

Hole Notes

The Official Publication of the MGCSA
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Featured in this issue:

Build It and They Will Come!
Albany Golf Club Enhances their Range Facility



**Industry Spotlight:
Winfield United
MGCSA 2021 Gold Annual Sponsor
pages 50 - 53**

**On the cover:
Albany Golf Club Superintendent Tom
Kasner proudly displays the “new” driving
range upgrade at his course. Built with local
support, the development includes Top Tracer
Technology, social gathering spaces and
enhanced food and beverage service.
It might be a great enhancement at your club.**

***Amazing Pictorials:
The Inaugural Turfgrass Talk-about pages 26 - 27***

***Events Ahead:
The Championship
The Wee One
The Scramble***

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Presidential Perspective

by Scott Thayer, Legends Club

What a start to the summer of 2021! Memorial Day weekend was beautiful, however at my course in Lakeville on Saturday we had a frost delay! What was that all about? Then, just one week later, we started this span of record heat, at times over 100 degrees with high winds. Obviously, I don't have to explain this to all of you because we are all in the same situation but, Wow, what a start to the season.

During my junior year of college, I did a summer internship in Memphis, Tennessee. The heat down there was almost unbearable. Managing bent grass greens in TN is not ideal, but I learned a lot about watering and keeping bent alive in scorching heat. I am not going to mince words, this span we are in seems the same to me and I hope

that by the time you read this, all the heat has passed and we have had some rain. Those of us trying to keep grass alive need some rest! Going into this heat we were very dry; I don't know if the Department of Natural Resources has designated it a drought, but the Metro area must be close. Recently, I have had some conversations with Jack about DNR suspending our irrigation permits; I think about this a lot. What would our courses look like with no water right now, or even just limited amounts? The MGCSA has been working on this initiative about changing our category with the DNR from nonessential water user to essential. At the least, we have been hoping to get legislation passed to allow turf managers to reduce water consumption in times of crisis without a 100 percent cut-back.

This year is a great year where

we can realize how important that work on this initiative has been and will be in the future. During a drought the first to be impacted will be surface water users, as their use permits are dependent on water flow in streams and rivers or static benchmarks in lakes or reservoirs. All surface water permit holders must have a contingent resource in place, should there be a permit suspension. Be sure to have conversations with your area DNR hydrologist to find out specifics for your location.

Ground water users, especially those with a history of surface/ground water interaction such as the Northeast Groundwater Management Area (White Bear Lake), should also develop a relationship with their area DNR hydrologist. And everyone who irrigates needs to imagine where they can reduce their water use, should a drought be announced and restrictions implemented. The MGCSA developed Irrigation Efficiency and Water Man-

agement Guidelines a few years ago to help individual courses make their own contingency plans and conserve water. Check it out [here](#). Two more Turfgrass Talk-about's are coming up this summer and I am really excited for the next one at Olympic Hills Golf Club with Jake Schmitz. I know Jake and his staff have done a lot to the course over the past couple of years, so I am excited to see and hear about everything that has happened.

I hope all who are part of the Don White match play event are enjoying some golf with your colleagues. Tim Fleegel and I had our match on a 100 degree day; I was tired after the round but had a great time playing some golf. Not at my course! I also wish everyone a great 4th of July.

Stay cool, hydrated and sun-screened during the hot summer season!

The Driving Range of Dreams

Written by Tom Kasner and Joe Berggren

In 1989 a film called; “Field of Dreams” hit the movie theaters. In that film, a man in a rural community destroyed his profitable corn field, built a baseball field, and hoped that he could get some baseball players to show up and play ball. Everyone knows the very famous quote from that movie, “If you build it, they will come!” The same is happening in Albany, MN.... sort of.

Albany Golf Club in Central MN is in the middle of their, “If WE build it, they will come” project. Superintendent (and Mayor) Tom Kasner has been at AGC for 35 years and this year they are in the process of a driving range project to add Top tracer technology with 12 heated bays including monitors and furnishings in each bay. The project has been spearheaded by committee member and local businessman, Bryan Schiffler. The driving range improvement is being COMPLETELY funded by the local community.





Left and above: Construction of the multi-season driving range began during the winter of 2020-21. Community support was critical for this project. Top Tracer technology and a dozen heated bays will allow for shoulder month practice and a “fun” community destination.

Top Tracer is the golf ball tracking technology that can be seen during any tour event. Top tracer driving range technology has interactive games, data at your fingertips and tour-proven technology. Top tracer also has an app that the golfer can use to fine tune their swing.

The driving range project started like normal, with leveling the tee-ing area, adding drainage, irrigation, and target greens. According to Tom Kasner, “We had a lot of fill available because of a road reconstruction that was going on in town. We started with the tee area and kept filling out to about 100 yards. It was essentially a design as you go project.” As the tee project neared completion, ideas started to pour in with what and where they should go next.

“Our former general manager, Paul Wellenstein, who retired a few years ago and is still involved with this committee, owns a training facility in southern California. He recently installed the Top Tracer Technology on his range so the committee started to look at what it would take to have that in Albany Golf Club. It was the committee’s intent to do this expansion project and not saddle the expense onto the golf course. The committee’s biggest challenge was to raise the money needed to make this happen”, Kasner said.

The group of members and local businessmen and women combined their abilities and efforts and raised over \$200,000 for this project. They convinced local contractors and vendors to donate their time and materials.



The MGCSA is excited to present the second in a series of social/educational programming:

***Tuesday Talk-about Turf Tours at
Olympic Hills Golf Club***

June 29, 2021* Rain or shine!

8:30 until 11:00 am * meet up in OHGC Clubhouse

Host Superintendent Jake Schmitz

Jake has had a few exciting years since becoming the Superintendent at Olympic Hills Golf Club. The complete rebuild in 2014 offered many agronomic challenges including the introduction and management of large fescue plantings, a signature of Jake's course. Come learn about post construction modifications and the inside scoop about maintaining large pure stands of fescue grasses.

Members are encouraged to bring the "rising stars" on their green staff to encourage them into the industry.

This is a free event but the association needs an accurate count for coffee. Please register at mgcsa.org



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“This is obviously a very giving and supportive area. It’s been an incredible process with so many stepping forward to support the course with their donations or just plain sweat,” Tom said. The building plans were made, permits were acquired, the concrete has been poured and building constructed during the off season of 2020-21.

Albany Golf Club is planning on food and beverages will be served to patrons and will be open typically earlier in the spring than the course and open later in the fall. “I believe it will be the only outdoor Top Tracer driving range in the state.” Tom said.

“We did a soft opening in mid March for anyone that wanted to check it out. We offered no charge to rent a bay and officially opened for business on March 29th. It was very busy right away, especially on weekend evenings with the lights on and has been pretty steady ever since. It is being used by golfers and non golfers alike and seems to be attracting those that probably wouldn’t use the golf course. We are serving food and drink and are taking reservations for daily use and larger events too such as stag and stagette parties, business outings etc. I believe it will get busier and busier as the word gets out,” Kasner said.



Do I have annual bluegrass weevil or bluegrass billbug in my turf?

Vera Krischik, Department of Entomology, University of Minnesota,
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Bluegrass billbug pest

There are at least 4 species of billbugs associated with turfgrass in the Midwest. These include the bluegrass billbug *Sphenophorus parvulus*, the hunting billbug *Sphenophorus venatus*, the lesser billbug *Sphenophorus minimus*, and the unequal billbug *Sphenophorus inaequalis*. The distribution of these four species overlaps significantly. It is not uncommon to find mixed populations of two or more species at a single location. In the Midwest, bluegrass billbug is the most prevalent species infesting cool-season turfgrasses such as Kentucky bluegrass, perennial ryegrass, fine fescue, and tall fescue. Hunting billbug is the most frequently en-



Left, Annual billbug, adult.

Below, Annual billbug larvae.



Photo: David Shetlar, Ohio State

University Bugwood.org [https://www.northeastipm.org/schools/pests/billbug-bluegrass-](https://www.northeastipm.org/schools/pests/billbug-bluegrass-billbug/#:~:text=Life%2Cycle%3A%20Billbugs%20overwinter%20as,feed%20within%2the%2turf%20stem.&text=Larvae%20spend%20their%20lives%20in,to%20leaf%20litter%20in%20fall.)

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[overwinter%20as,feed%20within%2the%2turf%20stem.&text=Larvae%20spend%20their%20lives%20in,to%20leaf%20litter%20in%20fall.](https://www.northeastipm.org/schools/pests/billbug-bluegrass-billbug/#:~:text=Life%2Cycle%3A%20Billbugs%20overwinter%20as,feed%20within%2the%2turf%20stem.&text=Larvae%20spend%20their%20lives%20in,to%20leaf%20litter%20in%20fall.)

countered billbug pest of warm-season turfgrasses such as zoysiagrass and Bermudagrass. Lesser and unequal billbugs may infest warm- or cool-season turfgrasses, but infestations of these two species usually occur at comparatively low densities.

Bluegrass billbug size and appearance

Adult billbugs are 1/4 inch long, gray-to-black beetles with a long snout. Larvae are legless with a brown head capsule.

Bluegrass billbug life cycle

In springtime, billbugs move from leaf litter near turf into the turf and may be seen as adults walking over turf to the spots where they decide to lay eggs. In summer spotty browning of turf will be an indicator. They are primarily a pest of bluegrass, so you are less likely to see this species on fescue or ryegrass.

Adult females lay eggs in June, in turf, and the larvae hatch and feed within the turf stem. As they grow they feed closer to the grass plant's crown, and then go to the roots. Larvae pupate in the soil in late August to hatch in September and October. The bluegrass billbug has one generation per year. Some turf managers like to target adults in late April or May, but the period of time when those adults are present and vulnerable appears to be seven to ten days. So, the most reliable timing of application appears to be June, targeting small larvae. See the conventional and biorational insecticide recommendations below.

Billbugs are the most commonly misdiagnosed insect-related turfgrass disorder and billbug damage is confused with compacted soil, drought or summer dormancy, nematode damage, spring dead spot and dollar spot disease, and grubs. As a result, these insects can become a perennial problem leading to seriously degraded stands of turfgrass that are easily overrun by weeds. Billbugs affect roughly half of all home lawns in Indiana. Apply insecticides 10 days after adult billbugs are seen on the grass.

Bluegrass billbug monitoring

Bluegrass billbug adult activity is surveyed most easily by observing paved areas near bluegrass on sunny days in May. If you observe for five minutes and see 12 billbugs, you can expect to see billbug damage about six weeks later.

Bluegrass billbug thresholds

The threshold for damage is 8 to 12 larvae per square foot.

ABW, Annual bluegrass weevil pest

The annual bluegrass weevil, ABW, *Listronotus maculicollis*, is the most difficult to control insect pest of short-mowed golf course turf in the northeastern United States and eastern Canada. ABW has spread to Ohio, Kentucky, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, West Virginia, and south to the Carolinas. The University of Wisconsin at Madison, in summer 2020, posted a



Left, Annual bluegrass weevil adult

Below, Annual bluegrass weevil adult and larvae



Photo: Penn State,
<https://plantscience.psu.edu/research/labs/turfgrass-entomology/insect-factsheets/annual-bluegrass-weevil>



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New Pest Alert that ABW had been found in Wisconsin and was spread by sod purchased from the east several years before. The annual bluegrass weevil is a destructive pest of annual bluegrass, *Poa annua*, and creeping bentgrass on fairways and greens. It was first described as a pest in Connecticut in 1931. A single larva may kill up to a dozen plants through external crown feeding. High larval densities greater than 40/square foot can occur. Feeding causes large patches of yellow and brown turf. In high priority sites such as golf courses, 10 larvae may be the damage threshold.

Annual bluegrass weevils are primarily a pest of annual bluegrass and creeping bentgrass but can also feed on perennial ryegrass. Since creeping bentgrass is more tolerant and requires greater larval densities before damage becomes visible, promoting creeping bentgrass should help reduce damage and the need for insecticide applications. Golf course managers said that on average they needed four insecticide applications to control ABW larvae.

A lot of good information on ABW management can be found online at the 2017 Survey of ABW management <https://www.gcsaa.org/gcm/2017/march/a-survey-of-annual-bluegrass-weevil-management> from the March 2017 issue of Golf course management.

ABW size and appearance

ABW adults are about 1/8" long, half the size of bluegrass billbugs, and about the same size as another small black turf pest, Black Turfgrass Ateneus. Larvae are legless with a brown head capsule.

ABW life cycle

Adult emergence varies with temperatures, which reduces the ability of turfgrass managers to time insecticide application. Consequently, many managers use multiple insecticide applications, which led to the development of pyrethroid-resistant populations on an estimated 20% of golf



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courses in eastern United States. The emergence of weevils from overwintering sites occurs over several weeks, beginning as early as March and ending in late April to early May. Most turf managers attempt to minimize larval damage by applying insecticides to adults newly emerged from overwintering habitats in spring.

Research from New Jersey, New York and Massachusetts indicate ABW adults overwinter in woodlot edges and other semi-protected areas on golf courses. In the East, ABW adults become active in late March to early April and females begin laying 2-3 eggs in leaf sheaths, usually in mown turf. Larvae emerge in mid-early April, feed, shed their sheds five times, which is called instars, and then form a pupae and develop for 5 days into adults. Larvae are stem borers until their third instar, though their feeding



Bluegrass billbug damage looks like pathogen and grub damage. Discolored, irregularly shaped areas of grass that become yellow and finally turn brown.

Photo: University of Minnesota Extension

<https://extension.umn.edu/yard-and-garden-insects/bluegrass-billbug>



Annual bluegrass weevil damage at a golf course in Wisconsin.

Photo: University of Wisconsin <https://tdl.wisc.edu/annual-bluegrass-weevil/>

may not produce noticeable damage. Most damage comes from fourth- and fifth-instar larvae feeding externally on the crown of the plant, especially within turfgrass stands with a high percentage of annual bluegrass. ABW has three generations per year. Most ABW activity has ceased by October. Timing of emergence can have a tremendous impact on insecticide selection and application timing for management of this pest.

ABW monitoring

Golf course superintendents may benefit from using on-site weather stations or growing-degree-day data loggers to predict population peaks, rather than having to rely on unrelated plant phenological indicators such as Forsythia species and flowering dogwood. Peak adult densities occurred in a discrete temperature accumulation range 122 to 172 GDD.

When sampling at sites that are less than 15 miles apart, there are big differences in emergence timing, population size of ABW life stages, and damage intensity. Depending on where you are located, insecticide ap-

plication timings may need to be adjusted by a week or two in order to maximize efficacy, as the insecticides that are available have a short residual activity. Monitor for the pest BEFORE applying an insecticide. All insecticide treatments will kill beneficial insects which can cause other pest populations to increase and cause damage. It is very important to keep records for different locations on the course and for the week, in order to anticipate insecticide applications. Keep a map of areas of past damage. In those areas start scouting for ABW. Apply a soapy water flush to these areas weekly, and keep track of adult numbers over the growing season. When these numbers start to increase, plan your application approach and select the most effective product for that life stage.

Traditional collection techniques for ABW adults is to run across the turf surface a reverse air flow leaf blower with mesh netting attached to the front of the nozzle. In areas with lower ABW populations, use a soapy water flush (1-2 tablespoons per 1 gallon water) to a square section of the turf (2 feet x 2 feet)

and wait 3-4 minutes for adults to emerge. To examine a turf for larvae, cut a small sample (3 inches x 3 inches x 3 inches) section and put the turf in a plastic container. Tease the grass apart as the larvae are hidden in the grass sheaths. Larvae can be drawn from the turf by pouring a salt-water solution made of 3/4 cup salt in 1 quart of water over the grass.

Syngenta's proprietary monitoring system called WeevilTrak, estimates population activity and development across the region from growing degree days and soil and vacuum samples on courses within a region. WeevilTrak was used by 72% of respondents and was the most popular means of monitoring annual bluegrass weevil populations in the survey mentioned above.

ABW threshold

In high priority sites such as golf courses, 10 may be the threshold number. It can be difficult to scout for ABW. In areas of turfgrass damage, you may want to use a soapy water flush to determine populations.



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ABW and bluegrass billbug management

However, springtime temperatures fluctuated greatly in the period between the first adult captures and adult density peaks. Remember, it is essential to apply these insecticides at the time when the majority of the adult population are active, so a monitoring program for adults must be implemented to pinpoint application timing for larvae. Repeated use of these products over a very short period of time of 3-4 years has led to extreme resistance issues, especially with pyrethroids. Rotate chemical class. Read the label. Consequently, many turfgrass managers report making multiple insecticide applications, which has led to the development of pyrethroid-resistant populations on an estimated 20% of golf courses in the east coast.

Biorational insecticides

Effective biological controls are limited primarily to the insect-parasitic nematodes *Heterorhabditis bacteriophora*, which is effective against billbug larvae and *Steinernema carpocapsae* which is effective against adult billbugs. When used properly, these products can provide adequate control and are generally safer than chemical insecticides. *Steinernema carpocapsae* nematodes, BT, and the high rate of spinosad (Conserve) can reduce populations by 50% of ABW (Vittum 1999).



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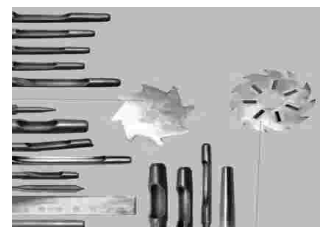
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Active ingredient: lambda-cyhalothrin Tradenames: Battle, Scimitar, <u>Cyonara</u>	Pyrethroid	2B	repeated use of these products over a very short <u>period of time</u> of 3-4 years has led to extreme resistance issues	Adulticide Monitor for adults, apply at peak activity.
Active ingredient: bifenthrin Tradename: <u>Talstar</u>	Pyrethroid	2B	repeated use of these products over a very short <u>period of time</u> of 3-4 years has led to extreme resistance issues	Adulticide Monitor for adults, apply at peak activity.
Active ingredient: <u>bifenthrin+clothianidin</u> Tradenames: Triple Crown, <u>Aloft</u>	Pyrethroid Neonicotinoid	2B+4	repeated use of these products over a very short <u>period of time</u> of 3-4 years has led to extreme resistance issues	Adult + larvae
Active ingredient: <u>chlorantraniliprole</u> Tradename: <u>Acelepryn</u>	<u>Anthranilic diamide</u>	28	Also controls grubs	<u>Larvacide</u> Apply <u>approximately 7-14 days</u> after adulticide to target larvae.
Active ingredient: cyantraniliprole Tradename: <u>Ference</u>	Anthranilic diamide	28	Also controls grub Research conducted in New Jersey found cyantraniliprole, to have 80% control of larvae as well as suppressing adults, irrespective of pyrethroid resistance level, so it can be used in a rotational insecticide resistance program. s	<u>Larvacide</u> Apply <u>approximately 7-14 days</u> after adulticide to target larvae.

Active ingredient: <u>Tetraniliprole</u> Tradename: <u>Tetrino</u>	Anthranilic diamide	28	Also controls grubs	<u>Larvacide</u> Apply <u>approximately 7-14 days after</u>
Active ingredient: Spinosad Tradename: <u>Matchpoint</u>	Spinosyns	5		<u>Larvacide</u> Apply <u>approximately 7-14 days after</u>
Active ingredient: Indoxacarb Tradename: <u>Provaunt</u>	Oxadiazine	22A		<u>A Larvacide</u> <u>pply</u> <u>approximately 7-14 days after</u>

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The membership of the MGCSA wish to express our thanks to Dr. Vera Krischik and the other University of Minnesota horticultural entomologists for their dedication to our industry. Your support is greatly appreciated.

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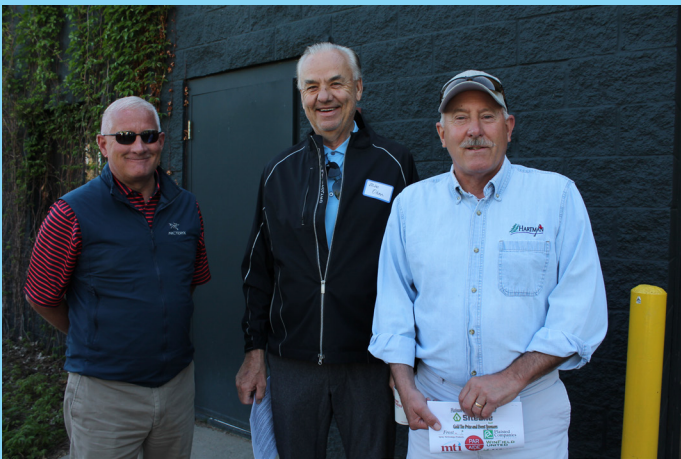
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Inaugural Turfgrass Talk-about at Midland Hills Country Club Thanks Host Superintendent Mike Manthey





Stimpmeter, A love story

By Chris Tritabaugh, Superintendent at Hazeltine National Golf Club



There may be no bigger scourge to the golf course superintendent, than the stimpmeter. This recent [Twitter thread](#) put some of these thoughts on full display. This 3-foot long aluminum stick, originally designed to measure putting surface consistency across a particular course, inevitably became a way for courses to measure themselves against other courses.

This article is not the typical stimpmeter hate mail, it is more of a love story.

I would not start out by calling my previous relationship with the stimp-meter hate, probably not even dislike. A more accurate word would be ambivalence. The greens at my first course, Northland Country Club, were very severely sloped and difficult to stimp. On the occasions of big events, I might take the stimp to the 13th (flattest) green and get an idea of the speed. Mostly though, I'd putt on them and listen to golfer comments to judge whether our practices were producing the requisite speed.

As I would come to find out years later, the fact we rolled every single day probably had a lot to do with the speed. I once had an employee approach me to say; “I’m not complaining, but I wanted to let you know I’ve rolled greens 27 days in a row.” He was really good at it, but don’t worry, he did something different the next day. This story was always a funny reminder to me that we never skipped rolling at Northland, and we almost never had complaints about greenspeed.

Fast forward a number of years and during the final green committee meeting of 2018, a member asked me; “when you stimp, do you stimp multiple greens and every day?” My answer was no. I felt like I wanted to stimp every day, but something always seemed to get in the way. My stimping routine went something like this:

Monday - didn’t mow or roll, what’s the point?

Tuesday - Stimp the small putting green. Disappointed in the number... shrug.

Wednesday - Stimp the small putting green. Number is better.

Thursday - Forget

Friday - Forget

Saturday - Too many people around.

Sunday - Didn’t go into work and forget to have someone do it for me.

I’m kind of making this up, but you get the picture. I did it sometimes, only on one green and because it did not seem important enough, I let other things get in the way.

In June of 2019, Hazeltine hosted the KPMG Women’s PGA Championship and of course, we stimped a lot of greens in the morning and evening. When we hosted the Ryder Cup, we stimped a lot of greens, both in the morning and the evening. Why? Consistency of course, and to make sure we were attaining the speed desired by the PGA of America’s setup guru Kerry Haigh.



Above, the tenth hole at Hazeltine National Golf Club

Following the KPMG, I thought: “why am I not stimping multiple greens every day?” My brother, an accountant said: “I would think the stimp is a number you would want to know everyday” When it comes to numbers, my accountant brother is someone worth listening to. So, starting June 25th, I stimped an average of 10 greens every day until October 16th, when I stopped for the season.

Here’s my method:

- I will typically do the stimping myself, shortly after the final prep of the surface (either a mow, a roll, or both).
- Our numbers are not posted, but they are also not a secret. I’m happy to share the numbers with anyone who asks. As time has gone on, many of our members who see me stimp meter in hand, enjoy guessing the day’s number.
- I have a subset of six putting surfaces across the course that will always be stimped. Often I’ll do more, but if I’m gone and one of the assistants stimps, I only ask them to do the usual six.

- I generally use the same location on each green, each time.
- I use a tape measure for accuracy and I don't cheat-I write down the actual numbers. Since we do not post the speed, there's no benefit to recording a number that isn't 100% accurate.
- I use the Brede Method $(2 \times \text{uphill} \times \text{downhill}) / (\text{uphill} + \text{downhill})$ to compensate for the effect of gravity. This makes the selection of a location easier because the surface doesn't need to be level, the ball only needs to roll straight. On a flat area, the Brede correction is small. The greater the distance between the uphill and downhill roll, the larger the correction.
- The numbers are entered into a spreadsheet, where the speed is identified using the Brede equation. Here is a list of the things I've learned by stimping multiple greens every day:
 - The real green speed our members enjoy for daily play.
 - On our greens, rolling is vital. If we don't roll, we will be 6–12" slower. Obviously rolling makes greens faster, this is not a revelation. However, I was amazed by just how much faster. It will take multiple days of rolling consecutively to reach the max speed for that day's conditions. However, as soon as we skip a day of rolling, this effect is immediately lost. [Disclaimer: this is the case on our greens. I do not know if the effect exists on different greens of different construction and grass type.]
 - Extra rolling does not result in a sustained speed increase. Imme-



diately after a second roll, the speed is higher, but 30 minutes later, the speed from one roll and the double roll speed are the same.

- When all variables remain relatively similar, mowing and rolling each day results in a speed plateau. If the weather is the same and we mow and roll for five straight days, the speed each day, will be nearly identical beginning about day 2 or 3. If we want to increase the speed, a variable needs to change. Height of cut drop, increase in number of mows, etc.

Since I started stimping our greens every day, I cannot remember a complaint about greenspeed. They are consistent from green to green and they are consistent from day to day. It has also allowed us to dial in our practices to get the ideal speed for the conditions. We have also been able to gain true knowledge of how various practices impact greenspeed. I would even say our greens are faster, with less effort than they were before daily stimp measurements. We know the right practices to employ, or not, at the right times to get the very best from our surfaces.

If your stimpmeter keeps your door propped open and you are happy with it's performance and the performance of your greens; keep it there. If you feel like there is room to improve the performance of your greens, maybe you golfers make one too many negative comments about green speed? Blow the dust of that aluminium stick, grab a tape measure and start measuring.



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Get to Know 'em

Superintendent Kevin Malloy The Austin Country Club

by Hole Notes Editor, Joe Berggren



FACILITY INFO

Golf Course: Austin Country Club

Public or Private: Private

Number of Holes: 18

Full time employees: 3

Seasonal employees (not including full time): 15

Number of employees of entire facility at peak season: 100



Types of grass: Bent/Poa
Greens, Tees, Fwys. Blue/Rye
Rough

Total course acreage: 110

Greens acreage: 2.5

Tee acreage: 2.5

Fairway acreage: 23

Rough acreage: 50

Driving range acreage: 8

Range tee acreage: 1.25

Personal Turf Facts:

How many years have you
been in your current posi-
tion?

This is my fourth season at
Austin Country Club.

How many years have you
been in the turf industry?
Pretty much my whole life.
Being the son of a super-
intendent, I spent a lot of
time on golf courses in my
youth, some paid and some
unpaid(does that violate la-
bor laws?)!



Where else have you worked?

Ventana Canyon, Bearpath Golf and Country Club, TPC Scottsdale, and the Club at Cordillera

Turf School Attended (if any)?

University of Arizona

Industry thoughts

What is one “master plan” thing you would like to change at your golf course?

Would love to have a completely developed master plan for the golf course. We are a 100 year old property and there are various things that are outdated as it pertains to golf now, i.e. bunker placements, green slopes. I love to do the work. I just ultimately want a set of outside eyes with no preconceived notions to help develop the plan.

What concerns do you have the turf business and the future of golf?

I think that water is the biggest issue facing this industry. While we are very lucky in Minnesota to not have the squeeze on us that other parts of the country and world have, we need to be prepared for such. Having worked in multiple environments where water is a pressing issue, I can tell you many of us in Minnesota take for granted how easy water is to get, and don't put a ton of time and effort into

What is needed to bring more young professionals into the industry?

While I understand the discussions had around salaries, for someone who is still young in the industry salary is not the only thing that needs to be discussed and to me not the main issue. Many superintendents today joined the golf industry during the golf boom, and became superintendents at a young age, comparatively. Now it seems to be longer tenures



as an assistant which comes with growing your life outside of work, and I feel like some superintendents struggle to understand the nuances to other people's lives as they drastically differ from their experience. We hear a lot about work-life balance, but ultimately if it was truly being addressed we wouldn't be continuing to talk about it...The other part is make it fun! While it is work and some days will be more stressful than others, understand it is just work, a scalped collar will grow back, a gas spill can be fixed, irrigation breaks happen, remember how lucky we are to do this for a career!

What piece of equipment do you want? Not a need, a want. My club has been very good to me since arriving, but I want a tracked skid loader. We do a lot of in house projects and tracked skid loaders make work much easier!

In terms of industry costs (equipment, pesticides, labor, etc.) are they too low, too high or just right?

I mean, obviously it would be nice if prices were lower, but ultimately it would probably just lead to more waste. So overall, I think most prices are reasonable.

FUN FACTS

Have you ever met a celebrity? Who?

Yes, Michael Jordan was a member of a club my dad was at in the Chicago area. He once brought Wayne Gretzky out and my brother and I got to meet them both!

What is your favorite vacation spot?

I went to college in Arizona, so I am pretty partial to visiting Arizona anytime that I can! Other than that I do like historical locations, like Savannah, Georgia.

What is your favorite memory of starting your turf career?

Without a doubt, my first Waste Management Phoenix Open when I was an assistant at TPC Scottsdale. PGA Tour events are interesting in the complexity and scale, but that event was very eye opening for a 21 year old.

What is your favorite job on the golf course?

I don't get to do it too often anymore, but walk mowing.

What is your least favorite job on the golf course?

Spraying, I have spent A LOT of time on a sprayer in my life

Have you played any famous golf courses? Which ones?

I have been very fortunate to play some very nice courses over the years, some of the highlights outside of Minnesota are: Shoreacres, TPC Sawgrass, The Bear's Club, Pinehurst, Whistling Straits, Whisper Rock, and I am sure I am forgetting some right now.

Who is your dream foursome?

Me, my dad, Jack Nicklaus, and Tiger Woods

2020- What a year! Would you like to comment on it?

2020 was certainly one for the record books, but the bright side was it was a mild weather year, and a lot of people in this world were forced to slow down and enjoy the simple things in life!



WETTING AGENTS AND THEIR ROLE IN WATER CONSERVATION TODAY

*By Robert A. Moore
President, Aquatrols Corp. of America
New Jersey*

A few years ago, we were all shocked, and made well aware of our dependency on oil—particularly foreign oil—and we have been talking about “An Energy Crisis” ever since. It is my firm belief that our next national crisis will be “A Water Crisis.” As an example, at the Oklahoma Turf Conference, in December 1978, Dr. Huffine recalled a comment by Marv Ferguson, that if this nation ever has another Civil War, it will be fought over water.

I don't believe we'll run out of water! But I do believe we must stop wasting water. We must learn to use water efficiently. Some areas of our country are now very aware of the necessity to conserve water, and have started various programs. Most of these programs require registering and reporting the quantity of water used, either monthly, quarterly or yearly. Very few areas are actually restricting water use except in cases of extreme drought or water shortages. We have all read about these checks—and in some years, have experienced such regulation.

The present requirements for registration and monitoring of water-use, provide the mechanism for future planning, and future restrictions, if and when they are needed. Take note of how many conferences in recent years are placing an increasing emphasis on water. When our company started twenty-five years ago, very few conference programs considered water at all. Today's increased awareness of potential limited water resources is sharpening our senses on ways to more economically use water—ways to make water more efficient.

One enormously useful tool to make water more efficient, that has gained recognition in the last few years, is the use of soil wetting agents. Before we discuss their place in water conservation and improved plant growth, let's take a quick look at the vital role of water in plant growth and turf maintenance; and at some of the characteristics of water that can lead to problems. Bob Kneebone, has pointed out that water is essential for every function within the plant—for photosynthesis, for cooling, for growth, for turgor and for root development. It is used as a solvent, as a reagent, and as a nutrient—in fact the largest nutrient used by a plant. Water is also involved in every maintenance practice in your operations—fertilizing, pesticide treatments, mowing, aerifying—it even affects the quality of playing conditions—sometimes to the point of eliminating play.

Most properties of water are beneficial, but two in particular, surface tension and the moisture tension in the soil, can be obstacles leading to inefficient water use, and turf losses. If we investigate the relationship between these moisture-tensions, turf losses and water uses, we see a definite pattern. Plain water has a lot of tension and hang-ups that can cause soil-water problems, one obvious example is low infiltration rates and puddling.

Puddling leads to run-off, and evaporative loss of water. One U.S.D.A. survey in the plains states, indicated that less than 20% of the natural rainfall actually

becomes root-zone moisture—the water being lost by run-off and evaporation. Without water in the root-zone plants can't function. Plain water with its high tensions, moves slowly in fine textured soils. Though not always a loss of water, this is another inefficient use, since turf can't utilize water from a saturated soil with poor aeration. Diseases such as root rots, pythium, and other water molds, as well as algae increase under these conditions, weaken the turf, add to the inefficient use of water, and many times result in turf losses.

On the other hand, in the coarse texture soils, which have been enjoying great popularity for the past few years, the high tensions of plain water create different problems. Water tends to channel and not wet the soil profile uniformly. These soils can be droughty requiring greater amounts of water. In addition, the sandy type soils have been shown to produce a hard-to-wet condition referred to as localized dry-spots. These areas literally repel water, resulting in wilting and turfgrass losses. Repellent areas require special hand labor and extra waterings to try to save the turf—and that can cost you money! Thatch can also inhibit the movement of plain water, consequently, the movement of nutrients and other chemicals, particularly soil insecticides, are limited, weakening the grass and resulting in turf losses.

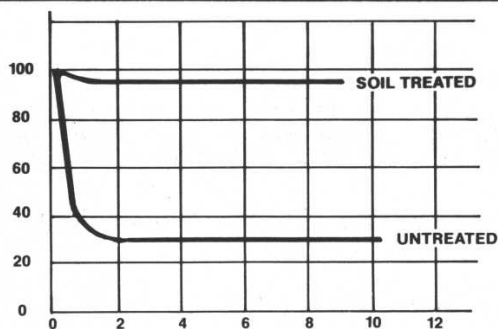
As we review these problems that can lead to turf losses, we note that they can be classified as WATER problems—not SOIL problems. In each case there was too much water or too little water. And yet the approach to solving the situation has historically been aerifying and soil renovation. Though the soil condition is involved, the main cause of the turf losses outlined has been the high tensions of plain water.

It is essential for the growth of healthy plants and for the conservation of water that certain compensations be made to promote a more efficient and wise use of water.

As mentioned earlier, the use of soil wetting agents to change water by lowering its tensions is rapidly gaining recognition for the purpose of “Making Water Better.” Under low-tension-water conditions, water percolates faster. Puddling is reduced. Run-off and evaporation losses are reduced or eliminated. University data using tensiometers indicated a reduction of 30 to 50% in water use requirements when using wetting agents. That could mean a 30 to 50% reduction in salts introduced when using high salt content water—an important factor in these western states. Erosion losses were reduced by 65% in these same tests—which were under the severe conditions of 6 inches per hour on a 30% slope. All this, simply using a wetting agent to compensate for water's few negative characteristics.

A statement that has often been heard is that we can't do anything about the problem of water penetration in areas of high traffic—high compaction. The remedies discussed are usually aerification soil renovation or paving. No thought is ever given to the WATER.

continued on Page 11



Percent water penetration in inches of untreated versus treated soil.

Improved infiltration and percolation means better drainage and aeration—without rebuilding! The better drainage and aeration obtained in a wetting agent treated soil improves rooting—improved water movement reduces disease potential—and the overall efficiency of water and nutrient utilization is increased. This healthier turf, is also more efficient in using water as shown by Kauffman's data from Michigan State which indicated a significantly lower water-use-rate for Merion Kentucky bluegrass growing in a wetting agent treated soil—an 11 to 14% reduction.

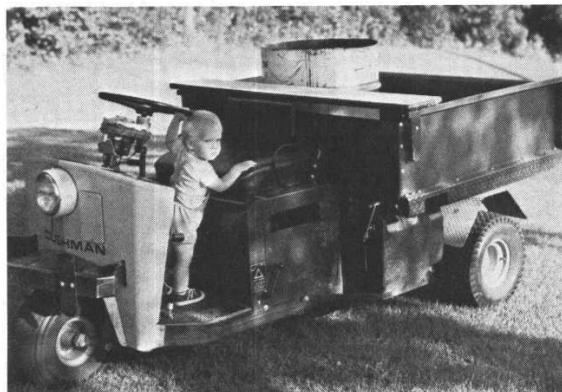
Harry Muesel's work at Yale University with Aqua-GRO, showed that the turf grown with the wetting agent had a more compact cellular structure, a heavier cutin layer, and increased cell wall thickness—a definite change in the physiological structure of the turfgrass blades and roots. These changes contribute to improved resistance to disease, winter injury, traffic and wilting—a lower water use rate with a water "Made Better." These are real changes that have resulted from the better availability of rootzone moisture and the lower energy of that water.

Stress areas that develop as localized dry spots requiring extra labor and waterings can now be eliminated. Beard and Rieke's data from Michigan State clearly shows that wetting agents are the most effective correction in eliminating the damage from these localized spots; more effective than aerifying or slicing alone. The best overall results can be obtained with combined coring and wetting agents use. Water will quickly and uniformly move through a treated thatch and water repellent soil layer thus eliminating the necessity for extra hand-watering and labor.

I would like to emphasize a point made by Beard and Rieke—"All wetting agents are not alike." In fact, 80% of the commercially sold materials that they tested did not work better than plain water! You must use a scientifically blended material to be assured of performance in all type soils. It must work for you in your soil to be of value. A proper blend will feature controlled biodegrading to safeguard the environment and, at the same time, be effective over a period of months. Some materials are lost after only two or three waterings. Your use of wetting agents should be on a repeating basis in order to compensate for this controlled biodegradation.

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FUTURE SUPE. He's at the wheel and maybe backing up but Doug Mahal's son shows a definite liking for vehicles.



CHOW HOUNDS. There's something about the taste of food outdoors that brings out the wild appetite in everyone.



COWBOY. Ron Steffenhagen's son looks as if he might go west when he grows up.

SCANGREEN: An international greens-height turfgrass evaluation program

By Dr. Eric Watkins

University of Minnesota, Turfgrass Research Team

The National Turfgrass Evaluation Program (NTEP) provides multi-location turfgrass cultivar performance data from trials managed as both golf greens and fairways. For the most part, these trials consist of creeping bentgrass entries; however, in some trials, fine fescues are evaluated at fairway height, including a current trial at our research center.

Turfgrass cultivar evaluation data provided by NTEP is very valuable for several traits including dollar spot resistance, color, turf density, establishment, and summer stress tolerance. Unfortunately, it is a rare case when greens trials include data on winter stresses. As an example, the 2014 NTEP greens height trial that concluded in 2019 included 19 testing locations, but over the 5 years of the trial only one winter stresses related rating was taken: a single snow mold rating at one location.

This lack of cultivar information is not terribly surprising as winter stress damage is not a consistent problem at a given location from year to year.



Rather, severe winter damage occurs under combinations of environmental conditions that are site-specific. As most superintendents know, and have possibly experienced first-hand, conditions that are common to stressful winters include prolonged ice cover, lack of snow cover during extreme low temperatures, and large fluctuations in temperature during the winter. While our research plots in St. Paul may experience some combination of these conditions during a given winter, there are many winters when no meaningful winter stress assessments can be made.

Due to the very stressful winter conditions that occur throughout Scandinavia, turfgrass researchers can obtain very valuable information on various aspects of winter stress each year. This is accomplished through a program called SCANGREEN, which coordinates testing of a number of cultivars representing several cool-season turfgrass species at multiple locations (Figure 1): Landvik, Norway; Apelsvoll research station, Norway; and Reykjavík, Iceland. Funding for this trial primarily comes from



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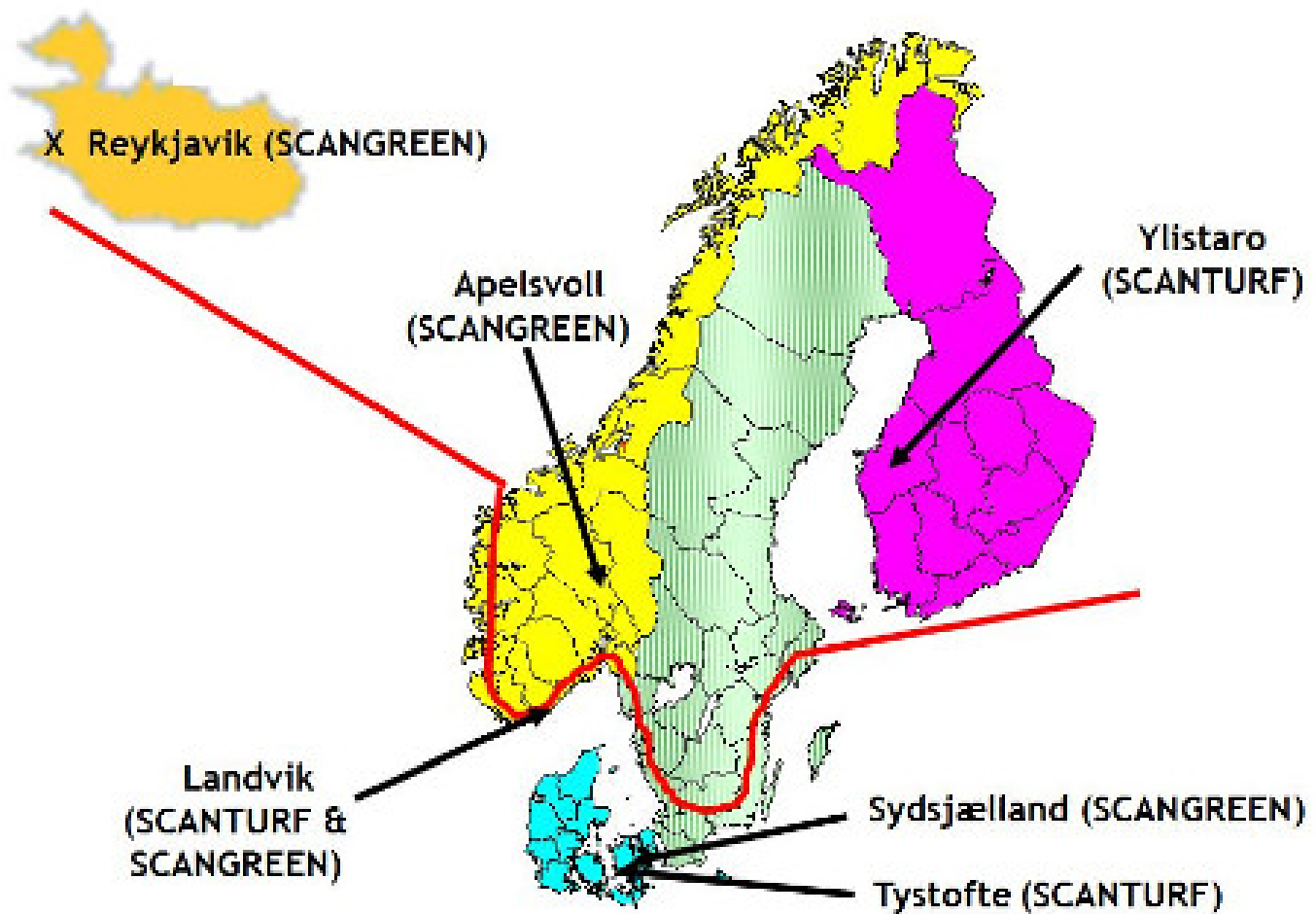


Figure 1: Current testing sites for SCANGREEN (greens height) and SCANTURF (fairway height) in Scandinavia. Map from scanturf.org.

the Scandinavian Turfgrass and Environment Research Foundation (www.sterf.org), with a small portion covered by fees charged to sponsors of each cultivar that is entered into the trial.

Each SCANGREEN testing site is unique in its ability to test the ability of turfgrasses to survive winter. The site in Iceland (Figure 2) is in an area where winter temperatures range from about 28F for average lows in the winter to average highs in the summer of only about 56F. With this narrow range of temperatures, this environment is a great location for testing for ice damage tolerance and the ability of turfgrasses to grow during sub-optimal growth conditions. The Apelsvoll site, about 120 km north



Figure 2: SCANGREEN testing site on the outskirts of Reykjavík, Iceland. This photo was taken by Lily Watkins during a visit in early May 2018.

of Oslo, receives a significant amount of snow and can reach very low temperatures during the winter, leading to several turf problems including snow mold, ice cover, and low temperatures that kill some species. In Landvik, ice cover and fluctuating winter and spring temperatures can result in excellent winter stress data. Between these sites, severe winter injury is almost guaranteed to occur each year, providing golf course superintendents with valuable information about the best grasses for golf greens in cold climates.

In 2018, I traveled to Scandinavia and discussed ways that the University of Minnesota turfgrass research program could collaborate with colleagues working in Norway, including Dr. Trygve Aamlid, who leads turfgrass research efforts there. Greater collaboration between the two programs is a natural fit given the common challenges faced by turfgrass managers from the two locales. In the ensuing months, we developed multiple collaborative projects that are ongoing, one of which was expanding their SCANGREEN cultivar trial to the U.S. at sites in Minnesota

and Massachusetts. The trial was seeded in the late summer of 2019 and includes eight turfgrass species: creeping bentgrass, colonial bentgrass, velvet bentgrass, rough bluegrass, Kentucky bluegrass, perennial ryegrass, Chewings fescue, and slender creeping red fescue. The trial is arranged in a way that allows for each species to be maintained at its appropriate greens mowing height and fertilizer level. Each year, starting in early summer, the entire trial area receives traffic that is meant to provide stress similar to golfers walking on the turf (Figure 3).



Figure 3: Beginning in mid to late June, the entire SCANGREEN plot area receives traffic application using this device each Tuesday and Thursday, with the device making three passes over the plots each day.

Photo Gary Deters

Most entries performed adequately during the summer and fall of 2020 in Minnesota. The greatest separation for species performance came when the snow melted this past spring. Almost every creeping bentgrass plot had pink snow mold damage (Figure 4), while the fine fescue plots main-

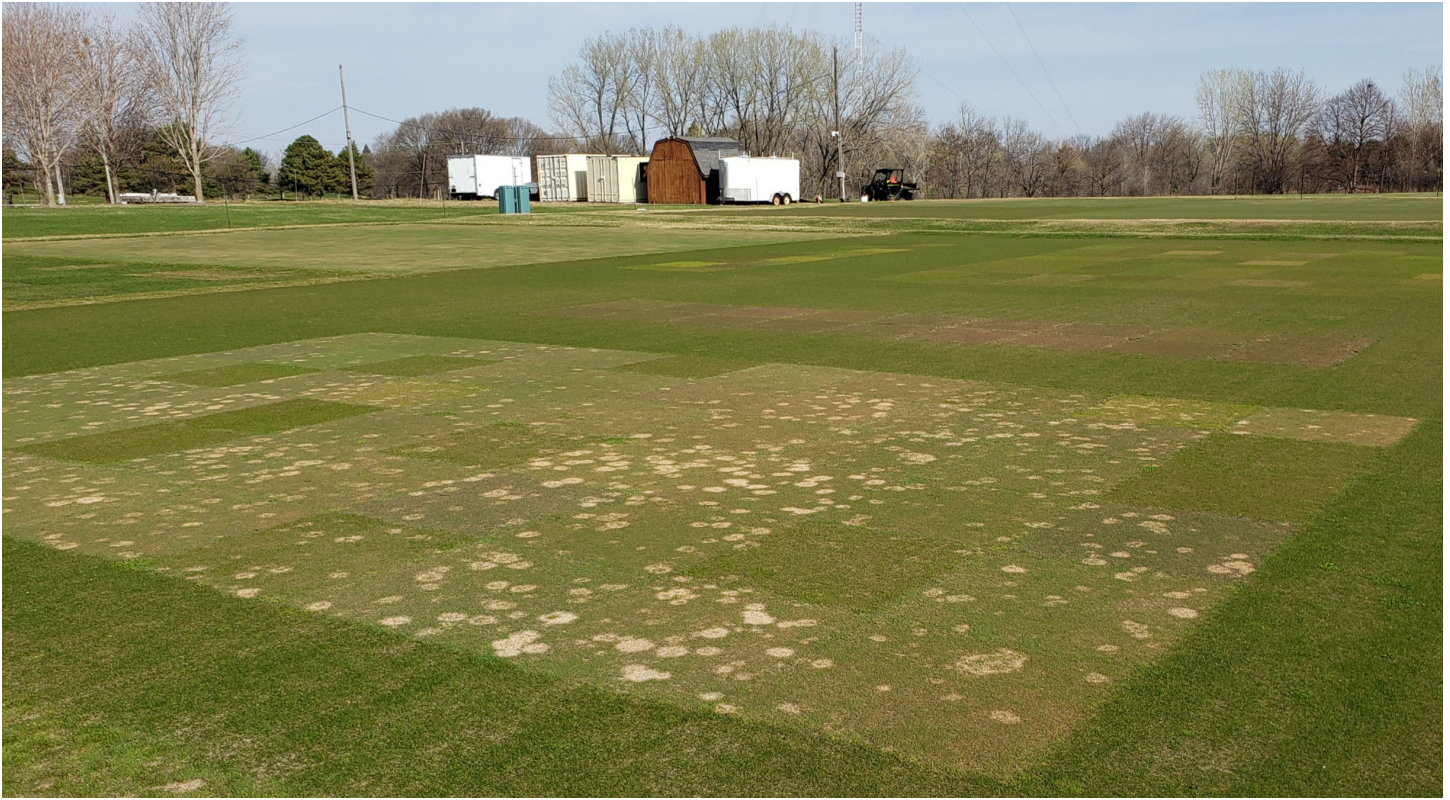


Figure 4: Snow mold damage was significant on creeping bentgrass entries in spring 2021. In this photo, plots in the foreground without snow mold damage are fine fescues, while those with damage are creeping bentgrass entries. A cool spring resulted in disease damage being visible well into June. Photo Gary Deters

tained at the same height and nitrogen fertility level showed little to no disease. In the U.S. there are numerous effective snow mold fungicides; however, options in parts of northern Europe are quite limited, so knowledge about alternative species that can be used at sites where snow mold pressure is expected is critically important for those superintendents.

Results from this and future collaborative winter stress tolerance evaluations will be useful for Minnesota superintendents managing turf in areas where winter stress damage is a recurring problem and for those facilities seeking to reduce reliance on fungicides for snow mold control. Results from this trial will be available at both www.scanturf.org and turf.umn.edu when data analysis is complete. This and other turfgrass research projects benefiting Minnesota golf course superintendents would not be possible without the generous funding provided by MGCSA.



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The MGCSA is excited to present the third in a series of
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*Talk-about Turf Tours at
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Host Superintendent Mark Michalski

Mark has had a few exciting years since becoming the Superintendent at TPC Twin Cities. The 3M Championship changed to the nationally televised 3M Open and his course was modified to accommodate the bigger hitters. Join Mark on a “talk-about” walking tour of the course and learn from him the ins and outs of the rebuild project and 3M Open. *Members are encouraged to bring the “rising stars” on their green staff to encourage them into the industry.*

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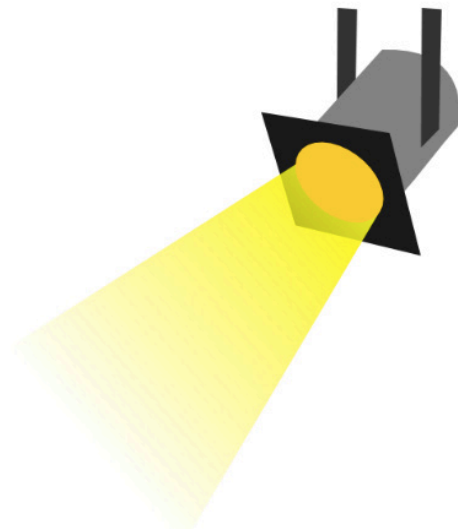
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In fact, we create many of our products to bring out the best in golf course turf and to make turf management more affordable, more effective and easier for all golf course superintendents. From seed blends and colorants to fungicides and adjuvants, we aim to provide superintendents with products to increase their efficiency and production across the entire state, just as the association has brought everyone together for the betterment of the industry.

“The MGCSA and other associations are the link that binds our industry together. That link provides camaraderie in our profession, the opportunity for

educational and professional advancement, and they are advocates for us in the golf industry,” said Chris Hoff, our resident rep since 2012.

He started with Simplot Partners in 1999 as a warehouse manager, moving to a sales position a year later. Chris entered the industry in 1991 when he worked at Hudson Country Club. When asked what makes being a superintendent in Minnesota different from other superintendents, he didn’t take long to respond. “I think local superintendents have a very communal



Chris Hoff

sense of pride in our local industry.”

“I support the MGCSA by being an active participant at association events, by engaging & communicating with other members, and by being a vocal steward of what this association & profession have to offer.”

Chris Hoff understands the importance of the MGCSA and supports the association at every opportunity, making him an invaluable asset to our team and the entire industry.

Chris is married to his wife Jennifer and has two children, Emma and Sam. Emma studies Pre-Medicine at the University of Minnesota-Rochester, and Sam plays basketball and lacrosse as a sophomore in high school.

Brad Smith is also another asset for Win-Field United, having been with us since 2012 when we acquired Precision Turf & Chemical.

The MGCSA promotes the well-being of the

superintendent as well as advocates for education and research. Brad also has some thoughts about the association.

“The MGCSA has many benefits including legislative presence (voice at the capitol), networking and educational opportunities.”

The association is all about working with and helping superintendents solve problems with an emphasis on efficiency and economical maintenance of their golf courses.

“Superintendents in general are very good at solving all sorts of difficult problems,” Brad emphasized, “specifically in Minnesota where there are an extraordinarily large



Brad Smith



number of golf courses all competing for a short season of revenue. Superintendents are tasked with the challenge of always finding a way to do more with less.”

Brad has a long history in the industry, having worked with a friend whose father was a golf course superintendent at Westmoor Country Club in Brookfield, Wisconsin. Later in college when trying to decide on a career path, he remembered how much he enjoyed working outside and all his years at Westmoor.

He completed a Soil Science-Turf Management degree, and the rest is history.

“Although I do not attend as many events as I once did, I support the MGCSA behind the scenes in encouraging people to become involved or stay involved.”

When he’s not wrapped up in the industry, Brad enjoys spending time with his wife Dana and two boys, Mitchell and Marshall. Coaching and watching his kids participate in sports are great highlights.

People like Chris and Brad are who help propel the golf course industry forward, keeping superintendents aware of the MGCSA and its many benefits while also helping WinField United stay current and aimed toward a greener future.



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In Bounds

by Jack MacKenzie, CGCS



Thus far, all MGCSA members I have spoken with are doing well, except for one concern, “lots of play”.

Of course, the usual comments are made as well, “lack of quality labor, too much rain, not enough rain and not enough time to get my job done”, but the common thread is the amazing amount of play that is taking place, even post pandemic.

Isn't this a good thing? More rounds mean more dollars in the owner's pocket, more soft good sold in the pro shop (that is if they are even available!), more hot dogs eaten and likely, greater cart fee revenue. Instead of bemoaning the challenge of too much play, shouldn't our industry be celebrating the resurgence of golf as a recreation? It wasn't too long ago that “golf” was suffering from contraction.

Change in the form of too much

play is a good thing. It seems that “golf” is again the focus at golf courses and not necessarily the venue for weddings, anniversaries, and other special occasions. It was evident in 2020 that not being tied to a dining room was a very good thing for the operations that only served up sandwiches and a drink from the busy on-course refreshment cart.

Adjustments in the form of more “fun” golf is also apparent. Just as can be observed in the lower numbers of competitors participating in our MGCSA Championship, while the popularity of golf increases in leaps and bounds, there has not been as dramatic of a bump in competition at the amateur level. This simply must indicate that play is spiking because people are having “fun” playing golf.

It is still my opinion that many players left the game in the early years of this century, during the time just prior to the technology revolution. Big headed drivers, “hot and durable” golf balls, giant iron sweet spots and easy to control putter advancements were missed out upon when golf clubs were sequestered to the back corner of the garage to collect dust. It cannot be disputed that the new ball and club enhancements gave many the impression that they could hit a straight shot and they could pound the ball well beyond their youthful expectations and golf balls seemed to last longer and fly straighter. They left the golf course thinking, “hmmm, this is kind of fun, and I killed a couple of drives”.

New rules relaxed, eliminating petty requirements and reducing the need to carry a rule book. And even more rules have been modified in the last year to help ease those considering the seemingly complicated game. Golf was sud-

denly about fun, not frustration. While not being too flippant about the integrity of the sport, people were given the latitude to ‘massage’ the way their gang of four (or five or seven) would play the game.

Golfers who took a break because they were frustrated with the game also missed out on the enhanced playability of the golf course. A typical tool in the 2021 Superintendent’s cart, portable moisture meters had barely made their presence known just ten years ago. Faster, firmer and more consistent conditions prevail with the irrigation control tool. Sure, a soil probe and deft professional hand was good enough for many decades, since the inception of golf course irrigation, but the introduction of technology made a big difference in manageability and playability. Drier, firmer faster, oh yeah baby!

Green’s rollers, commonplace over the last fifteen years, have produced an exceptionally smooth putting surface. Aerification equip-

ment, light topdressing tools and efficient sprayers reduced the negative impact of maintenance. Chemistries and modern blends of fertilizer, when properly applied, created the healthy turf and coloration sought by golfers. The use of “growing degree days” as applied to a wide variety of management practices, further reduced impact on play.

Seemingly, the new technologies developed over the last twenty years were created in anticipation of the uptick in play. The sudden and unexpected mandate of socially distanced outdoor recreation forced latent golfers to pick up their clubs or buy a new set. Now playing in the “new paradigm”, golfers are suddenly having fun, on their own terms, and upon amazing pieces of well-conditioned properties.

Now, how to maintain the momentum? Keep it “fun”! Easy pin placements, forgiving rough, relaxed ‘local rules’ about music, friendly games, team competition, smooth

putting surfaces and not too slick. Perhaps keep the “superintendent’s” amazing ability to toughen a course beyond fun in check as well.

Although I haven’t managed a golf course for over a decade, memories of “jacking” up the green speeds and cutting cups in unpleasant locations cause me to pause and consider if some people who played “my set up” didn’t have a lot of fun on those occasions.

Golf is a game. Golf should be fun. Golf course superintendents can make the game fun for all.

It took a crisis to open the eyes of dormant players and realize recreational opportunities do exist on the golf course. It will take considerate management to keep them coming back for more fun.