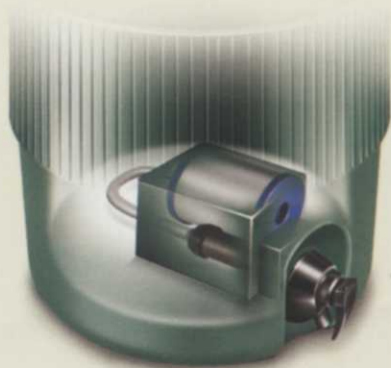


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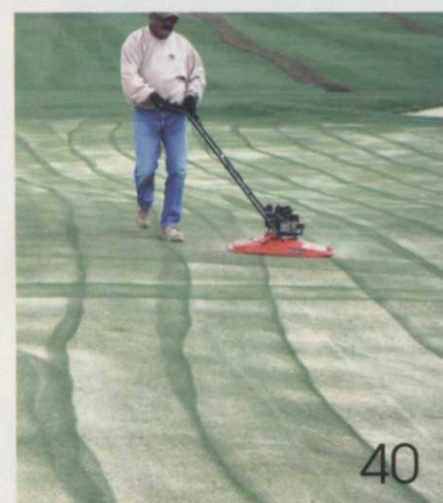




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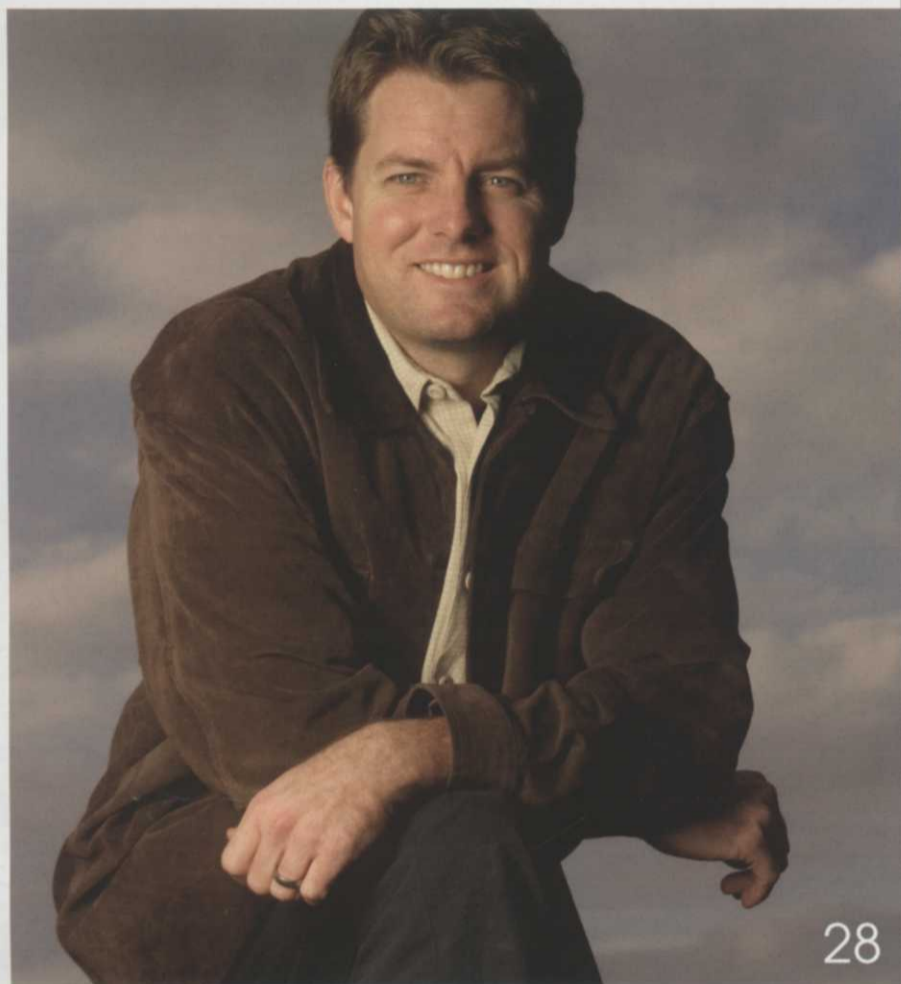
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John Walsh  
Editor

## Positive change

Some people in the industry say the national golf market is struggling for revenue and are cautiously optimistic about the golf business in the future. The cost to play golf and maintain a course, and the decline of the number of rounds played and new golf course openings are often mentioned as reasons why the industry isn't doing that well. But while people see the negative signs and suggest action golf needs to take to improve, there are two very positive aspects of the industry of which people need to be reminded: changes in golf course development and the focus on renovations and reconstructions.

After booming in the late 1990s and into 2000, the golf market, like many other markets in the U.S. economy, started to decline in early 2001 and really plummeted after 9/11. The golf business was hurting despite the popularity of the game. The industry went from opening about 400 courses a year in the late '90s to about 120 completely new ones last year. At the beginning of the year, there were 320 courses under construction, according to the National Golf Foundation; and the number of courses expected to open this year is projected to be slightly more than last year. But if one looks at golf course development during the past 20 years, those boom years are abnormal, and comparing the industry's health to them is misleading.

At the 2005 Golf Industry Show, architect Erik Larsen said new golf course openings will stabilize at between 150 and 200 a year. But the number of golf course openings in a year isn't the only way to measure the vitality of the industry. Just because golf courses open, doesn't mean they've all been thoughtfully planned or will succeed financially. Numerous courses are struggling because they were built for the wrong reasons – some just to help sell homes.

Larsen says stand-alone courses are having more difficulty getting financing and lot sales are subsidizing many golf courses. But a decline of new golf course openings might not be that bad. Because banks are hesitant to finance golf course development, some might pause and think more strategically about where there's truly a need for more golf courses, forcing developers and owners to conduct more research. Larsen also suggests new courses be environmentally sound, economically viable, sustainable and community oriented.

Architects are a factor in wiser develop-

ment. At the Golf Industry Show, a panel of them discussed trends in golf course architecture and development – feasibility, site selection, planning and environmental concerns. Integrating golf courses better into communities is one trend architects foresee. Courses can be more than just a place for people to hit golf balls. They can be used for water retention, revegetation and recreation, as well as view corridors, firebreaks and wildlife habitats. More people will be touched by golf courses in the future regardless of whether they play golf.

The other aspect of the business that doesn't seem to be getting much attention is the number of renovations and reconstructions completed during the past four years. There have been 126 full-scale renovations from 2001 to 2004, according to NGE. They increased from 13 in 2001 to 46 in 2004. There were 53 reconstructed courses opened last year, and 65 reconstructions were still under construction. Bottom line is there's a lot of money invested in course renovation and reconstruction.

I've spoken with several architects and builders during the past few months about the market and their businesses, and they seem to be doing well. Maybe they're doing more renovations than they've done in the past, but they're still working consistently and growing their business, which is done through relationships, quality of work and service done after the work. There seems to be plenty of jobs out there for the people and companies who do quality work.

If architects and builders are busy, superintendents are busy too because they're working on these projects as well. And let's not forget the owners and club members. They're the ones spending the money on these projects. If they can afford to renovate their courses during a slump in the market, things can't be that bad.

Being cautious about the market and focusing on where golf needs to improve is wise, but people shouldn't forget about the market's strengths. Growing the game has its challenges, but the industry is figuring out how golf can fit into the changing U.S. market. The way golf is growing is changing, and it has to remain healthy. GCN

# GOLF

## COURSE NEWS

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### On the mark

I read John Walsh's article about hiring practices in the golf industry ("The art of hiring," February issue, page 34). Excellent! I'm a golf course owner that has agonized about hiring decisions more hours than I can count. I've been helping a gentleman in my area who has set up a golf course recruiting company. He has 10 years of experience with employee recruitment and placement in the IT sector, and he's now focusing on golf. His Web site is [www.oncourse recruiting.com](http://www.oncourse recruiting.com).

SAM SHUMATE

Principal  
The Sulstone Group  
Charlotte, N.C.

### Making holes

I read Kevin Ross' article, "Creative cultural practices," in the January issue (page 58). I'm interested in the aerifying pictures. What size, type, spacing and equipment were used to produce the holes that close together in which a quarter could touch four holes? Also, can a green withstand topdressing equipment to fill the holes without excessive rutting?

I'm interested in trying to achieve a higher surface area removal/impacted than I currently have. I prefer to do it with core aerification than with verticutting because it's hard to fill the grooves with sand. Please share any more information that might help me out.

TROY FINK

Woods Course superintendent  
Kingsmill Resort  
Williamsburg, Va.

### Ross' response follows:

The tine in the photo is called an ultra tine. It measures 0.625 inches outside diameter and a 0.390 inches inside diameter when new. The wear on that tine is about 0.012 inches per 5,000 square foot green. So after nine greens, it measures 0.5 inches inside diameter. The photo shows a spacing of 1 inch by 1 inch using a GreenCare CoreMaster aerifier. A quarter is almost 1 inch in diameter, so it works well in the photo.

Your topdressing question is a tricky one to answer. Depending on your operation, I like to pick up the cores by hand. This is labor intensive, but it creates a better product. The health and stability of your green surface will determine whether it can withstand the mechanical equipment. Most USGA greens become too soft after this type of aerification. In this case, I recommend a light rolling with

a greens roller after the cores are removed, then topdressing with a mechanical topdresser. To work the sand in, I strongly suggest not dragging it in with a utility vehicle and brush. I prefer Fly-mo's (no strings) and a good team of hand brooms. This causes much less damage and results in a superior product. This also is more labor intensive, but for a critical operation such as this, well worth it.

As far as achieving a higher SARI, that might depend on your aerification equipment. If you can get a 1-inch-by-1-inch spacing, that will help out the most. At present, a 0.400-inch inside diameter (when new) is about as big as you can get, but manufacturers are looking at making bigger ones available. A tine of 0.400 inches ID will equate to 12.5 percent SARI when new on a 1-inch-by-1-inch spacing.

If you were at the Golf Industry Show in Orlando, you might have noticed that Graden has a new machine that fills the dethatched grooves as you perform the operation. It might be something to keep an eye on.

### A great spokesman

Nice interview with Ray Davies ("The right fit," January issue, page 30). Mr. Davies would make a great spokesman for the entire golf course management company industry. In very concise replies Mr. Davies spoke volumes. I would encourage everyone to take the time to reread the article line by line with extra time to ponder what was said. Then compare it to their own operations, regardless of the type of club or management situation. I will make a conscious effort to never again generalize about the entire golf course management company industry. I'm also confident that superintendents enjoy working for Mr. Davies.

BOB TAEGER, CGCS

Village Country Club  
Lompoc, Calif.

### Corrections

- The photo credit for the cover of the February issue, the fifth hole of the Coeur d'Alene Resort Golf Course, goes to Joel Riner/Quicksilver Studios.
- The photo credits for the pictures of Bill Kubly in the February issue on pages 27 and 28 go to Mark Wangerin.
- The liquid formulation of Heritage, Heritage TL, is labeled for use on turf, not on ornamental plants. The information was incorrect in our February issue on page 64. GCN

### Readers with comments are invited to write to:

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or e-mailed to

[jwalsh@gie.net](mailto:jwalsh@gie.net).

Letters might be edited for space or clarity.



## Calendar of Events

### March 21

**GGCSA Innovative Superintendent Seminar and Golf Outing**  
Kinderlou Forest Golf Club  
Valdosta, Ga.  
Call 706-376-3585 or visit [www.ggcsa.com](http://www.ggcsa.com).

### March 23

**LANDSEXPo**  
Texas Station  
Las Vegas  
Call 877-964-6222 or visit  
[www.landsexpo.com](http://www.landsexpo.com).

### March 24

**IFAS – University of Florida Field Day**  
Davie, Fla.  
Call 772-692-9349 or visit [www.ftga.org](http://www.ftga.org).

### March 28-29

**Rain Bird golf irrigation training**  
GITC Levels 1 and 2  
Boston, Mass.  
Call 520-741-6178 or visit  
[www.rainbird.com](http://www.rainbird.com).

### March 30-31

**Rain Bird golf irrigation training**  
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Boston, Mass.  
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[www.rainbird.com](http://www.rainbird.com).

### March 31

**NYSTA Adirondack Regional Conference**  
Lake Placid (N.Y.) Resort Holiday Inn  
Call 800-873-8873 or visit [www.nysta.org](http://www.nysta.org).

### April 14

**Everglades GCSA Spring Symposium**  
Naples (Fla.) Beach Club and Hotel  
Call 239-261-1958 or visit  
[www.evergladesgcsa.com](http://www.evergladesgcsa.com).

### April 18-20

**Trees and Utilities National Conference**  
Embassy Suites Downtown  
Omaha, Neb.  
Call 888-448-7337 or visit  
[www.arborday.org](http://www.arborday.org).

### April 29

**Florida Sod Growers Cooperative Field Day**  
New Smyrna Beach, Fla.  
Call 863-675-2144 or visit [www.ftga.org](http://www.ftga.org).

### May 2-3

**59th Annual Southeastern Turfgrass Conference**  
University of Georgia Tifton (Ga.) Campus  
Conference Center at the Rural  
Development Center  
Call 229-386-3416 or visit  
[www.ugatiftonconference.org](http://www.ugatiftonconference.org).

### May 3

**Rain Bird golf irrigation training**  
G3T Level 1  
Chattanooga, Tenn.  
Call 520-741-6178 or visit  
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### May 11-12

**Cactus and Pine GCSA Field Day and Seminar about irrigation uniformity**  
Karsten Turf Center,  
Campus Research Center  
Tucson, Ariz.

Call 480-609-6778 or visit  
[www.cactusandpine.com](http://www.cactusandpine.com).

### May 12

**Florida GCSA Spring Board Meeting**  
Naples (Fla.) Beach Club  
Call 772-692-9349 or visit  
[www.floridagcsa.com](http://www.floridagcsa.com).

### May 15-17

**California GCSA Annual Meeting**  
Harrah's  
Reno, Nev.  
Call 559-298-4853 or visit  
[www.californiagcsa.org](http://www.californiagcsa.org).

### June 14

**Cactus and Pine GCSA Seminar about fire, bark beetles and forest service**  
Oak Creek Country Club  
Sedona, Ariz.  
Call 928-284-1660 or visit  
[www.cactusandpine.com](http://www.cactusandpine.com).

### June 21

**West Texas GCSA Superintendent Leadership Series program**  
LakeRidge Country Club  
Lubbock, Texas  
Call 800-687-8447 or visit  
[www.wtgcga.org](http://www.wtgcga.org).

### Aug. 1

**Western Washington GCSA Fifth Annual Equipment Field Day**  
Glendale Country Club  
Bellevue, Wash.  
Call 360-705-3049 or visit  
[www.wwgcsa.org](http://www.wwgcsa.org).

### Aug. 9

**Western Washington GCSA OSU/WSU Turf Field Day**  
Corvallis, Ore.  
Call 360-705-3049 or visit  
[www.wwgcsa.org](http://www.wwgcsa.org).

### Oct. 19-20

**Turfgrass, Landscape and Equipment Expo**  
Fairplex  
Pomona, Calif.  
Call 800-500-7282 or visit  
[www.turfcouncil.org](http://www.turfcouncil.org). GCN

Contact Rob Thomas, associate editor, at [rthomas@gie.net](mailto:rthomas@gie.net) or 800-456-0707 to submit conference information.

