

Spring Business Meeting

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

With record high temperatures attendance was down a bit this year as golf course staffs were looking at the earliest opening in years. However there was still a nice crowd waiting to learn during the education portion of the meeting.

Dr. Chris Williamson started off with the topic of "Japanese Beetle Grub Control". This pest was first found in WI approximately 14 years ago and has quickly spread through a good portion of the state. Beetles are typically bad fliers but the Japanese Beetle is better than most.

Time has shown that the first few years of infection are the worst for a new area and then the natural pests reduce the number of adult beetles and grubs.

Timing is the key to successful control of the larvae (grubs). The adults can be seen in almost swarm like groups and like to lay their eggs on low cut irrigated turf. Within 7 to 14 days of egg lay the first instar grubs start feeding. At this point the pest is most vulnerable to pesticides. By the third instar the grubs seem to be able to break down insecticides so product effectiveness is greatly reduced.

Japanese Beetles are triple trouble as both the adult and grub cause significant plant damage. On top of adults devouring leaf tissue and grubs eliminating root

systems. Then to add insult to injury the grubs attract skunks, turkeys and raccoons that damage large areas of turf in a short period of time.

Grub damage is best controlled preventively and there are many good options for long term control. Curative applications must be timed right, applied with 1-2 gallons per thousand of water and watered in to reach where the grubs are feeding.

Dr. Jim Kerns followed with "Snow Mold Update, What Are We Seeing." Snow mold can be a damaging disease and recovery many years can be slow. The challenge for turf professionals is there is usually only one chance to provide control as winter applications are ineffective and physically challenging.

In the southern half of the badger state Pink Snow Mold or Microdochium Patch is our biggest challenge. The pathogen *microdochium nivale* is active with temperatures between 32 and 45 with high moisture. It will grow under snow but does not need snow and has been found with temperatures up to 68 degrees.

Pink snow mold is a prolific sporulator and wetness is the key to growth. Long periods of snow on unfrozen ground can lead to major outbreaks.

Gray Snow Mold and Speckled Gray or Typhula are caused by the pathogens *Typhula incarnata* and *Typhula ishikariensis*. This disease needs 60 to 90 days of continuous snow cover and temps of 30 to 40 degrees. All the snow molds flourish in lush turf but speckled gray snow mold is considered worse because it can kill the crown of the plant not just the foliage delaying recovery even in the best of spring weather.

Although PCNB was long considered the best low cost control product recent research has shown a number of other products that work just as well or better.

No one product works everywhere as many factors including site history, grass species, fertility levels, budget, customer expectations and weather patterns play in a role in product selection. Turf managers should study the annual snow mold trials conducted by Dr. Kerns and Turfgrass Diagnostic Lab Manager Paul Koch for options that may work on their property.

Dr. Kerns expressed that often fungicide failure can be blamed on environmental conditions, applicator error and fungicide timing. With snow mold control the application must be early enough to be effective but not so early that the product degrades or is mowed off the plant.



Dr. Chris Williamson (left) and Dr. Jim Kerns (right) speak at the spring business and education meeting.

Top: Bill Linneman, Director of Rules and Competition, WSGA

Middle: James Van Herwynen, Treasurer, WGCSA and Golf Course Superintendent, South Hills CC

Bottom: Jeff Millies, President, WGCSA and Certified Golf Course Superintendent, Edgewood GC



Jim touched on new research studying the effect of snow cover on fungicidal degradation. By putting down treatments and then keeping half covered and half clear of snow they were able to track light, microbial and temperature degradation.

The talks then switch gears with Bill Linneman, Director of Rules and Competitions for the Wisconsin State Golf Association discussing "Marking of the Golf Course and Rules".

Linneman started with his thoughts that golf will be always be played on turf so the consolidation in golf from a 3 or 4 person management team to a 2 or 3 person team the superintendent will survive as they key to a golf facilities success.

Bill then presented the changes to the rules of golf including the ability to rake a bunker before you play your shot if your sole purpose is to care for the course, not test sand conditions.

Hazards such as bunkers and water continue to be the most challenging in golf. In a hazard you can touch grass, bush or tree but you cannot ground your club or allow the grass to support the weight of the club.

Superintendents are often given the duty of marking their golf courses and Bill expressed marking a golf course is as important as the goal line in football and the foul line in baseball. Water hazards marked yellow give the player three options for play while red or lateral water hazards give the player 5 options total. For either type of hazard the committee can designate a drop area giving players another option under the rules.

Ground under repair is usually painted white and depending on local rule the player may or not be able to play the ball or take a drop. Linneman described how marking GUR is a arbitrary thing depending on overall course conditions and local factors. Bill told a story of his first solo marking when he ran out of paint after only a few holes and how he has learned to examine the entire golf course before starting his marking.

After a great lunch the room cleared out a bit as many decided to head back to work but an engaged crowd stayed to discuss the association business.

Chapter Manager Grams expressed the member renewals were coming in slower than normal due to layoffs and clubs waiting to the last minute to pay. The delay makes it hard to print the directory as we want to include all members but yet get it out early in the year. In result the directory will be late but accurate.

The audit committee was chaired by Jeff Barlow and found the books and receipts to be in good order.

Jim Van Herwynen recapped the finances from 2011 and reported the association had a good year while finishing all business with a profit of \$10,336.77 over expenses. In savings, checking and CD's the association currently had a year end balance of \$58,473.75.

Monroe Miller presented that Bill Kreuser a PhD Candidate at Cornell University won the Monroe Miller Literary Scholarship for the best student contribution to *The Grass Roots*. Bill was not able to attend but appreciated the \$1,000 award towards his education.

Miller also discussed the damage from the sun his light skin received over the years between his time in Vietnam, the family farm and many years on the golf course. He was undergoing treatments for skin cancer at the time causing red blotches on his face.

Scott Sann then presented the 25 and 50 year membership to Dewey Laack, Pat Zurowski and Tom Merkel. (See story on page 42)

At the end of business the meeting was adjourned and most members hurried off to work to get ready for opening day! 🌱