



# Rolling With the Changes

By **Jake Schneider**, Assistant Superintendent, Blackhawk Country Club

If you've had the misfortune of reading more than one of my columns, you're probably already aware that I have a sweet spot for UW-Madison, my alma mater. Boy or girl, I'm still trying to convince my fiancé that Bucky would be fantastic name for our first born. Although I'll swim across the Pacific Ocean before that happens, it doesn't hurt to dream.

Having spent 6 1/2 years as a first-hand witness of the research that takes place both in the lab and at the Noer Center, there is no doubt that our state's turf researchers are fully committed to using science to make our jobs just a little easier. The real meat and bones of every Grass Roots edition are the articles written by Drs. Stier, Kerns, Williamson, and Soldat and by future Dr. Koch. Each year, they conduct cutting-edge research that is both relevant and applicable.

Ok, ok, besides finding out that I have a mild, but hopelessly treatable, obsession with Buckingham U. Badger, this article could have been written by Captain Obvious. There is little debate regarding the merits of the turf research taking place not only at UW-Madison, but also at the many other fine turfgrass schools that dot our great nation. Why is it, then, that it's so darn difficult to implement recommendations that are derived from credible studies?

A simple answer would be, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." In other words, if your course has been great for years, it may seem as if you have nothing to gain and everything (including your job) to lose by implementing new practices. At Blackhawk, a certain Monroe Miller (you may have heard of him) cultivated some of the finest putting surfaces in the state for 36 years, and it's more than a little intimidating for Chad and I to stray from the practices that kept him gainfully employed for 9 years longer than I've been alive. However, slowly, but surely, we are evolving.

On July 7, 2010, we didn't mow the greens in the morning (or the afternoon or the evening). Instead, we rolled them, and it almost seems wrong. Sure, there is lots of data, most notably from Dr. Nikolai and Michael Morris, touting the benefits of rolling in favor of mowing. But, it still seems wrong to not mow the greens in the middle of the week during the prime golf season. Combine this with using Bill Kreuser's growing degree day data for timing Primo applications, and things are getting downright crazy at Blackhawk. While implementing these practices isn't exactly living on the edge, we are fairly certain that they will improve the health of our *Poa*/more *Poa* greens throughout the summer stress. If not, certain associates at Michigan State and UW-Madison/Cornell can expect some less-than-complimentary emails.

Speaking of research, do you know how much it costs to fund a graduate student at UW-Madison to conduct a 2-year research study? Me neither, but it's a lot. As the end-users of said studies, I hope that you will be able to support the Wisconsin Turfgrass Research Sustainability Fund by attending the Wisconsin Turfgrass Association outing on October 4 at none other than Blackhawk Country Club. Chad and I are honored to be hosting the event, and as long as the weather cooperates, we promise that you won't be disappointed. Regardless of the weather, you'll be treated to Chef Todd's mouthwatering cookout and post-round hors d'oeuvres and one of the best views in Madison. To increase your chances of success during the golf portion of the outing, I strongly recommend working on your punch shots, and pack a leaf blower if fall makes an early appearance this year. Please register by September 28, and we hope to see you here. 🌱

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