

Show-ing

BY LARRY AYLWARD, DAVID FRABOTTA, CURT HARLER AND MARTY WHITFORD

You put a lot of miles on your feet, but hey it's the **Golf Industry Show!**
Here's a recap of what went on in Orlando

◀ CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT A showgoer checks out a concept golf car at the Club Car booth; Tom Hill from BASF hosts Turf Jeopardy at the BASF booth; Christian Tom, manager of career seminars for the Club Managers Association of America, won the bugle-gum blowing contest sponsored by Phoenix Environmental Care; Scott McElroy from Auburn University tees off in Wii golf at a Syngenta Professional Products get-together; a show-goer catches a few winks outside the convention center; and superintendents test their agronomic knowledge in a game of Up to Par at the FarmLinks booth.

We'd like to thank Dr. Scholl for helping us make it through the Golf Industry Show with our feet intact. Without those massaging gel insoles provided to us by the good doctor, we don't think our dogs would've made it through the week.

So, how many miles did you put on your leather oxfords last month in Orlando? Did you have any blowouts?

Seriously, congratulations if you made it through the GIS still standing. That's quite an accomplishment considering that a lot of attendees were so busy going from here to there and back that they were literally eating on the run (did you try one of those awful \$9 gyros at the "food" stand inside the convention center?)

About that Orange County Convention Center ... isn't it vast? Sometimes it seemed downright infinite as we walked and walked to get from one side of the convention center to the other.

And if the show seemed more crowded, it was. Jeff Bollig, director of communications for the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, says attendance was up almost 12 percent from last year's show in Anaheim, Calif., with the crowd topping out at almost 26,000. Exhibit space rose nearly

9,000 square feet to about 301,000. The number of qualified buyers increased 18.5 percent to 11,500, according to Bollig, with 7,200 representing the GCSAA's segment of the show.

The show floor was rife with many new products as well. There was also a smorgasbord of seminars, a big golf tournament and a few celebrity sightings, including a particular Shark species and his new fiancée. And there were plenty of people bidding goodbye to Steve Mona, who attended his last show as CEO of the GCSAA.

Right man for the job

Speaking of that Shark, Greg Norman showed up at the show to pick up the GCSAA's Old Tom Morris with his significant and celebrity other, Chris Evert, by his side. Word on the show floor is the couple was very congenial, signing autographs and shaking hands.

Norman collected the GCSAA's top award, given to him for his accomplishments to the game and the industry, during the show's opening session. There might have been a few eyebrows raised when Norman was named chair of the GCSAA's Environmental Institute for Golf in 2003. The skeptics wondered what a famous golfer knew about golf and the environ-

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7:08 AM...



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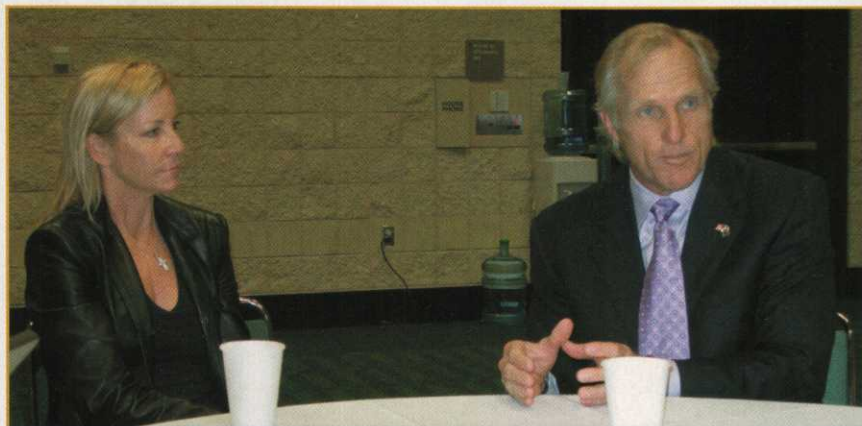
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► Chris Evert watches while Greg Norman waxes about golf and the environment.

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ment. Was appointing Norman to the post just an exercise to get someone famous in the seat to generate publicity and cash?

Maybe so, but Norman brings more than that to the table. And five years into his post, he seems as motivated as ever about achieving harmony between golf and the environment.

Norman couldn't shut up (I mean that in a good way) during the 45-minute press conference, which could have gone on longer. He went on and on about water issues, the Augusta Syndrome and other environmental issues facing the golf course industry. Norman also understands the

plight superintendents must endure in dealing with these issues, many of which originate with golfers' increased demand for the ultimate in golf course conditions.

Norman wants to help get the word out to Joe Golfer about his golf and the environment agenda. He knows his name carries weight in doing so.

"It's important for me to be with you guys to talk about this," Norman said. "Anytime I can talk about this, I'm going to talk about it."

He's got game

Just what does Seth Strickland do for a living? He says he's a golf course superintendent, but we're beginning to wonder. Does he work on turf — or just his golf game?

Strickland, superintendent at Miami Shores Country Club in south Florida, captured his second Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) National Championship by shooting *three* 4-under-par 68s for a record-setting 12-under-par 204, the lowest total winning score in the tournament's 58-year history. Strickland's closest competitors were 16 shots behind.

"I swear, guys, I work at least eight and a half hours a day," Strickland said after whitewashing the other 96 players in the field.

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► Seth Strickland (left) accepts another trophy from GCSAA Past President Ricky Heine after winning another national title.



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Good Show-ing

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We don't doubt that, Seth. We're all just envious that you've got game and we don't. Congrats to you!

The Stimp rules!

A Stimpmeter can be more than the end-all, be-all gauge of green speed. Stimping can become a valuable agronomic



► Magician Seth Kramer wowed show-goers with his tricks at the Agrium Advanced Technologies booth.

tool that can help you make important cultural decisions on your greens when used properly.

"Green speed is not a number. It's a range," says Michael Morris, the certified golf course superintendent of Crystal Downs Country Club in Michigan. "It's an everyday condition of what golfers experience."

Morris' talk, "You Do WHAT With Your Stimpmeter?" was part of the Innovative Superintendents Sessions.

Morris says he not only uses his Stimpmeter every day to make agronomic decisions, but he actually communicates his green speeds to his mem-

bers — without lying about the speeds.

By Stimping his greens every day, Morris says he's found ways to actually raise his height of cut by experimenting with different practices of mowing and rolling on alternate days.

By measuring the results of different practices, Morris can maintain expected green speeds by rolling his greens in lieu of mowing some days, which creates less mechanical stress, saves equipment wear and frees up valuable labor resources.

"It's a paradigm shift from the way you've normally done things," he says. "Rolling every day and skipping mowing (every other day) gave us the same result."

Wetting agents at work

Wetting agents work on putting greens. That was the main message behind the research and message of Erik H. Ervin, associate professor of turfgrass physiology at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, who spoke to more than 100 superintendents during, "You Asked For It ... You Got It!," a session created by superintendents' request.

One underlying question many superintendents have about wetting agents is: Where do they hold moisture? Ervin's research suggests they lock in moisture in the top 2 inches of the soil, where they can do the most good.

"Wetting agents are doing what they are supposed to be doing, which is holding water at the surface where you want it," Ervin says.

Wetting agents can be a valuable tool where hot spots exist on greens because they help distribute moisture uniformly, Ervin says. But they don't last forever.

"You need to stay on a preventive program just like you do with fungicides," he says.

Don't run and hide

"Communication is an essential skill for the superintendent," said Mike Jousan

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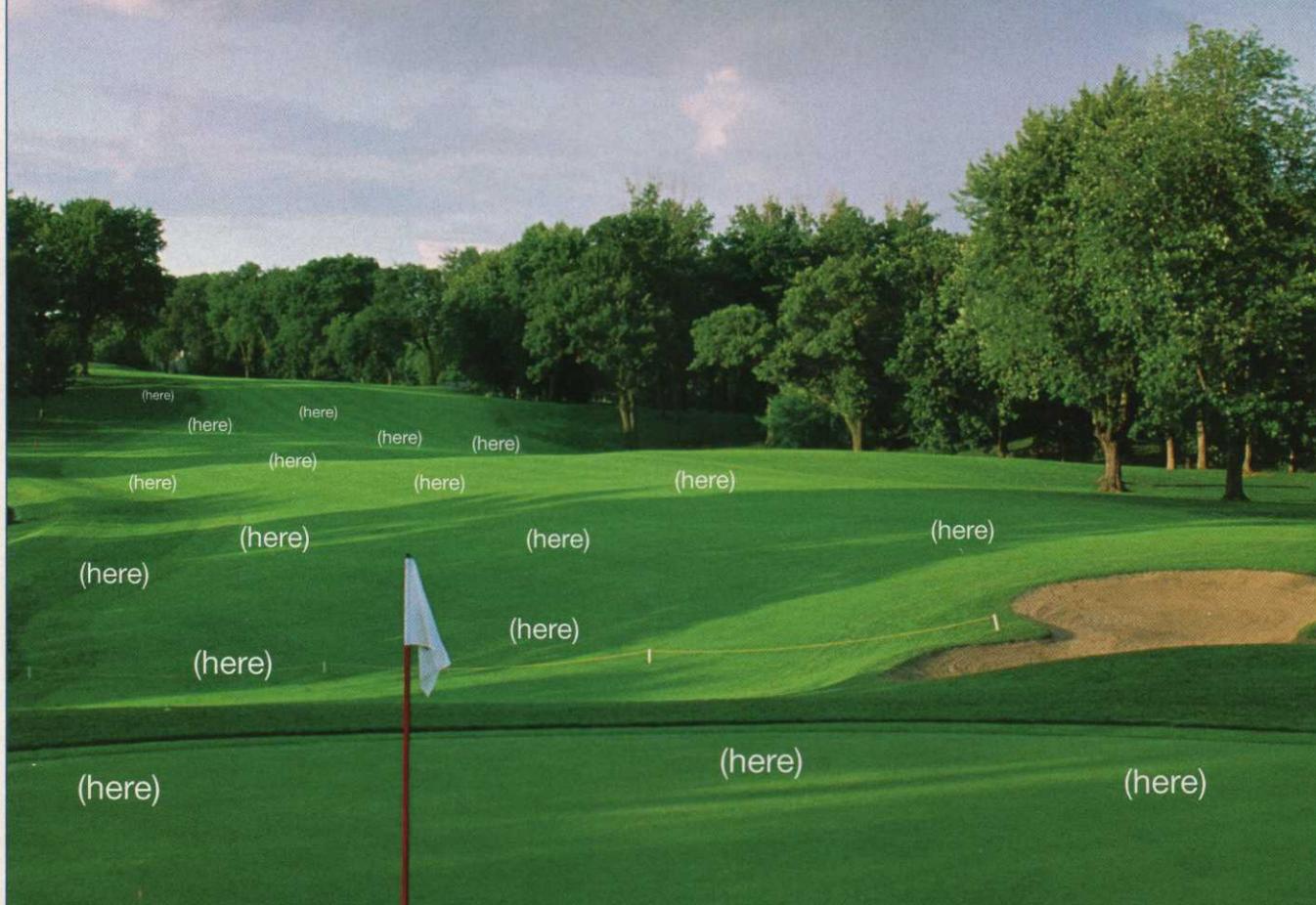
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