



July Meeting returns to Watertown CC

By **Brett Grams**, Chapter Manager, WGCSA

July 12th the WGCSA once again met at the Watertown CC. The heavy rains of 2008 hampered our last attempt to play the golf course but this time the mid July weather was a little more favorable. Our host Superintendent Mike Upthegrove along with his staff had the course in wonderful condition for the day. Prior to golf the attendees were able to hear Dr. Jim Kerns presentation on "A Review of Fungicides New and Old". This topic proved very timely considering the type of weather challenges we had this season.

Watertown CC began as a nine hole course and saw its first players in 1923. In 1959 Larry Packard designed the second nine of the private country club. The course currently features a par 70 layout at 6405 yards with a slope of 124 and rating of 70.6.

The Silver Creek meanders through the course and comes into play on half the holes. It is a nice water feature but can cause agronomic challenges during heavy rain periods. Superintendents before Mike Upthegrove include John Stiemke, Walter Kaddatz, George Wuestenberg, Joe Bahr, Ron Grunewald and Oscar Peterson.

The manicured golf course was a great location to hold our annual Superintendent Tournament. Seth Brogren of Saddle Ridge GC was this year's Low Gross Champion with a score of 78. A Flight Net Champion went to Jon Canavan with a score 71 with Chris White coming in 2nd with a score 74. B Flight Net Champion was Steve Van Acker with a score of 68 and Jeff Rotier took second with a 71. Affiliate Champion was Dave Heiber with a net score of 62 and Bruce Schweiger taking second with a 68.

Thanks to our generous Industry Partners winners received Pro Shop Credit along with the following individual hole events on the course.

Closest to the Pin

#5 Peter Meyer, #6 Greg Mark,
#9 Clark Rowles, #16 Dean White

Long Drive

#8 Seth Brogren, #14 Seth Brogren

Closest to Pin (two shots)

#4 Chris White, #12 Bruce Schweiger



July host course **Watertown Country Club**



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WGCSA Member - Guest Meeting Held at Oneida Golf and CC

By **Brett Grams**, Chapter Manager, WGCSA

Although Green Bay is best known for the frigid temperatures and frozen tundra of Lambeau Field it was the hot and humid weather of August 9th that greeted the attendees who came to our August 9th meeting. Our host Mark Storby and staff did a great job of preparing the beautiful club for our annual Member - Guest meeting.

The 18-hole course features a 6,523 yard par 72 layout, with a course rating of 71.8 and a slope rating of 131. The course was designed by Stanley Pelchar, and opened in 1928.

Thankfully the air conditioning was working in the beautiful clubhouse where the morning education session was held. Mr. Bruce Williams, CGCS was our guest speaker and his pres-

entation of "Challenges Facing Golf in 2010 and Beyond" was enjoyed by all. Mr. Williams drew upon his years of experience in our industry that stretched from Chicago to California as a Superintendent and also as a past President of the GCSAA. Mr. Williams is currently the Director of Business Development at Valley Crest Golf Maintenance. The presentation keyed on "doing more with less" and the "new normal" that golf operations across the country are facing in the present economic downturn.

After a great lunch the 84 golfers headed out to play the beautiful golf course. The weather was hot and humid but the challenging and picturesque course was worth the steamy conditions. The golf event was a two

person best ball format. Gross division winners were Bill Lindmark and Rick Warpinski who shot 69. Second was Peter Meyer and Joe Brown with a 71 and third place went to Mike Skenadore and Ed Millikin with a 73. Net division winners were Scott Schaller and Jason Van Rossum with a score of 60. Mark Storby and Brian Kindle were able to take second with a 63 and third place went to Greg Kallenberg and Steve Tatro with a score of 64.

Closest to Pin

- #3 Omar Zalvidas
- #8 David Busse
- #11 Steve Van Acker
- #17 Bob Lohmann

Long Drives

- #1 Ed Millikin
- #18 Bill Lindmark

Closest in Two

- #7 Scott Bartosh
- #16 Peter Meyer

Thanks to our generous Industry Partners who sponsor our Golf Meetings all winners received pro shop credit prizes. 🌿



View from Clubhouse Vista



The Oneida Country Club Clubhouse

The 164 yard 8th Hole at Oneida Country Club



The 524 yard par 5 9th Hole at Oneida Country Club.

The Misers Makeover

By Bob Vavrek, USGA Green Section Agronomist

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Golf and golf courses are struggling with the fact that rounds played in the United States have decreased during seven of the past nine years. When rounds are down, revenue is down, and when revenues are down, there is less money available for turf maintenance operations. It is no surprise that most superintendents have received mandates to squeeze every possible penny from tight budgets.

At some point, doing more with less will affect the level of course conditioning, yet keeping the golfer satisfied is essential when courses are competing for green fees and membership dues. Hard times require golf facilities to think outside of the box if

they want to be one of the last courses standing when the game begins to recover. One option to consider is to develop an architectural master plan designed to reduce maintenance costs. This is a departure from traditional course renovations that typically make the course more challenging, by adding bunkers, water features, or additional yardage.

BUNKERS

American golfers have developed an unreasonable expectation for nothing less than a perfect lie in a bunker and equally unreasonable demands for absolute consistency of playing conditions between bunkers. Bunkers are hazards to be avoided, yet many mid-to-high-end courses in the United States spend as much or more money to maintain bunkers than their putting greens.

The quest for perfect bunkers is a



Most golfers in the United States have developed unrealistic expectations for nothing less-than-perfect playing conditions in a sand bunker. The cost of bunker maintenance at some high-end courses equals or exceeds the cost of putting green maintenance.



Converting this sand bunker into a grassy hollow makes sense, but simply replacing sand with grass will not address the inherent drainage problem in this site. Installing drainage in grassy hollows is no less important than ensuring adequate drainage in bunkers.

time-consuming endeavor that requires a considerable amount of labor and equipment. Bunkers that accommodate a significant amount of play typically is raked three to four times a week and are touched up on the off days during periods of peak play. Some styles of bunkers require hand raking, which further increases the cost of maintenance. Bunkers are completely edged once or twice a year, and the perimeters need to be trimmed with a string trimmer or similar tools every week or so when the grass is growing vigorously.

Sand needs to be added to bunkers as often as once a year, especially in sites prone to wind erosion. The depth of the sand should be monitored throughout the season and redistributed as needed. Washouts associated with heavy rainfall events require many hours of unscheduled maintenance. Controlling weeds and grass encroachment is a constant battle, and removing debris, such as samaras, acorns, leaves and twigs from adjacent trees is a daily task during the fall.

Bunkers need to be completely renovated every 10 to 20 years; a major project that generally requires total sand removal/replacement, drainage maintenance and the reestablishment of original bunker perimeters. The total cost of providing golfers “perfect” bunkers during a span of 20 years would definitely be an eye-opener for any golf facility.

Maintaining an excessive number of purely visual bunkers or bunkers that never come into play is a luxury few courses can afford these days. Considering the high cost of bunker maintenance, eliminating unnecessary bunkers from the layout can pay big dividends. Hard times necessitate hard choices when it comes to determining what is an “unnecessary” bunker. The value of some bunkers that are candidates for removal are hotly debated. Consequently, the input of an experienced architect is invaluable when undertaking changes that affect how the course is intended to be played. On the other hand, there are examples where bunker removal is the obvious choice.

For example, many old courses have found it necessary to alter fairway contours or route holes, due to utility work, adjacent land development, etc. Fairways are moved, but often the old fairway bunkers are left behind, and unfortunately most golf courses continue to maintain these



Think outside the box to save maintenance costs. Can a grassy swale serve a similar, but less expensive alternative to a sand bunker? Be sure to construct grassy hollows to accommodate efficient mowing operations. A high maintenance grass bunker in place of a sand bunker is no bargain.

orphan bunkers every season. Leveling these hazards is a no brainer.

There may be sites on the course where a grassy swale or mounding would be just as effective as a high maintenance bunker. A good example is the deep, narrow “catch” bunker that might be found behind a green in a site where a ball hit just over the putting surface would likely carom into big trouble. The trouble could be water, woods, out of bounds, a parking area, tennis courts, adjacent property, or anywhere making a recovery shot would be difficult, if not impossible, if not for the bunker.

A well-designed “catch” bunker is the perfect safety net in the appropriate setting. It keeps a slightly

errant shot close to the green and helps maintain the pace of play. However, this type of bunker is over-used, and sometimes they are employed on holes where there is plenty of room for recovery behind the green. Here, a few gently sloping mounds or a grassy swale likely would be a low maintenance substitute for a narrow sand bunker. In addition, a few well-constructed mounds behind a green can provide the bonus of satisfying the obsession that some golfers have for a visual backdrop to a putting green complex.

Mounding may not be as intimidating or as visually attractive as deep, severe bunkering, but they still provide a serviceable architectural feature at a bargain price. You may need to consider non-traditional uses of mounds when trimming maintenance costs as a high priority. For example, mounding could be an economical alternative to trees or bunkers to define and protect the angle of a dogleg hole.

Mounding needs to be constructed and positioned properly to be an effective substitute for bunkers. Slopes need to be steep enough to challenge golfers and still possess a subtle grade that accommodates efficient mowing equipment. It makes little sense to replace a bunker that requires hand raking with a severe mound that must be mowed by hand.

Grassy depressions also can be an



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Unnecessary double hazards of trees and bunkers are a common sight on old golf courses. Bunker maintenance is costly enough without the added expense of cleaning leaves, twigs, seeds and other debris from the sand each day. Why pay to maintain two hazards when one will suffice?

economical substitute for bunkers in the right setting. Again, care needs to be taken during the construction of a grassy hollow to ensure accessibility to mowers. Depressions hold water, so be sure to install adequate drainage. Wet turf can be slippery, so grassy hollows need to be designed with safe entry and exit points.


Trees in close proximity to bunkers often create an unnecessary double hazard. Seeds, leaves and other debris from nearby trees increase the cost of bunker maintenance. Where double hazards exist near greens, the shade, root competition and restricted air movement associated with trees can be detrimental to turf quality on the putting surfaces and surrounds. Eliminating these problem trees can improve growing conditions and mowing efficiency. In addition, removing double hazards often improve the playability and appearance of the course.

FAIRWAYS

Reducing fairway acreage can help the bottom line of courses that struggle for survival. Fairway turf requires more mowing, water, and inputs of plant protectants versus roughs. Many courses maintain an excessive amount of fairway turf on par 3 holes, and sometimes fairways on par 4 and 5 holes begin just a few yards off the teeing area. A closely mowed run-up area between bunkers to a par 3 green helps maintain the pace of play, but expansive fairway surfaces for a 150 yard hole is unnecessary.

Architects generally agree that golfers from the mid-level set of tees should carry a minimum of 50-75 yards of rough to reach fairway turf. In general, eliminating some of the initial yardage of rough off the tee has less impact on the playability of the course as compared to the more controversial practice of decreasing fairway width. The concerns of seniors and other golfers who have a limited ability to carry 75 yards of rough can be addressed by providing them a well-positioned set of forward tees.

As mentioned above, architectural advice is strongly recommended whenever significant changes to the course are being considered. Some changes are obvious and others require the trained eye of a professional. Often golfers are hesitant to make changes to the home course, much in the same manner that people have difficulty throwing away junk from the basement or attic. Occasionally, some form of intervention is required to make positive, cost effective changes to an old course.

The course modifications discussed here may not save enough labor to make further deep cuts to a budget with no fat left to trim. However, reducing the number of bunkers and decreasing fairway acreage can provide more resources to maintain an acceptable level of conditioning for the rest of the course. 



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Going Generic?

By Dr. R. Chris Williamson, Department of Entomology, University of Wisconsin-Madison

For a variety of reasons, primarily economic, turfgrass managers often choose to use generic products including fungicides, herbicides and insecticides. So, is it a good or bad decision to use generic products? The bottom line is that there is no real definitive answer! One thing that is certain, the active ingredient in generic products is the same as those in branded products. However, many times the chemical formulation (i.e., inert ingredients including the carrier, surfactant, adjuvant, etc.) are not necessarily the same or comparable as the branded, non-generic, product. This is where the performance of a respective generic product can be impacted or compromised. This is not to imply that generic products are not effective, but merely to make you aware there can be differences between branded (i.e., original manufacturer and generic products) and generic products.

Agricultural chemical companies that discover, develop, register and market turf and ornamental products put hundreds of thousands of dollars into a single product long before it makes it to the commercial marketplace (i.e., for sale to you). Often early in the developmental process, companies work with university researchers to evaluate respective products. This important interaction allows university researcher to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the pros and cons of respective turf and ornamental products. Consequently, appropriate recommendations such as application timing, rate(s), pest or pest complex, spray volume, etc. can be made to growers.

As for generic products, seldom do manufacturers or formulators of generic products work with or rely on university researchers to comprehensively evaluate their products. They typically rely on data and information generated and provided by the original manufacturer of the branded product that contains the respective active ingredient. Again, the specific formulations of generic products are not necessarily the same as branded products. To this end, testing and evaluation of generic products is equally necessary to understand the pros and cons of generic products similarly to branded products. As you might suspect, such efforts require additional costs, thus often driving up the cost of generic products.

One simple way to ward-off or circumvent any potential issues regarding the performance of a generic product is to request to see performance (i.e., efficacy)

data or information of the generic product. It may be that such data or information exists and that the product being considered is equally as effective as its comparable branded product. Or, it may be also possible that no data exists. In this case, unless you have previous experience with or other information from someone whom you have confidence in who has used the product and had success, make an informed product selection carefully and wisely. 🌱

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Fall Planning Underway...

By **Brett Grams**, Chapter Manager, WGCSA

Well I am sure that most of our members are quite glad that the fall season is finally here. My conversations with our members the past few months almost always made mention of the uncooperative weather. It appears that Mother Nature did make it difficult for many parts of the state and even the country. I hope the hardest part of your season is now over and you can enjoy the shorter days and cooler temps of the fall season.

As the golf season winds down I have been busy working on the last of our meetings and events. The couples outing and always popular Symposium will finish out this year's events. I hope that you have been able to get away to join us. We have been fortunate to have our meetings at great locations in 2010. We are always looking for members willing to host a monthly meeting and I would like to help answer any questions you may have as we plan the 2011 meetings.

Planning is again underway for 2011. Budget preparations, PAR4 Plans, Industry Partnerships, and Membership Renewals along with helping members with day to day needs will continue to keep me busy to the end of the year. I will be working closely with the board of directors in all of our efforts to offer our members the best services and events that we can for 2011. I would appreciate hearing your ideas and suggestions on how we can improve the WGCSA. Please feel free to contact me as needed at Brett Grams, N1922 Virginia Dr, Waupaca, WI 54981, 920-643-4888, bgrams@wgcsa.com, www.wgcsa.com. 🌱



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It Was a Warm and Humid Night!

By David Brandenburg, Golf Course Manager, Rolling Meadows Golf Course

“It was a Warm and Humid Night” pretty much sums up most of summer for turf managers throughout the state and country. If the economic news is not enough to keep golf course managers up at night the warm night time temperatures and ample rainfall sure were.

Average rain is a good thing as it reduces watering needs and keeps golf courses green but the amount of regular rain gave turf managers fits as they tried to keep up with ever-growing rough and worried as wet conditions, humidity and warm nights reduced turf root depth to near non-existent levels by mid July.

As good stewards of our courses and the environment course managers can have goals for firm and dry conditions but record rain and humidity ruined those plans. The humidity and rains kept green speeds below normal causing golfer anguish and concern. Daily watering and afternoon syringing to keep the root zone wet easily led to soft and wet fairways.

Overall the summer of 2010 will be remembered as a bad one for

years to come. We can take some solace in the fact we were not alone as the entire Midwest and east coast had record temperatures and humidity.

From the USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service publication Wisconsin Crop Progress you can see from the August 15th map 97% of the state had adequate or surplus moisture amounts and the September 12th report shows 96% were still at adequate or surplus moisture while the surplus had dropped from 37% of reporting stations to 13%.

For an area that is used to a dry period during August and September the ample rain kept mowers of all types moving on a daily basis. The one good thing from the rate of growth is repair shops have been busy with overworked mowers needing repairs.

The statewide weather recap shows the year to date rainfall through September 11 above normal with Eau Claire at 1.24", Green Bay 7.78", La Crosse 5.22", Madison 7.30" and Milwaukee 4.59" above normal.

Along with the rain has come above average temperatures so those recording stations show growing degree day units 20.5% above normal with 2824 in comparisons to the average of 2344.

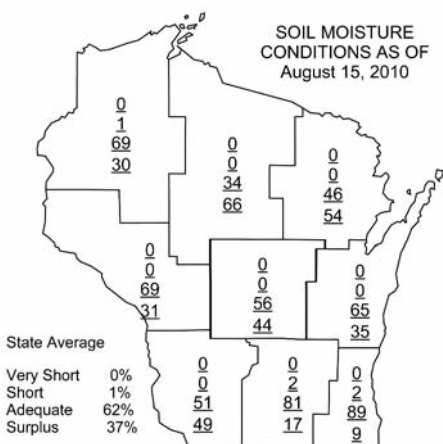
At least in our area our state bird the mosquito was out in full force most of the summer. Sprays that have worked other years seemed okay in the open but it was impossible to get near any wooded areas without donating a pint of blood!

PNCB Loss

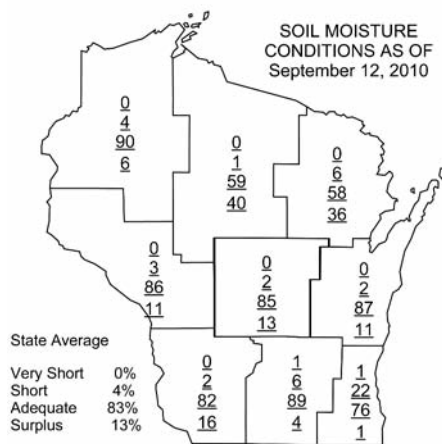
The sudden loss of PCNB as a snow mold fungicide due to some impurities in the product has left many superintendents and vendors scrambling. Due to the impurities a stop sale order was issued on August 12th by the United States Environmental Protection Agency on 95% technical grade PCNB. The company that manufactures the technical grade product (American Vanguard) challenged the order in a court of law and the motion was denied on September 3, 2010. Consequently, PCNB cannot be sold by the manufacturer and is going to be very difficult to find this year. This order is different from a registration cancellation, so if the manufacturer cleans up the impurities PCNB sales could resume in the future.

Congratulations and a big thank you goes to Dr. Jim Kerns and Paul Koch from the Turfgrass Diagnostic Lab for quickly coming to our aid with recommendations on replacement products.

Jim and Paul's quick and thorough recommendations have been highlighted around the country by all the major turf publications. It is



Source: USDA, NASS, Wisconsin Field Office



Source: USDA, NASS, Wisconsin Field Office