

Go Small or

GIS 2012
SPECIAL

REGIONAL SHOWS ARE KEEPING SUPERS CLOSER TO HOME. THE INTERNET IS OFFERING MORE EDUCATION THAN EVER. DOES THE GIS NEED TO GO SMALL IN ORDER TO GET BIG? BY SETH JONES AND BETH GERACI

Rhett Evans, GCSAA CEO, might not have been to too many Golf Industry Shows in his life, but he's fully aware of how important it is to the association he now runs.

"(GCSAA's) overall budget is almost \$16 million. The services and programs we offer — the education, our website, advocacy, government relations — a little over 50 percent of those services are funded by the GIS," he says. "That's a big piece of the pie."

And that slice of pie has shrunk at an alarming rate over the last few years. The largest Golf Industry Show ever was held in Orlando in 2008. That show welcomed almost 26,000 people to a trade show that exceeded 300,000 square feet. Last year, in the same city, the show saw only 14,781 attendees and a trade show of only 180,000 square feet. Respectively, the show saw 45 percent fewer attendees and was 40 percent smaller.

Has the GIS hit rock bottom? And how can the GCSAA keep the show relevant to today's superintendent?

Hemorrhaging members and rounds

It does not take a Ph.D. to determine that the Golf Industry Show was hit hard by the slumping economy.

"The entire golf industry suffered significantly from the recession that gripped the U.S. and other parts of the world," says Steve

Mona, the CEO at the World Golf Foundation and the former CEO of GCSAA. "Golf depends on the facility being robust. You had facilities hemorrhaging members and rounds. It's a domino effect to the rest of the industry."

Sure, the economy has hurt the GIS. But is the national show looking over its shoulder at other factors, such as regional trade shows or the fact that more educational opportunities are available online for superintendents?

"I always viewed regional shows as complementary. Having said that, in the new world that we live in, I could see regional shows being perceived as being competition," Mona says. "To travel by car, for fewer nights and less expense? I could see that being a choice."

One regional show that is thriving is the Carolinas GCSA Conference and Show. In 2011, the show sold more education seats than it ever had before at 1,364. Trade show exhibit space was sold out, and the event netted the association \$600,000.

Tim Kreger, executive director of the CGCSA, says that the GIS will always be important to superintendents, but he also points out that the Carolinas show brings in the same speakers as the GIS.

"I think the main challenge is, when it comes to maintaining your own budget, one of the easiest things to do is cut out profes-

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Go Home

sional development,” Kreger says. Consequently, he adds, clubs are making superintendents pay for the GIS out of their own pockets instead of the club paying for it.

Kreger says if he was a superintendent at a low-budget course and the money to attend a show came out of his own pocket, he'd choose the local show because it offers just as many benefits as the national show.

“When you're looking at percentages, clubs are paying more for superintendents to go to regional shows instead of national shows,” Kreger says. “They're relying more on

regional shows for educational opportunities. The cuts in budget and the opportunity for education at regional shows is making for the perfect storm.”

Brent Fuhrman, CFO and COO of FarmLinks, the research and demonstra-

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tion facility in Alabama, says regional shows and industry events such as those FarmLinks hosts do not prevent superintendents from attending the GIS.

"We just do not see ourselves as a competitor of the GCSAA," he says. "We are a complement to the overall educational desire in the industry... Obviously, when you're dealing with the economic realities in the industry and the demands on people's time personally and professionally, there are decisions people in the industry have to make on where they're going to spend their time."

FarmLinks and the Golf Industry Show offer two different things, Fuhrman says. FarmLinks allows for close interaction and deep conversation among colleagues seeking solutions to problems. National shows, on the other hand, allow superintendents to see all the options available to them.

"From my perspective, what's great about all these shows is you have an opportunity to see the breadth of options of what is available. There's a negative in that too in that you can't dig deep simply because of the time it takes to get around. You go wide but you can't go deep at a show," he explains. "But again, if I'm trying to get (educated) I think a show nationally or regionally makes a lot of sense."

Change your model

Another potential enemy of a national trade show: the internet.

Mark Woodward, president/owner of Mark Woodward Associates, LLC, a golf operations consulting firm, and a former CEO of GCSAA, says that on-line education caught on with the implementation of the association's Professional Development Initiative.

"That was about attainable, affordable education, so members could maintain their status as a Class A or certified member," Woodward says. "People can now take online classes and easily get points at the local level. You can maintain your status by staying home."

Mona agrees the internet has changed the way business has been conducted in the last five years.

"People don't just jump on planes and fly halfway across the country to have a lunch meeting anymore," he says. "People are much more conservative in how they use their time and their resources."

Hard times

Another major issue hurting the show is the cost of attending. It was the main obstacle that could keep people from attending, according to a *Golfdom* survey (see page 25).

"I know a lot of superintendents out of work right now. In my mind, the show is still something people should try to go to," Wood-

KEEPING
THE GIS
STRONG

WE ASKED FOR ONE BIT OF ADVICE TO THE GIS, AND THIS IS WHAT WE HEARD.

TIM KREGER

executive director,
Carolinas GCSA

Condense. That's my one-word answer.

When you have a golf tournament and then you have the trade show, too, you could potentially be gone from your job for 10 days. People's time is way too valuable these days. We shrunk our conference from four days to three days four years ago and it was the greatest thing we ever did. Our vendors and the members really appreciated it. It benefited both sides equally.



STEVE MONA

CEO, World Golf Village

Stay in tune with what is going on in the world generally, and in the golf course management industry specifically. And don't be afraid to try some things that are innovative that maybe aren't tried and true but could break some new ground.

Maybe get ahead of what people think they want. That was the beauty of the iPod — we didn't know we wanted it until we saw it.



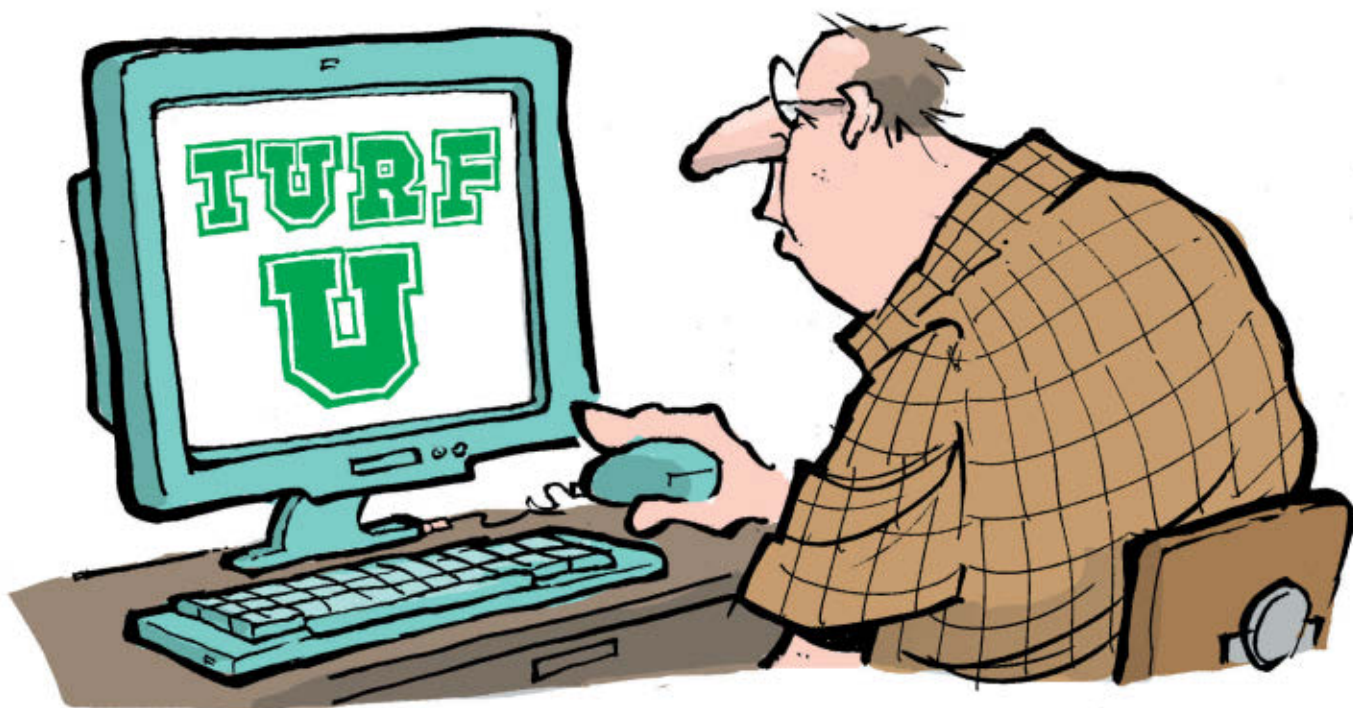
MARK WOODWARD

President, Mark Woodward
& Associates

The GIS needs to be relevant and the superintendent needs to convince the owner that it's a value-added experience to spend that time away from the golf course.

When a golfer plays your facility, you often have a value-add so when he pays, he feels he got more out of his money. The GIS needs to make sure superintendents get that value-added experience, so they can show the owners it was worth the investment.





ward says. "But I fully understand the flip side of the coin. As I've traveled around I've heard comments like, 'I can't afford to go if my club isn't sending me.' And if they can afford it, they can't afford the time away from the course."

"When you hear of (attendees) having to minimize their travel expenses and share rooms because they're paying out of their own pockets, that's a recipe for disaster," Justin Apel, executive director of the Golf Course Builders Association of America, says. "I think if the courses made the investment they would see immediate results. That owner, manager or operator ought to attend with the superintendent, because it's a team effort. There's just as many educational opportunities for them to attend. And then on the show floor, it's a team approach."

Until last year, FarmLinks surveyed superintendents attending its events on their views of the GIS. According to Fuhrman, leading up to the 2011 GIS, 43 percent of responding superintendents said they were skipping the show because of club budget cuts.

But the 2012 show will be different, Fuhrman says.

"I feel there is pent up demand for this particular show," he observes. Whereas club budget cuts stopped supers from attending the 2011 GIS, he says, "now there is certainly some possibility that people have been holding

off on buying equipment. So now they are in a position where they're going to make some major capital purchases. They now have needs they need to address."

Evans is confident that this year's show will at least be bigger than last year's show — and that's a move in the right direction.

"I think people hunkered down for a little while and said that the timing wasn't right," Evans says. "We're starting to see that come around. People have gone through that life cycle and they're saying, 'OK, I need to get back in the swing of things.' Our seminar seats are higher by 12 percent. That's a good sign."

Shorten the show?

Evans says that the GIS is like the GCSAA's Super Bowl. There are a lot of practices and games that lead up to that one moment. "I love it because I can go out and attend chapter meetings, meet members, and then there's a culminating event where we can all come together," he says.

Evans plans to take care of the big game, and he is happy to say that he's been thinking about how the GIS can be changed for the better.

"The first thing we're looking into, and it's a key factor in bringing people together, is time. I think for the most part, budgets are

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Superintendents don't have to travel to the national show to get CEUs anymore. Much more convenient, they're also available at the click of a mouse.

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stabilizing,” Evans says. “But what they’re not given any more of is time. There’s only so much time in a day.”

Evans adds that the show may be too long, considering that from the beginning of the GCSAA Golf Championship to the end of

the educational conference, it’s possible a superintendent could be away from his course and his family for 9 to 10 days.

“That’s an extremely hard thing for people to do. How do we compress the week and consolidate things? Are there items that need to be overlapped? There might be choices you have to make during your stay,” he says, “but you have to shrink down the amount of time it takes to attend the show.”

Mona says he’s seen it firsthand with the Golf 20/20 meeting. Ten years ago, the meeting was 2-and-a-half days. Last year’s meeting was only seven hours long, he says, and yet half the group of 115 left at lunch. He plans on cutting the 2012 meeting to four hours.

“We’ll run it from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., then we’ll say ‘Here’s lunch if you want it, if not, have a great rest of your day,’” Mona explains.

Evans says that a condensed GIS schedule is still at least two years away. Contracts for the GIS — with convention centers, hotels, golf courses — are signed a few years in advance. But he sees that a change to the schedule could come as soon as 2014.

Making the most

What 2012 and Las Vegas holds for the Golf Industry Show remains to be seen. But Mona believes that the GCSAA is doing all it can to keep the show relevant.

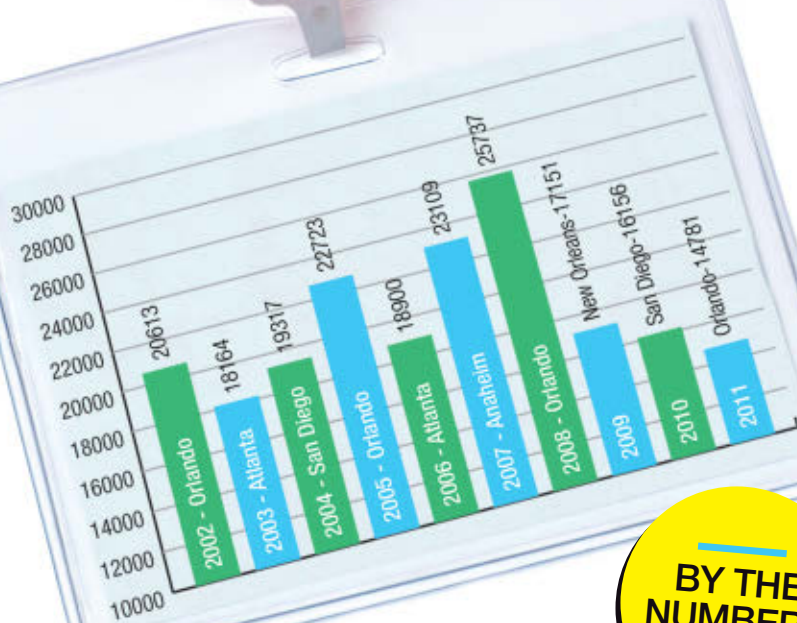
“During my tenure, we had it boiled down to three cities — Orlando, New Orleans and San Diego,” Mona recalls. “I’ve noted that Las Vegas and San Antonio are back in. I give GCSAA credit for going to cities that members want to go to.”

If the show never gets back to 300,000 square feet, that might not be the worst thing for attendees.

“Obviously the smaller shows would have a financial impact on the association’s revenue, but I’ve talked to a lot of superintendents who don’t mind the smaller shows of the last few years,” Woodward says.

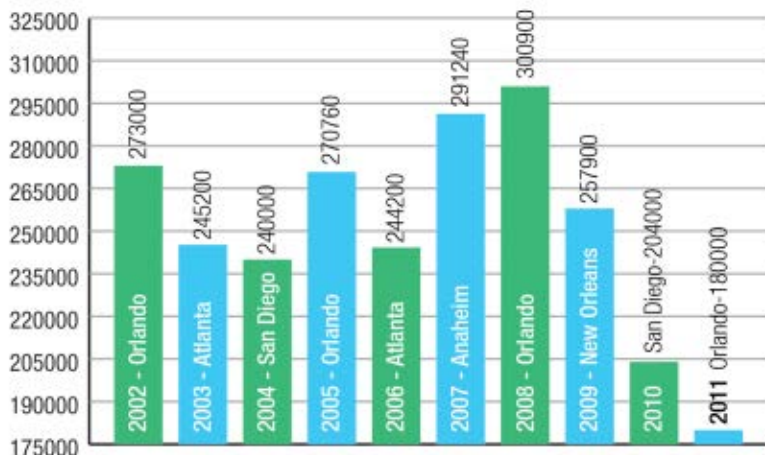
“Until there’s more rounds, more revenue in the industry, our show is going to stay the same,” Evans says. “Is that a good thing or a bad thing? We’re making the most of it. We’re totally content with where it’s at.” ■

GCSAA CONFERENCE AND SHOW ATTENDEES



BY THE NUMBERS

TOTAL TRADE SHOW FLOOR SQUARE FOOTAGE



Source: www.golfindustryshow.com/aboutgis.asp and Golf Course Management

SUPERS SPEAK OUT:

The GIS Survey

The education is still vital, and the price of attending the Golf Industry Show is the one thing that might keep a superintendent from attending. Those are just a few of the things we learned from our readers.

But how many readers believe that the Golf Industry Show will return to its heyday of the mid-2000s? How many readers wouldn't miss the GIS for anything? Which is more popular, the national show or your regional show?

All of these questions were answered in late January, when *Golfdom* sent out a survey to its readers and asked them 8 questions about the Golf Industry Show. We were thrilled to receive a whopping 867 responses to the survey. From chatter in the industry, people from maintenance facilities on the coasts to GCSAA brass in Lawrence, Kan., were looking forward to seeing the results of our survey.

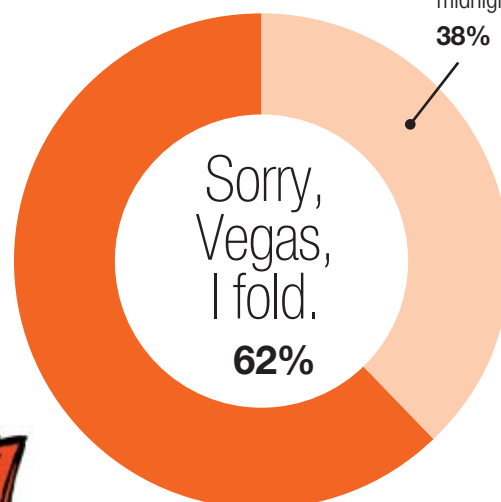
Thank you to everyone who filled out the survey. One lucky participant was rewarded with a \$100 gift card. Look for another *Golfdom* survey soon — this next one will ask superintendents to give their honest opinions on the effort and capital it takes to maintain putting greens.

And now, the results of our GIS survey...

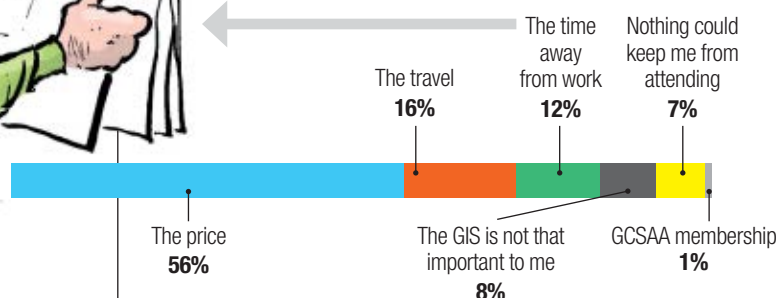
GOLFDOM READERS SHARE THEIR OPINIONS ON THE STATE OF THE GOLF INDUSTRY SHOW, FROM HOW IMPORTANT IT IS TO THEIR CAREERS TO THE ONE THING MOST LIKELY TO KEEP THEM FROM ATTENDING. **BY THE GOLFDOM STAFF**

VEGAS, BABY! ARE YOU GOING TO THE 2012 GOLF INDUSTRY SHOW?

We'll be up \$500 by midnight!
38%



WHAT'S THE PRIMARY THING THAT COULD (OR DOES) KEEP YOU FROM ATTENDING THE GIS?



Continued on page 26



Survey Says...

Continued from page 25



"The educational seminars are awesome, and the networking opportunities are immense. The trade show continues to keep me busy. I think the timing aspect, it may be good for people on the East Coast, there are areas on the West Coast — that's prime time for some people. Palm Springs, Arizona, that's their season. They should think about moving the timing."

MARK BURCHFIELD, superintendent,
Victoria Club, Riverside, Calif.



IN RECENT YEARS THE GOLF INDUSTRY SHOW ATTENDANCE HAS BEEN DROPPING AT AN ALARMING RATE. IF YOU WERE GCSAA CEO FOR A DAY, WHAT WOULD YOU DO TO TRY TO HELP THE GOLF INDUSTRY SHOW STOP THE BLEEDING?



"I think the GIS needs to become more affordable. I think the golf tournament itself plus the actual conference need to be combined into an area where it's affordable for everyone to go."

TOM LIVELY, CGCS, TPC San Antonio



"I would stop the GIS show and do maybe four or five big regional shows. That would cut down on travel expenses and be more pertinent to where you're at."

DAMON DI GIORGIO, superintendent,
Fieldstone Golf Club, Wilmington, Del.

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"It's hard to say, but I think GCSAA needs to do more one-on-one events and CEUs are too easy to get nowadays. It used to be you went to the (GIS) to get CEUs. Now you go to the local organizations, where you can get CEUs monthly, or even through webcasts."

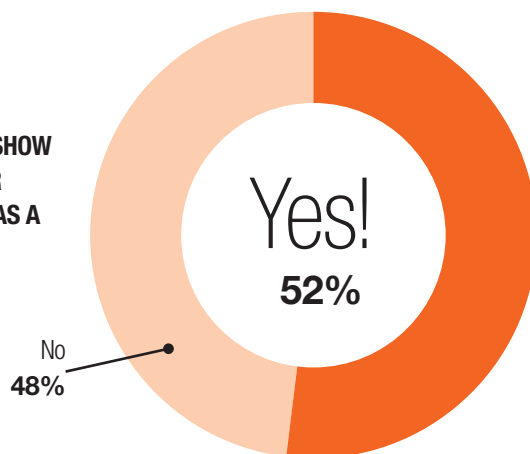
KIRK DOLAN, Turfgrass Director
Louisville Metro Parks



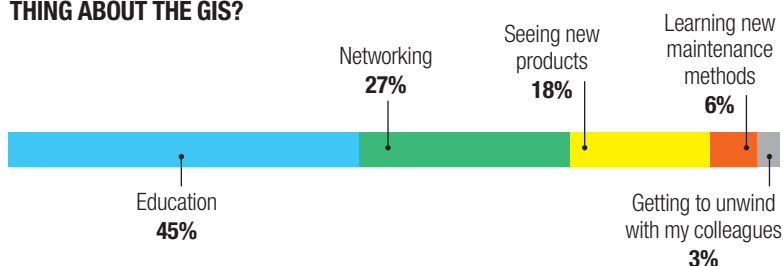
"I would try to have more events like (the *Golfdom* Summit,) where it's one-on-one."

ROBERT CAREY, superintendent,
Spring Brook Country Club, Morristown, N.J.

**IS THE GOLF INDUSTRY SHOW
AS IMPORTANT TO YOUR
CAREER TODAY AS IT WAS A
DECADE AGO?**



**OK, WE'RE ALL LOOKING FORWARD TO THE DAVID FEHERTY TALK AND
THE CHAPTER RECEPTION. BUT WHAT'S REALLY THE MOST VALUABLE
THING ABOUT THE GIS?**



Continued on page 29

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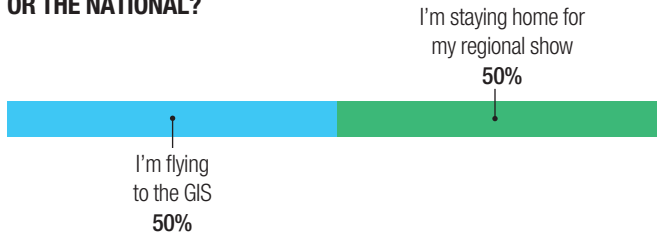
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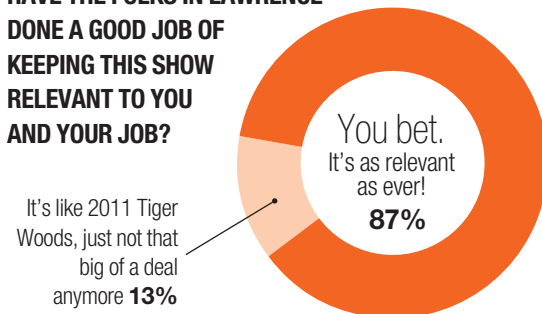
Survey Says...

Continued from page 27

DECISION TIME. THE GM SAID YOU CAN GO TO ONE SHOW, BUT NOT BOTH, IN 2012. ARE YOU GOING TO YOUR REGIONAL SHOW, OR THE NATIONAL?



HAVE THE FOLKS IN LAWRENCE DONE A GOOD JOB OF KEEPING THIS SHOW RELEVANT TO YOU AND YOUR JOB?



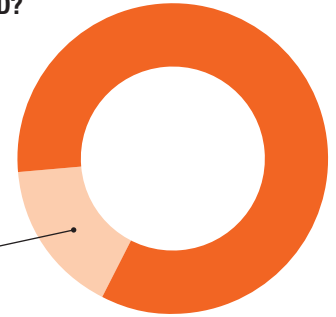
THE GOLF INDUSTRY SHOW IS LATER THAN USUAL THIS YEAR (FEB. 29TH-MARCH 1ST). HAS THE LATE DATE AFFECTED YOUR DECISION TO ATTEND?

It's not on Christmas or my wife's birthday, right? Then it's cool

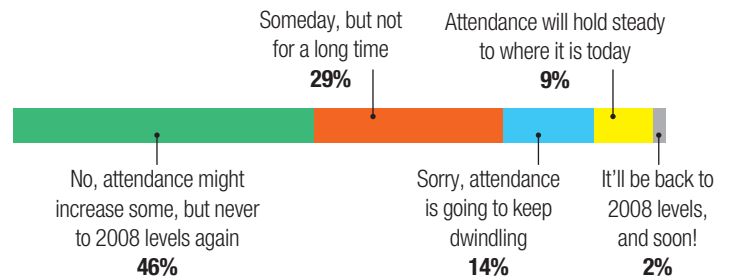
84%

They're messing with my Spring prep by holding it so late!

16%



THE GIS ATTENDANCE HAS PLUMMETED IN RECENT YEARS. DO YOU THINK THE HEYDAY OF 2008 WILL EVER RETURN?



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THE *Golfdom* CONVERSATION:

David Feherty

GIS 2012
SPECIAL

GOLF'S HOTTEST
FUNNYMAN TALKS
ABOUT SPEAKING
AT THE GOLF
INDUSTRY
SHOW, GOLFER
EXPECTATIONS
AND THE ONE TIME
A MOWER GOT
AWAY FROM HIM.

BY SETH JONES



IT SEEMS THAT David Feherty is always on a roll, always clicking. When he's clicking, that means others are laughing.

"I'm at a stage in my life and I think in my career where I have enough confidence in what I'm saying that people shouldn't take me too seriously," he says.

It's lucky for us that Feherty has found that confidence. His TV show, "Feherty," has been a smash, his multiple books are immensely popular with the golf

world, and whenever he's involved in a golf broadcast, you just don't know what quip he's going to drop next.

Along with his other media gigs he also is a popular speaker. On March 1st in Las Vegas, Feherty will be the keynote speaker at the Golf Industry Show's General Session. *Golfdom* caught up with Feherty in mid-January to talk to him about visiting the GIS, the work of superintendents, and if he ever had any maintenance mishaps on the golf course.

Golfdom: David, I appreciate you taking the time to talk to *Golfdom* magazine. Everybody in the industry is really excited for your presentation at the Golf Industry Show.

David Feherty: Yeah, I'm looking forward to it.

"I'm assuming that a room full of golf course superintendents have to have a sense of humor because they're dealing with idiots a lot of the time."

Golfdom: I was reading the promotional materials about your talk. It mentioned that you have a background as an assistant greenkeeper early in your career?

DF: Well, I wouldn't really call it an assistant greenkeeper. I was a kid that was allowed to play in what we call the greenkeeper shed. It was basically a bunch of what you would call crude farm implements these days, you know the gang mowers and the — well, the cylinder mowers haven't changed that much over the years except they're now like \$20 grand.

I was always hanging around out at the

pro shop or up at the greenkeeper's. He let me cut the holes and basically just follow him around.

I got interested in it and the plants and different types of grasses. Of course, we had 20 different types of grasses on the same 10-yard square area.

Golfdom: Good, good. So you know a thing or two about maintenance.

DF: I know a little bit. You know there's nothing worse than a keen amateur. I don't go to the dentist and give him advice. I let him work on my teeth.

Golfdom: Talking turf types, what's your favorite type of grass to hit off of and to putt on?

DF: Down here in the South, no greenkeeper in his right mind would want to tend greens down here in the summer. You know you've got to keep them so damp in order to keep them alive that every ball mark looks like a Taliban hand grenade went off.

And the Bermuda that we have these days, the hybrids and these fine-bladed Bermudas are just superb. They stand up to the hot weather. They don't have to be soaked. So I would play from zoysia up to one of the dwarf Bermudas. It doesn't bother me in the slightest if there's a little bit of grain. In fact, I love it. It adds another dimension to the playing surface.

In tennis they play on four or five different surfaces and nobody complains

about it. But, apparently in golf, we all have to play on linoleum — lightning fast, bad greens. You know that's bull. You know playing slow grainy greens brings another player into the equation.

Golfdom: I remember a few years ago you emceed the Golf Writers Association of America annual awards banquet in Augusta. It was a great event. We had a blast and a lot of laughs. This will be the first time I'll have seen you speak since then.

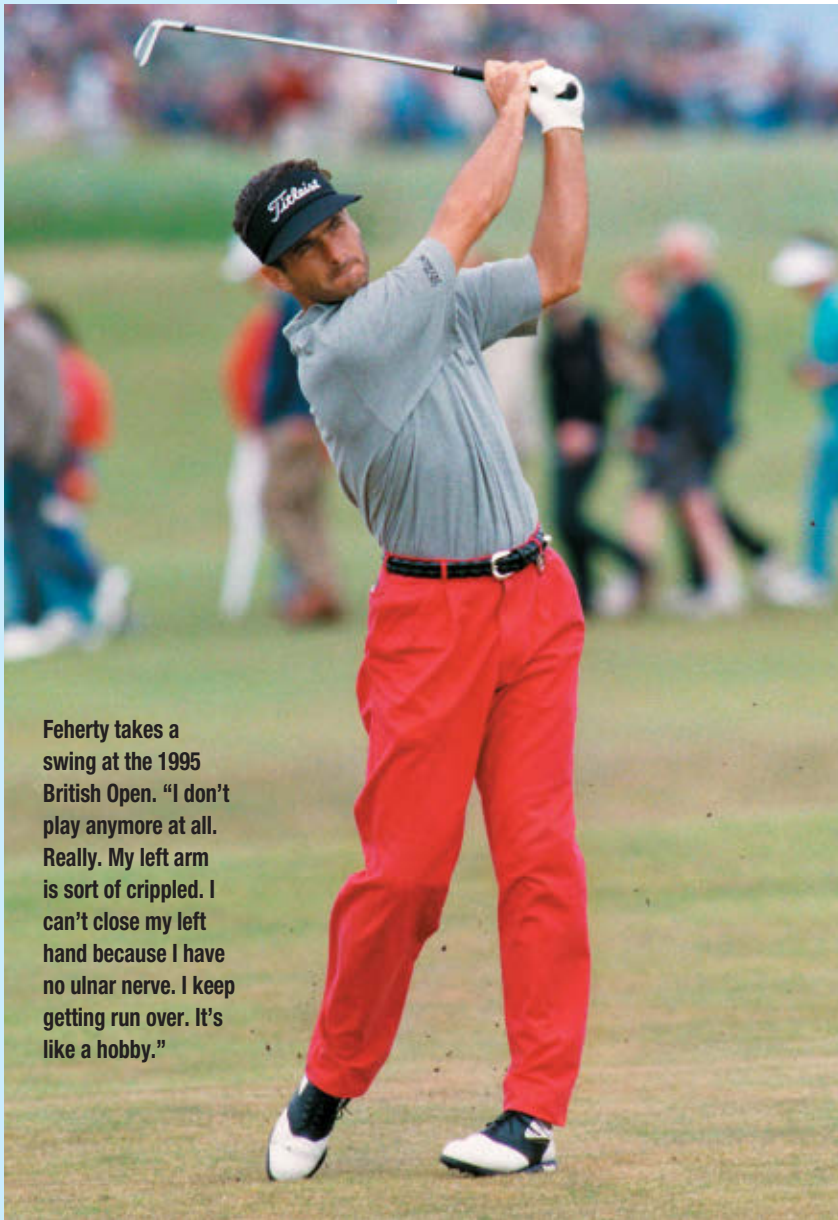
Do you make a different presentation for golf course superintendents than you would for golf writers, or if you were presenting to someone unrelated to golf, say a group of bankers?

DF: Yes. I'm assuming that a room full of golf course superintendents have to have a sense of humor because they're dealing with idiots a lot of the time. A lot of the time you just have to agree with (golfers), just nod your head. Really, I think the best superintendents, you know they listen to their greens committee or the chairman, they nod their head and then they go ahead and do whatever the hell they think they should do anyway no matter what they tell them.

Golfdom: Exactly.

DF: That same chairman of the greens will take full responsibility for the greens if they are superb, and absolutely none if we get some bad weather and you get

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Feherty takes a swing at the 1995 British Open. "I don't play anymore at all. Really. My left arm is sort of crippled. I can't close my left hand because I have no ulnar nerve. I keep getting run over. It's like a hobby."

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some brown spot or something that just creeps in and hits you all of a sudden because you get that exactly right temperature where it's in the 70s during the day and in the 50s at night. You have to know exactly when to hit it and sometimes you get unlucky.

And the poor old superintendent is always going to bear the blame for anything that goes wrong and seldom gets credit if the place is perfect. People just expect perfect.

But, sorry, to answer your original question, yeah. My presentation to a group of bankers in some ways will be similar to the superintendents. But, with superintendents, I feel like I'm kind of more among family because, even at my job, I'm on the golf course and I'm down on the ground and I see firsthand just how superb these conditions are at times. It never ceases to amaze me. And I know the amount of work that goes into it, the amount of pressure the superintendent is under.

So we'll hear players being critical and other commentators being critical. Sometimes it's just hard to make a three-foot putt because you're on *Poa* and, late in the day, that's just the way they are. You know they're going to flower a little bit and maybe you've just got to take your nuts in both hands and make a good positive stroke and, even if you do that, sometimes it's going to miss. That's called golf.

Golfdom: When you were a young golfer, did you ever feel the opposite way where it was the fault of the superintendent?

DF: Oh yes. Absolutely. Well, not just the superintendent. It was anybody but me.

Golfdom: Do you know any golf course superintendents personally?

DF: Oh yeah. The Masters is one that we have meetings with the superintendent. They invite guest superintendents from all over the country to that and to the PGA Championship. And I'll always try and make a point of finding the superintendent or some of the guys that work on the golf course and just ask them about what they'll be doing and what the weather has been like because so much of our golf course depends on the weather a few weeks before an event.

Golfdom: When you signed on to speak at the GIS, did the GCSAA ask you to hold back or anything? Did they ask you to keep it pretty clean or will they let you do what you want to do?

DF: Sometimes the groups will say, "Hey, you know, we've got ladies in here," or "We'd like it to be PG." And I say, "Well, hey, you shouldn't have invited me" because that cuts me down to about five minutes. I'll make fun of pretty much anybody and everybody out there, especially myself.

Golfdom: Can you give me an early memory of being out and working on the golf course, maybe a moment when things didn't go as planned?

DF: One of my earliest experiences of being on a tractor was driving a gang mower at Royal Belfast, which is one of

the oldest golf clubs in Northern Ireland. I was the assistant pro at the time and I'd taken over for a kid who was working the summer there. And I was mowing 13 fairway. And I got off the tractor, left it running, and ran up to the pro shop to get a drink. But it was on a side slope and, when I came back, the gang mower was lying there in the rough to the left of the 13th fairway and the tractor had broken through the sea wall and gone 40 feet down into Belfast Loch. Apparently I left it in gear but it was sneaking forwards ever so slowly until it got onto a slope that it liked.

And the sea wall was probably 300, 400 years old and maybe four feet thick. Yeah. There was a little explaining to do there. I just told them the truth — that I'd been drinking heavily.

Golfdom: Oh my! Did you get to mow much after that?

DF: No, no, not so much. Not at Royal Belfast anyway.

Golfdom: So the Golf Industry Show is in Las Vegas this year. Are you a fan of the city?

DF: You know I like being in Las Vegas for a night or maybe two because I'm an

alcoholic and a drug addict and it's not a great town to be in for an extended period of time because spare time is any addict's worst enemy. And I keep myself busy. I ride my bike. I mean, I enjoy Vegas. It's uniquely American and it's fun to be there and it's got some great venues for me to do my thing at. So I always look forward to speaking there or whatever I'm doing. But I'm glad to get out of town at times.

Golfdom: We touched on it a little bit earlier, about how everyone is an expert, you said that there's nothing worse than a keen amateur. What advice would you give a golf course superintendent who answers to a greens committee that is entirely made up of keen amateurs?

DF: Well, I think it depends on the personality on both sides. I mean some superintendents are fortunate... say, for instance, it's an affluent club where the

members are wealthy. You know they got wealthy a certain way, by doing what they know best. Hopefully they have enough sense to know that the greens superintendent became a superintendent, which is an extremely difficult thing to do. It's not dissimilar to becoming a doctor or a veterinarian. You know you've got to go through a long process and learn a bunch of (stuff) that people might think is irrelevant. But you're looking at an expert here that's taken a long time and has learned a great deal and made mistakes along the way.

I mean I imagine, and this is purely conjecture from my focus; I don't have this problem. If it were me, I would listen politely and say, "Yes, that's what I will do. Uh-huh. Absolutely. Yup. Sounds good to me," and then just forget it; you know, go and do what I know has to be done and let him take the credit for it; whatever. And, if CBS or the Golf Channel comes along, I'll be crediting the right guy.

Golfdom: David, you've got that great spot on the GIS schedule: Thursday, March 1st, 8 a.m., keynote speaker of the General Session. Tell me, what should attendees expect?

DF: It's more difficult to speak in the morning because the bastards tend to be sober. And, especially in Vegas, it could be a pretty tough crowd. They may be a little grumpy from having lost their wad or stayed up and had too many free cocktails.

But I would say don't expect any political correctness because that's just a euphemism for (bull) as far as I'm concerned. I'm at a stage in my life and I think in my career where I have enough confidence in what I'm saying, that people shouldn't take me too seriously because, on my tombstone, there will be something to that effect: nobody took him seriously. Thank God! Life's too short.

Golfdom: David, I appreciate you taking the time to do this interview. I'm looking forward to seeing you speak again at the Golf Industry Show.

DF: Yeah, it's my pleasure, Seth. See you soon. ■

"I feel like I'm with family when I'm with the greens crew. I always go to the barn to say 'hi, well done,' because I know how much work goes into it."



Golfdom EIC
Seth Jones with
David Feherty at
the 2012 AT&T.

• AN
INSIDER'S
GUIDE



BY CURT HARLER



GIS 2012
SPECIAL

Superintendents in the know tell how to make the most of Las Vegas.



While *Golfdom's* editors write about turf and fertilizer, they know a good time when they see it. And the Golf Industry Show in Las Vegas this month offers many opportunities to celebrate. The only questions are: Where? And how?

Just as hiring a caddy at a new course is a smart strategy, we know enough to rely on the opinions of knowledgeable locals. So we asked a half-dozen Vegas-area superintendents where to eat (and where not to), what to see and how to enjoy the experience.

John W. Lanier Jr. is a member of the Board of Directors for the Southern Nevada Golf Course Superintendents Association and the golf course superintendent at Desert Rose Golf Course. He says local superintendents look forward to hosting the GIS. "There are a great number of courses and superintendents that Las Vegas has to offer," he says.

Good eats

"Vegas has become such a place for fine dining with so many top chefs around that you can't go wrong," says Jeff Reid, director of golf course maintenance at the Las Vegas Paiute Golf Resort. His favorite for steak is **The Palm** inside Caesars Palace. "For seafood, try Rick Moonen's **RM Seafood** in the Mandalay Bay," he offers. "Both can be a little pricey but worth the bucks."

"The Forum Shops at Caesars offer a large selection of choices," says Kent McCutcheon, superintendent at the Las Vegas Country Club. "My favorite is the Palm restaurant. Try the filet Oscar."

"I usually don't eat close to the Strip," says Oscar Sanchez, superintendent at Tuscany Golf Club, Henderson, Nev. When he does, however, he likes the seafood buffet at the **Rio**. "They have two buffets there. The seafood one is great," he says.

Lanier is high on the Rio, too. "The Carnival Buffet has a great selection and the best quality food for a buffet," Lanier says. "It's always extremely fresh food and impeccable service."

But top on the eats list for Lanier is **Hash House A Go-Go**. "Humongous portions at a

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Vegas, Baby!

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fair price,” he says. “You’ll definitely go home with a doggy bag.”

Reid’s top two buffet choices are the **Bellagio** with its great king crab legs, and the buffet at **M Resort**.

But as memorable as the big-name spots are, “make an effort to get off the Strip and frequent some of the local places,” advises Kym Mitchell, superintendent at Primm Valley Golf Club. “You’ll find lots of good restaurants, bars and locals’ casinos.”

Entertainment

“You can’t go wrong with any show. Vegas has the best entertainment in the world, hands down,” Lanier says. “My wife and I enjoyed **Blue Man Group** the most.”

Mitchell says her friends say **Love**, a Beatles-themed musical by Cirque du Soleil, is the show to see. “Everyone should see the water show and the conservatory at the Bellagio,” she adds.

For McCutcheon, the Cirque du Soleil show **Mystere** at Treasure Island or ventriloquist **Terry Fator** at the Mirage are the top draws.

Casino play

What would a trip to Vegas be without a few passes at the roulette wheel or an hour of blackjack? Just don’t expect to come home rich.

“Save your money,” Lanier advises. “The average person loses about \$800 gambling per trip,” he warns, “but Lady Luck could be on your side.”

“All of the casinos are going to take your money,” laughs Sanchez. “On the Strip, any of the casinos are great. I think **New York, New York** is nice. With the **MGM** and **Bellagio** you have the three best.”

Lanier’s favorite casino is **Treasure Island**. “Mystere is there,” he says, echoing McCutcheon’s choice of a top show. “In addition, the free pirate show is out front. Plus, there’s great shopping and the dealers are probably the friendliest on the Strip.”

“The most fun casino,” Reid says, “is **Red Rock Casino**. It’s the top venue for concerts, and the pool area is great.”

Sanchez likes to go with his wife to the old downtown section of Vegas, the area around Fremont Street. “It is more laid-back,” he says. There are buses from the Strip or taxis running back and forth between the Strip and downtown.

Don’t expect to hail a taxi from the curb. Cabs are allowed to pick up customers only at approved queues. That means going to the front of a hotel or a restaurant. You don’t have



to be staying at the hotel to grab a cab. But the cabbies are forbidden, by law, from picking you up on the street.

Sanchez likes the light shows, the bands and the shops in the Fremont area. Lanier says a must-see is the world’s largest television there. It plays different themes and music every hour.

“Fremont Street is worth the trip,” agrees Mitchell.

If you are downtown, check out the cheap tables, McCutcheon says. “The Neonopolis is fun,” he adds.

“**The Fremont Street Experience** is unique,” Reid says. “Check out the new zipline attraction. And they have the best odds for those who like to play craps.”

McCutcheon recommends **Planet Hollywood** or **Mandalay Bay**.

For those betting sports, Lanier recommends the **Las Vegas Hilton Sportsbook**. “It’s the largest sportsbook in Vegas with great odds and payouts,” he says. For a sports bar (not the same thing), he would hit **The Sporting House** in New York, New York. “Great atmosphere and it’s like a Chuck E. Cheese for adults,” he quips. The timing will be right for sports, as the week of the Golf Industry Show falls at the same time as when college basketball teams are wrapping up their conference schedules. March Madness will tip off just a few days later.

McCutcheon gets off the Strip and heads to Town Square to watch sports at **Yard House** or **Miller’s Ale House**.

The old school favors the Hilton. “If you’re new school, Planet Hollywood has the best March Madness set up,” he says.

Reid, meanwhile, says the best sports bar is **Blondies** in the Planet Hollywood Miracle Mile Shops. “A great atmosphere when the top sporting events are going on,” he says.

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Vegas, Baby!



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Busman's holiday

The Vegas area is chock-a-block with great golf courses. “Shadow Creek is the course to play,” says Mitchell. “Getting on is another question.”

She also recommends the 27-hole **Badlands Golf Club** designed by Johnny Miller and Chi Chi Rodriguez. It plays 6,700 yards from the back tees and just under 7,000 from the championship tees.

Another more modest golf course close to the strip is **Las Vegas National**. “There are many wonderful courses around the valley but they are quite spread out,” Mitchell says. “My courses, Primm Valley Golf Club, are great tracks but about 40 miles from the Strip.”

Lanier recommends **Wolf Creek**. “It’s 40 minutes north of Vegas but well worth the drive,” he says. “Hands down, it’s one of the most unique tracks I’ve ever played. It’s always around the top 20 in the nation for a reason.” He also puts in a plug for his own course, **Desert Rose Golf Course**. “With the course conditions and value, we are the home for the best deals in golf.”

McCutcheon points to the **Las Vegas Paiute Resort**. “Three courses, no houses, and beautiful mountain views,” he says. For superintendents who have deep pockets, he points to Shadow Creek. “But you have to stay at an MGM property,” he notes.

If you are looking for a nice, but more inexpensive course, McCutcheon recommends **Boulder Creek**.

Reid isn’t shy about trumpeting his course. “The must-play courses are any of the three at the Resort,” he says. “There are 54 holes of Pete Dye with true desert golf...no housing around.” They are about 30 minutes north of the Strip. For a more modest course he suggests **Angel Park**, about 15 minutes west of the Strip with easy freeway access.

Leaving Las Vegas

Las Vegas isn’t the only game in town. Sanchez and Lanier both recommend a trip out to **Hoover Dam**, just 45 minutes away. Mitchell agrees, adding that **Historic Boulder City**, **Red Rock Canyon** and the **Valley of Fire** are all

worth a trip as well.

Red Rock Canyon is 17 miles from the Strip on Rt. 159 and is as popular for rock climbing as it is for its scenery.

Three reputable national parks are within a day’s drive. **Death Valley** is the closest. Travel north on I-15 out of Vegas to Lathrop Wells, Nev. and Hwy. 373 to California 190 to get to the nation’s lowest, driest, hottest spot. It’s a bit of a drive through the desert (just over two hours), but it’s amazing when you get there. A shorter but more difficult route goes through Pahrump, Nev. Either way, bring drinking water.

Or, head straight North on I-15 to **Zion National Park**. You will pass the beautiful Virgin River Gorge en route to Exit 16 in Utah, where you drive east on Rt. 9 to the park. It is a fast 160 miles to Zion.

Farther is the **Grand Canyon**. It is about a day’s drive — 275 miles and 4.5 hours — from Vegas to the South Rim (the North Rim area is closed this time of year). There are 14-hour bus tours offered from Las Vegas. If you plan to visit several national parks, buy the annual pass; vehicle passes run \$25 per car per park.

Keeping it sane

Knowing what to avoid is important, too. “I would avoid the side streets around the Strip after dark, the ‘alphabet’ streets downtown and the area around the Stratosphere,” Mitchell says. “The Stratosphere itself is fine but not walking around in that area, especially at night.”

Lanier says you probably shouldn’t venture too far off the Strip, either. “Cab fares are extremely expensive if you travel too far,” he says.

“I would not recommend splitting 10s at the blackjack table unless you feel the need to help our local economy,” Reid laughs.

We’ll give the last words to McCutcheon. “Bring plenty of money. It does get cold here at night so don’t pack too light. Have fun paying our taxes. We always appreciate the visits!”

Whatever you choose to do, have a good time, but keep it under control. Overdrinking, overgambling and oversleeping are not recommended. Have fun! ■

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GIS 2012
SPECIAL

It doesn't matter if you're going to the Golf Industry Show or not, these new and improved products are worth checking out. BY GOLFDOM STAFF

JOHN DEERE

IMPROVED PRODUCTS: 2020A and 2030A ProGators

IMPROVEMENTS: Featured enhancements to John Deere's 2020A and 2030A ProGators include improved performance and ease of use. The improved 2020A model features an electronic fuel injection gas engine (EFI) and an optional multi-mode electronic throttle control for ease of use with application equipment.

"We're excited to show customers the newest version of our popular ProGator HDUVs at GIS," said Brad Aldridge, product manager for John Deere Golf. "With superintendents and technicians in mind, we focused on improved performance, noise reduction and ease of use."

The ProGator 2020A model offers the industry's only 4-cylinder HDUV, which is improved to allow for quiet operation at 78 dB(A) at high idle. "It also offers an optional multi-mode throttle control that regulates maximum engine rpm for spraying, topdressing and spreading," Aldridge said.

To meet demanding performance needs, both the 2020A and 2030A ProGators offer 4-wheel hydraulic disk brakes, increased payload capacity and tighter shifting patterns.

GIS BOOTH: 615

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One of the best things about the Golf Industry Show is all the new and improved tools unveiled to superintendents. We can only guess what will be the hottest new product

at this year's show, but we can definitely give you a preview of some of the things that will be rolled out onto the Las Vegas Convention Center floor.

Keep an eye out for our April issue, where we'll give a more thorough rundown of the products being made available to better your golf course.



Check It Out

Continued from page 39

REELCRAFT

NEW PRODUCT: **Self-contained hose reel trailer**

Reelcraft's new hose reel trailer makes hose handling and watering easier, quicker and more convenient, and eliminates the need for a dedicated maintenance vehicle. Designed for grounds maintenance applications requiring up to 1-inch I.D. by 100 feet of hose, the trailer bed also offers additional space for tool trays and other accessories.

The wheel base matches typical work vehicles, and the wheels are mounted inside the trailer bed to prevent snagging of trees and shrubs. An extra-long 32-inch trailer tongue allows for sharp turns and is easier to back up.

GIS BOOTH: 1568



JACOBSEN

IMPROVED PRODUCT: **Eclipse2 walking greens mower**

IMPROVEMENTS: According to the company, improvements include the possibility of increased productivity by upping the max mow speed to 3.8 mph. The speed can be set through the pass code-protected menus on the Eclipse2's InCommand Control system. The mower has the highest productivity of any walking greens mower on the market, according to Jacobsen.

The generator and battery mounting slots have been extended, giving the option to increase or decrease the weight on the front roller.

Jacobsen's exclusive 15-blade reels can now be ordered standard on Eclipse2 units, providing the lowest frequency of cut with the highest mow speed.

For the technician, Jacobsen said it has improved the ease of maintenance by making adjusters accessible without removing covers and making covers easier to remove when needed.

The Eclipse2 features a new lightweight handle, a repositioned pull start and a new kick-stand. The LCD screen size has been increased to make it easier to read.

GIS BOOTH: 2432



STANDARD GOLF

NEW PRODUCT: **Bronze and aluminum Centennial Tee Consoles**

Designed to enhance the look, feel and tradition of the world's elite golf courses, the Centennial Tee Consoles are available with vertical oval- or crest-shaped markers, precision-cast in bronze or aluminum and richly accented with black or hunter green backgrounds. The 10-inch by 14-inch markers can be mounted horizontally using classic sign brackets specially fitted for the 3-inch by 3-inch square posts, or they can be attached directly to 3-inch-diameter round-ribbed posts.

Both post designs stand 8 feet high and come with decorative caps. Additional options include ball washer mounting brackets (with hardware) and complementary multi-colored signage (with hardware) to display each hole.

GIS BOOTH: 2349

EFFICIENT

BECKER UNDERWOOD

NEW PRODUCT: **Transition HC**

Transition HC formulation colorant gives turfgrass professionals the application flexibility to achieve a custom turf look in the winter. Transition HC enhances course playability and aesthetics of pre-dormant and dormant turf, the company says.

"Transition HC colorant is for turfgrass professionals who want to economically manage the onset of dormancy and produce a natural transition of turf color," says Dr. Mark Howieson, technical team leader at Becker Underwood. "This is an effective tool to help

reduce or remove altogether the competitive pressure of cool season turfgrasses in the following spring. Ideally, this promotes better warm season turf emergence and growth."

The company says Transition HC dark turf colorant with ColorLock technology is ideal for applications on all types of turf grasses in all growing regions.

GIS BOOTH: 1919

Transition™ HC

SYNGENTA

IMPROVED PRODUCT: **Daconil Action fungicide**

IMPROVEMENTS: The pathogen-fighting science remains the same but there is now the addition of nutrients designed to increase plant health.

According to the company, Daconil Action is the same as DaconilR but has a protein boost from acibenzolar-S-methyl (also known as acibenzolar).

"Daconil Action achieves complete plant coverage quickly," said Bob Goglia, brand manager, Syngenta. "Acibenzolar's systemic properties result in uniform distribution throughout the plant and ensure that natural defense mechanisms are activated in new plant growth as well."

According to the company, when acibenzolar is absorbed by plants, it stimulates the natural defense response or the Systemic Acquired Resistance (SAR) of the turfgrass by activating the production of PR proteins.

Syngenta said the effectiveness of Daconil Action against anthracnose and dollar spot in varied weather conditions was substantiated by trials at Rutgers University and Penn State.

GIS BOOTH: 1634



SMITHCO

NEW PRODUCT: **Star Command Spray System**

According to the company, Star Command is the result of a collaboration between Smithco and SharpShooter by Capstan Ag Systems, Inc. that will allow superintendents to solve difficult spraying problems that have long plagued them.

According to the Capstan website, "SharpShooter is... an automatic, instantaneous 'tip changer' that advances spray technology to keep pace with modern sprayer performance capabilities. Its key differentiating feature is the unique capability to control pressure independent of speed or rate."

One problem that will no longer confront spray techs, according to Smithco, is having to maintain a certain speed during applications. The Star Command is effective at between two and 10 miles per hour, as it maintains a constant rate, constant pressure and consistent droplet size and patterns.

According to Smithco, Star Command can reduce spraying time by 40 percent and reduce chemical costs by 30 percent.

GIS BOOTH: 2533

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Check It Out

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SUBARU

NEW PRODUCT: EX13 Greens Mower Engine

Subaru's new EX13 Greens Mower Engine is a specially designed version of the popular overhead cam (OHC) EX13 engine, intended exclusively for use on greens mowers. Featuring the power, easy starting and low noise hallmarks of Subaru's EX engine line, the 4.3-horsepower EX13 Greens Mower Engine also incorporates a unique design to suit the needs of golf course superintendents.

Initially custom-designed for the Toro Green-master Flex mower line, the EX13 Greens Mower Engine features a specially designed longneck fuel tank, offering ease during refueling, while also preventing fuel spills. Toro also requested eliminating the reduction on the engine to change the rotation direction of the crankshaft. This alteration is crucial for the application, as it allows a slower operation speed for greater precision on delicate, expensive greens.


Fast, easy starting, even in cold weather operation is another advantage of the EX13 Greens Mower Engine. An automatic decompression system reduces the required recoil pulling force by 30 to 40 percent when compared with overhead valve (OHV) engine designs. The engine starts easily, even in temperatures as low as 15 degrees F, without any perceptible kickback.

The EX13 Greens Mower Engine meets EPA and CARB emissions regulations, and is backed by Subaru's 3-year warranty.

GIS BOOTH: 2938



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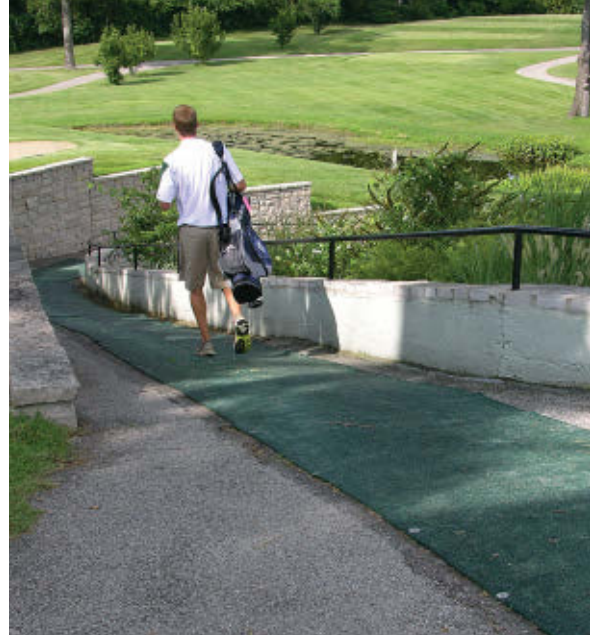
PROTEIN HELPS TURF DEAL WITH IT.

Turf leads a pretty stressed life. It has to withstand daily attacks by machines, UV rays, wildlife and extreme weather conditions. And if all that wasn't enough, there's always the constant threat of pathogens. New Daconil Action™ fungicide combines the power of Daconil® fungicide with a revolutionary Turf Protein Booster that helps turf activate its own natural production of PR proteins. The result is turf that is stronger, healthier and better able to defend itself against fungus and environmental stress like drought. Learn more at DaconilAction.com.



The Syngenta logo, consisting of the word "syngenta" in a lowercase, sans-serif font, with a registered trademark symbol (®) to the right.

TM



PEM SURFACE CREATIONS

NEW PRODUCT: Slip-resistant matting

Golf course superintendents face unique challenges, which include steep slopes, wet paths and fast-paced walk areas on golf courses. PEM Surface Creations has developed a high friction matting solution specifically designed for these areas. This first-of-its-kind matting features an aluminum oxide "grit" material bonded to the company's high traffic golf matting, creating a skid-resistant matting capable of reducing slips and falls in especially challenging areas.

"Our high friction matting is designed for the most extreme environments around golf courses," said Rob Amelung, vice-president of PEM. "The unique material bonded with our high traffic PEM matting allows us to offer golf course managers and superintendents the highest level of slip-resistance."

The high friction construction is composed of poly extruded matting (PEM) made from virgin raw thermal plastics. The material contains an antimicrobial biocide that guards against the growth of mildew, fungi and bacteria. The porous construction allows moisture to flow through or evaporate to eliminate standing water.

GIS BOOTH: 1574

Be sure to check out our April issue, where we'll spotlight all the great new tools we saw at the Golf Industry Show. If you'd like to make sure your product makes the showcase, email us at sjones@questex.com with product information.