

Insight: One Executive Director's Perspective

Scott Turtinen, MGCSA Executive Director



Statistics

My name is Scott Turtinen. I have been involved with the MGCSA since 1990 and currently serve as Executive Director at the association's Minnetonka office. One of my main functions is to follow the direction of the Board of Directors as well as all requests of MGCSA members.

Background

I graduated from the University of Minnesota in 1981 with a bachelor's degree in Individualized Studies with an emphasis on marketing, advertising and graphic arts. During my college days I refereed hundreds of high school hockey games in the winters and then coached the Wayzata High School Girls and Boys golf teams each spring including notable pro golfer Tim Herron and his sister and former U. S. Women's Mid-Amateur champion Alissa Herron. Both players played on my varsity squad as seventh graders.

Why Are You Involved in the Turf Industry?

I love the game of golf and the field it's played on. In 1989, the MGCSA was at a crossroads. The Minnesota Golf Association handled the business affairs of the MGCSA but found less and less time to pay due diligence to the MGCSA as interest in golf was skyrocketing at the time. The MGCSA was steadily growing, too. Former Wayzata Country Club Superintendent James Lindblad enlightened the MGCSA Board of our business capabilities and love of the game of golf. After interviewing multiple candidates, the Board of Directors selected Turtinen Communications to manage the MGCSA business office. Soon after, I was selected as Executive Director.

Who Was Your Professional Mentor?

My professional mentor is my dad, Ralph Turtinen. My dad taught me many valuable lessons by dealing with people in a courteous and respectful way and the importance of following up on all details,

big or small, requested by association members.

What Has Been the Highest Point in Your Career?

I like to think that every day is a high point because I sincerely enjoy working with turf professionals and doing my part to make the game of golf even better.

What are the Lowest Points in Your Career?

The anxiety of sometimes waiting extra days for *Hole Notes* to come back from the printer seems to be a low point at the business office.

Are Your Greatest Problems Political or Managerial?

The MGCSA has been and still is a great organization to be involved with. The "down to earth" turf professionals of the MGCSA make my job enjoyable. Fortunately, not too many problems have surfaced throughout the years. Of course, instances that need special attention come up every now and then. When this happens, the issue is dealt with in a respectful and professional manner.

What is the Most Difficult Disease to Manage at Your Golf Course?

While working with turf professionals for the past 15 years I have come to realize a lot of the trials and tribulations a superintendent encounters. The "greener grass" disease is what I encounter at the golf course. It is always a little annoying to hear golfers complain of course conditions, green speed or bunker sand. They see no reason why their course can not stay in U.S. Open conditions all season long.

Do You Have a Dog on Your Staff?

I have had dogs my whole life. Darby, my new golden retriever puppy, was named by my son Alex after professional hockey player Darby Hendrickson. Darby is too young to bring to work at this time.

Where Will Our Industry Be in 10 Years?

Although golf course development will probably slow down in the years ahead as land becomes more and more valuable, I believe the industry as a whole will be thriving. The turf research being done today at our universities will improve all courses tomorrow. New technology and better equipment will help Superintendents manage turf more efficiently and, hopefully, more cost-effective. As long as there are sunny days and rainy days the game of golf will continue to thrive as well.

Where Would You Like To Be in 10 Years?

I would like to still be the MGCSA's Executive Director but office out of a complex that included a driving range and an 18-hole putting green. A certain percentage of each bucket of golf balls purchased could go towards golf research.

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

Although I realize the demands of a golf course Superintendent sometimes can prohibit people from attending a meeting, it would be nice if more members find the value of attending MGCSA functions. Gathering valuable information from peers who encounter the same issues has tremendous value. I feel that we, at the office, are keeping up with the new technologies of today's world. We have adapted to the computer age and will continue to evolve in all areas in the years to come. We respond to member requests as promptly and professionally as we can.

Name Your Golfing Foursome

My foursome would include Bobby Orr (*great hockey player*), Wayne Gretzky (*another decent hockey player*), and Jim Nicol, CGCS (*one of many great turf professionals I have had the pleasure to meet through the MGCSA*).