

Month

Austin, Texas

Hole Stats

Distance: 175 yards from the championship tees

Par 3

The Turf

Green: TifEagle Bermudagrass

Fairway: Hybrid TifSport Bermudagrass

FAZIO FOOTHILLS IS BARTON CREEK RESORT & SPA'S signature golf course. It's a design masterpiece from Tom Fazio with dramatic cliff-lined fairways, natural limestone caves, waterfalls and superb TifEagle Bermuda greens, providing 18 holes of challenging pleasure.

The 7,125-yard, par-72 course demands long, accurate drives down the Hybrid TifSport Bermuda fairways. The 175-yard, par-3, ninth hole features a green adjacent to a natural waterfall that adds to the challenge and beauty of the course.



Additionally, all four courses at Barton Creek embody the Fazio trademark of protecting and preserving the environment and have achieved the Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary designation. Of the estimated 16,000 golf courses in the United States, only 2,300 are affiliated with the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary program.

Ken Gorzycki, director of golf course management, and his team take great pride in their courses and work hard to maintain their natural beauty through a meticulous management program that cares for the environment through managing run off water and re-using it for irrigation as well as cultural and chemical pest controls.

Insignia fungicide plays a role in keeping these courses looking their best. As part of a fungicide rotation, Insignia's broad spectrum of control helps keep the pristine greens and fairways from becoming susceptible to the patch diseases that normally attack bermudagrass.



To find out more about Insignia fungicide and its broad spectrum of disease control, contact your local distributor sales representative or BASF at www.turfacts.com

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

 **BASF**

The Chemical Company

The classic teamwork slogan, “There is no I in team,” sent the message that WE are all in this together, so quit slacking or showboating and get on the bus with US.

I do a lot of crosswords and word jumbles, so it didn't take long for me to decipher the word “team” and plainly see that there was ME in team.

I'm not saying the message still isn't valid, but the golf industry team at your club and in your state needs a new slogan and a new commitment to teamwork in order to address the multiple water, nutrient and pesticide issues.

“United We Stand” is my choice as the new rallying cry. I know it's not really new. Patrick Henry said it long ago on the eve of the American Revolution. But there's a U (you) and I in united. You and I need to get our act together to raise awareness on golf's contributions environmentally and economically, and send clear and consistent messages to our politicians and regulators at all levels.

The problem is like any preventive treatment or practice on your course. You spend time, effort and money to prevent a problem that doesn't exist YET! Most action groups that form do so out of a circle-the-wagons mentality to fight off a specific attack. I would make the argument that we are already under attack in the case of water restrictions and perceptions about nutrient and pesticide runoff and leaching. We need to unite and create white-paper statements about those issues, which make negative headlines about golf and turfgrass in general time after time.

A few states have made good inroads into uniting the allied associations of golf — Arizona and Georgia come to mind. Florida once created the Florida Golf Council over a taxation issue, but the council dissolved from apathy once the issue was reconciled. There's nothing like a good fight or injustice to pull us together. Again, I remind you that the anti-golf groups, clueless media and pressured politicians have golf and turfgrass in the cross hairs and take shots at us every day.

The Georgia golf associations managed to

U and I Need to Work Together

BY JOEL JACKSON



WE ARE ALREADY
UNDER ATTACK IN
THE CASE OF WATER
RESTRICTIONS AND
PERCEPTIONS
ABOUT NUTRIENT
AND PESTICIDE
RUNOFF AND
LEACHING

unite and rally the troops during the recent drought in 2000 and bring some common sense to the water-restriction process. I read recently that, as the alliance followed up with a Water Conservation Best Management Practices survey to solidify its position and demonstrate stewardship, only 21 of more than 300 surveys had been filled out and returned. It is so easy to lose focus once the crisis has passed. I keep telling you we are being worn down by a lot of little skirmishes that divide and conquer our industry — water use or quality here, pesticide fear there.

The Florida Golf Course Superintendents Association has been flirting with the idea of getting together with the Club Managers Association of America, the golf course owners, the Florida Golf Association and the Professional Golf Association for a sit down and talk about how we can work together on the issues. Well, it's time to ask these folks out on a date and see how it goes. The Golf Industry Show is a start on a broad national level, but local issues like “Save the Bay, Lake or River” will be taking pot shots at golf for fertilizer and pesticide runoff — real or imagined.

Coming soon from the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America will be Baseline Data Surveys to get a realistic fact-based handle on how we manage our golf courses. Don't ignore these opportunities to document the real facts about golf. They won't be long or tedious to complete. They will be confidential. Superintendents have the data. Owners, pros and general managers have the contacts. This will give us a way that you (U) and I can unite to help our industry.

Jackson is director of communications for the Florida GCSA.



SANDTRAPPER II

The best product on the market, this premium performer remains the only option where performance is critical. For use in extreme applications, Sandtrapper II gives you confidence and reliability over the long haul.



SANDTRAPPER MD

The newest addition to the Sandtrapper line-up, MD raises the bar on performance and value. Best for use in moderate to extreme applications where budgets are of paramount concern.



SANDTRAPPER I

Designed as a reliable, low cost option for moderate applications, Sandtrapper I works effectively in bunkers without high flashing. Great for use in bunker bases or shallow, flat designs.



SANDTRAPPER GEO

The contamination-only choice, GEO is designed to prevent contaminants from creeping into expensive bunker sand. Can also be incorporated in hybrid designs with other Sandtrapper styles.

MORE CHOICES

MORE FLEXIBILITY

MORE CONTROL

When evaluating your bunker maintenance routines, consider the performance and product options Sandtrapper delivers. With more choices, flexibility, and control, course professionals get the results they need.

Now available in four distinct styles, Sandtrapper gives you maximum performance at every price level. Also available in both 56" and 90" roll widths, Sandtrapper helps you get the most out of your renovation and construction budget.

Contact IVI-GOLF to learn more about this technology and we'll send you our new 2006 Product Information Guide.



888-970-5111
www.sandtrapper.com

At the United States Golf Association's (USGA) annual meeting, Equipment Committee Chair Jim Vernon explained what the USGA has been doing to study the impact of significant changes in the game.

The speech (www.usga.org/news/2006/february/es.html) was significant because it marked a rare moment of forthright communication from an organization that has become more secretive than Dick Cheney's Energy Task Force.

For those who feel golf is in decline in part because longer, narrower courses combined with expensive commercialization are driving people away, the USGA is laying the groundwork to do something about it.

The most interesting component of the talk was Vernon's reference to the "de-skilling" of golf.

"In short, we are to remain vigilant to ensure that improvements in technology do not diminish the skill necessary to play the game."

And there were tough statements like, "We know that the way the way the game is being played by accomplished players has changed dramatically in recent years."

And most blunt of all, "We know from the ShotLink data provided by the PGA Tour that driving accuracy has ceased to be a factor in predicting success on the PGA Tour."

Vernon reiterated that "increased distance has other negative ramifications that we seek to avoid — the lengthening and toughening of courses in response to increases in distance is costly and in many cases impossible. It also has negative effects on environmental and ecological issues, on the costs of maintaining courses and on the pace of play as well."

Everyone in the golf course industry knows about the last statement, and many might throw in safety issues brought on by the distance rush. But the more complicated question, and the one that the USGA has chosen to focus on, is this notion of skill. "What I am suggesting is that we need to re-frame the discussion of how the game is being changed," Vernon said.

What is skill in golf, and why does it matter?

There isn't enough space here to tackle this complicated but important question. For now,

Re-Establishing the Virtues of Skill

BY GEOFF SHACKELFORD



THERE IS AN ENTIRE
GENERATION OF
YOUNGER PLAYERS
WHO HAVE NO
CONCEPT WHAT
REAL SKILL
USED TO MEAN

consider how many skills are less necessary because of equipment advances in the past five years or so.

- The spin rate of golf balls has changed so that good players don't worry as much (or at all) about wind.

- The ability for top players to power their way through a 450-yard hole lined with rough has eliminated the reward of precision. (And yet fairways keep getting narrower.)

- The ability to carry the ball longer and higher than ever has meant a farewell to the ground game along with its wide array of delicious shotmaking and strategic possibilities.

Many will argue the equipment has allowed average golfers to enjoy the game more. While there is no question that more forgiving clubs make things easier, the inability to shape the ball, the reduction of shotmaking options, the changing nature of courses adapting to the equipment and other assorted skill-related shots have made the game less complete.

The Wall Street-driven race to keep up with the latest gear has made it more expensive for some, and an easy pastime to pass up for millions more.

There is an entire generation of younger players who have no concept what real skill used to mean — I'm talking about skill that was necessary as recently as 10 years ago.

So as 19th-hole discussions rage on this summer about the looming equipment battle, remember the skill question.

Many golfers believe that skill means hitting down an imaginary center line, striking the ball as high and long as possible while avoiding land mines along the way. But anyone who played golf prior to the recent equipment boom knows there is so much more to skill than that.

Shackelford can be reached at geoffshac@aol.com.



Our home is always welcome to unique visitors.
In fact, in January alone, we had 12,040* of them.

Of course... some were more unique than others.

Golfdom

www.golfdom.com



**Your window of opportunity for
controlling grubs just got bigger.**



ARENA™ is the only preventive and curative grub control product proven to provide maximum application flexibility.

Unlike other turf insecticides, ARENA™ Insecticide with clothianidin lets you apply from early spring to early fall and still get unsurpassed white grub control. Plus, ARENA offers proven performance against sod webworms, chinch bugs and other damaging pests. To learn more, contact your turf products supplier, log on to www.arystalifescience.us/arena or call 1-866-761-9397 toll free.

Arena™

Putting You In Control

Always read and follow label directions. ARENA and the ARENA logo are trademarks of Arysta LifeScience North America Corporation. The Arysta LifeScience logo is a trademark of Arysta LifeScience Corporation. ©2005 Arysta LifeScience North America Corporation. APIN-043



Arysta LifeScience

Harmony In Growth

Are YOU Happy with Your

PA



Fifteen years ago salaries didn't measure up. Today they aren't quite the bane of superintendents

BY THOMAS SKERNIVITZ, MANAGING EDITOR

WITH A BIGGER paycheck than ego, Matt Shaffer isn't worried about becoming the Bill Gates of superintendents. He's far more concerned about improving the financial standing of his lesser-paid peers.

"I think I'm top-10 percent now," Shaffer says of his monetary rank as the director of golf operations at Merion Golf Club in Ardmore, Pa. "But I always said that once I made it, I wasn't going to forget where I came from because there was a time I could barely eke out a living."

That time was 33 years and a few tax brackets ago. Now 53, Shaffer can smile while reminiscing about his entry-level salary of \$9,000 and the one-bedroom floor of a two-story house that came with it. Better yet, he can sleep easier these days, knowing that superintendent paychecks are no longer stuck in the era of buffalo nickels.

In 2005 the average base salary for a superintendent rose to \$68,914, according to the Golf Course Superintendents

Association of America (GCSAA). The figure represents a 9.3 percent jump from 2003 and a 29.5 percent jump over seven years.

"It's not at all unusual now for superintendents to be making six figures," GCSAA CEO Steve Mona says. "I saw a job posting the other day where the salary was between \$145,000 and \$165,000. Those used to be rarities 10 years or so ago. They're not now."

In turn, many superintendents seem content. A *Golfdom* survey indicates that 71 percent of superintendents are "OK" with their salaries. Another 17 percent claim they "make great money" while 11 percent believe "the pay stinks."

"In the role that I fit in," Mona says, "if 88 percent of our members are saying, 'Yeah, I think I'm OK to well compensated,' I'm happy with that."

Yet there is room for improvement. Many of the hardest-working superintendents are among the least compensated, Shaffer says.

Given the choice, they're the modest individuals who would sooner spend \$2,000 on fertilizer than on a road trip to the national conference. Meanwhile, to Shaffer's chagrin, other employees at the same courses are making notably more money despite playing less integral roles.



"Superintendents today are obviously better educated, and I think we are equal to or better than any other person on the property," he says. "I think we ought to be compensated accordingly, but I don't necessarily think that's the case."

Golfdom's readers reflect Shaffer's sentiment. Although not necessarily unhappy with what they earn, 32 percent claim that "more pay" would be the one thing about their job that they would change, ahead of catering to more knowledgeable golfers (30 percent), experiencing less pressure (18 percent) and shorter working hours (18 percent).

Turn the wage

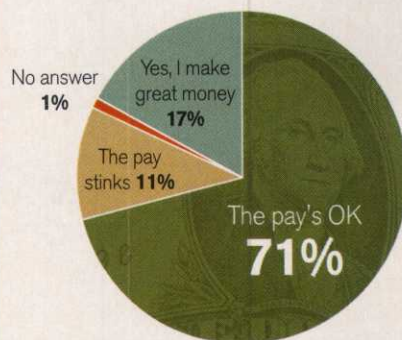
Disdain over compensation used to be more intense. In 1993 superintendents earned an average of \$45,000 per year. Humbling in itself, that figure was just a symptom of an overall image problem that was stunting the profession. While golf pros and club managers were basking in the sport's popularity, superintendents were facing sub-par compensation, fragile job security and fewer job opportunities.

The GCSAA, with Mona at the helm as of November 1993, started to focus on improving the reputation of its membership. Immediately, superintendents were told to mimic the best-dressed person on the property, whether it was a fellow employee or even a member. So be it if that meant donning a coat and tie.

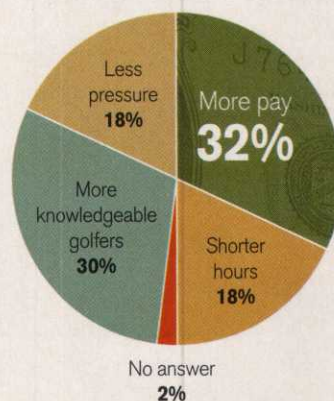
"I think that's pretty much what's expected now," Mona says.

Continued on page 30

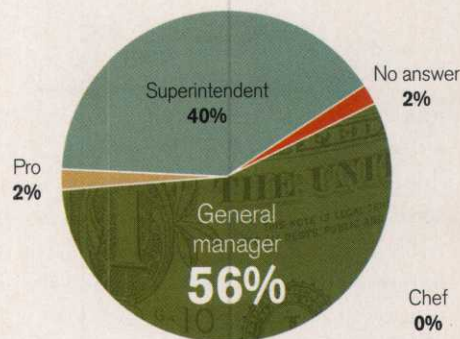
Do you think you're adequately paid for what you do?



If there's one thing you could change about your job, what would it be?



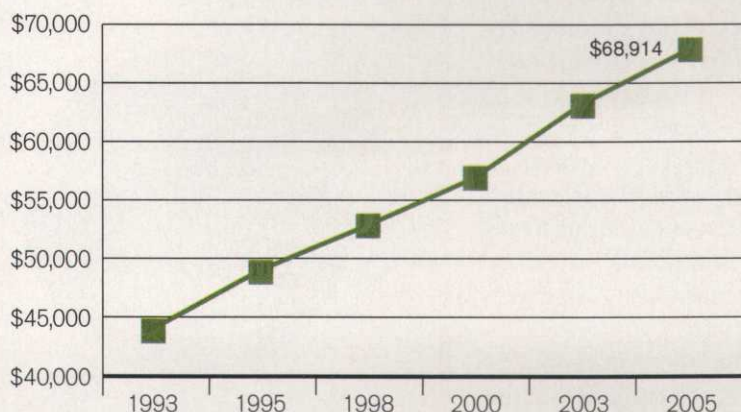
Who do you think should be the highest-paid employee at a golf course?



SOURCE: GOLFDOM SURVEY (379 RESPONDENTS)

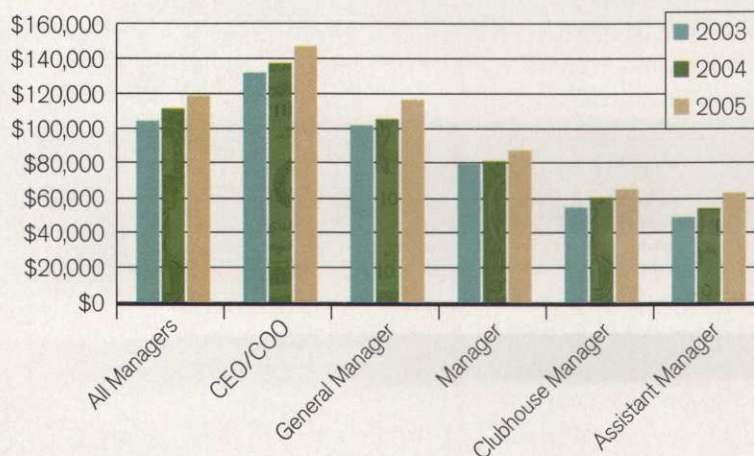
Happy With Your Pay?

Average Base Salary | All Superintendents



SOURCE: GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENTS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

Club Manager Salaries By Title | 2003-2005



SOURCE: CLUB MANAGERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

Continued from page 29

Of course, looking like a person of influence and actually being influential are two different matters. In addition to dressing the part, superintendents were asked by the GCSAA to start taking ownership of the entire facility instead of just the golf course. "Our members can't take that approach any more," Mona says. "And they don't."

Ironically, as the new millennium approached, superintendents finally began to dispel their flawed reputations because

of a newfound emphasis on their bread and butter — the golf course. Between 1996 and 2002, the No. 1 determinant as to why golfers chose a particular course changed from cost to course conditioning, according to surveys conducted by the GCSAA and National Golf Federation. An ensuing *Golf Digest* poll of core golfers indicated that the top two drivers of satisfaction were greens/bunkers and tees/fairways, respectively.

"The golfers have put the role of the superintendent at a pretty high posi-

tion," GCSAA Director of Communications Jeff Bollig says.

Employers, recognizing more than ever that the condition of the golf course is their "No. 1 weapon," Mona says, have reciprocated. The median salary for superintendents at 18-hole facilities with a budget of at least \$1 million is \$100,000, according to the GCSAA. At least 10 percent of all certified superintendents with a minimum education of a bachelor's degree are making \$125,000 or more.

In effect, salary is no longer a major concern. Job security and unrealistic player expectations of the course have moved to the forefront of superintendent worries, Mona says. These days, GCSAA members are just as prone to complain about issues involving labor and environment as they are about compensation.

"For a lot of years, (salary) was Job One," Mona says. "It's still extremely important. I don't want you to get the idea we're coasting at all, because we're not. But those are not the kind of conversations we're having today."

Supers vs. pros and managers

How much salary is enough? At one time the rule of thumb was that the total amount should represent 10 percent of the annual budget. But there are fallacies to that thinking, Shaffer says. "I'm not sure a guy with a \$3 million budget is making \$300,000. And the guy who has a \$500,000 budget, I'm not sure he's making \$50,000," he says.

Less practical still is trying to determine one's worth based on actual hours worked. That's a no-win situation, according to Mona, in light of the long days and weeks that many superintendents record, especially during peak season.

"If you get into the game of trying to calculate your average hourly wage, you probably won't be too happy with that," Mona says. "But if you look at it in a broader sense — as a year rather than 365 eight-hour days — I think you can have a little different attitude. ... And all