiting a young lady stepped out from an office and asked an older lady behind the cash register, "How are the greens?"

The older lady replied, "What do you mean, how are the greens?" And the younger lady said she just got off the phone with a man who asked, "How are the greens?" The older lady said, "What did you tell him?" And the younger lady said, "I told him they are green."

This should have been clue No. 1, but after driving all morning, I was just ready to play what at that time was one of my favorite courses. I paid our fees and immediately went outside to place our clubs on a golf cart. We proceeded to hit some practice putts on the practice green located immediately outside the golf shop.

The practice green was smooth and true, and I looked out over 400 yards away toward the direction of the first green, which was visible in the distance from the elevated position of the clubhouse. The young lady was right; they were green.

We drove to the first tee and we both striped shots down the middle. I was excited for Mrs. Greenkeeper to experience this scenic mountain golf course.

I smoothed a 7 iron to the front third of the first green and she also hit an excellent approach, and we made our way closer.

As I walked onto the green

to repair my pitch mark, I instantly became aware why the man called and asked, "How are the greens?" To my surprise, we discovered the entire green had been aerified with 5/8th-inch hollow core tines and cleaned off, but they had not yet been topdressed.

It was at this time I proceeded to tell Mrs. Greenkeeper about the odd exchange I witnessed in the golf shop. Considering the practice green was not aerified and you could not tell anything about the others from a distance it had not occurred to me to inquire.

So, we played on, a full 18 holes of Plinko as our putts bounced on and off line. At least the weather was nice, and we were together on a golf course. Seems we took things like that for granted back in those days. But, at our age, we better understand it is the time together that means the most.

After completing our round, a young man waiting at the golf car return asked how our day went. I told him it was a little disappointing to not learn of the aerification until walking onto the first green. He said, "Yeah, they weren't able to get the dirt to put back into the holes."

Sometimes you just have to laugh and remind yourself why it is important to explain what we do and why we do it when it comes to cultural practices. Because the folks answering the phone and talking to the customers as they leave might just not know what you think they do. 🏌️

“We played on, a full 18 holes of Plinko as our putts bounced on and off line. At least the weather was nice, and we were together.”

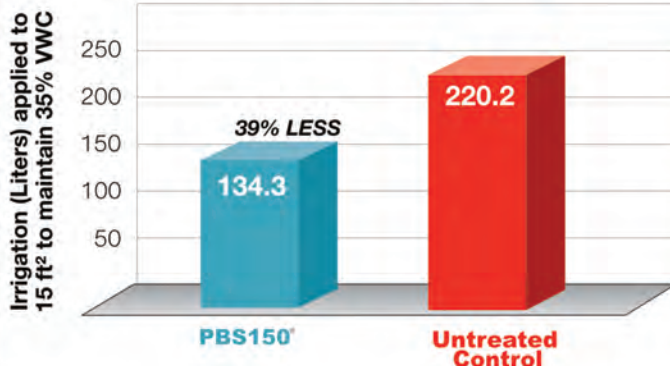


**MATTHEW WHARTON, CGCS, MG**, is the superintendent at Idle Hour Country Club in Lexington, Kentucky, and past president of the Carolinas GCSA. Follow him on X at @IHCCGreenkeeper.

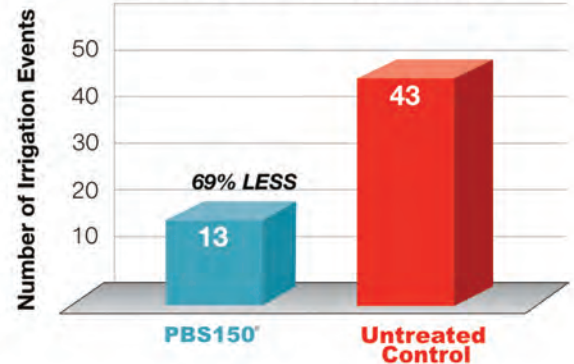




**PBS150** resulted in a **39%** reduction in irrigation water consumption



**PBS150**® resulted in a **69%** reduction in irrigation frequency



**Evaluation of Two Soil Surfactants for Soil Water Management of Creeping Bentgrass on a Wettable Clay Loam Rootzone During a Dry-down Period**


Nolan, G. and M. Fidanza. 2016. Penn State University

**PBS150**® is the **FIRST** surfactant in the turfgrass industry to have peer-reviewed, published research to prove and **quantify water savings**.


Penn State University research study showed that creeping bentgrass plots treated with **PBS150** resulted in a **39% reduction in irrigation water consumption** over a 63-day dry-down period versus plots only treated with irrigation water.

Turfgrass plots that were treated with 3 applications of **PBS150** prior to the 63-day dry-down period required **69% less irrigation events** versus untreated plots that only received irrigation with no soil surfactant



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