

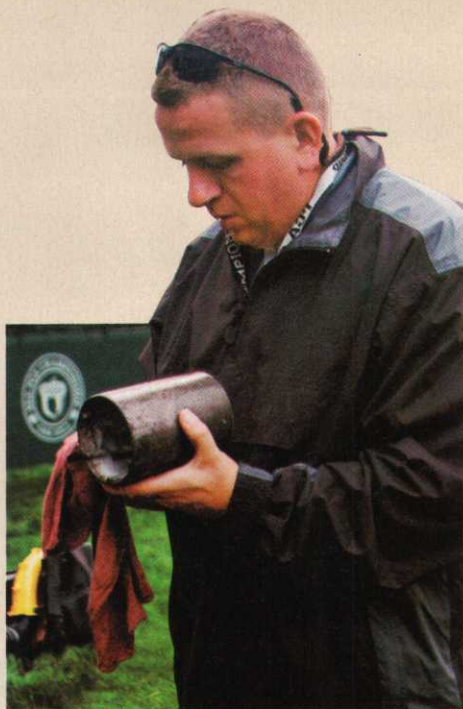
Sure Thing #1:

**THE SUN
WILL RISE
TOMORROW.**



"I'm probably the only guy with a weekend job at a golf course who gets invited to do course setup at Oak Hill for the PGA Championship."

MATT JOHNSON
PART-TIME EMPLOYEE
HAZELTINE NATIONAL



GREG WALL

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Rehr knows something about working a Major. He's been through 16 Masters championships in his 15-year career at Augusta, not to mention working a few other big tournaments as a volunteer, including the 2002 U.S. Open.

It took Rehr about 15 hours over two days to drive to Pittsford from Augusta earlier in the week. He arrived for duty Friday morning at 3:45. He'll stay until at least 9 p.m.

It's shortly after 8 a.m. now, and the second day of the tournament is in full swing. Golf course workers return in droves to the maintenance facility, which is tucked discreetly behind the sixth hole. They look like an army of sorts, all dressed in dark green shirts and khaki shorts or pants.

The jovial Rehr sits in a utility vehicle outside the maintenance facility. He lights another cigarette and confesses that he's exhausted — and it's only the second day of the tournament. But Rehr is not complaining. He knew what he was getting into.

"This is neat," Rehr says, glancing around the compound and wearing one of those I-wouldn't-want-to-be-anywhere-else smiles. "What's the biggest party in the state of New York this year? You're standing in it."

Rehr's experience of working such tournaments has given him the wisdom to recognize when someone's blood is boiling over with frustration. It might be the superintendent or a crew worker, and Rehr will take it upon himself to keep that person relaxed by cracking a

joke or doing something goofy. Shortly after meeting Tom Bailey, superintendent of Oak Hill's East Course, Rehr wisecracked, "You better smile every time I see you or I'm going to punch you."

As much as the workers need Rehr to keep them smiling, they need someone — a seasoned pro, of sorts — to provide reassurance that everything is going to be OK. The perfect person for that job is Paul R. Latshaw, Paul B.'s father, and a veteran superintendent of hosting Majors. Paul R. basically stays out of the way, but everyone has to feel good about him being here. It's like today's Yankees having Reggie Jackson in the dugout for the World Series.

It was 25 years ago that Paul R. hosted his first Major tournament — also a PGA Championship — at Oakmont Country Club near Pittsburgh. And here was his son hosting his first Major a quarter of a century later.

"I wouldn't have missed this for anything," Paul R. says with a heartfelt smile.

Paul R. attended the 2002 PGA Championship at Hazeltine National Golf Club near Minneapolis with his son so the two could get an idea of how Oak Hill should prepare for the tournament. Paul R. says he was taken aback by the sheer magnitude of the event and how much it has grown over the years.

Things have changed dramatically since the PGA was held at Oakmont. Paul R. notes that he had only four volunteers to help him with that tournament. "I told my son, 'You have some planning to do,'" he says.

That planning included assembling the throng of volunteers. But recruiting them wasn't that difficult for Paul B., who has more connections than the CEO of a big company.

THE VOLUNTEERS CAME TO

Pittsford for myriad reasons, although all are thrilled to be part of the event. Most have met Paul B. at one time or another and came away impressed with his passion for the profession.

Seibel came to Oak Hill primarily to help his mentor and good friend Paul B., for whom he worked as an assistant when Latshaw was superintendent of Merion Golf Club near Philadelphia from 1992 to 1998. It's the first time Seibel has ever volunteered at a big tournament. His main duty has been rolling greens with a drum roller.

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Sure Thing #2:

**WATER ROLLS
OFF A DUCK'S
BACK.**



Carry the Weight

"I hosted the Scandinavian Masters in 1996. But that was like a club tournament compared to this."

THOMAS PREIFELT
SUPERINTENDENT
HILLS GOLF CLUB, SWEDEN



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"Paul's the reason I'm here," Seibel says, adding that Latshaw taught him a lot about turf maintenance at Merion and has helped him in his career.

The big reason that Charles R. DeCerce, superintendent of Mechanicville (N.Y.) Country Club, is at Oak Hill is to get schooled on how a top course prepares for a Major. DeCerce's club paid his transportation from Mechanicville, located about 250 miles away, and gave him the time off with pay to attend the event.

The mustached DeCerce sits at a table in the tent, ready to wolf down a deli sandwich. He appears less tired than other workers, his manner actually bordering on buoyant.

"I'm learning something every hour," DeCerce declares. "Now I've got to take that information home, break it down and figure out how I can use it."

One of the things DeCerce learned was how to water bunkers to alleviate golf balls from sticking in the sand like fried eggs. He also learned the art of hover mowing around bunkers.

"This gives me a rush," DeCerce says of his experience, describing the entire scene as "controlled chaos." "I'm getting the knowledge I was seeking."

Thomas Preifelt gets the award for traveling the farthest to volunteer for the tournament. The blonde-haired and blue-eyed Preifelt came from Sweden, where he is superintendent of Hills Golf Club, a new course and the first American-designed track in the country. Preifelt wrote Paul B. about volunteering for the tournament after meeting Paul R., who visited Hills on a consulting venture last year.

"He wrote me back and said he wanted to have me," says Preifelt, who has been in the European turf industry since 1985. "My boss was delighted that I could come."

Preifelt's supervisor was so thrilled that he paid for Preifelt's trip. Like DeCerce's boss, Preifelt's supervisor thought volunteering for the PGA would be the ultimate learning experience for his superintendent.

"I hosted the Scandinavian Masters in 1996," says Preifelt, noting that the tournament is one of the biggest on the European Tour. "But that was like a club tournament compared to this."

Perhaps no one was more excited about volunteering at Oak Hill than Matt Johnson, one of the few volunteers who doesn't make a living in the golf course maintenance business. The 34-year-old Johnson is a UPS truck driver from Minneapolis, who works part-time on the weekends at Hazeltine National. Johnson took a week of vacation from UPS and paid \$360 for a round-trip plane ticket. Latshaw invited him to be a part of his crew after meeting Johnson last year at Hazeltine during the tournament.

"It was an opportunity I couldn't pass up," says Johnson, who's married and has two children. "My wife knows what kind of a golf nut I am. But she just told me to go and have fun because she knew how much I'd enjoy it."

Johnson's job for the week is setting and painting cups.

"This is quite an honor for me," he says. "I'm probably the only guy with a weekend job at a golf course who gets invited to do course setup at Oak Hill for the PGA Championship."

IT'S NEARING 5 P.M., AND THE

tent has transformed into a hive of activity. Several workers gather around the wide-screen TV to watch the tournament. Most golfers have completed their rounds, and few scores are below par while several are in the stratosphere. A few workers chuckle when the high scores are flashed on TV. They don't want the pros reigning over their creation.

"It's fun to see those guys struggling a little bit on the golf course," Seibel says with a grin.

Soon, the workers will sit down for dinner. Then they'll head back out on the course to work several more hours to begin preparing the course for the third day of the tournament. When they're done, some of them might grab a quick bite and beverage at a nearby tavern before going to bed. They'll sleep a few hours and rise while the crickets are still chirping. They'll dress quickly and return to the course for a 5 a.m. meeting and their morning chores.

It's a given that they'll already be a tad tired when they arrive. But like they did the previous morning and the morning before that, they'll reach deep down for that extra moxie to get them through the day.

They have no choice, for this is what they volunteered for.

And they welcome it. ■

GREG WALL

Sure Thing #3:

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Northern California based architect Tom Johnson e-mailed a few months ago to ask why golf does not have its own "think tank." Good question. Think tanks are government- or business-sponsored groups that research, brainstorm and look ahead.

Golf has no shortage of cocktail congregations that consistently end up as an excuse for a vacation followed by a press release announcing a new feel-good, corporate-esque initiative. When these execs do meet and talk specifics, they share tips on protecting their antitrust exemptions and nonprofit tax shelters.

Somehow golf's worst overspenders and pilagers are always invited to these affairs, as are a few bottom-line executive types who complain that Wall Street is hounding them because no one is growing the game, making it hard for them to report better third-quarter earnings than last year.

Why is there no think tank of creative folks who sit behind closed doors brainstorming ways to improve the sport?

Golf is a conservative sport by nature and typically afraid of new ideas. Think tanks have been known to come up with plenty of strange, if not downright goofy, schemes.

You might have heard about DARPA. That's the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency. Over the years, DARPA's work helped create the Internet, Global Positioning Satellite systems, the computer mouse and stealth technology.

Those were DARPA's birdies.

This year DARPA came up with a crackpot scheme to improve our foreign intelligence with an online futures market where folks tucked away as far as the mountains of Pakistan could place online bets, wagering where the next terrorist might strike.

That's a DARPA triple bogey.

It wouldn't take long for an effective golf think tank to point out how unimaginative and tedious the PGA Tour has become, and how a more creative Tour schedule could re-invigorate recreational golf.

The think tank might question why it costs so much to build a USGA green and it could point out that the USGA's handicap system tends to create all sorts of golfing side effects like

Golf Could Use a Good Think Tank

BY GEOFF SHACKELFORD



A SUPERINTENDENT
WHO HAS DONE
WONDERS ON A
\$400,000 BUDGET
WOULD BE A GOOD
CONSULTANT

the stroke play mentality, stigmas attached to nine-hole rounds and the silly emphasis on course ratings over fun.

And a think tank could point out that golf was a steadily thriving community sport, with an ancient model in Scotland and a modern example in Sweden.

The golf industry needs some imaginative thinking to inject life into the recreational game. Golf must improve its image environmentally, better explain the silliness of the distance issue to golfers and find ways to share innovative ideas that provide developers incentive to create fun and affordable golf facilities.

Some suggested guidelines for a think tank:

- No organizational blazer types would be allowed into meetings.
- No holders of golf industry stocks will be eligible.
- People who suggest the golf industry simply needs a fresh marketing campaign can save their breath.

The think tank will not listen to architects who build \$25 million golf courses and brag about how much they spent. Those helping them run up such tabs need not apply either.

A superintendent who has done wonders on a \$400,000 budget will be consulted, but not a superintendent who grumbles about how \$1 million just doesn't go as far as it used to.

Golf professionals who've schmoozed their way to the top can stay home. We only want those who've developed innovative programs that have made golf more fun to learn and play.

And finally, a golf think tank should assemble those who are not afraid to generate ideas that build on golf's greatest traditions while thinking of ways to grow the sport based on the principles of affordability and fun.

*Geoff Shackelford can be reached at
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TURFGRASS TRENDS

INSECT CONTROL

To Treat or Not to Treat for Bugs?

By Eileen A. Buss

Turfgrass managers are stewards of the environment where they work. They make daily decisions that affect the physical and aesthetic quality of their turf. One such decision is whether or not insect pests are abundant enough to warrant controlling them.

Each turf manager has different responsibilities and limited time and money to deal with pest problems. Most superintendents are on site full-time, so they learn where their pest hot spots are and can watch those areas closely.

When it comes to pest management, identification of a symptom or pest is just the first step. Understanding why the symptom is there, and adjusting the way the turf is grown and managed is the real challenge for sustainable control. A "reactive" turf manager

Turf managers can monitor the nighttime flight of most scarab beetles, mole crickets and pest moths using ultraviolet or mercury vapor lights.

may treat symptoms of pest problems without determining the various factors that contributed to the outbreak. A responsive turf manager calls upon various resources (experience, training, site maps, test results) to figure out which factors worked together to cause the problem, and then tries to modify the system to reduce the likelihood of it occurring again. Insecticides are used selectively.

Damage or tolerance thresholds are helpful tools that let superintendents gauge the amount of pest pressure, and then decide on a control strategy. Such thresholds enable the turf manager to make a series of

decisions that ultimately answers the question: "Do I apply a pesticide or not?"

Researchers often suggest numbers, based on experimental data, of pest insects per square foot that can cause damage. But the end user's tolerance to damage and site-specific factors (grass species, soil type, irrigation, fertility, mowing height and plant stress) also come into play. The final decision about pesticide applications or other control measure is made by the turf manager based on his experience, tolerance for damage or risk, and budget.

Most turfgrasses can tolerate a certain amount of feeding damage before suffering reduced growth rates, significant root or leaf loss, or color or density changes. "Rule of thumb" threshold pest densities (Table 1) may be modified to fit the specific situation.

In general, four factors will influence how tolerance levels are established, including turf use, location, aesthetic value or replacement value, and playability and safety issues.

Turf use. Knowing how the turf will be used is basic to defining an "acceptable" level of pests. For example, is there a lot of foot or golf car traffic in an area? Will the turf be used all year, part of the year or just for show purposes?

Turf location. Where insect infestations are located will have a significant bearing

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Proper timing reduces the risk to beneficial organisms, reduces liability issues and saves time and money.

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on whether a treatment may be needed. For example, although turf on a golf course may be used all year, fairways and roughs likely won't be treated for problems as intensively as tees, greens or even areas around clubhouses.

Aesthetics and replacement value. The more valuable the turf in terms of cost of replacement, the lower the acceptable damage level. The cost to repair or resod a green is expensive when one considers not only the turf replacement and necessary labor costs, but also lost playing time (revenues), inconvenience to golfers, the turf manager's reputation or even his/her job security.

Playability and safety. Healthy turfgrass cushions us when we fall and is easy to walk on. But, tunnels or holes caused by insect pests or vertebrates digging for insects may reduce playability and increase the risk of injury. Also, the presence of wasps or fire ants increases the risk of stings or an allergic reaction in people sensitive to stinging insects.

Once the turf manager gets a feel for the tolerance or damage thresholds for key pests, then timing of control actions is the next big issue. How does one properly time applications to effectively control the most vulnerable life stage before damage becomes intolerable? Periodic monitoring of the key pests will provide valuable assistance at low cost.

For example, turfgrass managers in the southeastern United States know that most mole cricket nymphs hatch from eggs sometime between early May to mid-June each year. But if the peak hatch has already occurred, and nymphs are larger than expected, then some insecticides won't work as well. Doing soap flushes will indicate how many adults are still laying eggs or how many nymphs have hatched in an area, as well as their sizes.

There are advantages to properly timing pesticide applications. Not only will the products work better against the target pests, proper timing also reduces the risk to beneficial organisms, reduces liability issues and saves time and money by reducing the number of retreats.

There are several useful tools and tactics that turf managers can use to more accurately time pesticide applications and help determine if an application is even needed. Knowing how to accurately identify insects and understand their life cycles are keys to successful monitoring. Keep a good turfgrass pest

management book with color photos available as a reference.

Monitoring tools and tactics — indirect sampling

Black light traps — Turf managers can monitor the nighttime flight of most scarab beetles, mole crickets and pest moths using ultraviolet or mercury vapor lights. The adult insects fly to the light, drop into a container (usually through a funnel) and can't escape. These traps are often hung 10 feet or so away from buildings, hedges or other obstructions. Knowing when adults are flying, mating and laying eggs helps turf managers estimate when peak egg hatch will be to time control measures more accurately. Also, watch what flies to flood lights or lights on buildings.

Pheromone traps — Another way to catch adult male moths and beetles is a pheromone trap that contains either a mating pheromone or floral lure. The pheromone smells like a female, so a male flies to the pheromone, can't find a female and gets stuck in the trap. A floral lure may smell like preferred host plants or flowers. The pheromones are typically species-specific, so only a particular pest is targeted for each trap. This may work well for either mass trapping, mating disruption or simple monitoring.

Bait traps — Some insects may be attracted to the smell of rotting fruit, meat or dung. They fly to the source of the smell, fall into soapy water and die. This trap is useful in catching *Pelotrupes* beetles (a scarab), which make gopher-like mounds in deep sands in Florida.

Pitfall traps — These containers are placed flush with the ground, and walking or tunneling insects fall into them. Often, a soapy solution or antifreeze fills the bottom of the container to kill the insect. Pitfall traps can be made from household materials, like a small cup. Frequent emptying may be needed during periods of rain.

Monitoring tools and tactics — direct sampling

Soap flushes — An easy way to find some pests in the soil without damaging the turf is to do a soap flush. About 2 tablespoons of liquid dish soap is added to two gallons of water, and the solution is poured over a square yard of turf. Caterpillars, beetle adults, mole crickets, earwigs, worms and other creatures will surface within a few minutes.

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QUICK TIP

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