



# Spring Business Meeting

By David Brandenburg, Golf Course Manager, Rolling Meadows Golf Course

You could only guess after the winter we had that the annual WGCSA Spring Business Meeting would be affected by the weather. A quick little storm iced up the roads just enough to make the trip to Fond du Lac miserable for many. Education Chair Chad Harrington had a great education program lined up for us.

Dr. John Stier, University of Wisconsin-Madison started with a talk on his research into velvet bentgrasses. Can this grass help us in our goals to develop environmentally sustainable golf courses in the future? Historically not a lot of research has been done into the velvets in due part to the early success of the colonial and creeping bents.

Dr. Stier covered some of the commonly held misconceptions about the velvets that have been around for years. So far the positives for velvet are its ability

to produce and keep carbohydrates (sugars) to allow for better drought tolerance. It also has the ability to compete with poa annua and is tolerant of Acclaim (fenoxaprop-ethyl) applications when compared to creeping bents.

The negatives are the velvets have not done well at the NTEP trials and the varieties do not mix well with creeping bent varieties which always seem to show up in the plots. The velvet bents are so fine in texture that any amount of creeping bentgrass in the stand looks extremely out of place. Dr. Stier also thought it is possible the NTEP plot managers may be maintaining the velvet just as they would creeping bentgrass, causing the velvet to be over-watered. His research shows the velvets prefer to be irrigated at 60 to 70% ET (evapotranspiration).



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In conclusion Dr. Stier is not ready to recommend full scale velvet conversions in our area as he is still in the research and data collection stage of his study. This study is partially funded by the WGCSA research dollars. This and similar studies will be important as governmental regulations and environmental common sense may cause us as turf managers to reduce our management inputs.

Next up was Bob Vavrek, USGA Green Section Agronomist with his ever popular "Year in Review". With travels around the country and world Bob is able to give us the highs and lows of the year, along with what has worked and what has not worked for turf managers.

One of the keys Bob hit on was the benefits of having a proper infrastructure through aerification, topdressing and fertilization. Root anthracnose is becoming a larger problem as we push greens to the limit with mowing heights and intense management. Bob considers lower application of topdressing sand to be a major factor in turf problems on greens.

Last year was a banner year for fairy rings throughout Bob's region. Some formally reliable treatments did not seem to work as well as in the past. Bob explained sometimes that is because superintendents are not doing the aerifying needed to get the fungicide where it affects this soil fungus. Also the trend of dollar spot becoming more prevalent during warmer or colder times is continuing.

Design issues in regards to trees ruining architecturally marvelous holes or shading greens and tees to the point proper turf cannot be maintained continues to be an issue at many clubs where trees are protected like children. Bob showed some great examples where tree removal programs did wonders for the turf along with



**WGCSA President Dustin Riley accepts a check from Reinders Representative Tom Wentz for \$46,475.00 from their Daconil/Heritage sales program.**



**WGCSA Members Mike Handrich (25 years), Reinders Bros, Tom Wentz (50 years) and Bill Knight (25 years) were on hand to receive their member plaques.**

improving the visual effect and playability of a golf hole.

After lunch the business of the association was conducted with President Dustin Riley leading the meeting. The association hopes to start moving towards more electronic communication with the members through e-mail and the website (WGCSA.com). Brian Zimmerman's last act as Treasure before turning the checkbook over to Jeff Millies was to give the report

on last years financials. The board again did a great job holding down expenses and supporting the turf industry through research donations while having a profitable year.

WGCSA honored its 25 year and 50 year members. At 50 years Reinders was represented by Tom Wentz. The 25 year members honored were Mike Handrich (Racine CC), Bill Knight (Ozaukee County Parks, retired), Dave Butz (Maple Bluff CC), Randy Van Fleet (Merrill

Hills CC), Steve Wasser (Lesco) and Ed Witkowski (Pendelton Turf Supply). Congratulations to you for your long term commitment to the association.

Dan Quast gave an update on the Wee One Foundation and the good work it has done for persons in need. The Wee One Foundation was developed as a tribute to Wayne Otto to assist golf course management professionals (or their dependents) who incur overwhelming expenses due to medical hardship without comprehensive insurance or adequate financial resources. Through the foundation's work, Wayne's legacy will never be forgotten.

The Wee One Foundation is in the process of hiring an executive director to enhance its ability to help others. More information on the Wee One Foundation and its activities can be found at [www.weeone.org](http://www.weeone.org).

The first golf meeting will be held at Geneva National Golf Club in Lake Geneva on April 21st. Kevin Knudson is our host. This will be the third consecutive year the 54 hole Geneva National has hosted the WGCSA for our first meeting. Be sure to thank Kevin and the staff for their commitment to our association. 🌱



**Wee One Foundation President Dan Quast gives a update on the foundations activities.**

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