

# INSIGHT

## One Superintendent's Perspective

*(Editor's Note: The following interview of Andy Keyes, superintendent at Windom Country Club was conducted by Jack MacKenzie, CGCS. This is the first in a series of State Superintendent interviews.)*

### Course and Statistics

The Windom Country Club is a 9-hole, par 36 course that measures 3,038 from the Blue and 2,565 from the Red. It is a tight, tree-lined course. The high number of trees on every hole makes up for the shortness of the course.

### Location

Windom, Minnesota, in the southwest corner of the state.

### Years in the business and short vocational biography

I have been in the Golf business since 1996 and my turf grass education at Western Iowa Tech in Sioux City, IA. I also have been involved in the on-line learning offered by the GCSAA.

### Why and/or how did you enter the turf management industry?

Like a lot of people I started at my local course in Janesville, Minn. After learning about the business I knew that this is what I wanted to do. And as they say, "the rest is history"

### Who was your professional mentor and why?

I would have to say that at this point the person that I learned a lot from would be Matt Akers, the superintendent at Elmwood GC in Sioux Falls, SD. I was one of the Assistants and the fact that most things were talked about before they happened, gave great insight into what the final outcome would be. He involved me in all aspects of the business from planning projects to budget proposals.

### What has been the highest point in your career?

Getting back into the industry after a two year break while I was working at Gateway Computers in Sioux City, IA. Let me tell you, working inside, right next to a window, in the summer is pure torture. This was a sure sign that I needed to get back to the Golf business ASAP.

### What has been your lowest point?

The spring of 2001. I had just been hired as the new Superintendent at Windom CC and I came to find out that no fungicides were applied the previous fall. In April there was still a few feet of snow on all the greens. I was out there blowing off greens so that I could maybe get something down. No such luck, most of the greens were covered with snow mold. Let's just say that there was a lot of hex plugging that spring. Once all the snow melted we had an entire fairway under a couple feet of water. Luckily it all came up from the ground and not over the dike so there was no silt from the Des Moines River. It was the only course around with an island green for a month. Quite an initiation into my new Superintendent job.

### Are your greatest challenges political, agronomic or managerial? Explain.

Here at WCC the greatest challenge is political. There is a constant change in the BOD each year which makes it a little more difficult to get certain points across when it comes to things that are being done on the course. By the time you get to know how they



Andy Keyes and Wiley.

want to work with you through the year, it is about over. Although this is my biggest challenge, it gets better all the time. Getting to know the members at a more personal level has really been helping out with the communication.

### What is the most difficult disease to manage on your course and how do you?

Dollar spot. DS has not been a big problem on greens but with a limited budget it tends to show up on the tees, and approaches. I am on a preventative program for my greens but everything else is curative. Lack of air movement and abundance of shade around the greens can make things a little scary in August, but all in all disease pressures are not too bad.

### Is it hard to find good help in your area of the state?

I have a great crew, kids that come back year after year. I try to start them young then they learn to enjoy the work and come back for 3-4 years before they leave for college. It's not hard to find people if you get the right ones the first time.

### Do you have a dog on your crew?

I just got a dog early last fall. "Wiley" he is a monster. He is a mutt but the best dog I have ever had. He loves people -- I just have to get him to dislike golf balls. Animals don't have a chance to rest when he is around. Wiley is nine months old and acts like it.

### Where will our industry be in ten years?

It has been a tough few years for not only our industry, but pretty much everyone else out there. I think that golf is an important part in a lot of people's lives. I believe that the industry will grow and be even more beneficial to all who are involved. We will all be here for as long as we want, and doing what we love.

### Where would you like to be in ten years?

My goal is to be the Superintendent at an upscale course in Minnesota be very active in the MGCSA, TROE Center, and an influence in the turf grass business. Oh yah, and to see at least one Vikings Super Bowl victory!

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## Insight—

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### *What is your perspective of our state association and what would you change?*

I am proud to be a part of the MGCSA. I think that this is the best state to work in and I think that it has to do with the support of all the members of our association. I think that it is well run, and the BOD thinks of the membership when making decisions.

### *Name your foursome, who would you play with and why?*

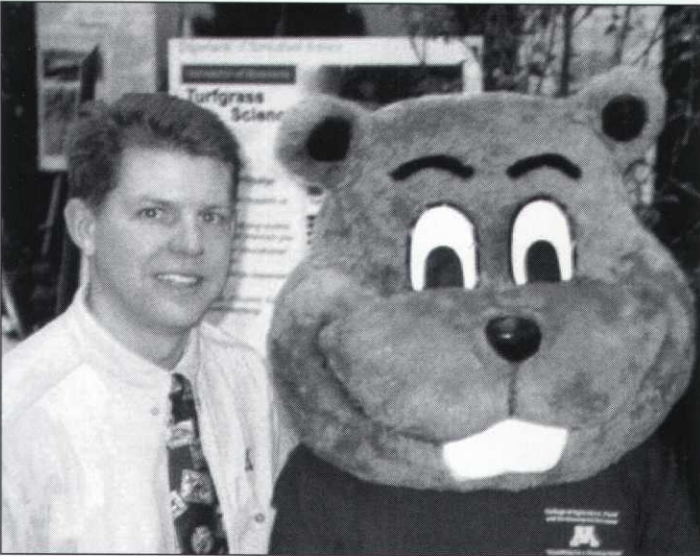
**Adam Sandler:** I want to see a 400-yard hole-in-one.

**Chris Hovan:** Had to put a Viking in here. He is the only one that, I think, would try the whole way through a round.

**Phil Mickelson:** We could pretend that this is a major and then he would have a good chance of finally winning one.

### *Additional Comments*

Working in the golf industry has been the most fulfilling thing that I have ever done. It has its ups and downs each year but doing anything else would not be as rewarding as working on a golf course. I try to show to everyone that this is a fun, and challenging job. I can't think of anything better than waking up, watching the sun rise, walking the course and seeing the work that is being done on a daily basis. In this job you can actually see what you have accomplished and it gives you something to be proud of each day you leave work.



## *Congratulations to Troy Carson*

In early February he will begin a new role as a Research Agronomist with The Toro Company. Troy has been an Assistant Scientist at the University of Minnesota working with Drs. Brian Horgan and Don White for the past nine years.

## CLASSIFIED ADS

### FOR SALE

1993 Cushman Utility Truckster - 3-wheeled, wide tire model complete with ROPS, hydraulic dump box, auxiliary hydraulics, PTO and hi/lo gear range. Liquid-cooled engine with 3,825 hrs. - \$3,000

1979 Meyer Snowplow - new frame, lights and rebuilt lift motor. fits Ford F-350 - \$900  
1993 Vermeer 620 Brushchipper - comes with 20 HP Kohler engine. Low hours (265); Recently serviced and ready to go. - \$3,750

Contact: Bob Distel  
Wayzata Country Club  
952-473-6955 or

grounds\_department@wayzatacc.com

### FOR SALE

Greens Mowers:

+ Jacobsen 2 cycle-3; + Jacobsen 518-2  
+ Jacobsen 522-4; Jacobsen Groomer  
Attachment; Greens Roller; Greensiron 3000  
Toro 322 D with flail deck/blower attachment  
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Call for pricing.  
Contact: Tim Johnson  
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### FOR SALE

Peerless Single Blade Grinder  
Model 1300

Circa 1950-1960 - Best Offer  
Contact: Michael Cohrs  
Bluff Creek GC  
612-799-0605

### FOR SALE

+ Toro Greensmaster 3000 with cutting units (new motor and reels) \$1,250  
+ Jacobsen Greensking IV with cutting units, diesel, runs great \$1,000

+ 1992 Jacobsen LF100 fairway mower with cutting units, diesel, still cuts great  
+ 1991 Jacobsen LF100 fairway mower for parts, sell both for \$1,000

+ Toro verticut reels, never used \$750  
+ Two 1998 Terra Broom rotary sweepers, 3.5hp Briggs great for sweeping in topdressing or cleaning cart paths \$500 for both  
+ Yard Machines 5 hp push blower, never used \$100

Contact: Scott Greenfield  
Spooners Golf Club  
(715) 635-6438

### FOR SALE

+ 2000 - 84" Reelmaster 3100-D Sidewinder  
5 blade, 392 hrs.

+ 2000 - 72" Reelmaster 3100-D Sidewinder  
w/o Sidewinder option, 8 blade, 650 hrs.

Both machines are better than excellent shape. \$10,500 each.  
Contact: Scott Held  
Blackberry Ridge GC  
320-229-1888

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## Industry News -

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of South Dakota and Wisconsin. The partnership was announced at the Green Expo in early January, and is effective immediately. "We are excited by the opportunity to sell and service both TURFCO and National," said Butch Greeninger, Director of Sales and Marketing for MTI. "We are committed to providing the same level of service and support to these lines as our customers have come to count on. We have already stocked parts for these products so customers should not miss a beat."

John Kinkead, CEO of National Mowers said, "The new partnership between National Mowers and MTI holds great promise in exposing both National's and MTI's customers to our complete line of mowing equipment." This sentiment was echoed by George Kinkead, the President of TURFCO. "TURFCO is excited by our new partnership with MTI Distributing. We believe it will enhance our ability to offer our topdressers and material handlers in the four-state area to our current, and prospective customers."

Mike Anderson, President of MTI Distributing, was also pleased. "With this agreement MTI now represents the largest manufacturers of turf maintenance equipment in our territory. "We truly believe that this local partnership will prove to be a success for the customer, TURFCO and National as well as for MTI Distributing."

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