



April Meeting - Autumn Ridge

By **Dustin Riley**, Golf Course Superintendent, Oconomowoc Golf Club

The Host Golf Course - Autumn Ridge

Autumn Ridge is an 18-Hole, Par 70 semi-private golf course located in Valders, WI. The golf course architect, Ernie Schrock of Indiana, stretched his design up and over the very hilly and tree laden terrain. The seven-year old course opened in 1995. In February of 2000, Tom O'Conner and WSGA Golf Professional, Chuck Dammier, partnered in purchasing the golf course. Since the change over, golf rounds have increased by 5,000 in 2001 and are projected to continue to increase. Even though Autumn Ridge is fairly new, significant changes have occurred since the ownership changeover. The most obvious change involves the extensive tree removal program. Over the past couple of years 1,200 - 1,400 trees have been removed from green, tee, fairway edges and also in rough areas.

The Host Golf Course Superintendent - Chad Harrington

Chad Harrington became the golf course superintendent at Autumn Ridge in the spring of 1995 during the construction and grow-in phases. Chad, a native of the Wautoma area, began his golf course maintenance career at Waushara Country Club. As with many young individuals, Chad worked at the golf course during his high school and college years. Upon completing his English degree at Ripon College, he was offered the assistant superintendent's position at Waushara Country Club. Chad's next career move would be to head the golf course construction, grow-in and maintenance department at Autumn Ridge. With the help from his assistant, Julian Mejia, Chad manages a golf course maintenance staff totaling nine during peak summer months.



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The Event

Seventy-six superintendents, assistants and industry affiliates attended the first 2002 WGCSA monthly meeting on April 29th. The event was preceded by an informational presentation by Wayne Horman of the Scotts Company. His presentation provided some insight into the direction of Round-Up resistant turf. Although many of the studies are still currently in progress, the potential use of these grasses on golf courses is beginning to be defined.

All players were reminded that April in Wisconsin can be somewhat unpredictable and inconsistent. Weather conditions provided an array of different playing conditions. Who would have guessed that the 40-50 degree day would be a precursor to all of May? The steady spring breeze accented the cool temperatures.

Despite the cooler weather, all of the teams appeared to enjoy the opportunity to see their fellow peers while playing a little golf. The scramble format yielded the typical golf outing characteristics such as the occasional "golfer language," some hoot'n and holler'n and the repeated clanging of golf balls ricocheting among the trees. Although there may have

been over a thousand trees removed over the past couple of years, there were several instances when numerous stray golf balls collectively resembled the sound of a two-year old banging on a xylophone.

As the event came to a close, it was brought to everyone's attention that there was a problem. The siren from an approaching ambulance caused great concern. During the golfing portion of the meeting, one of our peers suffered a heart attack. Dewey Laak was taken to Holy Family Hospital in Manitowoc. It was discovered the following morning that there was a 99% blockage to the lower right side of his heart. Medical procedures relieved some of the blockage and Dewey was released following four days in ICU. He has been home and getting better everyday. Doug Laak, Dewey's son, was kind enough to keep everyone informed of his father's condition. His e-mail, sent through the Noernet on May 17th, relayed a sincere thank you to all those individuals that concern for his father's health. I would like to use this article to quote a part of Doug's email. "Remember guys, family first, grass second - listen to your body, make time for a physical - the people you love could be gone in a flash."

Four places were awarded for their scores.

First Place (60) - Mike Skenandore, Wanaki Golf Course

Dan Shaw, Lac Labelle Country Club
Mark Hortness, Ives Grove Golf Links
Ed Witkowski, Pendleton Turf

Fourth Place (62) - John Feiner, Public Golf Association


Skip Willms, Green Concepts
Chad Ball, Conway Farms GC
Wayne Otto, Ozaukee CC

Seventh Place (63) - Dale Marach, Reinders

Bruce Schweiger, Reinders
David Swift, Whistling Straits
Grant Davies, Whistling Straits

Tenth Place (65) - Scott Bushman, Fox Valley Golf Club

David Herr, Deer Run Golf Course
Lee Reinke, Deer Run Golf Course
Roy Zehren, Natural Athletic Turf



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Hole event awards were:

Hole #1 - Longest Putt

Marc Davison, Green Bay Country Club

Hole #7 - Closest to Pin
Pat Staehler, Spring Valley

Hole #9 - Longest Drive
Jace Schmelzer, 27 Pines

Hole #12 - Closest in Two
Skip Willms, Green Concepts

Hole #14 - Longest Putt
Sam Andre

Hole #17 - Closest to Pin
Bruce Schweiger, Reinders

The Celebrity - Wayne Otto, Ozaukee Country Club

In recent issues of Golfdom Magazine, there has been an advertisement starring one of our very own Wisconsin superintendents. Wayne Otto can be seen relaxing in a lawn chair, displaying some awfully white legs reading an issue of Golfdom Magazine. Wayne has since become an even larger celebrity among his peers. In great humor, Wayne was kind enough to "go along" with a celebrity issue autographing. Thanks, Wayne, for all of your influence throughout the years. You'll be missed upon your retirement.

Future Meetings

The summer is here and the golf courses are in full swing. Hope that everyone can get away for a day and participate in the future meetings.

July 15th - Wisconsin River Golf Club

August 13th - WTA Field Day -

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"ONE OF THOSE BIG MOSQUITOES HAS JUST BEEN SIGHTED ON THE 14th TEE. LARRY, GET ME MY SHOTGUN."