

HOLENOTES

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Renovating
Eau Claire GCC

Pursuing the
Perfect Employee

UMN WinterTurf
Project Reports



On the Cover:
UMN WinterTurf Field Day
On this page:
Old bunkers on 5th green at ECGCC

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HOLE*NOTES*

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Featured Articles

Renovating Eau Claire Golf & Country Club

By: Nick Peinovich

Page 8-16

The Pursuit of the Perfect Employee

By: Tony Zerwas

Page 22-27

Get to Know 'Em: Joe Rolstad

By: Joe Berggren

Page 38-42

Greens Height Cool Season Turfgrass Survival Under Ice Encasement

By: Andrew Hollman, UMN

Page 46-49

Making Ice, Killing Grass

By: Gary Deters, UMN

Page 50-52

Studying the Effect of "False Spring" in Tall Fescue

By: Florence Sessoms, UMN

Page 53-55

Monthly Columns

Presidential Perspective P. 2-3

Roll It Forward P. 28-34

From the High Grass P. 56-59

Upcoming Events

SE Exposure- 5/24 Austin CC

SW Exposure- 6/14 Marshall GC

Social Series- 6/21 Topgolf

WI Exposure- 7/20 Luck GC

Family Day @ the Saints- 7/31

Presidential *Perspective*

Mike Sonnek, Royal Golf Club

Have you ever asked yourself, how did I get here? I know some of us grew up in the golf maintenance business with memories of visiting the maintenance shed in our youth and starting out raking bunkers at a very young age. Others like me grew up playing golf and found the attraction to the golf course too strong to ignore, so we found a way to create a career that allowed us to spend our days on the golf course. There are those who have never had a great interest in playing golf, but enjoy the opportunity to work outside and enjoy being out in nature.

A few months ago, I had an epiphany. I can't recall the setting exactly, but I was contemplating the path my life has traveled. I thought about how much I enjoyed playing golf all the way back to when I would follow behind my parents at The Wells Golf Club, swinging a single club. From what I have been told, this was the case until I struck my dad in the back of the leg with a shot. From then on, I played in front of my parents and soon had a set of clubs of my own. Living one block away from the golf course, the game became a pas-



sion of mine. What a great way to spend a summer day than unlimited golf. I remember some days playing as much as 90 holes on that par 30 gem. As I grew, I enjoyed playing golf with friends and family and playing for my high school for 5 years. I also enjoyed watching golf, having the good fortune to attend events such as The Colonial PGA event in Texas, the US Open at Hazeltine, and the LPGA event at Edinburg USA.

After high school I was a bit of a lost soul trying to figure out which direction I should proceed. I spent time in and out of a number of jobs and attempts at education. Nothing seemed to inspire me, and no real path presented itself. This went on for several years during which I enjoyed golf, when it was in my budget. I eventually came to a personal crossroads and asked myself, "What do you like to do? Where do you like to spend your time?" At the top

of the list was golf. The tricky part was, how could I find a career on a golf course? I had played golf for years, but my game never really developed into much. I knew I wasn't cut from the golf pro or pro shop cloth. After my father had retired from construction, he took the position of groundskeeper at our little par 30 course in Wells. I liked being outside. Could I find a career on the golf course maintenance side?

After some research, I found out that The University of Minnesota offered a golf course maintenance turf program. I had attended classes at the U of M with marginal success. I reached out about this possible new direction of study, and found out I could transfer a number of credits, so I signed up. I found my inspiration in the turf program, going from a marginal student to the Deans List. The next step was to seek employment at a golf course. I had put the cart before the horse by beginning a turf education before ever working at a golf course. My decision making in my youth wasn't always stellar. Luckily for me I started my career working for three rock star Superintendents in Doug Mahal, Dale Caldwell, and Tim Johnson during my first three seasons. When I reflect back, I think about how fortunate I was to work for

great Superintendents right out of the gate. How fortunate I was to have great instructors at the U of M, including Dr. Don White. Time to circle back to my epiphany.

Over the years I had always thought of my journey through decisions I made based on what I wanted to do. I never really thought about the inspiration that started my journey in golf. My inspiration was my mother. It was so obvious I couldn't believe it took me so long to realize it. Jean Ann Sonnek had a great passion for golf. I had almost 40 years of playing golf with my mother. In my youth we would spend winter Sunday afternoons watching our favorite golfers play in exotic locations like Hawaii, Pebble Beach and Palm Springs, while we waited for spring to come so we could get back on the golf course.

I'm writing this the day after Mother's Day. I would like to wish a happy belated Mother's Day to all moms. A special happy Mother's Day to my wife Lynda, who has provided me such a wonderful life and family. Even though I had to say goodbye to my mother almost 13 years ago, I wish her a happy Mother's Day as I feel her hand on my shoulder guiding me down life's path.

Thank you mom.

2022 Legacy Scholarships

Deadline for Application: June 1st, 2022

The Program: The Minnesota Golf Course Superintendents' Association offers a scholarship program designed to assist children and grandchildren of Class AA, A, B, C, D, EM, Associate and Affiliate members. The MGCSA provides scholarships to students attending college or vocational programs at any accredited post-secondary institution. The program is independently managed by a group of select, unbiased academic advisors. Awards will be granted without regard to race, color, creed, religion, sex, disability, national origin or financial need.

The Joseph S. Garske Legacy award, named after the founder of Par Aide Products Company, Joe Garske, is committed to furthering the education of children and grandchildren of MGCSA members through financial contributions. This is the 24th consecu-

tive year for these awards. Par Aide is located in Lino Lakes, Minnesota and owned by Steve Garske, son of Joseph.

The late Mr. Garske, who died at the age of 76 in 1982, started Par Aide in 1954 with plans to make a "good" ball washer. A foundry man and avid golfer, he knew little about the golf business, tried to sell his ideas for design and tooling to two accessory companies, was turned down by both and so began Par Aide Products Company. Steve Garske started The Legacy Scholarship in his father's honor in 1996.

Selection of Recipients: Scholarship recipients are selected on the basis of academic record, potential to succeed, leadership and participation in school and community activities, honors, work experience, a statement



of education and career goals and an outside appraisal. Selection of recipients is made by a select group of academic professionals. Applicants will be notified by the end of July whether they have been awarded or denied a scholarship.

Eligibility: Applicants for the MGCSA Legacy Scholarships must be: children/grandchildren of Class AA, A, B, C, D, EM, Associate or Affiliate members who have been members of the MGCSA at least five years; High school seniors or graduates who plan to enroll or students who are already enrolled in a full-time undergraduate course of study at an accredited two or four-year college, university or vocational-technical school, and under 23 years of age.

Awards: Three awards will be given to children and grandchildren of Class AA, A, B and C members. One award of \$1,500 in the name of Joseph S. Garske will be given to the highest

evaluated applicant. That award will be renewable for one-year contingent upon full-time enrollment and satisfactory academic performance. One other \$1,000 award will be given to other qualified applicants from this group. One, \$1,000 award will be available to children and grandchildren of Class D, EM, Associate and Affiliate members. These awards are not renewable. However, students may reapply to the program each year they meet eligibility requirements. Awards are for undergraduate study only.

Obligations: Recipients have no obligation to the MGCSA or its members. They are, however, required to supply the MGCSA with current transcripts and to notify the MGCSA of any changes of address, school enrollment or other relevant information. Except as described in this brochure, no obligation is assumed by the MGCSA.

Apply Today

WinterTurf Field Day

UMN TROE Center- April 13, 2022





Thank you Maggie Reiter, for your efforts supporting the MGCSA over the last few years, and good luck with your new venture!! More information on WinterTurf studies later in this issue.

Renovating *Eau Claire Golf & Country Club*:

By: Nick Peinovich



I have been with Eau Claire Golf and Country Club since 2008, serving as an Assistant Superintendent until 2016 when I was given the reigns from long time Superintendent, John Granholt (38 years at ECGCC). Eau Claire Golf and Country Club was incorporated in 1901, then

renovated in 1928 by Harry Vardon and Charles Ramsdell.

Shortly after starting as Superintendent, ECGCC started discussions to renovate the boring, “amoeba like” bunkers. In fact, I took over as Superintendent on September 1st and a ‘course



Above: 2 sets of new forward tees were built on each hole. This hole, #16 short par 3, saw green expansion, rerouting the cart path, and 1 new bunker in addition to renovation of the 2 existing bunkers
 Opposite Page: Completed construction of the bunkers at the 9th green.

audit' was scheduled with the Green committee that coming Friday. The bunker discussion to that point had focused solely on replacing the existing sand with new, but I posed the question whether they were happy with the current bunker design. I was surprised at the excitement from the committee when we started talking about smaller, more classic shaped bunkers rather than the large, sand flashed bunkers we currently had.

That winter at the Golf Industry Show, I was introduced to Kevin Norby, ASGCS from Hereford Norby Golf Design. During the 2017 golf season, Kevin Norby made several trips to ECGCC and a Master Plan was introduced in the winter of 2018. What originally started as a bunker renovation quickly grew into a Master Plan. Aside from modern looking bunkers, the rest of the course was still mostly original and hadn't been very accommodating toward

lady and senior golfers. Kevin convinced us that a bunker renovation wouldn't be appropriate without some tee renovation since the bunkers wouldn't be utilized by half the membership without creating a shorter course. We'd already had difficulty retaining older members and the course was very long for lady golfers. It was an easy sell.

In addition, to tees and bunkers, the Master Plan included removing some of the

movement from the fairways for more uniform fairway widths, wider approaches to greens, enlarging a relatively small green on the 16th par 3, tree removal (of course) and moving the 7th green (par 4) about 30 yards back. Kevin concluded by looking over old aerials of the course, that the 7th green had been moved from the original location at some point. "This seemed likely since the green lacked many of the classic characteristics of the other holes. That green

New 7th green pad is under construction just right of the skidsteer. In addition, a fairway bunker was added and fairway widened.



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was very shallow, whereas most of our greens are very elevated with false fronts. It also was the smallest green on the course and prone to flooding. A beautiful little bend in Otter Creek, which bisects the course, was just calling out for a green about 30 yards behind the existing. Kevin recognized it immediately.

Kevin Norby and his partner Jon Schmenk had a goal to stay true to Vardon minimalist design and classic features of the Golden Age of golf course architecture. The master plan discussion was finalized in 2018 with Norby's designs eliminating half the bunker square footage while keep-

ing the same number of bunkers. Previously, the course had only 2 fairway bunkers, we now have 21. Big changes to the strategy off the tee. We went from about 73,000 square feet of bunkers to about 35,000 square feet. Better Billy Bunker liner was installed under 4-5" of 'Fredonia' bunker sand, a manufactured sand from Waupaca Sand and Gravel of Waupaca, Wisconsin. The native soils at ECGCC are very sandy and drainage wasn't a concern. Due to the excellent drainage of the site, the decision was made to keep the drainage system within the trap and not daylight it since the old bunkers never held water and would help keep cost



down. You may be asking, why go with a liner if the sand didn't hold water? Due to the native sandy soil, I recommended a liner to provide a buffer from the native sand which would mix with the expensive bunker sand creating contamination. The original plan speculation called for 50/50 Best sand from Ohio and manufactured sand, but later changed to Fredonia after discussion with several Superintendents from Southern Wisconsin.

I'm fortunate to have an excellent Green Chair in Dr. Lee Mayer, who is also a WSGA official and regularly gets to some

very high-end golf facilities for tournament setup. He began scheduling meetings with the Superintendent around their Tournament schedule and picking their brain. During a circuit of events in early 2021, he kept hearing about Fredonia bunker sand, and after hearing the players talk about how great it was; the decision was made to switch. The price was half of Best sand and I preferred the color. It's darker than Best sand and seemed more natural to western Wisconsin. Soil tests showed that the characteristics of the sand would be appropriate for a bunker sand

Opposite Page: Sod edges shaped and pea rock spread in preparation for the Better Billy bunker polymer.
Below: Joys of construction in the middle of play





Old 7th hole with shallow, flood prone green. This green would be moved 30 yards back over the natural bend in the creek.

and had proven well over BBB.

Construction started shortly after Labor Day 2021 and was completed in play, in 12 weeks. *I repeat, in play, 12 weeks!* We got lucky that Duininck was able to come in with a large crew starting September 1, and we finished with 2 large crews right before Thanksgiving. Mother nature was on our side too! My crew and I did all the bentgrass seeding on tees and fairways and Bluegrass seeding in roughs for recovery. New greens were seeded to '007' by Seed Research of Oregon, while tees and fairways were seeded with 'Penn Trio' by Tee 2 Green. The existing fairways have a lot of bentgrass, but of

the 'PennCross' variety. I wanted something that would match well but have some newer varieties. Mike Manthey at Midland Hills was influential since he hosted a walk around that spring where we were able to get close to Penn Links and really see it in the field next to some old bentgrass. I felt it blended very well next to the established bentgrass.

This project could not have been accomplished without a great team. The membership was 100% on board and very tolerant of playing around construction due to the leg work of Green Chairman, Dr. Lee Mayer. Dr. Mayer really helped to promote the project to the mem-

bership and explain what the return on investment will be. His experience as a WSGA official spoke volumes, we could not have gotten this project accomplished without his influence. I remember asking Jeff Johnson at Minikahda how he got his membership to buy into his regrassing. He stated that he had a very engaged member with a marketing company that he really allowed to run with the marketing of the project. With that knowledge and Dr. Mayer's enthusiasm, I really just stepped aside and let him lead that and provided input where appropriate.

Working with Norby Designs was hugely beneficial as

well. Kevin was great to work with, we had a large town hall meeting where we introduced the project to the membership, and he spoke very well in that setting. You could definitely tell that wasn't his first time in that setting, and he knew what to expect in terms of pushback and how to respond. I think what impressed me the most about Kevin was how considerate he was of our maintenance concerns. I don't have a big staff or budget and he was genuinely concerned that he wasn't adding to our workload. He regularly asked for my opinion on how we would maintain his designs for the long term. Chris Kleinsmith,

Previously large sand flashed bunkers on 9th green



Project Manager, from Duininck was a wealth of knowledge, and Project Superintendent Josh Buillion did a great job. Josh was relatively new with Duininck but very organized as you'd have to be to manage a huge crew like he had for this project. We certainly couldn't have done this project without my staff, and I'm fortunate to have a team of All-stars that aren't afraid to work hard. We did a ton of dormant seeding and were even laying sod in December in the snow. Moving irrigation, etc. in sloppy, cold conditions and they didn't complain once. I'd also be remiss to not mention Sam Bauer from Bauer Turf Consulting. Sam

and I grew up together working on the golf course since we were 16, and I'm sure lucky to have someone with vast renovation experience to bounce ideas off and walk me through what works and what doesn't.

With acres of dormant seeded turf and sod, a lengthy grow-in is to be expected this spring and early summer, but I expect to be fully established by late summer 2022. My goal is to be fully open by the time of our Member/Guest tournament at the end of June. So cross your fingers for a warm spring!





MGCSA Southeast Exposure Golf Event

Austin Country Club

Tuesday May 24th, 2022

Host: Brandon Bergene

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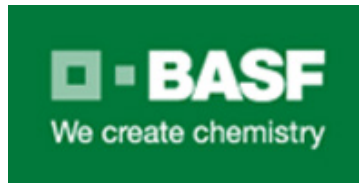
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MGCSA President Mike Sonnek presented Jack MacKenzie with a small gift of appreciation, a custom MGCSA paddle. He couldn't resist testing it out! Thank you again for all your service, Jack.



MGCSA Southwest Exposure Golf Event
Marshall Golf Club
Tuesday June 14th, 2022
Host: Lance Tykwinski

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The Pursuit of the *Perfect Employee:*

Does checking all the boxes truly bring value to your organization?

By: Tony Zerwas, Town & Country Club



In my short time in our industry, I've been fortunate to have the opportunity connect with Assistants and Superintendents across the country and participate in discussions regarding the current labor issues in the turf industry. While I write this article, there are 348 Assistant Positions open on the GCSAA Job Board. The consensus appears to be that there is a lot of open positions for Assistant Superintendents and not a lot of qualified people who are willing to fill the role.

I'd like to challenge that line of thinking.

Prior to coming into the turf industry, I worked in the public

sector and served in the military for over a decade. While working for the government (please don't hold that against me), I was lucky to have a wide variety of bosses. Some were phenomenal leaders; others were about as useless as a screen door on a submarine. I learned a lot from *all* of them. One of the things I learned was that just because someone checks all the boxes, doesn't mean they are a good fit for the organization. I learned this lesson the hard way.

I sat on interview panels for the agency that I had worked for. My role at the agency was expanding rapidly and I needed the additional help. Fortunately, my



Photo courtesy of the Minneapolis Golf Club

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boss saw this, and kick started the process for hiring another Digital Evidence Technician to work alongside me. We were in the middle of COVID-19 at the time, so we had limited applicants. One applicant, who I will call 'Doug,' moved along in the process and made it to the final interview panel which I sat on.

Doug checked all the boxes. He had prior experience in management and storage of digital media which went along hand in hand with what we did. He was familiar with the general rules regarding data releases. However, Doug didn't really seem like a go getter. Doug seemed to be applying for the job because he had to, not because he wanted to. We were trying to build a certain work culture that consisted of go getters, but Doug checked all the boxes for experience and education, so we moved forward and offered him the job. Doug accepted the job offer.

Fast forward a few weeks and Doug started working at our agency and began train-

ing. I was his trainer and was tasked with ensuring his development went smoothly.

It did not.

Over a two month period Doug showed up late to over 80% of his shifts. Despite providing consistent and clear expectations, Doug continued to show up late. It got to the point where I wasn't even mad, I was kind of impressed. I would ask Doug if the hours were difficult and he said they weren't, he just wasn't much of a morning person so that's why he always ran behind. In addition to the consistently late arrivals, Doug showed little motivation. It became very clear to me that although Doug checked the boxes and was a very nice guy, he wasn't a fit for what our team was trying to build. After multiple warnings, Doug was eventually let go.

Back to the drawing board we went.

We opened another hiring process, and this time received a

few more applications. We had a decent pool to pick from. We narrowed down the applicants to two finalists and scheduled final interviews. I was given the opportunity to sit on the panel for the final interviews. Applicant One, who we'll call Mary, checked all the boxes and was familiar with our agency and its processes. Training them in would have been a breeze! However, Mary seemed to be very melancholy and wasn't very motivated, which was not a fit for what we were trying to build.

Applicant Two, who we'll call Jim, did not check all the boxes, but it was very clear to us the Jim was bright, motivated, and wanted to be there. Jim was a fit for the culture we were trying to build. We offered Jim the job and they accepted.

Jim showed up for work and was a phenomenal employee from the get-go. Jim displayed a desire to learn and exceed expectations. Jim also showed up on time, which was greatly appreciated. I enjoyed train-



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ing in Jim. When I ultimately left the organization, I felt they were in good hands with Jim.

So, where am I going with this? What does it have to do with the turf industry? Here's where I'm headed with this conversation...

Are we turning away candidates that would be great fits for our organization because they don't check all the boxes?

I don't think there is a shortage of candidates out there. Is the industry *unintentionally* limiting their applicant pool by having stringent requirements for the Assistant Superintendent position? Theresa Whitmarsh, Executive Director of the Washington State Investment Board once said "If you exclude 50% of the talent pool, it's no wonder you find yourself in a war for talent." Yes, having a degree in Turf Management is ideal for the position. But is it really required to start out? If courses switch having a degree in Turf Management from a required qualification to a desired qualification, could that open up the applicant pool?

According to a 2016 study conducted by the Pew Research Center, only 12% of Americans think that a two year associate degree prepares students very well. The same study showed that only 16% of American college graduates believe their education prepared them for a well-paying job. With that being said, it's my opinion that although a degree is great to have, it is not the 'end all be all' indicator of whether someone can be a successful Assistant Superintendent or not.

Since I'm not a fan of talking about problems without offering solutions, I'd like to offer a solution. Instead of making a degree in Turfgrass Management a requirement, make it a desired qualification. Offer two different tiers of pay. One with a degree, one without a degree. It will give your new Assistant Superintendent something to strive for. If they don't have a degree, they can get a pay bump when they finish the program.

By opening up your applicant pool you can focus more on

hiring for the right fit for your organization, instead of just checking the boxes. Jim Collins once said "People are not your most important asset. The right people are." This couldn't

ring truer. If you focus more on the person and less on the processes they were involved in, you're on the right track to building the positive culture you want for your team.

Tony is currently completing GCSAA's Assistant Superintendent Certification Series (ASCS). This article was written as part of that process. If you are interested in becoming an certified assistant, find more information at: <https://www.gcsaa.org/education/certifications-exams/assistant-superintendent-certificate-series>

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Roll It Forward

By: Dave Kazmierczak



I remember it as plain today as when it happened some 34 years ago. My then girlfriend Denise and I went on a walk while visiting her sister in a freshly purchased house in an up-and-coming suburb called Woodbury. At the time, we were half-way through school at South Dakota State University. She was to be an engineer- the

smart one- and I was on my way to being a journalist- the not so smart and a little bit lazy one. On the walk, we took a turn and wound up on a street with construction beginning on giant, high end homes and then I saw that there was a golf course attached to the desired lots where the building



was commencing. I had always played golf and indicated that I would like to play this place sometime and ambled up the hill to the large clubhouse. I remembered inquiring to the price of playing Wedgewood Valley Golf Club at the time and while I don't recall the exact amount (probably \$30 or so-imag-



ine that!) I do remember walking back and saying to my future wife "Guess I won't be playing there!" Little did I know what the man upstairs had in store for me.

Upon graduation, my now wife decided to take a job in the greater Kansas City area. Having graduated myself, remarkably a year previ-

ous, I gladly gave up my sports editor's job at a weekly newspaper (for \$13,500 a year) to try to find a journalism job in Kansas City. After a few months of trying that, Denise decided a new husband sitting on the couch and not contributing anything wasn't what she envisioned in marriage, and indicated it was in my best interest to at least find a job- any job- until something in my career came along. The add read: "Laborers needed, Hallbrook Country Club, apply now." I had worked maintenance at Brookings Country Club for one summer at college, plus some bit stuff spring and fall with no great love acquired but I didn't mind the work so what the hell- I signed on in March 1991.

It was there that two things happened. One, I began working at very high-end Tom Fazio designed club and two, I met Chris Mock, the then lone assistant that ran the up to 43-person crew at Hallbrook basically by himself. It was his love, enthusiasm and relentless passion for the job that was almost intoxicating that made me decide by the end of the season that this was indeed what I wanted to do with my life. I enrolled in turf school at Kansas State University Spring 1992 and in two years got my four-year degree while working every available day I wasn't in Manhattan at Hallbrook. After one season as a second assistant at Kansas City CC, it was back to Hallbrook for three and a half years as assistant. In the



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middle of those three and a half years, Denise and I were given twin daughters at 28 weeks of pregnancy following the birth of my son three years previously. With no family to help and limited resources, we were in a very tough situation. In 1998 we moved to Minnesota, had one weekend to find a home and wound up in..... Woodbury.

Initially I found employment as an assistant at Mississippi Dunes Golf course which had its ups and downs, but after five months I sat down and did a financial analysis and discovered that after paying for a nanny for three kids, who quite often didn't show up, I was netting about \$35 a

week. I had to bite the bullet and become Mr. Mom for two years. Without a doubt, the hardest job I have ever done. Luckily, the aforementioned Wedgewood Valley Golf Course, which I had walked up to some ten years back, entered the picture again. I was hired part-time at what was now called Prestwick Golf Club. It allowed me to keep my interest and career going by employing me to cut cups in the am (5-8), get home so wife could go to her job and then come back to do some spraying in the evenings. It was this bit part that allowed me to establish relationships with the crew and mechanic and ultimately led to me being hired as the Superinten-

dent when the position opened up in the summer of 2000.

I started on January first, 2001 and have been here ever since. Words simply cannot describe my continual appreciation for the people that hired me for this job and have allowed me to keep this job. I have been blessed with great ownership at Prestwick, a great head pro to work with, fantastic members, a wonderful piece of property but most of all, outstanding assistants, mechanics and ground-level kids and retirees alike, that make coming into work enjoyable. We all agree that this is the best job you can have even though there are many trying days and things that don't

always go your way. The smell of fresh-cut bluegrass, the sounds of wildlife cascading through the trees, the vision of multiple workers and mowers working in unison on a sun-drenched sparkling morning are what first drew all of us to this profession and I still get high just off the simple aspects of the job and off the days just described. GCM isn't just a job, it's something that grabs your soul and makes you passionate about it. We all feel that, some more than others, but it's there in each and every one of us.

I often wish I could go back in time. For many reasons of course, but I would love to go back and walk along with the





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two 20 year-olds tramping up Wedgewood Drive towards that clubhouse. There is much I would say to them, but at that moment I surmise I would take great pleasure in telling the journalist that he would one day run that golf course he thought he would never play for 22 seasons and, God willing, a good deal more. The look on his face would be precious.

I appreciate Jamie Bezanson, my former assistant for nominating me for this article and the kind words stated about me in his article. I always wanted my assistants to come to Prestwick as employees and leave as close friends, and for the most

part that has happened. That is why I am nominating my friend Adam Lesmeister as my Friend it Forward nominee. Adam served as my lead assistant for seven years before joining the sales side of the industry. I hired Adam in an interview over the phone. He was sweating in Texas at the time, and I think just about any superintendent will tell you sometimes you just get a feeling about people when you are hiring, and I knew he was the right guy at the right time. He exhibited the passion I look for, over the phone no less, and never disappointed me in that regard. I can tell he has taken that passion to his new career.





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MGCSA Members Only
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@ the St. Paul Saints

Sunday, July 31 st, 2022

Saints vs. Iowa Cubs

2:07 First Pitch

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\$15* - Member

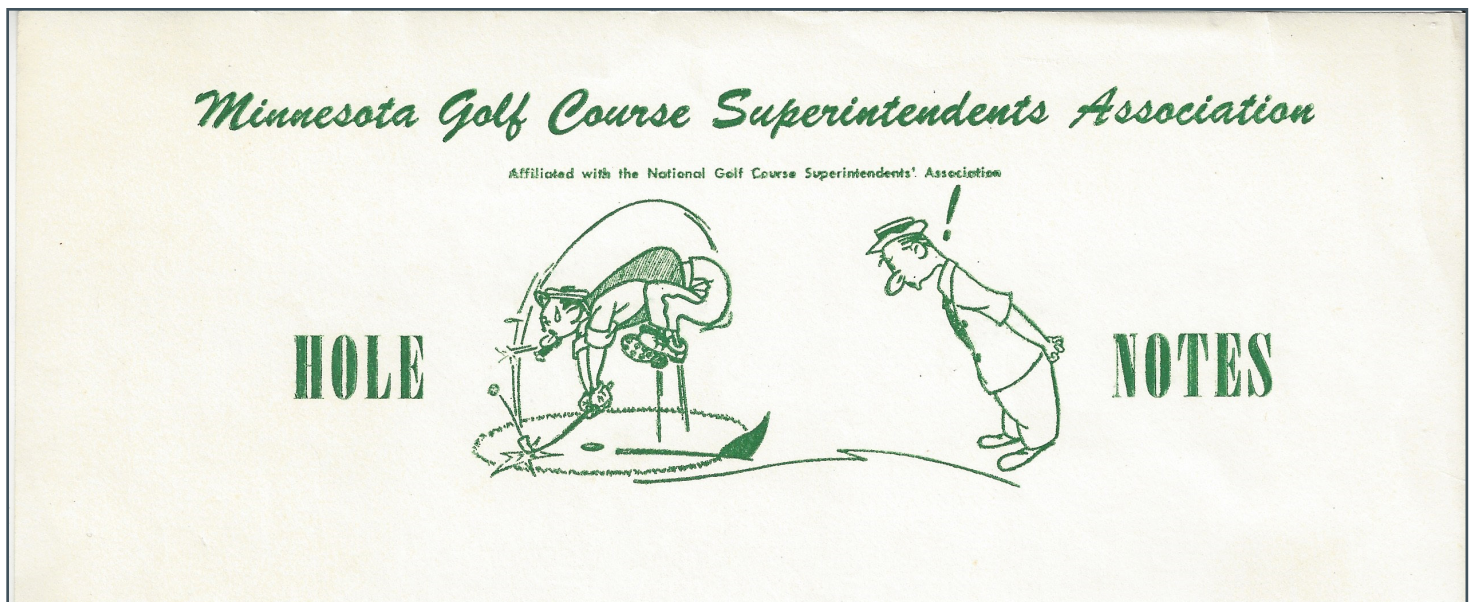
\$14- Family (*kids under 2 do not need ticket*)

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GOLF COURSE MUSINGS

Share your strange, funny, and unique
photos from your time on a golf course?
Send your images to chris@mgcsa.org.



A vintage Hole Notes newsletter, April 1962.

Get to Know 'em: *Joe Rolstad*

By: Joe Berggren, Hole Notes Editor

FACILITY INFO

Golf Course: TPC Twin Cities

Public or Private: Private

Number of Holes: 18

Fulltime employees: 7

Seasonal employees (not including full time): 26

Number of employees of entire facility at peak season: 120

Types of grass:

Bentgrass Greens, Tees and Fairways. Bluegrass/Fescue Rough

Total course acreage: 235

Greens acreage: 3.1

Tee acreage: 5.5

Fairway acreage: 30

Rough acreage: 58

Driving range acreage: 13

Range tee acreage: 2



Twin Cities



Personal Turf Facts:

How many years have you been in your current position?

2 Months

How many years have you been in the turf industry?

16 years

Where else have you worked?

Superintendent Fargo Country Club, Assistant Superintendent TPC Twin Cities, Assistant Superintendent Winged Foot Golf Club, Assistant Superintendent Fresh Meadow Country Club, Intern Golden Valley Country Club – Yellowstone Club – Minneapolis Golf Club.

Turf School Attended (if any)?

B.S. Sports and Urban Turfgrass Management from NDSU

TPC Twin Cities



Industry thoughts

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

Practice Facility

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

How this industry which has struggled to offer a competitive hourly wage, will move forward.

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

Competitive hourly wages, rethinking work schedules, respecting life outside the golf course and educating young people that this is a career opportunity.

What piece of equipment do you want? Not a need, a want.

Salsco CRV Core Recovery Vehicle

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

There's no doubt in 2022 prices are high and equipment availability is a real struggle. Seasonal hourly rates overall are low but see changes happening currently. I have had no issue finding seasonal employees for the 2022 season, compared to the previous two years.

FUN FACTS

Have you ever met a celebrity? Who?

Yes, Stanley Hudson (Leslie David Baker)



Fargo Country Club

What is your favorite vacation spot?

North Shore

What is your favorite memory of starting your turf career?

First year working on a golf course, I was late one hot summer day and was given the job of washing and applying Armor All on all course par aide trash cans... I was not late again that summer.

What is your favorite job on the golf course?

Topdressing and spraying weeds

What is your least favorite job on the golf course?

Mowing rough, enjoyable for 5 minutes

Have you played any famous golf courses? Which ones?
Cypress Point Club, Winged Foot, Bethpage, Pinehurst

Who is your dream foursome?
Tiger, John Daly and my brother

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



Fargo Country Club

*If you would like to participate in a future
Get to Know 'Em, please reach out to Editor
Joe Berggren at jberggren@golfthewilds.com*



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Nick White
Golf Course Superintendent



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Dollar Spot

Brown Patch

Anthracnose

Gray Leaf Spot

Snow Mold

*Dollar spot, brown patch, anthracnose, gray leaf spot and snow mold were the five most common diseases according to a national survey among golf course superintendents.

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Career Fairs

By: Chris Aumock

MGCSA has been actively participating in career fairs over the last few weeks. On April 20th, I joined Nikk Dickerson for an opportunity to speak with students in the Owatonna School District about becoming a Golf Course Superintendent. Then on April 25th, Gary Deters with the UMN, joined me at our booth at the state fairgrounds coluseum for the State FFA Convention. Over 3600 students registered for this event, and we spoke with hundreds of young students from all corners of the state!

This past week, I attended the Forest Lake High School Ag Day! This was a very impressive event that brought almost every classroom into our area throughout the school day. Another great opportunity to talk with hundreds of students about the perks and opportunities within our industry.

We will continue to pursue opportunities that allow us to engage and expose our proffession to young students.

Opposite Page Photos:

Top left and right: Gary Deters and students at the State FFA Convention at the State Fairgrounds Coliseum.

Middle right: Nikk Dickerson at an Owatonna Schools career fair.

Bottom left and right: Forest Lake High School Ag day



Greens Height Cool Season Turfgrass Survival Under Ice Encasement

By: *Andrew Hollman,*
University of Minnesota



The variability in temperatures and precipitation during our winters has led to more golf courses in Minnesota experiencing accumulation of ice on their golf greens for longer durations. In other parts of the country and world, turfgrass managers deal with this predicament yearly. The University of Minnesota is working in collaboration with other researchers in the United States and from the Norwegian Institute of Bioeconomy Research (NIBIO) to investigate differences among species used for golf greens in surviving a long period of ice encasement.

Plots for the ICEBREAKER trial were seeded July 13, 2021, at the Turfgrass Research Outreach and Education (TROE) Center on the St. Paul campus, on a USGA specified putting green. The cultivars 'Radar' Chewings fescue (*Festuca ru-*

bra ssp. *commutata*), 'Cezanne' slender creeping red fescue (*Festuca rubra* ssp. *litoralis*), 'Luminary' creeping bentgrass (*Agrostis stolonifera*), 'Nordlys' velvet bentgrass (*Agrostis canina*), and 'Two Putt' annual bluegrass (*Poa annua* var. *reptans*), were seeded at 1.5 lbs./1000 ft. A border of 'S1' creeping bentgrass was seeded to provide a turf surrounding the repetitions. Frequent fertilization, irrigation and topdressing allowed the plots to fill in and grow at a mowing height of 0.140 inches by the fall of 2021.

Once growth slowed and mowing was no longer needed in fall 2021, the plot was marked out to allow for the placement of aluminum edging around each of the four replications. Although each

replication measured 1x5 meters, the barriers were 2x6 meters to keep the plots 0.5 meters from the edge of the ice and eliminate any potential air movement from outside the iced over area. Four environmental sensor nodes were installed to measure O₂, CO₂, temperature, and soil moisture, with two being inside the iced areas and two being

outside. Metal hardware cloth and pvc piping was used to protect the cables from the local coyotes which seem keen on chewing on them (Figure 1). Next, it was a waiting game for the temperatures to drop enough to freeze the soil and become conducive to making ice. Luckily for us, the weather cooperated and by the end of December 2021 there was 4 inches of ice covering the plots (see accompanying article by Gary Deters).



Figure 1. Sensor nodes installed on the trial with coverings to protect from coyote damage

Winter temperatures preserved the ice and as our target date of 75 days of ice coverage approached, we developed a plan on how to remove the ice. We practiced mechanical removal of the ice on our parking lot using our aerator equipped with solid tines and found depth settings to remove from 0.5 to 2.0 inches of ice. However, the forecasted weather maintained cold temperatures with limited sunlight, so we held off removal to prevent mechanical damage or potential damage from suddenly exposed turf experiencing sub-freezing temperatures. With this decision we decided to see if we could keep the ice for 90 days,

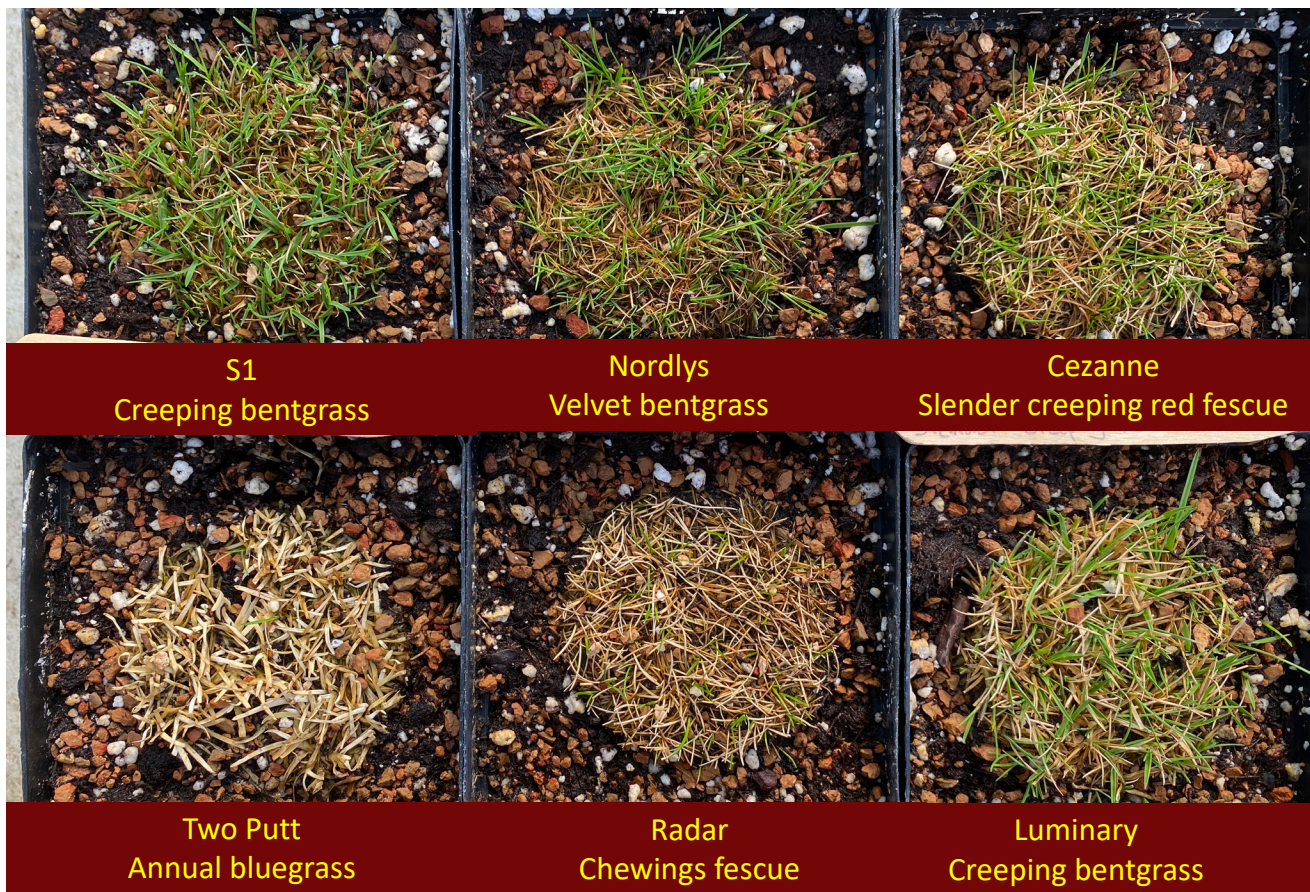


Figure 2. Plugs taken from the ICEBREAKER trial after growing under greenhouse conditions for 5 days (April 11, 2022).

as this is sometimes cited for a period after which we should be concerned about creeping bentgrass. The weather changed and a warmup in the middle of March had the ice almost completely gone from the plots by the 21st. Data collection was ready to begin when rain, snow and cold temperatures returned. The spring greenup we were hoping to capture in 10 days after the ice melt was not happening.

To help attendees at our Winter-

Turf Field Day in April see how the species performed, small plugs were taken from the plots on April 6th and placed in the greenhouse to grow. After just 5 days, growth indicated the annual bluegrass was dead or severely damaged, and the Chewings fescue also did not fare well (Figure 2). This status did not change after 8 days, but the extra time allowed us to identify that the growth from the annual bluegrass was a stolon from the creeping bentgrass border.

We have continued to collect field measurements which have confirmed what we saw with the plugs. The annual bluegrass was completely killed and the few specimens of green that appeared in the plots were from a stray creeping bentgrass or fine fescue plant. The Chewings fescue was severely damaged with the potential for recovery being questionable. Slender creeping red fescue showed damage but

appears to be able to recover.

Both the creeping bentgrass and the velvet bentgrass were tolerant of the ice. Although the velvet bentgrass turns purple with the cold temperatures, data suggests it may be more efficient in using sunlight during cold temperatures in the spring (Figure 3). We plan on repeating this study next winter to see if we get similar results.

Figure 3. ICEBREAKER plots on May 2, 2022.



Making Ice, Killing Grass

By: Gary Deters,
University of Minnesota

Through research and experience we know creeping bentgrass (*Agrostis stolonifera*) has a better chance of surviving under extended periods of ice than *Poa annua* (annual bluegrass). When I was a golf course superintendent, one of my biggest concerns during winter was the formation of ice on greens from winter rainfalls or melting snow. In the fall we took preventative measures of creating channels with the sod cutter to help divert water. Fortunately, with all the worried times I had, we never lost a significant amount of greens from ice damage, only low areas in the fairways where water had no place to go.

The ICEBREAKER project, a collaboration between the University of Minnesota and turfgrass scientists in Norway, aims to better understand which species will do best under extended ice



cover. At our research center, this required the formation of a 4" layer of ice for a minimum of 75 days in order to hopefully see turf injury or potential death from the five selected species of turf. As a turfgrass manager creating ice seemed to go against everything I tried to do as a superintendent.

The aluminum barrier was installed in the fall before the soil was frozen. The next step was to receive help from Mother Nature. We needed to have cold temperatures and frozen ground to get the ice layer started. The first day of ice development was December 16th (Figure 1) with so-so results. We were able to get about ¼-½" of ice the first couple days. Even though it was cold, it was not quite ideal for the quick freeze and thicker

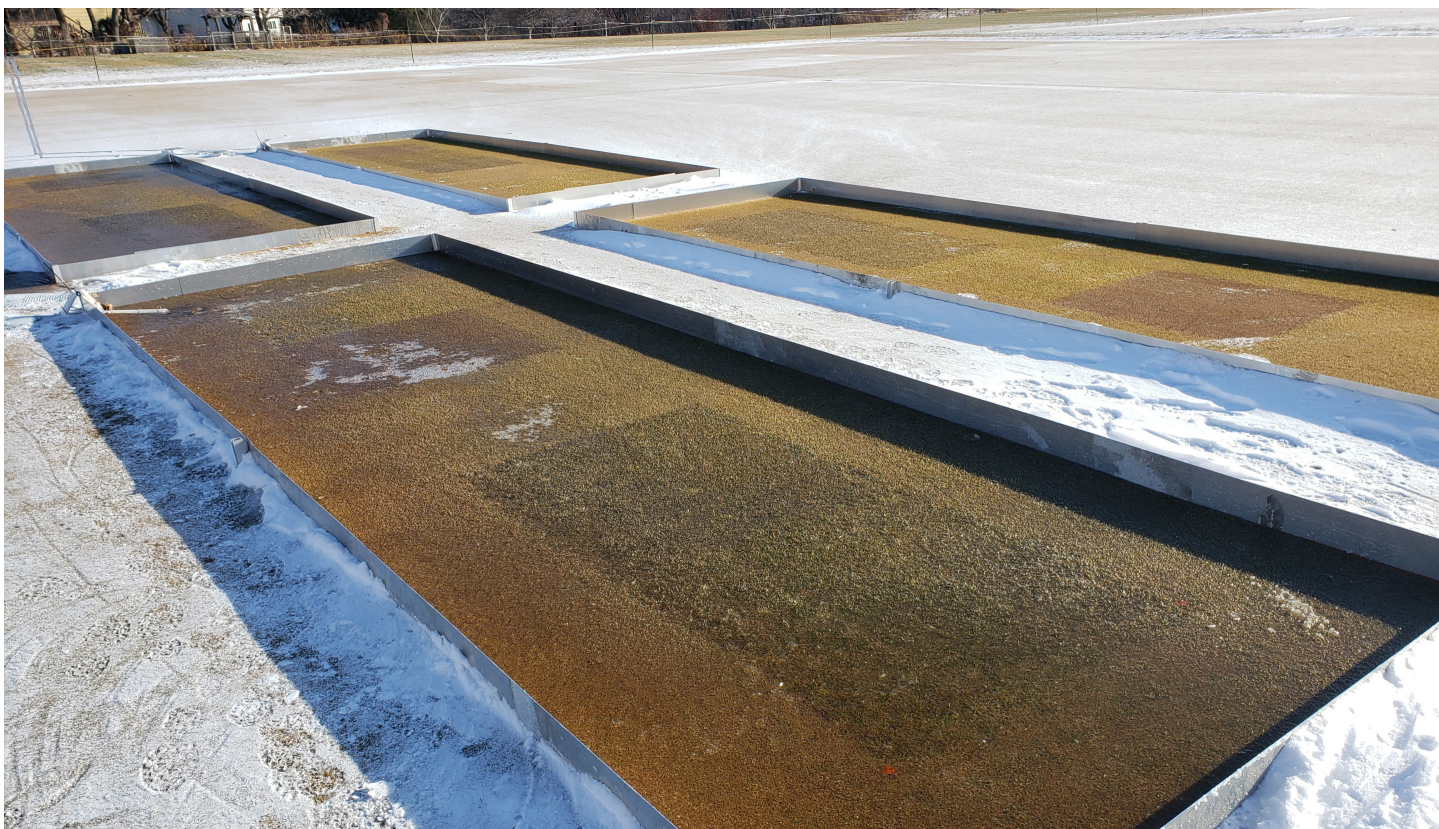


Figure 1 - December 16th: Day one of making ice. Photo - Gary Deters

ice development we needed. Everything changed the week of December 20th. Morning temperatures began below zero which was exactly what we needed. Over the next week we were able to successfully achieve the four inches of ice which was required. The winter was excellent in regard to frigid temperatures and we were able to keep the ice for 90 days.

Since the experiment took place at our research plots where water isn't available during the winter, we needed a 200-gallon tank which was filled with water

from the greenhouse. We used an electric pump and generator to apply the water through a nozzle which is used to syringe greens during the summer. It took about 2300 gallons of water to complete the ice layer. After we were satisfied with the ice inside all four aluminum barriers (Figure 2) we just hoped the weather would cooperate with us the rest of the winter. As I mentioned earlier, the cold temperatures allowed us to maintain ice throughout the winter, and hopefully the results will lead to a better understanding of winter injury.



Making Ice, Killing Grass: Figure 2 - December 29th: Ice layer completed. Photo - Gary Deters

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Studying the Effect of “False Spring” in Tall Fescue

By: Florence Sessoms
University of Minnesota

False spring events are an understudied effect of climate changes. These stretches (lasting a couple days to multiple weeks) of unexpectedly warmer temperatures in late winter or early spring followed by sudden freezing events (generally early April), result in important economic losses, especially for fruit producers. False spring events can also impact turfgrass species in a variety of ways: (1) turfgrass spring growth and establishment could be reduced leading to an increased incidence of weeds such as crabgrass, (2) increased soil erosion and nutrient leaching may occur because of poor root development, and (3) the turf could have lower resistance to summer stresses such as drought and heat.

The University of Minnesota was awarded a grant from the Ontario Turfgrass Research



Foundation to study the effect of winter de-acclimation, as would occur during a false spring, on the freeze tolerance of turf-type tall fescue cultivars. We decided to focus this research on tall fescue because of its tolerance to wear, heat and drought while requiring less fertilizer inputs. The newly developed turf-type cultivars could be considered as a good replacement option for Kentucky bluegrass, especially in situations where irrigation is infrequent. Tall fescue is, however, known for its sensitivity to some winter stresses (snow mold and ice encasement) and little is known about its ability to survive freezing temperatures after cold de-acclimation.

Therefore, our objective was to evaluate tall fescue freezing tolerance after short false spring

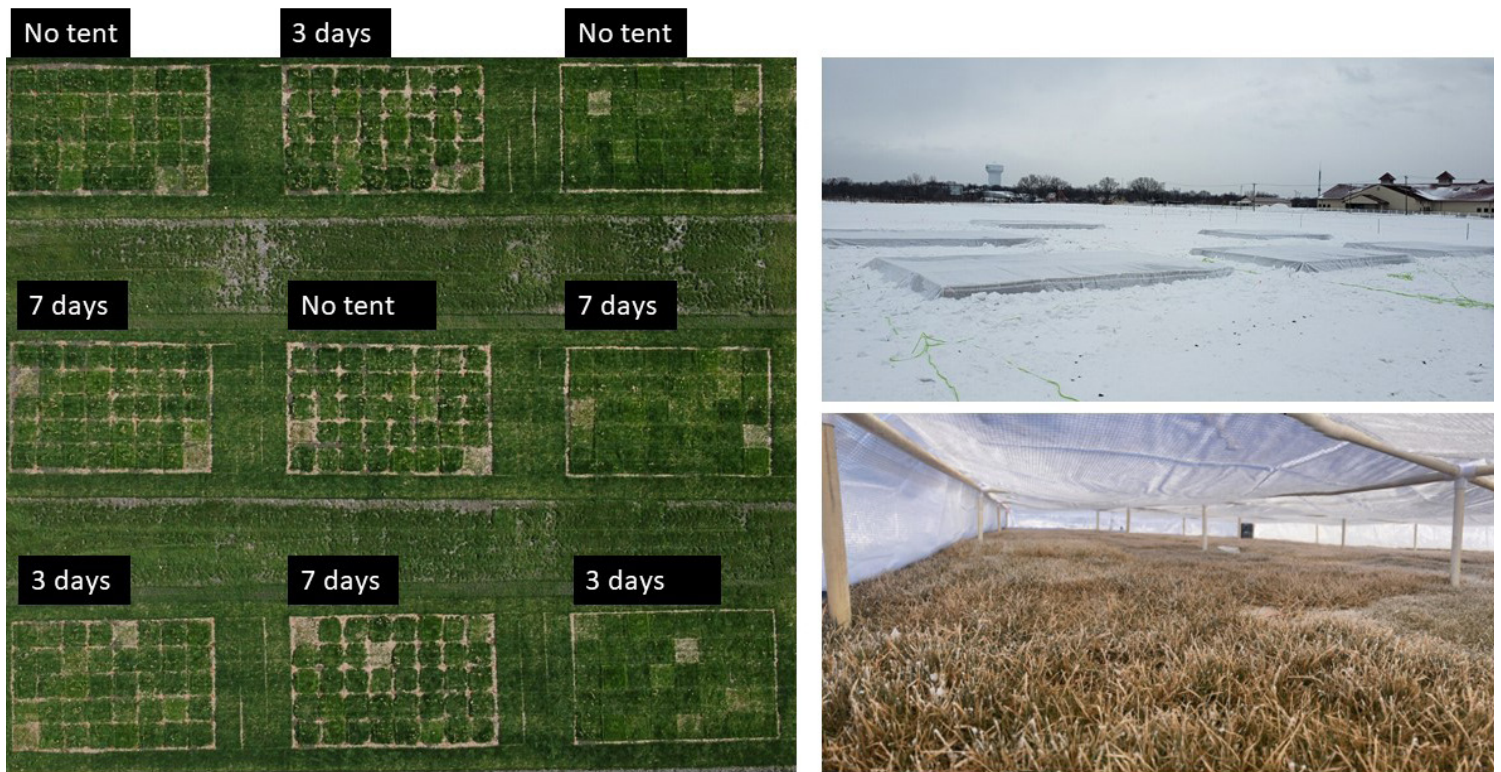


Figure 1: Layout of the trial area for a tall fescue “false spring” experiment (left). Exterior (right, top image) and interior (right, bottom image) of the dehardening tents used in this experiment during February 2022.

events under both controlled environment and field conditions.

For our field experiment, we tested 30 tall fescue cultivars based on cultivar seed availability. Plots were seeded on September 08, 2021, to allow a good establishment stand before winter; our preliminary experiments in controlled conditions showed that older tall fescue plants possess higher freezing tolerance. The field area consisted of 9 blocks allowing us to assign 3 blocks to three differ-

ent treatments: (i) no false spring (control); (ii) false spring of 3 days; (iii) false spring of 7 days. Starting on Valentine’s Day 2022, we artificially increased the temperature of several blocks by building a clear tent and using portable heaters (Figure 1). The 7-day false spring treatment was first to start, and a few days later the tents were built on the 3-day false spring plots.

At the end of the artificial false spring events, the tents were removed, and each block experienced normal

winter conditions, along with very cold freezing temperature. Snow was manually removed before and after the tents were built. During the spring, we took digital images for the evaluation of the percentage of green cover. Snow melted in late March 2022, but the cold temperatures of this year's spring did not permit "normal" green-up. On April 11, the average percentage of green cover in the control blocks was only 1.46%, but higher, and statistically different than the two false spring events: 0.32% for the 3-day treatment and 0.50% for the 7-day treatment.

On May 2, after the first mowing to remove dead shoot biomass, the average percentage of green of the control blocks was 37.56%, and still statistically different from the two false spring events:

28.35% for the 3-day treatment and 30.44% for the 7-day treatment. On both dates, no statistical differences were observed between the two false spring treatments.

Our preliminary results showed that the control blocks with untouched snow cover had a slightly higher green cover when snow melted compared to the false spring treated blocks and maintained their higher green cover difference through early spring. We also observed that even 7 days of false spring did not result in any death for any of the cultivars tested. However, a slowdown in spring green-up establishment was observed for both false spring treatments. This experiment will be repeated next year to confirm these observations.

*Follow the UMN Turf Blog
for project updates!*

From the *High Grass*

By: Chris Aumock

Is this where you thought you would be?

What did you want to be when you grew up? Maybe it was one of the stereotypical ones, firefighter, movie star, astronaut, and then probably superintendent. Wait, what? That's an actual job? I'm sure many of us, myself included, came to that same realization one day. What a great job, working outdoors on a golf course every day, sign me up! From where I started, I wouldn't have guessed this is where I would end up. There are plenty of us that didn't necessarily intend to follow a path into golf. Not only is that OK, but it's probably extremely beneficial to help one properly grow.

As a kid, I truly don't remember being asked the question, "What do you want to be someday," but my answer would have been professional hockey player. However, being rather scrawny,



that wasn't going to be a reality. After high school, I actually started out as an art major! Yes, you heard me correctly. I got accepted into a program for Industrial Design. Basically, that's designing every type of product that we consume. Seemed like a viable job opportunity! I still think about it all the time, when I buy a product that just doesn't work, or look like it should. Some of my vendors have heard my thoughts on certain items. I tell my wife all the time, I could have designed this better! Mainly though, I wanted to design cars. I always loved cars growing up, specifically Audi's. Mostly because my dad would always buy and trade cars rather quickly, often older Audi's. I asked him once

in my college years, how many cars he has owned in his life. At the time the number was 52!

Starting college as an art student meant we had to do all the drawing classes and such for the first two years. There wouldn't be any computer design programs until my junior year. That's where the problem arose! First semester in Drawing I, a class where you would sit around in a circle and draw the objects in the middle. At the end of each class, we would walk around the circle and look at everyone's work. Most of them were very talented artists, but my work could be summed up best as, probably 4th grade quality! The thing was, I was never proficient in art, and had only taken one class in high school, a senior year filler class. So, it was clear that this wasn't going to work out. The professor was kind enough to tell me halfway through the first semester.

What about being a professional hockey player? I never wanted to stop playing hockey, so after this failed art degree, it was time to go back home to try and play junior hockey. Not playing for

over a year wasn't going to be problem, figuring I'd just try out and get back into it. On the first day of tryouts, I decided orange juice and raisin bran would be a good breakfast. After a year and half away from the game, this became what should have been an obviously poor choice. Things got better, or no, actually they didn't. On day two, a poorly executed pull move set me right in the path of a defender, and I got knocked out. This had to be it, right? Not yet, junior hockey is all about money. So, if I was capable, and cleared of the concussion, next weekend's round two tryouts were there for another chance, if another check cleared of course.

Thankfully I did make the team and had a good season getting back into shape. I obviously knew I was never going pro at this point, but still loved the game. After that season, it was time for the defining moment in my maturity, as we all have at some point in our lives. There was an offer to keep playing, but it was not going to be the right opportunity for me. It was difficult to give up that dream, as ill-fated as it was going to be, but necessary.

Walking away from that path you or I wanted to be on is hard. In the end, it allowed my life to be so much more rewarding.

It was now time to find something new to follow. I had taken that year off from school to play hockey, so it was time to get back to school. Century College had a Sports Facility Management program, and it was time to try one of those old passions again, golf. It was finally time to get on the current path that has supported my goals so well. Most of us aren't following a straight line. We shift and adapt as our needs, ambitions, and goals alter. It didn't take too long to understand that this was finally a path worth following.

Why am I telling you all this?

Who knew we would all end up here, or who knows where all our seasonal staff will go. They have their plans now, but will that be the path they follow? Maybe they will come back to that forgotten goal or job and try again. Maybe there's someone in your group that could be trained or molded into our profession.

As we work to find solutions to labor issues, our first place to look is within our own staff.

Every once and a while, I would get a staff member to engage, and show interest in this line of work. Up until recently, we had an employee at the park board who was actively interested in turf management. He attended the Great Lakes School of Turfgrass Science one winter and was excited about the future. Within our system though, we couldn't help him. We couldn't give him more responsibility or an increased role due to union contracts. He was advised by a few of us to go work at another golf course. Somewhere they could provide him with a better role, and further his education and experience. Unfortunately, he decided to leave the golf course for a full-time offer from his winter employer at a distillery. He chose to leave because we couldn't offer him an opportunity for advancement. I tried to prepare him for one of you, but unfortunately, he chose another path. Was there something more we could have done for him, to keep that investment

within our ranks? I still think about that often and I haven't decided yet. There are opportunities for us to retain and educate staff, and it will need to be more of a priority into the future.

We are working to find solutions to these staffing issues for the future. More pressingly, what can we do now? We can support those individuals that are interested and engaged in our line of work. We can teach and educate the seasonal's that may not be showing an interest, but through time and work may develop those desires. Let's get those engaged individuals involved in the Great Lakes School in the winters, a cost-effective learning tool to truly gauge an individu-

al's interest. MGCSA may even support them for that tuition!

Some say, kids don't want to work these days, I believe they just want someone to tell them how to work. That's where we need to reengage, if we haven't, and teach them ourselves. Much like Matt Cavanaugh said recently, we have forgotten our role to develop young talent.

As we look for answers to staffing issues, let's not forget to look at what we have, and be grateful that we even have that much. There won't be one simple answer to alleviate our staffing issues, just as there will never be one straight, simple path for individuals to find their way to us.

MGCSA NEW MEMBERS - *May 2022*

Seth Triplett	B	Meadowbrook Golf Course
Devan Landry	C	StoneRidge Golf Course
Elliot Rudd	B	Ridges at Sand Creek
Shane Benson	D	Royal Golf Club
Michael Freeberg	C	Bearpath Golf & Country Club
Andrea Brischke	Facility	Tanners Brook Golf Club