

Shades Of Green

■ OPINION

OK, so Dallas isn't the vacation destination that Orlando is, and the weather was lousy most of the time, which limited sightseeing.

But according to the exhibitors, it sure made for good trade show attendance. And let's face it: Once you're inside the meeting rooms or on the trade show floor, GCSAA's 72nd International Conference and Show could have been held in Timbuktu for all it mattered.

My view of the show has shifted since I've become an association executive. I miss the old routines now that I have new priorities. As a full-time superintendent, I used to gorge myself on seminars for four days before the general sessions and special events. I looked forward to the trade show, which offered some much needed relief from the classes.

The seminars were valuable opportunities to hear other perspectives from a diverse audience. The breaks gave you opportunities to follow up and meet new people. I miss that. Now, in the chapter leaders track, I have a new crowd I hang with, and the informal learning still goes on after the formal presentations are done.

Like superintendents, we chapter managers and newsletter editors have common problems. Sometimes we can't help but talk about some of our members who won't write articles, return calls, pay dues on time or meet deadlines.

While superintendents are sharing better ways to manage turf, association employees are in forums sharing ways to overcome association apathy. We discuss how to grow memberships and improve member services. We learn how to communicate better with members and the media, handle affiliation paperwork and publish newsletters.

We receive pointers on applying for matching research funds, as well as working with legislators and regulators. We do so in the hopes of helping chapters around the country become as successful as they can be.

One of the big issues facing chapters today is, believe it or not, taxes. Though these groups started as informal meetings to discuss

New Priorities Shape Show Plan

BY JOEL JACKSON



I HAVE FOUND NEW REASONS TO ATTEND THE SHOW, BUT THE BOTTOM LINE IS STILL ALL ABOUT LEARNING

common problems. many have now grown to the point that they publish newsletters — with advertising. Such advertising is considered unrelated business income by the IRS, and it is taxable.

Although there are the usual loopholes and exceptions to IRS regulations, the days of shoe-box accounting done by a volunteer superintendent are over. The penalty for not knowing the proper laws could be loss of tax exempt status for your group. Those are the kind of things we debate in our forums while the show goes on.

I have traded in my weed identification and insect control classes for the Greens-and-Grassroots government-relations forum, where we discuss the latest trends in regulatory action as we confront the weird science of politics, which often ignores the science of turf maintenance when regulations are designed.

I would have liked to have seen Scott O'Grady's talk on his survival experiences in Bosnia — I'm assuming that the word "survival" makes his talk appropriate for the GCSAA general session — but that session conflicted with the chapter manager's forum. That was too bad because it's not as if we association executives don't need survival training, too.

Not every chapter needs to hire an executive director or association manager, but every chapter should consider having at least a part-time employee to do the necessary evil paperwork to provide continuity and stability.

With the advent of GCSAA's chapter leaders track, I have found new reasons for attending the show. But the bottom line is still all about learning.

Joel Jackson, CGCS, retired from Disney's golf division in 1997 and is director of communications for the Florida GCSA.

Over the years, the old saw that “green is not great” held as firmly as a 100-yard pitch. Golf, after all, traced its origins to drab Scotland, and courses everywhere there allowed their colors to change with the seasons — until irrigation and color television entered the picture. Since then, the “greening of golf” has firmly altered viewer expectations, producing problems for superintendents at top-flight courses.

“Today, we get fixated on beautiful green pictures, which is nice but puts a lot of pressure on superintendents,” says Tim Moraghan, USGA’s chief agronomist. “Green is not always the best playing surface.”

Moraghan focuses on U.S. Open course preparation, where he helps control course ratings. But viewer ratings are another matter, and many living-room fans expect courses to look perfectly green week after week.

Ted Horton, a former superintendent at several championship venues who recently retired from Pebble Beach Golf Links and who is now a consultant, points out that he and his brethren may have set their own trap by finding successful ways to colorize courses.

“We’re the ones who’ve been driving standards higher year after year,” he says. “We kind of did it to ourselves.”

But who wouldn’t want to show off for the TV audience? Many superintendents dream of a day when the entire world can see their handiwork and, given that opportunity, want their courses to look like paradise. But it’s not that easy. The self-imposed pressure can become downright debilitating. There are also factors that are out of superintendents’ hands, such as weather.

But a little counseling in advance of tube time can help superintendents prepare their courses for the warm glow of the spotlight.

Schmooze the TV crews

In most cases, the networks visit golf courses numerous times before an event to plan coverage. Superintendents should use this as an opportunity to establish relationships with them.

“It’s important to develop relationships with TV personnel — cable guys, announcers and producers, for example — because they can slant the way they televise,” Horton says. “When they truly have the intent of making you look good, it helps.”

Horton advises superintendents to seize the public relations initiative. Tell TV crews your course’s warts before they find them themselves. Be positive and progressive when explaining why certain areas may not be in perfect condition. They’ll be less likely to draw their own conclusions and more likely to be sympathetic to your challenges.

Denny Schreiner, a former anchor/host for the Golf Channel who covered about 35 tournaments a year, spent time with the course’s superintendent before each event, always asking about the conditions for playing and televising. He’d conduct a two- or three-minute

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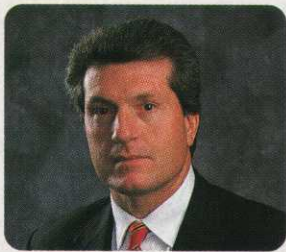
BY BRUCE ALLAR

**INSIDERS SHARE
THEIR SECRETS
FOR SMALL-SCREEN
SUCCESS**



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Made for TV



“Today, we get fixated on beautiful green pictures, which is nice but puts a lot of pressure on superintendents.”

TIM MORAGHAN

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on-camera interview with the superintendent, giving him a chance to explain the course's bad spots. “In cases where there was trouble, if I had a good explanation from the superintendent, I'd use it on the air,” says Schreiner, now a consultant for course design and equipment companies.

But Schreiner always kept in mind his first obligation — to the audience at home. “You always give the benefit of the doubt to the viewer,” he adds.

Bare spots on fairways or bumpy greens affect play, and the TV announcers will point that out, even if it wounds superintendents' egos — just as they'll discuss unfair pin placements and other poor set-up decisions even if it angers tournament officials.

A superintendent should take advantage of an early relationship with TV and tournament officials to map out camera angles. The superintendent should study how the course shapes up in accordance with those angles. “You have to work closely with them and keep notes and

keep maps,” says Oscar Miles of The Merit Club in Libertyville, Ill., site of last year's U.S. Women's Open.

Focus on areas that will be inside the ropes; that's where the expectations are highest, experts say. Early in his preparation, Horton routinely climbed a stepladder at the tee box and took wide-angle photographs down the fairways to simulate what cameras from towers would be showing from those spots. He then trimmed trees and shaped some of the fairway cuts to best accentuate a hole's beauty.

Mark Wilson, who shined up Valhalla GC in Louisville, K.Y., for the 1996 and 2000 PGA Championships, got his hands on videotape aerial views of Valhalla that were taken by the network two months before the PGA and searched for spots that needed attention from his crew.

Tee off early

Actual course preparation can commence as early as two years prior to an event. Miles tested

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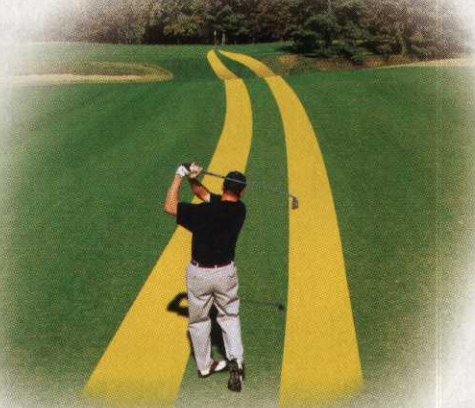
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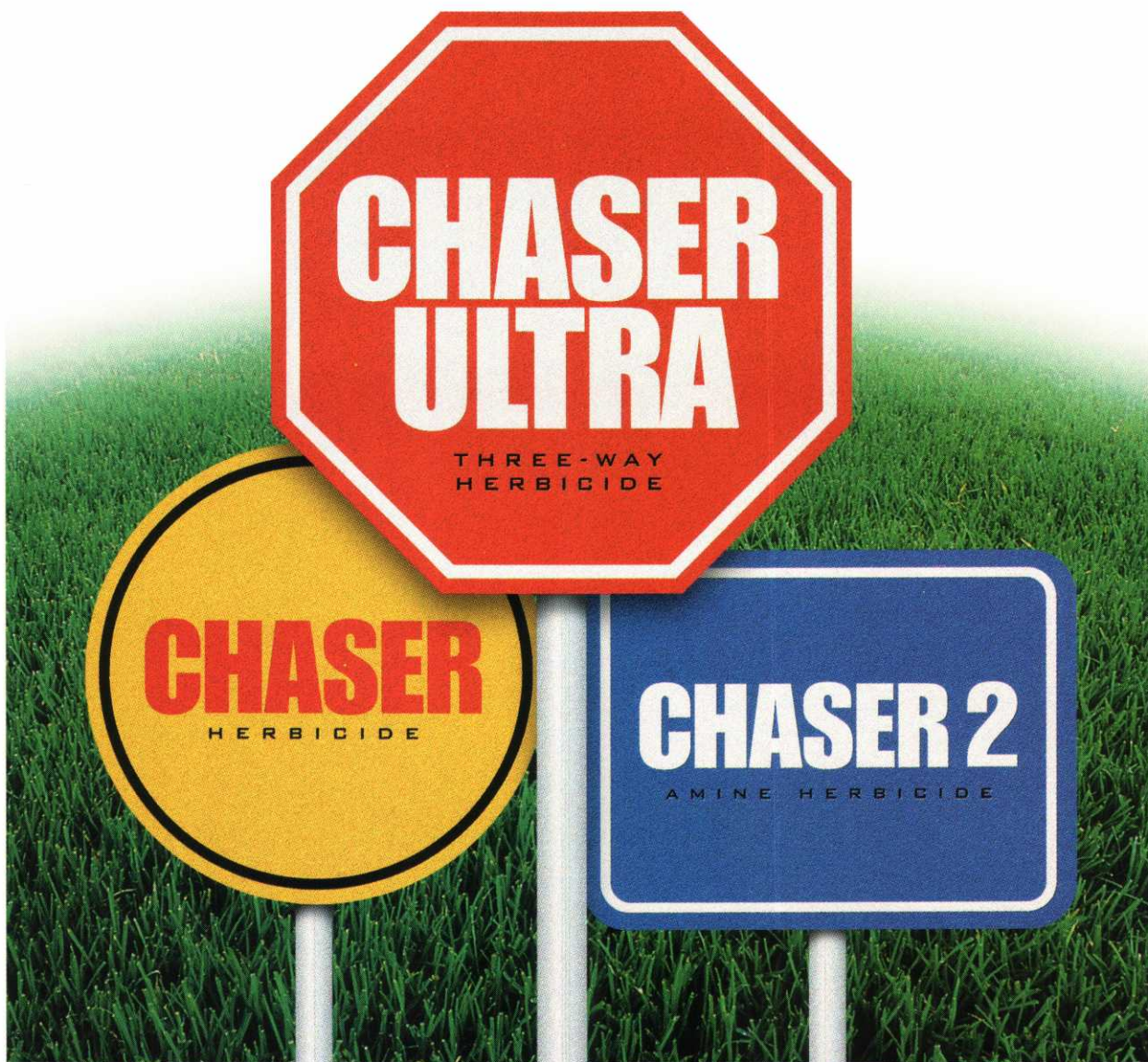


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Made for TV

Continued from page 24

his greens 24 months before the Women's Open by subjecting them to USGA-style maintenance to see how they would hold up. That gave him ample time to evaluate what the greens could withstand and what would overstress them. "Find out if what you do is going to cause loss of roots," Miles advises, adding that damaged greens will recover and can be tested again one year from the tournament date.

Wilson rebuilt his bunkers a year before the 2000 PGA, largely because the new sand looks whiter on television. Six weeks before the event, he topped off the new sand with a new layer for added whiteness.

One month from tourney week, Wilson started a striping program for greens, fairways and tees. He used a string line to lay out exact 90-degree paths in a cross-mow pattern. "From one month out we were burning in straight lines," Wilson says. It's a lot of work, he admits, but "you only get one shot" to do it right.

Interestingly, Wilson and others pay little attention to ornamentals prior to tournaments. The cameras, they say, will find their own beauty shots and golf course crews have many more important things to deal with as they head into an event.

Miles laid out his mowing patterns two

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STILL PHOTOS ARE STILL IN

Tips from veteran photographer Mike Klemme on how to prepare for a shoot

By Bruce Allar

The dawn of the video age hasn't eclipsed the need for powerful photographic portraits of your golf course. In fact, the uses for still images of picturesque layouts are growing with the sport.

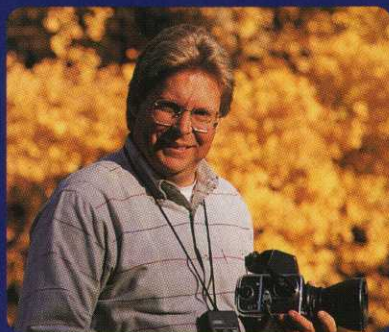
In addition to art for magazine stories, books and calendars, top-quality photographs can enhance marketing efforts in your own advertisements or by having your course featured in an ad for one your vendors. Today, there are more posters, Web sites, Monopoly-style golf board games and various other uses for pretty golf course pictures.

Mike Klemme, of Golfoto in Enid, Okla., has been a golf course landscape photographer for 15 years. He has photographed more than 750 courses and says fees generally run from \$2,500 to \$3,500 per day. Klemme prefers to work in the early morning or late afternoon.

"I try to use the shadows to show more definition in the course," he says. "That highlights the shaping the crews do and helps cover up bad spots, if they're there."

Contracts with photographers are routine, says Klemme, *Golfdom's* chief photo editor. Generally, a client pays more for rights to the finished photos. Many courses today want a total buyout, accord-

ing to Klemme, which means they control all rights to the art. He warns, however, that this can lower your exposure in golf magazines, catalogs, books and other publications if the editors first call a stock house like Golfoto for images, not the courses themselves.



Mike Klemme

Here are a few tips from Klemme for preparing for a still photographer:

- Make sure a photo session is not scheduled during overseeding, aeration, verticutting or topdressing.
- Immediately before the shooting, mow fairways, rake traps (and remove rakes) and dye small lakes. Do not stripe cut. Photographers generally prefer to show the course in its normal condition and

your crew is best at typical maintenance procedures.

- Cut grass to its regular playing height unless you've recently overseeded.

Klemme asks for overseeded grass to be kept a little longer because "it really glows in an image when the sun shines through it."

- Don't automatically order aerial photos. Klemme says he gets better shots from a cherry picker because the angle from that height is more natural. The best lift, he says, is a 140-foot unit, which is also small enough to be pulled behind a pick-up truck.

■ Klemme's first choice is late afternoon. He prefers the light as the sun is lowering and there are fewer maintenance chores interfering at that time. Dew can be an issue during morning shoots, but it is of less concern than the tracks made by equipment and footprints that ruin the pristine quality of the shot.

- Keep staff away from areas to be photographed during the morning. The photographer may want to keep the dew in the image for effect; if not, he'll likely ask for a quick cut just before he takes the pictures. Sometimes a few blasts from the sprinklers can be applied to knock off excess condensation.

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months before the U.S. Open. "We tried to establish a mowing pattern to highlight the best features of the golf course," he says.

Shoot for great greens

First, the bad news. "Greens get exposed the most, so they can create a problem for the course if they're not in the best shape," Schreiner says.

The recent emphasis on green speeds has been hell on cosmetics. Putting surfaces are no longer long enough to showcase beautiful side-to-side mowing patterns. To the contrary, they're mowed and rolled so often and in so many directions that it's hard to keep them from shading toward brown.

The good news? If there's any, it's that golf fans are more like players today. Many of them will judge you more on how well the putts roll than on how green your greens appear on TV.

Superintendents can optimize coloration by mowing in the same lines and directions, even when they cut two or three times a day at tourney time. If you're forced to cross-mow for added speed, you might follow Miles' example. He cut the greens at The Merit Club cross-wise in a checkerboard, eliminating the diagonal cuts that tend to impede lines.

Miles also recommends a fertilization program that maximizes nutrition levels. He checked the percentage of nitrogen in leaves from the greens, attempting to keep it no greater than 4.75 percent. While 5.25 percent is normal for member play, a lower reading helps reduce the growth of the grass at tourney time. But don't go too low, he warns. "If you get to 4.25 percent, you have great control of the grass, but you lose the color," Miles notes.

Be wary of the temptation to "paint" brown spots green; it doesn't always work. The "worm cam," as TV folks call the camera shooting ground-level shots from the greens, shows every blemish. Your best defense? Get them healthy early, and stay natural during tournament week.

Star with stripes

Once you've charted the expected camera angles on a hole, you should study the fairway from that perspective and determine if striping will be attractive. You may want to stripe the fairway in advance and take photos to see how it looks. The way you mow areas around tees and fairways can complement the beauty, but avoid the temptation to get too busy with your lines.

Wilson sought a crisscross effect on his bentgrass fairways, always cutting in cross swaths at 45-degree angles to the direction of holes. In contrast, he cut tees and approaches in parallel fashion. Valhalla even raked the bunkers in the same direction each day of the tournament. "The biggest thing is having a game plan so your staff is in sync," he notes.

Finish with a flourish

Iron applications near event time often provide a noticeable green injection in the grass and can help it stand up more firmly without adding growth-sparking fertilizer. Wilson sprayed his tees and fairways the Friday before tournament week for color enhancement. He also applied a bluish dye, particularly on bunker faces, a few days before the tournament.

Miles avoided iron at the Merit Club. He worried that it would contribute to soil black layer, thereby reducing oxygen and upsetting the bacteria balance. He cautions against quick



"We tried to establish a mowing pattern to highlight to best features of the golf course."

OSCAR MILES

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fixes that might cause long-term damage. Superintendents should bear in mind their obligation to members to enjoy a well-kept course once the pros have dragged their spikes to a new town, Miles stresses.

A superintendent should try to get into the TV production trailer — especially during practice rounds — to take advantage of the opportunity to spot blemishes that the cameras expose. It could even be arranged to have a “dead line” run from the trailer to the maintenance area, where workers could monitor some of the TV cameras. Then they could spot tree branches, for instance, that might mask a shot.

Television crews can adjust color tints in the trailer, but green-enhancing filters on camera lenses do not appear to be as popular as many assume. Schreiner says they never used filters at the Golf Channel. Jim Walton, a producer for Shell’s Wonderful World of Golf, says he eschews them as well.

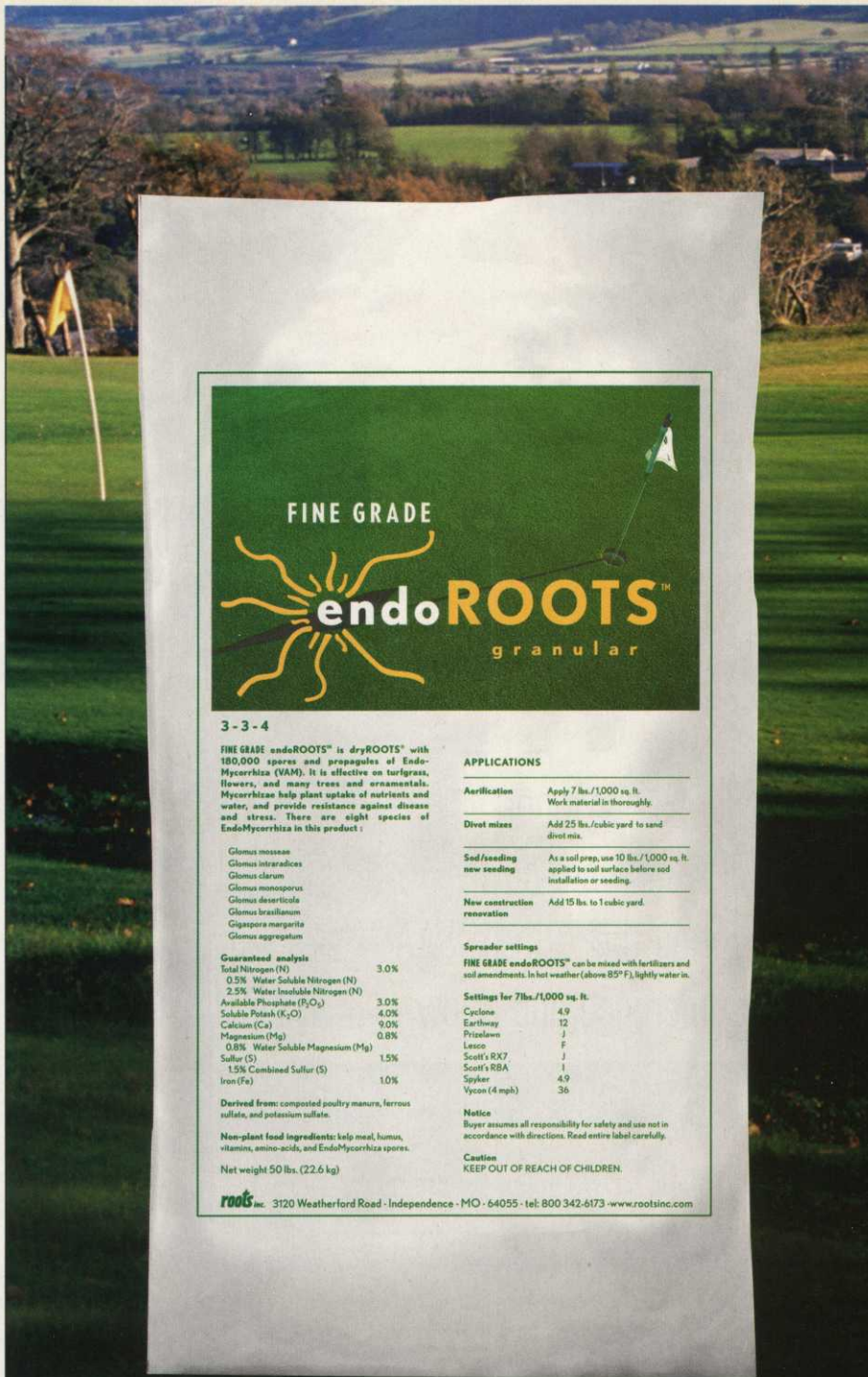
A superintendent might be able to take advantage of his relationship with TV producers to help them attain the proper hues of the course. Miles, who has prepped for several Western Opens, says production crews always asked him what shade of green his course should appear on TV. Miles opted for the bluish green of Penneagle, which he considered the course’s natural color.


And what about after the event? TV crews have left some marks on courses over the years, but their equipment is getting lighter and they now have the ability to move out quickly with minimal damage. It’s still a good idea to keep at least one eye on how they set up and tear down, especially seeing to it that contractors put towers up in the right places. But superintendents shouldn’t have to worry too much about tire ruts and other gouges.

Wilson says TV has improved to the point where its personnel complete a move out the day after a tournament. Wilson was so comfortable with CBS at the 2000 PGA that he didn’t stick around to supervise the teardown. He had his own winding down in mind after a pressure-packed week.

“You have a couple a beers with the guys and go home to bed,” Wilson says. ■

Allar is a free-lance writer from Floyds Knobs, Ind.





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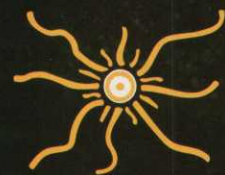
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The Scoop from Dallas



Here's our report of what went down during the 72th GCSAA Conference and Show

Editor's note: The weather stunk and the city is boring. So what's a Golfdom staff member to do? His job, we guess. So here's our comprehensive report from the recent GCSAA Conference & Show in Dallas, where the association also celebrated its 75th anniversary.

PDI: Thumbs up

The expected tight vote on the Professional Development Initiative never materialized. The initiative easily cleared the two-thirds vote needed to pass. The final vote was 75 percent in favor to 25 percent against.

"It's a significant mandate," said GCSAA CEO Steve Mona. "[Most superintendents] want higher standards [for] a Class A superintendent."

The new PDI requirements for Class A membership will be implemented by July 1, 2003. Superintendents who reach Class A status before then will be grandfathered in at their current designation.

Outgoing GCSAA president R. Scott Woodhead said the association reached a milestone with the passing of PDI. "It's about a stronger association and positioning the superintendent to do a better job, day in and [day] out," Woodhead said. "We've raised the bar with PDI. The marketplace drove [its passing]."

New GCSAA president Tommy D. Witt said association members made a statement by passing PDI. "We are committed to taking bold steps to enable us to advance our profession by improving recognition, potential higher compensation and additional job opportunities," he added.

PDI and the fat lady

The overwhelming vote in favor of the PDI-related bylaws changes may seem like the end of the story but, as the old saying goes, the opera ain't over until the fat lady sings. So *Golfdom* asked some of the most vocal opponents to PDI whether they thought the fat lady had crooned the last note in the PDI saga.

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Prerequisites for PDI		
Education	Years as a superintendent to become a Class A	Education points to become a Class A
4-year turf degree	3	3 (Minimum of 2)
4-year turf degree + 2-year turf degree/certificate with equivalent hours	3	3 (Minimum of 2)
Other bachelor's degree	4	5 (Minimum of 3)
Associate's turf/plant science degree or comparable 2-year turf certificate (i.e., Michigan State, Penn State)	4	5 (Minimum of 3)
400-contact-hour turf certificate	5	16 (Minimum of 6)
2-year other associate's degree	6	10 (Minimum of 6)
No degree or recognized certificate	7	40 (Minimum of 32)*

* A maximum of 30 education points can be received retroactively from previous college experience.