

## Great Way to Start the New Year

By **Tom Schwab**, O.J. Noer Turfgrass Research and Education Facility, University of Wisconsin-Madison

The WTA went all out to present an exciting and informative Winter EXPO to start out the New Year. The annual conference was held on January 18th at the Kalahari Resort in Wisconsin Dells. The Kalahari, a new location for 2011, received unanimous positive reviews from attendees for its location, great accommodations, and options for activities to do before and after the show.

The education and informative trade show were the other big reasons for EXPO's high marks. Many of the educational presentations looked back a year or two in the business of turf management to see what worked and what didn't. After the challenging summer of 2010 there were many aspects of turf care to examine what, if anything, could be done differently. And EXPO answered many of those questions.

EXPO started out in the main hall with presentations from our UW-Madison Turf Team of professors, including Drs. John Stier, Chris Williamson, Jim Kerns, and Doug Soldat. This is the group of experts that conduct the research on the very problems that occurred at many turf facilities in 2010. They concluded that much of the turf decline this past season was caused by excess rain in early and mid summer. The excess moisture, especially in poorly drained soils, held more heat in the rootzones than turf could tolerate. More aerification was recommended along with syringing at the proper time of day to cool grass. Aerification introduces more air to the soil which holds less heat than water soaked soils.

Dr. Soldat introduced new UW-Madison turf fertilization recommendations to main-

tain turf and help it recover from severe years like 2010. Research has shown the greatest amount of nitrogen is taken up by the plant when applied close to mid-September while the grass is still actively growing. Nitrogen take-up reduces the later in the season due to the plant slowing down and the plant taking up less water.

Dr. Stier showed current research and research from Dr. James Beard in 1973 that for cooling it is more effective to syringe the turf in late morning before the turf has a chance to heat up. This syringe does not particularly cool the turf down but it keeps it from heating up to unhealthy levels. John re-enforced how difficult the night time temperatures were for plants to overcome.

Dr. Kerns talked about what diseases plagued turf in 2010.

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John Turner of Bayer and Randy Smith from The Legend at Bergamont rarely miss attending EXPO!

## SCHOLARSHIP PRESENTATIONS AT EXPO

*CHARLES O NEWLIN MEMORIAL - Brian Huiras*  
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## NOTES FROM THE NOER FACILITY

The wet and warm summer brought on more fairy ring and pythium than usual and then in the fall when the rains virtually stopped, the turf also stopped, which promoted rust disease to run rampant throughout the state. The disease that didn't show up much in 2010 was anthracnose. Dr. Kerns additionally talked about what fungicides or combinations worked best to control the diseases that killed turf this past season.

Dr. Williamson presented the latest in white grub control and gave those in attendance disappointing news on how the pests survived weather extremes. White grubs tolerate temperatures from 100 to -35 so it is unlikely they will die from cold in the badger state. With the flooding of 2010 Chris learned that the pests can survive under 14 days of flood waters without issue. The only positive news was many of his control products also survived the floods and continued provide effective results.

The golf breakout session started with

Dr. Derek Settle from the Chicago District Golf Association who not only provides research and help to Chicagoland golf course but also takes care of the associations three hole course. Derek discussed how extreme the weather is just south of the Wisconsin border with long stretches of over 90 degree heat. Adding to the challenge for superintendents was ice damage from the winter had no time to recover before the heat started.

USGA Agronomist Bob Vavrek presented a mini "year in review" with a stress on the importance of aerification and topdressing in proper amounts. A few of the tips Bob offered are to put winter time turf samples under a grow light so your not waiting for days to see the results. Also to take pictures of drainage issues right after a rain to use in presenting turf and drainage improvements to the membership. More than likely anywhere the water stands the grass dies at some time from the stress of excess moisture.

Scott Anthes, Golf Course Superintendent at Brown County Golf Course was next with a presentation on the turf stress from summer flooding and high temperatures and the steps he took to recover on a golf course that never closes to players regardless of the weather. Anthes reduced mowing and rolling frequency while raising the height of cut slightly. As the turf recovered he pushed growth with light frequent fertilization.

Jim Nicole, Golf Course Superintendent at Hazeltine National Golf Club in MN presented information on renovating the fairways at their historic club. To improve the fairways heat, cold and drought tolerance as well to improve consistency on the turf the club used two applications of Roundup to kill off the existing turf before seeding in new varieties of bent and fescue. A few quick lessons that Jim learned are to do all cultivation before killing off the existing turf to reduce damage and to learn to have patience as it takes time for seed to grow.



Former graduate student Jake Schneider and current grad student Shane Griffith adding to their core of knowledge during EXPO

Jim Hasz from Lake Breeze GC makes a big transaction with DHD's Matt Kinnard during the EXPO trade show







**Dr. Jim Kerns address the crowd during the 'High Temperature Stress, Basics and Management' opening session.**

**Michael Lee explains the expansive regrassing job that he and his staff undertook in 2009 to the Blackwolf Run River Course to a full Golf break-out room.**



Mike Lee, Manager of Golf Maintenance at Blackwolf Run / Whistling Straits finished up the session with the regrassing of the 36 hole Blackwolf Run facility over two years. Work included fumigation and reseeding of 18 greens and tees each year, new drainage and sand in the bunkers, green banks were replaced as needed due to weed seed encroachment and tees were stripped and leveled. Mike assembled a in-house project crew of 35 members to complete everything except the fumigation process and even then the assisted the fumigation company. The project included a large investment in the proper equipment to do the job.

The Blackwolf complex is preparing for a return of the USGA Women's Open Championship. Take home ideas from Mike included putting a tracker wire around each fairway and tee as well as with all drainage tile to find later as well as using team members in their areas of strength to ensure a smooth project.

After lunch the golf breakout session continued with Sherry Ray with a talk titled "Managing Personal Stress. Sherry presented some valuable information on how to deal with everyday stressors to improve home and work life.

Wrapping up the day for the golf group was Dr. Jim Kerns with "Hot Issues From 2010". He started out with the bad news confirmation that PCNB would not return to the market and golf courses will need to adapt to other control measures for snow mold. Not only are we losing the most economical wide spectrum snow mold control but many turf manager will need to consider re-applying snow mold products in spring to fight Microdochium Patch. They new prod-

ucts also should be applied in mid fall while the plant is still growing increasing the risk of a warm late fall reducing winter effectiveness.

Dr. Kerns also presented research on fairy ring which was very widespread in 2010. Effective control is found with preventative treatments that are watered in when the soil temp is between 60 and 70 degrees.

Concurrent to the golf discussions was another session for lawn care, sod producers, and sports field managers. This session likewise used the panel format where attendees heard from experts like Dr. Soldat from the UW-Madison, Michael Boettcher from the Milwaukee Brewers, Raechal Volkening from Volkening Consulting, and Wayne Horman from the Scotts Company. The experts discussed their four keys to good turf.

Other presentations included Jim Lohmann's talk about sports field renovation, Dr. Chris Williamson's talk about Chinch Bugs.

The trade show was another very valuable part of EXPO. One attendee wrote an e-mail the day after EXPO saying, "Awesome job on EXPO, great education and networking, but vendor time was a little short, even 15 minutes or so longer would be great." This says how valuable the vendors are to the success of EXPO. They are important for the knowledge they bring to attendees and are likewise important for keeping EXPO affordable. The 2011 EXPO exhibitors and sponsors are listed here and I hope you give them a call for all your supply and services needs this coming season. Let's hope this next season continues as great as it started.