

Congratulations Dr. Koch

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

Dr. Paul Koch has stayed close to home. Born and raised in Wisconsin Paul has stayed here through his undergraduate, graduate and doctorate education. With his recent selection to fill the vacant assistant professor of Plant Pathology in Turfgrass Science at UW Madison, we hope Paul can stay a badger forever.

Paul became interested in golf course maintenance as a summer employee working at The Bog in Grafton. He started out looking for a job that would not leave him stuck inside for the summer and he responded to an ad his mom found at the nearby course. He was on the high school golf team and liked the game so he thought it would be enjoyable. Koch says his first day on the job was during spring break and he spent his entire first week edging bunkers. Although he had his doubts during the first month by the end of that summer he had caught the turf bug that catches so many in the turf industry.

After a initial bacteriology major degree selection the enjoyment of working outdoors led Paul to change his major to turf management.

Paul continued at the Bog under Pat Shaw and Tony Gonzalez for 6 years during summers and breaks from college and had the opportunity to do just about every job on the course.

Koch interned at Blackwolf Run for two summers under the tutelage of Ron Bierwirth including helping with the greens

crew at Whistling Straits during the 2004 PGA Championship. While at Blackwolf Paul applied pesticides, performed general maintenance and helped with several different projects. One of the projects entailed removing railroad ties along the cart paths near greens and tees and installing large stones.

After graduation with majors in horticulture and soil science the search was on for a assistant superintendent position until Dr. Geunhwa Jung asked Koch to consider furthering his studies. A match was made and Paul was working at the Turfgrass Diagnostic Lab while working on his M.S. Degree in Plant Pathology.

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For the summer of 2005 Paul worked with Steve Abler at the Noer Center conducting research and learning disease diagnosis.


When Abler moved on in the spring of 2006 Paul was ready to step and lead the lab while continuing to work on his Masters Degree.

Paul received his Masters in Plant Pathology in 2007 and soon started working on his PhD which he received in 2012.

Dr. Koch continued on as the manager of the Turfgrass Diagnostic Lab through 2012 when Bruce Schweiger took over.

The university administration wheel turns slow to fill vacant positions and it took over a year to get approval to fill the position left by Dr. Jim Kerns. Paul and the industry as a whole are happy the way it has turned out.

Dr. Koch will be 70% extension, 20% teaching and 10% research. He will be teaching the beginning and advanced turfgrass management classes.

Congratulations Paul on this well deserved position. Thank you for your contributions so far and we look forward to working with you for years to come. 



Dr. Paul Koch examining a turfgrass plant.

(Photo from University of Wisconsin - Madison, Turfgrass Diagnostic Lab Website)



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