

A Great One Retires in Green Bay

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

I am sure my title got you excited to see if I had some new news about the Brett Favre retirement. Sure, 15 years leading a NFL team with no weeks off is a awesome feat. But it does not compare to another retirement in the Green Bay area.

Instead I am talking of Tom Schaller who served North Brook Country Club just north of Green Bay in Luxemburg as Golf Course Superintendent since 1969. I am sure many of you heard the comparison of how long number 4 served as the Packers signal caller when compared to the number of quarterbacks the Vikings or Bears have had over that time. But how many courses have seen 5, 10, 15 or even 20 superintendents over the 37 years Tom guided Northbrook.

I remember how impressed I was with Northbrook a few years ago when Tom hosted a WCSAA summer meeting. Those that were able to attend that meeting will not be surprised to learn Northbrook's members cared for Tom a great deal. They gave Tom a plaque making him a lifetime club member at his retirement party.

Tom was featured on the cover and with an article in Volume XXX no.3 in the May/June issue of *The Grass Roots* along with his nephew Scott Schaller, Golf Course Superintendent at North Shore Golf Club, his brother Fritz (Scott's dad) and his dad Hans. The Schaller family has been in the golf business for over 70 years. Hans and Fritz built North Brook and Tom became the first superintendent.

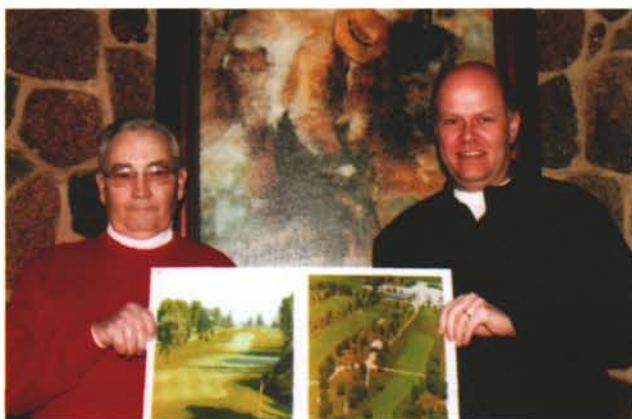
Good luck to you in your retirement Tom, you deserve the best.

I write this as we enter late March and I for one have never been more worried about the weather and how the golf course is faring under the unusual snow cover. We have been trying to clear our greens of snow to get at the ice, which varies from 1" to 5". Six years ago we cleared snow and ice in February and those greens were very slow to green up in spring due to desiccation, while the other greens were fine. Two years ago, we did little with the snow and ice and were hit pretty hard with ice damage. I guess there is no right answer because we as turf managers cannot forecast the weather.

This will be a great test for snow mold products throughout the state. For once Paul Koch will not need to travel north to find high levels of snow mold.

Our varied weather and winter conditions should remind us to consider using the United States Golf Association Green Section Turf Advisory Service (TAS). If you are not familiar with the TAS, it is a great opportunity for you as a golf course superintendent to have an independent review of your course management program.

Basically a USGA agronomist (for us in Wisconsin it is Bob Vavrek)



Tom Schaller receives aerial photos of Northbrook CC with signatures and well wishes on them from club manager Al Hoppe.

Tom Schaller receives a lifetime membership plaque from club president Melanie Wiezbiski and greens chairman Ray Birsall in appreciation for 37 years of service as golf course superintendent.



comes to your course for a full or half day visit with you and any other staff, owners or board members you want to come along. A tour of the course leads to discussion on any problems you may be having, and changes you want to make in your programs, and how best to implement those changes to provide the quality of course your golfers want and can afford.

Each USGA agronomist visits over 130 courses per year and have access to the latest in turf research and new programs. After the visit you and any other club officials you name will receive a written report regarding the items you discussed. The reports offer backup information and research to allow you to "sell" any changes to your staff or customers.

This year the service costs \$2,000 for a half day (\$1,700 if paid by May

15), and \$2,700 (\$2,400 if paid by May 15) for a full day visit. You can find more information and a registration form on the USGA web site.


You may be thinking the budget is tight and the service just is not possible for your course. Actually the Turf Advisory Service could save your club money as you find new ways to do things or validate the programs you already have. Our club has what I would consider a average to below average budget and we find the value I having a visit every other year. It confirms what we are doing right and gives us the newest in information into how we could improve and what that might cost.

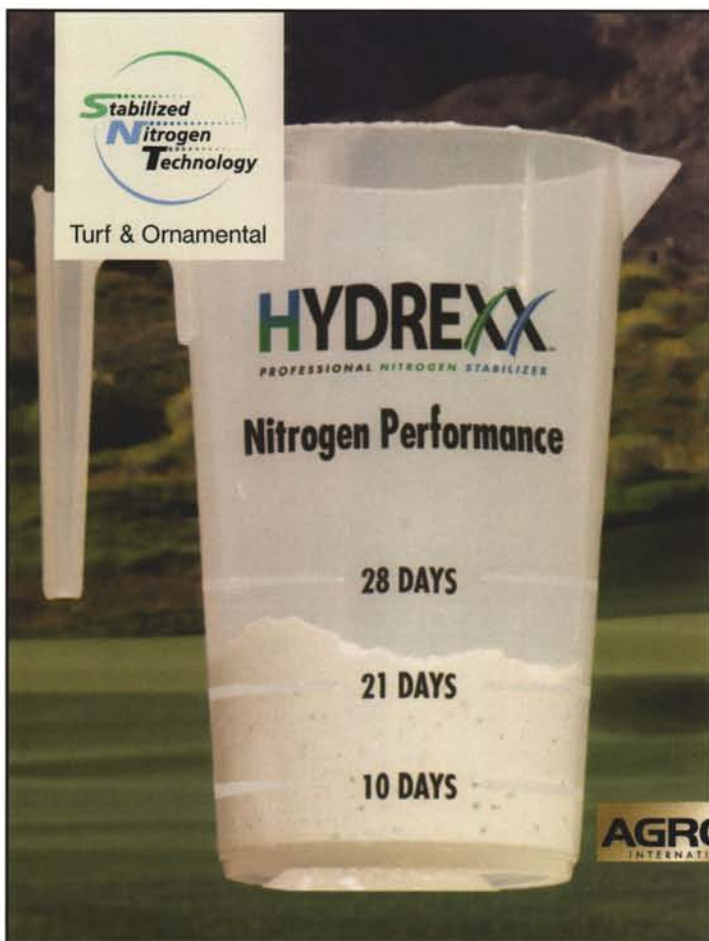
The TAS is an investment worth making for the future of your club and in turn your career.

The WGCSA summer meeting schedule starts soon and it looks like

WGCSA Golf and Arrangements Chairman Jim Van Herwynen has assembled a great variety of events. Thank you to those superintendents and clubs who have opened their doors for us.

All of us are busy, and many of us do not play golf that often, but our monthly meetings are a great opportunity to expand our knowledge. I have never been to a meeting where I did not see a new method or way of doing things that I could use at our course. Just as valuable of seeing the operation of the host superintendent the networking with other turf managers around the state is a great way to stay on top of what products and programs are working.

You don't need to be a serious golfer to enjoy these meetings and receive an education in turfgrass management at the same time. I hope to see you there. 



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