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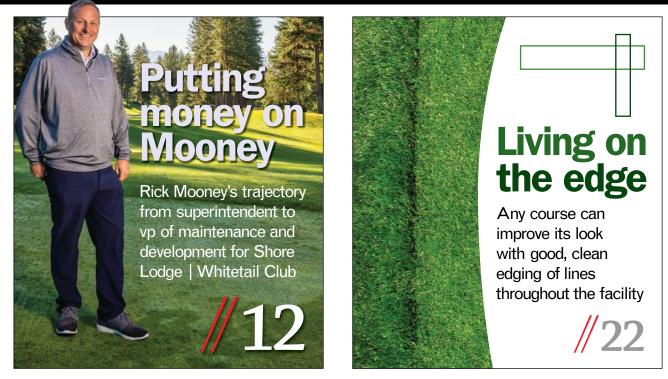


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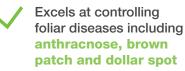


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THE LEADER.

Keeping up with **The Jones**



"Mooney is a person you will always remember, even after one meeting. I first got him in *Golfdom* in the August 2017 19th Hole interview, and I figured it wouldn't be long until I got him on the cover."

SETH JONES, Editor-in-Chief & Associate Publisher

AD ASTRA PER ASPERA

To the stars through difficulties

onight, I'm writing from my driveway, under the stars, enjoying an unseasonably cool August night here in northeast Kansas. I can't help but think of the state's motto: *Ad astra per aspera*, "To the stars through difficulties." There's little chance I'll stick to one point this month, so hopefully you'll stick with me as I go to the bullet points format ...

 I'm proud to present this month's cover story on our Herb Graffis Businessperson of the Year award winner, Rick Mooney. This story is a couple years in the making. Last summer, I had the pleasure of visiting Mooney and Shore Lodge | Whitetail Club. It takes a lot to get there, but it's worth the effort. Mooney is a person you will always remember, even after one meeting. I first got him in Golfdom in the August 2017 19th Hole interview, and I figured it wouldn't be long until I got him on the cover. One of his apprentices, Sean Reehoorn, summed up Mooney nicely when he told me, "When you first meet Rick, you say, 'Who is this guy?' He's really crazy, but he's also really caring. Whenever I go to GIS, the first thing people say to me is, 'Where's Rick?' He'll outwork anyone, and he's also one of the smartest people in the business." If you haven't already met Rick, I hope you get to meet him soon, because he really is one of the more colorful characters in our industry.

• It was announced recently that an in-person 2021 Golf Industry Show in Las Vegas is off the table (story on page 8). With conferences canceling left and right, going into early next year, the tide turned and GCSAA had to fold. I asked GCSAA CEO Rhett Evans about the survey they did asking members about hosting an in-person GIS, and he told me, "The survey was conclusive — we had roughly two-thirds that simply felt it was not in the best interest to do an in-person show in late January/early February. That was conclusive, and we felt, given everything else, that it was time to be decisive and make a decision and shift to this virtual platform." The complete Zoom interview I did with Evans is posted at Golfdom.com.

• It's disappointing to think that we won't be able to see our Friends of *Golfdom* in Las Vegas next year, but I understand the difficulty of the situation. Like everyone else, we'll adjust and find new ways to connect. I do think losing GIS makes an old-fashioned print publication like ours even more important to keep our tightknit community together. We are up to the challenge and look forward to sharing the latest and greatest the industry has to offer via our various platforms in print and online.

 After bemoaning my lack of travel last issue, I have an exciting update: I finally left my home office a few weeks ago and boarded a Southwest flight bound for Cleveland. I stopped in at North Coast Media headquarters and met with our staff there before heading off to the suburbs to get in 18 holes at Shaker Heights CC with the CEO and publisher. It felt normal! The flight was fine ... aside from a terrifying moment when I felt a sneeze coming on. Mind over matter, I was able to convince my body that removing my mask wasn't an option and an in-air incident was avoided. I'll get on another airplane again when asked, no stress here.

• Thank you to the readers who reached out to me after reading July's column (*Hail, hail to the lucky ones*), supportive and happy to invite me to their golf facility as soon as I start traveling again ... looks like my February 2021 just opened up ... **@**

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Despite the fact that the 2021 GIS will be virtual, the GCSAA is confident superintendents will still receive quality education and content.

GIS 2021 TO BE VIRTUAL

BY CHRISTINA HERRICK // Editor

The 2021 Golf Industry Show, originally slated to be held at the Las Vegas Convention Center on Jan. 30-Feb. 4, 2021, will now be a virtual online-only event.

"This was not an easy decision to make. We considered global health concerns, travel bans, restrictions on large gatherings, social distancing requirements, adjustments other shows were making and the state of the economy," said GCSAA President John R. Fulling Jr., CGCS, in a video announcement. "We listened to members, engaged exhibitors and consulted our industry partners, and it became clear a virtual event would afford the best opportunity to provide you a safe, quality GIS experience."

In an interview with *Golfdom*, Rhett Evans, GCSAA CEO, added, "When you look back over (the show's) 90-plus year history, we've only forgone the show during World War II. Here, we sit with a global pandemic that really has affected the world. We had to adapt, and I think we have a great plan moving forward to keep the show going and deliver education and content, but it will definitely be different."

Josh Lewis, golf course superintendent of Sharon Heights G&CC in Menlo Park, Calif., applauded GCSAA's decision.

"It's not only the right decision from a business perspective, but also the right decision from a people perspective," he said. "I've been a member of the executive team here at my club, and I can only imagine what GCSAA has gone through to figure out the right course of action. When you figure in the obvious risks and then how putting on a show is going to be significantly impacted — people aren't going to want to be part of a large group."

Continued on page 9

//NEW FORMAT, SAME GOALS MORE EVENTS MOVING TO ONLINE

Green Start Academy (GSA) and the Syngenta Business Institute (SBI) are both moving to a virtual format for 2020. The annual events, hosted by John Deere and Bayer, and Syngenta, respectively, will both be comprised of a series of virtual sessions.

"We are excited to continue the tradition of Green Start Academy to further the careers and personal connections of assistant superintendents," said Robert Schmidt, global manager of market development and strategy, John Deere Golf. "Even though our program may look different this year, our goal remains unchanged: to provide professional development and networking opportunities for all Green Start Academy participants."

"After much discussion, and with the health and safety of our customers in mind, we are excited

to announce we will continue with the Syngenta Business Institute this year, but instead of in person, we are going virtual," said Stephanie Schwenke, turf market manager for Syngenta. "This is not a decision we made lightly. We are committed to providing education, and we are continuing to work closely with the staff at Wake **Forest University** to provide eight hours of quality higher education. This is the perfect hybrid

perfect hybrid of live teaching that will challenge and engage superintendents

online." GSA kicks off Oct. 14; SBI begins Dec. 7. For further updates on the events, check in at Golfdom.com.



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Thanks to @TheChristinaKim for coming to Toledo and playing the last few weeks. Thanks for introducing yourself to the maintenance crew and advocating for what we do. Oh, and thanks for the beers. @MiGCSA @nwogcsa @miturfgrass @OHSuperNetwork

Greg Pattinson Superintendent Highland Meadows GC Sylvania, Ohio



Seth,

Your July '20 edition of *Golfdom* was one of the best. Our superintendent, Brian Bartlett, our golf professional, Erik Tiele and myself read it religiously! Your article, "Hail, hail to the lucky ones" made us want to send you this email to get you out of the office! Please consider this an invite to come to Williamstown, Mass., to visit, play and dine with us at what I am sure you will consider one of the area's very best golf courses. I know we all would enjoy talking with you, especially Brian, who does such a great job of maintaining this golf course. Please plan to come out!



Spread smiles, not germs!

Mike Deep Owner, Waubeeka Golf Links, Williamstown, Mass.

Continued from page 8

David Dore-Smith, director of golf course grounds and grounds maintenance at Copperleaf GC in Bonita Springs, Fla., agreed, noting, "To send me away only to come back with some sort of issue, or to have to quarantine, is not good business," he says. "There are far too many unknowns. It's terribly frustrating. I wouldn't mind going to Las Vegas, but my wife would question why. It's not always just the superintendent's decision; it might be your partner who says, 'Do you really need to put yourself and me in a possible situation?'"

The theme for GIS 2021 is "Your Space. Your Pace. All in One Place." Registration for the GIS 2021 virtual trade show opens on Oct. 13.

//ENDURING SUSTAINABILITY

THE TORO CO. LAUNCHES NEW SUSTAINABILITY PLATFORM

The Toro Co. (TTC) launched its Sustainability Endures platform, which will strengthen TTC's strategic focus on sustainability and its commitment to making a positive impact financially, socially and environmentally worldwide.

In fiscal year 2019, TTC enhanced its focus on sustainability by establishing a cross-functional sustainability leadership team to further develop and implement an enterprise-wide sustainability strategy. In doing so, TTC strives to build on its tradition of sustainability and drive progress with a transparent, integrated approach.

Sustainability Endures introduces four strategic pillars — people, products, process and planning — that help guide The Toro Co.'s sustainability strategies and execution of those strategies. Through these pillars, The Toro Co. says it is focusing on environmental, social and governance areas that it believes are most material to the company and where it can make a meaningful impact, including health and safety, diversity, equity and inclusion, water conservation, product innovation and operational efficiency.

//NEW GUY IN TOWN

DRYJECT EXPANDS IN MISSOURI

DryJect has added a new franchisee. Jim Naudet of Heartland Golf & Turf Services has purchased the DryJect franchise territory for the state of Missouri. This represents another step in the company's mission to have a strong presence across all areas of the country.

Naudet has lived and worked in the Kansas City area for the majority of his life and has owned and operated an upscale lawn and landscaping service for the past seven years. He previously was the superintendent of Leawood South CC for 21 years.

"We are excited to have Jim as part of the DryJect family," said John Paddock, president and owner of DryJect. "We wish him the best of luck in his endeavors as we work together to ensure the best possible service to our customers. It is pleasing to know that this territory will receive the attention and quality of service they deserve." SPONSORED CONTENT

Groundhog Day

A look at how the crew at Winged Foot is keeping the course prepped for a September U.S. Open

eston Neff, U.S. Open superintendent, Winged Foot Golf Club in Mamaroneck, N.Y., views the postponement of the U.S. Open from June to September due to the coronavirus as a sort of Groundhog Day.

The 120th U.S. Open, which was scheduled to be held June 18-21 at The West Course of Winged Foot Golf Club in Mamaroneck, N.Y., has been rescheduled to Sept. 17-20.

"For so long, it was just waiting," Neff says. "Now, it's here, and even though it's going to

be completely different with no fans, our jobs haven't changed. For us, it's just Groundhog Day, the same thing just three months later. Golfers expect the same conditions, and they expect the same outcome."

Down to business

While the motivation and mindsets of the crew at Winged Foot haven't changed, a few of the agronomic practices for the course have, especially when it comes to keeping the rough in tiptop shape.

"June is an easy time of the year to get the rough long and thick," Neff says. "For the U.S. Open, it's known to be long and gnarly. To go through the three-month stretch of June, July and August, especially in New York, the grass just wants to give up and go dormant, but we've had to revamp our whole agronomic look. We're spraying it more, watering it more. Every practice with the rough has changed to try to keep it where we want it in September."

In order to ensure Winged Foot meets the high standards expected of a U.S. Open course, the crew has turned to its trusty fleet of John Deere equipment: 2700 E-Cut hybrid triplex mowers, 2020A ProGator GPS PrecisionSprayers[™], 9009A TerrainCut[™] rough mowers and the 220 E-Cut[™] hybrid greens mowers.

> "Pretty much everything we use is John Deere," Neff says.

Neff says the 9009As have been helpful in ensuring the roughs are in top form.

"We're at 3 inches right now, but for the Open, it's going to be closer to 5 inches," Neff says. "The mower stands the grass up and sucks it up so we

have a better cut. If the rough is at 5 inches and you mat it down, without the function to suck it up straight enough, it won't cut it. So, it pulls the grass straight up and cuts it so it looks uniform, and we're not getting grass laid over at 7 or 8 inches with someone getting a bad lie on the 18th hole with millions of people watching on TV."

The 2700 E-Cut triplex mowers help keep the fairways smooth and uniform. "We have huge undulations in our fairways, but the mower cuts tight and flexes, bends and moves with all the contours we have," Neff says.

Neff adds that the GPS sprayers have added another layer of efficiency for his crews.

"The sprayer drives itself, they communicate with each other, and that's been a huge savings with the attention to detail, because every nozzle is individually controlled," Neff says.

The volunteer force

Another aspect that may be different this year is the size of the volunteer force. Due to coronavirus restrictions, the volunteer force dropped from around 140-150 people for June to about 70 for September. Around 80-90 percent of the volunteers will hail from the local metro New York area.

"We're just doing our due diligence to keep our numbers as low as possible but still have the same quality and not lack anything on the golf course," Neff says.

He adds that everyone working on the site will be tested, tents will be bigger for volunteers to be spread out and each volunteer will get their own cart.

To help fill any labor gaps, Winged Foot's local dealer, Finch Services, will supply extra rough and fairway mowers, people movers, three to four volunteers and a mechanic for the weeks before and after the U.S. Open.





Weston Neff



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 $\star \star \star$

ON MOONEY

SUSINESSPERS

BY SETH JONES

On Christmas Eve 2004, a fire burned down a multiperson house near Whitetail Club in McCall, Idaho. Thankfully, no one was hurt. The house was used to accommodate between eight to 10 golf course maintenance workers seasonally. Because McCall is remote, getting seasonal golf course workers to the area is challenging.

Now that this house was a total loss, it would be even more challenging to get seasonal golf labor. Thankfully, two years earlier, Shore Lodge | Whitetail Club — the resort and community that owns the golf course — had already put their money on Rick Mooney. The wheels began turning. Change was coming.

From sod farm to Cypress Point

The son of a cattle rancher, Rick Mooney got his start in the business when his dad bought a ranch in Boise, Idaho, that had a sod farm. When they were kids, it was Rick and his brother Bryan's job to move the sprinklers on the farm. By the time he got to high school, he knew he wanted to work outdoors, so he took a summer job as a night waterman at the McCall city golf <u>course</u>.

From there, he went to work — at Coeur d'Alene Resort — and got a taste of high-end resort golf. He worked a construction job at Lake Hefner GC, Oklahoma City, Okla., then went to study turf at Michigan State University. His internship was at Cypress Point GC, Pebble Beach, Calif., working alongside Jeff Markow, CGCS. After college, Mooney bounced around, with stops in Arkansas and Washington before being named superintendent at Whitetail Club in 2002, the same year it opened.

"My parents had a condo in McCall for all my youth. It's been a home of mine all my life," Mooney says. "We get our share of challenges. Being a golf course that's under snow for six months a year, we get snow mold and ice damage. But, you can't beat the summers. It's low humidity, and in my 19 years, it's only reached 100 degrees F twice. Our average temperature in June, July, August is 83 degrees F."

Continued on page 14

How Rick Mooney evolved from superintendent of the 18-hole Whitetail Club to vice president of maintenance and development for Shore Lodge | Whitetail Club

> He's the person who made me aware that being a superintendent is a career," says Sean Reehoorn, superintendent at Aldarra GC in Sammamish, Wash. "He's the reason I went to Michigan State. He's always given me good advice." Here, Mooney walks the Whitetail Club golf course with his trusty companion Wilson at his side.



// GRAFFIS AWARD

Continued from page 12

The golf season at Whitetail Club runs from May 20 to about Oct. 15, during which the course sees about 6,000 rounds. In this unusual year, the course is getting almost double the amount of play it usually gets.



"We thought play might be down, but that has not been the case," says Adam Lott, formerly the assistant superintendent, promoted to superintendent two years ago. "I've

Adam Lott

never seen this much golf in my seven years of being here, and that's with many of our tournaments being canceled."

Land planning

Back to Christmas Eve 2004. Faced with a new dilemma — a burned-down house and



★ Townhomes were built on unused land acquired for a new office. "I have been very fortunate to work for a company that's progressive," Mooney says.

having to tell eight seasonal workers they didn't have a place to stay for the upcoming golf season — Mooney and the Shore Lodge Whitetail Club team started a new plan. "The idea was let's take the insurance and *Continued on page 16*



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FLUAZINAM 40SC SELECT™	Fluazinam	2 x 2.5 gal	Buy 1 case/\$200 VISA card
REGULATE SELECT™	Metalaxyl	4 x 1 gal	Buy 1 case/\$150 VISA card
TM 4.5F SELECT™	Thiophanate Methyl	2 x 2.5 gal	Buy 3 cases/\$50 VISA card
HERBICIDES	Active Ingredient	Case Pack	Promo Details/ Gift Card Amount*
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MESO 4SC SELECT™	Mesotrione	4 x 1 gal	Buy 1 case/\$150 VISA card
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TRIAD SFZ SELECT™	2,4-D, MCPA, Dicamba, Sulfentrazone	30 gal	Buy 1 drum/\$120 VISA card
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TRIAD TZ SELECT™	2,4·D, Dicamba, Triclopyr, Sulfentrazone	30 gal	Buy 1 drum/\$60 VISA card
INSECTICIDES	Active Ingredient	Case Pack	Promo Details/ Gift Card Amount*
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	Abamectin	4 x 1 gal	Buy 1 case/\$50 VISA card
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// GRAFFIS AWARD

Continued from page 14

make more of a dormlike lifestyle than a normal house," Mooney says. "We built

a central kitchen and 16 separate rooms with bunk beds, TVs and furniture in each room. That worked very well for the



★ While Shore Lodge | Whitetail Club endures challenges like snow mold and ice damage, summers are ideal, with low humidity and an average temperature of 83 degrees F.

seasonal golf employees."

Now that one building had sprouted up, Mooney considered how other parts of the operation — cooks, servers, housekeepers, etc. — could benefit from other types of housing opportunities in McCall. Shore Lodge | Whitetail Club was growing, and the need for more employees and more housing was greater. Mooney found himself off the golf course grounds more and more often, looking at land and existing properties and in the boardroom discussing potential new acquisitions for the company.

The results are visible: Today Shore Lodge | Whitetail Club enjoys expanded office space, more living quarters for employees, a cafeteria and a workout center.

"The employee housing is huge for the company as a whole," Lott says. "It's a small tourist town. So either a) people can't find housing because there's hardly anything *Continued on page 18*

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R



// GRAFFIS AWARD

Continued from page 16

available, or b) the ones that are available are way out of their price range. Having pretty much on-site employee housing makes a huge difference in being able to hire our positions because if they don't have some place to live, the chances of them taking the job are not good."

Maintenance and development

It became clear at Shore Lodge | Whitetail Club that Mooney was no longer just the golf course superintendent. In 2017, he was promoted to vice president of maintenance and development. Now, if any new product is being added to the property cabins, custom homes, remodels, land acquisitions — expect to see Mooney nearby with a rolled-up blueprint.

"(Mooney) has grown his career here from when he started as superintendent in 2002," says Kaili Moss, director of



★ "(Mooney's) retention on the golf maintenance team is amazing," says Kaili Moss, Shore Lodge's director of HR. "His people go away and then come back year after year."

human resources for Shore Lodge. "He now oversees everything maintenance, including the buildings and grounds, as well as development ... real estate, construction. I know his heart lies on the golf course side, but the people he has brought up has created an amazing team for Whitetail Club."

"I know that when I started here, I had

no vision of where my job would take me," Mooney says. "It's taken me on a great ride. I've made a number of mistakes, and I was able to learn valuable business decisions by making mistakes and having an owner who allowed me the opportunity to work through the growth of myself in this role."

While Mooney has moved up the ladder, Continued on page 21



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LEGENDS INITIATIVE



BOB FARREN

Director of Golf Course and Grounds Management

Pinehurst Resort & CC, Village of Pinehurst, N.C.

By Seth Jones

Started by Anuvia, the Legends Initiative celebrates superintendents who have gone above and beyond in their careers — not just in maintaining tremendous golf courses, but also in their contributions to the industry, creative problem-solving and mentorship. *Golfdom* sat down with Anuvia Legend Bob Farren to discuss how he found his career, hosting back-to-back U.S. Opens in 2014 and what his future plans are beyond the 2024 U.S. Open.

How did you find your way into

golf maintenance? My father was a greenkeeper. I grew up on a public golf course. The family who owned it took in Dad like a son. It really gave me a sense of the business aspect of it, the social aspect of it. I never considered anything else. I would say in high school, "I'm going to go to college, then I'm going to North Carolina to be a golf course superintendent." I had never even been to North Carolina!

As the science of maintaining golf courses has evolved over the years, what has caught your eye as being particularly interesting?

I think plant growth regulators are playing a big role in helping to manage nutrition, density, texture, mowing, quality and characteristics of mowing ... it has a far-reaching impact on all aspects of turf. I think those will continue to be advantageous in the future.

When I say "back-to-back U.S.

Opens, " what comes to mind? The fact that we were able to successfully do it and that the USGA had the confidence in us to do it. It's the best that's ever been done because it hasn't been done since! I remember we were worried about the range tee capacity ... it was like we were looking for something to worry about. Later that week, a USGA executive said to me, "The only (complaint) we've heard is that the cart paths are a little dusty." And I thought, if that's only problem we're experiencing, we're doing pretty good.

What does your future hold? I'm looking forward to the '24 U.S. Open and making a determination going into that at what retirement might look like and how good I would be at retirement. I don't know how good I would be because I still have too much I want to do.

You've accomplished so much in your career, and Anuvia bestowed this "legend" honor on you ... do you ever think about it? I reflect on it some. It's very humbling to see those of us who have been selected and those who have been considered. To be in the same sentence as those people is very humbling. It wasn't a career goal, but it was an ambition to be respected by these people. If you choose the right people, and do it the right way ... you will have success.









"(Mooney) is a prideful ambassador for Shore Lodge," Moss says. "If you need something done, you call Rick."

Continued from page 18

it moved him farther from the golf course ... but not entirely. "It's for the best," he says.

"I went from being in the field a large part of the day to in the office a large part of the day," he says. "I love the aspect of being out there with the guys. One of the reasons I was receptive to continuing on with the job advancement (is) I had good people working within my organization that needed to grow. I get a tremendous amount of pride in that the individuals I've worked with have gone outside the organization and advanced their career aspirations, or the ones who have stayed are getting fulfillment and are recognized for the work they do for the organization, as well." He's mentored three superintendents who have gone to successful careers: Sean Reehoorn, Aldarra GC; Jay Neunsinger, Boundary Oak GC; and Ben Wilmarth, Eagle Hills GC.

"Rick knows this place inside and out," Lott says of the golf course. "Having your mentor in your back pocket who you can call for help is such a great thing. Rick has more knowledge in terms of growing grass than anyone I've worked with. He's super supportive. I know this because he cares about me and my family."

Lott is one of those people who have benefitted from Mooney's hard work in more ways than one. Family is important to Mooney, including his own family — wife, "Mush," high school seniors Payton and Cael, eighth grader Quinn and his loyal dog Wilson — and his work family. "I'm extremely proud to be here. Our company works tirelessly to interact with the community, staff and our members," Mooney says. "We're trying to ensure that we deliver a great launching pad for people to further their careers and create great memories," he adds.

Mooney says he's thankful for the memories he's creating in McCall. "On Saturday, I woke up my 13-year-old kid at 7 o'clock and I said, 'Hey, I've got some friends who want to go skiing, do you want to go while the lake is glass?" Mooney says. "He's out there, he drops a ski and he's skiing on one! We're three weeks away from going back to school, and wow, we did this today? And, on the same day, we jumped in a plane and flew 40 miles to Joseph, Ore., and had lunch, me, my son and another guy and his son. We made a Saturday that you can't write a blueprint for."

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Living on THEEDGE

Any course can improve its look with good, clean edging of lines throughout the facility

BY JEFF VERCAUTREN

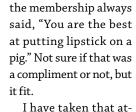
The highest priority at Rich Harvest Farms is greens, greens and greens. After that, it is in the details. The attention to detail at The Farm is what members always comment about. Sharp edges on the irrigation heads, bunkers, cart paths, drain basins and tree wells can make any course pop.

During my time in Florida as an assistant for the TPC network, we were ingrained with the idea that keeping a clean-cut, edged course would "make any course look great." The 18 holes that I oversaw were not the greatest. We had a limited staff of five guys, but every chance we got, we edged. This always made the course look clean and better than it was. We had old, crumbling cart paths, but after we edged them,



Jeff VerCautren

days, we edge bunkers. Every month, we edge cart paths. We constantly have staff out edging *Continued on page 24*



tention to detail to Rich

Harvest Farms. Every 10



The main priority for the team at Rich Harvest Farm is the greens — but after that, the crew pays close attention to the details in order to keep a clean, edged course.

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// STAYING SHARP AT RICH HARVEST FARMS



Continued from page 22

irrigation heads, and, on Fridays, my first assistants' responsibilities are to take string trimmers around and edge everything from drain basins to missed heads to anything blowing in the wind that shouldn't be. Some assistants over the years have looked at this process as a punishment, but the ones who take it to heart have gone on and succeeded at their own courses.

Staying sharp

One frustrating thing about keeping a clean, edged course is the comments when things don't get done. My former First Assistant Wil White, now superintendent at Geneva (Ill.) Golf Club, has noticed this at his course as well. He put up a sign in his shop that states, "Nobody notices what you do until you don't do it!" I am sure that is the truth with many things, but I feel it really fits with our industry.

Once a month, we also dot edges of the different mowing heights of cut. This helps the staff doing cleanup cuts stay right on the proper edges and not scalp into the rough or collars. Keeping the edges of mowing heights sharp is another detail that really makes a course pop. Unfortunately, this year, we've had to make a couple of labor cutbacks due to COVID-19, forcing us to eliminate the intermediate cut around the fairways and greens. However, even though members hate their ball rolling 1 foot off the .300-inch-cut fairway and being penalized with a 3-inch-thick rough shot, they have told me that they would not change a thing because of how good the edges of the cut look from the tee. Continued on page 26



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// STAYING SHARP AT RICH HARVEST FARMS

Continued from page 24

A sharp edge on your cup is also important. If you have ever watched people cut cups for a PGA Tour event? It is amazing the detail they put into the changing of the hole locations. Including putting a nice paint ring around the lip, taking scissors to nip off any straggler shoots of grass sticking over the edge, having a straight stick and making sure the cup is set at the same depth on every green are all the details Tour setup staff put into changing the hole locations every day. I understand not everyone has the time to paint a cup on a daily basis (I don't either), but making sure your cup cutter is sharp and changing the hole location daily are two easy steps you can make to bring out that sharp edge detail. I find myself cutting our cups daily. It forces me to check all the greens every morning and allows me to put that last detail on the course before the first group goes out. It also enables one operator to be able to apply his resources elsewhere.

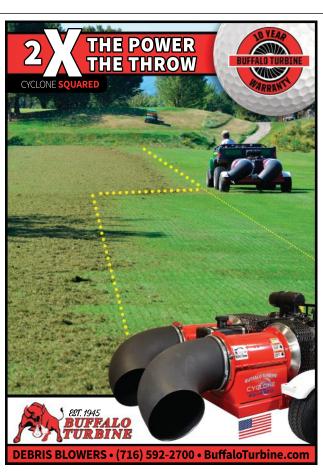
The cutting edge

Sharp edges are not just something you should do on the golf course. Keeping a sharp edge on your mowing equipment is also a huge priority. As stated in the USGA Green Section Record Vol. 54 for Feb. 5, 2016, a sharp reel can improve turf health, lead to smoother greens, conserve fuel and increase the green speed in a healthy way.

One last tidbit that helps me with the details at Rich Harvest Farms: My former superintendent in Florida, Tim Perez, always said that when you drive through the course and see something that should be done but you don't have time, "Think about smacking yourself in the head. Within time, if you smack yourself enough times, you will start to get a headache and find the time to stop and get it done."

I hope this gives you some ideas on how to improve your course. A sharp-edged course, as small as it might seem, is what will stand out. No one will notice until you don't do it. Either way, stay sharp! ^(C)











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// KICKING BACK DAMAGE

EFFECT OF GOLF SHOE DESIGNS ON PUTTING GREENS

By Cole Thompson, Ph.D.

oot traffic can reduce putting green smoothness, especially when golf shoes had metal spikes. The damage has decreased as plastic cleats or spikeless golf shoes became the norm. There are concerns that new golf shoe designs may cause similar damage as metal spikes.

Thomas Nikolai, Ph.D., Michigan State University, and Doug Karcher, Ph.D., University of Arkansas, evaluated more than 20 golf shoe designs over two years on putting greens in Michigan, Arkansas, Florida and Scotland. They classified and compared today's shoe designs with older soles, cleats and metal spikes. They evaluated spikeless shoes, shoes with plastic cleats and shoes with metal spikes. The shoes had outsoles made of rubber,



Depending on the model, some golf shoes cause more damage to putting greens than others.

polyurethane, thermoplastic polyurethane or thermoplastic elastomer. The experiments simulated 30 rounds of golf with each shoe design on creeping bentgrass, annual bluegrass, fine fescue, ultradwarf bermudagrass and seashore paspalum.

Foot traffic generally reduced the visual appearance of surface smoothness compared to control plots with no traffic. In some cases, golfers could not visually distinguish differences among control plots and noncontrol plots. Flat outsoles with cleat or spike inserts disrupted surface smoothness more than

studded outsoles with cleat inserts. Studs increase the number of pressure points and may help disperse traffic by reducing the pounds per square inch each cleat transfers to a putting surface. Traffic from metal spikes was more visible than the most abrasive outsole materials and cleats currently on the market. Spikeless or cleated shoes caused more visible traffic as the number of studs, cleats or cleat prongs decreased. Spikeless, rubber outsoles generally caused less visible traffic than spikeless, thermoplastic polyurethane outsoles.

Cleated designs caused more visible traffic than spikeless models. Cleated, thermoplastic polyurethane outsoles caused less visible traffic than cleated outsoles with a combination of polyurethane and thermoplastic polyurethane. Cleated, thermoplastic elastomer outsoles caused the most visible traffic. **G**



Cole Thompson, Ph.D., is director of the USGA Green Section Research program and can be contacted at cthompson@usga.org.

This project was funded in part by the USGA Green Section.

NEWS UPDATES

USGA SEES MILESTONE IN POLLINATOR PROTECTION

The USGA's multiyear collaboration with Audubon International has reached a key milestone by creating 1,000 acres of pollinator habitat on courses across America through the Monarchs in the Rough initiative.

The association's \$100,000 grant, delivered through the USGA Turfgrass Environmental Research Program in 2018, has helped deliver milkweed seed and educational resources at no charge to golf courses. A significant number of the more than 700 courses that have participated in the program are open to the public or are municipally owned.

The USGA said monarch populations have declined by 90 percent, and pollinator loss has a big impact on communities that rely on the benefits that they and other pollinators provide. Naturalized areas on a golf course provide natural beauty and an ecosystem and critical habitat for other wildlife and can filter stormwater runoff, improving the quality of surface and groundwater.

The USGA's investment supported a commitment of 250 acres of Audubon International's 500-acre goal, established under a 2018 grant award from the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation.

THERE IS A NEED FOR SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE REGARDING HOW PUTTING GREEN MANAGEMENT MAY AFFECT THE VISUAL WEAR DAMAGE CAUSED BY FOOT TRAFFIC."

Thom Nikolai, Ph.D., and Doug Karcher, Ph.D. (see story on page 29)

// CLEANING UP CLEAT DAMAGE

Putting green management impact on golf cleat damage

By Thom Nikolai, Ph.D., and Doug Karcher, Ph.D.

ince the demise of metal spikes in the mid-1990s, some superintendents and golfers have protested that newer golf cleat and sole designs are too aggressive on their putting surfaces. Trade journal articles have quoted individuals claiming that some of these designs are worse than banned spikes from the past (5). Conversely, some golf courses in similar regions have not reported any putting surface disruption caused by any of the cleat or sole designs.

Given this problem, there is a need for scientific evidence regarding how putting green management may affect the visual wear damage (VWD) caused by foot traffic. We conducted a two-year study to quantify the impact of putting green management on wear damage caused by foot traffic. The objectives of the research were to identify putting green management practices that minimize or increase wear damage caused by golf shoes. Common putting green management practices that may affect VWD are grooming, rolling, sand topdressing and nitrogen fertility. We used golf shoes made with thermoplastic elastomer outsoles and a cleat arrangement suggested as damaging to putting greens (25).

Grooming uses a series of lightweight vertical blades that reach down to no more than 10 percent of the height of cut to remove horizontal runners, leaf blades and other organic matter (28). It has grown in popularity because it is less invasive than verticutting, yet shares the goal to encourage vertical growth in the plant. However, research validating the practice of grooming is limited.

A combination of vertical mowing



Researchers conducted a study to find out how different cleat and sole designs affect putting greens. Here, researchers rate the plots for visible damage.

and grooming that followed core cultivation resulted in a decrease in organic matter buildup on creeping bentgrass putting greens by 19 percent (16). In Tennessee, reel mowing in combination with grooming reduced the percentage of green cover on the majority of rating dates in one year of the study (23). While grooming blades may help encourage upright growth, some believe grooming leads to scalping compared to other practices that could promote upright



growth (27). Even though putting green mower manufacturers offer groomers, it appears there is minimal data to substantiate their impact on wear damage caused by foot traffic.

In 1901, greenkeeper Walter Travis wrote, "From May until October, each green should be rolled daily with a light roller, rather than once or twice a week with a heavy one" (26). For the next quarter of a century, numerous publications addressed roller frequency, weight, compaction and soil texture (1, 10, 13) without coming to any definite conclusions. Shortly after that, the practice of frequent rolling ceased as turfgrass research showed a link between high levels of soil compaction and turf root growth (7, 11).

Continued on page 30

TABLE 1

Effects of rolling on putting green wear and volumetric moisture content.* University of Arkansas Michigan State University 2016 2017 2016 2017 Visual wear (1 = none, 5 = severe) Untreated 2.8 b 2.1 b 2.7 2.5 b Rolled 3.0 a 2.4 a 2.8 3.0 a Volumetric moisture content (%) Untreated 29.2 b 31.1 b 17.4 9.8 b Rolled 30.6 a 32.2 a 18.9 10.8 a

Within locations and years, means that do not share a letter are significantly different, according to Fischer's protected LSD test (\propto =0.05).

Continued from page 29

Lightweight rolling enjoyed a limited resurgence in the late 1980s because it was an effective way to increase green speed for tournament play (6). However, concerns that regular rolling would increase compaction, leaf bruising and disease still limited its use (2). Frequent rolling on greens did not become a common practice until research concluded that greens rolled three times per week decreased dollar spot, localized dry spot and broadleaf weeds, with no measurable negative effects (17). However, it remains questionable if frequent rolling has an impact on wear damage caused by foot traffic.

Old Tom Morris of Saint Andrews, Scotland, was first to suggest the practice of sand topdressing. He observed healthier turf after a windblown sand dusting or a spilled wheelbarrow of sand on a putting green (3). Historically, sand topdressing was applied once or twice per year with shovels, often following core cultivation.

The combination of lower cutting heights on newer cultivars was the impetus for sand topdressing equipment that could precisely apply small quantities of sand every one to two weeks. Light, frequent sand topdressing helps smooth the putting surface, control thatch and provide a firm playing surface (21). Research indicates that frequent sand topdressing can enhance the recovery from anthracnose (14) or lessen the severity of dollar spot (9). Since sand topdressing provides a firmer playing surface, the practice could decrease wear damage from foot traffic.

Nitrogen fertility influences putting green quality and growth rate more than any other nutrient (22). It was once customary to apply granular nitrogen every month at amounts as high as 1.0 pound per square foot (20). In the 1990s, concerns about picking up granular fertilizers on putting surfaces grew amidst decreasing cutting heights, which eventually led to an increase in foliar fertilization (15).

A survey in 2016 indicated that 99 percent of golf course superintendents in the United States used foliar fertilizers as part of their fertilization program on putting greens (24). In a

Research Takeaways

- Damage from golf cleats has become more noticeable with smoother putting green surfaces.
- Regular sand topdressing and grooming reduced visible damage from golf cleats.
- Higher nitrogen fertility and rolling increased visible damage from golf cleats.
- When rolling led to an increase in volumetric moisture content, it increased visible damage from golf cleats, which stresses the importance of monitoring soil moisture with sensors (or TDRs).
- There was a correlation between visible wear damage from simulated golfer traffic and the volumetric moisture content in the surface of the putting green root zone.

fertilizer carrier study, foliar fertilizer treatments did not deplete soil nutrient levels following three years of applications. Furthermore, the biweekly use of foliar fertilizers resulted in better turf quality than monthly granular fertilizer applications (29). While higher nitrogen rates are known to increase recuperative potential, it is questionable if nitrogen rates have an impact on wear damage immediately following foot traffic.

It is not clear how these cultural practices affect wear damage from foot traffic on intensively managed putting greens. Therefore, the main objective of this research was to determine how current putting green management practices such as frequent grooming, sand topdressing, rolling and foliar nitrogen fertility affects wear damage resulting from foot traffic with aggressive golf shoes.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

We managed the research putting greens at Michigan State University (MSU) and the University of Arkansas (UARK) under identical cultural and mechanical practices. Management treatments included the following:

• Grooming (none vs. three times weekly at a depth of 0.04 inches)

• Lightweight rolling (none vs. three times weekly) with Tru-Turf greens roller

• Sand topdressing (none vs. every other week at the rate of 0.12 cubic yard per 1000 ft²)

• Nitrogen (N) fertility (low N vs. high N) spray applications urea every 14 days at the rates of 0.12 to 0.24 pound per 1000 ft².

The experiment was a four-factor, split-strip plot design with three replications. We subdivided the main plot factor (grooming) into strip plots for nitrogen fertility, sand topdressing and rolling treatments.

Nitrogen rates in this study were higher than would typically be applied to mature creeping bentgrass golf greens due to the lack of maturity of the putting surfaces and root zones at both CLEANING UP CLEAT DAMAGE // USGA

sites. In 2015, we seeded creeping bentgrass at both locations into a USGA root zone. The experiment at MSU was on a 10-month-old Declaration creeping bentgrass green, whereas a nine-month-old stand of Pure Distinction creeping bentgrass was at UARK.

The treatments started in May of 2016 at both sites. Visible wear damage caused by foot traffic was evaluated monthly three to five times at each location during both years of the study. In a predesignated 1-square-meter area within each plot, we provided foot traffic. Each of the predesignated traffic areas had traffic by individuals simulating rounds of golf by mimicking a golfer retrieving a ball from the bottom of a cup (12).

Foot traffic was applied in random order by several individuals at each site, and each plot received 20 simulated rounds of golf. The golf shoe tested had thermoplastic elastomer outsoles with a cleat arrangement known to cause wear damage to golf green surfaces (25). Following traffic, VWD was rated by up to four individuals using the following scale (19):

1 = Excellent; no visible traffic

2 = Very good; I think I see foot traffic

3 = Good; some visible foot traffic, but I would not mind putting on the surface

Fair; visible foot traffic that would likely deflect my putt
Poor; terrible putting conditions, and I recommend banning the cleat/sole from our golf course

Other data collection included monthly surface firmness measured with a Tru-Firm (Spectrum Technologies) and volumetric moisture content (VMC) obtained from a 1.5-inch depth using a TDR 300 equipped with turf rods (Spectrum Technologies).

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

There were significant interactions among treatments and locations and years, so the wear data were analyzed and are presented separately for each location and year. Rolling increased VWD damage significantly at UARK in both years and MSU in 2017 (Table 1).

Sand topdressing consistently decreased VWD from foot traffic and is most likely the result of an organic matter dilution that occurs with the practice. The results indicate grooming can be beneficial in minimizing VWD (Table 2).

Nitrogen fertility, and perhaps increased growth that derives from higher nitrogen rates, interacted with grooming in this study, which complicates the recommendation to groom for minimizing VWD (Tables 2 and 3). However, nitrogen rates in this study were higher than what mature, cool-season putting greens would usually receive due to the immaturity of the research greens in this experiment. Perhaps, on older putting greens with lower nitrogen rates, grooming might consistently result in decreasing VWD as it occasionally did in this study. Regarding the nitrogen rate affecting VWD, when significant differences occurred, the higher rate resulted in more visible wear than the lower amount. As a result, it seems pertinent to recommend using cleatless golf shoes on immature putting surfaces because the research shows they result in the least VWD (25), and immature putting surfaces should be receiving higher rates of nitrogen (4).

A compelling result from the study was the increased VWD on rolled plots. At MSU, rolling resulted in significantly firmer surfaces during both years of the research, but there were no significant differences at UARK regarding surface firmness in either year. A closer look at the data suggests the increased VWD on rolled plots was most likely due to an increase in VMC at the sites (Table 1).

Volumetric moisture content was higher in both years in rolled plots at UARK and increased visible wear. At MSU, rolling resulted in no significant differences in VMC or VWD in 2016 but result in significant differences for both in 2017.

Previous research has concluded that rolling increases VMC, which decreases localized dry spot and dollar spot (8, Continued on page 32



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Continued from page 31

20). Therefore, the increase in VWD on rolled plots in this study may be due to the experimental design that did not allow for decreased irrigation on rolled plots.

These results emphasize the

importance of utilizing a moisture meter during a frequent rolling program to help minimize irrigation afforded by the practice, which, in turn, can reduce VWD. Additionally, even though irrigation was not a treatment in this

Effects of grooming fertility and tondressing on nutting green wear *

study, there was a positive correlation with VWD and VMC in the top 1.5-inch depth of the root zone.

This research demonstrates that cultural practices can affect VWD on highly managed creeping bentgrass

TABLE 2

	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept./Oct.		
Ī							
Grooming	University of Arkansas – 2016						
Untreated		3.9 a	3.4 b	2.3 d	3.0 c		
Groomed		3.7 ab	3.0 c	2.1 d	2.0 d		
Fertility	/	I	I		•		
High N		3.9 a	3.6 a	2.4 c	2.9 b		
Low N		3.7 a	2.8 b	1.9 d	2.1 cd		
Topdressing	University of Arkansas – 2017						
Untreated	2.0 c	2.2 bc	2.8 a	3.0 a	2.9 a		
Topdressed	1.4 d	2.1 bc	2.1 bc	2.3 b	1.7 d		
Grooming x Fertility	I	I	I		1		
High N	1.5 i	2.3 cdef	2.8 ab	2.3 cdef	2.4 cde		
Low N	1.7 hi	2.0 defgh	2.1 defgh	2.7 bc	2.1 defg		
High N + groomed	1.9 fghi	2.3 cdef	2.7 bc	3.1 a	2.6 bc		
Low N + groomed	1.7 ghi	2.0 efgh	2.3 cdef	2.5 bcd	2.1 defgl		
Grooming	Michigan State University – 2016						
Untreated		3.4 a	2.2 c		2.8 b		
Groomed		2.9 b	2.0 c		3.0 b		
Topdressing			· · ·				
Untreated		3.3 a	2.2 d		3.2 ab		
Topdressed		3.0 b	2.0 d		2.6 c		
Fertility	·	·	·		•		
High N		3.2 a	2.0 c		3.1 a		
Low N		3.1 a	2.2 c		2.7 b		
Topdressing	Michigan State University – 2017						
Untreated		2.9 ab	3.1 a	2.8 bc			
Topdressed		2.3 d	2.9 ab	2.6 c			
Grooming x Fertility							
High N		2.7 bcde	3.0 ac	2.4 de			
Low N		2.8 abc	2.8 abc	3.0 abc			
High N + groomed		2.7 cd	2.9 abc	3.1 ab			
Low N + groomed		2.3 de	3.2 a	2.2 e			

putting greens. These results will help golf course superintendents maximize golfer satisfaction. It would be beneficial to conduct similar research on other common types of intensively managed putting green surfaces, such as annual bluegrass (*Poa annua*) and ultradwarf bermudagrass (*Cynodon dactylon x C. transvaalensis*). **G**

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Acknowledgments

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TABLE 3

Four-way treatment interaction on visual wear damage at the University of Arkansas in 2016.

	Not Rolled		Rolled				
	Not Groomed	Groomed	Not Groomed	Groomed			
	Visual wear damage (1 = none, 5 = severe)						
High N	3.0 bcde	3.2 abc	3.7 a	3.4 ab			
High N - Topdressed	3.3 ab	2.6 def	3.4 ab	3.1 abcde			
Low N	3.0 bcde	2.5 ef	2.9 bcde	2.5 ef			
Low N - Topdressed	2.6 cdef	2.2 f	3.2 abcd	2.2 f			

The interaction means that do not share a letter are significantly different, according to Fischer's protected LSD test (\propto =0.05).

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SuperScience // EXPERTS' INSIGHTS



Tropical signalgrass can be spotted by its signal-flag-like seedhead.

Tamping down tropical signalgrass

The most identifiable feature of tropical signalgrass is the seedhead, which is where the perennial weed gets its name because it looks like an old signal flag on ships, according to Bryan Unruh, Ph.D., professor and associate center director at the University of Florida.

"Most of the time, golf course superintendents are mowing this thing off, and so it never produces those seedheads, and if it does, they stay low to the canopy," Unruh says. "It's mat forming and will form this mass and choke everything else out."

He adds that tropical signal grass produces above-ground stems or stolons, the leaf blades often have a sheen to them and there are hairs on the leaf blade and leaf sheath.

It emerges later than crabgrass and goosegrass — in late spring and early summer.

"It's a perennial so it can live pretty much year-round, and it tends to be later, which is part of the reason it's problematic because we tend to be focusing on crabgrass and goosegrass for our spring preemergent products, and we miss that tropical signalgrass (window)," Unruh says.

From a cultural standpoint, superintendents should grow healthy turf and implement practices such as verticutting, aerification, fertilizing and irrigating. "The base grass, whether it's bermudagrass or seashore paspalum, should be as healthy as can be," he says.

Unruh adds that fall is the optimum time for more effective long-term control.

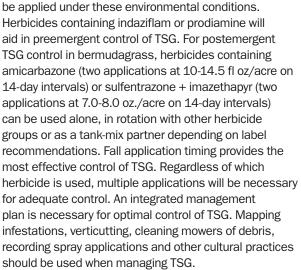
"The seed germinates in the spring later than crabgrass and goosegrass, but that starts a whole new cycle of the plant," he says. "Once that seed is germinated, that plant can live in perpetuity. If you have the plant out there, you try to minimize the emergence through preemergent strategies and effectively control it with postemergent strategies, and that's where most of the research points to fall applications being the ideal approach."

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TINA BOND, PH.D.

Technical service manager

Tropical signalgrass (TSG) seed germination occurs in soils with a pH of 5 to 6 when soil temperatures reach 77 degrees F. Preemergent herbicides should



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ERICH SLIDER Director of golf, South Division

Tropical signalgrass (TSG) is a challenging issue for turf

managers in regions where soil temperatures stay warm and frost doesn't develop. Spot control with selective herbicides can help keep this weed at bay. Best practices like keeping a record of treatment dates/locations can enhance the effectiveness of herbicide applications. The first step in controlling TSG is to accurately identify it. Per Todd Lowe (former USGA agronomist), "Crabgrass has a seedhead that has several stalks emanating from a single point and appears much like a hand. Signalgrass, however, derives its name from the fact that the seed stalks occur at 90 degree angles and resemble signal flags." A postemergent approach is most effective and affordable in the fall; however, spring and summer spot control with postemergent herbicides are also effective.



LANE TREDWAY, PH.D. Technical services manager

The first step in managing tropical signalgrass is to encourage



dense, healthy turf that can outcompete weed encroachment. Certain preemergent herbicides can inhibit germination for up to eight weeks, but tropical signalgrass germination occurs over a six- to 10-month period in Florida. It can be difficult to maintain consistent preemergent protection over this prolonged time frame. Once tropical signalgrass becomes established, postemergent control with the active ingredient of pinoxaden is a great option. Two applications on 14- to 21-day intervals are recommended. This type of herbicide has two major advantages: It performs well in the summer and has excellent safety to bermudagrass and zoysiagrass, so superintendents can control tropical signalgrass when desirable turf has the greatest chance to reestablish.



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"By 1963, golf's popularity was growing and so was the amount of traffic on courses around the country."

MIKE KENNA, PH.D., Research Editor

Clink, clink, clink

o you remember the sound of metal spikes? The earliest evidence of a shoe with spikes (hobnails) is from an 1893 photo of players in New Zealand. Walter Hagen wore hobnail shoes for his U.S. Open victory in 1914. Bob Jones wore them in the 1916 U.S. Amateur, and golf shoes with spikes were regular footwear by 1919.

In 1948, the USGA Green Section's Fred Grau, Ph.D., and Marvin Ferguson, Ph.D., addressed a different problem. Golf courses were not allowing the use of shoes with rubber lug soles. Grau and Ferguson compared shoes with lug soles to those with steel spikes. In their limited study, they concluded that shoes with lug soles caused less damage than those with metal spikes.

Marvin Ferguson continued to study the problem at Texas A&M University in 1958. This experiment had golf shoes with metal spikes, rubber cleats and a rippled sole. There was a gradual decline of putting green turf for all the designs. But, metal spikes and cleats caused more rapid damage to the turfgrass than the rippled soles.

By 1963, golf's popularity was growing and so was the amount of traffic on courses around the country. Bill Bengeyfield, USGA Green Section, suggested rounds of golf would outpace new golf course construction. He warned that traffic would become a significant problem for golf course superintendents. The USGA recommended recessed spikes in the 1970s, and some progress occurred when shoe companies provided spikes without shoulders. By the 1980s, a dramatic change in shoe design took place. New, rubber, multistud soles started to circulate in the golf community. Golf course superintendents claimed they caused more damage. The time was right for the "Green Section Golf Shoe Study II."

In early 1983, Bengeyfield, along with Vic Gibeault, Ph.D., and Vic Youngner, Ph.D., conducted the golf shoe study. Four shoe designs included metal spikes, two popular multistud designs and spikeless soles. Under all the conditions tested, metal spikes caused the most damage. The two studded shoes were the second most damaging, and the spikeless shoes caused the least amount of damage. The high surface contact area of 750 small rubber cleats was the best.

The Green Section Record had the results of the golf shoe study in the September/October 1983 issue. With the ink barely dry, Larry Gilhuly started his 36-year career with the Green Section in November 1983.

By 1992, Gilhuly opined the article "Search Your Sole — Remove Your Spikes!" He asked, "What have we learned from not one, not two, but three excellent studies concerning the negative effects of golf shoe spikes? Apparently, very little!" Nothing had changed as far as golfers' dependency on metal spikes. The consequences were millions of dollars of damage to greens.

Gilhuly asked golfers to do a little "sole searching." He hoped someday spike mark controversies would be a thing of the past. A change in momentum started with Gilhuly and his visits to Warm Springs Golf Course in Boise, Idaho.

Winter damage concerned General Manager Ernie Deacon and Superintendent Lee Monroe. They banned metal spikes during winter play but provided a "soft spike" alternative for conventional golf shoes invented by Faris McMullin. They thought golfers would appreciate better greens. Wrong!

Gilhuly did not give up and practiced what he preached. He then penned, "The Metallic Mashers of Monocots: Golf Spikes!" in the September/October 1996 issue of the *Green Section Record*.

He also convinced Green Section staff to try spikeless alternatives. Spikeless training shoes and soft spikes worked great. More importantly, we all observed the improvement in putting greens at golf courses going spikeless. Golf went from a humble half-million pairs of spikeless alternatives in 1993 to 20 million in 1995 to who knows how many today.

Golfers can pat themselves on the back; they are helping provide better putting greens. The carpets in the pro shop and locker rooms also look better now. Greens would be even better if golfers would fix their ball marks too! **G**

Mike Kenna, Ph.D., is the retired director of research, USGA Green Section. Contact him at mpkenna@gmail.com.



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The 2700 PrecisionCut and E-Cut Hybrid triplex mowers by JOHN DEERE are available with hydraulic or electric reels. The gas-powered machines boast 19 hp, offer a 62-inch cutting width and feature the TechControl system, which allows managers and technicians to input commands, controlling nearly everything regarding the operator's performance, including frequency of clip, turn speed, cleanup pass speed and how fast the cutting units raise and lower. The TechControl system ensures that regardless of the operator, the end results are the same. JohnDeere.com

6 Oregon ST120VX string trimmer

OREGON's 120V Professional Series ST120VX string trimmer features a 1.2-kW brushless motor, allowing it to offer a full 16.5-inch swath. Whisperquiet, the full line is designed with noise-sensitive areas in mind, and an IP56 rating allows use in any weather. With Oregon's BX975 backpack battery, operators can run 2.3 hours at full power and up to 3.7 hours using the system's stealth mode. *Oregon120V.com*

The 19th Loce

Chris Cook

SUPERINTENDENT // Bailey Ranch Golf Club, Owasso, Okla.



After 18 holes, what can I get you? A Dead Armadillo Amber Ale. It's a local brewery here in the state, and that's one of their best beers in my opinion.

Tell me about your family. I've been married for almost 15 years to my wife, Jessica. We've got two boys, 4 and 11. Coen is the oldest, and Carter is the youngest. We try to keep them from trying to tear each other apart.

What do you and the boys do for

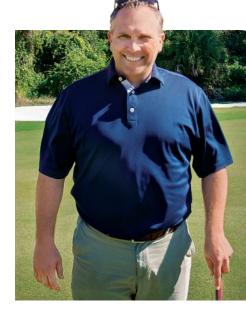
fun? We go to Lake of the Ozarks a lot — boating, swimming, etc., as much as we can. We go about six or seven times a season. In town, my son just picked up the guitar, and I'm about eight months into my guitar journey, so we're doing that together. That's been a blast to connect that way. My littlest is only 4, but he's already a heck of a soccer player.

Tell me about Bailey Ranch GC.

It's in a little town called Owasso, 10 minutes north of Tulsa. It's a nice little quiet community. The course is kind of linksy. Think Trinity Forest in Dallas.

How has your 2020 season been?

With all the craziness of this year, agronomically, we've been having a great year. The weather has been really generous. It's been cool. We haven't had those rains that we fear, where it gets hot immediately afterward. Bentgrass is happy, the golf



course is lush and thick and we're easily double the regular play we would see.

You spent some time at Wichita CC and in Leawood ... are you a Kansas native? I'm from Kansas

Kansas native? I'm from Kansas City. My first job was at Iron Horse GC in Leawood, and I fell in love with it. After two summers there, I realized I wasn't going to go to Kansas University — sorry, Seth — I went to Kansas State for its ag school and never looked back.

I won't hold it against you. Are you still basking in the afterglow of the Chiefe Super Boud win? I'm 20 on this

Chiefs Super Bowl win? I'm 39, so this is the first Super Bowl win in my lifetime. It's easily the best football game I've ever witnessed. And, we've done some good things organizationally to keep (Patrick)



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Mahomes for almost 12 years ... we somehow managed to keep Chris Jones. I think we had \$150 left in the salary cap. They squeezed every ounce of juice out of that orange they could!

What are your favorite tools to get

the job done? For me, in the Transition Zone ... the 648 ProCore, the moisture meter and fans. We wouldn't be able to do what we do without them.

It was announced today that the 2021 Golf Industry Show will be virtual ... are you attending? I don't see any reason why I wouldn't. There's not much going on here in February. I'm going to do it because I always do it. It'll be a different format, but I'm flexible.

As interviewed by Seth Jones, Aug. 12, 2020.



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