

The Anticipation Theory

By Peter Nomm, PGA General Manager & Head Golf Professional, Minocqua Country Club

Without question, one of the most talked about aspect of course maintenance is the speed of the greens. As a PGA golf professional, I am afforded the opportunity to read many publications written to the turf management industry, and it too is a hot topic among superintendents. Various theories about height-of-cut, rolling, growth regulators, etc., all are blended by each superintendent in his quest to satisfy the desires of those that play his facility. It is truly both an art and a science!

Anyone that plays golf or is at all involved in the industry recognizes that this is an opinionated topic. Unfortunately for those in the business of turf health, slow greens are a perceived "black-eye" on a superintendent. The most scrutinized part of a golf course by the average golfer is the greens, and most often it is the speed of the greens that is remembered. Whether we like it or not, it is this reality – the golfer's perception – that affects the overall success of what we do. No matter what the environmental effects are on our course conditions, or how well we educate golfers, it still boils down to their perception and enjoyment which ultimately leads them to choose to play our facilities.

Which leads me to the subject of this article – why is speed such a concern? Golf is certainly a hard enough game without the added variables such as weather and differing course conditions. Golfers want to know what to expect. Have you ever watched someone whistle a bunker shot over the green? The first thing he will do is scrape the sand with his wedge and grumble that there was no sand in that bunker. Well, that might have been true, but bunkers are hazards, are they not? Now that's another favorite topic of mine, but enough of that for this article!

Consistent conditions give golfers the opportunity to try to achieve their expectations – even in a bunker as I alluded to above, the golfer has a perception as to

how the shot will play. When conditions vary, as conditions SHOULD, it adds to the challenge. This same concept goes for the speed on the greens. When the golfer can anticipate consistent speed of the greens, he gives himself a better chance to perform well. Putting well leads to playing well, which leads to greater enjoyment. Certain-

“most often it is the speed of the greens that is remembered. Whether we like it or not, it is this reality – the golfer’s perception – that affects the overall success of what we do.”

ly from an agronomic point of view, consistency goes hand-in-hand with proper maintenance. Greens are typically mowed on a daily basis, perhaps rolled on a schedule, and are given consistent attention to keep these highly-sensitive plants healthy. But still, even if greens are consistent, then why do golfers also expect them to be fast?

I could argue a couple points in favor of slower greens. For one, I believe slower greens are easier to putt. With slow greens, you just “bang it to the hole and tap it in.”

It is easier to control your distance, which is the real key in putting. It doesn't matter nearly as much as to whether you are above or below the hole. Slower greens will “roll-out” much less than on faster greens, making the second putts much easier than on faster greens. This is why

we see the major championships on TV played typically on faster greens – it is the tournament's desire to challenge the best golfers by providing the most difficult conditions.

There is another reason in favor of slower greens – pace-of-play. Now I know it sounds like an odd relation, but with my

point above about slower greens being easier to putt, you have much less time spent “grinding” over those four and five foot comeback putts that are so prevalent on fast greens. Slower greens will give the golfer more “tap-ins,” also contributing to better pace-of-play. Why do tournaments take so much longer to play than an average round of golf? It has a lot to do with the speed of the greens – they are typically sped up for tournaments, making for more time spent on the greens.

So with all these wonderful reasons to have slower greens (not to mention plant health), why do golfers, including myself, really enjoy faster greens? Besides the meaningless bragging rights of one course to another, I believe that “The Anticipation Theory” is the real reason behind it. What is the theory? It is the amount of time the golfer has to react to the putt. Faster greens enable the golfer more time to anticipate the success of a particular putt - once you hit a putt, your mind will have all sorts of reactions such as this:

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“Ooooh, that felt good.....wait, it’s drifting a little right.....ahh, it is coming back.....hurry up, get there.....c’mon, c’mon, c’mon.....YES!”

Notorious CBS golf announcer Gary McCord estimates the distance of long putts in time, not feet, when making calls on the air. I have heard him numerous times call a putt a “fourteen-second” – and that’s a lot of time to anticipate! With slow greens, by the time you have a moment to look up, the ball is either in the hole or is missed.

“The Anticipation Theory” is a big part of the fun golfers have on the course. Drives that hang in the air, iron shots that

feel great and keep tracking to the pin, and even wayward shots that we keep begging to just stay out of the water – these are all examples of memorable moments golfers experience. But unfortunately, with these examples, golfers that don’t hit the ball far do not get to experience these very often. However, on a reasonably fast putting green, golfers of all levels can enjoy the anticipation of a great putt. And knowing that golfers of all levels will be playing our course, adding to their enjoyment is paramount.

Obviously, there is a point at which a green can be too fast. When golfers are afraid to hit a putt – when they are worried about how far a putt will travel past

the hole - that is no fun either. Greens that range around 10 on the stimp-meter (I hope that is not a bad word!) are more than able to provide golfers with the time to enjoy their shots around the green. And the more golfers can enjoy being on the course the more they will want to come back. Our jobs, whether in the golf shop, in the clubhouse, or out with the crew, is to attract and retain customers. Doing everything we can to make each golfer have the best experience each time he or she visits our facility is what makes us successful in what we do. So watch for this next time you get on the course yourself – see how “The Anticipation Theory” adds to the fun you have on the links! 



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News and Notes From WGCSA Members

By Matt Kinnard and the DHD Team

Editors Note: We welcome Matt Kinnard as the new man behind the pen writing the Clippings column. Our thanks go out to John Jensen for his service for over three years.

Thirty-seven years have past since the first issue of The GrassRoots was published in 1975. Why was it published? Wisconsin golf course superintendents needed an effective way to communicate ideas, news and research. Plus, the extra revenue from advertisements wasn't a bad thing either. With that in mind, Danny Quast published the first issue and took on the task of being the magazine's first editor. Magazine, however, might be a generous word. The first issues were simply folded sheets, but still provided useful and informative articles. The April 1975 edition included a bulletin regarding state legislation to ban phenoxy herbicides including 2,4-D (that obviously didn't happen). In June 1975, The GrassRoots warned of the potential for the fungicide thiram to make you sick while you drink beer. Hmmm, who knew!



Don Fort, the Equipment Tech at Abbey Springs, harvested this buck with his bow on the golf course November 16. The 3.5 year old 10-pointer dressed out at 185 lbs. Congratulations Don

With help from Bill Douglas, then superintendent at North Shore Country Club, Wayne Otto and many others, Danny did an excellent job with this publication before handing it over to Monroe Miller for further success. We, at DHD, are excited to be contributing to The GrassRoots on Danny's behalf, even if it has been a few decades.

Big Move

I want to thank John Jensen and the entire Reinders team for their contribution to this article for the last several years. Speaking of Reinders, they have moved from their longtime corporate headquarters in Elm Grove to their new location in Sussex. The Elm Grove location was Reinder's headquarters since 1866. That's impressive!

Career Moves

Brian Holz is the new superintendent at Branch River Golf & Tennis in Cato. Brian graduated from Rutgers University in 2007 and has prior work experience at Thornberry Creek Golf Course and Crystal Springs Golf Course. Before his move to Branch River, Brian held the position of assistant superintendent at Fox

Hills Resort for four years. If accepting a new job wasn't enough, Brian was married to Katye on October 1st. The happy couple took a week off from the cold in January and honeymooned in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic. Congratulations!

Heather Henning is the new assistant superintendent at Racine Country Club. Heather earned a BS degree in Geology from UW-Parkside with a concentration in Soil and Water Science. She spent time as the assistant superintendent at both Meadowbrook Country Club in Racine and Stone-

wall Orchard Golf Club in Grayslake, IL. Heather loves managing golf turf, and is an avid hunter and outdoorswoman. Congratulations!

Just Married!

Jacob Schneider said 'I do' to Jessica during a winter ceremony on January 7. Jake is the assistant superintendent at Blackhawk Country Club in Madison. Congratulations to the newlyweds!

Award Season

The Golf Course Owners of Wisconsin hosted their annual awards presentation at The Bull at Pinehurst Farms on November 29, 2011. Winners included MidVallee GC (18 holes or more) and Norsk GC (9 holes) for Best Golf Course Appearance and Maintenance. The Bull (18 holes or more) and Missing Links GC (9 holes) were awarded Course of the Year. Congratulations to all the winners!

Runners!

Lake Breeze Golf Club in Winneconne, was the site of the 2011 NCAA Division III National Cross Country Championship on November 19. Fifth place UW-Oshkosh hosted 277 athletes from around the country and according to Lake Breeze Superintendent Jim Hasz, they did very little damage to the course and he is looking forward to having the event held there again.

Finally, Happy New Year to everyone. My resolution this year was not to shovel or blow any snow in 2012. Well, so far so good, but I have a feeling this resolution isn't going to last very long.

If you're interested in reading about the consequences of mixing beer and thiram or any article from The GrassRoots since 1975, you can. Every issue is available at the WGCSA website via the Michigan State Turf Library.

Please pass along any significant news or happenings around the state to Danny, Mike or me. We want to spread the good news. You can also email me at m.kinnard@sbcglobal.net or call at 920-210-9059.





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“My entire member board knew which greens were mowed with the Baroness and which ones were mowed with the other mowers...they told me to buy Baroness even though we were under lease with the other mowers”

**Bill Murtha, Superintendent
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They Don't Call It ANNUAL Bluegrass For Nothing

By Bob Vavrek, Senior Agronomist, USGA Green Section

Editors Note: This article originally appeared on the USGA Green Section website January 17, 2012 and is reprinted here with permission.

No one seems to be overly concerned with winter injury as we enter 2012. This low level of anxiety is understandable considering the extended period of unusually mild weather throughout the Region leading up to the New Year. A number of courses even managed to garner some unexpected, but more than welcome, revenue from late season green fees due to the absence of snowfall during the holidays.

Yet, I would argue that it's the mild winters that should be feared the most when *Poa annua* or annual bluegrass is a significant component of the playing surfaces. Like most of us, *Poa* doesn't like change or extremes. It sure didn't respond favorably to the abrupt transition from a cool spring to an oppressively hot and humid July and August last summer. Similarly, *Poa* at many of the Region's courses had difficulty surviving thaw/freeze events and the occasional midwinter rainfall over snow cover that sealed off and suffocated low lying areas of

greens and fairways.

The one-two punch of winterkill and summer stress caused considerable losses of turf at many courses these past two seasons. Maybe you were persistent and fortunate enough to establish bentgrass into thin or dead areas of greens and significantly increase the ratio of bent to *Poa* in the putting surface. If so, you were in the minority. The best efforts of many resulted in little more than the eventual re-establishment of *Poa annua* into problem areas from seed already present in the soil.

Unfortunately, it's never the desirable perennial type of *Poa* that we find filling into the dead spots. As a rule, the seedy, fast growing, clumpy biotype of annual *Poa* is what finally provides the majority of turf cover for a devastated putting green and this same *Poa* will be extra-susceptible to heat, drought, diseases, and winter stress for the upcoming seasons. In the absence of these stresses and extremes the annual types may slowly transition into a more perennial type of *Poa*, but this takes time and weather patterns conducive to the transition, which have not been overly coopera-



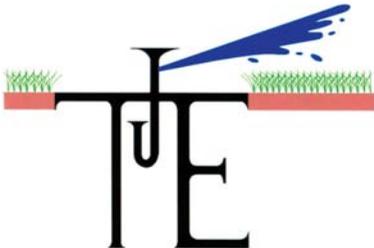
Unfortunately, when the old *Poa* in a green dies from winter stress, it's usually the same, if not weaker, biotypes of *Poa* that eventually fill into the thin and bare areas from seed already present in the soil. This tends to promote an endless cycle of turf loss from winter and/or summer stress that will become more prevalent if the predictions for milder winters and hotter summers come true.

tive in recent years.

Then again, why should this come as any surprise? After all, the name of the grass is annual bluegrass and we often forget that annual plants live to produce seed and die. However, if the climatologists are correct, we can expect more mild winters and more extreme summers across the upper Midwest, and these predictions do not bode well for *Poa* growing old enough to reach the perennial stage. If true, I can't help but wonder if the most sustainable option for old *Poa* greens in this Region is renovation to creeping bentgrass - not a bad topic for a regional update in the future.

Nevertheless, there is always hope that climatologists are more or less specialized meteorologists...and "we all know a weather forecast is never, ever wrong." So keep the faith for the New Year that the mild weather so far will lead to an early, warm spring and no surprises in between.





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Coming Events!

Wednesday February 8th NGLGCSA Educational Symposium, Wausau

Wednesday February 15th WGCSA Assistant Superintendents Educational Session, Fond du Lac

Wednesday February 29th WI Room, El Segundo Sol on the Strip, Las Vegas, NV

Monday March 12th Spring Business/Education Meeting, Fond du Lac

Saturday March 21 Deadline to donate to PAR4 Research

April 1 - 9 PAR4 Research Online Auction

Monday April 23rd Geneva National GC, Lake Geneva

Monday May 14th Trappers Turn GC, Wisconsin Dells

Wednesday May 30th Super/Pro, Nakoma GC, Madison

Monday June 25th WGCSA Tournament, Oshkosh CC, Oshkosh

Tuesday July 31st Summer Field Day at OJ Noer Center, Verona

August To Be Determined Possible Joint Mbr.Gst. w/NGLGCSA

Monday September 17th Wee One Fundraiser, Pine Hills CC, Sheboygan

Fri Oct 5th and Sat Oct 6th Couples Weekend, Edgewood GC, Big Bend

October WTA Fundraiser (to be confirmed by WTA)

Tuesday & Wednesday December 4th and 5th, Golf Turf Symposium, American Club, Kohler



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Do You Know Our History?

By David Brandenburg, Editor

Are you knowledgeable on the game of golf and greenkeeping in Wisconsin? Fortunately for us we have been provided easy venues to learn our history.

I encourage all members to start by looking at your association directory to learn some things about The Golf Course Superintendent Association of Wisconsin. Not only do you see our annual schedule of events, member contact information, board members and their committee assignments but there are pieces of our history to read.

The bylaws, creed and code of ethics all help tell our story while the list of Distinguished Service Award Winners, Past Presidents and 25 and 50 Year Members provides a whose who of golf course maintenance in Wisconsin.

All members were provided a copy of the WGCSA 75th anniversary book *Caring for the Green* authored by Gene Haas in 2005. Gene's knowledge of the history of golf in Wisconsin and the Midwest along with input from long time chapter historian Monroe Miller provides us with a detailed history of our profession.

Winter provides a great time to catch up your reading and with the WGCSA 75th

Anniversary Book I suggest you pick up Gene Haas's other book *Playing Through* "A History of the Wisconsin State Golf Association". Printed in 2001 *Playing Through* covers the start of the WSGA in 1901 through modern day golf.

These books and our directory will give you a insight into how the associations and the game of golf have developed.

The Wisconsin Greenkeepers Association was formed in 1930 after greenkeepers from Illinois, Minnesota and Wisconsin gathered at The College of Agriculture at the University of Wisconsin -Madison for the inaugural greenkeepers short course.

After the four and a half day session attendees had a desire to continue their education and networking. That desire led Paul Brockhausen to organize and host the meeting at Blue Mound Country Club. Brockhausen was elected as our first president and made this statement:

"Our association is the spontaneous outgrowth of the first short course for greenkeepers held at the University of Wisconsin in February, 1930. Its active membership is confined to greenkeepers on golf courses in the State of Wisconsin. Assistant green-

keepers and members of green committees are admitted as associate members. Others who wish to encourage the movement join, as contributing members... The purpose of our association is educational. It largely centers on the short course for greenkeepers at the State University. The program for these short courses is varied and practical. They bring the greenkeepers in personal contact with those at the experiment station whose training and everyday work are along lines allied with the problems the greenkeeper must meet and solve to the satisfaction of the multitude of golf players"

Following the organizational meeting the group had meetings the first year at Blackhawk CC, Hillmoor CC and Lawsonia GC following the idea of moving education around the state.

Our directory, *Caring for the Green*, and *Playing Through* provide a great start to learn the history of your profession. Just looking up the clubs mentioned below or on the next page on Google provides for interesting reading. Where are Whiting CC, Waterford Woods CC or Winneshiek G&CC located today?

Have fun finding out!



In 1930 these 39 charter members met to form the Wisconsin Greenkeepers Association

Bert Barrows, Kenosha CC
Charles L Bingham, Beloit Municipal GC
John S Bone, Blackhawk CC
Frank B Brandt, Harford CC
Paul Brockhausen, Blue Mound CC
Garfield Caley, Waterford Woods CC
Harold Clemens, Nakoma GC
C.E. Daniels, Riverdale GC

V.S. Dietz, CC of Beloit
A.B. Erdman, Whiting CC
Alfred Erickson, Mount Horeb GC
Robert E. Farmer, Brynwood CC
Joseph Foeger, Ozaukee CC
Eugene Fox, Racine CC
James Glaster, Lake Lawn CC
Harry Hanson, Maple Bluff CC
F.L. Johns, Platteville CC
E.A. Lietzinger, Lake Ripley CC
L.L. Littlefield, Delbrook GC
Robert Liverseed, Sheboygan CC
Alfred Ludwigen, Chenequa CC
C.B. McCann, Hillcrest CC
Wesley Merrifield, St. Johns GC
Robert B. Michaels, Oconomowoc GC
Verland Miller, Tuckaway CC

S.S. Mitchell, Lawsonia GC
W.C. Neilson, Tripoli CC
Fred Peters, Waukesha CC
C.L. Ream, Oneida G&RC
G.A Rietz, Kish-wau-kee-toc GC
Raymond Rolfs, North Hills CC
Archie Schendel, Westmoor CC
Otto Schael, Wausau CC
Peter Sieber, Winneshiek G&CC
C.C. Snavelly, Milwaukee CC
H.H. White, Hillmoor CC
O.M. World, Burr Oak GC
R.D. Yost, Beloit Municipal GC
Robert Zwerg, Madison Municipal GC



In 1901, Nine clubs organized to form the Wisconsin State Golf Association

- Janesville Golf Club, Founded 1894
- Milwaukee Country Club, Founded 1894
- Tuscumbia Golf Club, Founded 1896
- Kenosha Country Club, Founded 1898
- Riverview Country Club, Founded 1898
- Maple Bluff Country Club, Founded 1899
- Oshkosh Country Club, Founded 1899
- La Crosse Country Club, Founded 1900
- Racine Country Club, Founded 1900

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2012 U.S. Womens Open at Blackwolf Run

By David Brandenburg, Editor

1998 marked the first of many Major Tournament golf rounds to be played in Wisconsin when a then young Blackwolf Run Golf Course played host to the worlds best female players at the U.S. Women's Open.

The event was exciting as Korean Se Ri Pak won in a 19-hole playoff over amateur Jenny Chuasiriporn.

The 36 hole Blackwolf Run complex sits on property formed into a river basin by the flows of glacial runoff. The Open will use the original Championship Course comprising holes 10-18 of the Meadow Valleys course and holes 1-4 and 14-18 of the River course.

The courses designed by renowned golf course architect Pete Dye have matured into some of the finest properties in the world. The 2012 Golfweek's best resort courses listing has the River Course at #15 and the Meadow Valley at #85.

In 2009 the Championship Course went through a regrassing to bring the playing surfaces up to current technology. Greens were seeded to A4 bentgrass while the fairways were seeded to Memorial. Both areas were fumigated before seeding with the new grass varieties to eliminate all seed and plant material in the soil. The tees were leveled before they were reseeded. While the course was closed the bunkers saw new drainage and sand.

The regrassing will allow the staff to provide fast and firm conditions while

keeping poa annua at a minimum.

The second half of the course was done in 2010. Amazingly the project was completed with in-house staff and a lot of planning by Certified Golf Course Superintendent Mike Lee and his staff of experts.

Lee entered the golf industry at age 15 when he started working for Monroe Miller at Blackhawk Country Club in Madison, WI. That summer job led to him attending the University of Wisconsin - Madison with a Major in Turf Management.

In 1985 Mike interned at Cherokee Country Club followed by two years working for Dr. Gayle Worf in the Department of Plant Pathology setting up and conducting research trials on golf courses.

After graduation Lee became the Assistant Golf Course Superintendent at Blue Mound Golf and Country Club under the tutelage of Carl Grassl for 5 years when he left for his current position.

The U.S. Women's Open was added to the USGA's roster of championships in 1953, 58 years after the first U.S. Women's Amateur. Unlike the other 12 national championships conducted by the USGA, the Women's Open was created by another organization. In 1946, the short-lived



Hole 15 on the River Course will be hole 6 for the Open Championship. The par 3 called "Mercy" plays 227 yards from the back tees and all of it carry. A challenging shot since anything short or left will drop into the Weeden's Creek Valley.

Women's Professional Golfers Association introduced the Women's Open at match play at the Spokane (Wash.) Country Club. The Spokane Athletic Round Table, a men's fraternal organization, contributed the \$19,700 purse from its slot machines proceeds.

In 1949 the LPGA took over the event until 1953 when they asked the USGA to conduct the championship. The first Women's Open under the USGA flag was played at the Country Club of Rochester, in upstate New York, where Betsy Rawls won the second of her four Women's Open titles (1951, 1953, 1957, 1960).

In its 63-year history, the U.S. Women's Open has reigned as the world's greatest women's championship, attracting steadily increasing numbers of entries and spectators.

The event is a great opportunity to see a one of a kind golf course and the worlds best female players.

Practice rounds will be held July 4,5 and 6th with the Championship beginning July 7th. After 36 holes the low 60 and ties will continue to the weekend.



WISCONSINS FUTURE MAJOR GOLF TOURNAMENTS

2012 U.S. Women's Open Championship - Blackwolf Run, Kohler

2015 PGA Championship - Whistling Straits, Sheboygan

2017 U.S. Open Championship - Erin Hills, Erin

2020 Ryder Cup - Whistling Straits, Sheboygan