



You Might Be a Golf Superintendent...

By **Charles Anfield**, Certified Golf Course Superintendent, Heritage Bluffs Golf Course, Channahon, Illinois

Editors Note: This article was originally printed in the March issue of On Course, the official publication of the Midwest Golf Course Superintendents Association. Is it reprinted here with permission. I enjoyed the article and quickly found half of the items fit me perfectly, except my dress shoes are Callaway teaching shoes!

I was looking for something “light” to help you start your year off in what is looking like a tough fiscal year for many. So I came up with this little ditty. Enjoy.

This article is kind of a play on Jeff Foxworthy’s “You Might Be a Redneck...” comedy monologue. It’s always amazing to me that if you put a bunch of superintendents from anywhere in the country together in a room, the conversation is always the same. Whether it’s cool season or warm season turf, country club or public, we share similar stories about growing turf, golfer habits, staffing, and even our personal lives. Resemblance to any individual is purely coincidental. You Might Be a Golf Course Superintendent if...

- Your dog is named Bogey.
- Your favorite website is TGIF (Turfgrass Information File)
- Your dress shoes are Dry Joy teaching shoes.
- You only see you wife and children when it’s dark out. They think you are a vampire.
- Your favorite movie is Caddyshack.
- When you watch sports on TV, you check out the turf and mowing patterns.
- All of the books in your library are about turf diseases, landscaping, or golf course design.
- You quote memorized lines from Caddyshack in normal conversations.
- The People in your neighborhood only know you as “that grass guy.”
- All of the shirts you own have golf course or other turf care product logos on them.
- The only magazines you subscribe to are golf or turf related.
- Your living room decor is golf memorabilia.
- You hang out with other turf nerds on your personal time.
- Your favorite day of the year is when you aerify greens.
- Your role model is a former employer / superintendent.
- Unlike “normal” people you look forward to winter and hate summer. 🌱

Coming Events

July 14 - WGCSA Meeting, Evergreen Golf Club, Elkhorn
Mike Schmieden - Host Superintendent

July 13 - 19 - PGA Tour US Bank Classic, Brown Deer Park Golf Course, Milwaukee
Tim Wegner - Host Superintendent

July 20 -23 - WSGA State Amateur Championship, Merrill Hills CC
Randy Van Fleet -Host Superintendent

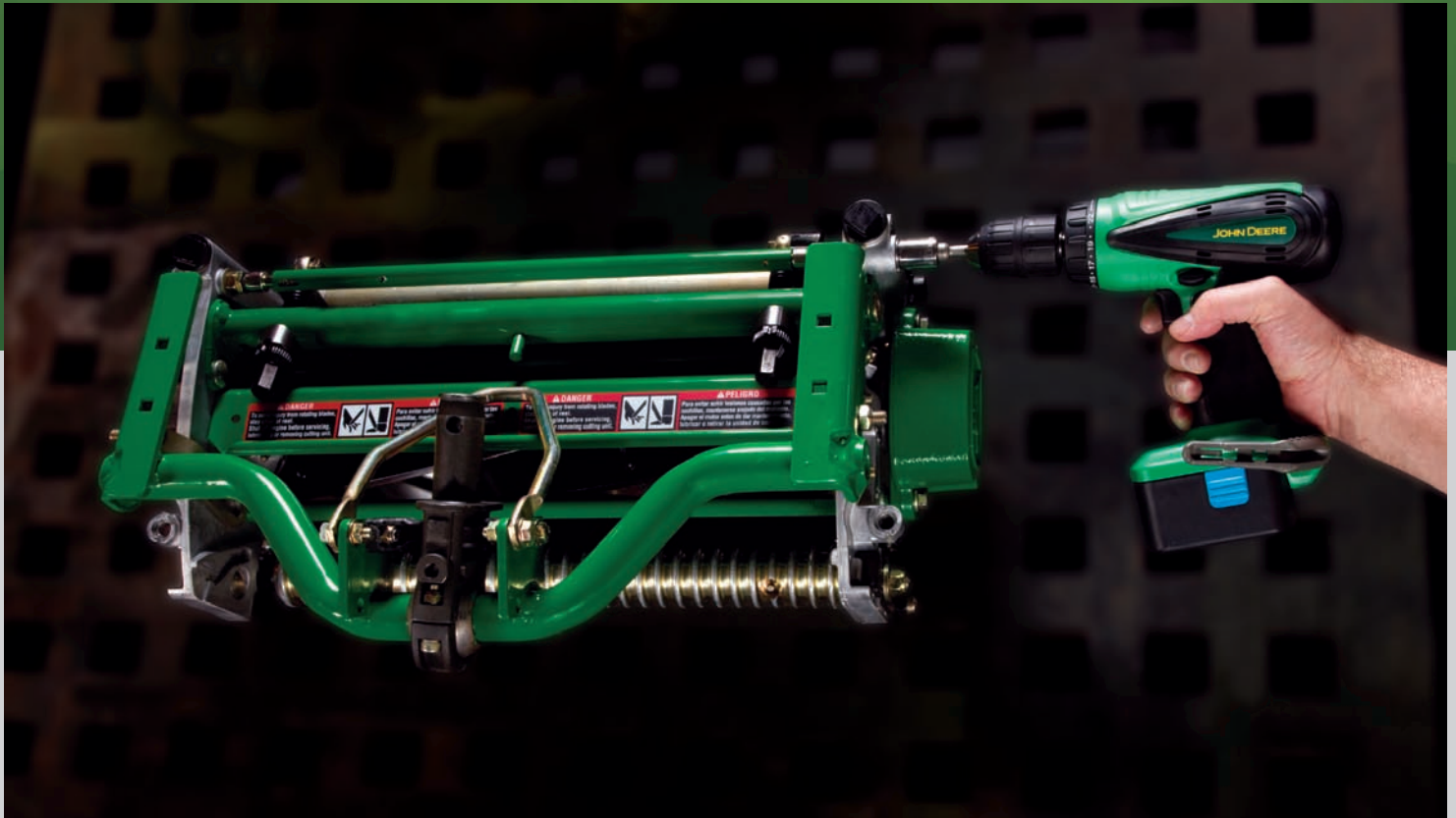
July 21 - WTA Summer Field Day, OJ Noer Research Facility, Verona
Tom Schwab - Host Manager

August 17 - WGCSA Superintendent Guest, Ozaukee CC, Mequon
Colin Seaberg - Host Superintendent

August 17 - 19 WPGA Wisconsin State Open, Blackwolf Run - Meadow Valleys Course, Kohler
Michael Lee - Host Superintendent

September 21 - Wee One Foundation Fundraiser, Pine Hills Country Club, Sheboygan
Rod Johnson - Host Superintendent

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Turf Club Stays Busy as Semester Ends

By **Patrick Bastron**, *Badger Turf and Grounds Club*

Final exams are just around the corner here at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, which means more time in the library. I think it is safe to say that most of us in the Badger Turf and Grounds Club are looking forward to summer vacation, and with it internships and research.

Turf club members will be working at golf courses throughout the state of Wisconsin and the nation. We are all excited to learn new skills and pick the brains of the talented superintendents who will be leading us. In addition, several graduate and undergraduate students will be hard at work at the O.J. Noer Research facility starting new projects or continuing existing ones. The Badger Turf and Grounds Club had one of their members selected for a USGA internship this year. As the individual selected I will travel with Mr. Bob Vavrek for a week of site visits to regional golf courses. I am looking forward to this opportunity and the learning experience it will provide.

We have also been involved in some community and campus events this year. As we have for the past couple of years, our turf students attended the Madison Lawn and Garden Expo. This event, held in February, has several hundred attendees. We fielded many questions and offer turf advice to homeowners looking to improve their lawns. More recently, the turf club participated in the 2009 Science Expedition held on campus. This was the first year we participated in this event and plan to make it a yearly event for the club. In addition to providing lawn care advice for those who stopped by our booth, we also had materials available for kids to grow their own turf plants as well as samples of various turf species to look at. We all enjoyed interacting with the kids and the consensus was that this event was a big success!

Finally, because this is the last article of the academic year, I would like to take the chance to thank some people for their contributions to the Badger Turf and Grounds Club over the past year. First, thank you to Aron Hogden at University Ridge for taking a Friday afternoon to speak with us about winter damage. Second, a big thank you to all the great guest speakers we have been lucky to have at this year's club meetings. We had a great group of experts cover a wide array of topics and we could not have asked for anything better. Third, thank you to all the turf club members who participated in the various events of the past year and made them all a great success. Last but certainly not least, immense thank you to our wonderful advisers

who have helped guide us through the year, providing us with invaluable counsel.

On behalf of the Badger Turf and Grounds Club, I would like to wish everyone great success this golf season. 🌱



Club Member Pat Bastron interned at Interlachen Country Club, Edina MN



Turf Club Members at a community event.

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In Recovery

By Bob Vavrek, Senior Agronomist, USGA Green Section

News Flash: golf course superintendents cannot control the weather. Therefore, they have relatively little ability to prevent winter injury when turf dominated by *Poa annua* is subjected to numerous, severe freeze/thaw cycles. Under certain circumstances, a properly installed cover system can provide a fair degree of protection from winterkill, but, in today's economy, fewer and fewer golf courses have neither the materials or early winter labor available to cover greens. For most courses, the only remaining option is to topdress greens after applying snow mold protection and then hope for the best.

On the other hand, we have much more control regarding how we tackle the task of encouraging turf recovery following an episode of winter injury. Wear and compaction across damaged turf can be addressed by taking severely affected sites out of play. Plastic sheeting or standard turf covers can be employed to artificially elevate soil temperatures during the cool weather of early spring. Seed can be primed or pre-germinated to jump start the recovery process. However, all is for naught if we cannot maintain consistent soil moisture levels.

Applying frequent irrigation to turf during early spring tends to contradict fundamental turf management principals, but the unwillingness or inability to apply ample irrigation to struggling turf and newly emerged seedlings can greatly prolong the recovery process. How many times have you made an extra effort to aggressively seed thin areas only to find that the fresh crop of immature plants seems to melt away and disappear within a week or so? Just a single



Increased irrigation may be necessary for spring recovery

afternoon of low humidity, sunlight, and windy conditions without supplemental irrigation could be the problem. It's easy to forget that that mature, well rooted turf can tolerate much more moisture stress compared to fragile seedlings.

Covers raise soil temperatures, but they serve as a mulch to keep moisture in the upper root zone. Similarly, taking the damaged turf out of play provides an opportunity to irrigate the site as often as needed without causing an inconvenience to golfers. It's no surprise that a damaged area that is not covered, taken out of play, or watered frequently will take a very long time to recover.

Still struggling with winterkill this spring? Re-evaluate your watering practices. It could mean the difference between being *in recovery* or business as usual. 🌱

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April Meeting at Geneva National Golf Club

By **Scott Bushman**, Golf Course Superintendent, Fox Valley Golf Club.

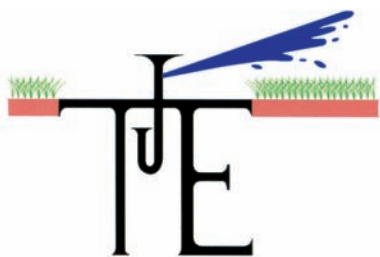
The Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendents Association kicked off the 2009 monthly educational meetings at Geneva National Golf Club in Lake Geneva on Monday April 20th, 2009. The weather this day was a far cry from the beautiful 70 degree day we had the previous year. Most of Wisconsin was receiving rain and even reports of some snow. As I departed on my trip to Lake Geneva from Freedom, I drove in rain and then snow and then back to rain all the way to Milwaukee. Leaving Milwaukee it did stop raining and the roads were dry to Lake Geneva. The weather for the golf event was windy and in the low 40's, but the rain held off letting us get the event in. Host Superintendent Kevin Knudtson and his team did an outstanding job preparing the Player course, having an event in Wisconsin in April is truly a difficult task.

The day began with a presentation by Kendall Marquardt, CGCS titled Greens Aeration: Which Way To Hole? Why do we aerate: To alleviate compaction, introduce soil amendments, dilute and control organic matter, disrupt layering, increase saturated hydraulic conductivity and increase rootzone oxygen levels and gas exchange. Kendall stated that excess organic matter in the top 2 inches is the number one cause of green failure. Excess organic matter will close off air channels, plug pore space between soil particles,



Geneva National features three great layouts.

inhibit water percolation, compact readily, support pathogenic activity and organic matter accumulation begins at germination. How much organic matter is too much? The International Sport Turf Research Center Handbook states that high organic concentrations of 2.5% and above will contaminate air pores and seal off sand filled cavities. Subsurface oxygen levels are also very important because when rootzone oxygen levels are low root cells lose ability to take up water. How much cultivation is necessary? Southeast region USGA agronomists have recommended impacting 20 - 25% of surface area annually to keep organic matter under control along with sensible nitrogen fertilization and topdressing. Golf courses with successful mature greens have been on a core aeration program where 15 - 20% of surface area has been impacted each year. Hollow core machine, solid tine machine, hydroject machine, dryject machine, graden dethatching machine and slicers/spikers are various types of equipment used for cultivation practices. When determining which method may work best here are some factors to consider. What are the specific needs of the course in terms of thatch control and soil modification, amount of play, budget dollars, SARI (surface area removal/impacted) of 15 - 25% and topdressing addition of 40-50 cu. Ft. annually. In closing, Kendall listed some targets to try to achieve. Less than 2% organic matter in the top 2 inches. Appropriate SARI of 15 - 25% and appropriate topdressing amounts including light topdressings every two weeks. Keep surface area



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Players Par 3 13th Hole plays downhill but is protected by a pot bunker front right.

open between major aerifications by spiking, hydrojecting, quad tining or slicing. Consider a physical soil testing program, to measure is to know. Ensure adequate sunlight and air movement.

After the educational presentation we were treated to an “All-American Cookout” style buffet and time to hit balls and putt before the golf event. After golf we gathered for hors d’oeuvres, beverages and announcement of the winners. Two teams tied for the lead with scores of 13 under par (59). After a scorecard playoff reverting back numerous holes the team of Travis Krauklis, Mark Lockhart, Cubby O’Brien and Kevin Knudtson were victorious.

In second place was Bruce Schweiger, David Boyce, Jim Kearns and Paul Koch. Hole event winners included longest drive on #2 Jeff Weber, closest to the pin on #6 Steve Beck, closest to the pin on # 13 Kevin Knudtson, closest to the pin on # 15 Randy Lusher and longest drive on # 16 was Aaron Kabat. Congratulations to all winners and thank you to all of the vendor sponsorships that helped make this event a success. Please remember to send in your registration with payment promptly after receiving the notice, I look forward to seeing you at the next event. Any questions or concerns regarding any of the events this year do not hesitate to contact me at 920-766-7055 or foxvalleygolf@netzero.com.🌱



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Faking It

By **Jake Schneider**, Assistant Golf Course Superintendent, Blackhawk Country Club

Editors Note: After contributing a few observations under the Miscellany title Jake Schneider joins The Grass Roots regular columnists this month under the title Madtown Musings. We look forward to sharing his opinions and ideas in the future.


After traveling to the Hawkeye State and watching my beloved Badgers get creamed by 23 points on a cold, miserable night in Iowa City with a Rose Bowl berth on the line in 2004, I've never particularly liked anything that had to do with the University of Iowa, and that's putting it mildly. So, it is with a tremendous amount of pain and guilt that I admit that a recent story from our too-close-for-comfort neighbors to the southwest inspired this article.

Beginning, next season, Kinnick Stadium, which doesn't hold a handle to the beautiful confines at Camp Randall, will no longer have natural grass. Instead, the corn-fed boys in yellow and black will be suiting up (and losing, hopefully) on FieldTurf. This conversion means that Penn State, Purdue, Michigan State, and Northwestern will be the only teams in the Big 11 to have natural grass football fields, and if Penn State or Michigan State ever switch, I hope that you have a healthy supply of bottled water and nonperishable food, because the world will surely be coming to an end.

Since it's beginnings in Houston's Astrodome, the merits of artificial turf have long been a point of debate. While AstroTurf was little more than a durable, green carpet laid over a concrete pad that kept athletic trainers employed, FieldTurf and other, similar products in the marketplace today have their merits and are rapidly gaining popularity. This is especially true in areas like Wisconsin, where turf simply isn't able to hold up in the late fall and early winter, when the football season is still in full swing. Naturally, the question relating to us is, "When will artificial turf become common on golf courses." And, while I'm no Nostradamus, my guess is that it'll be here sooner than we think.

Somewhere out there, I'm sure that some guy who's a whole lot smarter than I am is developing an artificial turf that might someday be on the greens of your golf course. In fact, a quick Google search led me to Colorado's Echo Basin Ranch, where a gentleman with a little too much money on his hands is building a 1.2 million square foot golf course. Although I can't ever imagine an entirely artificial course being a whole lot of fun or very practical for that matter, the fake stuff will

probably rear it's plastic head in time because...

Like it or not, restrictions on plant protectants, fertilizers, and water use aren't going away, and it's not a secret that they will likely be tightening in the future. Without these inputs, what would our fairways, greens, and tees look like? "Not very good," would be my answer. When this happens, what are the odds that the golfers will lower their standards for course conditions? Again, "not very good," would be my answer. The good news is that I do believe that most golfers will never accept artificial fairways (taking a divot=broken wrist) or tees, but I could see artificial turf greens being viable. The challenges to developing such as system are many (how would you change the pin placements, for one), but if we can figure out a way to fly to the moon, realistic artificial greens aren't out of the question. It sure would make our jobs a whole lot easier and winterkill would definitely never be an issue, but I really don't want to worry about getting turf toe when I play 18; I'll leave that to my friends in Iowa (lots and lots of turf toes for them). 

Welcome the following New Members to WGCSA!

- Paul Cales**, Global Greens LLC E
- Joe Churchill**, Old Seed Solutions E
- Brett Hosler**, Ozaukee Country Club C
- Kyle Kleinschmidt**, The Bridges Golf Club, C
- Randy Lusher**, BASF, E
- Brandon Nebel**, Mayville Golf Club, SM
- Rob Nixon**, Rock River Hills GC, SM
- Glen Obear**, UW-Madison S
- Scott Olmer**, Northbrook COUNTRY Club
- Jeff Orłowski**, Milwaukee County Parks SM
- Andrew Paxton**, UW Madison, S
- Jason Rosploch**, Grant Park, SM
- Michael Rzadzki**, UW Madison, S
- Damon Soderberg**, Hawk's View Golf Club, SM
- William Stein**, Minocqua Country Club, SM
- Jake Vollbeer**, Burris Equipment, E
- Tom Wentz**, Lebanon Seaboard Corp, E



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