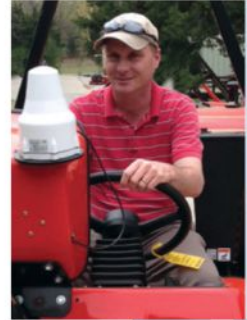


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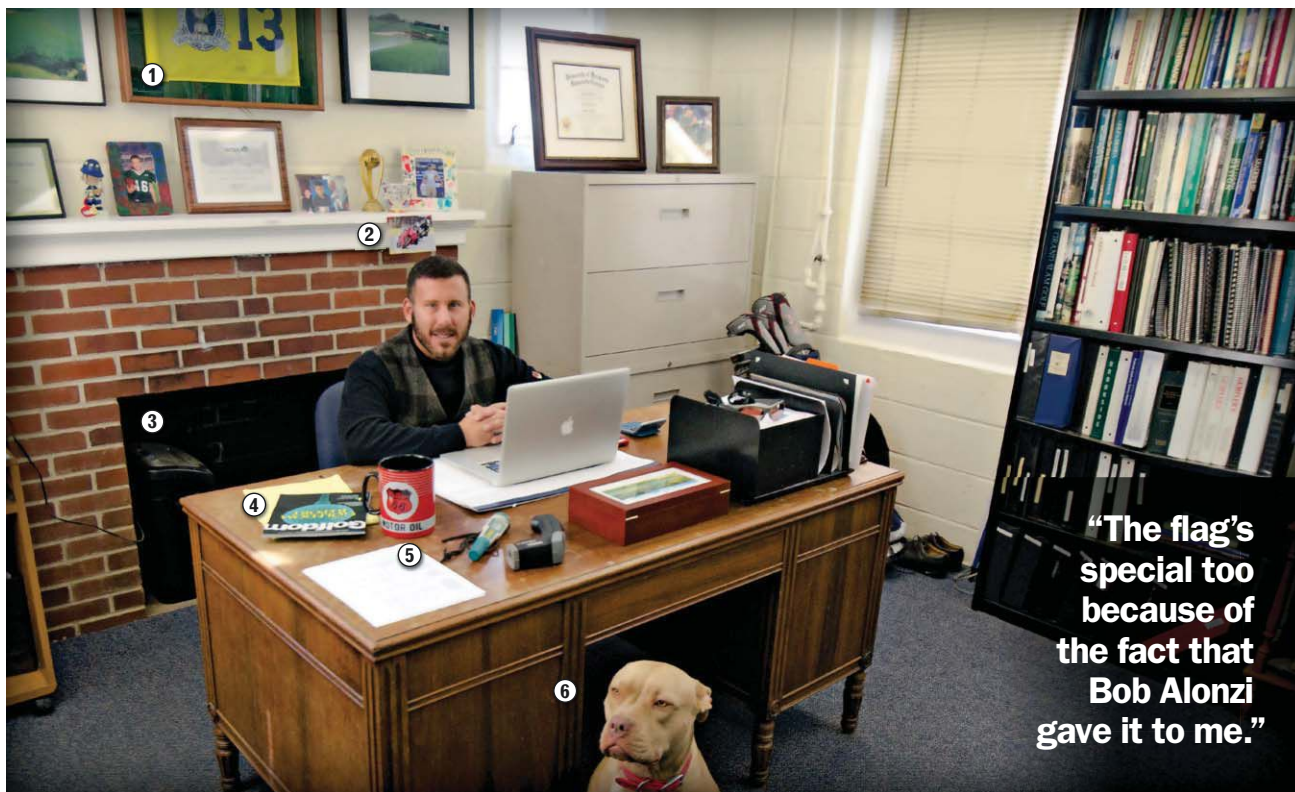
# My Second Office

BECAUSE THE COURSE  
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## About our host

**JARED VIARENGO, CGCS**, general manager and superintendent at Applebrook Golf Club, Malvern, Pa., is a smart guy with a need for speed. Viarengo has a few degrees to make use of at his course, including an associate's degree in turfgrass management from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, a bachelor's degree in psychology from Northeastern

University in Boston and a master's of science in management from the University of Maryland, University College. He has been with Applebrook since 2000, just before its opening in 2001. Prior to Applebrook, Viarengo was at Winged Foot GC in Mamaroneck, N.Y. When not on the course, he's got quite the lead foot, racing motorcycles as fast as possible.



**"The flag's special too because of the fact that Bob Alonzi gave it to me."**

**1 LUCKY FLAG** That's a 1997 PGA Championship flag and it was given to me by my boss, Bob Alonzi, at Winged Foot Golf Club. He gave me that flag before he left and it's signed by Davis Love III and Justin Leonard. Love had won the tournament and Leonard was the runner-up. The other thing is, 13 is my lucky number.

**2 GEAR HEAD** I occasionally do track days on motorcycles. I have a bunch of motorcycles, but this particular bike is a track motorcycle. I'll take it out to a nearby racetrack in New Jersey and ride

on the track for the day. It's a 2007 Kawasaki ZX6 and sometimes I get up to 150 mph. I have six motorcycles.

**3 JUST FOR LOOKS** It (the fireplace) doesn't work, in fact the only thing in there is my paper shredder. But, it's actually not that cool because the fireplace constantly makes a cold draft on my behind.

**4 A PERSONAL TOUCH** I like (*Golfdom's*) more personal aspect. I like the fact that it's a different perspective to the industry, a

little less clinical. You could pick it up, read an article or two, put it down, pick it up and read it again.

**5 YOUR MORNING MOTOR OIL** I'm kind of a gear head and into anything that goes fast — motorcycles, cars and all of that stuff. It's the shape of an oilcan and is a ceramic mug, but it holds a quart of coffee.

**6 APPLE OF HIS EYE** That's Bella. We've had Bella for almost two years now. She was a rescue. She's a pit bull/boxer mix. She's a great golf course dog and gets along with everybody. She's

probably one of the best dogs I've had. I always laugh because I said she was the most inexpensive dog I've ever gotten and then within three months, she got run over by a John Deere Gator. She was running alongside the cart, darted in front of it. Turned out to be about \$1,200 in vet bills. She's fine now. She turned out to be a more expensive dog than I thought.

**BY MOLLY GASE // PHOTO BY KEN BROWN**  
Proud of your second office? Email us a photo of you in it to [sjones@northcoastmedia.net](mailto:sjones@northcoastmedia.net), and we may feature you and your office in an upcoming issue of *Golfdom*.



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“Now, I’m not saying that the movie ‘Caddyshack’ was based on my experience, but I can tell you I could definitely relate very closely to the theme of that movie.”

**MARK WOODWARD**, *Contributing Editor*

## Trickiest green ever: Just prior to grand opening

**A**fter more than 40 years in the business and working with hundreds of greens, the trickiest challenge related to getting a green ready for play, dates back to 1974 when I first got in the business. I was a young assistant superintendent at Dobson Ranch Golf Course, just five months out of college. The month was October. We were preparing the golf course for the grand opening ceremony, which Lee Trevino and a bunch of dignitaries were scheduled to attend.

The golf course was in a new community and was the first thing built as part of a huge residential development. The plan was to build the golf course first and then get premium prices for the home lots surrounding the course. At the time of the opening, there was not one home surrounding the facility. Several years later there were hundreds. This caused the problem with the green in question. The land that the golf course was built on was old farmland and had a high population of a pest we have all seen on the big screen.

Literally two weeks before the grand opening... you guessed it. The inevitable happened. A gopher popped up in three different locations, right in the middle of

the third green. We came in one morning and during course set up, immediately noticed three large piles of sand on the green. And this was six years before the movie “Caddyshack” came out. Instantly we knew we had a serious problem.

We began developing plans to get rid of this unwanted pest and that is when things got interesting. Our thought was that we didn’t want to run water down into the holes because we were dealing with a relatively new green and were afraid the water would cause more damage. Remember, there were three mounds of sand meaning that the gopher had a fairly extensive system of burrows running across the green. I can only imagine how this gopher must have been

thinking: how cool this is! This was the best and easiest digging he’d ever experienced. USGA sand is very diggable compared to the normal caliche soil he was used to.

Anyway, we tried virtually everything we could think of at the time to eliminate this problem. We used gopher bait, poison and gas. We even backed in an old Cushman with burnt valves that smoked worse than a burning tarpaper shack, hooked a hose to the exhaust pipe and floored the accelerator. After each one of these attempts we would come in the next morning and the gopher seemed to be thriving. He burrowed more tunnels and popped up in several more locations around the green.

Since we were having

no success with all of these supposedly tried and true methods, we finally decided to stick the hose down one of the holes and flush this critter out. When we did this, just like in the movie, water started bubbling up from all the holes created by our friend.

Finally, as we were all focusing on other holes on the green, the gopher popped up in a new hole behind us. One of the more agile maintenance workers ran over and solved our problem with one mighty stroke of a round point shovel. I don’t mean to sound morbid here but that was an extremely good day at the ranch. We were only a week from the grand opening.

At this point our agronomic skills kicked in. We stripped the sod along the tunnels created by the gopher, added some sand that had been washed away, re-laid the sod, watered and rolled the green. Obviously, on the day of the grand opening you could see the sod lines but the green was smooth and very playable. No one said a word.

Now, I’m not saying that the movie “Caddyshack” was based on my experience, but I can tell you I could definitely relate very closely to the theme of that movie.

A year or so later we found a 1,000-year-old Hohokam Indian skeleton behind this same green, but that’s a story for another day.

**Mark Woodward** is a senior vice president for OB Sports, principal of Damarco Golf, president of Mark Woodward and Associates and a contributing editor for *Golfdom*. He can be reached at [mwoodward@obsports.com](mailto:mwoodward@obsports.com).



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“If you find yourself complaining that your putting green is too big, I suppose you can be thankful that it’s not 2.3 acres.”

**MATT NEFF**, *assistant superintendent, Wedgewood G&CC, Powell, Ohio*

## 18 greens in 1

It’s been said that putting green management is the most advanced form of agriculture that exists. That’s probably true when you consider all the variables that we attempt to control and balance with golfer expectations for firm and fast, yet receptive and true putting surfaces.

Imagine then the undertaking of maintaining 85 greens at a world class golf resort. By “world class” I mean a bucket list caliber golf experience. No pressure, right? How about then adding a 2.3 acre putting course, roughly the equivalent to another 18 putting surfaces to the mix? That’s what Ken Nice, director of agronomy at Bandon Dunes, Bandon, Ore., and his team do everyday.

Bandon Dunes Golf Resort is composed of four 18-hole courses, Bandon Dunes, Pacific Dunes, Bandon Trails and Old Macdonald, along with a 13-hole par 3 course, Bandon Preserve, all designed by some of the leading practitioners of modern minimalist architecture. It is also now the home of the Punchbowl putting course, which will officially open in May after a soft opening this past fall.

The Punchbowl is the

brainchild of Bandon founder and owner Mike Keiser, who enlisted architects Tom Doak as the designer and Jim Urbina as the shaper.

I recently had the opportunity to speak with Ken Nice about the maintenance regime they have implemented for the Punchbowl, as well as some of the design features.

The Punchbowl is grassed with a creeping red and Chewings fine fescue blend on native sand. Mowing heights for the entire 2.3 acre complex are planned to be in the .200 to .250 range as the slope and contours of the green will not require speeds above eight on the Stimpmeter to be challenging and also to maintain the health of the fine fescue. Speeds in excess of this target will, as you would imagine, likely result in the loss of some of the most interesting pin locations.

The entire complex is

mowed with a flex head triplex and rolled with a side-to-side roller. Mowing and rolling take approximately two hours to complete for a total of four man hours. The common practices of alternating mowing and rolling, as well as target rolling (only rolling the area in proximity to the cups) will be employed when appropriate, based on conditions.

The complex is topdressed every three weeks at a rate that matches the current growth. Native sand that is mined on-site is used. As with the other greens at Bandon, the surface will be regularly cultivated, however no hollow tining will be performed due to the native sand construction, regular topdressing and low thatch production of fine fescue. Cultivation practices will include slicing, solid tining and verti-draining.

The routing of the putting course will change each day.

The green is divided into six sections with five hole locations per section. Three locations from each section are used for a given day’s routing, thereby allowing two to recover.

From the fine fescue turf to the massive square footage, this is obviously not your everyday American practice putting green, but the architecture arguably puts it in a class by itself. No offense to other putting courses. Admittedly (and regrettably), I’ve never seen the Punchbowl in person, but believe me, it doesn’t take a genius to recognize the sheer awesomeness of this place.

There is almost 20 feet of elevation change from a plateau on the north end, down the massive Punchbowl on the south end, with many dramatic contours and elevation changes. Further adding to the mystique are the naturally occurring dunes that have been incorporated into the complex. No greater authority than Tom Doak himself said, “You will find every kind of putt you can imagine out there and probably a few you never dreamed of.”

So if you find yourself complaining that your putting green is too big, I suppose you can be thankful that it’s not 2.3 acres. If you wish it was bigger (get your mind out of the gutter, you’re an adult), you can dream about the Punchbowl.

**Matt Neff** ([mneff4@yahoo.com](mailto:mneff4@yahoo.com)) is assistant superintendent at Wedgewood G&CC in Powell, Ohio.

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# Week



This series of photos of the chipping green at Monona GC were taken by Joe Sell. Following the project, Sell was inspired to create a video out of the images and accompanied by music. The completed video can be viewed at [youtube.com/watch?v=cr84Tsm3Uno](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cr84Tsm3Uno).





# end warriors

Two Wisconsin assistants spearhead a volunteer project for the First Tee and build a chipping green in one weekend.

**A** recent volunteer project spearheaded by a couple assistant superintendents in Wisconsin resulted in two distinct benefits — those who had never been involved in building a green gained that experience and kids who play at a First Tee course in Madison can now practice chipping before they play a round.

This past September, Joe Sell, senior assistant superintendent of the Straits Course at Whistling Straits in Kohler, and Jake Schneider, former assistant golf course superintendent at Blackhawk Country Club in Madison, lead a team of local assistant superintendents and turfgrass students from the University of Wisconsin – Madison in building a chipping green at Monona Golf Course, a First Tee facility.

The gist of the project was for assistant superintendents to gain experience in something they don't typically do. In this case, construction, specifically a 6,650-square-foot, USGA-spec chipping green that was built in two and a half days.

The group started on a Friday, and by Sunday at 5:00 p.m., the green was seeded and being watered-in. But it took Sell and Schneider much longer to get the project going. It took six months to plan the project and ask for donations. The entire cost of

about \$30,000 was paid for via donations from vendors and suppliers. The project cost The First Tee and the city of Madison nothing.

## A major project

The idea for the project came from the assistants committee of the Wisconsin GCSA, on which Sell and Schneider served. Sell still does, but Schneider, who chaired the assistants committee for two years, left the industry in August 2013 for the

landscape industry and now is a department manager for The Bruce Co. in Middleton. Sell has served on the assistants committee since 2008. The committee includes four others assistants who are spread throughout the state. Assistants who are members of the WGCSA meet every year at the association's annual meeting, which is held in the winter.



BY JOHN WALSH



“We had talked about doing a significant project, such as building a green,” Sell says. “The idea stemmed from the 2005 Golf Industry Show when the Builders Association (GCBA) built a green on the trade show floor. We thought, ‘What if we did that on a bigger scale?’ because assistants don’t get that type of experience.”

Sell and Schneider, who met at North Shore GC in Menasha when they were teenagers, met with the director of The First Tee, Joni Dye; course superintendent, Shannon Barstow; and the manager of golf operations for the city of Madison, Ray

*Continued on page 20*

Continued from page 19

Shane, and talked to them about the project and their intentions. The First Tee staff was interested, so Sell sketched a design using maps from Google Earth and sent it to them with a proposed plan.

“They gave us the go-ahead in May,” Sell says. “Once we had their approval, they didn’t need to do anything. We got all the materials — the fill, pea stone, mix, hand tools, etc., which were all donated through local vendors and area golf courses. The sand came from two hours away, and we phoned a friend who had trucks to haul it for us on weekends. Jake and I reached out to vendors, and most said yes right away.”

“Getting the funding and materials aligned was more difficult than actually building the green,” Schneider laughs.

Monona Golf Club, a 9-hole regulation course, is a fledgling First Tee chapter designated in 2011, according to Dye, who



Jake Schneider

asked what they could do for the kids of The First Tee,” she says.

Barstow and the city maintenance crew selected the best place to build the chipping green, which was behind the clubhouse. 10 to 12 kids can use the green at any time.

“It’s a huge gift,” Dye says. “It was amazing this gift fell in our laps.”

**Giving back**

The city of Madison has a long-term plan for the four golf courses it operates, but

says it features challenging greens that aren’t too speedy, junior tee boxes, and a driving range, but it had no chipping green.

“Joe and Jake approached me and

renovating the clubhouses is priority. As such, there were no plans for a chipping green.

“We don’t use taxpayer money,” Dye says. “The players pay for the course maintenance. If we fail to support our city courses adequately, the city will consider shutting them down.”

Sell took the lead on the project because he had a background in construction. There were about 25 volunteers, including some of the grounds crew from Whistling Straits, helping out on the second day.

“The whole idea of the project was to get assistants good experience and give back to the community,” Sell says.



Joni Dye

Continued on page 22

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