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Off The Fr



DEEP THOUGHTS

WITH Rick Slattery

Superintendent shares views on golf and the economy



Editor's note: Rick Slattery, longtime superintendent of Locust Hill Country Club in Fairport, N.Y., is an astute person who not only keeps up with the latest in golf course maintenance agronomics, but is well-versed in what's going on in his world, from politics to the economy to world events. *Golfdom* asked Slattery, who is on the magazine's editorial advisory board, to share some of his thoughts with readers. Slattery's column will run randomly in *Golfdom*.

Barack Obama was elected president of the United States by signaling a message of change. Will the green industry be willing to change?

I, for one, reject the notion that Democrats will regulate and tax golf courses out of business. In fact, most pundits agree that some regulation is good as long as it doesn't smother — just look at the reasons behind the stock market crash last fall. Although over-regulation and taxation are real threats, if anything puts us out of business, it will be our economy.

Historically, the golf industry has prospered during strong economies and struggled during weak economies. Golf survived the Great Depression, and it will survive this too. But with emerging economies around the world, there is a growing global demand for fertilizer and water for food-producing agriculture. The pressure for us to reduce water and agronomic input will come not only from environmental fronts and political regulation, but economically as well in escalating costs and decreasing availability of water and raw materials. Are we fighting to preserve the size of our piece of the pie, when the pie as a whole is shrinking? ■

Golfdom would like to hear your deep thoughts on Slattery's view. Just send an e-mail to info@golfdom.com.

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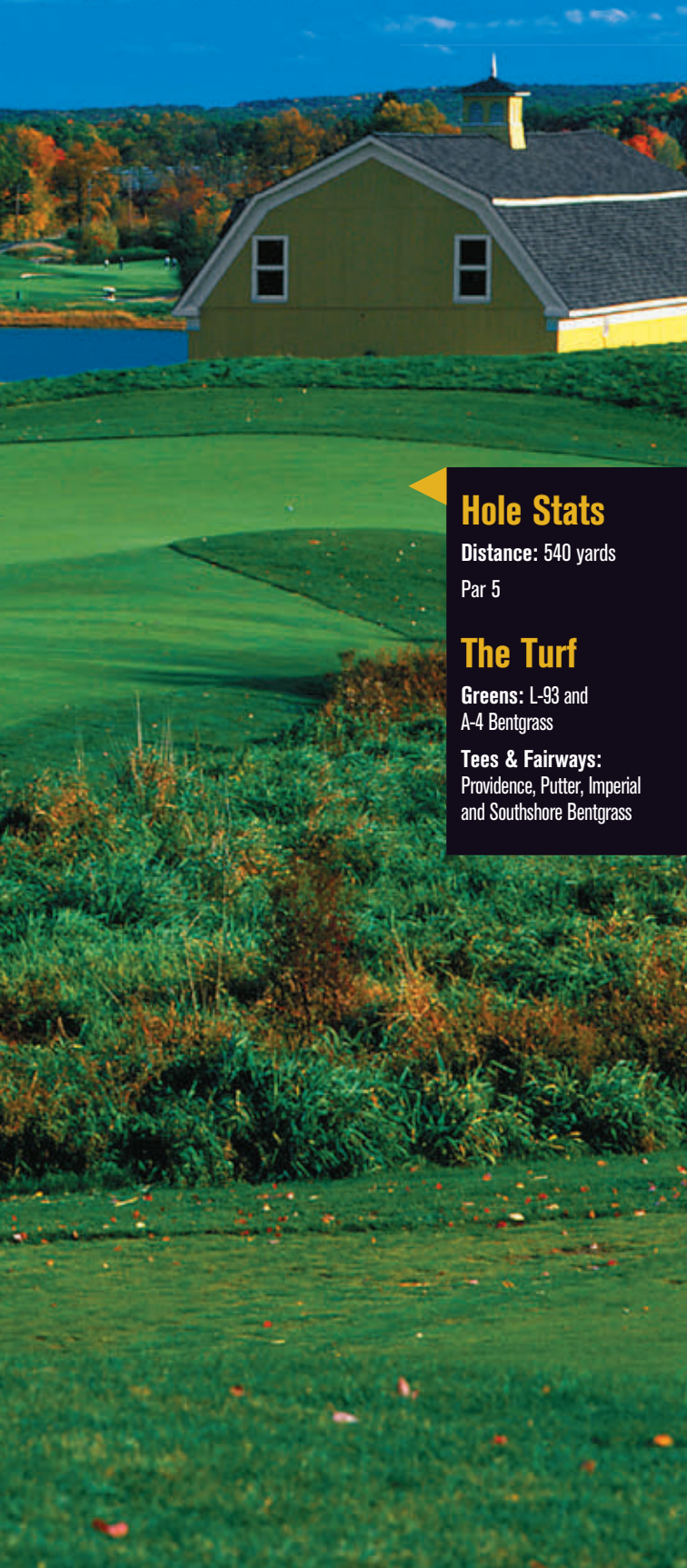
**BECKER
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Hole of the

▶ Hole No. 9 | The Ranch Golf Club | Southwick, MA



Month



Hole Stats

Distance: 540 yards

Par 5

The Turf

Greens: L-93 and
A-4 Bentgrass

Tees & Fairways:
Providence, Putter, Imperial
and Southshore Bentgrass

The Ranch Golf Club's yellow barns stand in tribute to its transformation from a century-old dairy farm into the "Best Public Course in Massachusetts," according to Golf Digest. The renovated barns serve as the clubhouse and pro shop, while pristine playing surfaces have replaced the former pastureland.

The Damian Pascuzzo-designed course, completed in July 2000, guides players through meadows, woodlands, creeks and streams. "Each hole has a unique micro-environment and natural beauty that enhance the challenge," said Jedd Newsome, the club's golf course superintendent.

Hole 9 – nicknamed "Glacier" for its undulating slopes and Berkshire Foothill views – calls for a long drive to a downhill green. Golfers have the best chance of reaching the par-5 hole in two strokes with a drive down the left side of the fairway. Laying up the second shot just short of the wetland is wiser than shooting straight for the hole.

But for Newsome, what's in the air presents more challenges than any hole on the course. "Our moist environment keeps everything green," Newsome said. "In fact, they grow tobacco just miles away," he said. "But because we're in a valley, we also have poor air circulation that breeds disease."

Dollar spot thrives in humidity. The straw-colored spots start out small, but spread aggressively, devastating broad swaths of turf. "I once had half a fairway dissipated from dollar spot," Newsome said. "So I sought newer chemistries and a better preventive program."

Newsome defends his tees and fairways using Emerald® fungicide at a label rate of 0.18 ounces per 1,000 square feet. "I've been completely clean of dollar spot for three seasons," said Newsome, who's worked at The Ranch for four years. "It was a perennial pest until we started using Emerald in the early season. We're getting a minimum of 28 days control and making fewer applications."

Newsome rotates Emerald mid-season with Curalan® EG fungicide at a rate of 1.0 ounces per 1,000 square feet. He also applies Insignia® fungicide at 0.9 ounces per 1,000 square feet preventing take-all patch for a minimum 21 days. "These products make my job easier," he said.



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



Golf, as most of us middle-to-high handicap hackers know, is often defined as “flog” spelled backwards. Flog is what we do to that poor, little white ball for 18 holes or 4.5 hours, whichever comes first.

But what else does G-O-L-F stand for? Try these out for size:

Golfers Observe Lots of Fauna: I’m not telling you anything new about seeing wildlife on a golf course. It’s one of the nicer perks of being a superintendent. We all have memories and stories about the critters we have seen or interacted with on our properties. Some, but not enough, have joined the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary program and have documented and shared the positive wildlife stories golf has to tell. We need more courses to join the effort through Audubon International and the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America’s Environmental Institute for Golf.

Get Off your Lazy Fannies: This name of the game topic does not refer to your daily work ethic. I know the kinds of days superintendents can have. While we certainly have gained some respect over the past five to 10 years, most folks still don’t understand the daily balancing and juggling acts that we go through to produce those acceptable and affordable playing conditions.

What I’m referring to is the often appalling superintendent turnout at local chapter meetings and seminars where vendors often outnumber superintendents two to one. I’m also talking about leaving advocacy of important issues to only a couple of people in the chapters. I’m talking about those who have been willing to lead the effort to either work with local governments and/or oppose local ordinances that ignore science and embrace emotionalism and political expediency.

I’m also talking about the hesitancy in the membership ranks for volunteers to step forward and serve and give back to the organizations and industry that helps you earn a living in a very special line of work. Don’t wait to be asked! Those poor guys and gals who are serving on the board for the umpteenth time because

In the Name of This Great Game

BY JOEL JACKSON



IT'S UP TO YOU TO
ENHANCE THE GAME'S
IMAGE BY FOLLOWING
BEST-MANAGEMENT
PRACTICES AS YOU
MANAGE THE GOLF
COURSE

no one else is willing would love to invite you to serve if they only knew you had an interest in the first place. You are interested in your profession, aren't you?

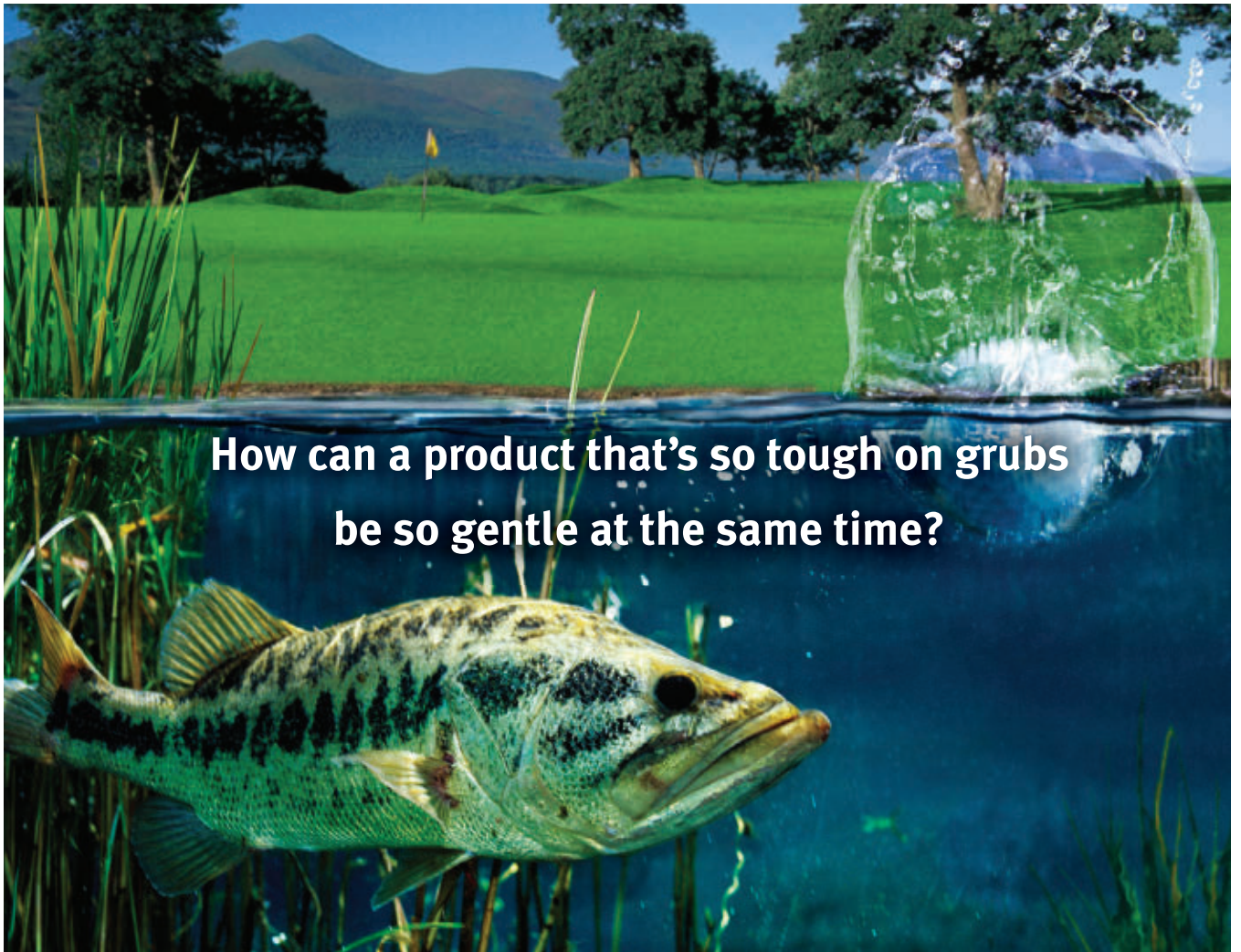
This brings us to G-O-L-F as, a **Goal Of a Lasting Future**. In the wake of the slumping economy, PGA Tour Commissioner Tim Finchem realized everyone on the tour had to make an extra effort and asked the players to work a bit harder to please fans and sponsors. During the Arnold Palmer Invitational recently, the topic was revisited as golfers Rocco Mediate, Kenny Perry and Jason Gore remarked how sad it was they had to be reminded about the critical role the players had in the success of the PGA Tour. They cited their host Arnold Palmer as the perfect example of what a golf ambassador should be. Perry says he remembers what Palmer told him, “Always take care of the fans. Take care of the people. Take care of the sponsors. Take care of the game.”

Those words from “The King” ring true for superintendents as well. Take care of the fans — your golfers and members. Take care of the people — your crew, fellow department heads and the club staff. Take care of the sponsors — the club ownership and management team and your suppliers who sponsor your chapter events.

Take care of the game. Isn't that job No. 1? It's up to you to enhance the game's image by following best-management practices as you manage the golf course. Showcase the beauty and communicate the positive impacts golf courses can have as an asset to the local community.

For the future of golf, always do the right thing — and in the name of the game.

Certified Superintendent Joel Jackson retired from Disney's golf division in 1997 and is executive director for the Florida GCSA.



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Editor's note: *Christopher S. Gray Sr., superintendent and general manager of Marvel Golf Club in Benton, Ky., is the author of this new column that will appear in Golfdom magazine and The Insider e-newsletter. Gray is the only two-time overall winner of the "Environmental Leaders in Golf Awards" and the 2008 winner of Rain Bird's "Intelligent Use of Water" Award.*

I love mowing rough. Over the years, I think it's done more to preserve what's left of my sanity than anything else. It actually provides me an opportunity to evaluate the golf course and see what's working and, more importantly, what's not working.

My favorite areas to look at are the environmental programs I'm trying to implement on the course. From running through the process of making homemade biodiesel to trying to expand my use of corn-gluten meal for pre-emergent crabgrass control, I really get into these mad scientist-type solutions.

Admittedly, not every environmental program I've participated in has been a rousing success. Believe me when I tell you I have had some serious failures along my path of trying to find new, innovative ways to environmentally manage my golf course. In hindsight, some of them were, well ... to put it simply, pretty dumb.

One golf course where I was an assistant was extremely dedicated to the idea of maintaining the exact root zone mix that was originally placed in the greens during construction. The only problem with that was the original mix was an 80/20 mix. So every two weeks, right before topdressing, we blended in 20 percent organic peat moss to the topdressing mix so it would be the exact same materials as in the original mix. As you might imagine, things were fine for the first couple of months. Then, in June and July, we began developing severe algae problems on the greens.

The peat moss content of the topdressing material, while being dragged smoothly and evenly around the entire green, ended up holding enough water on the putting surface to promote the single, nastiest green algae

Lessons Learned Along the Way

BY CHRISTOPHER S. GRAY SR.



**BUT IF YOU'RE NOT
PREPARED TO
LOOK SILLY,
NOTHING GREAT
IS EVER GOING
TO HAPPEN**

infestation I've ever seen. Multiple applications of Terracyte later, we all had learned a valuable lesson.

Another time, I had the "brilliant" idea of buying some agriculture-grade, organic fertilizer for a fertilizer application in my course's roughs. The price was unbelievable and the seemingly only catch was that it had to be delivered in bulk — 15 tons of bulk — and all of it unbagged. So I cleverly pulled out several old greens covers from the construction days and was ready to cover the pile of fertilizer heading my way. Now, if you've never seen 30,000 pounds of fertilizer being piled up from the back of a dump truck, it's quite the vision. When the truck pulled away, I knew I was in trouble. The greens covers protected about half the pile. And when the rain moved in, an hour later, my pile of fertilizer melted like the Wicked Witch of the West at the end of "The Wizard of Oz." Lesson learned.

I've lived, learned and gotten smarter, sort of. These little setbacks obviously haven't stopped my quest for new ideas and practices in managing a golf course more efficiently. And they shouldn't.

The bottom line is that we, as an industry, can't afford to be afraid to try something new, however odd it may sound, to improve on what we already know. We are an industry full of innovators who want to improve our golf courses, our industry and our planet and leave them better than we found them.

Taking calculated risks is a key component of that drive. If you're not prepared to look silly, nothing great is ever going to happen.

So, next time you get a wacky, off-the-wall idea, don't be afraid to take a moment and examine it a little more carefully. You may just have the next big idea for our industry.

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The Right Way to Treat a Tree



It's June, and the summer pest season has begun in earnest for cool- and warm-season turfgrasses. At this time, two of the three major pests — weeds and diseases — get the most attention. Weeds get noticed because of their visual unsightliness and disruption to the turf surface. Diseases get noticed because — almost for the exact opposite of weeds — although we can't see the pathogens, we know the type of damage they can cause.

Insects combine both characteristics of weeds and diseases. We can see them (they are normally big enough) like weeds, but often go unnoticed until damage occurs, like diseases.

For many golf course superintendents, insect injury on turfgrass occurs once or twice a year depending on the insect's lifecycle. There are exceptions, especially with several southern insect pests. A key to monitoring for potential insect injury is obvious — know the insect pests on your golf courses. This is most likely determined by past experience or use of the previous year's records, such as spray records.

Most superintendents I know have a good grasp of the insect pests on their golf courses and when damage can occur. The mistake I often hear in association with turfgrass injury caused by insects is superintendents saying they forgot (out of sight out of mind?) or overlooked/misdiagnosed potential insect injury. Here's how to combat this: Place a sketch or drawing of the lifecycle of each serious insect pest on your golf course with the damaging stage clearly marked in a place that serves as a frequent reminder. Constant monitoring builds awareness for potential insect injury.

Tools for monitoring the presence of insects are simple and easy to use. The golf course cup cutter is a convenient means for surveying an area for grubs or other soil-inhabiting insects. Samples are taken from the soil, inspected and then replaced to the original hole.

Light traps are effective in monitoring night-flying insects, such as the masked chafer. The professional light traps are comprised of black lights with baffles that deflect or direct

Watch Out for the Turf-Hurting Bugs

BY KARL DANNEBERGER



MONITORING BUILDS
AWARENESS FOR
POTENTIAL INSECT
INJURY

the flying insects into containers. These traps are extremely effective in monitoring night-flying insects.

Simpler light traps can be constructed by placing a water tub under a fixed or suspended light (usually the light should be 3 feet above the water). The night-flying insects are attracted to the light and then fall into the water. Light traps are excellent means for monitoring May-June beetles, masked chafers and black turfgrass ateniens (Niemczyk and Shetlar, 2000).

The most popular pheromone trap is the one sold to capture the Japanese beetle. Pheromones are substances produced by insects to attract themselves to each other. The traps are popular with homeowners who think they can protect their plant material from Japanese beetle feeding. These traps capture only half the Japanese beetles and actually attract more beetles to the site than would normally occur.

Soap flushes are an effective means of monitoring caterpillar insects like cutworm and sod webworm. The soap irritates the insects, and forces them to the surface. A popular and effective soap solution is 2 tablespoons of Joy liquid detergent added to 2 gallons of water, which is then sprinkled over the turfgrass within a yard or meter square area. The soapy solution will also bring mole crickets and beetles to the surface.

Storyteller Garrison Keillor was once quoted as saying, "I believe in looking reality straight in the eye and denying it."

In the case of insects on golf courses, monitoring negates denial.

Karl Danneberger, Ph.D., Golfdom's science editor and a turfgrass professor from The Ohio State University, can be reached at danneberger.1@osu.edu.