

# THE GRASS ROOTS 1992 Article Index

Compiled by Larry Lennert

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*Upcoming Education Opportunities for Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendents*

## **GCSAA International Golf Course Conference and Show**

January 23-31, 1993 • Anaheim, California

## **Wisconsin Turfgrass Association Winter Conference and Trade Show**

January 12 & 13, 1993 • Oconomowoc, Wisconsin



## Highlights of Recent Changes to the USGA's Green Construction Recommendations

By Robert Vavrek  
USGA, Green Section



The USGA's recommended method for putting green construction has been revised three times during the last 30 years. Each revision was an effort to integrate the current level of scientific knowledge with the sound practical experience of the Green Section staff. The underlying intent of the USGA has always been to provide a method for greens construction with the highest potential for success under a wide range of environmental conditions.

During 1991, Dr. Norm Hummell, associate professor at Cornell University, spent his year on sabbatical leave working with the USGA to update and standardize the laboratory procedures used by various labs that test the construction materials used to build putting greens. After an extensive review of the scientific literature pertaining to the use of high-sand content root zone mixtures for turf a number of revisions to the USGA specs were recommended.

An Advisory Committee of soil scientists and Green Section Staff was assembled to review the recommendations. After review, the proposed revisions were submitted to an international

group of approximately 30 soil scientists, lab personnel, architects, and industry personnel for comment and further suggestions. The USGA has utilized a broad base of scientific knowledge and practical experience to achieve several goals regarding the current revisions:

- 1) To increase confidence in the specs by standardizing lab procedures.
- 2) To reduce the cost of building greens to USGA specs by removing unnecessary steps during constructions and to provide more flexibility in choosing construct materials.
- 3) To utilize the most current level of scientific knowledge to develop a comprehensive set of recommendations.
- 4) To identify areas in our knowledge of greens construction methods that are poorly understood and will require further research efforts in the future.

The following is a summary of the major changes:

### SUBGRADE

The subgrade can be shaped to facilitate drainage and need not conform exactly to the proposed surface

contours. However, the contours of the gravel layer must closely conform to the finished grade.

A geotextile fabric may be used between the gravel layer and an unstable subgrade soil, i.e. muck, expanding clay, etc.

### DRAINAGE

Drainage trenches shall be a minimum of 8 inches (20 cm) deep.

Drain lines shall be installed no more than 15 feet (5 m) apart.

The main line shall be extended for a short distance from the back/high side of the green to facilitate the installation of a clean-out port.

A perimeter (smile) drain shall be installed along the low edge of the green/surrounding-soil interface and shall extend to the first set of laterals.

### GRAVEL

Angular particles are preferred for stability—to facilitate shaping; pea gravel is, of course, acceptable.

Gravel of questionable weathering/mechanical stability must pass the LA Abrasion test and/or the sulfate soundness test—ASTM tests C-131 and C-88, respectively.

### PARTICLE SIZE DISTRIBUTION OF A USGA ROOT ZONE MIX

FINE GRAVEL	VERY COURSE SAND	COURSE SAND	MEDIUM SAND	FINE SAND	VERY FINE SAND	SILT	CLAY
3.4 mm to 2.0 mm	2.0 mm to 1.0 mm	1.0 mm to 0.5 mm	0.50 mm to 0.25 mm	0.25 mm to 0.15 mm	0.15 mm to 0.05 mm	0.05 mm to 0.002 mm	LESS THAN 0.002 mm
MAX 3%		AT LEAST 60% OF THE PARTICLES MUST BE WITHIN THIS RANGE		MAX 20%	MAX 5%	MAX 5%	MAX 3%
10% MAXIMUM GREATER THAN 1.0 mm				10% MAXIMUM LESS THAN 0.15 mm			

The need for an intermediate sand layer can only be determined by a soil laboratory and depends upon the relationship between the particle size distributions of the gravel and the root zone mix.

Where an intermediate sand layer is required—no more than 10% of the gravel can be retained on a 1/2 inch sieve, at least 65% must pass through a 3/8 inch sieve and be retained on a 1/4 inch sieve, and no more than 10% can pass through a 2mm sieve.

#### INTERMEDIATE SAND LAYER

The acceptable particle size has been expanded from 90% of the particles between 2mm and 1mm, to 90% between 4mm and 1mm.

#### ROOT ZONE MIXTURE

The acceptable particle size distribution of the USGA root zone mix is summarized in the accompanying table.

Allowance has been made for more fine sand (0.25mm-0.15mm) but less very fine sand (0.15mm-0.05mm).

The peat source must be a minimum of 85% organic matter by weight. Other organic composts should be aged for at least one year and must be proven to be non-phytotoxic to the turf by the supplier. The final organic matter content of the mix must be between 1-5% by weight (ideally 2-4%).

If soil is used in the mix it must have a minimum sand content of 60% and a clay content between 5% and 20%. The final mix must still conform to the revised guidelines for particle size distribution.

Several root zone physical properties have been modified:

Total porosity: 35-55%  
(previously 35-50%)  
Air-filled porosity: 20-30%  
(previously 15-25%)

Saturated Conductivity (percolation rate)  
Normal range: 6-12 in/hr (15/30 cm/hr)  
Accelerated range: 12-24 in/hr (30-60 cm/hr)

#### SOIL FUMIGATION

Sterilization required prior to establishment of turf only 1) in areas prone to severe nematode problems, 2) in areas prone to grassy weed or nutsedge problems, or 3) when the root zone contains unsterilized soil—otherwise optional.

The complete recommendations will be available during January 1993. For a copy, call 414-241-8742. Or write:

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## 1993 Commercial Applicator Training Sessions

Roger Flashinski, pest management education specialist for the UW Extension, has announced pesticide applicator training sessions for this year.

Training is designed for initial certification or recertification. Sessions begin at 8:30 a.m. and conclude at about 2:30 p.m. Afterwards, 90 minutes are allowed for the exam.

The dates and locations for Ornamental and Turf (3) training are:

Location	Date	Pre-Registration Deadline
Milwaukee	March 19	March 5
Arlington	March 24	March 10
Milwaukee	March 31	March 17
Green Bay	April 2	March 19
Eau Claire	April 7	March 24
Milwaukee	April 14	March 31

For those who need Aquatic pest-control training (5), a session will be held in Wausau on March 15. Pre-registration deadline is March 1.

To register for a training session and to receive your training materials, please complete a "Commercial Pesticide Applicator Training" registration card. These cards are available from your county Extension office or from the Pesticide Applicator Training office in Madison. Indicate the location and date of the training session you desire to attend and the pest control category in which

training materials are being requested. Return the registration card and training fee to:

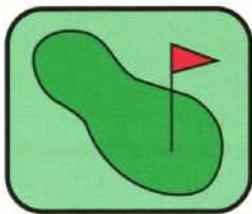
Pesticide Applicator Training -Department of Agronomy  
1575 Linden Drive  
Madison, WI 53706-1597

Please register before the deadline date listed for each training session. Advance registration allows ample time for you to receive and review your training materials prior to the scheduled session, and it may avert cancelling a training session due to inadequate enrollment. We will notify you regarding the status of your session approximately 7 to 10 days prior to the scheduled date. Directions to the meeting facility will be given at that time.

To become certified in commercial pest control categories not listed here, review the appropriate training manual and study guide and then make exam arrangements directly with the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection. Their phone number is 608-267-9652.

If you desire more information on registration and obtaining training materials, or if you're unsure which pest control category certification is needed, please call either:

Rose Scott Program Assistant 608-262-7588	Roger Flashinski Pest Mgmt. Education Specialist 608-263-6358
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## SUCCESSFUL COACHING (For Golf Course ~~Superintendents~~ Coaches)

By Chad Eberhardt

Being a successful golf course superintendent consists of more than teaching fundamental skills and manipulating textbook agronomic principles into workable golf course applications.

Motivating crew members to work hard and believe in themselves is also a full-time task.

Whether we like it or not, we're also salesmen, communication specialists, and psychologists. It all comes with the territory.

In other words, golf course superintendents are coaches.

In a nation that is becoming one in which apathy and satisfaction with mediocrity is the rule rather than the exception, why not consciously manage your crew as a team in the sport of golf course management?

After all, sports offers participants the opportunity to pursue excellence and overcome adversity, and in the process to extend themselves to the limits of their ability.

Although we face a multitude of tasks much like coaching in our work (e.g., scheduling, budgeting, maintaining equipment and facilities, paperwork, etc.), the coaching task itself can be reduced to two areas, teaching and motivation.

We teach crew members the skills, patterns and strategies necessary to operate in our sport, and then we motivate them to give their best efforts in "playing the game".

Obviously, the better teacher a coach is, the more his/her players will learn in terms of skills, patterns and strategy—assuming that the coach possesses a basic understanding of the skills, patterns and strategies associated with the sport.

What is not so obvious is the fact that motivation involves far more than pep rallies, slogans, and inspirational talks.

The best coaches in the business are, without exception, totally committed to excellence in their coaching. In order to build a successful

program, you must first develop your own set of philosophies and techniques. There is no such thing as a prototype coach.

Bobby Knight is supposed to be too intense, and too tough on his players to get many of the top basketball prospects nowadays. But have you checked Knight's career won-lost record lately?

Many people who are opposed to Knight's philosophy and techniques keep hoping he'll fall flat on his face, but every year the wins keep piling up for Coach Knight.

Regardless of whether outside observers agree with your coaching style, you must make it work with the people who really count: your team. It is important that you surround yourself with a crew that will accept your style as best for them.

You, as coach, need to decide what kind of players you want on your crew. Selection of team members should be based at least in part on the basis of respect for you and other teammates.

It's all part of the "weeding-out" process when entering a new program or rebuilding an old one.

You'll need a good head assistant who shares in your sense of direction.

The key to a good relationship with your assistant(s) is contained in a single word: **Professionalism**.

As a coach, you will constantly transmit your values to your players, whether consciously or unconsciously. Sometimes you'll lose players whose values differ widely from yours.

Most of the athletes (employees) you come in contact with will accept your values as best for the team. Many of those players will, in fact, adopt your values into their own lives, which is probably the most important and lasting contribution you'll make to the people who comprise your team.

As mentioned previously, coaching styles vary with the individual. But, by examining a coach's program closely, you can see some basic guidelines by which they adhere.

**1. Consistent relationships with their players.** This doesn't mean that you have to treat all players alike; rather, it means that your players have the right to fair and equal treatment, whether in disciplinary matters or in helping them to solve personal problems.

If you can't be consistent in your administration of a rule, you should get rid of the rule. If you can't be up front, open and honest with your players, you shouldn't expect to develop an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect among your players.

**2. They don't treat all players alike. They know who can be pushed and who requires pulling.** Your players' motivations as well as their personalities vary widely. Some thrive on praise and compliments. Some players need the incentive of sharp criticism to stimulate them. If you study your players individually, you'll learn what motivates them best.

**3. Great coaches are never too busy to listen to their players.** Communication is a two-way street.

**4. No matter how hard they drive their players, they treat them with dignity and respect.** Don't rob them of their pride.

**5. They are always searching for team leaders.** Peer pressure is normally a powerful motivating force. Good team leaders can simplify your tasks enormously.

**6. Organization.** Good organization is a habit. Good coaches are good administrators. They can't afford not to be!

You still may not consider your crew a team in the sport of golf course management. Or, if you do, you may not agree with my viewpoint. But, you need to be aware that my philosophy of management exists, if for no other reason than to prepare your crew to work harder when going up against teams like mine.

Best of luck ... Coach! 🌿