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TREE TALK

The PGA Tour Barclays was awarded to Ridgewood Country Club in New Jersey at the last minute, leaving Todd Raisch, CGCS, little time to accomplish a great deal of work. One concern was clearing trees and limbs necessary to erect tents and staging operations to allow the gallery to see the best players in the world.

Because tree removal is a sensitive subject, Raisch contracted a qualified tree service company, Tree-Tech of Mount Freedom, N.J., with extensive golf course experience to assist him with a thorough review and preparations. The following are thoughts about superintendent/tree service relations from Tree-Tech's owner, Rob Finnesey.

Q What are the benefits for a superintendent to contract a tree service company to assist the host club?

A We'll review a number of concerns with the golf course superintendent, including everything from sun/shade studies to safety. For the best results, a tree service company should be contacted at least two years before the event to form and execute a plan that includes:

- Reviewing tree safety issues that could injure the gallery, spectators in the grandstands or under trees, or impact moving vehicular or pedestrian traffic.
- Removing any root encroachment in high-play areas such as primary rough grass landing zones, bunkers and brush along a water hazard so the competitors won't injure themselves.
- Understanding the superintendent's agronomic issues with all playing surfaces. We'll conduct a sun/shade study, identify root intrusion for gallery and players, reduce any overplanting concerns, thin canopies, root prune and remove any tree that affects the setup of the golf course inside and outside the ropes.
- Evaluating playability concerns, including sight lines from teeing grounds, tree/

limb intrusion into the intended line of play and removal of trees that affect shot options (such as a tree planted behind a bunker creating a double hazard). If there's an architect involved, we'll help him to create the proper sight lines to enhance design features with proper tree planting or removal.

- Reviewing the safety issues of multiple-trunk trees, hanging limbs, surface roots and thorn-producing species to reduce any legal liabilities.
- Working with the television crews well in advance of the event to selectively remove any tree, limb or other obstacle that might intrude the camera's view.
- Reviewing the type of weather expected to identify additional opportunities for damage or injury in the case of a sudden storm.
- Clearing any area designated for an operational or vendor compound.

Q What can a superintendent do to ease your staff's efforts?

A Prioritize the work he wishes the tree company to accomplish. This would include:

- Receiving all as-builts, maps, site documentation, irrigation line and other golf course information so the tree service doesn't add additional work for the superintendent.
- Locating and tagging all suspect and hazardous trees for removal or pruning.
- Getting involved with any golf course renovation efforts by the club. It's better to prune trees and remove them and clear them during a renovation, limiting the extra work required of the grounds staff.
- Checking with all the subcontractors to investigate their needs and what trees might hinder them when accomplishing their tasks.
- Attending any organizational walk-throughs to identify all gallery paths, service roads, walking spectator sight lines, proposed parking lots or other areas where

a tree might clutter the routes.

- Contacting local traffic authorities to identify their routes for buses, large trucks, and police/fire and emergency vehicles to allow easy and unencumbered entry and exits in case of a medical or other emergency.
- Assisting when grandstands, tents, concessions and lavatory facilities are placed to identify what trees should be removed.
- Having an emergency crew on call 24/7 before, during and after the event.

Q How can tree services assist a superintendent?

A A quality tree service can advise the superintendent about:

- Identifying and removing any miscellaneous or nonindigenous trees affecting turf health, light penetration, air circulation and prolonged shade impacts.
- Supporting the club when selecting the best species for the location and growing environment. Choose trees that don't have surface roots, pest concerns or fruit droppings. Look for those with moderate growth rates, brilliant fall color and quick leaf drops.
- Evaluating and removing any underbrush (which might affect pace of play), identifying out-of-bounds and locating the proper boundaries of water hazards.
- Evaluating the tree lines along the teeing ground perimeters to widen the line of play and lift up intruding limbs, especially for left-handed players. Many times tree intrusion will cause the misalignment of a teeing ground to a point other than the intended landing zone.
- Eliminating any poor-quality trees that affect the growth and health of the primary species being highlighted.
- Removing any trees that frame a green, landing zone, teeing ground or encroach into a line of play, create a backdrop or overhang a golf hole.
- Reviewing the three forms of pruning with the superintendent: canopy or the thinning of the interior profile; root pruning, which will prevent a tree from robbing water and nutrients from the turf; and basal pruning. **GCI**

Terry Buchen, CGCS, MG, is president of Golf Agronomy International. He's a 38-year, life member of the GCSAA. He can be reached at terrybuchen@earthlink.net.



Travels With Terry

Globetrotting consulting agronomist Terry Buchen visits many golf courses annually with his digital camera in hand. He will share 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.

Jack it up

The maintenance crew at the Palmas del Mar Country Club in Humacao, Puerto Rico, uses a Greens Iron Super 5000 tournament speed roller, which comes with a removable transport frame. When the roller is transported from green to green, it hits the turf and cart paths because it rides low. So, head mechanic Jose Rodriguez raised the frame by adding one 12-inch-long, 1.5-inch-diameter hollow pipe above each axle to raise the roller a foot higher. In addition to welding the bottom of the pipes to the top of each axle, Rodriguez welded a $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch-thick piece of metal to the top of the pipes and then bolted them to the roller frame with two $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch-diameter bolts, nuts and lock washers.

Because Rodriguez raised the frame, the built-in hitch on the Toro Workman tow vehicles couldn't be used with the roller anymore. So, he bolted a 2-inch-square, class III receiver hitch to the bed of the Workman using two $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch-diameter bolts, nuts and lock washers. He also welded a class I hitch, which fits over the top of 1 $\frac{7}{8}$ -inch-diameter trailer hitch ball, to the roller's frame. Rodriguez uses an adjustable turnbuckle to raise the roller onto the frame and lower it off.

Rodriguez, director of golf course maintenance Karla Cora and area supervisor Felix Arroyo conceived and designed the idea.

The cost of the pipe, hitches, trailer hitch ball, metal, turnbuckle, etc., was less than \$100, and the labor took about two and a half hours.



Hang it up

At the Hermitage Country Club in Manakin-Sabot, Va., Manakin Course superintendent Eric Spurlock and director of golf course operations John Haley designed a hose rack to better organize hoses and watering accessories for quick and easy access at a centralized location at the turf care center.

Spurlock placed two 6-inch-by-6-inch posts into the ground and stabilized them with concrete to support the weight of the hoses and lumber. He cut five 2-inch-by-6-inch pieces of wood on which to hang the hoses. He also cut notches on both ends of the two-by-sixes that were angled back to the main structure to keep the hoses from slipping off the rack. Then he nailed another two-by-six to each the five he cut first, essentially creating a 4-inch-by-6-inch board.

Next, the 2-inch-by-8-inch boards (one on either side of the 6-inch-by-6-inch end posts) were bolted ($\frac{1}{2}$ -inch diameter) to either side of the post for support underneath the notched two-by-sixes, which were positioned across the two-by-eights so the notches on either side enabled the hoses to be hung from both sides of the rack. The notched two-by-sixes were held in place by two short pieces of two-by-sixes wedged between the two-by-eights and screwed in place.

Two two-by-sixes (one on either side of the six-by-six) were spanned between the end posts and bolted in on top of the notched two-by-sixes for more stability. Once the structure was completed, a 6-inch-diameter PVC pipe was cut into 10 1-foot sections. The pipe sections then were split into half circles and screwed ($\frac{1}{4}$ -inch diameter) to the top of the notches where the hoses hang to reduce the possibility of damage.

Finally, Spurlock built and mounted a wooden box with a hinged cover to one end of the post to keep quick coupler valves, nozzles, fittings, wetting agent canisters, etc., organized and close to the hoses.

The cost for the materials from an outlet lumber yard was about \$350, the PVC pipe was in stock, and labor took about 16 hours. **GCI**



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DIFFERENT, YET THE SAME

I'm currently recuperating from five days at the GIE + Expo in Louisville. As you may or may not know, GIE is the national show for the lawn care, grounds and landscape contracting industry. For those of you who've never attended – which includes, I suspect, almost every superintendent reading this – the show is similar to the Golf Industry Show in some ways, but different in others. The events, like this market, overlap but also diverge dramatically. Allow me to elucidate.

GIE is just about as big as GIS in terms of attendance (about 20,000) but significantly larger in trade show exhibit space, thanks mainly to an enormous outdoor demonstration area. The outdoor demo consists of acres of zero-turn mowers, brush hog-type doohickeys, trenchers, tree movers, chain saws and a long list of other cool gas- and diesel-powered toys. The outdoor area is a ball, but you have to duck occasionally because turbo-charged pieces of equipment kick up rocks and dirt clouds.

Like GIS, the Louisville show is the result of throwing a number of different associations into an enormous blender to create an industrywide milk shake. Take a deep breath and get ready for a virtual acronym orgy: GIS consists of the GCSAA, CMAA, NGCOA, GCBAA, etc. GIE + Expo consists of OPEI, PLANET (the old PLCCA and ALCA groups) and PGMS. Both shows are attempts to consolidate several trade shows into a single site and still allow some autonomy for education and activities by the host associations. So, you see a zillion badge types, concurrent seminars hosted by multiple groups, specialized zones on the show floor for each discipline and different types of professional meetings.

Show consolidation – however awkward – is an economic necessity these days and an alphabet soup mix of “partners” is the price we pay.

So, if you're interested in turf cut at an inch or less, you go to the GIS (or STMA if you're one of those athletic field dudes). Otherwise, it's Louisville for you. And that points out another difference between the shows – the GIE takes place in Louisville,

The “other half” of the green industry may be different, but unless we work as a whole, none of us will survive.

whereas the GIS moves from Orlando to San Diego to New Orleans. I love GIE, but being rooted in Louisville is equivalent to locating the Super Bowl in Toledo until the sun goes dark. Variety is the spice of life, and you pretty much only get salt or pepper in Louisville. (One aside: the location in Louisville essentially makes that show a “superregional” event.)

Another difference: GIE is, first and foremost, an iron show. The golf business is dominated by red, green and orange, but you get the entire rainbow in Louisville. There are a dozen other manufacturers selling to the residential and commercial cutting market. You think golf's big three are competitive? The pro mowing market might be somewhat bigger than golf's, but there are five times more companies vying for your business.

Even though the GIE part of the show – historically the chemical and fertilizer segment – merged with the Expo part (the equipment side) a few years ago, the big soft goods manufacturers don't have nearly the presence in Louisville as they do at GIS. Why? Lawn care is basically a herbicide and insecticide market. Fungicides, growth regulators and other specialty products,

such as wetting agents and foliar, play a minor role in the segment.

The educational component of GIE+Expo is good but nothing like GIS. There might be 3,000 attendees signed up for seminars versus the 7,000 who attend the conference part of the golf show. Some of the education is agronomic, but the majority is business driven. How do I get more customers? How do I manage my lines of credit in a tough economy? What about H-2B and other labor issues? In short, GIE attendees are professionals working for small, medium and large businesses trying to figure out how to sell more services and boost their bottom lines versus simply trying to deliver better-quality turf.

The two shows have much in common in terms of general product categories, exhibitors and a mutual interest in turf and the overall green industry. But they're vastly different in scope, purpose and focus. Those differences often make it easy for superintendents to dismiss the lawn and landscape part of the green industry as second class. But look beyond the surface of the two markets

and think about our common interests. The small stuff is different, but we are inexorably tied by the big issues: water, development, chemical usage, nutrition, labor and a

significant perception problem that we're only focused on aesthetics.

The “other half” of the green industry may be different, but unless we work as a whole, none of us will survive.

As the legendary former speaker of the House Tip O'Neil was fond of saying: “All politics are local.” That's particularly true in our business and golf and lawn care must work together in alliances to be effective. Because, as another great American, Benjamin Franklin, said about the vast disparities between his colonial colleagues, “We must hang together, gentlemen, or surely we will hang separately.”

Think about it. **GCI**



golf industry show

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