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# In the **M**inority

What are young professionals doing to land their first superintendent jobs? Sometimes it's a matter of taking advantage of a not-so-super opportunity **BY LUKE WAGNER**

**T**he modest Windridge Country Club in Owensboro, Ky., workplace of 29-year-old Scott Stuckey, could be observed as a so-so job for a superintendent.

But not for Stuckey, who envisions nothing but opportunity with his mediocre budget and frequently flooded back nine.

Knowing he's in a minority category, Stuckey smiles and waves at member after member who call his name as he prunes the plants around the first tee at Windridge. Only 4 percent of superintendents in the United States are under 30. What is that 4 percent

doing right to gain the top jobs? Who better to ask than Stuckey and a couple of his peers separated by decades of experience.

Stuckey, a first-year superintendent, husband and father of two, believes the biggest reason under-30 assistants have trouble breaking into the industry is because they have their eyes on bigger prizes.

"But if you don't get the perfect layout or the huge budget, you can't look at that as a step back," Stuckey insists.

He stresses that with each new challenge comes a new opportunity to learn. Stuckey says that if a young superintendent can show what he can do with a \$250,000 budget and a less-than-perfect design, the ideal jobs that so many young turf professionals immediately seek will be waiting for them eventually.

In Stuckey's situation, he believes he would still be looking for a job had he not focused on the positive aspects of Windridge. And

while some claim the course lacks the character of a multimillion-dollar landscape, Stuckey has always dwelled on the club's positive traits, including its small maintenance barn built atop an ancient, fractured red and green tennis court.

When Stuckey interviewed for the job a year ago, he revealed his enthusiasm for the post. He inspected the course's mostly new equipment and met the course's dependable nucleus of workers. He says that kind of motivation is vital for young assistants looking to move up the ranks.

"Get yourself enthusiastic about some aspect or challenge," Stuckey advises. "Get yourself in the frame of mind to make the best of it."

These are the things young

**Scott Stuckey says he's making the best of his chance as superintendent of Windridge Country Club.**



LUKE WAGNER



turf professionals must display to prospective employers in the early stages of their careers. And such enthusiasm goes hand in hand with making good contacts.

Rick Slattery, the veteran superintendent of Locust Hill Country Club in Fairport N.Y., says making solid contacts early in their careers is crucial for young professionals.

"It's vitally important that you network as much as you can," Slattery says. "You never know if a salesman or a member from a previous course could be a vital contact."

Stuckey points out the importance of contacts as a way to set oneself apart from the sea of identical resumes that boast two to four years of experience as assistants.

While building contacts can take time, Mat Dunmyer, the young superintendent of Sonoma Golf Club in Sonoma, Calif., points out that time is on the side of the younger generation. It's also important that young turf professionals

use their early years to learn. "You need to grow and recognize your weaknesses and strengths," Dunmyer says.

How important is it to build contacts? Consider Stuckey's plight. Less than a year ago, he was roaming the fairways and greens as a highly visible, hard-working assistant at a top-tier country club in southern Indiana. He later discovered that an important member contact at that course made a substantial contribution to his hiring just up the river.

But again, intertwined within this spider web of a getting-hired formula is the weighty personal interview itself. "You must market yourself like a product on the shelf at the grocery store," Slattery says of the interview process.

Stuckey and Dunmyer view the interview process differently. Knowing the X's and O's of turf management is crucial, Stuckey believes, but so is the ability for the interviewee to show that he or she can succeed at a certain course.

Also, Stuckey gives credit to his home life as a responsible father and husband as a selling point.

While not disagreeing, Dunmyer focuses on a more personal level during interviews. He says it's important to understand for whom you'll be working, and then market yourself as to how you can relate to that person's tendencies.

However, when sorting through all this information, one commonality sticks out like brown patch on a perfectly manicured zoysiagrass fairway: It's a process. Superintendent jobs don't just fall into 20-somethings laps.

"[The jobs] may come later, or they may come sooner," Slattery says. "But I don't know many people who worked hard, had patience, knowledge and a network of contacts that didn't end up being superintendents (eventually)." ■

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*Wagner is a freelance writer from Evansville, Ind.*

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## It's winter, and a Northern superintendent's thoughts turn to **Weed Control**

**I**t may be December and cold and snowy, but some Northern superintendents already have visions of spring dandelions dancing in their heads. So we decided to ask them: What are the most important things to remember in planning for weed control next year? Here's what they had to say:

"Review the past year and look to see what worked and what didn't work. Look to see what weeds you have and make sure you address specific problems. You also need to determine whether or not you will be overseeding before deciding on a pre-emergent application. I tend to formulate my weed-control program based on specific needs as opposed to a shotgun approach."

— **Mike Sauls, superintendent of Butler National Golf Club in Oak Brook, Ill.**

"Broadleaf control is best in the fall. So you'll be ahead of the game if you did it this fall. If it's a moist year like the past two years, the weeds just keep coming. So keep the sprayer going."

— **Steve Numbers, superintendent of Westfield Group Country Club in Westfield, Ohio.**

"We're re-evaluating our weed-control program, especially in light of introduction of newer herbicides. We want to positively identify our problem weeds, analyze why we think they occurred or invaded [the course] and then research controls for them. Are they annuals, perennials, sedges or grasses? Did they occur because of turf loss, turf stress or certain cultural

practices, such as mowing height and fertility? In a nutshell, we want to find what we can do to stop or control weeds with a keep-it-simple method first. It might be a slight cultural adjustment, or it may end up requiring some major attack method. Certainly, the money spent on the program must be evaluated, as well as possible environmental consequences."

— **Jerry Coldiron, certified superintendent of Boone Links/Lassing Pointe in Florence, Ky.**

"The most important things I try to remember are:

- What are the most-difficult-to-control weeds?
- On what grass species and on what site will an herbicide be sprayed?
- What time of the year do I need to apply these herbicides?
- What adjuvants or surfactants can I add to possibly lower rates or increase effectiveness?
- What products for weed control are not registered for use in my state?"

— **Kevin Seibel, superintendent of Century Country Club in Purchase, N.Y.**

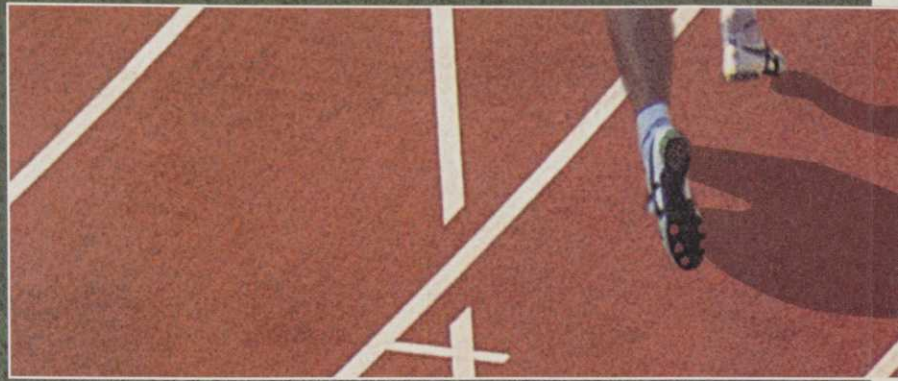
"Effective weed control is about applying the correct herbicide at the right time of year and at the proper rate for your grass types and maturity level of the turf."

— **Chris Ayers, certified superintendent of Lakewood Country Club in Rockville, Md.**

*Compiled by Larry Aylward, Editor*



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**Matt Shaffer**  
Director of Golf Course Operations,  
Merion Golf Club, Ardmore, PA



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Industry suppliers at a glance

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MIKE KLEMM



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## Product Focus:

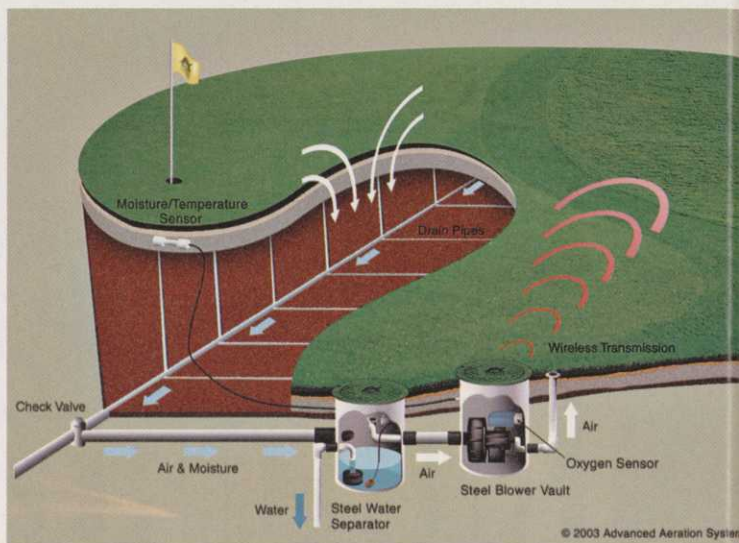
Advanced Aer, recently recommended for installation on all Nicklaus Design golf course projects, is the first and only sub-surface aeration system that measures, monitors and controls oxygen, moisture and temperature levels in the turf grass root zone through sensor technology. With Advanced Aer's OMT system, superintendents have a tool that provides vital information about their greens and provides an effective treatment method that assures that high playability standards can be reached and maintained, even in the face of unpredictable changes in environmental conditions. The end results are both healthier grass and faster, firmer, more consistent putting surfaces.

## Technical Support, Sales, Training and Customer Service:

Advanced Aer distributes the OMT system through Rain Bird and Toro irrigation system distributors including Century Equipment, Hilliard, OH; Koonz Sprinkler Supply, Springfield, NJ; Smith Turf & Irrigation, Charlotte, NC; Wesco Turf Supply, Lake Mary, FL; Wesco Turf Inc., Sarasota, FL; Hector Turf, Deerfield Beach, FL; HYDROLogic, Sioux Falls, SD; Wickham Supply, Carrollton, TX; and High Tech Irrigation, Indio, CA. Each distributor has factory trained and certified service technicians who can install and expertly maintain the systems.

## Major Product Lines:

The Advanced Aer OMT is a compact, in-ground aeration system that incorporates patented soil gas analysis technology that continuously monitors subsurface oxygen, moisture and temperature levels. The sensors' data is sent to a green-side pedestal or a PC at the



superintendent's desk via radio satellite communications. The system can be programmed to automatically activate the vacuum, pulling air through the root zone, and the system's powerful regenerative blower motors automatically adjust to the amount of moisture in the soil profile, preventing the over-drying associated with other subsurface aeration systems.

The in-ground system consists of two compact 20-inch diameter by 30-inch tall stainless steel vaults connected to under-green drainage pipes at a check valve off to the side of the green. Moisture, temperature, and/or salinity sensors are inconspicuously buried in the green's soil profile, and an oxygen sensor is housed in the system's underground blower vault.

The OMT system is ideal for newly constructed greens or as a retrofit to an existing green's drainage system. The system can be activated remotely from the superintendent's computer or at the green-side pedestal, or it can be set to automatically activate when specific thresholds, pre-set by the superintendent, are reached. This level of knowledge and control is unprecedented in the industry. The end result is both healthier grass and a faster, firmer, more consistent putting surface.





# BASF Turf & Ornamental

## BASF Turf & Ornamental

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Manager

### Product Focus:

Better turf comes from better products. At BASF, we offer a comprehensive portfolio of products specifically designed to help you keep your course weed-free and disease-free, with maximum efficiency of labor and other resources.

We know your career can be made or broken out on the course. That's why BASF offers the tools you need to keep your course in the peak condition that virtually eliminates player complaints.

### Technical Support, Sales, Training and Customer Service:

The BASF T&O dedicated sales team works directly with customers and distributors to apply leading global science to regional turf and ornamental challenges. To find a BASF sales representative in your area, visit [www.turffacts.com](http://www.turffacts.com).



### Major Product Lines:

BASF has an extensive product line for golf course superintendents, including:



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**Emerald®**  
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**Emerald®** is an all-new class of fungicide chemistry for dollar spot control. The active ingredient, boscalid, inhibits a system called complex II in the Mitochondria of fungal cells, depriving the fungal cells of energy, disrupting fungal growth and development and halting disease development. Designed specifically to control dollar spot, Emerald is effective on most major turf species.



# Bayer Environmental Science

## Bayer Environmental Science

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### Product Focus:

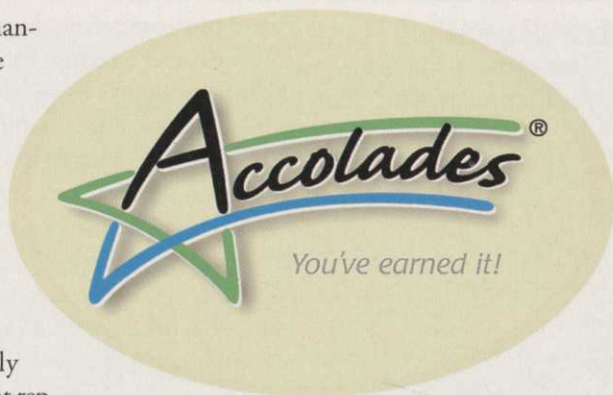
Bayer Environmental Science manufactures and markets an extensive line of turf and ornamental products for use on golf courses, home lawns, sports fields, commercial landscapes, nurseries and greenhouses. Bayer Environmental Science continues a tradition of innovative research and professional solutions, supported by highly trained sales and field development representatives. Its Backed By Bayer initiative highlights the many value-added benefits of working with Bayer, including ongoing industry commitment, dedication and support; guaranteed performance; superior solutions that go beyond controlling pests; and its Accolades rewards program.

### Manufacturing Facilities:

In the United States, manufacturing facilities are located in Pasadena, TX; St. Louis, MO; and Kansas City, MO.

### Technical Support, Sales, Training and Customer Service:

Bayer Environmental Science supports its green industry products with a dedicated turf and ornamental research and training facility in Clayton, NC, where industry experts develop solutions for the green industry. A network of technical development representatives works with university specialists throughout the country. Separate golf and lawn/landscape sales teams focus on the distinct needs of golf course superintendents and lawn service owners/operators.



### Major Product Lines:

From trusted standards like Merit® insecticide, Ronstar® herbicide, Proxy® plant growth regulator and Compass™ fungicide to newer products like Allectus™ insecticide, Revolver™ herbicide and TopChoice™ insecticide, Bayer Environmental Science offers products to fit all areas of turf maintenance. Its broad line of fungicide products includes 26GT®, Signature™, Bayleton®, ProStar® and Banol®. Besides Merit, TopChoice and Allectus™, insecticide products include Dylox®, Chipco® Choice™, DeltaGard®, Tempo® and Sevin®. Herbicides include Finale®, Sencor®, Prograss®, Illoxan® and Acclaim® Extra.

In addition, Bayer continues to create new uses for existing products – additional tree injection uses for Merit, mosquito control for Tempo Ultra and improved turf quality with Signature.



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