



*Merry Christmas and
Happy New Year!*



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SYMPOSIUM GETS RAVE REVIEWS!

By Monroe S. Miller

By all accounts, the 1992 Wisconsin Golf Turf Symposium was one of the best held in the 27 year history of the meeting.

From WGCSA president Bruce Worzella's opening remarks to Jim Latham's closing summary, the material presented by the speakers was timely and interesting.

The topic—*The Green and Tee Complex—Renovating the Surrounds*—piqued the interest and curiosity of golf course superintendents from 16 states. The Symposium committee's rationale for selecting the subject was the widespread updating of older golf courses so that they might offer similar challenges of the many new courses available to golfers.

It's a good thing Jim Moore is no shrinking violet; we needed to hear his hard-edged comments about the state of affairs in golf course construction. He criticized everyone—architects, clubs ("house designers are NOT golf course designers"), contractors ("king-sized egos, no accountability"), golf

course superintendents ("don't take an active enough advocacy role"), and even the USGA.

His critical remarks were complemented with sound advice on how to overcome the problems most often encountered.

Brian Silva is a busy man. We invited him to Wisconsin last year, but he was unable to attend because of his hectic schedule. He penciled the Symposium in his schedule for 1992.

And he is a man of his word. Since he was coming so far (from eastern Massachusetts), it seemed to make sense to have Brian on the program twice. That turned out to be a stroke of genius.

Silva is a blend of lecturer and entertainer, architect and equipment operator, superintendent and player. His comments on "sympathetic restoration" were tremendous and many of us will look at golf courses very differently from now on.

Brian's wealth of experience in bunker restoration was the focus of his afternoon lecture. The slides he showed to emphasize his comments were a lesson in golf design history.

Bob Vavrek talked about green construction and obviously spent a lot of time assembling details on many of the new methods of green construction being touted. The USGA specification green is well known to everyone; less known (and even unknown in some cases) are the California method, the Hurzdan method, the 'Ideal Green Rohoza' method, and the modified USGA method.

For a professional group that is more and more frequently confronting decisions involving construction meth-

ods, Vavrek's summaries couldn't have come at a better time.

Tuesday afternoon's program took a strong turn to the practical when Lee Bruce took the podium and talked about green and tee construction. His remarks were wrapped around slides showing some green/tee/pond work he is completing at the Nakoma Golf Club. Lee answered some great questions from the audience and flattered the group when he commented that after 30-plus years in the commercial landscape business he's "seen no group as concerned about projects as golf course superintendents."

Danny Quast and Monroe Miller were a continuation of a popular format for Tuesday's wrap-up—a panel discussion. They visited about their experiences and recommendations with in-house construction versus contracted work. When the dust settled and the questions were over, they found more common ground and agreement than disagreement.

Professor Norm Hummel has been on sabbatical from Cornell University for a year, working on refinements and details of the USGA specifications for putting green construction. His results have not yet been published, and we were given an early look at the changes.

And the changes make a lot of sense. Hummel was driven by a need to provide more flexibility, to better define limits, to incorporate new technology and provide good scientific rationale, to remove unnecessary steps and to give the industry superior specifications.

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Keynote Speaker Jim Moore

Symposium Review

(Continued from front page)

The publication of the revised specifications will be met with wide acceptance in the industry.

Many had anxiously awaited John Huber's appearance at the Symposium to talk about washed bentgrass sod. The interest in the use of washed sod for putting greens is very high, and John answered many of the questions held by Wisconsin golf course superintendents. Its advantages—earlier opening, no layering, elimination of wash-outs, the lack of weekends, lower transportation and labor costs—seemed in line with its cost. It will be fun to see who among us will be the first to use washed sod.

Don Sweda is a colleague from the Beechmont Country Club in Cleveland. He discussed his success at regrassing putting greens from seed, and led the audience through the process with an excellent set of slides.

As he's done since his appointment to the USGA Great Lakes Region Green Section Agronomist position, Jim Latham offered a summary of the proceedings. The Symposium wouldn't be the same without this USGA tradition.

The 1992 Wisconsin Golf Turf Symposium offered a unique opportunity to those who attended—the chance to hear Ron Whitten speak. Ron is the co-author of the book *THE GOLF COURSE* with Geoffrey Cornish, a publication that has met with absolutely tremendous success over the past decade and is found in the home or office of many serious golfers and many golf course superintendents.

Whitten is a true student of the playing fields of golf. He speaks from memory about architects, golf courses, specific features and just about anything else connected with the history of golf



Lee Bruce discussed green and tee construction.



Ron Whitten, Terry Ward and Bob Belfield at the noon luncheon.

courses and golf course architects. His appearance as our luncheon speaker ranks up there with Frank Hannigan's trip to Milwaukee and Andy North's appearance at the podium in the mid-1980s.

Symposium Awards, Records, Firsts and Kudos

AWARDS

Best News Award—the revised USGA specifications for putting green construction. Dr. Hummel's lecture on those changes and the reasons for them was welcomed by anyone facing new construction.

Best Advice Award—from Brian Silva: "When seeding new greens, double the recommended seeding rate. Do not be afraid of using 5# of bentgrass seed/M on new greens. And do not be stingy with the fertilizer. New golf greens will need about 2# N/M/month for three years to grow a thatch cushion."

Best Slides Award—Ron Whitten. It was pure pleasure to listen to the Architecture Editor of *Golf Digest* talk about great golf courses, golf holes and green surrounds. His slides complemented his words perfectly.

Keynote Award—although time can dull our memories, I'm pressed to remember a keynote address any better than Jim Moore's. Down-to-earth, practical, blunt, challenging and even controversial, his remarks set the stage for a great program.

Sentimental Award—goes to Charlie Wilson for stopping by to see how his 27 year old "youngster" was doing. WGCSA members my age know what a giant in our business Charlie was during his career. Younger members should do some reading and find out. Without Charlie and his forward thinking there likely wouldn't be a Symposium to attend.

FIRSTS

1. First time we heard the SAME speaker twice on the program. And who better than Brian Silva to break a 26 year old precedent? As many said, "I could listen to Brian Silva talk for days." Thanks to Brian and credit to the Symposium committee for breaking new ground.

2. First time the Symposium was held at the Hyatt Regency. Look elsewhere for a scorecard on the hotel's grade as a Symposium site.

3. First time we had three USGA employees on the program and two former employees in attendance (Charlie Wilson and Brian Silva). The number goes up by one if you count Norm Hummel's sabbatical!

4. First time the audio-visual equipment worked!

RECORDS

1. Highest registration—attributed to an outstanding topic AND a terrific lineup of speakers.

2. Highest second day attendance—credits same as above.

KUDOS

To session chairmen Dave Smith, Jerry Kershasky and Jim Belfield. They kept the program on time, prodded the audience for questions, and handled introductions like the pros they are. Good job.

To the Symposium committee. Faced with the impossible task of pleasing a large audience AND choosing a topic better than the year before, they came through again with flying colors. Thanks to Bob Belfield, Rod Johnson, Jim Latham, Al Nees, Wayne Otto, Bob Vavrek, Terry Ward and Bruce Worzella for yet another winner.

To Terry Ward from all the program speakers. He told us he was the caretaker for our two days in Milwaukee, and he was. Special thanks to this witty, gregarious and capable fellow! MMSD is lucky to have him.

To MMSD for all their staff does (and has done for 26 previous years) to make this event happen, in the name of education and on behalf of the NOER FOUNDATION. Collectively, they are the best!

To the speakers, who come from near and far to share their expertise and experience to make for better golf turf. A lot of time and effort goes into preparation for an appearance at the Symposium podium; those efforts and the time are appreciated.

SCORING THE HYATT

It seems only appropriate that the venture of the Symposium into a different venue receives a grade. Below is one man's opinion of the Hyatt Regency job as host of the 1992 Wisconsin Golf Turf Symposium. 1 = poor; 5 = excellent.

PARKING: Accessible, easy-to-find. Cost is too high, but competitive with other ramps in the downtown area. Convenient to hotel. Advertised as "unsafe" (see pic); give credit for honesty despite the sad comment on conditions downtown. *Score = 3.*

ROOMS: Clean, big, comfortable. Very expensive, even at our group rate. Obscenely expensive for procrastinators who registered late and paid an extra fifty bucks a night. I'd have camped out! As near as I can tell, however, the rooms are priced with similar facilities downtown. *Score = 4.*

HOTEL RESTAURANTS: Even though we are in Milwaukee to learn, we still have to eat. I found the food service prompt, the food good and the prices high (what's new?). *Score = 4.*

AMBIANCE: The Hyatt is a distinctively modern hotel, but is very beautiful. It lacks the character of an old hotel like the Pfister—I always liked going down to the lobby in the morning and reading a paper in one of their plush chairs. But the Hyatt has a personality all its own, and I very much enjoyed it (especially the elevators!). *Score = 4.5.*

LECTURE HALL: Very good. Chairs were comfortable, acoustics were superb, audio-visual equipment actually worked (what a singular treat!), lights worked. The temperature was perfect and there were no outside windows and attending shades to deal with. The only negatives were short supply of refreshments (and golf course superintendents DO like their refreshments!) and the lack of pencils and notepads.



The latter may be the only things from the Pfister that I missed. *Score = 4.5.*

NOON LUNCHEON: Great meal, just what you should expect when you have invited a guest like Ron Whitten. I'll never forget that skinny sandwich from last year! The room was comfortable, the tables roomy and the audio-visual equipment worked, again. Just great! *Score = 5.*

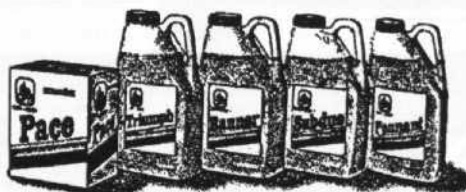
LOCATION: The Hyatt offers neither advantage nor disadvantage when compared with the Pfister in the category. *Score = 3.*

COST: This is a major factor for Terry Ward and Al Nees. I haven't heard from them in this regard, but I suspect that I will. "Corp fin" has a lot to say in this department! *No score.*

OVERALL SCORE: The Hyatt is enough to make me forget the Pfister, and I am a big-time traditionalist. I hope we are at the Hyatt next year and every year after that. *Score = 4.*

At least the parking ramp staff is honest!

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