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## contents



#### Course design: features

# Future Course

**30** Golf course design changes during the next five to 10 years might not be drastic, but there will be changes that affect superintendents' approaches to maintenance and their budgets.

#### 36 AN ENCOMPASSING APPROACH

A Taiwanese real-estate developer's executive-style short course, Dublin (Calif.) Ranch Golf Course, is striving to be all things to all golfers.

#### Relationships: Q&A feature

#### 26 THREE'S COMPANY

Teamwork, understanding and respect are needed among superintendents, general managers and golf professionals for management to work best.

#### Course finances: feature

#### 42 BUILDING A BULLETPROOF BUDGET

Golf course superintendents can turn valuable line items into hard-to-cut programs by taking a different approach to budgeting.

#### Seed update: feature

#### 46 A BETTER GRASS

Perennial ryegrass varieties resistant to gray leaf spot provide superintendents with more choices for fairways.

#### Maintenance: feature

50 IN TIP-TOP SHAPE Consistency is the trademark of a quality equipment maintenance program.

#### Course cleanup: feature

54 PUT TO THE TEST Superintendents focus on cleaning up their courses after hurricanes tear through Florida.

#### Research: feature

#### 58 IMPROVING TURFGRASS

U.S. Golf Association-funded research projects help enhance turf conditions on golf courses.

26

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## contents







#### Departments:

- 8 EDITORIAL A helping hand
- RESOURCES 10 Calendar of events, books
- 13 **INDUSTRY NEWS** Association, course, supplier and personnel news
- 66 PRODUCTS New, fountain/pond aerators, utility vehicles
- 69 **ADVERTISING INDEX**
- 70 MAKING A DIFFERENCE The Get a Grip Foundation

#### Columnists:

- 23 MARKETING YOUR COURSE Jack Brennan: Negative to positive
- 24 **DESIGN CONCEPTIONS** Jeffrey D. Brauer: Cart path design
- 25 **ADVANCING THE GAME** Jim McLoughlin: Career Web sites

#### Research:

**UPDATES FROM IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY** 63 Nick Christians reports on several graduate students' research projects.

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#### JOHN WALSH



editorial

John Walsh Editor

## A helping hand

ood will. The industry has a lot of it. One of the unique aspects about the golf course management industry is the comradery among golf course superintendents and the brotherhood that exists among them. It's a friendliness among competitors that I haven't seen in other businesses.

Superintendents continuously use better products, methods and technologies to manage turf and their staffs better, as well as meet golfers' expectations through the conditions of the courses they maintain. When someone finds something that works better or finds a better way to do something, he's not shy about telling other superintendents what's working for him or what isn't. And there seems to be few trade secrets. Most golf course superintendents want their fellow professionals to excel at their jobs and advance within the industry.

Another example of this brotherhood is when superintendents give each other a helping hand when someone hosts a major tournament. With millions of people watching and thousands visiting a course for such a tournament, the superintendent wants the course to shine. Other superintendents want the course to shine, too. That's why there are many superintendents and assistant superintendents from throughout the country that come to the course that's hosting the tournament to volunteer their time and efforts to help a fellow superintendent. Many superintendents work behind the scenes to give one superintendent the limelight as professional golfers praise the conditions of such a well-maintained course. That's not selfish.

Recently, late this summer and early fall, there was another example of superintendents' care for each other after many well-maintained courses in Florida took a beating from Mother Nature. Four hurricanes – Charley, Frances, Ivan and Jeanne – tore through Florida and wreaked havoc, damaging some of the country's most beautiful golf courses.

There are about 1,300 courses in the Sunshine State – the most golf courses per state, according to the National Golf Foundation – and 350 to 400 of them were damaged from the hurricanes. There have been estimates as much as \$30 billion worth of overall damage in Florida. The cost of cleanup for some courses is between \$800,000 and \$1.1 billion. Mother Nature can be vicious, but who thought like this. Not only has she put a hurt on the physical conditions of these courses, but she's also put a clamp on their revenue streams. The negative affects of the damage will last for the rest of the year and into next year for some of these courses. Owners must wonder when they're going to wake up from this horrible nightmare.

Jeff Parsons, general manager of the Diamondback Golf Club in Haines City, estimates the hurricanes took out about 1,000 trees on the course and the cost to clean up and repair all the damage will be about \$250,000 in machine and labor costs. Parsons expects the cleanup to take about a year. To help with the cleanup, Diamondback received help from members of a golf course maintenance crew in Georgia.

Randy Waldron, superintendent at the Golf Club of Georgia in Alpharetta, heard about golf courses sustaining hurricane damage in Florida and wanted to do something to help. So he contacted a friend, ChampionsGate Country Club superintendent Bobby Ellis, to see what he could do. Ellis referred him to Parsons, and Waldron sent one of his assistants, Steve Sisson, and some equipment to Diamondback.

Because Waldron and some of his staff are from Florida, they wanted to help out, especially a course that didn't have a big budget. The course maintenance staff at the Golf Club of Georgia convinced a local supplier to donate a chain saw for Sisson to take with him, and the staff collected about \$300 to pass along to Diamondback's maintenance staff. Sisson helped out at Diamondback for a week while he was being paid by the Golf Club of Georgia.

Now that's lending a helping hand.

This is just one example of superintendents helping fellow superintendents during a crisis. I'm sure there are plenty more. But in this day and age of superintendents having to do more with less, it's nice to know they're willing to give other superintendents a helping hand at no cost and even chip in out of their own pockets. It all goes back to brotherhood.

Superintendents are lucky and should be thankful they're in an industry that's so helpful and kind. Many other industries, because of competition and budget pressures, are much more vicious – kind of like, well ... Mother Nature at times. GCN



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#### Calendar of events

Nov. 30 - Dec. 2

Illinois Professional Turf Conference Pheasant Run MegaCenter St. Charles, Ill. Call 630/243-9483 or visit www.illinoisturfgrassfoundation.org.

#### Dec. 7-9

**Rocky Mountain Regional Turfgrass** Association's 51st Annual Turfgrass Conference and Trade Show Holiday Inn Denver International Airport Call 303/770-2220 or visit www.rmrta.org.

#### Dec. 7-10

2004 Ohio Turfgrass Conference & Show Greater Columbus (Ohio) Convention Center Call 888/683-3445 or visit www.ohioturfgrass.org.

#### Dec. 9-11

New Jersey Turfgrass & Landscape Expo Taj Mahal Casino and Resort Atlantic City, N.J. Call 732/821-7134 or visit www.njturfgrass.org.

#### Dec. 15

The 6th Annual Organic **Turf Trade Show** Smithtown (N.Y.) Sheraton Call 516/541-4321 or visit www.neighborhood-network.org.

#### Jan. 5-7

Minnesota Green Expo Minneapolis Convention Center Call 888/886-6652 or visit www.minnesotagreenexpo.com.

Jan. 6-11 56th Annual Canadian International Turfgrass Conference and Trade Show Metro Toronto Convention Center Call 905/602-8873 or visit www.golfsupers.com.

#### Jan. 11-13

Virginia Turfgrass Council's 45th Annual Turf and Landscape Conference and Trade Show Downtown Richmond (Va.) Marriott Call 757/464-1004.

#### Jan. 12-13

Ninth Annual Heart of America Golf and Turf Conference Overland Park (Kan.) Convention Center Call 816/561-5323.

Jan. 17-20 Annual Michigan Turfgrass Conference Holiday Inn South Lansing, Mich. Call 517/321-1660 or visit www.michiganturfgrass.org.

#### Jan. 17-20

Turfgrass Council of North Carolina's 43rd Annual Turfgrass Conference and Show Adam's Mark Hotel and Grand Pavilion Winston-Salem, N.C. Call 910/695-1333 or visit www.ncturfgrass.org.

#### Books

### Golf greens book explores theories

Columbus, Ohio - Michael J. Hurdzan, Ph.D., of Hurdzan/Fry Golf Course Design recently wrote a new book, "Golf Greens: History, Design, and Construction." Hurdzan looks at the past 100 years of history and evolution of golf greens, how scientific investigations have influenced their construction, the intent of the golf course architect when designing a green, and how design and construction influence maintenance practices.

Through exploration of the history of golf greens, related design theories and future trends in the game, the book uncovers how modern golf green designs fit in with the history of the game. The book

also looks at the strengths and weaknesses of construction methods, legal considerations and how to manage specific problems.

Hurdzan intended to make the book light reading for those mildly interested, but also to be an in-depth textbook for serious students of golf course design and maintenance. The book is available by calling 877/762-2974 or 614/457-9955. GCN



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