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Paul Jett, CGCS, Superintendent
Pinehurst No. 2

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Pinehurst No. 1 and Pinehurst No. 4

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- Bob Farren, CGCS, Golf Course and Grounds Manager

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pictured from left to right:
Bob Farren, CGCS, Golf Course and Grounds Manager
Paul Jett, CGCS, Superintendent Pinehurst No. 2

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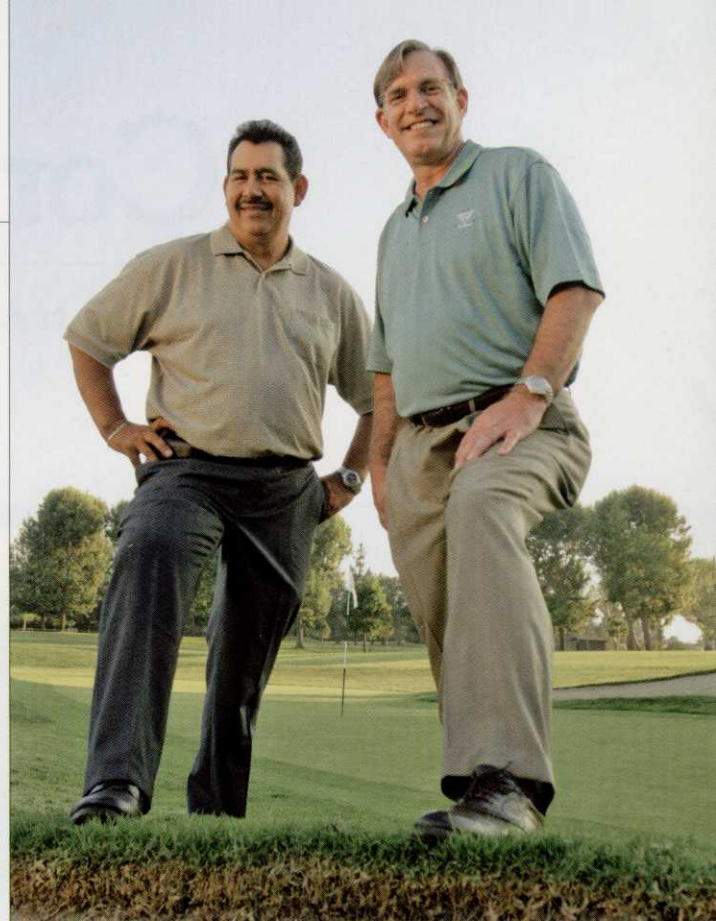
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Several regular irrigation maintenance practices can help reduce water management costs while increasing turf quality.

ONLINE POLL: PURCHASING POWER

As a person in charge of managing golf course maintenance, do you have purchasing authority for golf cars? Visit the GCI home page to vote in this online poll.

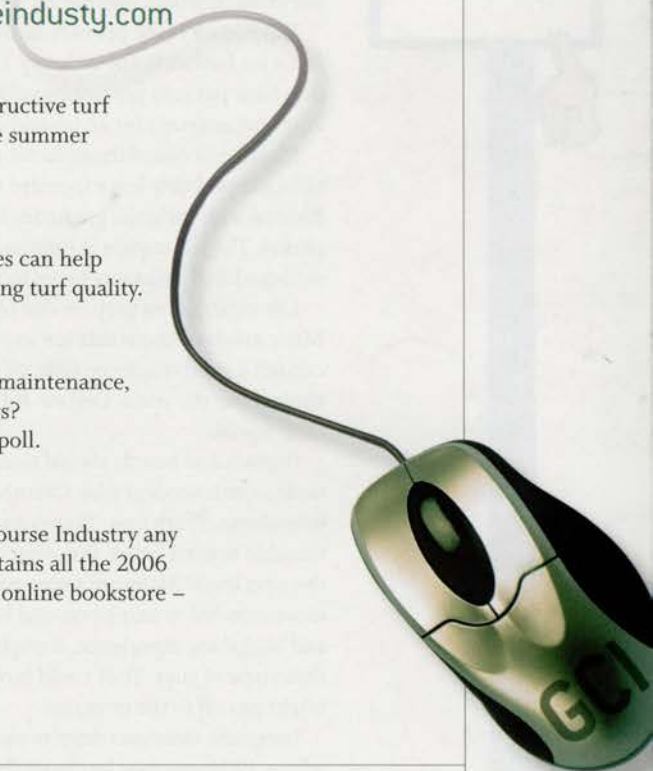
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EDITORIAL MISSION STATEMENT:

Golf Course Industry reports on and analyzes the business of maintaining golf courses, as well as the broader business of golf course management. This includes three main areas: agronomy, business management and career development as it relates to golf course superintendents and those managers responsible for maintaining a golf course as an important asset. Golf Course Industry shows superintendents what's possible, helps them understand why it's important and tells them how to take the next step.





John Walsh
Editor

UNDER THE RADAR

While writing this month's cover story, I learned more about an important and invaluable group of people in the industry who are overlooked more than ball marks on a muni par-3 green – longtime assistant golf course superintendents.

There are commonalities among them. They tend to fly under the radar. Many of these hard-working guys are Hispanic, quiet, humble and not as polished or politically savvy as some of the high-profile assistant superintendents in the business. Many don't have a college degree and stay at the same facility for their entire careers. The key commonality is their loyalty and dependability.

Longtime assistants make superintendents' jobs much easier because they've earned the respect of the staff, can manage a crew and know the intricacies of a facility inside and out. They can run the show, so to speak, when needed. A superintendent can leave the course for a week-long vacation with his family without worrying about coming back to dead grass, irate club members, a pissed-off owner or some other course-related crisis. Thanks to these guys, superintendents sleep well.

So, if longtime assistants are this capable, why aren't they becoming golf course superintendents? Maybe some of them are. If you know of a longtime assistant superintendent who came out on top of a job search for a head superintendent position, let me know. It would make great fodder for an article.

Experience is the primary factor of success, but the four-year turfgrass degree takes one a lot farther in the industry. Given all the effort the GCSAA and other organization have put into promoting college degrees, who can blame owners for passing up a longtime assistant for an up-and-coming young whippersnapper with a sheepskin?

Money is a determining factor at most facilities, and young, college-educated assistants are probably less expensive than a 20-year assistant. Additionally, the market is flooded with turfgrass graduates looking to become superintendents within a five-year period. The job market is extremely competitive right now. It's taking longer for many well-qualified assistants to get to the next level.

Life experiences prepare one to deal with others more than a classroom ever will. Many longtime assistants are in charge of hiring crewmembers, and they usually can tell a good employee right off the bat because they've seen all kinds come and go throughout the years. Despite the lack of formal education, longtime assistants have their upside.

Owners and boards should think more about hiring these longtime assistants for head superintendent jobs. Granted, not all longtime assistants want to become superintendents. That's fine. There's a place for career assistants in the industry. They're valuable beyond belief. But what about the longtime assistants who want to move to the next level? Many are trying to earn their associate or bachelor's degree to become more valuable to employers and better themselves. Considering crew management and budgeting experience, it might be worth it for facilities with tight budgets to hire these type of guys. They could hire a valuable assistant as a superintendent for less. It might pay off in the long run.

Longtime assistants deserve more respect and recognition from the industry as a whole. I'll do my part by giving them that in this space. If you're an owner or manager at a facility who has a longtime assistant, make sure you give him the respect and recognition he deserves. **GCI**

We would like to hear from you. Please post any comments you have about this column on our message board, which is at www.golfcourseindustry.com/messageboard.



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Clarification

In the article, "The need to justify," on page 102 in the April 2007 issue, UMaxx stabilized nitrogen was referred to as time-release fertilizer. Some questioned the accuracy of that.

Agrotain International uses stabilized nitrogen technology to describe its golf industry products. The result of slow-release, controlled-release or stabilized nitrogen is extended nitrogen availability and performance. Each has certain features and benefits, and use of each depends on which tool a turf manager chooses.

The following definitions are used by the American Association of Plant Food Control Officials to help consumers measure accurate labeling by fertilizer manufacturers. The T definitions refer to fertilizers and compound fertilizers. The N definitions are specific to nitrogen products.

T-21: A slow-release fertilizer that contains sources of water soluble nutrients, release of which in the soil is controlled by a coating applied to the fertilizer.

T-29: A slow- or controlled-release fertilizer that contains a plant nutrient in a form that delays its availability for plant uptake and use after application, or which extends its availability to the plant significantly longer than a referenced rapidly available nutrient fertilizer such as ammonium nitrate or urea, ammonium phosphate or potassium chloride. Such delay of initial availability or extended time of continued availability may occur by a variety of mechanisms. These include controlled water solubility of the material ... by slow hydrolysis of water-soluble, low molecular weight compounds or by other unknown means.

T-32: A slow-release fertilizer consisting of particles coated with polymer resin. It's a source of slowly available plant nutrients.

T-40: A nitrogen stabilizer substance added to a fertilizer that extends the time the nitrogen component of the fertilizer remains in the soil in the urea or ammoniacal form.

T-41: A fertilizer to which a nitrogen stabilizer has been added.

T-45: A urease inhibitor substance that inhibits hydrolytic action on urea by the urease enzyme. When applied to soils, the effect of the inhibitor is less urea nitrogen lost by ammonia volatilization.

T-46: An N-(n-butyl) thiophosphoric

triamide (NBPT) compound that's a normal butyl derivative of thiophosphoric triamides and a urease inhibitor.

T-49: A nitrification inhibitor substance that inhibits the biological oxidation of ammoniacal nitrogen to nitrate nitrogen.

T-70: Enhanced efficiency fertilizer products with characteristics that minimize the potential of nutrient losses to the environment, as compared to a reference soluble product.

N-24: Ureaform fertilizer materials are reaction products of urea and formaldehyde that contain at least 35 percent nitrogen, largely in insoluble but slowly available form. The water insoluble content shall be at least 60 percent of the total nitrogen. The water insoluble nitrogen shall have an activity index of not less than 40 percent when determined by the appropriate AOAC International method.

N-25: Urea-formaldehyde products shall have the percentage of total nitrogen as part of the product name. For example, 20 percent N urea-formaldehyde. The water insoluble nitrogen shall be at least 60 percent of the total nitrogen. The activity index of the water insoluble nitrogen shall be not less than 40 percent by the AOAC International method for urea-formaldehyde products or not less than 50 percent by the AOAC International alkaline permanganate method or 80 percent by the neutral permanganate method.

N-26: Isobutylidene diurea is a condensation product of isobutyraldehyde and urea having a total nitrogen content of 30 percent. It's a source of slowly available nitrogen by virtue of particle size, solubility decreasing with increase in particle size. Material conforming to the description of a granular fertilizer will have 90 percent of its nitrogen content in the water insoluble form before grinding as tested by an AOAC International method.

N-27: A slow-release fertilizer consisting of urea particles coated with sulfur usually further coated with a sealant and conditioner. It typically contains about 30 percent to 40 percent nitrogen and about 10 percent to 30 percent sulfur.

N-28: Reaction products of urea and formaldehyde that contain at least 30 percent nitrogen, largely in the water soluble form. Some slowly available nitrogen products are present. Stable aqueous solutions might be prepared from these materials. **GCI**

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Inaugural tour



John Miller, CGCS

John Miller, CGCS, at The Golf Club at Yankee Trace in Centerville, Ohio, will walk into uncharted territory as he takes the reins as the first agronomist for the Ladies Professional Golf Association.

Officially, the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America will employ Miller, but he will work closely with the LPGA to visit the tournament's host courses and help them prepare sites. He will work with the courses' superintendents and staff to make sure the courses have all the equipment and staff necessary to run an LPGA event.

This is the first position of its kind for the GCSAA and LPGA. When the LPGA created the position, it turned to the organization with the most experience with agronomists, Miller says. While some question whether a conflict of interest would arise working for both organizations, Miller says the partnership will only make each entity stronger because they're working together.

"It's going to be a win-win situation for both associations," he says.

Miller doesn't have to move from southern Ohio for the job, but he's required to travel a lot. He anticipates visiting about 34 tournament sites per year.

"Most sites will have been on the tour already, so there will be few issues," he says. "We'll look at any inconsistencies. If it's a new site, we will look at it to see what needs to be done to get it ready."

There are certain amenities the LPGA will require, and Miller will see those requirements are met. Most likely, he'll visit the

site of a tournament 10 to 12 weeks ahead of time and make recommendations, if needed, for the grounds and other amenities, including the locker rooms, hospitality areas and other accommodations a tour host provides. Miller will return to the tour site about a week before the event to assist with final preparations. By the time the tournament starts, Miller's job is done.

When the GCSAA announced its nationwide search for the newly created position, it piqued Miller's interest.

"We need to look at what the architect was saying when the course was built. If we slow down the greens a little, we'll get some of those great hole locations back."

— JOHN MILLER

"I've wanted to do this for a long time," he says. "I had been looking for a job with the PGA Tour before this opportunity came up. There's something about the challenge of tour golf I enjoy."

With increasing emphasis on faster greens and greener fairways, Miller hopes golfers' expectations will come back to reality eventually. Some courses are being passed up because of the increasingly rigorous standards.

"We need to look at what the architect was saying when the course was built," he says. "If we slow down the greens a little, we'll get some of those great hole locations back. People don't understand that courses are

peaked for that particular event. Golfers think it's that way all the time."

Miller will prepare for the job with a month of training – two weeks with each organization. He gained experience with tournaments while at Yankee Trace, hosting the Nationwide Tour's Dayton Open, which the club hosted from 1999 to 2003. He also has taught classes for the GCSAA about hosting tournaments.

Prior to his 14 years at Yankee Trace, Miller was superintendent at Indian Springs Golf Course

in Mechanicsburg, Ohio, and London (Ohio) Golf Club. He earned his bachelor's degree in agronomy from Ohio State University.

Miller serves on the GCSAA's standards/bylaws committee and previously was the vice chairman for the education and certification committees. He also is a member of the Miami Valley GCSA and served on the education planning committee for the Ohio Turfgrass Foundation. Additionally, Miller is past president of Play Golf Ohio.

Miller's assistant, Terry Taylor, took over as superintendent at Yankee Trace when Miller started his new role Aug. 13.

— Heather Wood

