

PROFILE OF A SUPERINTENDENT

By **Scott D. Austin**
Midland Hills Country Club



Greetings from Midland Hills Country Club! Please allow me to introduce myself. I'm Scott D. Austin, CGCS. I have worked at Midland Hills C.C. for the past 10 years, 1½ years as Assistant Superintendent and 8½ years as Superintendent. This article, basically a condensed autobiography, will briefly touch upon the following areas:

- Background Information
- Work & Education History
- Midland Hills History
- Management Philosophies

One of the first things that you should know about me is that I'm a "Bells and Whistles" type of person. I'm completely fascinated with the cutting-edge technology that surrounds our daily lives, such as the fax machine, computers, cellular phones, CD players etc., etc.. Why, for a couple hundred dollars you can even "tee it up" with a 'Bubble-Shafted' driver. Incredible!

Background Information

Age: 40

Home: Mahtomedi

Family: Lisa, forever young; Carrie, 8 yrs.; Billy, 3 yrs.

Hobbies & Interests: Woodworking, Gopher Sports, Lutsen Cabin, Winter Skiing, Martial Arts and of course – GOLF!
 USGA Index: 8.6

Personal Accomplishments: Private Pilot's License, Tae Kwon Do – Purple Belt, CGCS, Played and stayed at Augusta National.

Work and Education Information

I was born and raised in Owatonna. I grew up in a very athletic and competitive family, consisting of one sister and three brothers. My parents were avid golfers and gave me my first "set" when I turned 8 years old. For the next nine summers I basically lived for golf, playing almost daily at the Owatonna Country Club. When I turned 17 years old my mother STRONGLY suggested that I find a summer job and a life! I quickly determined that working outdoors and being around golf would suit me fine. Thus, in 1972 my career in Turfgrass Management began when I joined the Owatonna Country Club's ground staff. My lengthy work and education history looks something like this:

1972, 1973	Owatonna C.C.	Laborer
1974	Owatonna Ice Arena	'Ice Specialist'
1975	Havana Hills Par 3 <i>Owatonna, Minn.</i>	Superintendent
1975	College of the Desert <i>Palm Desert, Calif.</i>	Turfgrass Prog.
1976, 1977	Brooktree G.C. <i>Owatonna, Minn.</i>	Superintendent
1976-1978	Penn State University <i>State College, Pa.</i>	Turfgrass Prog.
1978	Cherry Hills C.C. <i>Denver, Cola</i> (Hosted 78th U.S. Open)	Apprentice
1978,1979	City Park G.C. <i>Puebla, Cola</i>	Apprentice
1979 (Fall)	Southview C.C. <i>West St. Paul, Minn.</i>	Apprentice
1980	Hazeltine National G.C. <i>Chaska, Minn.</i>	Construction Crew
1981	Silver Bay C.C. <i>Silver Bay, Minn.</i>	Superintendent
1982	Institute of Art <i>Minneapolis, Minn.</i>	Superintendent
1983	Westbank Ranch G.C. <i>Glenwood Springs, Cola</i>	Superintendent
1984-5/85	Sawmill G.C. <i>Stillwater, Minn.</i>	Superintendent
1985,1986	Midland Hills C.C. <i>Roseville, Minn.</i>	Assistant
1987–Present	Midland Hills C.C. <i>Roseville, Minn.</i>	Superintendent

Early in my career I always thought that the perfect job lay just over the horizon. I suffered from the "grass is always greener on the other side of the street" syndrome. In retrospect, the chase was always more exciting than the catch. The lesson that I eventually learned is that all jobs have many of the same challenges, frustrations and rewards and that there is no such thing as the "perfect job"!

As crazy as it sounds, I realized after completing my first season at the Owatonna Country Club that Turfgrass Management was the career for me to pursue. I am forever grateful to Dale Aden, O.C.C. Superintendent, for giving me the inspiration, encouragement and counseling that eventually allowed me to attend his alma mater, Penn State!

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Superintendent Profile —

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Although I was rejected by Penn State, my determination never lost momentum. I was informed by the administrator at PSU that my chances for acceptance the following year would improve if I had one year of college "under my belt." I enrolled at the College of the Desert (no kidding, it's for real) in its Turfgrass Management Program. I was fortunate to make the school golf team (whose mascot is the roadrunner!) and play golf most every day at such courses as Ironwood C.C., Mission Hills C.C., The Springs, Indian Wells C.C., Canyon C.C. to name a few. It was really an unbelievable experience. Oh, I almost forgot, I did go to school from 8:00 until noon. Anyway, I will never forget how I was *momentarily* disappointed when I received my acceptance letter from Penn State. The move from the West Coast to the East Coast finally became reality.

Midland Hills History

Briefly, Midland Hills was initially established by a group of University of Minnesota faculty members. In 1920 the Seth Raynor design was constructed on 160 acres, formerly the old Walsh and Anderson farmland. The greens, tees and fairways consist of bent/poa and are watered by a double-row, Toro 630/670 hydraulic irrigation system. We are in the process of switching over from the Vari-time II controllers to the new OSMAC, windows version, control system, along with the Campbell Scientific weather station. The golf course statistics are as follows:

Tees	Yardage	Par	Rating	Slope
Red	5831	74	75.1	137
White	6344	72	71.5	131
Blue	6560	72	72.4	134

During the past 75 years there have been **only** nine Greenskeepers/Superintendents entrusted with the responsibility to manage this great track of land called Midland Hills. They are:

1920-21	William Youatt
1921-1927	Martin Rasmussen
1928-1947	Emil Picha
1947-1954	Clarence Reynolds
1955	George Ostler, Sr.
1956	Mr. La Barre
1957-1983	John Fuller
1984-1986	Paul Mayes
1987-Present . . .	Scott Austin, CGCS

The future looks bright for Midland Hills. We are preparing to renovate the driving range, as well as implement the golf course master plan, which was designed by Dr. Michael Hurdzan. In addition, the long range planning committee is also considering the options associated with renovating or replacing the clubhouse.

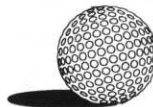
Philosophies

My management philosophies and beliefs are relatively simple. First, I believe that my greatest asset is my staff. I pride myself on hiring and retaining a nucleus of dedicat-

ed, honest and hardworking individuals. Secondly, I believe in providing my staff with a clean, safe, comfortable and fun work environment. Thirdly, I try to give them the necessary training or guidance that they may need and then give them an opportunity to make a mistake. That's right an opportunity to make a mistake. There was a time when I thought that I had to do much, if not all, of the important "stuff" so that it would get done just right. Well, I eventually realized that once competent individuals were trained properly, they could perform most tasks as good and usually better than I could. The important "take-home message" that I try to give my staff is, if they make a mistake, they need to **learn** a lesson so that they can keep from repeating it over and over and over again! My greatest job satisfaction is teaching young men and women the how, when and why's of this profession. I hope that eventually I will have an opportunity to inspire, encourage and counsel an individual into pursuing a career as a Golf Course Superintendent! **Finally**, I try to live one day at a time and follow these simple rules:

- Treat others as you would like to be treated
- Know the difference between right and wrong
- Do what's right!

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