

INSIGHT

One Superintendent's Perspective – Marlow Hansen

Course and Statistics

Forest Hills Golf Club, located three miles east of Forest Lake, was established in 1960. The architects were several local businessmen at a local tavern and plans were sketched on Hamm's beer napkins which are still around. It is an 18-hole private club with 350 members. Built on only 120 acres it plays 6,514 yards from the back tees with small "push up" greens with a bentgrass/poa mix throughout the greens, tees and fairways.

Biography

I spent seven years on the grounds crew at Forest Hills, a year on the grounds crew in Florida and 18 years as Superintendent at Forest Hills. Without any formal vocational background I've made an effort to enroll in any turf-related seminars available.

Why And/or How Did You Enter the Turf Management Industry?

Growing up living very near the course and playing it with my father by day and running around it by night, at a very young age I knew what I wanted to do...manage a golf course.

Who Was Your Professional Mentor and Why?

Being a young 25-year-old inexperienced Superintendent/manager I was fortunate to have an older gentleman named Bill Peitz working as our mechanic. Bill had worked in the turf industry as Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent and/or mechanic for many years. Not only did Bill teach me a lot, but more importantly (I realized later) that he let me learn from my mistakes...meaning he wouldn't always tell me how something should be done...but let me learn on my own and then offer his insight.

What Has Been the Highest Point in Your Career?

Emotionally I get a high each and every time I drive around the golf course at the end of the day when it's really looking its best! And when I meet a past employee or his parents and with a handshake they thank me for the years they worked for me were the best and funniest time of their

lives.

What Has Been Your Lowest Point?

I guess that would be the drought summer of 1988. With only a quick coupler irrigation system it was pretty ugly out there and wasn't much you could do about it.

Are Your Greatest Challenges Political, Agronomic or Managerial?

Explain. Definitely political, it's an endless challenge to deal with personalities of a revolving Green Committee and BOD.

What is the Most Difficult Disease To Manage on Your Course And How Do You?

We have poorly draining soils both peat and clay so Pythium on our fairways is our biggest concern. Preventive has been the key, using a variety of products depending on the pressure, (Heritage, Nutri-Grow, Alliette) Do a lot of scouting and spot spraying, keep fertility and soil moisture to a minimum.

"Tia is a Red Setter. She is 8 years old now and has come to work with me every day since she was a puppy. We rarely see a goose on the course, she leaves the ducks alone, the members love her, and it was their idea to put her on the payroll at \$600 year."

Is It Hard to Find Good Help In Your Area of the State?

Fortunately it is not. We have reduced the number of high school age employees and have turned to the more reliable "retirees" and turf students.

Do You Have a Dog on Your Crew?

Absolutely! Tia is a Red Setter. She is eight years old now and has come to work with me every day since she was a puppy. We rarely see a goose on the course, she leaves the ducks alone, the members love her and it was their idea to put her on the payroll at \$600 year.



Marlow Hansen and Tia

Where Will Our Industry Be in Ten Years?

Things have advanced so greatly since the 80s, it's hard to imagine what another 10 years will bring...maybe a chemical product that you apply once or twice a year and it controls everything! I just hope that the cost of technology of chemicals, equipment and high maintenance does not price out the little guy from playing golf.

Where Would You Like To Be in Ten Years?

I'd like to be living in a small house on a beautiful lake in northern Minnesota, maybe in the golf industry...maybe not. I am thinking by then it will be time for a change!

What is Your Perspective Of Our State Association and What Would You Change?

I feel our association does a very fine job of supporting its members, educationally and with the latest technology.

Name Your Foursome, Who Would You Play With and Why?

Tiger Woods and his girlfriend, myself and my girlfriend.