



The Surrounds

By Wayne G. Horman



Isn't Wisconsin beautiful in spring? I bet the golf course superintendents in central Wisconsin didn't think spring was "just around the corner" or beautiful when over two feet of snow fell in late March. I am certain that most golf courses didn't experience snowmold problems, but the courses that received all that snow on top of unfrozen ground might be a bit concerned.

In the southern part of the state, a number of superintendents made comments of four separate freeze and thaw situations that occurred during the winter. The turf appeared in good shape at the beginning of April, so most of them appear in good shape.

Not many golf course superintendent positions opened up over the winter months. In northern Wisconsin, Todd Monge, the superintendent at St. Germain GC, moved over to Timber Ridge CC in Minocqua. Timber Ridge has been sold, and the new owners will open the golf course to public play.

At St. Germain, Steve Spears has taken over as the new course superintendent. Spears was the assistant for Dan Barrett at Trout Lake GC in Arborvitae.

Jerry Kershasky has hired two new assistants at Westmoor CC in Brookfield for the new season. Tara Zabkowicz, a spring graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and Larry Gorman, a graduate of Anoka Hennepin Technical College in Minnesota, will start at semester's end.

Kershasky's former assistant, Adam Fisher, moved to Palm Springs, California to become the assistant at PGA West. Fisher, also a UW-Madison grad, worked previously at Yahara Hills GC and Blackhawk CC.

Deer Valley is a new 18-hole golf course being built near Barneveld, located 30 to 35 minutes southwest of Madison. The golf course superintendent is Derek Van Damme, a former assistant at Blackhawk CC. As with most new golf course construction projects, Van Damme is getting good education dealing with all the different facets involved with building a golf course.

However, a new wrinkle that most projects don't often encounter, but may in the future, is dealing with endangered species of threatened species. In the case of Deer Valley, a threatened species is a little bit less difficult to address than an endangered species. A threatened species doesn't shut down a project, but rather the golf course will create an additional habitat for a "Regal Fritillary" butterfly.

The Regal Fritillary butterfly has made the site of this golf course its home for many years, and the DNR has worked well with Van Damme on mitigating new habitat in the rough and other surrounding areas for this butterfly. Hopefully, environmentalists will note this as an industry working to preserve nature.

Speaking of Deer Valley, Dave Walter will move from the

staff at Blackhawk CC to the assistant position at Deer Valley. He is a recent graduate of the UW-Madison.

How many of you have gotten hooked on the Internet? I decided to give it a try this spring. Tom Schwab has even started a turf bite chat board that has over 30 different superintendents and other industry representatives available to share information. It is really interesting to read the interaction among subscribers. The most active recent discussion was related to the new field being installed at Lambeau Field in Green Bay.

Lambeau Field won't be the "frozen tundra" it once was after the SportsGrass is installed. The SportsGrass system consists of 100% natural grass playing surface grown in a layer of amended sand. Within the layer of sand are polypropylene grass blades tufted into a woven backing.

The new turf is being grown in the state of Virginia and will be put on top of 12 inches of greens mix (80/20) this spring. A new heating system will be installed that will keep the turf at 70 degrees even during cold temperatures late in the season. There currently is only one football field that has cool season grasses planted into this synthetic fiber, so time will tell how effective the new field will hold up.

Enjoy the rest of spring and E-mail (horm@itis.com) or call if you have some good information to share. 🌱