

On the other hand... let me also say that it is all simply a matter of athletic limitation! Judging from a few of the non-playing superintendents that I personally know... I'd have to generally and truthfully say that those who have trouble swinging the golf club with grace and ease... probably also had trouble putting the basketball through the net... catching the football... running the big race... or asking the pretty girl for a rather harmless date!

In fact, a couple of old Madison area superintendents still amaze me... how did these klutzes... who couldn't hit a golf ball with a baseball bat... ever connect on another level and end up married with families? Women must have been less finicky back in the old days... I guess!

It's also a matter of perception. Members here know that I do play the game... and oftentimes give me credit where none is due! They perceive that I have a better understanding of the game than the average superintendent... which is blatantly false.

What they do not understand... no matter how much it's explained... is that when I'm golfing... I am concentrating on playing the game! I do notice things

out on the course... but it's an entirely different mentality when any superintendent is playing versus working... even on the same course. I am not out there taking notes... I am having fun playing the game! I am concentrating on hitting the ball... making a good swing... or canning a putt.

In my years of playing and working on golf courses... like any other superintendent... certain styles and themes evolve... especially in public golf situation. Greens/surrounds/bunkers are critical... as is the neatness and tidiness of the course. Fairways are important... but many is the Friday when I've left them unmown to relieve the overtime burden. Do golfers see this out on the course? I do not think so...

I have heard through the gristmill that the private club in our area... changes cups infrequently... and doesn't mow greens daily. Coincidentally, this superintendent is always under fire from his committee and his status is somewhat uncertain from one season to the next! Does it take a golfing superintendent to realize that this is a recipe for disaster? Not at all.

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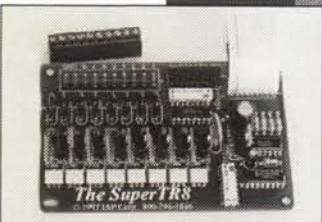
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members even ask... and provides playing conditions daily that meet or exceed their expectations.

And there are lots of non-playing superintendents who are able to accomplish this... in their non-graceful, non-athletic way...

Lastly... the question of complimentary golf and mutual professionalism is snorting me tons lately. As I mentioned earlier... we had an ownership change that resulted in some management team changes. Our new general manager is new to the golf business... but has lots of business experience that makes him the man to take responsibility for the bar, restaurant, and ostensibly, the golf operation. Fortunately, he and I are on a par with each other... which is as it should be.

Truthfully, though, he does lack the golf experience that shows up in lots of little ways. Our lack of marketing, advertising, and coordinated golf events really hurt us earlier this year... which used to be our specialty... thanks to our experienced and talented PGA professional! As I write this on August 9 I still do not see any coordinated advertising/marketing effort.

During a recent management meeting the wise old veteran (myself) very boldly stated that the best advertising and marketing effort that we could possibly ever come up with would be to operate without constantly 'shooting ourselves in the foot!'

We had an incident over the July 4th weekend where a scheduling foul-up resulted in no beverage cart/carts getting onto the course until after 11 AM... loudly complaining golfers brought it all into sharp focus for our new general manager (on the course golfing all morning) and our golf professional (reported for work at 9 AM)... needless to say they learned from their mistake.

Interestingly, I am the part of the management team with by far the most experience... so when I offer an opinion about the course or anything else... I do get some respect and an audience from our new owners - my aunt and uncle.

I have also offered my opinion on this idea of complimentary golf among staff people from different courses. The new rage here is for our general manager, or just about anybody else... starters, rangers, shop staff... to get 'comped' as some very nice courses in the area.

Seemingly every Wednesday 'that special group' heads out early in the AM to 'ooh and aah' over the latest new public course that hasn't yet gotten wise to their ruse! It's a reward... I'm told... for their dedicated work and service! They always learn something useful... they say... that we might be able to implement here! They might even start using a camera... they say... to give me some landscaping ideas! Hey, what a good idea!

I tell them... right to their faces... that I don't need

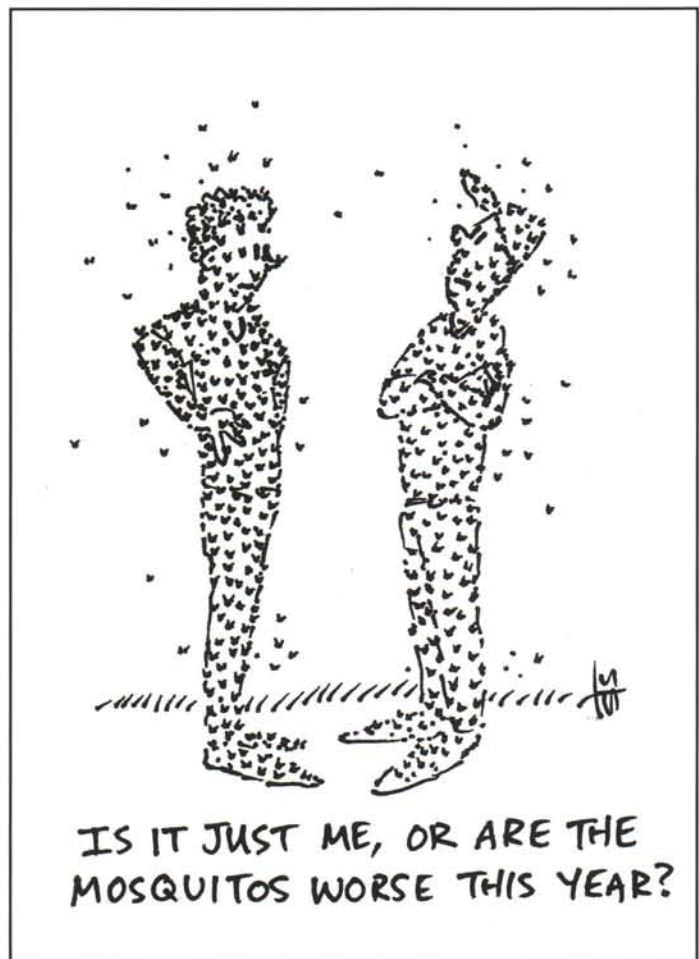
their photos... or their ideas... and also state that this whole Nettle Creek traveling road show is way inappropriate and way overdone! These other courses probably feel somewhat uncomfortable saying no to our discount seekers... but sooner or later they will refuse to participate in this sham!

The idea of complimentary golf for staff people, whoever they may be, is not the question. The problem is taking advantage of an honorable custom... and making our golf facility look like cheapskates in the process!

One of the host courses... I hear... offered our boys a six pack of Snickers bars for their complimentary breakfasts... which somehow fits the situation here!

The best questions in this world of golf are never those that deal with the agronomics... or the shop talk about mowers, grasses or chemicals. The pertinent questions are always about people, politics, happenings, and situation. I am totally bored and tune out when the conversation turns to the mundane.

Talk to us instead about people. They are what makes our profession so interesting... and diverse... and vibrant. They are what make us all tick. ♡





Lepto What?

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

Before starting to work in the TDDL I would have been saying "Lepto what?" But, after three years of diagnosing turfgrass problems on a daily basis it has come to be known as a familiar site. So what is Lepto, or better known as *Leptosphaerulina* leaf blight? By the end of this article you will know exactly what it is and probably the major reasons it is so popular.

When you do a literature search on this disease, you will probably only find it in two or three books with only very limited information provided. One of these books even classifies it as a senectopathic disorder. But, based on my experience with this disease, it kills more turf than some turf pathologists think, and current turf management strategies probably encourage this disease.

Leptosphaerulina leaf blight infects all cool-season

turfgrasses and is most commonly active in mid-summer. This disease caused by *Leptosphaerulina australis* in Wisconsin usually infects moisture-stressed turf during hot and humid weather. Several other turf conditions can predispose the turf to this disease such as herbicide treatments or installing turf during extended periods of hot and humid weather. Additionally, when the disease is present mowing of wet turf or irrigating in the afternoon or evening can enhance this disease.

Identification of this disease is fairly simple in the lab, but can be confused for several other diseases in the field. The stand symptoms of this disease are usually large blighted areas of turf or a more patchy appearance sometimes resembling leaf spot diseases. Additionally, I have observed it follow tire tracks, so it could be confused as



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Pythium blight. Individual leaves will have brown spots that can be confused for anthracnose (see figure 1), but under magnification this disease is easily diagnosed.

This fungus is easily identified by its perithecia (sexual reproductive structure, figure 2) and ascospores. The ascospores emerge from a volcano shaped perithecium in an asci (sac containing 8 ascospores) when crushed, figure 3. Several asci can be born from a single perithecium as seen in figure 4. Once the asci are released it is easy to observe the ascospores which have both longitudinal and lateral septa or crosswalls (see figure 5).

So now you know how to diagnose it; the only thing left is to learn how to manage it. Basically, avoid all of the conditions that were described as enhancing the disease above. Irrigation should be applied deeply and infrequently to reduce length of leaf wetness. As for fungicide treatments, no chemicals are labeled for its control. With change in weather conditions and following some of the above tips, infected turf should heal in a week or two.

If you have any questions about this disease or any others please feel free to contact us at the Turfgrass Disease Diagnostic Lab. ♣



Figure 1. Perithecia on leaf

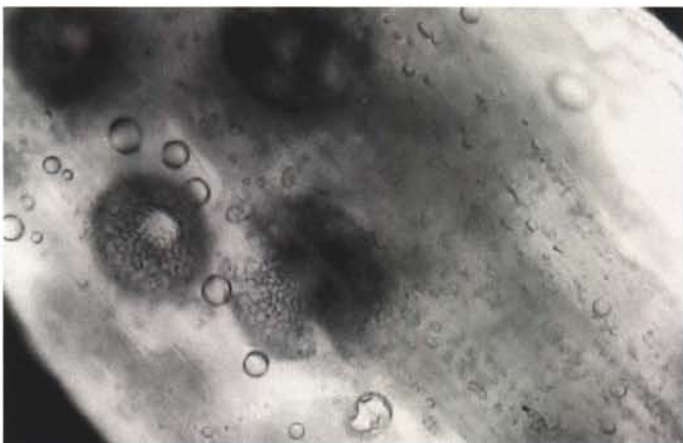


Figure 2. Volcano shaped perithecia



Figure 3. ASCI containing ascospores emerging from a perithecium



Figure 4. Several asci emerging from perithecium



Figure 5. Ascospores in asci with lateral and longitudinal septa

USGA

Reality Check

By Bob Vavrek, USGA Green Section Agronomist, North-Central Region

Relatively little midsummer stress to *Poa annua* playing surfaces occurred over the past few seasons on golf courses across the north-central tier of states. In fact, the summer of 1995 was the last time intense heat stress and disease activity caused extensive injury to turf throughout the North-Central Region. It seems that every three or four years, Mother Nature feels the need to teach a refresher course in Latin. *Poa annua* is Latin for annual bluegrass. Annual bluegrass, an annual plant that (1) germinates from seed during fall, (2) may or may not survive the winter in the North-Central Region, (3) produces a

flower (seedhead) during the spring, and (4) dies during the summer.

True, this life cycle is somewhat oversimplified because some plants will produce seed during summer through fall and seed germination can often occur all season long. Furthermore, some of the *Poa* plants in the playing surfaces dominated by *Poa annua* are perennial biotypes and a percentage of the stronger, annual biotypes might survive longer than one season under ideal weather conditions. The fact remains that many of the plants on greens, tees, and fairways at older golf courses are true annuals and weather conditions during the sum-

mer are not always ideal. When the annual types of *Poa* begin to die off during the midsummer, the best we can hope for is that they don't all die at once. Unfortunately, a considerable amount of *Poa annua* died on many golf courses within the span of several days during late July after an extended period of heat, high humidity, and sporadic heavy rainfall events.

Observations made at Turf Advisory Service visits indicate that the *Poa annua* in the collars, the immediate surrounds to greens and in the intermediate roughs appeared to have suffered the most during late July. *Pythium* and

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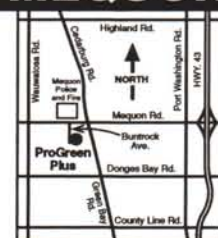
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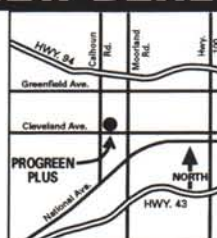


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anthracnose were partly to blame, but direct, high temperature injury, wet wilt, and concentrated wear from carts and mowing equipment seemed to be equally responsible for the severe losses of turf on many golf courses.

Bentgrass greens on a number of relatively new golf courses were affected by the stressful weather as well. It was no surprise that the smallest greens and greens built in shaded sites where air circulation is limited were the first to experience problems. Furthermore, playing surfaces that were sodded last fall or this spring seemed to melt in the hot sun during July - in spite of frequent aeration operations.

I can tell owners, Green Committees, and the like that *the greens never putt so good the day before they die*. This year it actually happened at one golf course when the superintendent was instructed to push the greens to increase speed for the Club Championship during the hot weather.

Superintendents in the northern states tend to forget what superintendents in southern states simply accept as a fact of life. Namely, fungicide applications do not guarantee disease free turf when environmental conditions for the growth and development of a particular fungal pathogen are ideal. Thousands of dollars were spent this summer for fairway applications of various fungicides that, at best, protected the turf for only three to seven days.

The fallout after the devastation to turf that occurred this summer is not all bad. The smart superintendents have already come to the realization that they may have been putting a little too much faith in the power of pathogen prevention. Many more fairways, tees and greens will be aerated this fall. More cart paths will be constructed on high play golf courses. Antiquated irrigation systems will be replaced.

Believe it or not, a few superintendents will be allowed to maintain greens at a higher height of cut next season.

Reality Check 1999. Timely fungicide applications are only one of the many important components of a sound golf course maintenance

program. When the natural, organic fertilizer hits the fan during an exceptionally stressful summer, fungicides will not magically transform weak, annual biotypes of *Poa annua* into Kentucky bluegrass or creeping bentgrass. ♣

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How To Be A Great Boss

By Dr. Robert A. Milligan, Cornell University

Editor's Note: I have taken quite a few GCSAA seminars over the years; some are good, some are poor; and a few have been outstanding. One that fell into the outstanding category was taught by Dr. Milligan, a colleague of Dr. Frank S. Rossi's and a member of the Cornell University Turfgrass Team. This article, reprinted from Vol. 9, No. issue of CUTT, appears with permission of both the author - Dr. Milligan - and the CUTT editor - Dr. Rossi. At a time when we are looking back at the season now quickly passing and evaluating our staff, it may be good to also evaluate what kind of personnel manager we have been. Read on and learn.

We often think of a "great boss" as one who is nice all of the time. If we analyze the idea of a great boss, we get a much different picture. Think of the following situations:

- Sally is frustrated because she is unsure how well she is doing in her job. Her supervisor tells her she is doing fine, but somehow she isn't certain he means it.
- George is working hard and seems to be performing very well, but he doesn't see how his hard work contributes to the business. His supervisor tells him he is doing fine and just keep it up.

In both situations the supervisor is being a nice person but not a great boss. How can a supervisor be a great boss? The performance management process diagrammed here is a great tool to become a great boss. We will discuss each of the three components of the process.

Performance Expectations

Individual performance expectations are defined as the conditions or results of satisfactory work. They should be discussed and agreed upon before the performance period begins. They should be consistent with the mission, objectives, and goals of the business. These specific outcomes provide a target for the employee to shoot for. Effective performance expectations have the following four characteristics:

- **Measurable:** Truly result-oriented performance expectations must contain measures by which performance can be judged. Measures may include dollars, percentages, numbers of items, ranges, etc.
- **Time:** Productivity is often determined by how quickly desired results can be achieved. The employee and the manager should be clear on just when results are expected.
- **Attainability:** Performance expectations must be within the individual's and the organization's reach if they are to be an effective performance management

tool. If either internal or external business constraints prevent attainability, they may serve to demotivate rather than motivate the individual.

- **Available resources:** The individual or team striving to meet the performance expectation must know what resources including time are available to them

Coaching and Feedback

Once the performance expectations are established, they serve as the accountability for the employee. It is now the employee's responsibility to fulfill these expectations. The supervisor becomes a coach providing the support the employee needs to succeed. As with the coach of an athletic team, the "great boss" is now on the "sideline" providing the resources and the encouragement the employee requires. The keys to the supervisor's success in this environment are empathy and trust. Empathy to understand the employee, to know how and when to provide support. Increasing levels of trust so that the employee will freely seek support when needed.

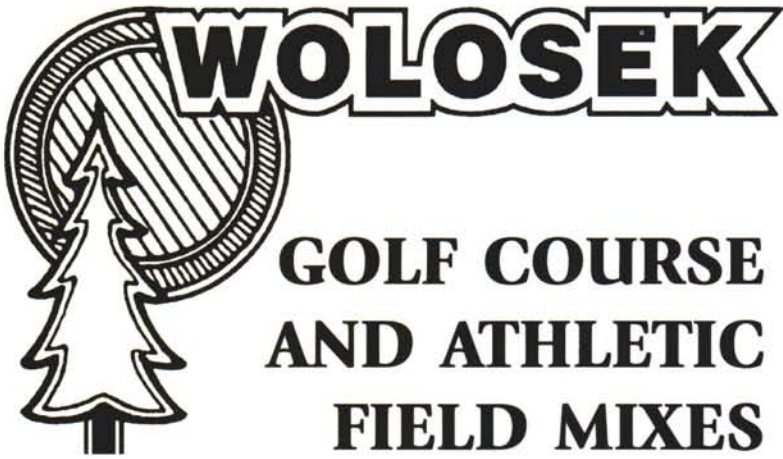
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