



# GOLFDOM SUMMIT A SMASH

## COMBINING ALL-EXPENSES- WITH VENDORS FOR

**THE GOLF MAINTENANCE**  
industry is changing on a daily basis.

Everyone in the industry — from superintendents and vendors to meeting planners and publishers — is adapting in order to survive in this industry.

*So Golfdom asked: why not change the way the industry meets to do business?*

Enter the *Golfdom* Summit, a new way to bring superintendents together with vendors in a more intimate setting than the traditional trade show to discuss the newest trends in the industry.

### **GOLFDOM SUMMIT 2011 QUICK FACTS**

#### **LOCATION**

Pinehurst Resort,  
Pinehurst, N.C.

#### **GOLF COURSE**

Pinehurst No. 2

#### **SPONSORS**

FMC  
Jacobsen  
John Deere Golf  
Redexim  
Smithco  
CourseVision

#### **SPEAKERS**

Rees Jones, architect  
Bob Farren, CGCS, director  
of golf course and grounds management,  
Pinehurst Resort, Pinehurst, N.C.  
Ken Mangum, CGCS, director of golf  
course and grounds, Atlanta Athletic Club  
Anthony Williams, CGCS, CGM, director of  
grounds, Stone Mountain (Ga.) Golf Club  
Seth Jones, editor in chief, *Golfdom*  
Clark Throssell, Ph.D., research editor,  
*Golfdom*

### **The Summit concept**

The first ever *Golfdom* Summit was held last month at the Pinehurst Resort in Pinehurst, N.C. The Summit featured a unique format that combined boardroom presentations with one-on-one meetings and several unique networking opportunities, including the opportunity to tee it up on Pinehurst No. 2, site of the 2014 U.S. Men's and Women's Opens.





The format was met with appreciation by many of the superintendents in attendance. “It was nice to have the one-on-one interaction with company representatives instead of just shuffling by at a trade show,” Chris Zugel, superintendent at Whistling Straits in Kohler, Wis., said.

The Summit was a hosted event, which meant that neither the superintendents nor their clubs needed to open their wallets to cover travel, registration or even hotel rooms.

The idea of a hosted event might seem risky in a down economy. But realizing how tight maintenance budgets are all over the country, Pat Roberts, publisher of *Golfdom*, saw that adversity as an opportunity.

“The biggest advantage (of the *Golfdom* Summit), naturally, is that the club or the superintendent doesn’t have to pay for the super’s trip,” Roberts explained. “The advantage for our sponsors is that the vendor knows exactly who they are getting

Golf Course and Grounds Management at Pinehurst Resort and the host superintendent addressed attendees on the recent renovation of

Pinehurst No. 2 by Ben Crenshaw and Bill Coore and how he and his staff were preparing to host the U.S. Open and the U.S. Women’s Open in back-to-back weeks in 2014. “Trust me, we did not solicit this,” Farren said of hosting the two majors. “But we are proud of the fact that (the USGA) has faith in our abilities and faith in our community.”

Clark Throssell, Ph.D., *Golfdom*’s research editor, updated attendees on the newest research presented at this year’s C-5 turf science meetings in San Antonio. The response to Throssell’s presentation was outstanding, and he also was happy to receive positive feedback from the group on his new “Clark Talks Turf” column that runs in *Golfdom* every month.

*Golfdom* editor in chief Seth Jones shared his observations on what makes superintendents tick, learned after working closely

*Continued on page 16*

## PAID ATTENDEES, EXCLUSIVE GOLF AND ONE-ON-ONE MEETINGS AN INNOVATIVE NEW MEETING CONCEPT

BY MATT HENDREN, CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

to meet with, and for how long. They don’t have to try to lure the customer into their booth, or waste their time with guys who are just sightseeing. It’s a win-win.”

### Big meeting, big speakers

The Summit also featured several big name speakers including Rees Jones, Clark Throssell, Ph.D., Bob Farren, CGCS (Pinehurst Resort), Ken Mangum, CGCS (Atlanta Athletic Club), Anthony Williams, CGCS, CGM (Stone Mountain Golf Club) and *Golfdom*’s own Seth Jones.

Rees Jones’ keynote presentation, titled “The Evolution of Championship Golf,” was the highlight of the first day of the *Golfdom* Summit, closely followed by that rare opportunity of playing Pinehurst No. 2. Jones shared before- and after-photographs of such courses as Oakland Hills, Atlanta Athletic Club, Baltusrol, Brookline, Hazeltine, Winged Foot and Congressional.

For lovers of the game of golf and the history of golf — and let’s face it, who in that room wasn’t? — the Rees Jones keynote address was worth the price of admission alone... if there was a price, that is.

The following day, Bob Farren, Director of

1. Superintendents enjoyed the throwback look of Pinehurst No. 2. “The redo of it going back to the intent of the course, and the native (grasses), I thought it was perfect,” said John Anderes, CGCS, Queenstown Harbor, Queenstown, Md. “I wish American golf would go that way.”
2. Clark Throssell, Ph.D., gives a talk about current turf research at the Summit. 3. Rees Jones, keynote speaker, mentioned to the crowd that *Golfdom* founder Herb Graffis was a family friend, and that he was happy to help out the magazine today. 4. Bob Farren, CGCS, Pinehurst Resort, speaks to the group.





## Summit Sized Up

6

*Continued from page 15*

with them over the last dozen years. Jones also shared stories of where his career covering the golf industry has taken him, opportunities like interviewing Lorena Ochoa in Guadalajara, Mexico and flying in Nick Price's private jet.

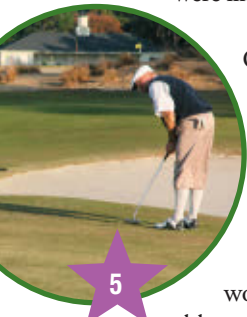
### Pinehurst No.2

One of the many perks of hosting the *Golfdom* Summit at the Pinehurst Resort was having the opportunity to play the historic Pinehurst No. 2. Superintendents taking part in the Summit were like kids in a candy store.

"I don't have the words for it," Mike Osley, CGCS at Saddle Rock Golf Course in Aurora, Colo., said. "Getting a chance to play it was just awesome. The renovations, I love the simplicity of it, going back to the natural surroundings. I think that's a great thing."

John Genovesi, director of grounds at the Maidstone Club in East Hampton, N.Y., worked at Pinehurst back in 2000. He said he was blown away by the way the course has changed.

"I know where it came from to where it is now... I think they hit a home run," Genovesi said. "This was the first time



5. "I don't have the words for it,"

Mike Osley, CGCS at Saddle Rock Golf Course in Aurora, Colo., pictured, said of Pinehurst No. 2. "Getting a chance to play it was just awesome."

6. Emil Miller discusses a new technology from Smithco to Lawrence (Kan.) CC superintendent Bill Irving, CGCS. 7. Attendees listen to Rees Jones give his presentation. 8. *Golfdom* editor in chief Seth Jones gives a talk — part insightful, part humorous — on his perspective on the work of superintendents.

I've seen it — other than seeing it in publications — and I've got to say, as good as some of the photography is in some of the publications, it doesn't do it justice."

### Rave reviews

Like any event being hosted for the first time, there were many questions about how the event would be received, not only by superintendents but vendors as well.

All questions and concerns were soon alleviated by the overwhelming positive response from all parties involved.

"It was a tremendous honor to be a part of the event and the opportunities that it provided me to speak to other influential people in the industry," Jeff Couwenhoven, superintendent with ValleyCrest Golf Course Maintenance, said in an email following the Summit. "I have already recommended the event to many people who thought it would not be a success and were surprised at my perspective of the event. I feel you have a winning recipe for an event that could offer a tremendous amount of education, fun and opportunity to help the industry grow."

Genovesi echoed those sentiments.

"When you go to a national show you feel like you're lost in the sea — it's almost too big at times," he said. "This has been a great event and the strongest aspect of this event has been the small groupings that we've had."

Like any golf industry event the feedback from attendees is important but the true judge of success comes from the vendors, the lifeblood of the Summit. After all, this event would not have been possible without the support of vendors such as Don Smith, of Smithco, who thought the first ever *Golfdom* Summit was a success.

"(The) format was unique; the format was something that I had not experienced before at this level," Smith said. "This is the kind of format I would prefer, than say a larger format with a lot of people and a lot of confusion, because you don't

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## EXCLUSIVE *OR* ELITIST?

Dear Seth,

All this crowing about the *Golfdom* Summit and this "new way" of getting superintendents together with company reps makes me queasy. How will it help the majority of superintendents? I see the vendors benefiting immensely and good for them, but what about the rest of us? How can you brag about this "new" process when only a fraction of one percent of the courses will benefit?

— **Kathy Antaya**, CGCS, Battle Creek, Mich.

Dear Kathy,

Thanks for your note, and I'm happy to have caught you on the phone just now. To reiterate with our readers what you and I chatted about...

I hear you loud and clear. There is a thin line between exclusive and elitist. Indeed, this first *Golfdom* Summit was mostly composed of high end courses. I promise that as the Summit gains steam in the industry, we'll invite a more diverse group of supers. Also, please don't think that we're going to obsess over the Summit beyond this issue — it can only be the "first" *Golfdom* Summit once, and that's why we're so excited about it right now.

Looking forward to hosting many more of you in the future.

— **Seth Jones**, EIC

get that intimacy, that one-on-one."

The MC of the event, Seth Jones, said the Summit surpassed his lofty expectations.

"This was a gutsy thing for *Golfdom*, just because there aren't many groups investing money into something totally new in the golf industry right now," Jones said. "Now that we've done one, and I really believe it was a smash hit, I think it's going to catch on as the word spreads."

### Ahead of the curve

Even before the event had concluded superintendents in attendance and sponsors were asking about the 2012 Summit.

"The 2012 Summit is definitely going to happen," Roberts said. "The location is to be determined. I would love to do it again at Pinehurst. The people here have been great. Check out [golfdomsummit.com](http://golfdomsummit.com) for information on the 2012 event here in the next couple of weeks."

*Golfdom* takes pride in staying ahead of the curve and supplying content that will help keep superintendents aware of what is going on in the golf industry. In the *Golfdom* Summit, the hope is that the old magazine found a new trick.

"The format has been so resourceful for me," Jim Loke, superintendent at Bent Creek Country Club in Lancaster, Pa., said. "I think this is the future of our business in how we disseminate information." ■

*Contributing editor Matt Hendren is superintendent for the city of Kansas City, Kan.*



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