



The Surrounds

By Wayne G. Horman



It is always nice to hear that golf course superintendents have a life away from the golf course. Gary Tanko, the superintendent at SentryWorld in Stevens Point, is just one of those individuals. Tanko, who is an avid racquetball player, took part in the World Seniors Racquetball Championships in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The event included racquetball players from eight countries, and Tanko finished in the top eight in the 35 years and older division.

In my travels, you meet a lot of superintendents and assistants who have hobbies. Believe it or not, some don't even involve golf. So recently, when I stopped at Brown County GC in Onieda, Paul Delfosse mentioned his assistant, Steve Johnson, and Steve's project over this past summer. Johnson grows pumpkins, not very many of them, just two. But they are two of the biggest pumpkins I have ever seen. Weighing between 650 and 700 pounds each, the pumpkins sit off in the distant rough, a good distance away from where any hacker may hit. This has been a hobby of Johnson's for some time. He grew them at Bull's Eye CC in Wisconsin Rapids in past years. His secret? Special seeds, a lot of Hi K Greens fertilizer and Fertilizer + Minors (sorry—I had to add that!). Johnson plans to take the biggest down to the state competition in Oconomowoc.

Jeff Ruesch, the golf course superintendent at Grand View Golf Club in Hortonville, had a surprise 40th birthday party waiting for him when he arrived at his club in September. There, to his surprise,

were Jeff Bottensek (Stevens Point CC), Dave Murgatroyd (The Ridges), Dave Beavillia (Maple Hills GC) and Steve Schmidt (Butte des Morts CC). Ruesch, who I thought was much older than that, was also joined by his family and other friends.

Mike Wirth, the assistant at Lake Breeze CC outside of Oshkosh, is a proud new papa. Loren Elaine was born on August 31st. She is the first child for the Wirths.

Greg Gage, a December 1994 graduate of the UW-Madison Turfgrass Management program and a student of Dr. Wayne Kussow, will begin his new job as golf course superintendent at Pine Valley near Wausau on December 1st. He spent the past year as the second assistant at Blackhawk Country Club in Madison. Congratulations to Greg!

Finally, many of you have received your topdressing this fall. Usually, this event doesn't merit much fanfare. However, maybe you never received it from Iowa. As you can see from the photos, they do it a little bit differently.

Don Shaffer, superintendent and owner of Ludden Lake GC in Mineral Point, ordered 27 tons of topdressing mix in early October. In the process of dumping the mix, the trailer began to tip over. If it wasn't for Shaffer's quick action of pushing the driver out of the way, the driver might have been seriously hurt. The strange part was that it tipped over on a FLAT surface! So you might want to take your delivery a little bit more seriously.

I hope to see you all at the Wisconsin Golf Turf Symposium in November. Bring along your stories! 🌱

