

TABLE OF CONTENTS

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE	
Feels Like Another Long Golf Season!!	3
TDDL	
Disease Research: Bigger and Better in '99	5
BADGER TURF & GROUNDS CLUB	
Preparing Riviera for the Nissan Open	9
PERSONALITY PROFILE	
He's Challenged By Increasing Demands In Golf Course Construction	21
GAZING IN THE GRASS	
Fine Fescue Fairways	27
WISCONSIN ENTOMOLOGY REPORT	
Japanese Beetles: An Invasive Pest	33
NOTES FROM THE NOER FACILITY	
Plans are in Full Swing	38
JOTTINGS FROM THE GOLF COURSE JOURNAL	
Where Did Thirty Years Go?	40
THE EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK	
Green Wisconsin	44
GREEN SECTION	
No-Way Ray... Poa annua Control	47
MISCELLANY	
WGCSA Convenes at Lake Arrowhead GC for April Meeting	
&	
WGCSA Meets at Green Bay Country Club	51
FROM ACROSS THE COUNTRY	
Lowering Soil pH with Elemental Sulfur	53
POA TRIVIA	
.	56

ABOUT THE COVER

As has become a Grass Roots tradition, the July/August cover features the favorite hole of the host golf course superintendent of the Wisconsin State Amateur tournament and the Wisconsin State Open. Landscape artist J.L. Samerdyke created the cover.

Gary Johnson and Brynwood Country Club are welcoming players to the State Am in July. Gary's favorite hole at his course is the par 5 fifth hole. It is a slight dogleg right, playing 517 yards from the blue tee. Trees, water, sand and topography come into play, providing a player the elements of a classic style golf hole.

Rod Johnson loves the 369 yard, par 4 eighth hole at Sheboygan Country Club.

The Wisconsin professional golfers and the best amateurs will see the Pigeon River running along the entire left side of the fairway and across the front of the green. The elevated tee provides a great view of the hole and of the clubhouse in the distance.

"Next in importance to the divine profusion of water, light and air – may be reckoned the universal beneficence of grass. Grass is the forgiveness of nature, her constant benediction."

– John J. Ingalls,
U.S. Senator, Kansas (1833-1900)

THE GRASS ROOTS

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Feels Like Another Long Golf Season!!

By **Scott Schaller**, Golf Course Superintendent, North Shore Golf Club



As I am putting together this president's message, I can't help but think it sure looks like we are off to another banner golf season. Again, we all had an early opening of our courses and great spring and early summer weather, which in turn produced record rounds of golf and, lastly, created a lot of work for all of us.

A special thanks goes out to Joseph Fryman, Marc Davison and Wayne

Otto for hosting WGCSA monthly meetings this year.

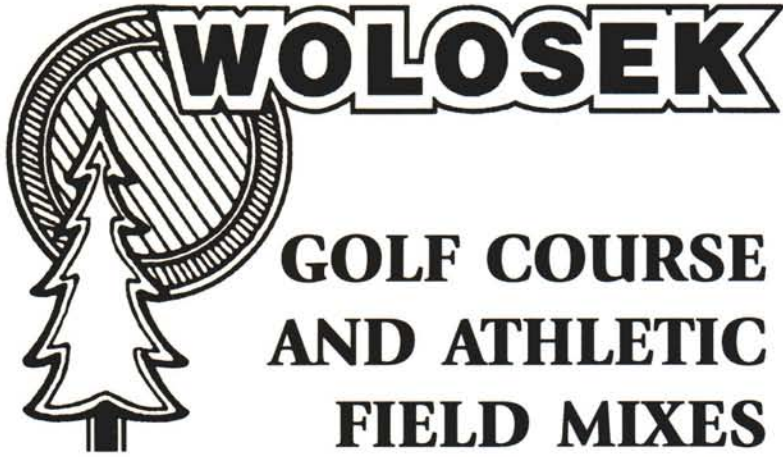
Each of their golf courses were in OUTSTANDING condition. All the people in attendance at these meetings truly appreciated the efforts made by the host superintendents to make our day at their facility one to remember. THANKS GUYS !!!

I'm sure all of you are aware we will not have an August monthly meeting at a golf course facility this season. We have abandoned the WGCSA August golf meeting to promote your attendance to the WTA Field Day on August 10, 1999 at the O.J. Noer Facility in Verona, Wisconsin. The field day should be on every golf course superintendent's calendar. Get out and show your support for the WTA and the O.J. Noer Facility. See what is happening with current turfgrass research and the donated money from the WGCSA.

Take care and I hope to see you at the WTA Field Day. ♣



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Disease Research: Bigger and Better in '99

By Jeffrey S. Gregos, Department of Plant Pathology, University of Wisconsin-Madison

The Turfgrass Disease Diagnostic Lab has just completed the third year of snow mold control research and we are embarking on our best year of summer disease trials. There are over ten trials that will be conducted this year in addition to preparation of plots for the upcoming winter season and following summers. Be sure to mark your calendar for August 10, WTA Field Day at the Noer Facility, to tour some of the research plots described below.

Summer Trials '99

Anthracnose

This is the second year for an anthracnose trial to be conducted at the Noer Facility. This year we will be featuring 36 treatments, with over half of them being experimental fungicides. Come see what the future will hold.

Brown Patch

Over 25 treatments will be included in the brown patch evaluation this year. Once again, the reduced-rate mixtures will be evaluated for the control of brown patch. Excellent results were obtained last year; and if the beginning of this summer is any indication of what is to come, it should be a favorable year for this disease.



Dollar Spot

For the third year we will be evaluating the reduced-rate mixtures along with some product comparisons. In recent months some superintendents have informed me of their interest in the mixtures as they have proven to provide excellent control for 21 days or more.

Dollar Spot Carrier Volume

In its second year, this study was initiated to evaluate the affect spray volume has on the length of efficacy. Ten fungicide treatments at three volumes each are included in this study and results from the first year proved to be encouraging.

Pythium

The "houses of death" return from their 12-month hiatus to put another 18 treatments to the challenge. Great data from the first year resulted in an overwhelming response and we had to turn away fungicide treatments for this year's study. Who will survive the house?



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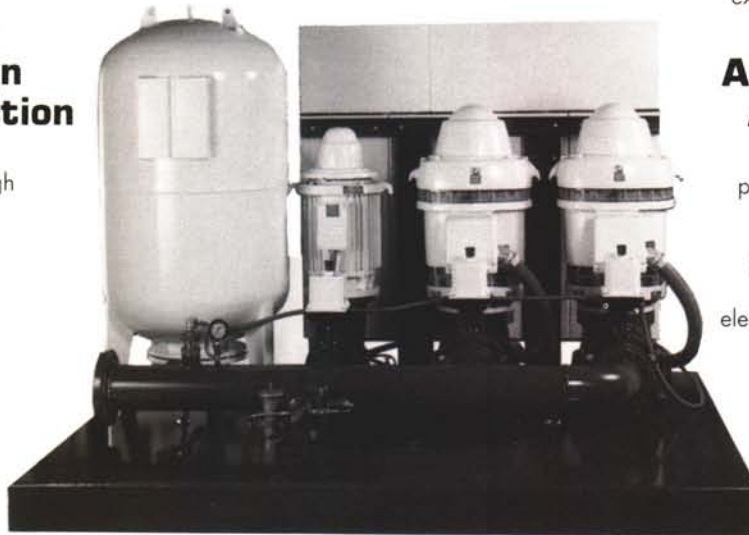
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Summer Stress

Can fungicides benefit the over-all health of turfgrass plants? We intend to find out by reducing the height of cut to 0.10" on a Poa/bent and applying traffic. Can these wonder tank mixtures meet the challenge?

Sod Blend Evaluation

Initiated in 1997, this trial is studying the role that soil preparation has on disease development. Already we have noticed the benefits of establishment methods on rooting and aerification on reducing melting-out development. Will this be the year that necrotic ring spot develops?

Take-all Patch

Two trials for take-all patch are currently being conducted. One was initiated in the fall of 1998 and another this spring. A total of 23 treatments are currently being evaluated. If you are battling this troublesome disease, this is one not to miss.

Additional Projects

New Poa Green

After the summer of '98 we realized the need for additional space for studies on controlling *Poa annua* diseases. This spring members of the TDDL have constructed an additional 5,000 sq. ft. green of the lovely

light green grass that everyone loves to hate. It will always be there and if you can't beat it, we will just have to learn how to keep it healthy.

Dollar Spot Resistance Management

Once again we will be evaluating the reduced-rate tank mixture against a resistant population of *Sclerotinia homoeocarpa*.

Screening Techniques for Breeding Snow Mold Resistant Grasses

The second year of this study will be seeded this summer at three locations around the state. This evaluation has already shown that fine fescues and colonial bentgrass have some tolerance to this disease. Additionally, a growth chamber study will be conducted in comparison to see if we can reduce the amount of time for this evaluation process.

Snow Mold Sensitivity In Vitro

This summer several isolates of different snow molds will be evaluated in the lab to see how sensitive they are to the different snow mold fungicides. You might be surprised as to what's required to control those tiny specks that you find on your brown turf every spring.

Come one, and come all. Find out what will cure your ailing grass. Take the time now to mark it on your calendar; August 10th is the big day for the 1999 Wisconsin Turfgrass Association Field Day.

SEE YOU THERE. ♣

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Preparing Riviera for the Nissan Open

By Christopher Chase, University of Wisconsin-Madison



BACKGROUND

The Riviera Country Club, located in Pacific Palisades, California, is truly one of golf's greatest treasures. George C. Thomas began construction in 1920 and by completion had created a golf course that would prove to be a test for the best golfers in the world for years to come. Since its opening, Riviera has served in two major capacities. It is a glamorous layout for Hollywood's elite as well as a proving ground for serious golfers. The Riviera has hosted the 1948 U.S. Open, 1983 PGA Championship, 1995 PGA Championship, 1998 U.S. Senior Open, and is the annual site of the Nissan Open.

One cannot discuss Riviera Country Club without mentioning Ben Hogan. Ben Hogan won the 1948 U.S. Open and two Nissan Opens at Riviera. Soon after, Riviera adopted the nickname "Hogan's Alley." Jack Nicklaus includes the par 4 second hole and par 3 fourth hole among his 18 favorite golf holes. The course has

received countless accolades throughout the years. Golf Digest currently ranks the course twenty-second in the nation.

This course has seemed to transcend time, providing a great test of golf in a beautiful environment. Management, members, and golfers all believed that the Riviera was deserving and ready for another U.S. Open. However, all that would change during the 1995 PGA Championship. The Riviera was slated for the Nissan Open in February and the PGA Championship in September. The greens at the time were showing signs of age. They were over 50% *Poa annua* and had over an inch of thatch. Six months prior to the Nissan Open, the decision was made to sod the greens with 'Crenshaw' washed sod. The sod took very well, and under normal circumstances, would have worked out fine, but two major tournaments proved too much for the young turf. Under the stress of a low-mowing

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height, double-cutting, rolling, foot traffic, and no water, the greens survived but were marginal at best for the Nissan Open. Due to shallow rooting, the superintendent was reluctant to mow at a low enough height and was simply unable to go the 4 days without applying water to the greens. The greens survived, but were highly criticized for playing too slow. They were rolling a mere 8 feet on the stimpmeter. After the Nissan Open, the club had 6 months to get the course ready for an even bigger tournament—the PGA Championship. The week of the PGA Championship rolled around and everyone was discussing the speed of the greens. It was made very clear by the PGA that the greens had to be rolling at least 10 feet on the stimpmeter. The health of the bentgrass still was not up to par and in the week prior to the tournament, the superintendent pressed his luck. He was double-cutting the greens and rolling them with 1-ton rollers. At the start of the tournament, the greens were up to speed, but were suffering. The greens gradually got worse throughout the weekend, and by Sunday, the PGA agronomist estimated that 70% of the turf was dead. Words cannot describe how poor the conditions of the greens were. The superintendent lost his job and the press was brutally honest about the greens. This was a major tournament with

greens that were dead. Riviera's reputation was ruined and it was doubtful it would ever host another PGA tour event.

Riviera would do the only thing they could to gain back the trust of the PGA. They hired Paul Latshaw as their superintendents. He is arguably one of the best superintendents in the country. More important, he is trusted by the USGA and the PGA. He is the only superintendent to have hosted the PGA Championship, the Masters, and the U.S. Open. He has worked at Oakmont, Augusta National, Congressional, and Riviera.

GENERAL PREPARATIONS

The Nissan Open is an annual event held at Riviera the week of February 14 through 21. Throughout the year, the course suffers significant cart damage. This damage becomes more apparent in the winter months when the turf is exposed to colder weather and less sunlight. In addition, it is not always possible to accomplish all management goals because of limited staff and less sunlight. Therefore, it is important to take preventative measures well in advance to avoid problems nearer to the tournament. We decided to restrict carts to the paths only beginning January 1, thus giving the course ample time to recover from cart traffic damage. This policy was also adhered to by the maintenance crew. The entire course was closed one week prior to the tournament to further lessen any foot traffic damage and to allow for the maintenance crew and volunteers to work unobstructed.

Volunteers are a vital part of every major golf tournament. With all PGA tour events, there are plenty of people willing to volunteer — we had superintendents, students from area turf schools, crew members from area courses, sales representatives, and friends and family of crew members. We had young children filling in divots, superintendents mowing fairways and mothers of workers whipping greens. In total, we had over 100 people preparing the course for play. It is the responsibility of the host superintendent to provide housing, transportation, and meals for the volunteers, which is a task taken well in advance. We booked 22 hotel rooms, 3 shuttle buses, and catering service for the meals.

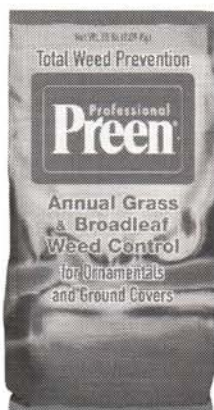
The PGA sets various guidelines to assist the host superintendent in preparing the golf course. A PGA tour agronomist visits the site months prior to the tournament to evaluate the course. The main objective is to provide a golf course that tests the players' skill, is fair to all contestants, and that has consistent playing conditions in all areas of the course. About a week after the visit, the superintendent receives a report with necessary changes and recommendations. The Riviera is an annual PGA site so there were no drastic changes needed. Obviously the Riviera membership wants the course to play easier than tournament conditions. For the

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