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**A**s we prepare for a trip to Las Vegas for the Golf Industry Show, I would like to celebrate the bad choices that will be made by many of us in Sin City — from packing uncomfortable shoes to the late-night reload at the casino ATM.

This month we took a look at the ups and downs of the GIS. We asked a few sources for advice on how to keep the GIS successful in this down golf economy.

I thought I'd offer my own take. Instead of advice on what to do, here are a few things GCSAA should correct about its Golf Industry Show and the National Championship and Golf Classic.

► **Tournament is too far away:** I played in my first GCSAA Golf Classic last year in Palm Beach, Fla. I had a great time. The GCSAA and Toro come together to put on a fantastic event, and my hat is off to GCSAA tournament director Jim Cummins and all the people who put together such a great event.

Odds were low on me playing in the tournament this year, I'll admit, because we recently welcomed a newborn baby in the Jones household. I've already been on the road 16 days this year, and adding extra days to the GIS to tee it up didn't seem like a smart choice.

But I did consider it... right up until I Google-mapped the drive from La Quinta, Calif., site of the GCSAA tournament host hotel, to Las Vegas. It's 281 miles, almost a five-hour drive. Yikes!

I love me some Palm Springs golf, trust me, but putting the tournament so far from the convention center — and neglecting the great courses in Las Vegas — is a real head-scratcher to me.

► **Stop nickel and diming vendors:** I heard a complaint the other day from a friend in the industry. You know how some booths at the GIS have the "gun" that scans your badge? Well, technology has caught up, and the scanner gun has become obsolete. This year, badges can be

## Bad GIS Choices

BY SETH JONES



I LOVE GOLFING  
IN PALM SPRINGS,  
BUT PUTTING THE  
TOURNAMENT  
SO FAR FROM  
THE CONVENTION  
CENTER IS A REAL  
HEAD-SCRATCHER.

scanned with a free app on the iPhone.

One problem: There's no such thing as "free" when it comes to the GIS. To use this free technology at the GIS, the GCSAA is going to charge vendors some \$200 per iPhone. And, yes, it's your own iPhone you're being charged to use.

I get it, GCSAA has to watch out for No. 1 and this is their party. And when you have hundreds of vendors, you're not going to keep everyone happy. But GCSAA should remember that even though this is their party, these are also their customers. Free scanners may have paid off better than frustrating vendors with another charge.

► **Loosen the leash on GCSAA staff:** The GIS is a busy week for everyone. But for some GCSAA staffers, it can be grueling hours and not much of a life outside the show.

I remember for the 2008 GIS in Orlando, my *Golfdom* colleague Joel Jackson, executive director of the Florida GCSA, invited the entire GCSAA staff to the Florida chapter party. Classy move.

But within the walls of GCSAA, it caused some consternation. Should the staffers really be out there mingling with members? Could that leave a bad impression?

No. GCSAA should encourage all of the staff to get out there and enjoy a chapter party or two when invited. It's a great opportunity to mingle with the members and learn more about them, especially for those staffers who rarely leave Lawrence.

If you do spot a GCSAA staffer out and about in Vegas, why not offer to buy them a drink? Those guys work their tails off so all of us can have a good show.

That would be a good choice.

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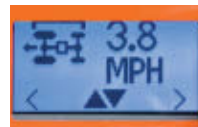
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# Taking a Mulligan

■ A WORD FROM THE SENIOR EDITOR

**I** am excited to say this is my first column in *Golfdom*. And I'm not afraid to admit that it is aptly named. Let's face it: I'm not a scratch golfer. My handicap is my golf game. But I do try. I am improving. And I know I'm not alone.

It's not every day I'm offered a mulligan, but if you throw one my way, don't be surprised if I take it.

Quite frankly, mulligans are a wonderful thing. Lord knows I've had many — at the tee, of course, but even more so in life.

It's hard to say exactly where I'd be without the many do-overs I've been given. But when I stop to think about it, it's really not a pretty picture.

**1 For starters, I wouldn't have a college degree.** Because of PE, not because of my GPA. That's PE as in phys. ed. It's not easy waking up for an 8 a.m. aqua aerobics class when you're cranking out your senior thesis every night. Had I failed gym, I wouldn't have fulfilled my gym credits in time for graduation. Thankfully, I put in some time at the pool on a Saturday morning and my instructor let me slide. Thanks for the mulligan, Mr. Riley.

**2 I wouldn't be driving.** Something about crashing the car in the driveway when you're 15 — and racking up \$2,000 in damage to the front end of the car — doesn't make for good PR with Mom and Dad. And it sure doesn't strengthen the likelihood that you'll be graduating from your temp to your license anytime soon. It took six months of weaving between orange cones in a parking lot, but I was eventually allowed to get my license. Thanks for the mulligan, Mom and Dad.

**3 I wouldn't be confirmed.** Hey man, it wasn't my fault they scheduled my prom on the same Saturday night as my confirmation. Lucky for me, they offered a makeup confirmation ceremony at 9 a.m. Sunday morning. And to think I almost

## Gotta Love a Do-Over

BY BETH GERACI



SOMETIMES  
YOU JUST GOTTA  
GIVE YOURSELF  
A MULLIGAN AND  
SEE WHERE IT  
TAKES YOU.

made it. It's not my fault I fell asleep, only to awake at 9:30 a.m. I needed a do-over on the do-over. Fortunately, I got one — 15 years later. Better late than never. It always helps to interview a priest. Thanks for the mulligan, Father Murphy.

**4 I wouldn't be doing this.** OK, so it wasn't the wisest thing in the world to just up and quit my job without another one lined up. Oh, wait, yes it was. Jackson Hole, Wyo. may be the most beautiful place in the country, but my time there was up. And when you're ready to move, there's no sense in waiting. I packed up my car and moved to Chicago. I landed on my feet. Sometimes you gotta give yourself a mulligan and see where it takes you.

Some of the mulligans that I've been given I shamelessly asked for. Others were handed to me. I am grateful for all of them.

But as wonderful as they are, sometimes it feels just as good not to take them. To give it your all and do it yourself. Like successfully hitting out of a bunker, or not shanking it from the rough. Like New Zealand golfer Phillis Meti driving for 307 yards. Like Paul Lawrie coming from 10 strokes behind to win the 1999 British Open.

The next time you tee it up — whether on the course or elsewhere — know that some people are willing to give you a mulligan.

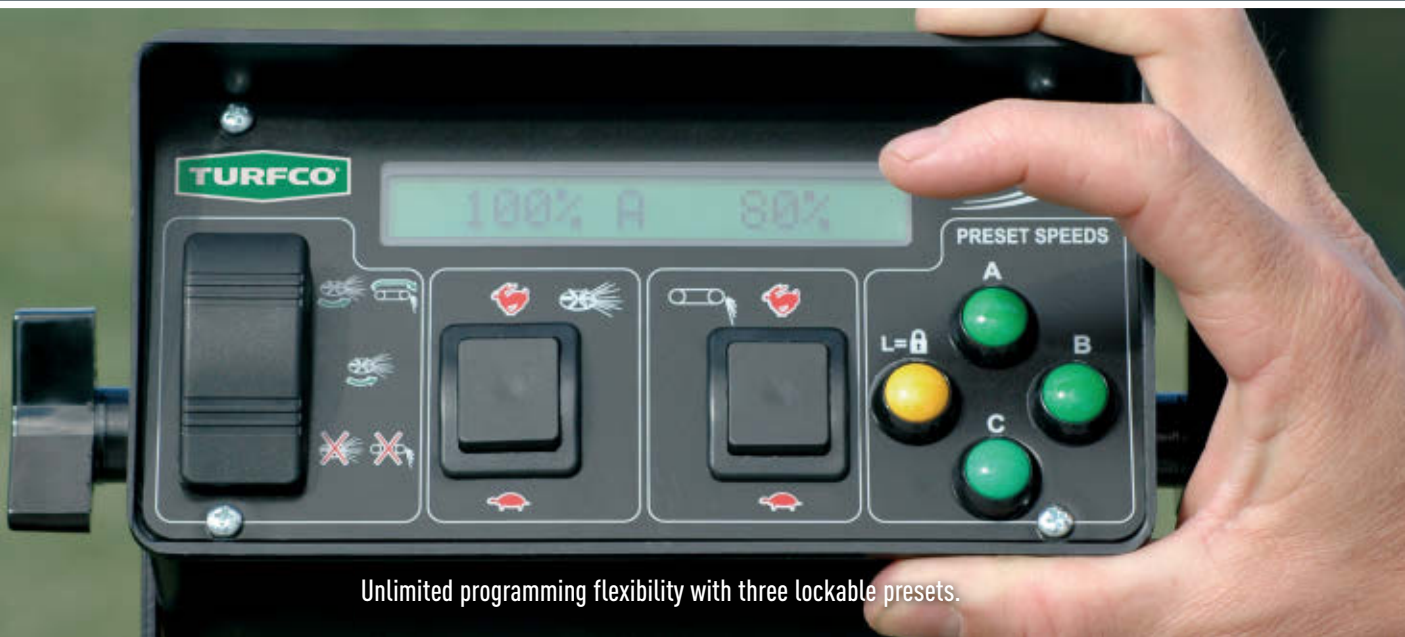
Whether or not you take it is your choice. But don't be afraid to ask for one. And don't be afraid to give one.

Were you ever given a great mulligan? Send me an email. I'd love to hear about it.

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**I**n the context of the golf universe in which we live and work, I give you some “blue sky” notions of my “perfect” golf world.

▶ The media, after decades of spreading negative and sensational news using the slogan “the public has the right to know,” finds the original quote by Gutenberg, which actually says, “The public has the right to know the facts!”

▶ Environmental activists finally take a cue from Audubon International and start working with the golf industry instead of irrationally ranting and raving in the media and public meetings about non-existent disaster scenarios.

▶ Legislators and bureaucrats discover the true meaning of “...of the people, for the people, by the people...” and use science and common sense instead of political expediency in making or enforcing regulations and policy for the environmental and economic benefit of all.

▶ Golf course owners, architects and builders, feeling the financial pinch from stiffer permitting regulations, higher costs and limited water availability, quit building “Taj Mahal” ego monuments and concentrate on attractive layouts that are cost effective to maintain. Many architects are advocating target-golf designs with more natural areas and embracing the forward tee concept to encourage the growth of the game. Owners need to understand this is the necessary future of the game.

▶ The PGA Tour, PGA of America, Champions Tour and LPGA finally admit that golf course maintenance and conditioning is under siege and they pledge to use their highly visible positions and large bank accounts to donate more to turf research to find better ways to manage natural resources and still keep golf “green and playable.”

▶ Course owners and club members who persist in demanding ideal conditions at all times realize they must also have a budget capable of meeting those demands. And if resources are limited, a set of maintenance standards should be created so the superintendent can focus on the priorities in order of impor-

## In a Perfect World

BY JOEL JACKSON



**I KNOW THAT A  
PERFECT WORLD  
DOESN'T EXIST. BUT  
I ALSO KNOW THAT  
YOU AND I HAVE  
SUCCESSFULLY  
WORKED TOGETHER  
FOR THE DEFEAT OF  
BAD REGULATIONS.**

tance to the majority of members.

▶ Good superintendents realize that to stay employed they must embrace continuing education and stay motivated to constantly improve their skills. To do this they also volunteer to serve on committees in their professional associations to enhance their sources of information for problem solving. This service is recognized by peers and employers as positive signs of personal and professional development and is an asset for clubs.

▶ Golfers finally realize that half the pleasure of being on the golf course is leaving it better than they find it. They cheerfully fix divots and ball marks, rake out bunker tracks and don't drive carts in wet or worn turf areas.

▶ Local, state and national issues management is still a reality even in a “perfect world.” Programs like We Are Golf, State Golf Days, GCSAA Regional Field Staff and Action Alerts are good resources, and they will need our continued support to be effective.

I know that a perfect world doesn't exist. But I also know that you and I have successfully worked together for the defeat of bad regulations and the formation of good working relationships with many regulatory agencies.

We have seen those ignorant of our practices, and even hard-core skeptics embrace our golf course wildlife habitat potential via eco-tours, Christmas bird counts, school tours and other on-course projects.

Perhaps we were never meant to live in a perfect world. But if we all work together for the health and enjoyment of the people, respect the planet's resources and earn fair profits and business success, then we can surely all live at least in a better world.

---

*Certified superintendent Joel Jackson is Executive Director of the Florida GCSA.*



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*"Spring is nature's way of saying, 'Let's party!'"*  
— ROBIN WILLIAMS

**S**pring is the time when golf is renewed with anticipation and excitement. For golf course superintendents it is also a time of preparation for the coming season and inevitable summer stress. Here are a few things to keep in mind during the "party."

**1 Take care of residual problems from last year.** If old disease symptoms are present upon spring green-up, clean them up. Old symptoms are a source of inoculum that can potentially result in early and severe disease development later in the season.

**2 Spring growth initiation varies.** Remember, cool season turfgrass shoot growth initiation varies among species. For example, tall fescue initiates a more rapid spring shoot growth rate than Kentucky bluegrass. The difference is most obvious in a Kentucky bluegrass rough that has patches of tall fescue. The earlier shoot growth rate contributes to the obvious appearance of tall fescue clumps. Regarding creeping bentgrass, rapid shoot growth is much slower to occur compared to annual bluegrass. The creeping bentgrass may appear to be doing nothing compared to annual bluegrass. A common mistake is to try to increase creeping bentgrass shoot growth by applying higher than normal rates of nitrogen. Creeping bentgrass will start growing when it darn well feels like it — don't push it! Excessive nitrogen in spring will only lead to problems later in the year (for example, succulent growth, potential reduction in root growth, etc.)

**3 Be aware of sporadic root die back.** It's an interesting phenomenon that was first reported by Dr. James B. Beard while at Texas A&M in the late 1970s. On warm season turfgrasses, specifically bermudagrass and St. Augustinegrass, root die back can occur at the time of first leaf emergence. Roots that were white and healthy quickly turn brown and die. Root regeneration occurs rather quickly but mechanical practices at the time of first leaf emergence are detrimental. Root die back does not appear

# Spring Cleaning

BY KARL DANNEBERGER



A COMMON MISTAKE IS TO TRY TO INCREASE CREEPING BENTGRASS SHOOT GROWTH BY APPLYING HIGHER THAN NORMAL RATES OF NITROGEN.

to occur every year and may be sporadic, but why chance aggressive management practices at that time?

**4 Annual bluegrass seedhead control with growth regulators is a popular practice in areas where annual bluegrass turf predominates.** Various methods of predicting when best to apply a growth regulator is based on phenological events (for example, seedhead in the boot of the sheath, seedhead appearance in the rough) and climatic data (growing degree day models) but in any case, getting the product down before seedhead emergence is important. It might be suggested to mix some iron with the plant growth regulator to reduce any phytotoxic response. Also, if melting-out is a concern, putting down a fungicide prior to the plant growth regulator application would be recommended.

**5 Stress affects the speed of spring transition.** Although there are several herbicide strategies to removing perennial ryegrass or *Poa trivialis* from bermudagrass that are quite effective, the amount of stress that you put on that overseeded turf through mowing, fertilization or watering can influence the speed of transition.

**6 Coring to relieve compaction gets pushed earlier and earlier in the season to the beginning of spring mainly to not impact rounds of golf.** The benefits from coring have been reported to last between 5 to 8 weeks. Maximum effect from coring should be timed prior to the summer stress period. Following the 5- to 8-week window some sort of quadra or pencil tine coring should be initiated on roughly a 3-week basis.

**7 Disclaimer:** The above recommendations may need to be adjusted based on local conditions.

Let the party begin!

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



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# Go Small or

GIS 2012  
SPECIAL

REGIONAL SHOWS ARE KEEPING SUPERS CLOSER TO HOME. THE INTERNET IS OFFERING MORE EDUCATION THAN EVER. DOES THE GIS NEED TO GO SMALL IN ORDER TO GET BIG? **BY SETH JONES AND BETH GERACI**

**R**hett Evans, GCSAA CEO, might not have been to too many Golf Industry Shows in his life, but he's fully aware of how important it is to the association he now runs.

"(GCSAA's) overall budget is almost \$16 million. The services and programs we offer — the education, our website, advocacy, government relations — a little over 50 percent of those services are funded by the GIS," he says. "That's a big piece of the pie."

And that slice of pie has shrunk at an alarming rate over the last few years. The largest Golf Industry Show ever was held in Orlando in 2008. That show welcomed almost 26,000 people to a trade show that exceeded 300,000 square feet. Last year, in the same city, the show saw only 14,781 attendees and a trade show of only 180,000 square feet. Respectively, the show saw 45 percent fewer attendees and was 40 percent smaller.

Has the GIS hit rock bottom? And how can the GCSAA keep the show relevant to today's superintendent?

## **Hemorrhaging members and rounds**

It does not take a Ph.D. to determine that the Golf Industry Show was hit hard by the slumping economy.

"The entire golf industry suffered significantly from the recession that gripped the U.S. and other parts of the world," says Steve

Mona, the CEO at the World Golf Foundation and the former CEO of GCSAA. "Golf depends on the facility being robust. You had facilities hemorrhaging members and rounds. It's a domino effect to the rest of the industry."

Sure, the economy has hurt the GIS. But is the national show looking over its shoulder at other factors, such as regional trade shows or the fact that more educational opportunities are available online for superintendents?

"I always viewed regional shows as complementary. Having said that, in the new world that we live in, I could see regional shows being perceived as being competition," Mona says. "To travel by car, for fewer nights and less expense? I could see that being a choice."

One regional show that is thriving is the Carolinas GCSA Conference and Show. In 2011, the show sold more education seats than it ever had before at 1,364. Trade show exhibit space was sold out, and the event netted the association \$600,000.

Tim Kreger, executive director of the CGCSA, says that the GIS will always be important to superintendents, but he also points out that the Carolinas show brings in the same speakers as the GIS.

"I think the main challenge is, when it comes to maintaining your own budget, one of the easiest things to do is cut out profes-

*Continued on page 21*