

# The GRASS ROOTS

AN OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE WISCONSIN GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENTS ASSOCIATION

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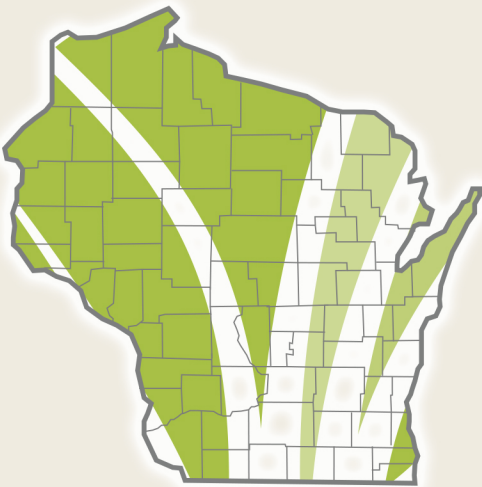
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The Par 3, 154 yard third hole at Westmoor Country Club the recent host of the WTA Fall Golf Fundraiser.

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*"If we had no winter, the spring would not be so pleasant: if we did not sometimes taste of adversity, prosperity would not be so welcome."*

**By American Poet Anne Bradstreet, 1612-1672**

Born in England but lived her adult life in America this quote by Bradstreet can remind us that the darker days of winter with it's cold and limited daylight help us appreciate those first warm longer days of spring.

## THE GRASS ROOTS

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# THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

## Thank You For The Opportunity!

By Josh LePine, Certified Golf Course Superintendent, Maple Bluff Country Club



As I wrap up my term serving as your Association President, I am humbled by the opportunity. During this typical 10–12-year commitment from board member to two-year stints each as Secretary, Treasurer, Vice President, President and now Immediate Past President, I have been fortunate to work with such great people all along the way. I have gained a new

appreciation for volunteerism and the dedication of all involved to keep our great association thriving.

To the WGCSA members: Your participation and support drives all that we do. You have given me the opportunity of a lifetime. For that, I am very grateful.

To the past and current Presidents and WGCSA Board Members and Representatives: Your leadership and service to the association is energizing and contagious.

To our industry partners: We simply could not function without your financial support. Thank you for supplying us with the knowledge, products, and services we need to maintain our facilities.

To our Allied Turf and Golf Associations: GCSAA, WTA, WPGA, WSGA, GCOW, NGLGCSA, I look forward to continued teamwork, collaboration, and camaraderie.

To the UW Turf Team: Dr. Soldat and Dr. Koch, you guys are rock stars; approachable, knowledgeable and world renown. We are lucky and proud to have you in our corner. We value the partnership.

To the team at the OJ Noer: Bruce, Audra, and Kurt, keep up the

great work of maintaining our premier turfgrass research station and turf disease diagnostic lab. Thanks to the founding fathers of the WTA for providing this outstanding infrastructure to serve our industry.


To Jaime Staufenbeil and Milorganite: Your sponsorship and effort to plan and host our signature event, The Turf Symposium, is above and beyond. I look forward to meeting in person again soon.

To Grass Roots Editor, David Brandenburg: Your time and energy dedicated to our premier award-winning industry publication The Grass Roots is so very much appreciated by our Board of Directors and membership.

To Gina Rizzi and the Radius Sports Group team: Thank you for the outstanding work on our State Best Management Practices Initiative. You championed this effort and made a simple-minded BMP Chair look far more organized and intelligent than reality.

To WGCSA Chapter Manager, Brett Grams: Your leadership and dedication to serving our association is inspiring. Maintaining the day-to-day association activities, while adjusting to all our varying strengths/weaknesses, personalities and priorities is no easy task. I will miss our close working relationship.

Finally, to our families: Thank you for the understanding and sacrifice as we struggle at times to find that proper work/life balance.

From my days as a student member 25 years ago, to today, the WGCSA has been a constant in my turf life. Thank you again for affording me the opportunity to pay back a fraction of what this association has done for me. 

### WGCSA MISSION STATEMENT

The Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendents Association is committed to serve each member by promoting the profession and enhancing the growth of the game of golf through education, communication and research.

### WGCSA VISION STATEMENT

The Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendents Association is dedicated to increase the value provided to its members and to the profession by:

- Enhancing the professionalism of its members by strengthening our role as a leading golf organization in the state.
- Growing and recognizing the benefits of a diverse membership throughout Wisconsin.
- Educating and promoting our members as leaders in environmental stewardship.
- Offering affordable, high value educational programs at the forefront of technology and service.
- Being key to enjoyment and the economic success of the game of golf.





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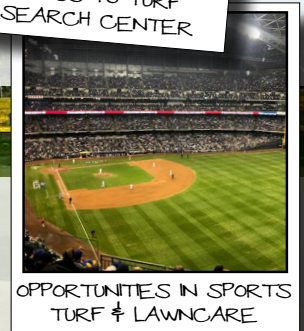
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## The USGA Green Section Celebrates 100 Years of Impact

By Joe Passov, Journalist and Co Host of Backspin, The Golf Show



**The USGA Green Section has spent the last century working to help golf courses deliver better playing conditions, conserve resources and protect the environment.**

*This article is reprinted from the Volume. 58 (23), December 4, 2020 of the USGA Green Section Record. Copyright United States Golf Association. All rights reserved."*

Someone is having a birthday...and it's a big one. The USGA Green Section turns 100 years old in 2020. However, instead of a buttercream frosted cake and French vanilla ice cream, perhaps we should toast with a plot of 'Penncross' bentgrass and a bowl of pea gravel and coarse sand. Of course, no matter how we choose to celebrate the Green Section, it's a worthy endeavor. For 100 years, the USGA Green Section has quietly, but effectively, fulfilled its mission of providing tools and solutions to golf courses, clubs and golf associations that make golf experiences better. It's that simple. People enjoy their golf more thanks to the efforts of the Green Section. Superintendents do their jobs more expertly and economically thanks to the efforts of the Green Section. As a tip of the cap to a century of remarkable achievements, here are the most impactful accomplishments and milestones in the 100-year history of the USGA Green Section.

### **Establishment of the USGA Green Section**

In 1920, attorney E. J. Marshall, then green committee chairman for the Inverness Club in Toledo, Ohio, was charged with overseeing course preparations for that year's U.S. Open. He sought – in vain – objective, scholarly agronomic information to help him in his task. Later that year, in response to the entreaties of Marshall, Merion's Hugh

Wilson and others, the USGA and the United States Department of Agriculture agreed to collaborate in the development of scientific information relating to golf course turf. On November 30, 1920, the Executive Committee of the United States Golf Association created the USGA Green Section.

USDA scientists Dr. Charles V. Piper and Dr. Russell A. Oakley, both keen golfers, were appointed to run the Green Section. As early as 1906, Piper and Oakley were consulting on golf course turf. In 1908, they counseled pioneer architect C.B. Macdonald on grassing the National Golf Links of America, advising him on fertilization techniques to help grass grow in the sandy soil of eastern Long Island. In 1917, Piper and Oakley authored their seminal work, "Turf for Golf Courses."

On February 10, 1921, Piper and Oakley published the first issue of *The Bulletin of the Green Section*, which established a long, virtually unbroken chain of publication that dispensed research results and impartial advice for practitioners of turfgrass management. Today that publication is known as the USGA Green Section Record.

### **Turfgrass Research and Innovation**

In 1916, at the urging of the USGA, the USDA – via Piper and Oakley – established the Arlington Turf Gardens in Arlington, Virginia. Early research there yielded improved bentgrasses for putting greens. After the formation of the Green Section, research continued at Arlington with financial help from the USGA until 1942 when the U.S. Depart-



## USGA GREEN SECTION

-ment of Defense confiscated Arlington Turf Gardens and its surrounds to make way for a new campus of buildings we know today as the Pentagon.

In the 1940s and 50s, turfgrass research exploded with a huge development – turfgrass breeding. On the bentgrass side, Penn State University's Dr. Burton Musser began USGA-supported research that led to the 1954 release of 'Penncross', the first improved bentgrass that could be grown from seed. On the bermudagrass side, USGA funding to the tune of \$500 per year allowed the University of Georgia's Dr. Glenn Burton to breed bermudagrass cultivars with superior traits that became the majority of bermudagrass varieties used on golf courses in the Southeast, including the famous 'Tifway'.

Today, the USGA Turfgrass and Environmental Research Program continues to be hugely impactful. Drought conditions in the 1970s spurred research efforts to improve irrigation efficiency and produce grasses that require less water. That research continues to this day, with more than a dozen universities working hard to help golf courses use less water. Ongoing development of bermudagrasses with improved cold tolerance, such as 'Latitude 36' and 'NorthBridge', is helping courses in a wider range of climates to conserve water and deliver better playing conditions throughout the year.

USGA-funded research has resulted in improvements of nearly all the major species planted on golf course playing surfaces including annual bluegrass, colonial bentgrass, creeping bentgrass, fine fescue, Kentucky bluegrass, perennial ryegrass, turf-type tall fescue, bermudagrass, seashore paspalum and zoysiagrass. They have also invested in im-



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proving native species for naturalized areas such as alkali grass, blue grama, buffalograss, crested wheatgrass, curly mesquite, inland saltgrass, and sprucetop grama. It's safe to say that no matter where your golf ball lands, it probably is on grass that has ties back to the USGA.

The USGA Turfgrass and Environmental Research Program is also helping to develop grasses that are more disease resistant, saving individual golf courses thousands of dollars each year in pesticide applications.

Understandably, innovation takes time. Nobody waves a wand and suddenly there's a new grass variety. "Depending on the species, it can take up to 20 years to develop a new grass variety," said Dr. Cole Thompson, director of the USGA Turfgrass and Environmental Research Program. Innovation also takes money. The USGA has invested more than \$43 million in turfgrass and environmental research over the years. The average annual investment is \$1.5 million to \$2 million, with \$1.9 million being invested in 2020.



**USGA-funded research at the Arlington Turf Gardens yielded early improvements in bentgrass for putting greens. Today the Pentagon sits where the turf plots used to be.**



## USGA GREEN SECTION

### Course Consulting Service

Launched in 1953 as the Turf Advisory Service, the Course Consulting Service (CCS) represented a paradigm shift in department activities for the Green Section. For its first 30 years, the Green Section mostly stuck to research. That changed as the need for course-specific guidance was heard loud and clear from golf courses around the country. As Chris Hartwiger, director of the Course Consulting Service put it, "The cornerstone of the program is having agronomic experts located throughout the country that understand regional trends and issues, understand how to resolve or mitigate problems, and are available to work one-on-one with facilities. These on-site visits to participating courses by experienced agronomists, followed by written reports of findings and recommendations is the essence of what we do."

Overall, USGA agronomists visit about 750 courses per year. "On average, each agronomist makes 75-100 visits annually," said John Daniels, Central Region agronomist, "but we're interacting with a lot more courses than that. We will stop by a course for even 20-30 minutes while we're in the neighborhood to check in, answer a question or meet a new superintendent. We're also regu-

larly fielding calls and emails about a range of issues."

Hartwiger states that their first focus is on producing healthy turf. "Without a healthy base of turf, it's not realistic to provide excellent or acceptable playing conditions for an extended period of time," he said. "With a healthy foundation in place, our next focus is on optimizing playing quality based on a facility's budget, expectations and type of golfer." The agronomists help courses with everything from disease outbreaks on greens to issues with bunker sand playability. They get to the root of the problem and suggest an economically feasible fix.

Two main features make CCS so successful and distinctive, according to Hartwiger. "We have a national presence and no commercial ties to our recommendations," said Hartwiger. "Over the last 75 years, it's clear that the USGA's commitment to placing turfgrass experts across the country is unprecedented in the industry. When you couple this with the fact that we do not have any commercial ties, we are viewed as being a resource 'for the good of the game' and a trusted advisor for our clients."

Nelson Caron, superintendent at The Ford Plantation in Richmond Hill, Georgia, couldn't agree more. "We have one course visit in the spring and one in the fall," says Caron. "It's like going to get a checkup at the doctor."

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## USGA GREEN SECTION



**USGA agronomists visit hundreds of courses each year, providing objective recommendations to help superintendents deliver the best possible results.**

To Caron, one of the greatest benefits USGA agronomists brought to the Southeast in particular was helping to promote widespread use of ultradwarf bermudagrasses for putting greens. “Back in 2010 or so, they opened my eyes – and the eyes of many others – about the positives in ultradwarf bermudagrass and the benefits of moving away from bentgrasses, which really struggle during our hot, humid summers. When one reflects on the beneficial impact that these agronomists had in that shift alone, we’re talking about hundreds of clubs enjoying better playing conditions and hundreds of millions of dollars saved.”

And it’s not only golfers, superintendents and course owners who benefit from the CCS. Architects do, too. Bill Bergin, of Bergin Golf Designs, has collaborated with the USGA Green Section on a dozen projects since 1999 – each one a success.

“The more objective we can be in identifying our reasons for renovation, the more successful we are,” said Bergin. “That’s where the Green Section comes in. In our renovation process, we always start with the mechanical – the agronomics of the golf course. How old are the greens? Does the golf course drain properly? Are trees obstructing air flow and circulation? What are the proper grass choices? Before you go into making the course more playable or more exciting, you have start with the mechanical aspects and that’s where USGA agronomists and the architect tag-team perfectly.”

### **USGA Recommendations for a Method of Putting Green Construction**

Prior to World War II, soil-based greens did just fine, all things considered. Golf wasn’t a big-time endeavor. After the war ended, however, golf became more popular

and old or inconsistent construction methods for putting greens started showing their weaknesses. Standards were also rising.

To cope with the increasing demands placed on putting greens, the USGA invested in research that focused on building greens with a sand foundation and effective drainage. After 10 years of research at the university level, the first USGA putting green construction recommendations were published.

The method of construction that became known as a “USGA green” involved excavating the putting green area, installing drainage pipes in the subsoil, then covering them with a 4-inch layer of gravel, which was topped by a 12-inch layer of sand-based rootzone mix. The principal benefits of this construction method included improved internal drainage, resistance to compaction and consistent performance that allows putting green turf to prosper in almost all conditions.

The USGA continually invests in researching and refining the recommendations. Owing to scientific and technological advances, six updates to the process have been published since 1960, most recently in 2018. Even with all the changes that have occurred in golf over the last 60 years, the USGA method of putting green construction remains the most widely used in golf.

### **Championship Preparations**

According to the USGA, “The Green Section provides active support of on-course preparations at all of the USGA championships. The USGA agronomists work with golf course management staff before, during and after each championship to achieve the desired playing conditions for competition while using best management practices to preserve turfgrass health.”



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But it wasn't always this way. Even after E.J. Marshall reached out to ask for help in preparing Inverness for the 1920 U.S. Open, it took more than three decades for the host clubs and the Green Section agronomists to collaborate. Since then, it's been a very compatible partnership.

Darin Bevard, director of Championship Agronomy, begins site visits four to five years before a course hosts a championship. The year preceding the championship, he will make three to four full-day course visits. On some of these occasions, a USGA regional agronomist will accompany Bevard and at other times the agronomist will consult on their own. Bevard and the agronomists evaluate current conditions and make recommendations about how to achieve the desired playing conditions for the championship.

Bevard appears on-site seven days prior to the start of a championship and remains for the duration. At the U.S. Open and U.S. Women's Open, he is accompanied by two regional agronomists. There is at least one regional agronomist present at every USGA national championship.

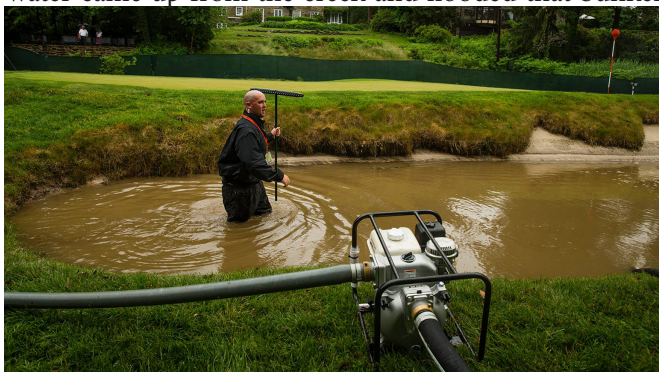
Bevard sees his role as the conduit between the host club and the USGA. "We work with the golf course superintendent and the Championship Director from the USGA, who is in charge of golf course setup," said Bevard. "It's our job to get the course prepared the way the Championship Director and the USGA would like it to play in terms of putting green speed, green and fairway firmness, rough conditions, width – every aspect. As we get closer to the championship, we're observing the practice round play, evaluating ball reaction on the greens, adjusting firmness and so forth. We continue that monitoring and evaluation process throughout the championship itself and work with the superintendent to make any adjustments or solve any problems that arise."

The most common issue is weather. "Rain, wind – anything that prevents you from doing what you want to do. That's what keeps me up at night," said Bevard. As far as unusual issues? Again, it's all about nature. "During the 2016 U.S. Women's Open, I got a call to remove a snake crawling across the second fairway. We had bees at a U.S. Junior event one year. You deal with it."



## USGA GREEN SECTION

Bevard's personal favorite on-site memory was back in 2013, when he was lead agronomist at the U.S. Open at Merion. "With the weather challenges we had – all the rain – it was really enjoyable working with superintendent Matt Shaffer, his team and all the volunteers to keep that golf course in shape and playable. That was the most fun I've ever had in a bad situation," said Bevard. "There is a green-side bunker to the left of the famous 11th green. We had to rebuild it twice that week. There was so much rain, the water came up from the creek and flooded that bunker –



**Flooding during the 2013 U.S. Open at Merion is an example of the challenges that can occur during a USGA championship.**

two different times. I've never been a part of anything quite like that."

### **Turfgrass Information File (TGIF)**

TGIF means one thing to most people. What it means to superintendents, turfgrass researchers and university students seeking information and solutions is possessing the ultimate library card. The Turfgrass Information File (TGIF) is hosted at the Turfgrass Information Center at Michigan State University. Experts generally consider it the most complete repository of turfgrass information in the world.

Born of necessity, TGIF was fueled by the Green Section's desire to develop a thorough turfgrass research reference library stored in an accessible digital bank. In 1983, proposals were solicited. Michigan State had amassed a world-class collection of works on the topic and so the university forged a relationship with the USGA. By 1997, the World Wide Web brought TGIF content to many more subscribers than ever before. In 1998, to ensure that Michigan State University Libraries possessed the necessary resources to maintain and develop the TGIF database and website, the USGA pledged \$1 million to the school's endowment.

According to Pete Cookingham, head of the Turfgrass Information Center, TGIF currently hosts 303,545 records (articles). In 2018 alone, nearly 625,000 database users searched for one or more records.

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## USGA GREEN SECTION

Cole Thompson emphatically puts TGIF in the proper perspective. “TGIF is the database for turfgrass-related literature.” John Daniels, USGA agronomist, echoes that sentiment. “It’s a tremendous resource. I use it all the time. It helps me answer questions I get from superintendents and golfers and allows me to share some research with them. It would be a huge loss if we didn’t have it.”

### Research and the Environment

In 1990, in an effort to show how golf could not only coexist with the environment, but enhance it, the USGA pledged more than \$3 million to study what happens to pesticides and fertilizers when you apply them to golf course turf.

Working in conjunction with the EPA, the USGA Environmental Research Program results revealed that under most conditions, the small amounts of pesticides and nutrients that move from golf course turf and soils were found at levels below the health and safety standards established by the EPA.

Part of the mission that evolved from this research was determining the impacts and benefits of golf courses on communities, wildlife and the environment. Since 1990, about \$10 million in USGA funding has supported more than 100 projects. There has been \$1 million invested in the past 10 years to support programs like Audubon International’s BioBlitz and Monarchs in the Rough. Several other projects studied best practices for establishing pollinator and other wildlife habitat, the effects of nutrients and pesticides on invertebrate abundance in golf course waters, and the emissions associated with turfgrass management. Another project is estimating the value of ecosystem services provided

by golf courses and comparing these benefits with those offered by other potential land uses.

One of the most popular and successful of these USGA-supported initiatives has been Monarchs in the Rough. Established in 2018 in conjunction with Audubon International and the Environmental Defense Fund, it is now close to surpassing the goal of having 500 golf facilities convert a minimum of 1 acre of maintained turf to monarch butterfly habitat. The process involves procuring native plant materials, such as the milkweed plants on which monarch butterflies depend, and establishing them in a typically out-of-play area on the golf course, replacing the maintained turf.

“There are two huge benefits to monarchs in the rough,” said John Daniels. “First, it provides cost savings. You’re taking the expense of maintaining that turf – labor hours, fuel costs, irrigation, preemergence herbicides – and re-allocating that to more impactful places on the course or saving the cost entirely. Second, you’re creating an important habitat for a species that’s been in decline. You don’t have to be a golfer to identify a Monarch butterfly. Even an elementary school kid recognizes that brilliant black and orange coloration.”

### Tools for Turfgrass Management

The USGA Stimpmeter® is a tool for measuring green speed that was developed by Edward Stimpson after he observed what he thought were excessively fast greens during the 1935 U.S. Open at Oakmont. The USGA tested and refined the tool, eventually bringing an improved version to market in 1978 to help superintendents measure and manage green speeds more effectively.



**Helping golf courses establish monarch butterfly habitat is one of many environmental initiatives the USGA Green Section has supported over the last 100 years.**

## USGA GREEN SECTION

The aluminum bar featured an extended V-shaped groove and an indentation where a ball would fit. When the device was raised to an angle of 20 degrees, the ball is released onto the putting surface. To get an accurate measure of green speed, the user finds a flat spot on a green, rolls three balls in one direction and measures the average distance they rolled, then repeats the process in the other direction to arrive at an overall average that accounts for any influence of slope and wind direction.

The Stimpmeter was meant to assist superintendents in comparing greens within their own course to achieve consistency and refine their maintenance practices. Unfortunately, it wound up launching an arms race between some golfers who were eager to brag about whose greens were faster, and thus “superior.” However, anyone that works in the Green Section will be quick to tell you that faster does not mean better, and green speed measurements can’t be reasonably compared between courses because there are too many variables.

Less controversial was the debut of the USGA TruFirm device, created to determine objective measurements of putting green firmness. Together with soil moisture meters, the TruFirm provided reliable feedback to achieve sought-after consistency in measuring green firmness.

The most recent addition to the toolbox is a digital platform that helps facility managers to make important decisions that impact maintenance efficiency and golfer experience. The online facility app uses a customizable map and easy-to-understand charts and graphs to visualize data

such as the resources used to maintain every feature of the course, golfer traffic based on GPS data, and playing conditions of the greens.

Whether used on a day-to-day basis or in conjunction with a renovation project, the data can be used to maximize return on any investment. The USGA officially will launch the tool in early 2021, so be on the lookout for an announcement.

### The Next 100 Years

Looking ahead, Dr. Matt Pringle, managing director the of Green Section, is proud of the impact the Green Section had made over the last century and even more excited about the next 100 years. “We know that what golfers care about is a great golf experience, but courses must be as responsible and judicious as possible with the resources needed to provide that experience. We’re going to continue to do research, and continue to share that information through our education program and our agronomists. We’re also building new tools that can help golf courses make more data-driven decision to provide a better playing experience and reduce the use of critical resources like labor and water” said Pringle.

Backed by the largest turfgrass research program in the world and a talented staff of agronomists, engineers and education experts, Pringle is confident that the Green Section will have an even greater impact on golf courses over the next century and beyond by providing tools and solutions to golf courses, clubs and golf associations that make golf experiences better. ✓



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## Goal Check

By Jake Schneider, Seasonal Worker, Trondheim Golfklubb, Norway



Way back in 2019 (when people could do things such as shake hands and watch the Packers beat the Bears in person) I wrote an article about self-improvement that contained a list of four items upon which I was hoping to better myself. Well, it has been a few months, and one step in the goal setting process (that I just Googled) is to evaluate and assess progress. Never mind that I may have missed the action items of creating a plan and developing a timeline; those probably aren't that important. Guess we'll see.

In case you happened to forget, here's what the list looked like in May 2019 when I was living the life of a simple house husband:

1. Become proficient in Spanish because it has more universal practicality. Seems like a logical thing to do in Scandinavia, right?
2. Learn how to perform road bike maintenance and deal with a flat tire. Gotta have an easy one.
3. Run a marathon PR. Setting a sub-2:55 goal sounds a bit aggressive, but it will be in the back of my mind.
4. Do a better job of managing my occasional anxieties. For some reason, I worry more when I have less to do.

Hmmm, maybe those steps that I skipped held some merit after all.

First, the good news—I ran a 2:54\* marathon this fall. Discerning readers might note that there were almost no in-person running events for the vast majority of the year, and even though we have done a pretty good job with keeping the virus in check, Norway was no exception. Before the chaos began, I had targeted the San Sebastian Marathon due to the

**Thankfully, my own anxieties have decreased. While I haven't found a silver bullet and still struggle at times, regularly practicing yoga and cutting out caffeine has noticeably helped. As an added bonus, my much-improved posture probably made me a quarter inch taller, and when you're south of 5'7" tall, that's a major victory.**

time of the year (November), course profile (flat), and location (Spain rocks). I also enlisted the brainpower of a friend who had some experience coaching runners and creating training plans, and he did just that for me. Things got underway in early May, and thanks to a lot of walking at work on top of running the most mileage that I had ever done, I spent the next four months trying to replenish calories and generally being exhausted. Fun-sounding hobby, eh? By late September it became obvious that there was no chance that they were going to be able to hold the race in San Sebastian, but the infection rates in both Norway and Latvia were such that the Riga Marathon was a real possibility. Pair that with a \$70 round-trip plane ticket, and plans were changed. Naturally, the bottom fell out of that plan within a few weeks, and the only option left was to run Riga virtually, in Trondheim. I was awfully reluctant to complete the "race", but thanks to pacing support from my boss and another acquaintance, it was as fun and successful as 26.2 miles can be. But, it wasn't really official. Thus, the asterisk\*.

Staying in the vein of exercise, I had grand intentions of filling some of my ample free time with road biking, and even went so far as bringing my bike

overseas. Shortly upon returning, I surprisingly happened upon the job at Trondheim Golfklubb, and the bike has only been used for the commute to work on weekends when the buses aren't running early enough. Although this trip is only three miles, the last half of it features 600 feet of elevation during which I am exceptionally glad to have a relatively lightweight road bike, but if it came right down to it, I would likely still struggle to proficiently change a flat tire. So much for checking off the easy goal.

What certainly has been a challenge for many in recent times has been staying sane. Turns out that pandemics are great for boosting rounds of golf played and boat sales, but they aren't so good for mental health. Thankfully, my own anxieties have decreased. While I haven't found a silver bullet and still struggle at times, regularly practicing yoga and cutting out caffeine has noticeably helped. As an added bonus, my much-improved posture probably made me a quarter inch taller, and when you're south of 5'7" tall, that's a major victory. I'm hopeful that I might round the corner on anxiety when I am back and staying busy in the comfortable confines of Madison in a few months.

When we do return to the US, it is safe to say that I still won't be comfortably conversing in Spanish with my buddies, Omar and Angel, at Blackhawk CC. During the beginning of our lockdown, I was doing quite well with the studies on Duolingo, but that quickly waned when work started up again. Now, my pea brain has a weak grasp of both Norwegian and Spanish and constantly gets the two confused even though they have few similarities. This one seems like a good winter project. I should create a plan and develop a timeline--or not. 🌱



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# MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

## Jens Arneson

By Josh Lepine, Certified Golf Course Superintendent, Maple Bluff Country Club and  
Ben Labarre, Golf Course Superintendent, The Legend at Bristlecone

*Authors Note: As WGCSA Board members, we want to thank everyone who participated in the Membership survey. The information and feedback obtained was invaluable. The requests for more member spotlight stories inspired us to start this column. We hope to randomly highlight a few members each edition from all geographic areas, facility types and membership classifications. It may take us 20 years to get to everyone in the directory but please be ready for that phone to ring and be prepared to share stories, photos and information about YOU!*

Name: **Jens Arneson**

Company Position: **Assistant Golf Course Superintendent at Maple Bluff Country Club**

Years as WGCSA Member: **10**

Membership Classification: **C**

### **18 Holes With Jens Arneson**

#### **1. How did you get started in the turfgrass industry?**

I like to say I was predestined for it. While pregnant with me, my mom's water broke while she was push mowing the lawn on our farm. For a baby gift my grandpa then got her a riding lawnmower. In middle school my brother and I started our own lawn mowing business (Arneson Enterprises) when we moved into town, and in high school I started working part time on the grounds crew at a local par three course. I then went to UW-Madison and got my degree in Soil Science-Turfgrass Management, interned at University Ridge while in school, graduated in 2013, and have been at MBCC ever since.

#### **2. What is the most rewarding part of your career?**

I come from a family with a strong history of advocating for the agriculture industry, and teaching kids about agriculture. I enjoy taking

the opportunity to educate those who may not know much about the golf industry, what we do, and the benefits golf provides. Whether it is a summer employee, concerned citizen, friend, student, or anyone I can find on the street, I feel strongly about discussing and dispelling common myths and educating them on all the good our industry does.

#### **3. What would you consider to be your greatest career challenge?**

My methodology in any workplace I've been in is to work hard, and keep to myself. My current role involves training and leading the crew on a daily basis, so I have really had to jump out of my comfort zone and interact, engage, and help correct fellow employees to make sure we are keeping to the standards we have set for our course.

#### **4. Which three adjectives describes you the best?**

Empathetic, persistent, and witty (Or so I think).

#### **5. Tell us about your family.**

Both my parents are ex-Ag teachers, farmers, and now, my mom Darlene, is the WI Ag In the Classroom Coordinator, and my dad, John, works for DuPont. I have one older brother Lars, and a younger sister Sigrid. (We all got stuck with Norwegian names).

#### **6. Any pets?**

I have a Golden Retriever named Ragnar, who will be five in May. (I also stuck him with a Norwegian name.)

#### **7. What drives/motivates you every day?**

I am a perfectionist and a people pleaser, so I try and give my best effort every day to make the course, and myself better.

#### **8. Who Do You Admire?**

As an avid over-thinker and over-worrier, I admire anyone who can make quick decisions, stick to them, and not dwell on them later.

#### **9. Who is the person in history you'd most like to meet?**

Chris Farley



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## MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



**Top Left:** Posing for a photo after my girlfriend, Sydney, caught a nice fish this past winter, while I caught nothing.

**Top Right:** The EXCEL Leadership Program has allowed me to travel across the country getting involved in many GCSAA activities. Here is a post round picture at Trinity Forest Golf Club in Dallas, TX.

**Bottom:** My usual response when asked, "What do you do in the winter?" Posing for a photo after our other assistant took down another hazard tree at MBCC.



## MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

### 10. What's a fun fact that people don't know about you?

I double majored in Scandinavian Studies, speak Norwegian pretty fluently, and interned in college at a turfgrass research facility in Norway. I also consider myself an over-achiever for someone who still lives in their parent's basement.

### 11. What do you do in your spare time, favorite hobbies?

I love to golf, play various underhand sports (mainly dartball and Kubb), and travel around Wisconsin.

**12. If you could go anywhere in the world on vacation, where would you go?** I'll never turn down another trip to Norway, especially the northern part above the Arctic Circle.

**13. What is the one thing you would like to learn/achieve someday?** I have a current short term goal of visiting all of the state parks in Wisconsin, and a long term goal to become a more voracious reader.

**14. What is your favorite turf management related tool or technique?** With the various mediums that golf courses are constructed on, wetting agents are an incredible help in evening out your soil moisture. Plus they keep a hose out

of my hands 24/7.

### 15. Favorites:

**TV Show:** Seinfeld


**Movie:** Caddyshack

**Food:** Cheese Curds

**Sports Teams:** Badgers Bucks and Brewers

**16. Do you golf? Handicap? Best shot or golf story?** At best my handicap got down to a 5.6 a few years ago, but now I consider breaking 80 a great day for me. Once I witnessed my brother get a hole in one, asked him what club he used, grabbed the same club and lipped out my shot, losing to him on the hole with an 8" tap in birdie. It would've made for a great story if I was a little better that day!

**17. Top Bucket List Item?** Play a round of golf at St Andrews.

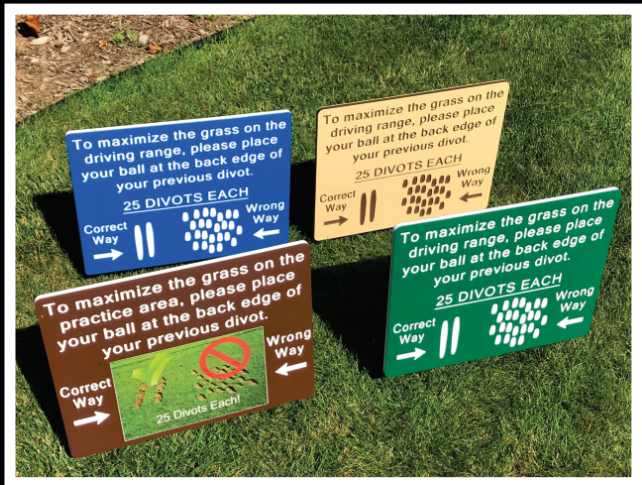
**18. If you could provide one piece of professional advice, what would it be?** Take advantage of every educational opportunity that is available, and network with everyone you can there! It never ceases to amaze me how many opportunities for growth and knowledge there are in our industry. 



**Left:** Ragnar posing for a photo on our 18th green, after being not much help on the golf course. (I wonder who he learned that from.)

**Right:** It's amazing the heights I went to just to study turfgrass while working at Bioforsk in Norway!





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# Fall Business Meeting Goes Virtual In 2020

By David A. Brandenburg, Editor



The WGCSA joined many other organizations, businesses and families by making the fall business meeting virtual with a zoom call.

Attendance was pretty much the same for what we have at the in person meeting historically held on the first day of the Golf Turf Symposium which was cancelled due to the Covid 19 pandemic. Attendance consisted of the 9 person board and 9 members. This low attendance can be looked at as a membership who is comfortable with the leadership of the Board of Directors and Chapter Manager Brett Grams. Chapter information is provided through these pages, chapter e-mails and social media.

With his two years at the helm coming to a end, President Josh Lepine called the meeting to order. In his report he thanked all those who helped him over the years, and announced the BMP's are finished and published and despite some delays, it was well worth the journey.

Josh discussed how the WGCSA worked with other state associations, including the professionals, owners and the state golf association, to reach out to the Governor's Office, through a lobbyist, to get golf open again when many other business

were closed for over a month or even longer in some counties.

Chapter Manager Brett Grams recapped the associations year and great start with the Golf Industry Show and spring business meeting before the pandemic hit and business changed rapidly. He also discussed the cooperation between the organizations, and how strong we are together when we pool our resources.

The strength in numbers also showed how non member clubs are a liability not only to themselves, but everyone as a whole, when they are hard to reach and educate in a rapidly changing situation.

Brett presented that the directory would be out soon and reminded members a searchable directory is also available on the website. He explained the changes coming in 2021 to The Grass Roots which include switching to 4 quarterly issues and that the printer is going to take over layout duties and provide a new look.

Grams said he is thankful for our industry partners who support so much of what we do through advertising and sponsorships. He is hoping we can all see the industry and our lives return to normal by the summer of 2021.





Outgoing WGCSA President Josh Lepine receives a thank you and his Past Presidents plaque from a well protected Jens Arneson, Assistant Superintendent, Maple Bluff CC.

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Grams presented the event schedule shown below. Keep checking these pages or the website for updates.

- The symposium date and location is still being negotiated.
- The WTA Field Day may be moved to fall, due to continued covid concerns on campus, so stay tuned for updates.
- The WTA Golf Classic will be October 4th at Nakoma CC in Madison.

Education will be limited due to covid, and until universities allow their staffs to travel. So for now the golf meetings will be primarily golf to enhance social distancing. There are a lot of online opportunities from associations, universities and vendors to receive top notch education.

Grams showed the membership numbers are down slightly from 425 to 405. The reduction is from both seasonal fluctuations and from the covid shutdowns but he expects numbers to bounce back shortly.


Lepine and Grams discussed the Best Management Practices and how the information will be used and disseminated to members, non-member operators, Grassroots Ambassadors, concerned citizen groups and the community, along with allied associations, local government and media outlets. The BMP's should be used as a tool to guide your facility into the future.

Grams showed the projected 2020 and proposed 2021 budgets and went over both with those in attendance. The main budget influence was the BMP Project. In 2020 we expended \$32,500 and took in contributions from the Northern Great Lakes of \$5,000, a GCSAA grant of \$10,000 and from our friends at the Wisconsin PGA, \$2,500.

Scholarship and Research costs are estimated at \$31,313 for 2020 and budgeted at \$32,025 for 2021 which was approved by the members in attendance.

- J.R. Love Scholarship \$1,500
- Legacy Scholarships \$2,000
- M.S. Miller Literary Award \$1,000
- TDL Donations \$3,100
- PAR4 Research Donation \$8,000
- EIFG/NOER Foundation \$2,500
- UW Research Funding \$9,975
- WGCSA Turfgrass Scholarship \$1,500
- Great Lakes School Reimbursement \$1,650

The election was held with an unanimous ballot cast for the following nominations.

- President - Jeff Barlow, Waupaca CC
- Vice President - Scott Anthes, Brown County GC
- Treasurer - Garrett Luck, Hidden Glen
- Secretary - Benjamin LaBarre, Legend at Bristlecone Pines
- Director - Timothy Schmidt, Butte des Morts CC
- Director - Adam Suelflow, Wisconsin Club
- Brian Bonlender and Tim Wegner have one year remaining on their directors terms while Josh LePine will stay on as Immediate Past President. Jon Canavan will leave the board and join the long list of distinguished Past Presidents.
- The zoom meeting format worked for the meeting and was easy for members to attend. Please join us for the Spring Business Meeting which will follow the same format on March 2nd. 

## 2021 Event Schedule!

**February 2-4 - GCSAA Virtual Golf Industry Show**

**March 2 - (Tuesday) WGCSA VIRTUAL Spring Business Meeting**

**April 28 - (Wednesday) WPGA/WGCSA Super Pro - Wild Rock GC, WI Dells, WI**

**May 4 - (Tuesday) Class EM, Class C Meeting - Sand Box Par 3 Course at Sand Valley Resort, Neekosa, WI**

**May 11 - (Monday) WGCSA May Meeting - Abbey Springs, Fontana, WI**

**June 14 - (Monday) WGCSA June Meeting - Lawsonia, The Links, Green Lake, WI**

**TBD - WTA Summer Field Day - O.J. Noer Research Facility, Madison, WI (Previously shown as July 27 but it is possible the Field Day will be delayed due to concerns over Covid 19. )**

**August TBD - Joint NGLGCSA/WGCSA Member Guest - HOST NEEDED**

**September 13 - (Monday) Wee One Fundraiser - Pine Hills CC, Sheboygan, WI**

**September 21 - (Tuesday) NGLGCSA Superintendent and Crew Outing - Greywalls Course, Marquette, MI**

**September TBD - Equipment Managers Meeting - Location TBD**

**October 4 - (Monday) WTA Golf Classic - Nakoma CC - Madison, WI**

**TBD - Couples and Guest Evening - Location TBD**

**TBD - 55th Golf Turf Symposium - American Club, Kohler, WI**

**Feb 5-10, 2022 - Golf Industry Show, San Diego Convention Center, San Diego, CA**

**Feb 4-9 2023 - Golf Industry Show, Orange County Convention Center, Orlando, FL**

**Visit our website at [www.WGCSA.com](http://www.WGCSA.com) for the most up to date calendar and registration forms.**

## 2021 Committee Assignments

The Chair is listed first followed by committee members.

- Affiliate - Rob Johnson, Brett Grams
- Audit - Garrett Luck, 3 class A Members, none of whom shall be a board member
- BMP Updates - Josh LePine
- Benevolence - Garrett Luck, Brett Grams
- Bylaws - Jeff Barlow, Scott Anthes, Brett Grams
- Certification Liaison - Jeff Barlow, Josh LePine, Jim VanHerwynen,
- Membership - Ben LaBarre, Brett Grams, Tim Wegner
- Education - Tim Schmidt, Tim Wegner, Adam Suelflow
- First Tee Liaison - Scott Anthes, Jeff Barlow
- Distinguished Service Award - Jeff Barlow, Brett Grams
- Grass Roots - David Brandenburg, Brett Grams, Jeff Barlow, Josh LePine, Ben LaBarre
- GCSAA Delegate - Garrett Luck, Brian Bonelender
- Student Liaison - Scott Anthes, Jeff Barlow
- Golf and Arrangements - Brian Bonelender, Ben LaBarre, Tim Schmidt, Adam Suelflow
- Government Ambassador - Adam Suelflow, Tim Schmidt, Brett Grams
- Historian, Monroe Miller, Brett Grams
- Limited Budget Outreach - Jeff Barlow, Ben LaBarre
- Nominations - Josh LePine, Jon Canavan, Jim VanHerwynen
- Parliamentarian - Jeff Barlow, Josh Lepine
- Publicity - Scott Anthes, Brett Grams
- Scholarship & Research - Garrett Luck, Brian Bonlender, Ben LaBarre, Tim Wegner, Brett Grams
- Social - Rob Johnson, Tim Wegner, Brett Grams
- SOP Update - Jeff Barlow, Scott Anthes, Brett Grams
- Symposium - Jeff Barlow & Jaime Staufenbeil, Josh LePine, Jon Canvan, Scott Anthes, Garrett Luck, Tim Schmidt, Rob Johnson, Brett Grams
- Par4 Research - Scott Anthes, Jeff Barlow, Brian Bonelnder, Garrett Luck, Tim Schmidt, Rob Johnson, Brett Grams
- WTA Liaison - Josh LePine, Jeff Barlow
- Class C - Jens Arneson & Scott Anthes, Ben LaBarre and 3 class C members.
- Class EM - Austin Wright, Tim Schmidt and 3 EM Members.

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### WTA Fall Golf Outing – Westmoor Country Club

By **Bruce Schweiger**, Manager, O.J. Noer Turfgrass Research and Education Facility



The day started out with a nice email from David Brandenburg reminding me of the last time the WTA played the fall golf outing at Westmoor Country Club; it snowed and only a handful of players actually completed the round of golf. In those days, all meetings were coat and tie required. My memory is that at that meeting, the shower after golf was to get feeling back in your toes! This year the weather cooperated. We had a sunny sky with bit of a breeze and the temperature just around 60. The day turned out perfect, especially when you compare it to the last two years of rainouts.

All the people I worked with at Westmoor Country Club, Vince P., the Golf Professional, Kate Wilson, Events, and of course Patrick Reuteman, Superintendent, made this a very easy event to arrange and conduct. The entire staff at Westmoor Country Club was amazing. THANK YOU to all the Westmoor Country Club staff for all you

did for the WTA Outing.

Being 2020, the year of Covid, I was concerned about the turn-out. In my early discussions with the club, I had hoped for 60 players and to my surprise, 90 people played golf. There were many familiar faces and some new faces. It is the players that make the day successful. As I drove around the course, it sure looked like fun was being had by everyone. The course was in excellent shape and the addition of the wind added a supreme challenge for all the players.

This year we had some nice surprises. Some people were not able to play or had Covid concerns but they still wanted to support the WTA. They stepped up and sponsored tee signs. Additionally, Superintendent Patrick Reuteman, paid for the coolers of beer on the course. I am not sure, but those coolers of beer might have added to the challenge on the course.

Throughout the day everyone seemed to be doing their Covid best with social distancing and the wearing of face coverings. Westmoor Country

Club had its policies on face coverings and the staff made them very easy to comply with and not hamper any of the good times.

After golf, we convened on the patio and had some hot hors d'oeuvres. There was plenty of space for social distancing and the food was terrific. After some brief socializing it was time for the prizes. In the past, there has always been a big raffle drawing. With the cancellation of the past two golf outings, the WTA had enough prizes for this year's event. Due to Covid, the raffle prize drawing was done the week before by Audra and me. Before golf, all the raffle prizes as well as WTA ball markers donated by SAS Management were distributed onto everyone's golf cart. Each year we have a few kind players bring a raffle prize to the event. This year was no different, but since the WTA placed the prizes on the cart before golf, these were supplemental. Each of these prizes were handed out at an "old normal" raffle prize drawing after golf.

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## NOTES FROM THE NOER



**Top Left:** Mike Bremmer goes for the green while Garrett Luck and Dominic Frese (hidden) wait their turn.

**Middle Left:** Master of ceremonies, Bruce Schweiger, doles out the winnings.

**Middle Right:** Jim VanHerwynen, Josh Lepine, Jens Arneson, Boe Jentree and Rob Johnson pose for the camera.

**Jim Shaw, Ed Witkowski and Kristin Witkowski watch the camera while Randy DuPont carries the team.**





# NOTES FROM THE NOER

## The prizes this year were:

- Golf Bag donated by DHD Turf and Tree, Dan Quast and Joe Jehnsen
- One dozen Titleist Pro VI donated by Peter Meyer, National Graphics (Peter also sponsored the four flag event)
- Portable InstaPot donated by Dave Radaj, Midwest Turf
- Golf Hat donated by the WTA
- Amazon Gift Card donated by Waupaca Sand & Solutions
- We then announced the golf prize winners and thanked everyone for their support and attendance. The day ended early and most everyone should have been able to be on the road home, ahead of the Milwaukee rush hour traffic.

## The golf prizes were awarded as follows:

- Closest to the pin Hole #3 Dave Radaj
- Longest putt made Hole #7 Trygve Ekhern
- Longest putt made Hole #12 Mike Bremmer
- Closest to the pin Hole #14 Tim Grainger

## The events prizes are as follows:

- 1st place at 12 under par, Durrell Naquin, Nick Adel, Eric Leonard and Trygve Ekhern

- 12 place at -3 (card playoff) James Liebham, Brian Ophem, Brandon Schegetz and Bill Schwantes
- Last place at +8 Tom Schwab, Ken Schwark, Joe VanGemert and Dan Fenney (***Retired Mr. Schwab needs to go back to golf and get off the mountain bike.***)

Thank you to everyone who helped put on this event. A special thank you goes out to the Board of Directors at Westmoor Country Club and the entire staff for allowing us to enjoy Westmoor Country Club.

I did remember that I was remiss in not introducing the WTA Board Members that were in attendance, to them I apologize. They are as follows:

- Brad Debels, President, Weedman
- Grayson Harms, Secretary, Reliable Property Services
- Josh LePine, Board of Directors, Maple Bluff Country Club
- Dan Harrier, Board of Directors, SiteOne Landscape Supply
- Mike Bremmer, Board of Directors, J.W. Turf

Stay safe and healthy. And be sure to join us Monday October 4 at Nakoma CC. ✓



**Top:** Our host Patrick Reuteman, with Mark Mejchar, Dave Mihlsimmer as PhilSpitz tries to recover from the rough.

**Left:** The 8th serves as Westmoor's Road Hole and is well bunkered requiring well placed tee and second shots.



## NOTES FROM THE NOER



Above: John Turner tries to hole out from the collar on hole 12 while Peter Meyer and David Brandenburg look on and hope.

Right: The 18th Hole titled Dragon Tail.



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# NOTES FROM THE NOER

## WTA Fall Golf Classic Hole Sponsors

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Corteva  
Helena  
The Anderson's  
Pendelton Turf Supply  
Wausau CC  
Turfgrass Diagnostic Lab  
Soldat Family  
Reinders  
The Club at Strawberry Creek  
Midwest Turf



**Left:** The greens complex on hole 16 is well protected by bunkers and mounding. The hole titled Tony's Other Elbow offers a dogleg right and a steep green where staying below the hole on your second shot is imperative.

**Below:** Nick Strain tries to drain the putt while Todd Marten and Aaron Goninen study the line.

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## NOTES FROM THE NOER



The Par 5 15th hole at Westmoor is titled Stonewall and is protected by water on the left and a bunker on the right.

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These pages from the November/December 1990 Grass Roots highlight the last time the WTA Golf Fund-raiser was held at Westmoor CC. The weather was horrible with only a few golfers finishing but at the dinner after golf it was announced the Noer Center fundraising had met its goal.



**KUSSOW PUTS "THE PHOSPHORUS MYTH" TO REST. See the story on page 17.**

## THE GRASS ROOTS

an official publication of the Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendents Association



Volume XVII, No. 6

November/December 1990

### NOER CENTER Challenge Met!

By Monroe S. Miller

The fund raising program for the O.J. NOER CENTER for TURFGRASS RESEARCH went over the top on Tuesday, October 9 at the Westmoor Country Club.

Despite absolutely miserable weather, over one hundred golf players gathered for the outing that Jerry Kershasky has been planning for the past year. A few of the more hearty and hardy actually played eighteen holes; more common were those who retreated to the locker room when they reached either the ninth or eighteenth green.

Even though the preference would have been for a warm autumn day, an afternoon in the beautiful Westmoor clubhouse was easy to enjoy. The recently remodeled building is elegant beyond words. From the vaulted, massive ceiling of the locker room to the rich oak woodwork of the dining room, the warmth and ambience of this special day and time in the turfgrass industry was felt by all.

Golfers weren't the only ones present; dozens of others joined the group for dinner. Prominent among them were the faculty from the University of Wisconsin-Madison College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, who for years dreamed with us about the reality of the NOER CENTER. Professors Worf, Kusow and Koval were beaming.

It was entirely fitting that the Wisconsin Turfgrass Association project reached its ambitious goal at Westmoor. The club is the only one to have had representation at all of the WTA's golf events. Their support and generosity, along with that of Stevens Point Country Club, have been exemplary.

Support for this golf outing comes from many quarters; two are especially noteworthy. The donors to the prize table are listed here; take a look at the list of those who added to the fun of the day. Again this year, everyone went home with something.

The other group is really special; they are the ones who contributed \$100 for a place on the donor board located near the first and tenth tees. Check out the names on this board — they collectively accounted for \$5,800.

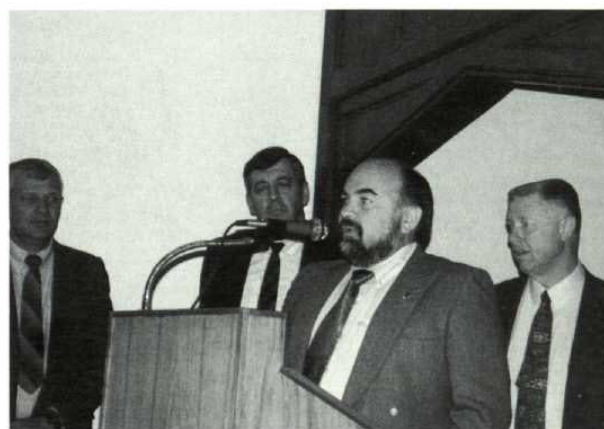
The specifics of the funds brought forward are important. Here they are:

1. The Wisconsin Golf Course Association presented WTA President Roskopf a check for \$7,000, the final payment of their \$15,000 pledge;
2. The outing itself generated something over \$5,000;
3. Jim Billings came forward and presented Stevens Point C.C.'s gift of \$1,100 to the CENTER;

(continued on page 9)



The two hosts of the 1990 WTA Golf Outing — Jerry Kershasky and Red Roskopf.



Lee Merkel brought along the last installment of the WGCA pledge. Kusow, Koval and Roskopf are in the background.



# NOTES FROM THE NOER

(Continued from front page)

4. Mark Kienert, representing Bulls Eye C.C., brought their donation of \$1,502.50;

5. WTA president and Camelot C.C. owner Red Roskopf sponsored a tourney at his course that generated \$1,065 for the project;

6. Jim Spindler, representing the O.J. NOER Research Foundation, presented that group's check for the NOER CENTER in the sum of \$1,000.

So it was a memorable day for the largest turnout ever at this event. The comradery, the pride and the sense of accomplishment were in the hearts of every person there.



Scotts was well represented by (L-R) Jerry O'Donnell, Dick Even-son and Wayne Horman.

## WISCONSIN TURFGRASS ASSOCIATION 1990 Golf Outing Prize Donors

The following generous people and organizations have made the prize table for the 1990 WTA golf outing possible. If you see any of them, please say thanks!

Maple Bluff Country Club  
Barefoot Grass Lawn Service (Terry Kurth)  
Jacobsen Division of Textron Inc. (John Oldenburg)  
Randy Smith  
Blackhawk Country Club  
Reinders (Ed Devinger and Steve Barritt)  
UW-Madison Athletic Department (Assoc. AD Duane Kleven)  
Tom Schwab  
Mike Muranyi's Golf Shop  
Swiss Colony  
Scotts (Wayne Horman)  
Spring Valley (Bill Vogel)  
Kellogg Seed (Egon Herrmann)  
Columbia Par Car (Sonja Sauvey)  
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Pendleton Turf Supply (Ed Witowski)  
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## Winter of Unknown

By David Brandenburg, Editor

I have heard repeatedly on the news the winter of 2020/2021 will be a dark winter mainly in respect to the covid 19 pandemic which continues to grip much of the nation.

Although many golf courses set records for play and golf income, the opportunity for income from food and beverage through the winter months is slim as social distancing and local ordinances, along with common sense, continues to reduce gatherings.

Two vaccines are entering communities as fast as they can be made and currently our senior citizens and teachers have joined first responders and those in nursing home type facilities as eligible for shots.

However, covid leaves a lot unknown, as we do not know how quickly the population will be treated, how long the vaccine will protect a person and how the vaccine will work against new variants of covid as they emerge.

We also do not know what restrictions we may see as spring emerges in a few weeks. Will single rider carts still be a thing? Will limited capacity lead to a continued cancellation of golf outings, banquets and weddings? All we can do is continue to sanitize, wear our masks, be prepared for the worst and hope for the best.

\*\*\*\*\*

Congress is working on President Biden's promise of a \$15 minimum wage. The latest I read was a increase from the current \$7.25 to \$9.50 with increases to \$15 in 4 years. All this is up to negotiation as the evenly split Senate tries to get along.

As a industry that relies on seasonal part time employees, this change will influence payrolls over the next few years. This change will also push the move to automation and continue to force golf courses to do more with less. As with everything we will have to wait to see how this plays out in Congress.

\*\*\*\*\*



Arnold Walker, long time rules official and volunteer for the Wisconsin State Golf Association and Wisconsin Professional Golfers Association passed away December 1, 2020 at 97 years old. A true gentleman in every sense of the word it was a pleasure to have Arnold work an event at your course. At 94 years old he was still running Players Ability Tests for the WIPGA by himself.

Arnold was born in Michigan and after graduating high school and taking vocational classes in printing he moved to Washington DC and worked for the U.S. Government Printing Office before joining a local printer. In 1942 Arnold enlisted in the U.S. Navy and served in the Pacific. Walker served on two different Landing Craft rising to the rank of Quartermaster First Class and being chosen as the navigator for his entire flotilla.

After being honorably discharged in late 1945 he enlisted in the U.S. Naval Reserve for five years. After the war, Arnold joined the U.S. Maritime Service (Merchant Marine) and graduated from their Officer's School in April of 1946. He rose to the rank of Master, and captained vessels all across the world.

In 1952 Arnold married Betty Jane Poppeck whom he had known since childhood. In 1955 Arnold left the Merchant Marine to join Texaco and the family settled in Fayson Lakes, New Jersey. With Texaco the family spent time in Japan, Australia, Indonesia, and the Island of Sumatra before returning to the New Jersey in 1962.



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## EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Arnold decided to leave the oil industry and joined Merrill Lynch as a stock broker and then moved to Milwaukee in 1964 and never left.

After family, golf was Walker's passion. Never a great player he loved the game and the Milwaukee County Public Links Association. Playing out of Brown Deer Golf Club Arnold served as President of the MCPLA for nearly thirty years and also served on the board of the Wisconsin State Golf Association and the Wisconsin Public Links Association. In honor of his leadership and selfless giving to the game Walker was inducted into the Wisconsin Golf Hall of Fame, was an Honorary Member of the WIPGA and also since 1998 the MCPLA Championship became the Arnold Walker Milwaukee County Championship.

Recently, the WSGA created the Arnold Walker Volunteer of the Year Award in honor of all Arnold did for the game. This year's recipient of the award is Joe Birsch of The Golf Course of Branch River. Joe has been a long time volunteer for the WSGA, served as a board member since 2011 and worked more than 50 tournaments in 2020.

Arnold will be missed and I am glad I had the chance to meet him and have a couple of conversations a year with him. He was soft spoken but yet when he talked, people listened.

Slow play was one of Arnold's pet peeves and we discussed the problem often. If they have tournament golf in heaven I am sure Arnold is giving someone his trademark "move it" hand gesture to push them along.

\*\*\*\*\*



On Sunday, January 24, 2021, Curtis Leonard Larson, loving husband and father of four, grandfather of seven, great grandfather of five and great-great grandfather of one, passed away at the age of 85 after a valiant battle fighting Covid-19.

Curt was born in 1935 and raised on a small farm in Jack-

son County near York-halfway between LaCrosse and Eau Claire. It was a farming community with a large Norwegian population, his great grandparents were immigrants of Norway. He enjoyed attending the Lutefisk dinners at the holidays.

He graduated from Hixton High School in 1953 and went to work for a local milk Co-op. One year later he moved to Janesville where he worked briefly at GM, then Wurtz Mobile as a mechanic. In 1961 Curt started his career at Wisconsin Turf Equipment Corporation servicing lawn mowers and small engines. He retired in 2000 as the Executive Vice President. Curt served as President of the Wisconsin Turfgrass Association and made many lifelong friends in the golf course industry.

Curt married the love of his life and high school sweetheart, Mary Louise Boe on August 14, 1955. They celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary. Together they had four children-Brian, Bruce, Barry and Andrea. Curt was dedicated to his family and was so proud of them. Dad was always available at the drop of a hat to help out and offer advice. During his retirement Curt was an avid member of the Golden "K" Kiwanis where he dedicated his time to fundraising. He was almost always certain to sell a winning truck on ice ticket! Curt loved all sports, especially the Wisconsin Badgers basketball and football teams. He also loved golfing, walking in the park and any fresh baked treats he could get his hands on! Anyone who knew Curt knew how meticulous he was about his yard and when he was not able to get it done, he taught his granddaughter Kailey to complete the task.

Anyone who knew Curt admired him. He was always calm and collected. He will be missed dearly by so many friends and especially his family.

Curt was preceded in death by his parents Palmer and Mamie Larson, in-laws Orville and Leona Boe, a brother James Larson and sisters-in-law Helen Larson, Joan Boe and Carol Larson. He is survived by his brother Palmer, sister Mary Jane Kleba (Jack) wife Mary, sons Brian (Gail, Nicole, Kalista, Kai, Kamoni, Erik, Rebecca and Caleb), Bruce (Joy, Aidan and Karina), Barry (Jane, Jennifer, Ava, Jameson, and Sam) and daughter Andrea Hughes (Chad and Kailey), many nieces and nephews, and many friends who are like family.

The family would like to thank the staff at Mercy Hospital and Trauma Center who worked tirelessly taking care of their beloved father and husband.

A private family service was held on Friday, January 29, 2021. A celebration of life will be held at a later date. Please visit [www.whitcomb-lynch.com](http://www.whitcomb-lynch.com) to send condolences to the family.

In lieu of flowers, the family would appreciate memorials to Faith Lutheran Church, 2116 Mineral Point Ave., Janesville, or the Blackhawk Golden "K" Kiwanis Club, 1455 Palmer Dr, Janesville, WI 53545.





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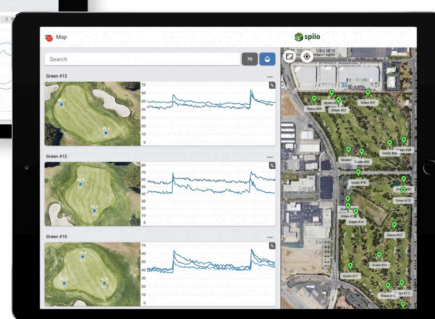
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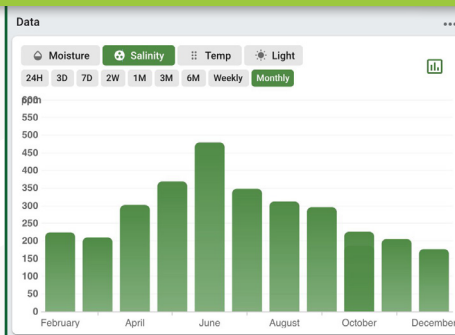
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## EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Curt was featured in a Member Profile in the September - October 1992 issue of The Grass Roots, that can be found through the members section of the WGCSA website or the Turfgrass Information File at the Michigan State Library.

With his time at Wisconsin Turf and serving as President of the WTA, Curt knew a lot of people and was well respected by all who knew him. Our thoughts are with his friends and family during this time.

\*\*\*\*\*



Congratulations to Ben Pease, Turfgrass Research Specialist at Iowa State University for receiving a 2020 Watson Fellows \$5,000 award from the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America. The Watson Fellowship is supported by The Toro Company and is awarded by the GC-

SAA's philanthropic organization, the Environmental Institute for Golf (EIFG).

The Watson Fellowship, started in 1998, is named in honor of the late James R. Watson, Ph.D., a pioneer and visionary in turfgrass research and vice president at The Toro Company. The fellowship recognizes students in postgraduate degree programs who have been identified as scientists that will go on to be leaders in turfgrass management.

Ben is a doctoral candidate at Iowa State and his research is focused on plant stress issues in turfgrass. Ben received both his Bachelors and Masters from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Before joining Iowa State, Pease served as a Turfgrass Research Specialist at UW Madison, Golf Course Technician at both Whistling Straits & Blackwolf Run, Research Station Superintendent at North Carolina State University, and Assistant Golf Course Superintendent at Cherokee Country Club.

\*\*\*\*\*



After 29 years with Waupaca Sand and Solutions, Kari Rodencal, inside sales person, is heading for a life of leisure. Kari's last day was August 21st, 2020. In her industry farewell letter Rodencal gave a big thank you to the many clients she has worked with over the years and ensured them that Bob Masse and Anne Madden will carry on the same great service that Kari offered.

Kari was someone most of talked to multiple times a year but few of us actually met in person. Congratulations and enjoy your retirement.

\*\*\*\*\*

GCSAA has a new application (app) that members can use much like the associations website. Now available on the Google Play or Apple store, the app is much improved from the previous version.

- Login once, and you are in!
- Relevant, up to date GCSAA news and content.
- Interact with other members through the discussions and private messaging features.
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- Keep track of national and local GCSAA happenings with the Events feature.

• Have easy access to membership documents and other information in the Resources section.

I used the new app to pick my sessions and set a schedule for next weeks Virtual GIS. It was pretty handy besides my time zone confusion.

Not just GCSAA but all app technology, is outpacing and taking over what many websites used to do all from the convenience of your phone.

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## EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

\*\*\*\*\*

WGCSA announced recently that members can now pay with a credit card rather than PayPal for event and dues payments. This change will provide an easier process for members and less fees for the WGCSA. When the time comes, just follow the instructions for payment on the website and the new process should be easier and quicker to use.

\*\*\*\*\*

GCSAA has reached their goal of having BMP plans in all 50 states. Although Wisconsin was near the end, we joined a number of other states to finish the exhaustive process of providing these valuable documents.

Prior to the launch of the initiative in 2017, seven states — Florida, Michigan, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Virginia and Washington — had already developed comprehensive golf course BMPs. These states updated their documents using GCSAA's new resources.

Now that all the states are complete, each one can start reaching out to lawmakers, other associations, and our club leaders to discuss how these BMP's help guide our decision making.

\*\*\*\*\*

Links magazine recently came out with a list of the top short course openings expected in 2021.

- 9 Hole Course at Inness Mountain Resort, Accord, NY
- Barnbough Short Course, Tasmania, Australia
- **The Baths of Blackwolf Run, Kohler, WI**

## MAY 4th - SAVE THE DATE

### Assistant Superintendent and Equipment Manager Joint Meeting

**Sand Vally's Sandbox Golf Course will host a Class C / EM two person scramble followed by lunch and a optional shop/facility tour.**

A formal registration form will come out in early 2021. The field will be limited to the first 68 spots.

- Quicksands at Gamble Sands, Brewster WA
- Pebble Beach Short Course, Pebble Beach, CA
- Three Grand and Nine Grand, Cleveland, TX
- **12 North at Trappers Turn, Wisconsin Dells, WI**
- The Gorge 9 at Skamania Lodge, Stevenson, WA
- **Pioneer Pointe, at Madison, WI**
- Sailfish Sands, at Stuart, FL

Wisconsin is well represented with 3 new short course projects to bring non-traditional golf to the state.

The Baths of Kohler will be a 10 hole par-3 course featuring holes from 60 to 160 yards. The area will also feature a two acre putting course and food and beverage service.

12 North will feature 12 holes with yardage between 50 and 120 yards. The layout to complement the existing 27 holes, will showcase elevation, exposed sandstone and panoramic



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## EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

views of the surrounding property. The greens will be oversized and fun with multiple tiers and lots of slope.

Pioneer Pointe set on the former Tumbledown Trails 18 hole course will feature 13 holes ranging from 100 to 280 yards. The course is the centerpiece of a new housing project which will attract kids and adults and is being built to grow the game. Jerry Kelly is involved in the project that will host undulating greens with many pin placements.

Short courses and extended practice areas are very popular with private and public facilities as a great way to not only attract new players to the game but also to entertain experienced players as well. They also offer a fun way to play golf without the 4 to 5 hour investment of a 18 hole regulation course.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Keiser families affect on golf in Wisconsin continues with 2 big stories recently. Michael Keiser, who owns the new Sand Valley courses with his brother Chris, is looking to improve golf in Madison.

Michael lives in Madison and has reached out to the Parks Department to volunteer to fund a renovation and reimagining of Glenway Golf Course.

Keiser would like to not only rebuild 8 of the 9 greens but change the property by adding hiking trails and the reintroduction of prairie and savannah grass species in out of play areas.

The no strings attached offer would provide a property that is inclusive and designed architecturally for all golfers.

*Continued on page 42.*



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### 1 & 2-Year Turfgrass Management Programs at UW-Madison

**The programs were cancelled last year due to covid but are set to start in Fall of 2021. (See Ad on page 4)**

**The certificate programs will be run through UW-Madison's Farm and Industry Short Courses and classes run from Late October to Mid March.**

**The hands on program will be led by Dr. Soldat and Dr. Koch to benefit all those interested in a career in turfgrass management but are looking for a nontraditional program.**

**Scholarships are available.**

**More information can be found at the programs website <https://turf.wisc.edu/academics/> or at [WGCSA.com](http://WGCSA.com)**

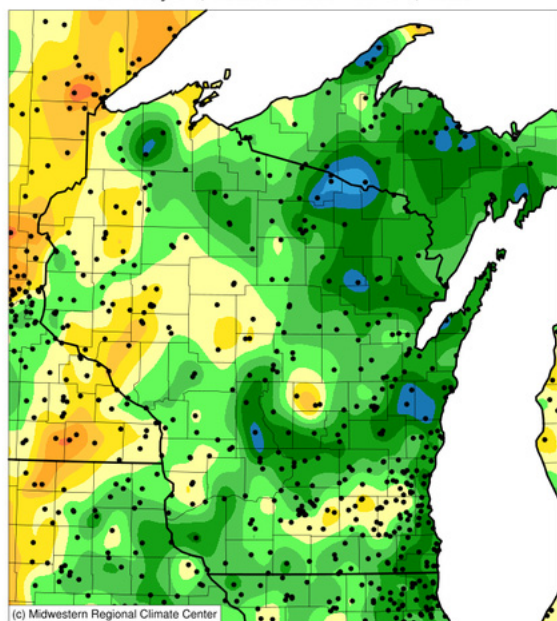
**Doug and Paul will be hosting a series of Zoom Meetings for interested students and employers of students to introduce the program. The sessions will be held at noon on Feb. 1, March 8, April 12 and June 7.**



# EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

**Accumulated Precipitation (in): Departure from 1981-2010 Normals**

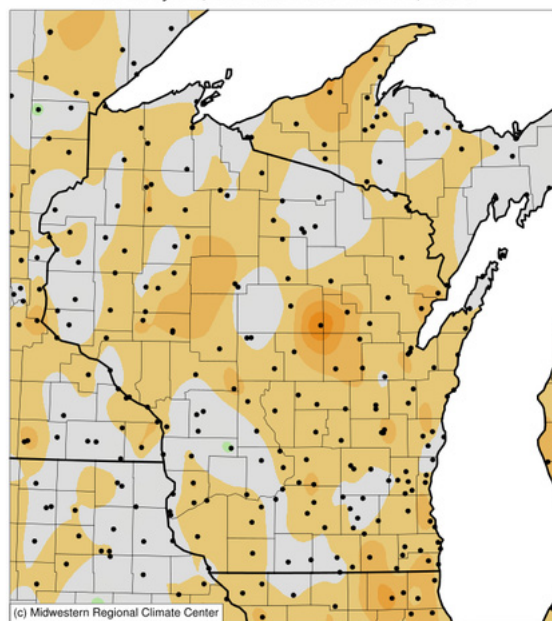
January 01, 2020 to December 31, 2020



-12 -10 -8 -6 -4 -2 0 2 4 6 8 10

**Average Temperature (°F): Departure from 1981-2010 Normals**

January 01, 2020 to December 31, 2020



-1 0 1 2 3 4 5 6

The maps above from the Wisconsin State Climatology Office show that the entire state was either at or slightly warmer than the 30 year average while most of the state was average or above average in moisture. Even though moisture in Fond du Lac was higher than average, golfers and greenskeepers were thankful moisture was less than the seasons of 2018 and 2019.

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## EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

*Continued from page 40*

Keiser was walking on Glenway the other day and saw a family out in the snow flying a kite. He would like to see that happen in summer months. He envisions something similar to St. Andrews where the public can walk around the course and on most Sundays the course is closed so the public can walk on it. Michael feels the project would be great for Madison but it is up to the city to take the offer. If approved for 2021 the course would be closed for part of the season and Keiser stressed after the project he would have no operational role in the course.

The other big story from the Keiser family is a third 18 hole course to be built across the street from Sand Valley. The mainly private facility will be constructed as a replica of the Lido Golf Club in Long Island, New York.

The original Lido was designed in 1914 by C.B Macdonald and Seth Raynor with a 18th hole inspired by Alister MacKenzie's entry in a course-design contest. The original course, considered to be one the finest courses in the world, was plowed under and became the site of a U.S. Navy Base in WWII.

Although not on the coast the renderings of the new layout are incredible from an architectural standpoint.

\*\*\*\*\*

Toro Golf has acquired Turf Lynx, a Portuguese company, along with their robot technology. Turf Lynx has distributors in Portugal, Belgium, France and Denmark and is a leader in electric GPS guided fairway mowers.

The combination of Toro's worldwide market and engineering combined with Turf Lynx technology could bring advanced driverless mowers to the U.S. Market soon.

The Turf Lynx F315 can work day or night in any weather and can drive from the maintenance facility to fairway to fairway and back to the maintenance wash pad.

This technology will save a lot in labor hours while providing great playing conditions for golfers.

\*\*\*\*\*

As we move into 2021, I hope the golf rush of 2020 continues, but without the covid virus locking us down. Provide customers a good time with friends and family and they will come back. Best of health to you and yours in the new year. 🌱



**This rendering of the new Lido layout near Nekoosa provides a glimpse into what awaits golfers. The incredible layout will be built by the Keiser's accross the street from Sand Valley.**



**The Turf Lynx F315 can drive from the maintenance facility to the course and mow a fairway in any pattern before going to the next fairway all while avoiding obstacles.**



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## 2020 In Review: Turfgrass Diagnostic Lab

By Kurt Hockemeyer, Turfgrass Diagnostic Lab Manager, O.J. Noer Turfgrass Research and Education Facility



Now that 2020 is in the rear view, I always take this time to look back at the samples that came into the lab. By identifying trends and looking at how the lab was used I can use this information to try to make the lab better. See where the lab performed well and identify areas we can improve. So let's get into it.

In 2020, I received 302 sample submissions from all over the Midwest and across the country as well (**Figure 1**). That total number is slightly down from 2019, but it is still pretty impressive considering the lab was mostly shut down during March, April, and May due to the beginning of the pandemic. A vast majority of samples came from the Midwest: Wisconsin (40%), Illinois (18%), Minnesota (15%), and Ohio and Iowa (5% each). A handful of samples came from way out west which was a little bit more than normal. Idaho, Wyoming, California, Oklahoma, and Utah made up this group of sample submissions. The east coast was not represented this past year, which probably just means that the great diagnostic labs out on the east coast are doing a great job.

202 of the sample submissions came from golf courses, which is almost 67% of all samples. Early spring was very wet in parts of the Midwest, which contributed to the high number of golf course samples. Several stretches of high heat and humidity in June, July, and August resulted in lots of samples from all sectors, including homeowners. Two years ago in 2019, I recorded one of the coolest springs in recent memory. Oddly enough, the

spring of 2020 was even cooler than 2019 by just a little bit. I keep track of growing degree day (GDD) accumulations to time some of our fungicide research sprays. I have data all the way back to 2011, and this spring was the slowest accumulation of GDDs since at least 2011.

Samples diagnosed as "abiotic" or "no disease found" accounted for 52% of all samples submitted last year. That's pretty normal for these two results to make up the majority of sample submissions. Most of the time when turfgrass dies, a disease or insect problem is not to blame. 2020 had several periods of extremely high heat and humidity. These two factors combine to present a double whammy of stress and I see a lot of turf checking out during these periods.

As a result of the high heat and humidity, summer patch was the #1 diagnosed disease by me in 2020. This does not mean that summer patch was the most common disease, it was

just the one that was sent to me the most. Summer patch is definitely one of those diseases that is difficult to diagnose in the field. It's really helpful to have at least a moderate amount of magnification but even with a compound microscope it is nice to see how many fungal infection structures are on present on the roots (**Figure 2**).

2020 was definitely a memorable year. For all the bad that happened, I think some good things came out of last year as well. It forced many of us to rethink how we do business on a daily basis resulting in efficiency that otherwise would not have occurred. Hopefully that kind of thinking continues into the future as we move on to the next growing season. Good luck in 2021! 🌱

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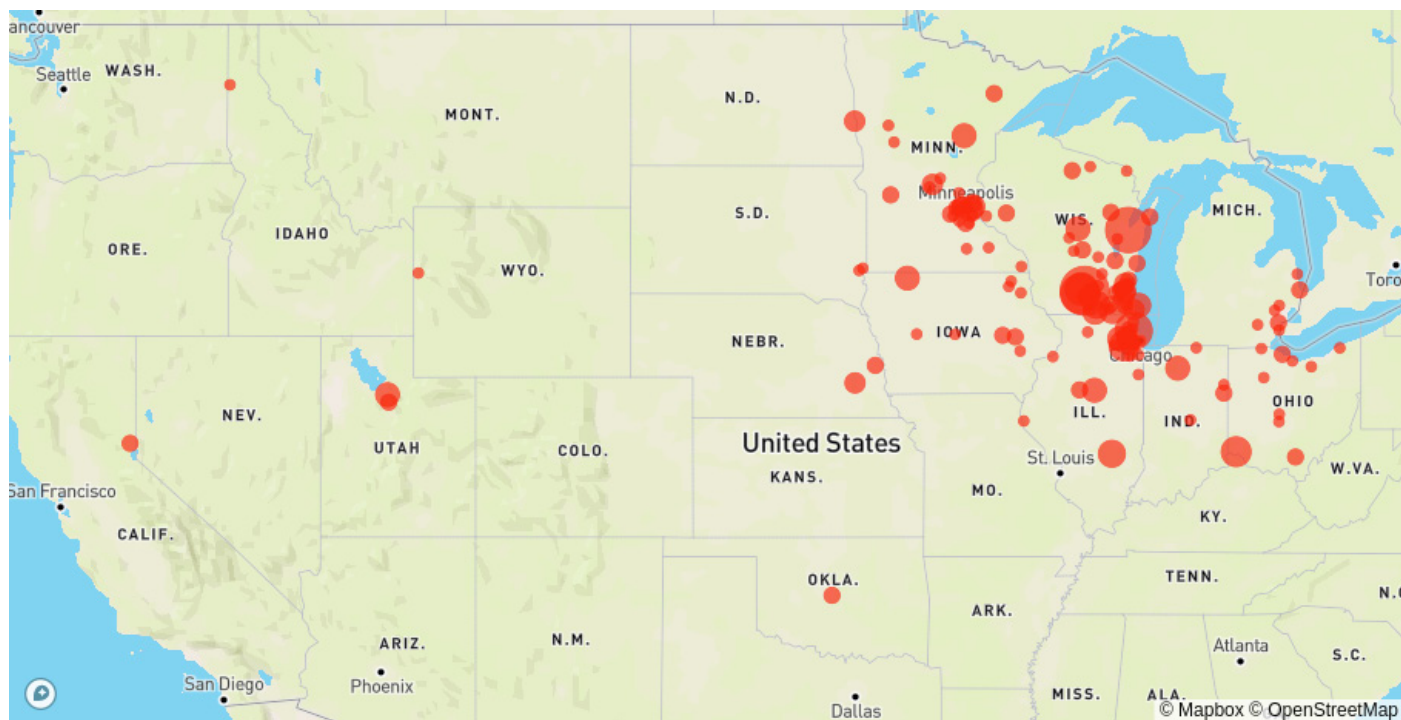


Figure 1. A graphical representation of where in the US each of the TDL samples came from. Larger circles mean more samples came from that area.

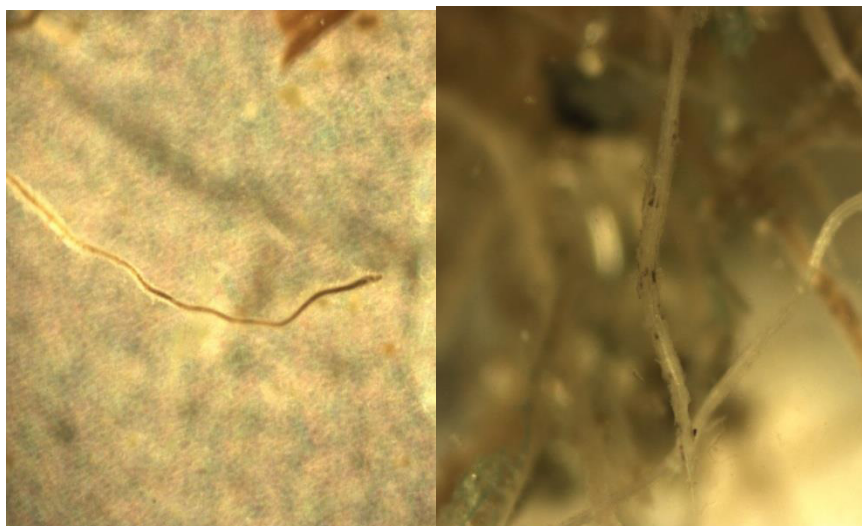


Figure 2. Left picture shows a bluegrass root infected by summer patch and the inner cortex of the root has started rotting and turning dark. Right picture shows dark runner hyphae and infection structures on a bluegrass root.



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