

'99 Symposium Among the Best

By **Monroe S. Miller**, Golf Course Superintendent, Blackhawk Country Club

The 1999 Wisconsin Golf Turf Symposium started on a serious, even sad note as session chairman Tom Schwab asked for a moment of silence in memory of our friends Jim Belfield, Dave Murgatroyd and Jack Anderson.

This year was the third symposium of three symposia that developed golf course construction (1997), golf course grow-in (1998) and golf course maintenance (1999). This one was the best, in my view. Thanks to the speakers for that.

Jim Moore traveled to Milwaukee almost immediately after he returned from nine days in Spain to speak at his third consec-

utive Symposium. His loyalty to our meeting should be rewarded with a standing annual invitation as a speaker and an honorary membership in the WGCSA. Speaking from his extensive experience as an USGA agronomist and as a former golf course superintendent, Moore spoke to golfer expectations that approach perfection and how to deal with such unreasonable desires. He reviewed his report card for golf courses (see the USGA website), addressed course projects and their place in golf course management, and emphasized communication. Moore's dry Texas sense of humor was present throughout, a definite

plus in his presentations.

Another Texan followed Jim - Dr. Dick White of Texas A & M. He spoke to issues of irrigation frequency and timing, and showed how much science was brought into these practices that also include a lot of experience and instinct. Dr. White tied algae appearance on greens to irrigation frequency (as well as to the height of cut) and related rooting and shoot population to frequency. The subject of calibration of irrigation systems was discussed.

Anytime we have a chance to learn from one of America's finest course managers, we are better for it. So it was with Oscar Miles from

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President Pinkerton presents Scott Schaller the past president plaque.



Penn State professor Dr. Pete Landschoot returned to Wisconsin and the Symposium.



Rutgers professor Dr. Jim Murphy accepts gratitude from Jeff Gregos on behalf of the WGCSA.

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the Merit Club. He will be hosting the 2000 U.S. Women's Open, testimony to his golf course and to him.

People lucky enough to know Oscar well, know that details are what you can expect from him. Unlike a lot of professions where successful secrets are tightly held, there is a generous sharing of information in ours. Oscar is a premier example of that openness. Starting from week one in his program, he took us through the season with his putting green maintenance program. It was impressive information.

I have a prejudice at meetings like the Symposium. I especially enjoy listening to lectures from soil science faculty. Jim Murphy didn't disappoint anyone as he offered great advice on topdressing practices.

The annual program wouldn't be complete without a speaker from the UW - Madison, and Dr. John Stier filled that roll perfectly this year. John talked about moss, algae and dry spots, all somewhat mysterious areas of our business.

By the way, John also served as session on the second day. Tom



The distinguished panel of VanAuken, Handrich and Lee, and moderator Vavrek.



Oscar Miles shared some of his vast knowledge about golf course management.



Dr. Dick White joined fellow Texan Jim Moore on our 1999 program.



O.J. Noer Facility manager Tom Schwab served ably as a session chairman.



Dr. John Stier served as both speaker and as a session chairman.

Schwab was joined by Jeff Gregos on day one.

Pete Landschoot, professor from Penn State, returned to Wisconsin and our Symposium and gave solid advice on golf turf management regarding soil and thatch problems.

USGA Green Section agronomist Bob Vavrek chaired a panel discussion. The panel included three of our top golf course superintendents - Mike Lee, Mike Handrich and Dave VanAuken. The free give and take among them and the audience resulted in a very interesting hour or so. With Vavrek directing traffic on subject matter, topics ranging from total N on greens (2# to 4#/yr) to PGR use (none of the three use them). This

format of discussion is clearly popular and successful.

The WGCSA election wrapped up business on the first day and many stayed for the cocktail hour afterward.

Attendance the second day was good, certainly better than in most years. Attribute that to good speakers - Moore, Murphy and Vavrek - and topics that generated interest among those of us in the audience.

Moore summarized some of the research that is underway to find out what are the best greens and how you attain them. He hammered hard on basic research as the basis for good buying decisions, as opposed to making those same buying decisions on testimo-

nials. Moore considers testimonials as nearly worthless from a scientific point of view.

I've attended the vast majority of the Symposia presented since the beginning, going back to the years when I was an undergrad. This one was among the best. Thanks to the committee and the MMSD for that. 🌿