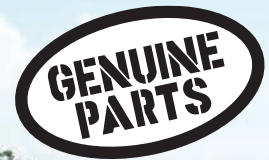


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## Rained Out at Strawberry Creek

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

April 23rd started out as one of the nicer mornings of 2013 but hopes for golf at The Club at Strawberry Creek quickly faded as rain moved in and temperatures plummeted. After the golf event was officially cancelled only a few diehard golfers braved the elements to enjoy the course provided by Host Superintendent Matt Kregel and his staff.

The wind driven rain did not stop Dr. Tom Voigt, Extension Specialist at the University of Illinois from speaking on The Trials and Tribulations with Un-Mowed Roughs. As many courses have gone from wall to wall groomed turf to allowing out of play areas to grow naturally the maintenance headaches caused by these areas have turf managers looking for answers.

The quest for a un-mowed turf that is weedfree and easy to find a golf ball and play a golf ball is a honorable one but it is not maintenance free or inexpensive. The group listened intently for advice from Dr. Voigt.

Successful low maintenance areas are defined by; 1. Appealing to look at. 2. Weed free. 3. Easy to find a golf ball. 4. Possible to hit a golf ball. 5. Low maintenance. Dr. Voigt quickly said the keys to success are choosing the correct plant for the correct environment and managing it correctly.

As much as the crowd wanted to hear and as much as Tom wanted to tell us the secret to allowing 50 year old stands of blue/rye/fescue roughs to grow up and be playable without maintenance we soon realized there is no secret to the impossible. Instead we have thick fallen over grasses make it impossible to find a ball much less play it and keep the weeds out.

To produce successful native areas turf managers usually have to start from scratch and kill off the existing turf and plant a desirable species that matches the environment. One challenge we have in the badger state is our environment is too good with healthy soils and ample mois-

ture causing thick turf or weed invasions.

Common native grasses such as big bluestem, indian grass and switch grass can be seeded while prairie cord grass needs to be plugged or have rhizomes spread. On the positive side these grasses are attractive, can be low maintenance and only need an annual mowing or burning. The negatives are they are slow to establish and can look ugly during establishment, are usually not playable and are easily invaded by weeds and undesirable species.

Other grasses that are shorter include buffalo grass, blue grama, side oats grama, little bluestem and prairie dropseed. These grasses are native to the great plains and attractive but again the negatives are slow establishment, ugly during establishment, slow to green up in spring and there is limited weed control.

Fine fescue can provide a playable turf but Dr. Voigt suggested avoiding


creeping red and chewings fescue. Hard and sheeps fescue can work if kept on the dryer side when seeded at 1# per thousand square feet. Compacted sites need to be avoided. The areas should be mowed in the fall and if clippings are abundant they should be collected to avoid smothering the turf. At 1 to 1.5 pounds of nitrogen per year they areas may not get too thick but often the plants topple over in late summer causing problems with appearance and finding balls.

Burning can be used and Dr. Voigt suggested fall burning is hotter and favors forbs while spring burning is cooler and favors warm season grasses.

Research done at the Midwest Golf House showed blue grama provided a good un-mowed turf with inexpensive seeding and easy establishment at 20# per acre. It can be used alone or with buffalo grass and is easy to find and hit balls from. The negative was a slow spring green up even in Illinois. A trial should be done at your site to determine the results before trying any widespread planting.

I had asked the best way to convert our Heinz 57 mix of turf to a native mix and Tom suggested a roundup application followed by a tight mowing with clippings removed followed by another roundup application and slit seeding.

Dr. Voigt finished with advice on seed quality and storage. Native grasses are sold and planted by PLS or Pure Live Seed which is the % pure seed x the best germination rate. In the field the germination rate will be less depending on many factors. Seed should be used in the year purchased as the germination rate of many species can quickly fall.

Although we did not get the magic we were looking for to convert our thick blue/rye/fescue roughs to a playable maintenance free turf Tom did provided us with the tools to do some trials and see what works in our environment. 



**Dr. Tom Voigt, Associate Professor at the University of Illinois speaking on the Trials and Tribulation of Un-Mowed Roughs.**





**TOP:** Our Hosts Assistant Superintendent Jeremy Dahl and Golf Course Superintendent Matt Kregel.

**MIDDLE:** Hole 2 at the Club at Strawberry Creek shows off the many native grass areas the course features.

**BELOW:** The group listens for advice on native areas from Dr. Tom Voigt.

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## Random Thoughts

By Jake Schneider, Assistant Superintendent, Blackhawk Country Club

One of the sure signs that the golf season is upon us is that my article submissions to our vastly underappreciated editor become later and later. I like to think that I'm normally pretty good at meeting the deadlines that David sets, but this article has embarrassingly set a new standard of personal tardiness. Between running a marathon that was much too warm for Green Bay in mid-May and trying to keep up with the grass that just won't seem to slow down, life's been busy.

Back to that darn grass... Not sure if it's just me, but the spring of 2013 seemed much busier than normal. It was the third latest opening date at Blackhawk (after last year's second earliest), and it seems as if we had to cram six weeks worth of into a three-week timeframe. But, so far, it's hard

to complain too much. I was getting more than a little stir crazy with the winter that wouldn't end, but with the last three years that we've endured, a shortened year may not be the worst thing. Last year, we had a twenty-day stretch of rain-free weather in May, and thus far, the rains in 2013 have been timely and the temperatures have been fairly normal. Let's hope that it stays that way.

.....

To say that the response to my last article concerning the First Tee project was underwhelming would be an understatement. I don't want to gripe and realize that money is tight, but it's disappointing to not have one company or individual express interest in helping to move the project forward.

However, we do appreciate the willingness to help by those that Joe Sell and I have personally contacted. As of today (May 28), the project to build a chipping green for the First Tee program at Monona Golf Course has been approved by the city of Madison to proceed, and aside from lending our talents to a very worthwhile cause, those involved in leading this endeavor are going to do as much as possible to publicize and thank the generous contributors.

With that, it's not too late to help, and it appears as if monetary contributions will be needed the most. Again, please contact either myself or Joe Sell at Whistling Straits if you or your company would like to chip in for the chipping green.

.....

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# MADTOWN MUZINGS

It humors me to no end that the USGA is so concerned with banning anchored putters. Maybe I haven't been paying close enough attention, but it doesn't seem as if there have been an alarming percentage of golf tournaments won by golfers who use an anchored putting stroke. Aside from that anecdotal observation, have putters really been driving changes in the game? It seems to me as if juiced up golf balls and drivers may be a bit more of an issue. On the flip side, I know that most average joes like the extra distance that these technological advances have brought, and if hit-


ting the ball far helps to grow the game, I'm all for it.

Speaking of growing the game, I can't help but think that simplified golf rules would be a good thing. Lately, it seems as if every major golf tournament has some confusing rules gaffe, and I hope that prospective players aren't turned off by these complicated rulings that many seasoned players probably aren't even aware of.

.....

If you haven't watched the GolfdomTV interview with Matt Shaffer from Merion

Golf Club, please take the time to do so. I found Matt's takes on golf course maintenance to be refreshingly candid and realistic. As a teaser, he likes grainy greens and hopes that a few of the players at the US Open have to hit from patches of white clover in the rough.

I hope that you and your golf club have a successful golf season, and by the time that the next *The Grass Roots* arrives, summer be nearing its end. Hopefully, my article will be on time for that issue or my time in this magazine might also be nearing its end. 

## Coming Events!

Tuesday July 30th, UW - Summer Field Day, OJ Noer Facility, Verona, Host - Tom Schwab

Tuesday August 20th, Joint meeting w/NGL, Stevens Point CC, St. Point, Host - John Femal

Monday September 16th, Wee One, Pine Hills CC, Sheboygan, Host - Rod Johnson

Monday September 23rd, WTA Golf Fundraiser, Maple Bluff CC, Host - Josh Lepine CGCS

Monday October 1, NGLGCSA Crew Outing - The Woods Golf Course, Ed Hoover

Saturday October 5th, Couples Outing/Party, Wild Rock GC, WI Dells, Host Michael Blazich

Tues and Wed Dec 10th-11th, Wisconsin Golf Turf Symposium, American Club, Kohler

Tuesday January 14th, WTA Turfgrass Research Day, Pyle Center, Madison

Feb 2-7, Golf Industry Show, GCSAA Conference, Orlando FL

Monday March 3rd, WGCSA Spring Business Meeting, Fond du Lac



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## Rays of Sunshine at North Hills County Club

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

North Hills Country Club Superintendent Randy Dupont delivered not only a pristine golf course on Monday, May 6, 2013 but also one of the nicer sunny days in the spring that wasn't.

Pre-meeting conversation focused on wet turf, dead turf and turf that was still half dormant from the cold weather.

The meeting started with the announcement by WTA Executive Director and WGCSA Historian Monroe Miller that Bruce Schweiger has been hired as the new Turfgrass Diagnostic Lab Manager at the O.J. Noer Center for Turfgrass Research. Monroe gave a great introduction and review of Bruce's career.

Schweiger is well known in the industry as a former superintendent and more recently a salesperson calling on many of us.

You can see more of Monroe's introduction and information about Schweiger on page 40.

The newly hired Schweiger quickly put on his Turfgrass Diagnostic Lab

Manager hat and gave his presentation "Continuing to Build Momentum: My Vision for the TDL."

Bruce started with a history of the WTA and the Noer Center going way back to 1981 when Monroe Miller, Tom Harrison and other leaders in the industry got the ball rolling.

From that simple beginning to the building of the Noer center and giving it to the University to the opening of the Turfgrass Disease Diagnostic Lab. The lab changed from the TDDL to the TDL or Turfgrass Diagnostic Lab as the lab matured into diagnosing all types of turf problems for golf courses, home lawns and beyond.

This year there will be 80 different research plots at the Noer Center and the students are a big part of that work.

Bruce promises Dr. Koch will continue to look at every sample this year as he gathers his own experience. He also guaranteed accurate prompt diagnostic work as he works to increase the labs state and country wide stature.



**Our Host, Randy Dupont, Golf Course Superintendent at North Hills Country Club.**



**The Entrance to North Hills Country Club.**



**The Clubhouse at North Hills Country Club.**





Left: The par 4 5th Hole plays 383 yards from the Championship Tee. The leafless trees on May 6th are a indication of the cool spring.

Right: Garrett Luck hits his approach shot from the rough.



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Schweiger is looking forward to helping develop an environmental tracking program using weather stations or monitors to help forecast disease outbreaks and application timing.

Social media will be a bigger part of the TDL in the near future as instant communication will be important to getting the word out.

He also wants to be a sounding board for industry driven research so feel free to contact him. Bruce can be reached at bschweiger@wisc.edu, or 608-845-2535.

After a great sandwich buffet lunch the group hit the links for a nice afternoon of golf on the course designed in 1928 by John P Barr and redesigned in 1997 by Ken Killian.

The course is built on the 126 1/2 acre Charles Fuss farm in what was then known as Fussville. The site was selected because of the large wooded areas, rolling fields, and the Menomonee River meandering across the property.

Randy Dupont has been at the helm at North Hills since 1995 when he took over from Chad Ball who spent 4 years at the course. Bob Musbach spent 17 years from 1972-1989 after spelling Jim Markell who only spent one year at the course. Charles Shiley was superintendent from 1952 to 1970 and also served as President of the then Wisconsin Greenskeepers Association.

Ray Rolfs was the original "greenskeeper" when he stayed behind in the position after building the course for Pioneer Golf and Landscape Company. Rolfs was a charter member of the WGA and served as president from 1939-1941.

Randy and North Hills have hosted the Vince Lombardi Golf Classic each year since 1971 to raise funds for cancer research.

## TWO PERSON BESTBALL RESULTS

### GROSS SCORES-

- 1st place - Jim Shaw and Ed Witkowski 71
- 2nd place - Dan Wubbels and Peter Meyer 72
- 3rd place - Mark Lockhart and Travis Krauklis 74

### NET SCORES -

- 1st place - John Meyer and Rod Johnson 63
- 2nd place - Bruce Worzella and Todd Fregien 66
- 3rd place - Cubby O'Brien and Matt Cavanaugh 66

### FLAG EVENTS -

- #2 closest to the pin Scott Bartosh
- #7 longest putt Bruce Schweiger
- #9 longest drive Matt Bazola
- #12 closest to the pin Mike Skenadore
- #18 longest drive Chad Harrington



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**Top Left: Bruce Schweiger, Manager TDL.**

**Top Right: Monroe Miller, WGCSA Historian and WTA Executive Director.**

**Right: Players are reminded Golf Is A Constant Challenge on the 5th Tee.**

**Bottom: The Par-5 4th Hole**

**Left: The Par-5 18th Hole.**



## Bruce Schweiger Heads Turfgrass Diagnostic Lab

By **David Brandenburg**, Golf Course Manager, Rolling Meadows Golf Course & **Monroe Miller**, WGCSA Chapter Historian

*Editors Note: Many parts of this article is from a introduction Chapter Historian, Monroe Miller gave when Bruce Schweiger was introduced at the May Meeting at North Hills Country Club.*

There are few in the Wisconsin turf industry that do not know Bruce Schweiger as he has been involved in different ways since the early 1980's. But as much as we know Bruce many of us were surprised to hear he was going to succeed Dr. Paul Koch as the Manager of the Turfgrass Diagnostic Lab of the O.J. Noer Turfgrass Research and Education Facility.

Although we were surprised we also had a immediate comfortable feeling the lab is in good hands.

Bruce grew up in Madison, the son of a eastside pharmacist and early on he considered following his fathers footsteps until he determined pill counting was not that much fun. He entered UW Madison in the pre-pharmacy program but after two years of pharmacology the call of the golf course was too much.

Schweiger got his start as a summer employee at Maple Bluff Country Club and took a liking to outdoors and turfgrass management. After a talk with Dr. J.R. Love schweiger enrolled in the Soil Science Turfgrass Program and graduated in 1982 with a double major in soil science and horticulture. After college his experience at Maple Bluff Country Club with Tom Harrison allowed him to be hired as the golf course superintendent of Riverside Golf Course in Janesville.

Schweiger was promoted to general manager in 1985 and stayed in Janesville until 1989 when Tom Wentz hired him to work for OM Scotts and Son. He served as the regional sales manager for northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin for almost 11 years.

Bruce took that experience to Reinders in January of 2000 and spent another 10 years as an agronomist for them working with customers and sales staff. In 2006 he took a brief break from Reinders to serve as general manager of Marengo Ridge Golf Club in Marengo, IL.

In 2010 Bruce became the regional agronomist for Midwest Turf Products and served as such for almost 3 years when he took his current position.

Although his predecessors have had more experience in turf pathology I am sure Bruce will lead the lab into the future. He will have good teachers with former lab manager Dr. Paul Koch available to help him when needed as well as the rest of the UW-Madison turf team.

Schweiger and his wife Carol have three boys, Paul, Brad and Scott. With a attorney, a professor and an accountant in the family Bruce should be ready for any problem the family faces.


Through his 24 years in the turf industry Bruce has seen every turfgrass issue possible and has been involved in the

construction or re-construction of 1,000 golf holes as well as sports complexes and landscape projects.

Carol does safety inspection, training and consulting work and met her husband to be in Dr. Jim Love's Soil Science 301 class.

Although a accomplished player golf has taken a back seat to other hobbies such as hunting and fishing along with consulting work Bruce does.


Welcome aboard and congratulations Bruce Schweiger! 





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