

Random Thoughts

By Jake Schneider, Assistant Superintendent, Blackhawk Country Club

One of the sure signs that the golf season is upon us is that my article submissions to our vastly underappreciated editor become later and later. I like to think that I'm normally pretty good at meeting the deadlines that David sets, but this article has embarrassingly set a new standard of personal tardiness. Between running a marathon that was much too warm for Green Bay in mid-May and trying to keep up with the grass that just won't seem to slow down, life's been busy.

Back to that darn grass... Not sure if it's just me, but the spring of 2013 seemed much busier than normal. It was the third latest opening date at Blackhawk (after last year's second earliest), and it seems as if we had to cram six weeks worth of into a three-week timeframe. But, so far, it's hard

to complain too much. I was getting more than a little stir crazy with the winter that wouldn't end, but with the last three years that we've endured, a shortened year may not be the worst thing. Last year, we had a twenty-day stretch of rain-free weather in May, and thus far, the rains in 2013 have been timely and the temperatures have been fairly normal. Let's hope that it stays that way.

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To say that the response to my last article concerning the First Tee project was underwhelming would be an understatement. I don't want to gripe and realize that money is tight, but it's disappointing to not have one company or individual express interest in helping to move the proj-

ect forward. However, we do appreciate the willingness to help by those that Joe Sell and I have personally contacted. As of today (May 28), the project to build a chipping green for the First Tee program at Monona Golf Course has been approved by the city of Madison to proceed, and aside from lending our talents to a very worthwhile cause, those involved in leading this endeavor are going to do as much as possible to publicize and thank the generous contributors.

With that, it's not too late to help, and it appears as if monetary contributions will be needed the most. Again, please contact either myself or Joe Sell at Whistling Straits if you or your company would like to chip in for the chipping green.

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It humors me to no end that the USGA is so concerned with banning anchored putters. Maybe I haven't been paying close enough attention, but it doesn't seem as if there have been an alarming percentage of golf tournaments won by golfers who use an anchored putting stroke. Aside from that anecdotal observation, have putters really been driving changes in the game? It seems to me as if juiced up golf balls and drivers may be a bit more of an issue. On the flip side, I know that most average joes like the extra distance that these technological advances have brought, and if hit-

ting the ball far helps to grow the game, I'm all for it.

Speaking of growing the game, I can't help but think that simplified golf rules would be a good thing. Lately, it seems as if every major golf tournament has some confusing rules gaffe, and I hope that prospective players aren't turned off by these complicated rulings that many seasoned players probably aren't even aware of.

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If you haven't watched the GolfdomTV interview with Matt Shaffer from Merion

Golf Club, please take the time to do so. I found Matt's takes on golf course maintenance to be refreshingly candid and realistic. As a teaser, he likes grainy greens and hopes that a few of the players at the US Open have to hit from patches of white clover in the rough.

I hope that you and your golf club have a successful golf season, and by the time that the next *The Grass Roots* arrives, summer be nearing its end. Hopefully, my article will be on time for that issue or my time in this magazine might also be nearing its end. ✓

Coming Events!

Tuesday July 30th, UW - Summer Field Day, OJ Noer Facility, Verona, Host - Tom Schwab

Tuesday August 20th, Joint meeting w/NGL, Stevens Point CC, St. Point, Host - John Femal

Monday September 16th, Wee One, Pine Hills CC, Sheboygan, Host - Rod Johnson

Monday September 23rd, WTA Golf Fundraiser, Maple Bluff CC, Host - Josh Lepine CGCS

Monday October 1, NGLGCSA Crew Outing - The Woods Golf Course, Ed Hoover

Saturday October 5th, Couples Outing/Party, Wild Rock GC, WI Dells, Host Michael Blazich

Tues and Wed Dec 10th-11th, Wisconsin Golf Turf Symposium, American Club, Kohler

Tuesday January 14th, WTA Turfgrass Research Day, Pyle Center, Madison

Feb 2-7, Golf Industry Show, GCSAA Conference, Orlando FL

Monday March 3rd, WGCSA Spring Business Meeting, Fond du Lac



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