

IT SEEMS THAT David Feherty is always on a roll, always clicking. When he's clicking, that means others are laughing.

"I'm at a stage in my life and I think in my career where I have enough confidence in what I'm saying that people shouldn't take me too seriously," he says.

It's lucky for us that Feherty has found that confidence. His TV show, "Feherty," has been a smash, his multiple books are immensely popular with the golf

world, and whenever he's involved in a golf broadcast, you just don't know what quip he's going to drop next.

Along with his other media gigs he also is a popular speaker. On March 1st in Las Vegas, Feherty will be the keynote speaker at the Golf Industry Show's General Session. *Golfdom* caught up with Feherty in mid-January to talk to him about visiting the GIS, the work of superintendents, and if he ever had any maintenance mishaps on the golf course.

Golfdom: David, I appreciate you taking the time to talk to *Golfdom* magazine. Everybody in the industry is really excited for your presentation at the Golf Industry Show.

David Feherty: Yeah, I'm looking forward to it.

pro shop or up at the greenkeeper's. He let me cut the holes and basically just follow him around.

I got interested in it and the plants and different types of grasses. Of course, we had 20 different types of grasses on the same 10-yard square area.

Golfdom: Good, good. So you know a thing or two about maintenance.

DF: I know a little bit. You know there's nothing worse than a keen amateur. I don't go to the dentist and give him advice. I let him work on my teeth.

Golfdom: Talking turf types, what's your favorite type of grass to hit off of and to putt on?

DF: Down here in the South, no greenkeeper in his right mind would want to tend greens down here in the summer. You know you've got to keep them so damp in order to keep them alive that every ball mark looks like a Taliban hand grenade went off.

And the Bermuda that we have these days, the hybrids and these fine-bladed Bermudas are just superb. They stand up to the hot weather. They don't have to be soaked. So I would play from zoysia up to one of the dwarf Bermudas. It doesn't bother me in the slightest if there's a little bit of grain. In fact, I love it. It adds another dimension to the playing surface.

In tennis they play on four or five different surfaces and nobody complains

about it. But, apparently in golf, we all have to play on linoleum — lightning fast, bad greens. You know that's bull. You know playing slow grainy greens brings another player into the equation.

Golfdom: I remember a few years ago you emceed the Golf Writers Association of America annual awards banquet in Augusta. It was a great event. We had a blast and a lot of laughs. This will be the first time I'll have seen you speak since then.

Do you make a different presentation for golf course superintendents than you would for golf writers, or if you were presenting to someone unrelated to golf, say a group of bankers?

DF: Yes. I'm assuming that a room full of golf course superintendents have to have a sense of humor because they're dealing with idiots a lot of the time. A lot of the time you just have to agree with (golfers), just nod your head. Really, I think the best superintendents, you know they listen to their greens committee or the chairman, they nod their head and then they go ahead and do whatever the hell they think they should do anyway no matter what they tell them.

Golfdom: Exactly.

DF: That same chairman of the greens will take full responsibility for the greens if they are superb, and absolutely none if we get some bad weather and you get

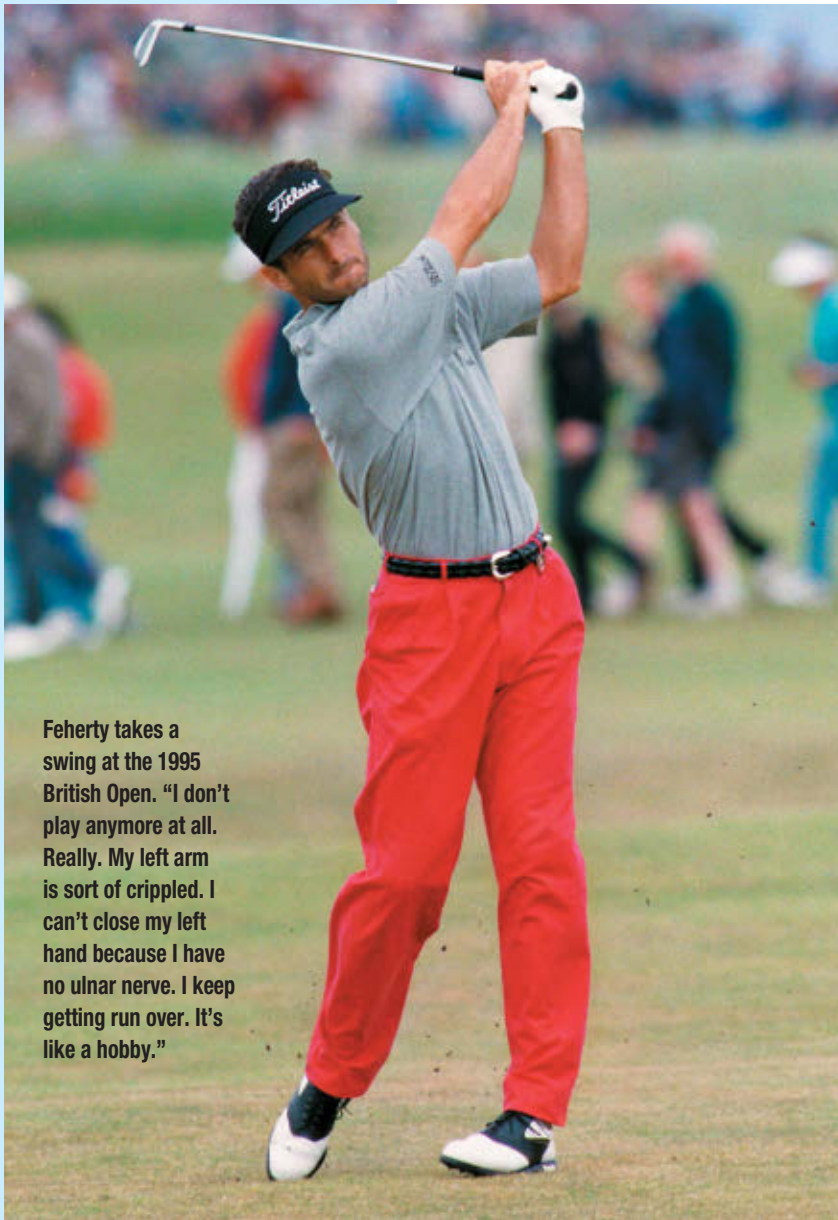
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"I'm assuming that a room full of golf course superintendents have to have a sense of humor because they're dealing with idiots a lot of the time."

Golfdom: I was reading the promotional materials about your talk. It mentioned that you have a background as an assistant greenkeeper early in your career?

DF: Well, I wouldn't really call it an assistant greenkeeper. I was a kid that was allowed to play in what we call the greenkeeper shed. It was basically a bunch of what you would call crude farm implements these days, you know the gang mowers and the — well, the cylinder mowers haven't changed that much over the years except they're now like \$20 grand.

I was always hanging around out at the



Feherty takes a swing at the 1995 British Open. "I don't play anymore at all. Really. My left arm is sort of crippled. I can't close my left hand because I have no ulnar nerve. I keep getting run over. It's like a hobby."

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some brown spot or something that just creeps in and hits you all of a sudden because you get that exactly right temperature where it's in the 70s during the day and in the 50s at night. You have to know exactly when to hit it and sometimes you get unlucky.

And the poor old superintendent is always going to bear the blame for anything that goes wrong and seldom gets credit if the place is perfect. People just expect perfect.

But, sorry, to answer your original question, yeah. My presentation to a group of bankers in some ways will be similar to the superintendents. But, with superintendents, I feel like I'm kind of more among family because, even at my job, I'm on the golf course and I'm down on the ground and I see firsthand just how superb these conditions are at times. It never ceases to amaze me. And I know the amount of work that goes into it, the amount of pressure the superintendent is under.

So we'll hear players being critical and other commentators being critical. Sometimes it's just hard to make a three-foot putt because you're on *Poa* and, late in the day, that's just the way they are. You know they're going to flower a little bit and maybe you've just got to take your nuts in both hands and make a good positive stroke and, even if you do that, sometimes it's going to miss. That's called golf.

Golfdom: When you were a young golfer, did you ever feel the opposite way where it was the fault of the superintendent?

DF: Oh yes. Absolutely. Well, not just the superintendent. It was anybody but me.

Golfdom: Do you know any golf course superintendents personally?

DF: Oh yeah. The Masters is one that we have meetings with the superintendent. They invite guest superintendents from all over the country to that and to the PGA Championship. And I'll always try and make a point of finding the superintendent or some of the guys that work on the golf course and just ask them about what they'll be doing and what the weather has been like because so much of our golf course depends on the weather a few weeks before an event.

Golfdom: When you signed on to speak at the GIS, did the GCSAA ask you to hold back or anything? Did they ask you to keep it pretty clean or will they let you do what you want to do?

DF: Sometimes the groups will say, "Hey, you know, we've got ladies in here," or "We'd like it to be PG." And I say, "Well, hey, you shouldn't have invited me" because that cuts me down to about five minutes. I'll make fun of pretty much anybody and everybody out there, especially myself.

Golfdom: Can you give me an early memory of being out and working on the golf course, maybe a moment when things didn't go as planned?

DF: One of my earliest experiences of being on a tractor was driving a gang mower at Royal Belfast, which is one of

the oldest golf clubs in Northern Ireland. I was the assistant pro at the time and I'd taken over for a kid who was working the summer there. And I was mowing 13 fairway. And I got off the tractor, left it running, and ran up to the pro shop to get a drink. But it was on a side slope and, when I came back, the gang mower was lying there in the rough to the left of the 13th fairway and the tractor had broken through the sea wall and gone 40 feet down into Belfast Loch. Apparently I left it in gear but it was sneaking forwards ever so slowly until it got onto a slope that it liked.

And the sea wall was probably 300, 400 years old and maybe four feet thick. Yeah. There was a little explaining to do there. I just told them the truth — that I'd been drinking heavily.

Golfdom: Oh my! Did you get to mow much after that?

DF: No, no, not so much. Not at Royal Belfast anyway.

Golfdom: So the Golf Industry Show is in Las Vegas this year. Are you a fan of the city?

DF: You know I like being in Las Vegas for a night or maybe two because I'm an

alcoholic and a drug addict and it's not a great town to be in for an extended period of time because spare time is any addict's worst enemy. And I keep myself busy. I ride my bike. I mean, I enjoy Vegas. It's uniquely American and it's fun to be there and it's got some great venues for me to do my thing at. So I always look forward to speaking there or whatever I'm doing. But I'm glad to get out of town at times.

Golfdom: We touched on it a little bit earlier, about how everyone is an expert, you said that there's nothing worse than a keen amateur. What advice would you give a golf course superintendent who answers to a greens committee that is entirely made up of keen amateurs?

DF: Well, I think it depends on the personality on both sides. I mean some superintendents are fortunate... say, for instance, it's an affluent club where the

members are wealthy. You know they got wealthy a certain way, by doing what they know best. Hopefully they have enough sense to know that the greens superintendent became a superintendent, which is an extremely difficult thing to do. It's not dissimilar to becoming a doctor or a veterinarian. You know you've got to go through a long process and learn a bunch of (stuff) that people might think is irrelevant. But you're looking at an expert here that's taken a long time and has learned a great deal and made mistakes along the way.

I mean I imagine, and this is purely conjecture from my focus; I don't have this problem. If it were me, I would listen politely and say, "Yes, that's what I will do. Uh-huh. Absolutely. Yup. Sounds good to me," and then just forget it; you know, go and do what I know has to be done and let him take the credit for it; whatever. And, if CBS or the Golf Channel comes along, I'll be crediting the right guy.

Golfdom: David, you've got that great spot on the GIS schedule: Thursday, March 1st, 8 a.m., keynote speaker of the General Session. Tell me, what should attendees expect?

DF: It's more difficult to speak in the morning because the bastards tend to be sober. And, especially in Vegas, it could be a pretty tough crowd. They may be a little grumpy from having lost their wad or stayed up and had too many free cocktails.

But I would say don't expect any political correctness because that's just a euphemism for (bull) as far as I'm concerned. I'm at a stage in my life and I think in my career where I have enough confidence in what I'm saying, that people shouldn't take me too seriously because, on my tombstone, there will be something to that effect: nobody took him seriously. Thank God! Life's too short.

Golfdom: David, I appreciate you taking the time to do this interview. I'm looking forward to seeing you speak again at the Golf Industry Show.

DF: Yeah, it's my pleasure, Seth. See you soon. ■

"I feel like I'm with family when I'm with the greens crew. I always go to the barn to say 'hi, well done,' because I know how much work goes into it."



Golfdom EIC
Seth Jones with
David Feherty at
the 2012 AT&T.

• AN
INSIDER'S
GUIDE



TO
Sin City

BY CURT HARLER



**GIS 2012
SPECIAL**



While *Golfdom's* editors write about turf and fertilizer, they know a good time when they see it. And the Golf Industry Show in Las Vegas this month offers many opportunities to celebrate. The only questions are: Where? And how?

Just as hiring a caddy at a new course is a smart strategy, we know enough to rely on the opinions of knowledgeable locals. So we asked a half-dozen Vegas-area superintendents where to eat (and where not to), what to see and how to enjoy the experience.

John W. Lanier Jr. is a member of the Board of Directors for the Southern Nevada Golf Course Superintendents Association and the golf course superintendent at Desert Rose Golf Course. He says local superintendents look forward to hosting the GIS. "There are a great number of courses and superintendents that Las Vegas has to offer," he says.

Superintendents in the know tell how to make the most of Las Vegas.



Good eats

"Vegas has become such a place for fine dining with so many top chefs around that you can't go wrong," says Jeff Reid, director of golf course maintenance at the Las Vegas Paiute Golf Resort. His favorite for steak is **The Palm** inside Caesars Palace. "For seafood, try Rick Moonen's **RM Seafood** in the Mandalay Bay," he offers. "Both can be a little pricey but worth the bucks."

"The Forum Shops at Caesars offer a large selection of choices," says Kent McCutcheon, superintendent at the Las Vegas Country Club. "My favorite is the Palm restaurant. Try the filet Oscar."

"I usually don't eat close to the Strip," says Oscar Sanchez, superintendent at Tuscany Golf Club, Henderson, Nev. When he does, however, he likes the seafood buffet at the **Rio**. "They have two buffets there. The seafood one is great," he says.

Lanier is high on the Rio, too. "The Carnival Buffet has a great selection and the best quality food for a buffet," Lanier says. "It's always extremely fresh food and impeccable service."

But top on the eats list for Lanier is **Hash House A Go-Go**. "Humongous portions at a

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PHOTOS COURTESY: LAS VEGAS NEWS BUREAU; ISTOCK INTERNATIONAL INC. (HAND)

Vegas, Baby!

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fair price,” he says. “You’ll definitely go home with a doggy bag.”

Reid’s top two buffet choices are the **Bellagio** with its great king crab legs, and the buffet at **M Resort**.

But as memorable as the big-name spots are, “make an effort to get off the Strip and frequent some of the local places,” advises Kym Mitchell, superintendent at Primm Valley Golf Club. “You’ll find lots of good restaurants, bars and locals’ casinos.”

Entertainment

“You can’t go wrong with any show. Vegas has the best entertainment in the world, hands down,” Lanier says. “My wife and I enjoyed **Blue Man Group** the most.”

Mitchell says her friends say **Love**, a Beatles-themed musical by Cirque de Soleil, is the show to see. “Everyone should see the water show and the conservatory at the Bellagio,” she adds.

For McCutcheon, the Cirque du Soleil show **Mystere** at Treasure Island or ventriloquist **Terry Fator** at the Mirage are the top draws.

Casino play

What would a trip to Vegas be without a few passes at the roulette wheel or an hour of blackjack? Just don’t expect to come home rich.

“Save your money,” Lanier advises. “The average person loses about \$800 gambling per trip,” he warns, “but Lady Luck could be on your side.”

“All of the casinos are going to take your money,” laughs Sanchez. “On the Strip, any of the casinos are great. I think **New York, New York** is nice. With the **MGM** and **Bellagio** you have the three best.”

Lanier’s favorite casino is **Treasure Island**. “Mystere is there,” he says, echoing McCutcheon’s choice of a top show. “In addition, the free pirate show is out front. Plus, there’s great shopping and the dealers are probably the friendliest on the Strip.”

“The most fun casino,” Reid says, “is **Red Rock Casino**. It’s the top venue for concerts, and the pool area is great.”

Sanchez likes to go with his wife to the old downtown section of Vegas, the area around Fremont Street. “It is more laid-back,” he says. There are buses from the Strip or taxis running back and forth between the Strip and downtown.

Don’t expect to hail a taxi from the curb. Cabs are allowed to pick up customers only at approved queues. That means going to the front of a hotel or a restaurant. You don’t have



to be staying at the hotel to grab a cab. But the cabbies are forbidden, by law, from picking you up on the street.

Sanchez likes the light shows, the bands and the shops in the Fremont area. Lanier says a must-see is the world’s largest television there. It plays different themes and music every hour.

“Fremont Street is worth the trip,” agrees Mitchell.

If you are downtown, check out the cheap tables, McCutcheon says. “The Neonopolis is fun,” he adds.

“**The Fremont Street Experience** is unique,” Reid says. “Check out the new zipline attraction. And they have the best odds for those who like to play craps.”

McCutcheon recommends **Planet Hollywood** or **Mandalay Bay**.

For those betting sports, Lanier recommends the **Las Vegas Hilton Sportsbook**. “It’s the largest sportsbook in Vegas with great odds and payouts,” he says. For a sports bar (not the same thing), he would hit **The Sporting House** in New York, New York. “Great atmosphere and it’s like a Chuck E. Cheese for adults,” he quips. The timing will be right for sports, as the week of the Golf Industry Show falls at the same time as when college basketball teams are wrapping up their conference schedules. March Madness will tip off just a few days later.

McCutcheon gets off the Strip and heads to Town Square to watch sports at **Yard House** or **Miller’s Ale House**.

The old school favors the Hilton. “If you’re new school, Planet Hollywood has the best March Madness set up,” he says.

Reid, meanwhile, says the best sports bar is **Blondies** in the Planet Hollywood Miracle Mile Shops. “A great atmosphere when the top sporting events are going on,” he says.

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P R O V E N S O L U T I O N S

Vegas, Baby!



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Busman's holiday

The Vegas area is chock-a-block with great golf courses. “Shadow Creek is the course to play,” says Mitchell. “Getting on is another question.”

She also recommends the 27-hole Badlands Golf Club designed by Johnny Miller and Chi Chi Rodriguez. It plays 6,700 yards from the back tees and just under 7,000 from the championship tees.

Another more modest golf course close to the strip is Las Vegas National. “There are many wonderful courses around the valley but they are quite spread out,” Mitchell says. “My courses, Primm Valley Golf Club, are great tracks but about 40 miles from the Strip.”

Lanier recommends Wolf Creek. “It’s 40 minutes north of Vegas but well worth the drive,” he says. “Hands down, it’s one of the most unique tracks I’ve ever played. It’s always around the top 20 in the nation for a reason.” He also puts in a plug for his own course, Desert Rose Golf Course. “With the course conditions and value, we are the home for the best deals in golf.”

McCutcheon points to the Las Vegas Paiute Resort. “Three courses, no houses, and beautiful mountain views,” he says. For superintendents who have deep pockets, he points to Shadow Creek. “But you have to stay at an MGM property,” he notes.

If you are looking for a nice, but more inexpensive course, McCutcheon recommends Boulder Creek.

Reid isn’t shy about trumpeting his course. “The must-play courses are any of the three at the Resort,” he says. “There are 54 holes of Pete Dye with true desert golf...no housing around.” They are about 30 minutes north of the Strip. For a more modest course he suggests Angel Park, about 15 minutes west of the Strip with easy freeway access.

Leaving Las Vegas

Las Vegas isn’t the only game in town. Sanchez and Lanier both recommend a trip out to Hoover Dam, just 45 minutes away. Mitchell agrees, adding that Historic Boulder City, Red Rock Canyon and the Valley of Fire are all

worth a trip as well.

Red Rock Canyon is 17 miles from the Strip on Rt. 159 and is as popular for rock climbing as it is for its scenery.

Three reputable national parks are within a day’s drive. Death Valley is the closest. Travel north on I-15 out of Vegas to Lathrop Wells, Nev. and Hwy. 373 to California 190 to get to the nation’s lowest, driest, hottest spot. It’s a bit of a drive through the desert (just over two hours), but it’s amazing when you get there. A shorter but more difficult route goes through Pahrump, Nev. Either way, bring drinking water.

Or, head straight North on I-15 to Zion National Park. You will pass the beautiful Virgin River Gorge en route to Exit 16 in Utah, where you drive east on Rt. 9 to the park. It is a fast 160 miles to Zion.

Farther is the Grand Canyon. It is about a day’s drive — 275 miles and 4.5 hours — from Vegas to the South Rim (the North Rim area is closed this time of year). There are 14-hour bus tours offered from Las Vegas. If you plan to visit several national parks, buy the annual pass; vehicle passes run \$25 per car per park.

Keeping it sane

Knowing what to avoid is important, too. “I would avoid the side streets around the Strip after dark, the ‘alphabet’ streets downtown and the area around the Stratosphere,” Mitchell says. “The Stratosphere itself is fine but not walking around in that area, especially at night.”

Lanier says you probably shouldn’t venture too far off the Strip, either. “Cab fares are extremely expensive if you travel too far,” he says.

“I would not recommend splitting 10s at the blackjack table unless you feel the need to help our local economy,” Reid laughs.

We’ll give the last words to McCutcheon. “Bring plenty of money. It does get cold here at night so don’t pack too light. Have fun paying our taxes. We always appreciate the visits!”

Whatever you choose to do, have a good time, but keep it under control. Overdrinking, overgambling and oversleeping are not recommended. Have fun! ■

Harler is a freelance writer from Strongsville, Ohio. Contact him at curt@curtharler.com.





GIS 2012
SPECIAL

It doesn't matter if you're going to the Golf Industry Show or not, these new and improved products are worth checking out. BY GOLFDOM STAFF

JOHN DEERE

IMPROVED PRODUCTS: 2020A and 2030A ProGators

IMPROVEMENTS: Featured enhancements to John Deere's 2020A and 2030A ProGators include improved performance and ease of use. The improved 2020A model features an electronic fuel injection gas engine (EFI) and an optional multi-mode electronic throttle control for ease of use with application equipment.

"We're excited to show customers the newest version of our popular ProGator HDUVs at GIS," said Brad Aldridge, product manager for John Deere Golf. "With superintendents and technicians in mind, we focused on improved performance, noise reduction and ease of use."

The ProGator 2020A model offers the industry's only 4-cylinder HDUV, which is improved to allow for quiet operation at 78 dB(A) at high idle. "It also offers an optional multi-mode throttle control that regulates maximum engine rpm for spraying, topdressing and spreading," Aldridge said.

To meet demanding performance needs, both the 2020A and 2030A ProGators offer 4-wheel hydraulic disk brakes, increased payload capacity and tighter shifting patterns.

GIS BOOTH: 615



One of the best things about the Golf Industry Show is all the new and improved tools unveiled to superintendents. We can only guess what will be the hottest new product at this year's show, but we can definitely give you a preview of some of the things that will be rolled out onto the Las Vegas Convention Center floor.

Keep an eye out for our April issue, where we'll give a more thorough rundown of the products being made available to better your golf course.

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Check It Out

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REELCRAFT

NEW PRODUCT: **Self-contained hose reel trailer**

Reelcraft's new hose reel trailer makes hose handling and watering easier, quicker and more convenient, and eliminates the need for a dedicated maintenance vehicle. Designed for grounds maintenance applications requiring up to 1-inch I.D. by 100 feet of hose, the trailer bed also offers additional space for tool trays and other accessories.

The wheel base matches typical work vehicles, and the wheels are mounted inside the trailer bed to prevent snagging of trees and shrubs. An extra-long 32-inch trailer tongue allows for sharp turns and is easier to back up.

GIS BOOTH: 1568



JACOBSEN

IMPROVED PRODUCT: **Eclipse2 walking greens mower**

IMPROVEMENTS: According to the company, improvements include the possibility of increased productivity by upping the max mow speed to 3.8 mph. The speed can be set through the pass code-protected menus on the Eclipse2's InCommand Control system. The mower has the highest productivity of any walking greens mower on the market, according to Jacobsen.

The generator and battery mounting slots have been extended, giving the option to increase or decrease the weight on the front roller.

Jacobsen's exclusive 15-blade reels can now be ordered standard on Eclipse2 units, providing the lowest frequency of cut with the highest mow speed.

For the technician, Jacobsen said it has improved the ease of maintenance by making adjusters accessible without removing covers and making covers easier to remove when needed.

The Eclipse2 features a new lightweight handle, a repositioned pull start and a new kickstand. The LCD screen size has been increased to make it easier to read.

GIS BOOTH: 2432



STANDARD GOLF

NEW PRODUCT: **Bronze and aluminum Centennial Tee Consoles**

Designed to enhance the look, feel and tradition of the world's elite golf courses, the Centennial Tee Consoles are available with vertical oval- or crest-shaped markers, precision-cast in bronze or aluminum and richly accented with black or hunter green backgrounds. The 10-inch by 14-inch markers can be mounted horizontally using classic sign brackets specially fitted for the 3-inch by 3-inch square posts, or they can be attached directly to 3-inch-diameter round-ribbed posts.

Both post designs stand 8 feet high and come with decorative caps. Additional options include ball washer mounting brackets (with hardware) and complementary multi-colored signage (with hardware) to display each hole.

GIS BOOTH: 2349