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Off The Fringe

It Wasn't About Shutting Up Bill Rose, Scotts' Schwartz Says

By Larry Aylward, Editor in Chief

The Scotts Miracle-Gro Co.'s recent acquisition of certain brands and assets from Turf-Seed Inc. was not about silencing Turf-Seed founder Bill Rose, who has been a vocal critic of Scotts' development of Roundup Ready Creeping Bentgrass (RRCB), a genetically modified turf now under consideration for deregulation by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, said Mark Schwartz, senior vice president and general manager of grass seed for Scotts Miracle-Gro.

"This isn't about shutting up Bill," Schwartz said. "I don't feel like there's a need to [shut him up]."

Roundup Ready creeping bentgrass has sparked controversy the past few years. Rose has repeatedly voiced his concerns about the glyphosate-resistant turf cross-breeding with non-glyphosate-resistant turf.

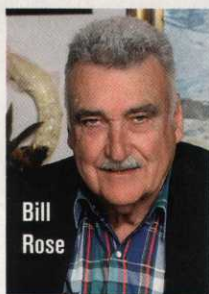
In June, Marysville, Ohio-based Scotts Miracle-Gro announced the acquisition from Hubbard, Ore.-based Turf-Seed, a producer of commercial turfgrasses for more than 35 years. The purchase price for Turf-Seed's assets and payments, under the six-year term agreements, is expected to total about \$30 million to \$35 million, according to Scotts Miracle-Gro.

Under the agreements, Scotts Miracle-Gro acquires certain assets of Turf-Seed, including its brands, turfgrass varieties and intellectual property. Scotts also enters into a multi-year collaboration, including relationships with several entities controlled by Rose. These agreements include Pure Seed Testing, Roselawn Seed and Rose Agri-Seed.

Schwartz said he didn't expect Rose, who was developing his own transgenic turfgrass called HybriGene, to sit back and watch as Scotts developed and tested RRCB a few years ago. Rose's complaints about RRCB were just "competitive instinct," Schwartz said.

"He has a point of view from a competitive point of view and an environmental impact point of view," Schwartz added. "He's certainly entitled to his point of view, and I respect it."

Schwartz will lead the combined seed business. Rose will serve as chairman of the Scotts Grass Seed Advisory Council, which will help guide the grass seed business and provide strategic direction in the area of innovations and marketing.



Quotable

"It's important to the country club that the lake gets cleaned up for people who water ski on it or have to look at it."

— Bob Senseman, the superintendent at Oswego Lake Country Club in Lake Oswego, Ore., who has stopped applying fertilizer with phosphorus to the course.
(Source: *The Oregonian*)

"Our products are vital to public health protection and property protection. And sometimes the American public tends to forget that."

— Allen James, president of the Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment, on the importance of pesticides, which have been underrated by many Americans

"I don't want to discuss politics."

— Matthew Yount, superintendent of English Turn Golf & Country Club, when asked how he thought President Bush handled the devastation brought on by Hurricane Katrina last summer.

Schwartz said he and Rose "buted heads a few times" in the past few years regarding Rose's objections over RRCB. "But to me it was never personal," Schwartz said. "It was just rhetoric."

Schwartz also said that he and Rose have formed a solid relationship. "Bill and I have become close friends over the last year, and we have already begun to partner closely in making our great business even better."

Rose could not be reached for comment.

The agreement between the two companies does not include Rose's HybriGene business. But Schwartz said, "We may or may not end up working together closely on that in the future." T-2-Green, a separate entity from Turf-Seed, is also not part of the deal. But Schwartz said: "I'd love to work with them to see if we can do some good as far as synergizing and growing the Penn bentgrass franchise and varieties."

A few weeks after the Turf-Seed deal, Scotts announced it had acquired certain brands and assets from Albany, Ore.-based Landmark Seed Co. Under the agreement, Scotts acquired certain assets of Landmark Seed, including its brands, turfgrass varieties and intellectual property.

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Hold the Rain

DESPITE NO FAIRWAY IRRIGATION, NEWPORT'S REYNOLDS WAS HOPING FOR DRY WEATHER DURING THE U.S. WOMEN'S OPEN

By Anthony Pioppi, Contributing Editor

When the 1995 U.S. Amateur came to Newport Country Club, certified superintendent Bob Reynolds was praying for rain.

A long, dry spell that year burned out the course, which only features irrigation for green complexes. The drought charred the fairways and reduced the rough to wispy clumps, hardly a deterrent to any player, especially Tiger Woods, who downed Buddy Marucci Jr. for his second of three consecutive U.S. Am titles.

This year Reynolds, in his 29th year at the course and 25th as superintendent, wanted the heavens to close up so Newport would be firm and fast when the U.S. Women's Open arrived June 29 through July 2. May and June had been abnormally rainy, resulting in a layout that was uncharacteristically green, not the usual variations of tan, henna, brown and golden. It also meant that conditions were much softer than Reynolds or anyone else at Newport wanted them.

For those unfamiliar with Newport, an A.W. Tillinghast

design, it is strikingly different than the West Course at Winged Foot Golf Club, a Tillinghast design that hosted this year's U.S. Open. At Newport there is little of the green designs that feature sweeping slopes that Tillinghast used in New York. Instead he opted for more subtle movements, most likely in deference to the winds off Narraganset Bay that buffet Newport, and the subtle landforms on which the course is placed.

Reynolds cut the greens at one-eighth of an inch but was considering dropping the height when interviewed in June. The fairway height of cut was about nine-sixteenths of an inch. Fairways had been narrowed slightly for the tournament and stayed that width once the pros left.

"The members like it. They're not going to change it," Reynolds said.

In sharp contrast to Winged Foot, which featured carefully manicured bunkers for the tournament, Newport's hazards were filled with sand that can change radically from one bunker to the next, even on the same hole, something of which the USGA wholeheartedly approved.

"They like it the way it is," longtime Newport green chairman Barclay Douglas said. "It's a smorgasbord type of sand."

The biggest change for Reynolds was in his crew size; normally he has a summer staff of 12 but this year it was 14 and was augmented by about 50 volunteers for the tournament, mostly superintendents, assistants and crew members from courses in the region.



INTRODUCING: The Golf and Environment Initiative

AUDUBON BEGINS PROGRAM BASED ON COMMITMENT

Ron Dodson believes that every person and organization involved with the game of golf has a role to play in protecting the natural environment. So to help those people and organizations do just that, Dodson, the CEO of Audubon International, has created the Golf and Environment Initiative.

Through the program, Dodson said he wants to provide the environmental education, tools, assistance and incentives needed for developing industry-

wide environmental commitment, action and results. Audubon International has been managing the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Programs for nearly 20 years.

"With an estimated 17,000 golf courses — covering an area equivalent to the states of Delaware and Rhode Island — across the United States, there are tremendous opportunities for the golf course industry and everyone associated with golf to play important roles regarding environmental stewardship in their communities," Dodson said. "To date, the responsibilities associated with course management and therefore the environment has been

placed squarely on the backs of golf course superintendents. While many have undertaken this responsibility with gusto, the future of golf depends on others stepping up and doing their part to assure the game remains viable both economically and environmentally. This not only includes others employed in the golf course business, but it most certainly includes golfers too."

Audubon recently launched a Web site for the Golf and Environment Initiative. It can be viewed at www.golfandenvironment.org. "The purpose of this site is to serve as a clearing house of all information connected to golf and environment issues," Dodson said.

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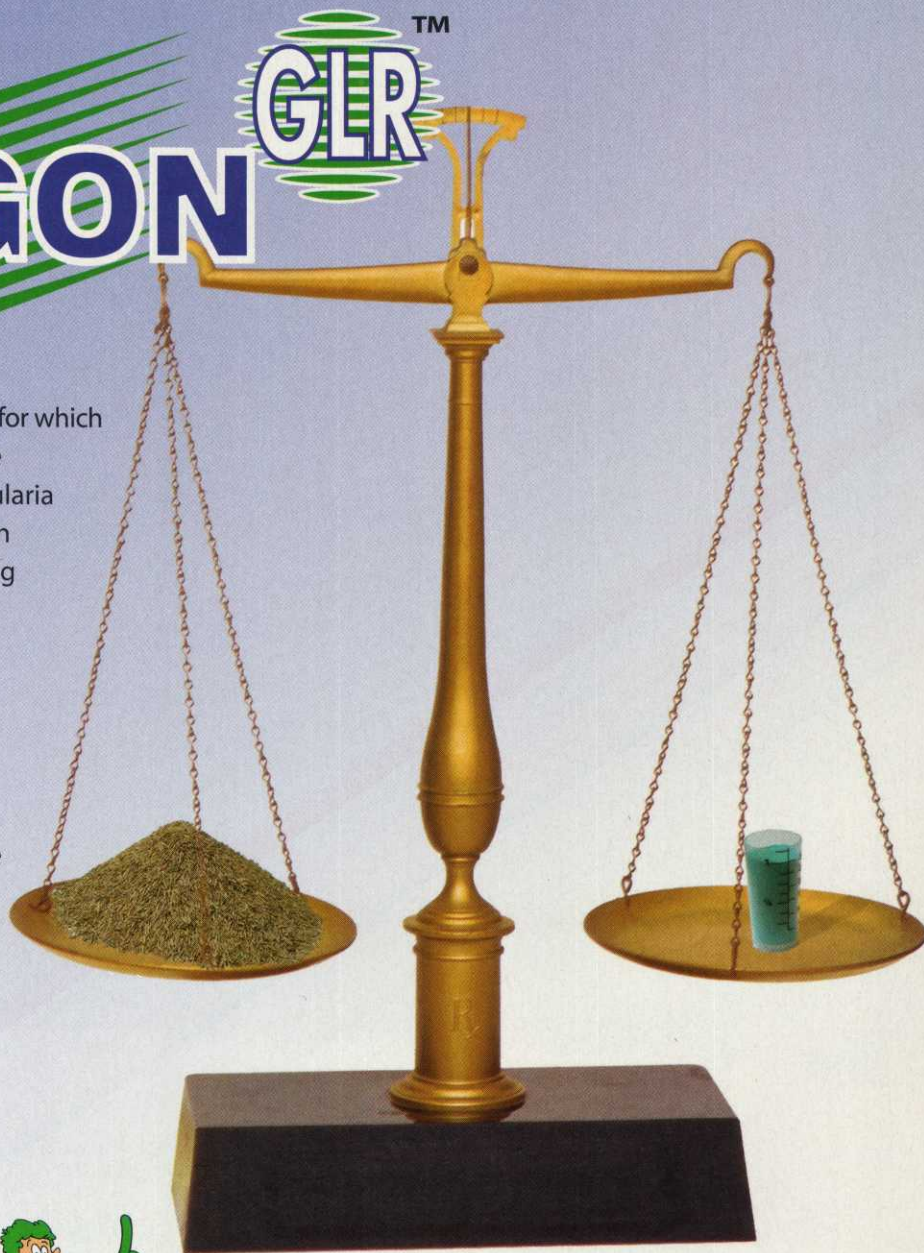
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Hole of the

▶ Hole # 17 | White Manor Country Club | Malvern, PA



PHOTO BY: DAN HALL

Month

Hole Stats

Distance: 553 yards

Par 5

The Turf

Green: A-1 bentgrass

Fairway: L-93 bentgrass

NEARLY THREE CENTURIES AGO, PENNSYLVANIA founder William Penn granted the magnificent rolling property known today as White Manor Country Club to the Evans family, which worked the land as a dairy farm until 1962. Two years later, pastures evolved into fairways and White Manor became recognized as one of the country's most beautiful and challenging golf courses.

Beginning in 2002, the 7,010-yard par-71 course underwent a 15-month renovation that earned White Manor the honor of Course Renovation of the Year in 2003 by Golf Inc. The 553-yard, par-5, 17th hole exemplifies White Manor golf and is one of the most scenic holes on the course.

The downhill hole begins at an elevated tee box that reveals the challenges of going for the green in two shots or trying to place a second shot to set up a third stroke to the green for a birdie.

The green is bordered by a stone wall bordering that separates it from the pond which comes into play during both a second and third shot.

Superintendent Don Brown and his crew take pride in meeting players' high expectations for beauty, challenge and exceptional play. Knowing dollar spot is a common bentgrass turf disease in the transition zone and, therefore, a threat to White

Manor's newly renovated greens, Brown implemented a preventive disease-management strategy based on both cultural controls and a fungicide rotation program. Brown applies Emerald fungicide as part of a tank mix on his greens in May and again in September as a stand-alone application. "We never see dollar spot," says Brown. "It's easy to control if you have a good program in place."

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GOLFDOM'S HOLE OF THE MONTH IS MADE POSSIBLE BY:

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Build it and they will come" might have worked for Iowa corn grower Kevin Costner in the movie, "Field of Dreams." But in golf circles (not to be confused with crop circles), the outcome is not so predictable.

I'm not talking about building new golf courses, which will continue despite the game's current flat-line participation, which is in need of resuscitation in this fast-paced, time-crunched, instant-gratification age. I'm talking about the traditional monthly meetings of local superintendent chapters and the old "scheduling it and they will come" mindset.

Don't get me wrong. I think chapter meetings are the heart and soul of our profession, and I have jumped on the soap box any number of times touting the personal and professional growth I gleaned from participating in them. Like any worthwhile venture, however, it is always the quality and not the quantity that makes them successful.

Geography may dictate having fewer meetings for some far-flung chapters, which makes sense. For instance, some courses are located a hundred miles apart in some areas of the West. And given the dismal attendance numbers in the more densely populated regions that traditionally have monthly meetings, a little introspection may be overdue.

With many operating budgets shrinking, does it really make sense to have 10, 11 or 12 meetings a year at \$40, \$50 or \$100 a pop? I know some chapters have only six meetings a year, which is a little more reasonable. There still may be more room to improve attendance and meeting quality. What's wrong with considering quarterly meetings?

Way out yonder in the Peaks and Prairies (Montana, Wyoming, etc.) and Idaho GCCA hinterlands, they meet twice a year, understandable since some courses are 1,300 miles apart. They get together twice a year for a weekend conference complete with nationally known speakers, regional USGA agronomists, banquets, receptions and golf outings. The meetings are planned before and after peak season. The attendance is excellent. Points are earned.

Build It & They Will Come (or Will They?)

BY JOEL JACKSON



MAYBE THE TIME
IS RIPE TO CHANGE
OUR WAY
OF THINKING
ABOUT HOLDING
CHAPTER MEETINGS

Costs average out, and there's less demand for time away from the job. I liken it to the old fur trappers annual spring jamboree in the Rockies.

Meanwhile, more urban chapters seem to be struggling with attendance, finding a speaker and finding a location beyond the usual half dozen volunteers who host it year after year. Recently, I read a chapter newsletter lamenting that at a recent monthly meeting the excellent golf course, speaker and club food were enjoyed by only 15 superintendents and 20 suppliers. All that work and preparation by host and board members for just a meager response from a chapter having more than 100 Class A, SM and C members. And this is not an isolated incident as you know.

They say the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result. Maybe the time is ripe to change our way of thinking about chapter meetings. Obviously each chapter will still hold its big annual fundraisers. These are always well attended.

If you have to get away and network with peers more frequently, there is nothing keeping you from getting a small group together to play an afternoon golf round and share war stories once a week or month. It would be cheaper and less time consuming.

It would also be easier for volunteer board members to schedule winter, spring, summer and fall chapter meetings rather than cramming more meetings into already time-crunched schedules.

It's just an idea maybe worth considering. Don't schedule it so often and maybe they will come when you do.

Certified superintendent Joel Jackson is the director of communications for the Florida GCSA.

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Did you hear the PGA Tour's finest howling like babies when Jack Nicklaus and Paul B. Latshaw Jr. unveiled furrowed bunkers for Muirfield Village Golf Club's Memorial Tournament last month?

Davis Love was so mad about the furrows that he wouldn't talk to reporters after the first round. Jeff Maggert, a notorious expert when it comes to the art of bunker raking, said the harrowing hazards were "Mickey Mouse" and that we'll "see players looking to pop this event off [their schedules] if they keep doing it."

While the folks at Muirfield deserve praise for trying to punch up the hazardless hazard, it's hard to imagine how the return of furrowed bunkers — long thought to have died at Oakmont Country Club after they were born in the early 20th century — will do anything but create more headaches for superintendents and golf committees.

The bunker, already overraked and primped because of what golfers see on television, may now have to be furrowed for the club invitational or the local amateur qualifying event. Or even on a daily basis at those courses where golfers love to be tortured.

So you're saying, "That's not so bad except for the cost of extra rakes and some golfers griping."

Oh, but it gets worse. At Muirfield, the fairway bunkers were more severely furrowed while the greenside bunkers' furrows had to be raked in a certain pattern. The PGA Tour is analyzing these directional raking issues to determine in the future which way the raking must go.

Now I bet you're thinking, "Good luck trying to get an underpaid, overworked employee to do this correctly in the morning darkness!"

The list of negative ramifications is endless, when the problem here really starts with courses being under fire to react to unregulated distance and to mimic the PGA Tour conditions.

Another more subtle influence is this ridiculous idea that bunkers should be manicured daily, creating the bizarre situation that has players begging for their balls to end up in the sand.

The PGA Tour would do a great service to the game by shelving the furrowed concept and instead announcing that they will rake bunkers

A Dangerous Bunker Mentality

BY GEOFF SHACKELFORD



THE FOLKS AT
MUIRFIELD DESERVE
PRAISE FOR TRYING
TO PUNCH UP
THE HAZARDLESS
HAZARD, BUT ...

Wednesday night of tournament week and then not again for the rest of the event, except in the case of a rain washout. This would put bunker maintenance at the mercy of players and caddies, while raising the stakes each day as conditions get more and more unpredictable.

As the Muirfield saga was playing out, I heard from certified superintendent Jerry Coldiron, who oversees 45 holes at Boone Links/Lassing Pointe in Florence, Ky.

"The game and expected conditions have simply gotten too expensive for the average facility to sustain, and bunker maintenance is a very expensive part of most budgets," Coldiron said. "Golfers expect what they see on TV tournaments on a daily basis."

Working with the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America staff and superintendents Kerry Satterwhite and Sandy Queen, Coldiron is attempting to develop a public golf forum at the Golf Industry Show next year that deals with ways to help public course superintendents who are bearing the brunt of a struggling game.

"Although Muirfield and the tour are doing this furrowing for different reasons, the return of bunker maintenance to a more reasonable level will help make the game more affordable in the long run," Coldiron says.

The group wants to address how the pressures of reduced revenue and increased cost have put undue pressure on many superintendents and their operations. But instead of beating a dead horse, Coldiron and friends want to offer insights, ideas and hopefully support to the unique situation faced by many public golf operations.

He would like your advice on topics and speakers who can lend ideas to struggling facilities. E-mail him at turfman@one.net.

Contact Geoff Shackelford at geoffshac@aol.com.