

GOLFDOM YEAR IN REVIEW



2012

IT WASN'T THE END OF THE WORLD

At least, not yet. We don't want to jinx it.
So let's just take a look at the year in the golf course
management industry, along with some of our
own keen insights along the way... ►►

BY KEN MOUM WITH ADDITIONAL COMMENTARY BY SETH JONES

This Is Not the End



A group representing the We Are Golf initiative traveled to Washington, D.C. to help spearhead the White House's announcement of Summer Jobs+, a call to action for businesses, non-profits, and government to work together to provide pathways to employment for America's youth in the summer of 2012. It is estimated that golf course maintenance jobs open to youths increased from 104,300 in 2011 to 107,280 in 2012.

Sadly, even with more youths in the workforce, there was no increase in youths being on time for morning meetings.

The National Golf Foundation reported in January that 157.5 18-hole equivalent golf courses closed in 2011 compared to only 19 courses opening. It was the sixth consecutive year closings have outpaced openings. Since the peak in 2005, more than 358 golf courses have closed.

Nevertheless, The NGF Golf Facility Supply Index, which tracks the ratio of golfers to golf courses, remained at 83 in 2011. The score means courses are 17 percent less crowded than they were 20 years ago.

So why are rounds still so slow? Was every group in front of us this year trying to qualify for the U.S. Open?



GCSAA named the winners of its 2011 Watson Fellowships: Lindsey Hoffman, Renee Rioux and Joseph Roberts. Each was awarded a \$5,000 postgraduate grant and a trip to the 2012 Golf Industry Show and GCSAA Education Conference in Las Vegas.

The GCSAA decided not to go with our advice, and just award the grants in cash, so the students could double it up at the tables in Vegas. Win some, lose some.

On Jan. 27, Barbara Douglas passed away in Glendale Arizona at age 69 after a three-year battle with cancer. She was the first minority chairman of the USGA Women's Commit-

tee, a winner of the Golf Writers Association of America's prestigious Ben Hogan Award and president of the National Minority Golf Foundation for five years.

The Golf Course Builders Association of America gave its Rossi Award to Jim Kirchdorfer. He is a founding member of the association and served as its president from 1994 to 1996. A 50-year veteran of the golf industry, he also helped found the GCBAA's "Sticks for Kids" program.

We checked, and couldn't find any connection to Mr. Kirchdorfer and the "Dorf on Golf" video series from the 1980s. Whatever happened to Dorf, anyway?

The Australian firm e-par, developers of the e-par Environmental Management System, announce the launch of e-parUSA.

Spoken in a Crocodile Dundee voice, "That's not an environmental management system... that's an environmental management system," is sadly not used as a slogan. (Yet.)

In a harbinger of good news, the Golf Industry Show reported qualified buyer attendance of 7,068 — a 2.6 percent increase over last year from Orlando and the most since the event was in Orlando in 2008. Education conference numbers were up 1.4 percent over last year in Orlando, Fla., and 14.6 percent greater than 2010 in San Diego.

The Kendrick B. Melrose Family Foundation donated \$1 million to the Environmental Institute for Golf. The foundation is supported by Ken Melrose, former CEO and chairman of The Toro Co.



Iowa State University took its 12th title in 14 years at the Collegiate Turf Bowl Competition. The University of Massachusetts-Amherst took second and the University of Maryland took third-place over 87 teams.

Not only does Iowa State dominate the turf bowl, they also dominate my Kansas Jayhawks on the turf—51-23 this year. So I've got nothing smart to say about the Cyclones other than, "well done."

Superintendent Gordon Witteveen was posthumously inducted into the Canadian Golf Hall of Fame. The founding director of the Canadian Golf Superintendents Association and longtime superintendent worked for more than 50 years at courses throughout Ontario and Quebec. He was also a respected author and speaker.

The two largest golf ownership and management companies on Myrtle Beach's Grand Strand joined to become National Golf Management. The new company, formed from Myrtle Beach National Co. and Burroughs & Chapin Golf Management, is one of the 15 largest course management companies in the nation, with 23 combined courses.

If two management companies coming together doesn't give you warm fuzzies, we don't know what will...

Joe Steranka announced that he will retire at the end of the year after seven years as CEO of the PGA of America. "I love golf, I love the PGA and I think the game is in a good spot right now," Steranka said. "It's the biggest decision of my life."

On April 18 the U.S. EPA denied a request to revoke all tolerances and the request to cancel all registrations for the pesticide 2,4-dichlorophenoxyacetic acid, or 2,4-D. The petition was originally filed on November 6, 2008, by Natural Resources Defense Council.

Syngenta marketing communications manager Margaret Bell retired after 35 years with the company. She had been active in many Green Industry associations, especially the Turf and Ornamental Communicators Association, of which she served as vice president for nearly 12 years.

The TOCA meetings will be a lot less fun without Bell's energy. But anytime a friend can retire on their own terms, we're all for it.

Webb Simpson won the United States Open at the Olympic Club in San Francisco. Superintendent Pat Finlen is front and center in the media, including an appearance on the Golf Channel's Morning Drive.

That's almost as cool as USGA Executive Director Mike Davis grabbing the squawking bird-guy and almost ripping his arm off on live TV.



Golf Supply House purchased Eagle One Golf Products of Anaheim, Calif., which has manufacturing capability in several product segments, including recycled plastic golf course furnishings, golf course signage and golf flags. It also distributes a broad line of other golf course equipment and supplies.

They also have this sign available, which we think should be mandatory at some of the courses we play.



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Mike Hurdzan, Ph.D., had gained critical acclaim for his golf course design centered on environmental stewardship and affordability, even before he was named the winner of GCSAA's 2013 Old Tom Morris Award.

Hurdzan and his longtime design partner Dana Fry announced that they are to go their separate ways. Fry is partnering with Jason Straka to form Fry/Straka Global Golf Course Design and focus on projects in Asia and Brazil. Hurdzan and his son Chris will concentrate on golf course projects in North America as Hurdzan & Son.

We're still hopeful for a reunion tour in ten years.

Frank Rossi, associate professor and extension turfgrass specialist in the Department of Horticulture at Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y., is named the TOCA Environmental Communicator of the Year. The program is sponsored by Project EverGreen.

Ernie Els won the Open Championship at Royal Lytham and St. Annes... using a belly putter. That makes him the third out of the last four major champions to use one. R&A Chief Executive Peter Dawson reveals that golf's ruling bodies are seriously considering taking action on anchored putting strokes.

Shortly before we went to press, golf's governing bodies proposed a ban on anchored putting, a rules change that would go into effect in January 2016 (see story, page 6.) The long putter was already outlawed by the cool police months ago.



Bert McCarty is the 2012 recipient of Clemson University's highest agricultural honor: the Godley-Snell Award for Excellence in Agricultural Research.

The National Climatic Data Center reported that the mainland United States has experienced the warmest 12 months since record keeping began in 1895, affecting golf courses and agriculture across the nation. The warmest-ever-recorded March and extreme heat in June helped make the first six months of 2012 the warmest recorded of any January-June stretch. In the last half of June, 170 all-time temperature records were matched or smashed in cities across the lower 48 states.

Toro launched the Toro Leaderboard, a new website that allows superintendents who own Toro equipment or irrigation solutions to share reviews on products.

For the first time in its 80-year history, Augusta National Golf Club has female members. The home of golf's Masters championship had faced criticism because of its all-male membership. Augusta National invited former secretary of state Condoleezza Rice and South Carolina financier Darla Moore to become the first women in green jackets when the club opens for a new season in October.



We think this is great news. And we hope that someday Augusta National will allow us the honor of a press credential so we can help sing the club's praises from Amen Corner.

Audubon International's board of directors named Ryan Aylesworth the new executive director for the environmental education organization.



Gregg Breningmeyer passed away on Aug. 9 at the age of 56. He was director of sales and marketing for John Deere Worldwide Golf and Turf Company and a friend to many in the industry.

Gregg was well known by the Golfdom staff as a kind, funny, straightforward guy, and we sure miss him. We'll toast one to him at the GIS in two months, as will many others, no doubt.

Tropical Storm Isaac hit the Southeastern U.S. in late August, bringing with it drenching rain that broke the drought in some areas, and caused massive flooding in others.

Syngenta agreed to acquire the DuPont Professional Products insecticide business, a leading supplier of innovative products for the professional turf, ornamentals and home pest control markets, for a consideration of \$125 million. The acquisition will expand the range of products that Syngenta offers to golf course and lawn care professionals and to ornamental growers. Syngenta will also access the related active ingredients and formulated products from DuPont through exclusive supply and licensing agreements.

On Aug. 28 Stanley Zontek passed away. His life was devoted to the game of golf and the improvement of golf courses throughout the world. It is simply impossible to calculate the impact Zontek had through his 41 years of visiting courses, writing articles, speaking at conferences and befriending people all over the world.



The Georgia Golf Environmental Foundation will invest more than \$23,000 in research projects, further advancing the game's drive toward sustainability. The foundation announced it would help fund two projects for scientists at the University of Georgia in which water conservation shapes as a key outcome for the state's golf industry that delivers a direct economic impact of \$2.4 billion annually. Established in 2004, the GGEF promotes sustainable environmental stewardship in golf and is the philanthropic arm of the Georgia Golf Course Superintendents Association.



BASF announced plans to acquire Becker Underwood for a price of \$1.02 billion. The move makes BASF a leading global provider of technologies for biological seed treatment as well as seed treatment colorants and polymers. BASF also expanded its product portfolio in biological crop protection, turf and horticulture, animal nutrition and landscape colorants and coatings.

If we had a billion bucks to burn, how would we spend it? Frozen burritos. And a grande-sized freezer.



Sept. 14, the House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate passed S. 3552, the Pesticide Registration Improvement Extension Act of 2012, which reauthorizes the collection of fees to support the EPA's Office of Pesticide Program registration process.

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The Wall Street Journal stated that Medinah CGCS Curtis Tyrrell was part of the Ryder Cup team in its article titled "In Golf Rivalry, Important Equipment Includes a Mower: As Ryder Cup Tees Off, Greenkeepers Seek Home-Course Advantage."



At the Ryder Cup, the U.S. suffered an epic meltdown down the stretch, losing the cup with an 0-8-1 finish on Sunday.

We wish Tyrrell really was on the team — maybe he could have made a putt for the Yanks on Sunday.

The IGF, which is composed of golf's national governing bodies in more than 150 countries, released its statement on sustainability in October. The statement was signed by 153 golf organizations, placing sustainability as a core priority. The focus of the declaration is on the management of golf facilities, administration of golf events and the influence of golfers as consumers.

The Organic Arsenical Products Task Force announced that MSMA applications labeled for use on golf courses (except in Florida) will be extended for at least 3 to 4 years until a new National Academy of Sciences review on inorganic arsenic is completed.

Superstorm Sandy, the second-costliest hurricane of all time, hit the East Coast in late October. The largest Atlantic hurricane of all time (with winds spanning 1,100 miles), Sandy killed 253 people, left about \$65 billion in damages and impacted 24 states, primarily New York and New Jersey.



The second **Golfdom Summit** was held at the Reunion Resort in Orlando. Rees Jones and Medinah's Tyrrell gave a presentation about the 2012 Ryder Cup. Reunion Resort Director of Grounds Tray Maltby (above left, with Jones) proved to be the perfect host, ensuring both superintendents and sponsors enjoyed the event.

If any residents find a Golfdom logo Pro V1 in their living room, it wasn't me.

American Society of Golf Course Architects members see increase in renovation and remodel work. In October the association's website featured a number of articles about ongoing or recently completed renovation work across North America by its members.

The third annual Symposium On Affordable Golf was held at the Southern Pines Golf Club in Southern Pines, N.C.

We wanted to go, but we'd already blown too much money on unaffordable golf this year.

Jacobsen teased customers that "something new is coming" on its website, www.jacobsen.com. The new product, pictured but covered with a sheet, will be unveiled January 15th, 2013. For more information, see page 39 of this issue.

Golfdom announced it is now available as an app for iPad.

Yes, that's convenient, but there's still no way to leave an iPad draped over the handicap bar in the men's room toilet, is there? ■

Ken Moum is a golf maniac who lives in Topeka, Kan. Seth Jones is just a maniac.