

News and Notes From WGCSA Members

By John Jensen and the Reinders Team

What a start to a brand new year. The Badgers made it to the Rose Bowl; the Green Bay Packers ended a season run that crowned them World Champions at Super Bowl XLV. (XLV, what a concept those Romans had. Now that's how we should start showing gas prices. It doesn't look so shocking that way. Hey, how much is per gallon? It will only cost you X, X, V's. Ok, back to my original message.) At the same time, we were witnessing a Ground Hog Day tradition cancelled throughout much of the country as many different states felt some effect from one of the largest blizzards on record. Luckily for many of us, it showed up before our travels to Orlando for the 2011 Golf Industry Show. This year's show from all accounts was a great success with attendance rising 11% above 2010.

If you were able to attend the Daytona 500 the week after the G.I.S. show, then you were one of over 15.6 million viewers that watched 20 year old Trevor Bayne become the youngest driver ever to win this prestigious race. Amazingly enough, Bayne doesn't even have a full time ride or a run at points for the Sprint cup series in 2011.

Politics, protests and economic uncertainty, looming NFL and NBA walkouts all seem to be the late winter themes and as I write this article, there are no decisions or directions on any of them. The Badgers basketball team is preparing for a run to glory in the Final Four scheduled to begin next week and from all indications they should be a strong force to deal with. (That's as much as I know about basketball)

Superintendent meetings throughout the state are starting to come to an end and spring is just around the corner. It's always an exciting time of year, as change is all around and it's up to us to make this the best year possible.

Industry News

Tod Blankenship, CGCS is returning to Wisconsin as the new Superintendent at Trappers Turn Golf Club located in Wisconsin Dells. Tod received his Bachelors of Science degree in Horticulture with an emphasis on Turfgrass Management from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and continued his graduate studies at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point followed by Oregon State University-Corvallis.

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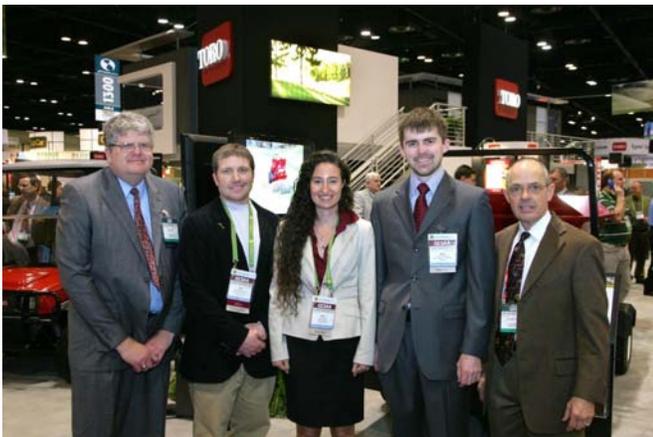
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Tod went on to become an assistant superintendent at Skaneateles Country Club in Skaneateles, New York before being given the head superintendent position at Wisconsin River Golf Club. After a few years, Tod was offered the opportunity and challenge of growing in a new Pete Dye designed course called Big Fish Golf Club located in Hayward, Wisconsin. After successfully achieving this goal, Tod was then asked to return to Oregon State University-Corvallis to take on the role of Turfgrass Specialist and Research Facility Manager where he remained until joining Trappers Turn.

Tod's family includes his wife LuAnn and his two daughters, Finley 3 and Stella 8. Congratulations, Tod, on the new job. I personally am glad I didn't have to type more complicated course names like Skaneateles in your bio. I would have moved from Skaneateles just so I wouldn't have to write that on an address label every day.



Tod was recently awarded a Watson Fellowship Scholarship for his graduate work at Oregon State. Pictured are Dana Lonn, (Toro) winners Tod Blankenship, CGCS; Emily Merewitz; Alex Putman; and Dr. Van Cline, (Toro) at the Golf Industry Show

Tom Rasmussen has accepted the position of Golf Sales Manager with the Toro Company-Irrigation Division. During the past 6 years with Reinders, he has won numerous Toro golf irrigation sales awards including the 2008 Blue Blazer award which is awarded to the person who achieved outstanding sales, and that continued to go above and beyond in meeting customer's requirements.

Tom will continue to live in Janesville and will work closely with Toro distributors and their customers in Wisconsin, Illinois and throughout the Midwest. Congratulations, Tom, and well done.

James Van Sickle former golf course assistant at Oconomowoc Country Club has been hired as the new superintendent at Koshkonong Mounds in Fort Atkinson, WI

Originally from Rockford, Ill, James migrated north to the Janesville area and worked as the assistant superintendent at Riverside Golf Course and Blackhawk Golf Course (both in Janesville) from 2000-2007. James Van Sickle joined Oconomowoc Golf Club in 2007 and held the position of 1st Assistant Superintendent. James graduated from Kishwaukee College in Malta, IL with a major in Horticulture with an emphasis in Golf Course Management. James wife Jillian and his son is Evan keep him on his toes when not at work.

Koshkonong Mounds Country Club was originally built as a resort in 1870, to host sportsmen who loved to hunt and fish. The course borders Lake Koshkonong which was once known to be one of the premier duck hunting destinations in the entire United States. In 1922, the initial golf course construction took place, utilizing many of the native effigy mounds as navigational hazards. After two short years, the new course opened for play in the summer of 1924. The additional nine holes opened in the summer of 1981. Congratulations, James, on the new venture!

Oconomowoc Golf Clubs second assistant superintendent, Harrison Beal has been promoted into first assistant position. Harrison joined OGC staff in spring of 2010, upon the completion of his 2-year turf certificate from Rutgers University. Prior to OGC, Harrison worked at Kenosha Country Club and completed an internship at Glenarbor Golf Club in Bedford Hills, NY.

Mike Werth has joined Jacobsen as a Territory Sales Manager for the Upper Midwest so we will still get to see him. He will stay in Monroe with wife Angie and daughters Lauren and Olivia.

Werth graduated UW-Madison in 1992 and has spent time at Lake Breeze GC, Hidden Glen CC, Monroe CC, Wisconsin Turf/Burriss and most recently with Pendelton Turf Supply.

Births

Jeff Rottier, superintendent of Janesville Country Club and his wife Hilari welcomed their new son, Roscoe Jeffrey Rottier into the world on February 11, 2011. He weighed in at 8lbs. and 2oz. Jeff says that both Roscoe and Mom are doing great!

Although Jeff remains a loyal Bear fan, I am sure that Hilari will continue to influence all of their kids and keep them on the path to becoming faithful Green Bay Packer backers.

What's your excuse?

Monroe Miller recently wrote a great article in Golf Course Industry Magazine titled "Are Chapters Dying?". In this column, Monroe discussed the changes seen in attendance at the local levels of superintendent meetings.

BADGER STATE TURF CLIPPINGS

Changes in family structure, economic structure and technology have all contributed to the decline in attendance and involvement in these chapters. If you get the opportunity, look this article up online, he points out some good things.

I was recently at the WGCSA spring business meeting and the Northern Great Lakes Superintendent Chapter Symposium. Each event included good topics that provided information that each of us can use, with information being presented by top leaders and researchers within our industry.

Yet, when I look around, it is usually the same few that take advantage of these opportunities. I typically do a head count at each event and then subtract the number of sellers from buyers and the numbers are shocking at times.

When I started in the industry, my boss Curt Larson

would say to me, "John, if you don't attend, you are more noticed by your absence". I used to agree with that, and in many ways as a vendor, I still do. But now the shoe seems to be on the other foot. Companies within the industry that do support these organizations and continue to advertise and pay meeting sponsorships may be starting to take notice of those few that are present. If it's not important to you, how can it continue to be important to others?

So, as I sat there on that Monday meeting I wondered, "What was their excuse?" Was it the weather? Can't be, other than a small area, the state was clear traveling. Was it budget, family, earthquake, typhoon?

To me it all comes down to this. For the older generation of us (after 23 years, I seem to slowly becoming an old timer) that remembers days of packed symposiums and monthly meetings, we must continue to encourage

new people to attend and get involved. To those of you that are faced with budget issues where your course or club won't fund these events, take advice from Jeffrey Gitomer who has written numerous sales and inspiration books. Mr. Gitomer says this, "If it is something that can help you further your career and adds value to you and your profession, and your employer won't pay for it, and then pay for it yourself".

Kids and family should always be a top priority, but remember, those that came before you had families as well. Take the time to be with family but also, take time to get a sitter.

If the topics are not what you were looking for, remember this. The power of who you know is always going to be stronger than what you may know. I have personally learned more from people over the years during a break or lunch conversation than I was ever going to learn in a class room.

Start becoming a regular attendee, get to know your neighbor, and get to know your fellow peers, Heck, get to know me. And when this Octobers Superintendent Couples Outing being held at Minocqua Country Club comes around, bring your wife, significant other or both and introduce her/him to the people you have gotten to know. Trust me, you, your family, and your career will not regret it.



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