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DECEMBER 2011 • VOLUME 67 • NO. 12

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Didn't make the guest list this year? Let us take you there with our behind-the-scenes look at an industry first.

BY MATT HENDREN



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Clark Throssell, Ph.D., discusses painting dormant bermudagrass greens with NC State turfgrass professor Grady Miller.

Turfgrass Trends

This month, *Golfdom's* practical research digest explores alternative approaches to managing dollar spot; and annual bluegrass weevil. See pages 29-34.

Online Exclusive



Check out *Golfdom TV* at www.golfdom.com to see our interview with Stone Creek Golf Club superintendent David Phipps, winner of the 2012 GCSAA's President's Award for Environmental Stewardship. And log onto www.golfdom.blogspot.com in late January as *Golfdom* goes across the pond to report from the BIGGA Turf Management Exhibition!

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Taking a look back at the year that brought us Hurricane Irene, the iStimp, a record-setting U.S. Open and the beginnings of a course fit for the Olympics.
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Golfdom art director Carrie Parkhill Wallace shows some of the highlights of the *Golfdom* Summit along with a design from iStock International Inc.

Can We Get a Mulligan?

A photo caption on page 15 in our "Just Add Germs" story (*Golfdom* November) should have stated that a core sample of sports turf was treated with LidoChem's Performance Soil Treatment.

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Off The Fringe

Balboa Park Golf Course Gets Major Overhaul

BY BETH GERACI

A ribbon cutting ceremony was held last month at The City of San Diego's Balboa Park Golf Course, marking the completion of a \$4 million renovation of the 96-year-old course's irrigation system.

The 27-hole facility comprises an 18-hole layout and a 9-hole layout. Work on the 18-hole layout began in February and was completed in September, said Paul Cushing, assistant deputy director of the City of San Diego Golf Division, which oversees maintenance on all four of San Diego's city golf courses. Work on the 9-hole layout began this September and was completed at the end of November, Cushing added.

"The golf course is in the best condition it's ever been in," he said. "It's just phenomenal. It's a crown jewel. The maintenance programs have been

lacking for many years and the course is now back."

With the overhaul, Cushing said Balboa's irrigation system is now ET-based and features new spacing, new HDPE main line laterals and more than 2,000 new sprinkler heads. "We're anticipating anywhere between 20 and 30 percent water savings, comparatively speaking," he said.

In addition to the irrigation system renovation, Balboa engaged in a separate restructuring of the golf courses, which ran concurrently with the irrigation system redo.

Cushing wouldn't elaborate on the cost of that project, but it was extensive. Among other things, the course was lengthened by about 200 yards, six new tees were added and turf was completely renovated and overseeded.

To improve its soil structure, Balboa has performed multiple aerifications and

applied more than 200 tons of gypsum over the past year. The maintenance team also trimmed trees and cleared overgrown brush on both courses, Cushing said. The programs will continue on both courses, he added, because golfers have enjoyed the benefits of both.

Cushing said new Balboa golf course superintendent Wayne Carpenter, formerly the superintendent at Torrey Pines, is "bringing a new set of standards and a higher level of maintenance and attention to detail" to the course overall. And given all of the renovation that's taken place at Balboa, "the course is more playable now," Cushing said.

The renovation disrupted play substantially, and many golfers stayed away during it, Cushing said, but now that word is spreading that the project is complete, "the place is jumping again."

Balboa's 1st and 18th holes post-renovation, with the San Diego skyline in the distance

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Quotable

“Let’s put one in every single state and one every second week. It’s that good of a symposium. I made it a point to ask (the superintendents) myself what they thought of it and everything was 100 percent positive.”

— Chuck Hicks, Redexim, when asked how the *Golfdom Summit* could be improved

Carolinas show sets record

The Carolinas Golf Course Superintendents Association has once again set a personal record with its conference and show. The 1,800-member association sold 1,364 educational seminar seats during the three-day conference last month, beating the previous mark of 1,281 set in 2007. Gross revenues of almost \$600,000 made for the second-highest in the event’s nearly 50-year history. Trade show exhibit space was sold out.

“We are extremely grateful for the continued support of our members and our industry partners,” says the association’s new president, Doug Lowe, CGCS from Greensboro (N.C.) Country Club. “We know everyone has experienced budget cuts of some kind in recent years. For superintendents and vendors to continue to invest their precious resources in this event is concrete proof of the value it delivers.”

Toro on a roll

The Toro Company announced recently that it has acquired the Graden greens roller product line, which includes the GSR 1200 greens roller. The acquisition provides entry into a new product category and broadens Toro’s offering to golf customers worldwide. Terms of the deal were not disclosed.

“This acquisition fills an important product gap in our core golf business and helps further strengthen our offering

in the greens care category,” said Darren Redetzke, vice president of Toro’s Commercial Business. “Rolling greens has become an important agronomic practice for golf courses that improves the health and playability of the greens. By leveraging our brand strength and extensive global distribution, we are well positioned for growth in this new segment.”

Graden’s other turf maintenance product lines, which include zero-turn mowers, verticutters and sand injectors, were not associated with this acquisition.

School is in with Syngenta

WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. — For the third consecutive year, Syngenta hosted a group of superintendents at Wake Forest University for the Syngenta Business Institute.

The three-day seminar utilizes Wake Forest faculty for classes in finances, negotiations and leadership. This year’s class included 26 superintendents from around the country.

The business-focused curriculum appealed to the superintendents attending.

“It’s unlike what I’ve seen in the past from GIS or any other classes I’ve gone to,” Jim Alwine, superintendent at Stockton (Calif.) Golf and Country Club, told *Golfdom*. “It’s not bugs, it’s not soils — it’s finances, it’s management and negotiating. I’ve taken away quite a few things I can implement at my course.”

Stephanie Schwenke, golf marketing manager for Syn-

Bill Davidson, CGCS at the Country Club of Naples (Fla.), discusses with the Syngenta Business Institute class the advantages of keeping a maintenance blog while Fred Dickman, CGCS at the Broadmoor Golf Club, Colorado Springs, Colo., looks on.



genta, said that hosting an event that didn’t focus on any of Syngenta’s products was key to the uniqueness of the event.

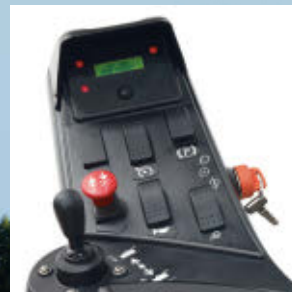
“We wanted to go beyond the agronomics that we believe superintendents are offered throughout the year through many different events,” Schwenke said in an interview that can be seen on *Golfdom TV*. “We want to enhance our relationships with superintendents and give them some different skill sets for challenges that we believe they’re being faced with every day at their courses.”

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My friend and veteran superintendent Matt Hendren does a fine job recapping the first ever *Golfdom* Summit, beginning on page 14. But here, I want to give you my personal top five moments from the event.

#5 One last interview: During the course of the Summit me and my team did more than 50 video interviews for *Golfdom* TV. It was a furious pace.

We needed to leave to catch our flight, and quickly pack up all our filming gear to get on the road. But I kept having the team unpack the gear, wanting to get “just one last interview” about three different times.

The last time I asked to have the equipment unpacked again, Hendren almost killed me with his angry look. But that last interview we did, with Chuck Hicks of Redexim, was perhaps the best interview of the week. (See one of his quotes on page 6.)

#4 Rees Jones turns off my voice recorder: On the first evening of the Summit, we had two great speakers: Ken Mangum followed by Rees Jones.

I told Ken before he got up to the podium that my voice recorder was up there recording the speeches. No problem.

Then Ken introduced Rees. I got up to take a few photos from different areas of the room. I heard Rees say, “Is this the clicker?” but I was moving around the room at the time and not watching him.

Apparently Rees mistook my voice recorder for the remote for the PowerPoint. You can imagine my horror when I checked and realized that, yes, Rees had managed to turn off my voice recorder before beginning his speech...

To my relief, Hendren had also set up a video camera to record Rees' speech. Crisis narrowly averted.

#3 First par on hole 6: The last round I played before Pinehurst was the worst round of golf I've played in years. It forced me to go see a

My Top 5 Summit Moments

BY SETH JONES



YOU CAN IMAGINE
MY HORROR WHEN
I CHECKED AND
REALIZED THAT,
YES, REES HAD
MANAGED TO TURN
OFF MY VOICE
RECORDER BEFORE
BEGINNING HIS
SPEECH...

swing doctor for a few lessons, terrified that I'd stink up Pinehurst No. 2.

My group teed off on hole No. 2. For the first four holes, I was still terrible.

But then, my first par on hole 6, a 204-yard par three, woke me up. Suddenly I was right down the middle for the next 9 holes, much to the relief of my caddie.

#2 Giving my “What I've Learned” speech: I gave a speech I've been working on to the group that combines a few stories of cool places this industry has taken me with some of the things I've learned about our industry.

I'm thankful the speech was well received and even got a few good laughs from the room. (I'd love to give the speech more in 2012... I'm looking at you, Hawaii GCSA.)

#1 Bob Farren concludes speech: Bob Farren spoke to our group about the restoration of No. 2. Bob had just started his talk when a cell phone rang. Always annoying, right?

But even worse: it was Bob's cell phone.

He reached in his pocket, silenced the ringer, then looked to see who was the caller. He apologized to the audience, but asked for empathy. The crew, he said, was operating heavy equipment that day, equipment they don't operate every day. It had him nervous.

Bob took a heavy sigh, then one more quick peek at his phone.

“So... in conclusion,” Bob said with a wry smile, getting the biggest laugh of the week from a group that understood exactly what Bob was feeling.

So, in conclusion... a fantastic week. I can't wait for the 2012 edition!

Email Jones at sjones@questex.com.



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Trends, bends, ups and downs dotted the landscape of the entire Green Industry this year. The wild ride of the economic slide slowed down a little bit and gave people a chance to evaluate their business operations. Budget cuts seemed to hold the line in many cases, and small gains were made here and there depending on how much the economy stabilized in various regions of the country.

Feedback indicates that lots of strategic planning is happening in all agricultural and Green Industry commodities and associations as they discuss how they will move forward in these uncertain times. The uncertainty was hammered home all the more this week when the congressional Super Committee couldn't reach an agreement on managing the national debt. If our representatives in Congress need a lesson on doing more with less, they need only to return home and visit the superintendents on their local golf courses.

Clubs learned that superintendents can't really do more with less, but superintendents did learn they could still maintain their courses with less than before. It takes more creative management, teamwork and a big dose of understanding by the membership to make it work. Thanks to the slight leveling of the economy, some clubs were able to put money back into their budgets, giving superintendents the resources needed to maintain acceptable course conditions.

Communications was an area ripe for learning on many levels. The most obvious is how, when and where a superintendent communicates with club members and management. While golf club operations and expectations vary across the board by type and location, certain elements remain constant. First you have to know how to read people. You also must know how best to deliver your message. To offer your best assessment of any issue, always be honest and do your homework.

Second, try to identify allies among the club's members. You don't have to fight all your battles alone. By continuous reports in club newsletters and on websites and blogs, you can reach a lot of members and inform them of

Lessons Learned from 2011

BY JOEL JACKSON



THROUGH CONVERSATIONS (THE DISTRICT) NOW UNDERSTANDS THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF GOLF COURSES AND IT HAS LEARNED WE ARE EFFICIENT STEWARDS OF OUR WATER RESOURCES.

what's happening on the course.

Another lesson learned in 2011 was that strengthening communications and cultivating relationships with regulators and legislators can pay dividends. One of the best examples is the GCSAA Action Alerts that allowed all of us the opportunity to easily make our voices heard on several national issues, such as water quality regulations, visiting worker labor laws and disaster relief. At the local level we continue to educate water authorities about just how efficient superintendents can be regarding water use.

While south Florida was placed on Phase 1 restrictions beginning in March, the district included a variance application process for those courses engaged in renovation and regrassing projects. Through conversations with people in the Green Industry, the district now understands the economic impact of golf courses and has learned we are efficient stewards of our water resources. We still face possible restrictions as an exceptionally dry cool season is being forecast and the flocking winter snow birds will be stressing the slow-growing turf.

Last but not least, we learned that we need to do a better job of communicating with the media. We need to educate reporters on the big picture and give them a golf course tour when activists aren't grabbing the headlines with outrageous claims. We need to let the media experience the wildlife and natural beauty on our courses. Then we can demonstrate to them how we use the science-based principles of biology, ecology and hydrology to manage turfgrass. Most of all we need them to understand that activist ideology is not a science.

Happy Holidays to all. Hope to see you in Las Vegas!

Jackson is executive director of the Florida GCSA.