

Vancouver Island superintendents are as adept on ice as they are on greens.



## Superintendents on ice

### Charity event raises \$100,000 for M.S. research

**T**he Vancouver Island Golf Superintendents Association doesn't mind a hard check into the boards — because the result ends up being a check for \$100,000 to Multiple Sclerosis research.

The brainchild of VIGA member Greg Kowalski, superintendent at Royal Oak Golf Club, the group has laced up the skates for the last four years and dropped the puck annually to raise money for a good cause. The money has escalated quickly for the group, and in the last two years, the chapter has

raised more than \$100,000 each year.

"We wanted to be more than simply a group that got together six times a year," Kowalski says. "We thought we should give back to the community. We live in such a beautiful community... people work their whole lives to retire here. Victoria is a beautiful community — we thought we should give back to that community."

So the chapter decided to organize an annual superintendent's hockey game.

"When we were deciding what to do, we said 'Why not hockey?' Kowalski says. "We were already doing a regular Friday game — superintendents versus industry. That's all we do up here in Canada anyway, right? Drink

beer and play hockey!"

The game, played in front of about 200 people, ended up being a 7-7 tie. Which was perfect, because the real winner of the event was the cause.

"We were talking about what cause to support, and it turned out that multiple families were affected by MS," Kowalski says. "It turns out, Canada is one of the most afflicted countries of MS."

The group is already planning for next year. The event will include the same silent auction and raffle, but they're also hopeful to add local hockey celebrities to the mix.

"It's a big group. If we all do our part, it all comes together," Kowalski says. "We're lucky we're all such hard workers." ■

### Research shows taller *Poa* won't slow your roll

**R**esearch at Oregon State University is showing taller height of cuts on annual bluegrass (*Poa annua*) greens combined with rolling doesn't slow ball roll.

The study is significant because the grass was mowed at a higher-than-normal height, which kept the grass healthy and vibrant and proves that putting speed can still be fast on taller grass.

Researchers mowed 60 grass plots at a height of 0.15 inches, well over typical greens heights of 0.10 to 0.125 inches, said OSU turfgrass specialist Rob Golembiewski, the study's author. The turf was cut at 8 a.m. with a walk-behind greens mower. Green speed was measured at 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. each day.

"We've been getting a lot of inquiries (about the research); superintendents and golf clubs in general, are interested in what we're doing," Golembiewski says. "It goes against the grain of people



Higher cuts on *Poa annua* greens doesn't slow ball roll.

thinking we have to lower height-of-cut. People are looking for ways to reduce inputs, have healthier stands, and still have acceptable surfaces for golfers."

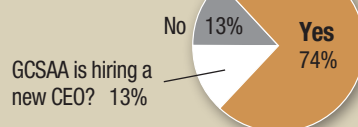
Researchers in OSU's study rolled plots with a 1,140-pound electric roller and an 845-pound gas roller. While both provided about a 1-foot increase in ball roll distance compared to non-rolled plots, there was no difference in ball roll distance between the two rollers.

Golembiewski told *Golfdom* that Thom Nikolai, Ph.D., Michigan State University, helped him outline the research before implementing the study.

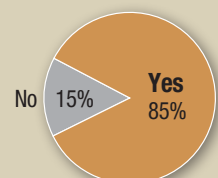
"Thom said most of the research they've done is on creeping bentgrass, but that some superintendents with more *Poa* or more of a mixed stand, have been seeing mixed results," Golembiewski says. "Out here (in the Pacific Northwest) we have more annual bluegrass greens, so I wanted to look into it." ■

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