HOLENOTES

The Official Publication of the MGCSA V. 59, #6 December 2024



Stewardship Grant Program: Lake Miltona Presidential Insights: Mark Michalski Staff Trials at Spring Hill GC





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HOLENOTES

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December 2024

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Presidential Perspective

By: Nikk Dickerson Faribault Golf Club





Greetings and Salutations,
To borrow a line from one of
my favorite movies growing up,
I can't tell you how humbled I
am to serve as your President
for this upcoming year.

First, I want to express my heartfelt thanks to Mark Michalski as he finished his presidential term, and to all the incredible past Presidents I've worked alongside—Scott Thayer, Mike Sonnek, and Matt Cavanaugh. Their leadership has been instrumental in guiding our association, and I've learned

a great deal from collaborating with each of them on the many challenges and opportunities we face as an association.

Looking back, the board has come a long way since I joined, especially since we were still dealing with covid protocols when I jumped in. My first three board meetings were either virtual or held outdoors, reflecting the era's challenges. Today, I'm proud of the growth and resilience we've shown as an association, and I'm optimistic about building on

the momentum of the past four years and I think that shows in the numbers we've added in the last few years as new members.

Our work is far from finished. At the forefront of everything we do is our mission: "Advancing the art and science of golf course management." This mission drives every initiative, whether it's organizing educational events like the Mega last week or fostering outreach programs year-round. A special shout-out should go out to Chris, whose tireless behind-the-scenes work ensures our mission remains the core of our efforts. When you see Chris at an upcoming event, be sure to thank him—his dedication often goes above and beyond expectations.

Looking ahead, we already have 19 events on the 2025 calendar. I'm planning to attend as many as possible, and as a board we try to have representation at every event. These events are an excellent opportunity to connect, so if you see me or one of the



other board members, please don't hesitate to say hello. I promise I'm approachable, and I'd love to hear your thoughts.

In the coming months, the board will hold a strategic planning meeting, something we do every few years to ensure we're aligned with our goals and we haven't strayed too far off from the priorities that were set at the previous meetings. These meetings have hatched ideas like increasing support to turf scholarship, the member rebate program and the stewardship grant. All great programs and if you have questions about them check out the website for more information except for the member rebate that was a one time thing a couple years ago. If you have ideas or suggestions for things you'd like us to think about or focus on, please don't hesitate to reach out—my email is nikk@faribaultgolf.com.

Finally, I want to reflect on last week's Mega event, which also hosted our annual meeting. With over 100 attendees each day and an outstanding lineup

of speakers, it was a success. For those who couldn't make it, I hope you'll consider joining an upcoming event in the next few months as next season will be here before you know it. These gatherings aren't just about education—they're about building community and advancing our profession.

Whether you come to learn from a speaker, explore a new topic, or simply connect with peers, every event offers a chance to grow. I know there are a couple things I'll be looking into on my course and I even heard a few book titles that I plan to check out before next season. So remember we are all here to help advance our profession and even a casual conversation might provide valuable insight or spark a new idea that can transform your approach at your course.

Here's to another productive and a little less up and down year ahead. Let's continue advancing our profession together!

Best regards, Nikk

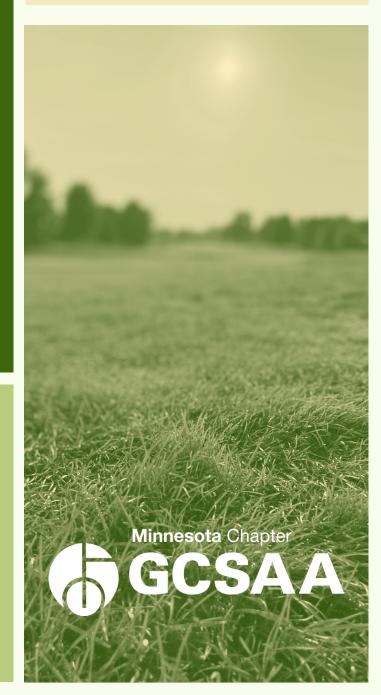


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MGCSA STEWARDSHIP GRANT PROGRAM:

LAKE MILTONA GOLF COURSE BY: TOM BLANK





The second landing zone of our 18th hole – a par 5 that finishes on an extended plateau like structure - has had a drainage issue since 2008. The third and final phase of a full renovation was left incomplete, leaving the last leg of a well fed twelve inch drain just 160-yards short of its retention holding area. Resultingly, the final outlet surface drained along the edge of the fairway leaving it much too wet to be mowed at a fairway height. A tight, challenging bottleneck in this area is what our golfers have become accustomed to.

With the help of the MGCSA Stewardship Grant we were able to add the crucial last section of tile to greatly improve an under whelming portion of the golf course. The supplies were acquired in September and all work was completed after our closing in mid-October. We utilized a mini excavator with a two-foot bucket. A gradual six-foot drop was present over the course of the run allowing us plenty of decline to work with. The first section was easy digging and took about two hours to complete.

A 90-degree corner in the routing was where we chose to install a surface inlet where additional runoff from the fairway could be most easily collected. The final run of excavation proved to be far more difficult. Two pine trees had to be navigated around and we also discovered a previous landowner's rock bury pit. The end of the line daylights on the edge of an existing wetland.

After installing the tile in the trench and connecting it to the proper fittings, we backfilled

with the existing soil, gradually compacted and smoothed with a sandpro. Additional topsoil and seeding will take place in the spring. Finally, sometime next season the fairway mowing lines will be expanded to reclaim a larger landing area for golfers. The whole project took approximately 22 labor hours and was aided significantly with the help of a borrowed Topcon digital transit, a mini excavator we possess and the funding from the MGCSA for the tile itself.







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PRESIDENTIAL INSIGHTS 2024 MGCSA President: Mark Michalski

By: Chris Aumock



"I love this job, its all I ever wanted to do, but how do I say that now if I'm leaving this job?"

The next few weeks will see the end of Mark Michalski's career!

On the golf course that is, at least for now. His time as MGCSA President has recently ended and he is now prepping for a shift away from the golf course into operating a tree farm. Before that happens, we always want to look back on our board Presidents and appreciate their efforts and the willingness to volunteer their time. Every winter, we host a Past Presidents Luncheon, with this year being hosted by Mark at Chisago Lakes Golf Course. Before that event, we sat down and chatted about his career, life, and what comes next for him and the MGCSA.

When I took over this role from Jack a few years back, I didn't really know Mark very well. I had an interview with him and Roger for the TPC 2nd Assistant

a decade ago, and I remember playing golf with Mark, Isaac Kasper, and Justin Bicek at an assistant's golf event at TPC in 2016. Mark also was not on the board that hired me, having joined the board just after that process. My first chance to learn more about Mark really came in March, when he and I travelled to the Annual Chapter Leader's Symposium at GCSAA headquarters in Kansas.

We spent 3 days together, talking about the MGCSA, life, and golf, while working with our national colleagues to learn and grow our future board efforts. That time was invaluable to me, to see what qualities and ideas Mark would bring to the MGCSA board. He quickly became very clear that he has a strong passion for his interests, whether that's on the golf course, board duty, being an EMT, or more specifically his family.

Mark started playing golf when his dad found an old set of clubs in the dumpster. He split up the set between Mark and his brother John, giving Mark



the odd numbered clubs, and John the even ones. That's all it took for them to get hooked on golf. He soon began frequenting Silver Bay Golf Course and spending the days playing golf with his brother. As he hit 16 years old and after

two years of hanging drywall already, yes, your math is correct, Mark began working on the grounds crew for Norma O'Leary at Silver Bay. Those years were formative. and helped grow the initial interest in turf, yet it wasn't a direct line into this profession. He

made several different stops along the way.

Mark started out attending a bible college, then did bible counseling in North Carolina. After coming home, he coached sports in Silver Bay, became an EMT like his father, made his way to Anoka Tech, and then finally on up to Crookston. From there, the path started to get clearer, but it didn't stop him from working on campus doing research as well for Kristie Walker. An

internship at **TPC** under Roger Stewart came first. followed by job searches all across the country. Thats when a Wayzata Country Club position opened up, it was an opportunity to good to be true, to experience another golf course

while staying in Minnesota. He spent 14 months working with Jesse Trcka before an opportunity arose again at TPC, and he returned as the Assistant Superintendent. Mark spent several years at TPC, eventually taking over for Roger



when he retired. After a few years, Mark made a lifestyle decision for him and his family, leaving TPC to take over at Chisago Lakes Golf Course. Over the last few years, he has appreciated the opportunity to get back to the public side of golf and be more involved with his local community. Now that he is leaving, It's not that he ever became the "burnt out" Superintendent, but just that he continually is on the lookout for different opportunities, which

will better support personal goals of being the best dad and husband he can be. Mark was fast tracked through the board, coming in as the Secretary/Treasurer position, he gave us a few years of his time and left behind some valuable insights. Through his time, he has helped develop some of current programs, including the Stewardship Grant Program, and event changes to the Don White and Championship. These efforts are there to support those who



come after us, as we are just now building out some frameworks for any future efforts.

Mark shared some of his thoughts for the future and what we need to consider going forward. First, collaboration amongst our allied groups is essential. He stressed the importance of working together on all of golfs issues. Mark was a part of our initial Allied Golf Coalition meetings, a new group that we are getting off the ground now with

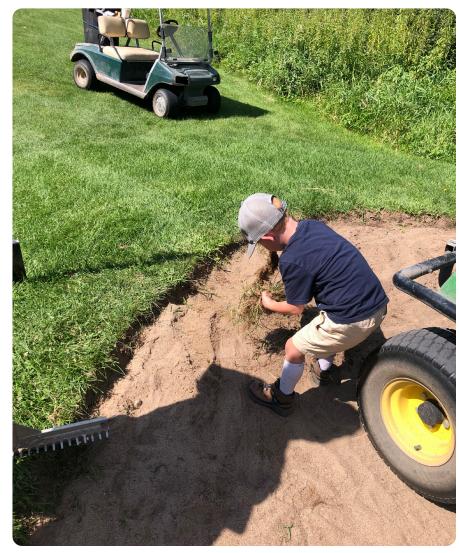
MGA, MN PGA, CMAA, and MWGCOA.

our partners at the

Second, he emphasized the need to further engage with students and young people to address our labor needs. Individual superintendents will need to get more involved, showing up to career fairs, etc., and actively recruiting and developing that young talent. Also, he believes the new faculty member coming to the UMN

Turf program will have some opportunities to help reinvigorate that program this way as well, and can help us fill those essential roles again in the future.

As we went through our conversation, we touched on one thing that was essential to his success as a Superintendent, and his answer did not come from golf or turf. He thought his work and training as an EMT was the best thing he ever did for his career, as it strengthened his



ability to speak with people, and communicate more effectively. This is a lasting lesson for all, that seemingly unrelated efforts, education, or training, are still effective ways to grow as a Golf Cours Superintendent.

Hopefully we will see Mark in the future involved with golf, as

he does see some contracting work potential with the new tree farm and services company. He has been a strong leader of the association, and represented us all with patience, integrity, and resolve. We are grateful for Marks time and efforts and wish him the best as he pursues this new career path.



The full audio conversation with Mark will be released in January, so lookout for that January episode of the MGCSA Hole Notes Podcast!

2025 MGCSA WINTER EVENT CALENDAR

Shop Tours	1/7
NE Outreach, Nemadji GC	1/15
NGE & (Golf Social Hour) 1/21-1/23	(1/21)
SW Outreach, Minn-Iowa GC	1/29
National Hospitality Night, San Diego	2/5
Allied Golf Day on the Hill	2/12
NW Outreach, Old Course	2/19
Assts. Pro Forum, X-Golf Eden Prairie	2/25

Registration is open now on the MGCSA event page for some of these events, with all others coming soon!





MGCSA SHOP TOURS TUESDAY, JANUARY 7, 2025





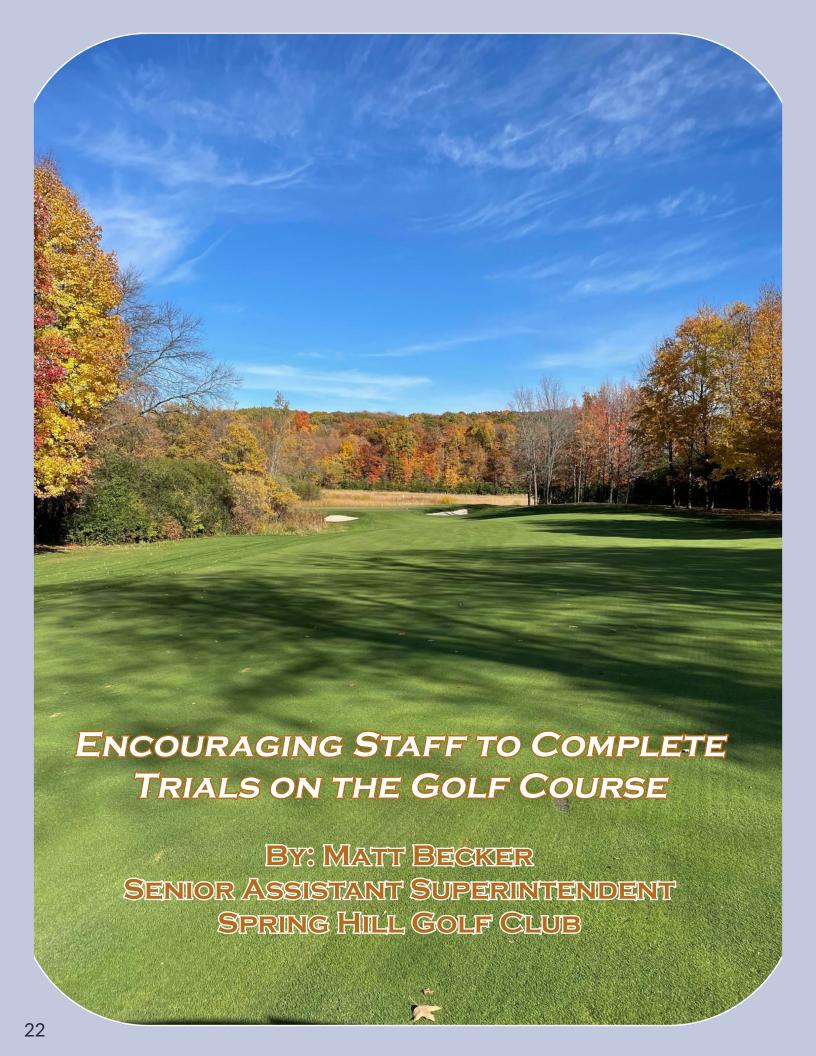
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MAJESTIC OAKS GREEN HAVEN EDINBURGH

\$35 W/LUNCH



For the past few years at Spring Hill all the full-time staff have been responsible for completing a trial sometime during the golf season. The trial can be related to anything from new chemistries to something equipment related. Completing these trials has been educational and a benefit to the facility. Some of the trials I have completed over the last few years included a wetting agent trial, bentgrass cultivar assessment, irrigation audit, and fairway nursery grow in program.

At the end of the year, we sit down and go over the results and discuss if it is something we want to implement going forward. Encouraging your staff, assistants, and equipment managers to do some kind of project I have found to be a great benefit. It does not have to be complicated or even expensive. Many of the trials our distributors have supplied us with the products for free or at a discounted rate.

Having everyone responsible for some research at the facility is a good way to learn new things and make everyone more engaged with the operation. Here is a short summary of some of the projects completed over the years.

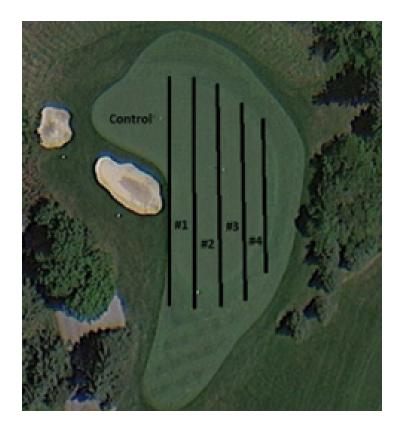


2023 Putting Green Wetting Agent Trial

Reason
What interested me in
conducting a wetting agent trial
was the previously dry summers
and poor results with a previous
product. I wanted to find a
product that has the benefits
of water holding capacity but
allowed the surface to firm up
quicker after the application.

Plan for Trial
Lay out 4 plots on the south side
of the chipping green including
a control plot. Start monthly
applications in May and continue
through June, July, and August.
A spray bug will be used for the
applications. These products are
all claimed to be an infiltration
and hydration wetting agent. The
other claim is that they produce a
firm playing without the surface
level being over hydrated.

Observations
Plot #1: Underhill Tournament
Ready Good longevity, Top of
putting surface remains a little
wet after being watered
in, Uniform moisture

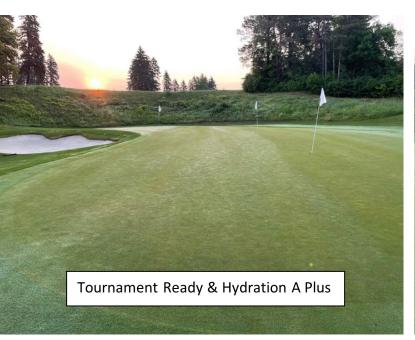


content throughout plot. Plot #2: Plant Food Co -Hydration A-Plus Penetrant & Water Holding Agent Only 2 to 3 weeks longevity at lower rate, Waters in very well, not much residue left on the surface. Plot #3 Heritage Professional Products Aquicare Lasts full 4 week spray interval, does not water in as well, residue leftover on leaf surface in picture, Uniform moisture no localized dry spot observed throughout year. Plot #4 Aquatrols Zipline, 3-4 week longevity, Waters in extremely well considering the rate. No excess moisture in the top of the canopy, Uniform moisture readings throughout.

Conclusion

The pictures below are from a 7/10" irrigation cycle overnight. If you look closely you will notice the differences in how well the products water in. In our experience we have dealt with excess moisture on the surface leading to softness and foot printing. I found that the plots with dew on them the following morning watered in better and the surface was not as soft in the days following the application.

Trufirm data also supported this case. The product I found to be most beneficial for our goals was Zipline from Aquatrols. It has good longevity and waters in well. The first week following the application conditions were back to normal within days instead of over a week. I don't necessarily think applications are always necessary but it is a good tool to have when you are experiencing extended heat and drought.





2021 Bentgrass Cultivar Trial

We are fortunate enough to have a USGA spec nursery green on site. We had a corner of the green get used for a green expansion that was open for development. During my internship at Hazeltine we planted a similar trial with different types of bentgrass. I wanted to create a similar trial of my own at Spring Hill. We have been inter-seeding our greens for many years now with new varieties, but I was interested in having pure new varieties on site to evaluate. We tried cultivars from Seed Research and Tee 2 green. Plots were seeded two drop spreader widths wide. Included are some years of photos at different times of the year to evaluate performance in different seasons.

Conclusion
Overall, I think all of the cultivars
performed well for us except

Flagstick. Flagstick at greens height was coarse and did not provide a dense putting surface. As far as density and texture goes there are some small differences from each other. Pure Select, Pure Distinction, Macdonald, and 007XL have the best texture in our opinion. The pictures on the next page are from April to show the differences in spring green up. Overall the seed research varieties had better spring green up than tee 2 green. We have been really impressed with the new bentgrass and are still monitoring them to this day.



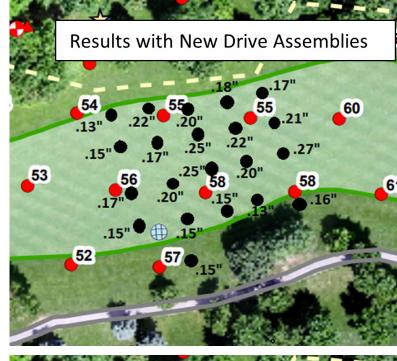


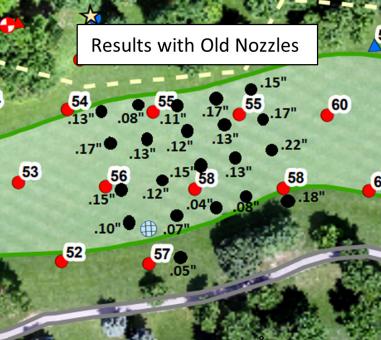


2022 Irrigation Audit

The goal of this audit was to find out how well of coverage the irrigation system was providing. Most of the older heads on the course are Toro 750 series style heads that are up to 20 years old. Over time the nozzles wear out from the friction of lake water from the irrigation pond, and sand from topdressing wears out the bodies of the sprinkler heads. The nozzles in the 750 heads were the standard red and black nozzle combo. The flex 800 model used the green nozzle on the front, while the yellow and beige were used on the back.

The test ran fairways at 100 percent (10 min) and fairway rough at 150 percent (15 min). Station 58,55,57,54, and 56 were the test heads The results from testing #14 fairway were showing what I suspected. The edges of the fairways were not being supplied as much water as the middle. I believe that the back nozzles are worn out and are shooting the water further than intended. The long range nozzles are







also worn out leading to more water being sprayed to the end instead of the intended areas. In dry years like the previous years, it was clear what areas were stressed. The catch cans that were under 1/10 of an inch were under drought stress.

We used the results from this test to evaluate our aging irrigation system as a whole.

Some of the problem dry areas were directly related to old nozzles. We spent the next season putting new drive assemblies in typical dry fairways and replacing 750 nozzles in other lower stress areas. The results after changing out nozzles improved our irrigation efficiency and reduced the amount of localized dry spot.



2024 Earthworks Grow in **Program**

Reason

Our fairway nursery was depleted and it was time to turn it over and start fresh. We were looking at grow in programs to try out and we had heard about earthworks having a grow-in program.

Procedure

The products used were Renovate Plus, Myco Replenish, and Replenish 10-2-5. Renovate Plus is a soil amendment, myco replenish is a starter fertilizer with mycorrhizal fungi, and 10-2-5 being a fertilizer used after germination. Renovate plus was applied at 150 lbs. /1000 and was incorporated with a sandpro. Mycho Replenish was applied at 15 lbs. /1000 for a Nitrogen rate of 0.5 lbs. /100. After germination we applied 10-2-5 every 2-3 weeks for the next couple months. Chem apps were made on a similar schedule to our greens program.

Results

Seeding took place on May 28th. The two photos on the right were taken forty days

after planting. We had a large control area where the initial products were not applied at seeding as seen in the picture below. The picture above had the full earthworks program applied. The density between the two plots was clear that the earthworks test side had better density and reached maturation faster. By about August first we had mostly full coverage on the test side. The control side had mostly full density around August 20th. Overall the difference in maturation was about 2-3 weeks. This summer was also very wet so there were challenges with fixing an area that was consistently washing out during rain events.

Conclusion

Overall I was impressed with the results I saw in speed of density and maturation. I would still like to try this product again at greens height to see if there is any difference at a lower height of cut. Another thing I would change would be having Plaisted blend renovate plus in the greens mix. This would allow uniformity across the profile instead of incorporating it on the top with the sandpro.





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Dodge Country Club SE Outreach

Thank you to our host Superintendet Alex Bryngelson and Dodge Country Club for hosting our first winter outreach of the 24/25 winter.

Learn more about Alex later in this issues Get to Know EM feature!



Roll It Forward

By: Jesse Trcka





Nikk, I guess a thank you is in order for your nomination...I think?...maybe......ok, here we go. The beginning of my story is about as standard as so many of the rest of yours. I grew up just outside the burgeoning metropolis of Montgomery, Minnesota and with limited job opportunities for a fifteen-

year-old, the golf course just across the gravel road I lived on was it. My older brother had put in a couple of summers at Montgomery Golf Club (sorry to disappoint, but this was pre-Montgomery National and Beatles theme) and the superintendent at the time was Mike Mueller. My dad took me

cWc

Photos provided by Jesse Trcka





up there early spring to meet Mike and I left with a job on the grounds crew. It was just as glamorous as I thought it would be. I washed carts three times a week after school. I still remember how Mike inspected the wheels on all the carts after I washed them, he liked it when the wheels were just so. Within my first few weeks on the job, Mike left to take a different superintendent job, but for the life of me I can't remember where. That left me working with a retired farmer named Lenny Baer, nope, not a joke, while a new superintendent was found. Lenny was....interesting. The last name was appropriate, he

was a huge man, with a bit of a squeaky voice who like to use his tongue instead of his fingers to take a dip of Copenhagen. His universal signal for lunch break was to drive by and point into a wide-open mouth. I was still in my first few weeks on the course, just trying not to screw things up too bad, when I absolutely buried a 3 wheel Cushman in the rough. Embarrassed and a lot nervous, I was desperately trying to rock the cart out when along came Lenny with the new superintendent that I hadn't even met yet.

Wonderful. Jim Reiter, or Jimmer, was my new boss and just gave me a smile and a shake of the head and told me I better stick to the high ground. I never heard another word about it. Jimmer was a great guy for a high school kid to work for. He was very patient with a bunch of screwy high school kids. Jimmer was a lifer. He was there all hours and kept the place running no matter what it took. He recently passed away, on the golf course, mowing greens.

The next few summers were a

blast as I was the youngest on the crew by a couple of years with plenty of requisite hazing by the older high school guys. My daily ride was an old golf cart that I used the bag straps to tie the push mower handle into place dragging it backwards around the course with a weed whip riding shotgun. Morning break was time to play cards with the older guys and take further beatings at my lack of skill playing Pfeffer. I loved every minute of it all. I was outside, getting a tan and raking it in to the tune of \$4.25/hour.

As my time in high school wound down Lenrolled at Gustavus Adolphus College. After a couple of years switching majors I still couldn't pin down what I truly wanted to do and through all the changes in direction would joke that I would end up going back and working on the golf course for the rest of my life. After thinking it through as well as a 19-year-old kid could, I decided to take that leap halfway through my time at Gustavus. It was going to be a turf career. The difficult decision was whether or not to get a degree that I was halfway toward obtaining, knowing that I would

be heading a different direction. Finishing what I had started was important to me, and I ended up graduating from Gustavus with a degree in finance. From there it was on to the two-year program at Penn State. Talk about an eye-opening experience and not knowing what I didn't know. Within my first week I realized that I needed to deviate from my original plan to continue on at Montgomery and experience a completely different level of golf course. One of my classmates at Penn State was Steve Roxburg, who also happened to be the assistant at Wayzata Country Club at the time.

The pull to return to Minnesota was strong for me and I ended up interning at Wayzata working for Steve and superintendent Bob Distel.

My fellow intern that year was Matt Olsonoski, superintendent at Edinburgh Golf Course in Brooklyn Park. It was a total shock to see an operation of that size and the maintenance regime that completely blew away anything that I had encountered before. Very quickly, I was hooked on this level of

I knew that I wanted to stay on the private club career track.

Following my internship, a full-time position opened up at WCC and I was offered the opportunity to come back. Matt Schmid, now of Superior Turf Services fame, was hired as an assistant that same year and we spent the next couple of seasons grinding it out together. We worked hard, learned a lot from each other and had a lot of fun over those two years. These were the first two of four years as an assistant at Wayzata, the last two as the first assistant.

In the fall of 2007, I found a posting for an assistant position within Marriott Golf at a place a little farther south. Looking to scratch an itch to go somewhere outside Minnesota, and escape winter, I applied and got the job at White Witch Golf Course in Montego Bay, Jamaica. My boss there was Keith Stein, a Canadian who had already been living there for 15 years and had gone native. He was fully immersed and considered Jamaica his home. The instant question

comes to almost everyone's mind when they learn of my time in Jamaica is "What was it like?" Work could be tough. Dealing with a staff that was difficult to motivate, stereotypes carry some truth, and with some of our team resenting the fact that a non-Jamaican was their manager. Unemployment is very real there and the fact that I was taking a high paying job led to some resentment from a few of our staff. All-in-all they were a great group that kept it interesting.

My weekends off were like a vacation. Head over to Negril for the day, sure, no problem! Ocho Rios, why not? After work, many hours were spent at the local jerk shack, Scotchies. It was frequented by locals, expats and tourists from all over. The rum was never gone, but we sure did our best to see if we could make it all disappear. If you ever make it down there, have the pork and a festival. Keith was a fantastic boss and probably the most entertaining guy I know. I will forever have the image seared into my memory of Red Stripe coming out his nose after I made him laugh with a perfectly

timed Caddyshack reference. Every few years we get together and tip a couple at the GCSAA show. Just as hilarious as it was sitting on a stool drinking a Red Stripe at Scotchies.

Working at a resort property in 2008 was a little dicey when the recession hit. Like so many others during that stretch, I was lucky to hang on to my job. Keith and I had the hotel grounds added to our plate of responsibilities as the operation looked to cut costs. But it was still a bit of an unsure situation and in the fall of 2009 when the opportunity to return to Wayzata CC as the lead assistant came about, I jumped at it. Wayzata had undergone a renovation of the tees and bunkers during my time away, along with the construction of a new practice facility and short course. A lot of new things to learn about the property I was already so familiar with. I moved into my current role as superintendent in 2011 and here I am today, almost fourteen years later. Through it all, it has never been lost on me that I would never have made it this far on my own and there are so

many to thank. I just celebrated my 10-year anniversary with my wife and I have two boys to thank her for. They suffer more than anyone else because of my commitment to my profession and the long hours associated with it. Every winter we make the trip to Florida for some warm weather and time together. It has not hurt that my in-laws bought a place down there in the past few years. Kids activities have turned my wife and me into shuttle drivers. Code ninja, karate, Mathnasium, gymnastics, flag football, on and on it goes. Wouldn't trade it for anything. I still carve out time to catch Packers games in the fall. Nobody's perfect. I look forward to any chance I have to be a dad and a husband, but it never seems like it is quite enough.

I have been blessed to have worked with so many amazing people along the way. Without starting a long list of dropping names, I feel like I would be missing out on the chance to say thank you to all the people who have spent some time in the dirt at Wayzata CC. So many of you have helped shape me as a person and a superintendent. Words

can't do enough to describe my appreciation for you all, but thank you, nonetheless. Three months into a major overhaul of the golf course I couldn't be more pleased or impressed with our current group here. Cody Larson, Marty Richardson, Jacob Ocholik, Andy Larson, John Fisher, Luis Maldonado, Weston Lehner. All of you deserve more recognition than I can give but I won't shy away from the opportunity to say thank you wherever I can. Jules Driscoll is our Office Manager/ Clubhouse Grounds Manager at WCC. She has authored one of these columns a while back, and if you missed it, I encourage you to go back and read it. She has tolerated me for so long (she is never shy to tell anyone that she couldn't stand me as an intern), and it would take too long to re-count her contributions to our operation for the past 20+ years and I couldn't have done it without her help.

Now, my turn to pass the torch. We are overdue to hear from an Equipment Manager and that said I am going to send it on to Tyler Lewellyn, Equipment Manager at Springhill Golf Club.

GOLF COURSE MUSINGS

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



Your 2025 MGCSA Board of Directors.

Equipment Manager Worskhop



MGCSA held its first EM Workshop in November, with approx. 30 local EM's and Superintendents in attendance! Look for more EM opportunities and information in the near future, as we are actively working to expand our support for the Equipment Managers at our facilities. Thank you to MTI for helping to get this initial program started!



GET TO KNOW 'EM



Alex Bryngelson

Dodge Country Club

FACILITY INFO

Public or Private: Public

Number of Holes: 18

Full time employees: 1

Seasonal employees (not including full time): 6

Total Acreage: 160

Greens Acreage: 2.5

Fairway Acreage: 19



PERSONAL TURF FACTS:

How many years have you been in your current position? 2 years

How many years have you been in the turf industry? ~10

Where else have you worked? The Oaks, Somerby, Rochester Golf & Country Club

Turf School Attended (if any)? Rochester Community Technical College

INDUSTRY THOUGHTS:

What is one "master plan" thing you would like to change at your shop?
Right now, we're behind the 8 ball on Emerald Ash Borer tree removal. It wasn't as noticably devastating a few years ago, but now it is glaring. We need to remove and replant all over.

What concerns do you have the turf business and the future of golf? We need to grow the game. It was heartbreaking seeing courses close in the past, but we need to focus on growing the game to support all sides of the industry. We need to keep it popular, and keep introducing kids to the game.

What is needed to bring more young professional into the industry? Getting kids in high school on the course, showing them the industry. Showing them different avenues through horticulture, including turf. Show them how to work, how to work hard. Sell them on the freedom to learn things, and be on your own. Taking pride in your work.





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

I want a ventrac, with a few different attachments, something versatile. Need it to replace a mower with the articulating deck, but also able to push trees in to a pile. May lead back to a Bobcat type machine.

Do you have any unique techniques or approaches you do at your course? I came from the old school work ethic, you're never late. I may be too lenient, but I udnerstand the needs of staff, and seem to get more out of some staff members by bringing a positive energy, and make it so they like working for me. Take the time to educate them and explain why we are doing things this way.

FUN FACTS

Have you ever met a celebrity? Who? I met Harmon Killibrew on course here. He was the coolest guy you'll ever meet, gracious fella. I had him and Robin Yount sign a copy of Kent Hrbeks book. Robin said his book would have to be on the top shelf, it would be above PG-13.

What is your favorite vacation spot? Costa Rica was awesome, Mexico we've done multiple times. The beach big time, and pools, relaxing in the sun.

What is your favorite memory of starting your turf career or a funny story? I left my phone in a cart at Somerby at 36 years old. Eric found a phone on a cart, and calls my Mom when he finds one, so he called my mother and said your son left his phone on a cart at work.

What is your favorite job on the shop? Mowing fairways, I don't get to do any kind of mowing often, but its nice to clear my mind, or fill it back up.

What is your least favorite job on the golf course? Spraying

was at first, but its now easier. Anything that has to do with irrigation. I just try to stay positive and take things on.

Have you played any famous golf courses? Which ones? Deacons Lodge, Bear's Best, The Jewel.

Who is your dream foursome? Just some buddies. We're all bad at golf, so we're able to

cheat, gamble, just have fun.

What is one piece of advise
that you've received in your
career that still resonates today?
I've heard from retired Supers,
just have thick skin, dont take
things too personal. You can
really let things eat at you if
you let it. I really felt that this
year, and now I just go, oh well.
Staying positive is crucial.



Don't miss the extended conversation with Alex on this months Hole Notes Podcast!

If you would like to participate in a future Get to Know 'Em, please reach out to chris@mgcsa.org.

2024 MEGA & ANNUAL MEETING

This years MEGA was one of our largest ever, with over 110 people attending each day! Thank you to all of our speakers, attendees, sponsors MTI and Duininck, and our host Superintendent Jeff Mold, and the entire team at Braemar Golf Course!























UMN Turf Research

Waiting and Preparing

By: Dr. Eric Watkins, UMN



During December, I find myself reflecting on the year that has passed and anticipating the year to come. In the Christian tradition the four Sundays prior to Christmas are referred to as Advent. The church calendar reserves these weeks as times to wait and prepare. Waiting for Christmas, waiting for the deliverer promised thousands of years earlier. Preparing for what is to come.

For most of us, we don't want to wait. Where's that pizza that was supposed to be here five minutes ago? This line at the grocery store is taking forever! My Amazon order was supposed to be delivered already, it's been almost a day!

In a research program, particularly one like ours that aims to respond to the needs of an important and large stakeholder group, we can't always figure things out quickly-sometimes the work we do takes years, or decades. Other times, we might be able to learn something in a short time, but what we discover doesn't really

affect the here and the now for the turfgrass manager.

Adding more complexity to this situation is funding--the amount of money it costs to run our research program at the University of Minnesota is very high—high enough that even with great local support we have to seek federal funding to do the work we need to do; this means we have to respond to federal agency objectives, and hope that we can at the same time do things that can be useful, either in the short or long term, for golf course superintendents.

For the past two decades, we have focused on identifying lower-input grasses that will provide the most functional turf for a given situation. In some cases, our work has already led to shifts in the grasses that are being used in managed turfgrass spaces; a good example is bee lawn mixes, or tall fescue that is now showing up more and more on landscapes across Minnesota. Sometimes, what we find isn't useful to turfgrass managers right away because using the new species carries too much risk. For example, we are very confident that fine fescues can provide an aesthetically pleasing, functional fairway that will require less water and fertilizer, and fewer pesticides than other more traditional grassing options. Unfortunately, the fine fescues don't handle cart traffic very well, and divots take excruciatingly long to fill in, so there is more work to do.

Another example of waiting is the WinterTurf project. Our aim is to help solve the problem of winterkill. Hopefully we can do that soon, but a difficult challenge like this one might take years. Years of work and waiting for that big breakthrough, or the accumulation of many small advances that lead to a critical insight. So, for now, the written accounts of these ongoing projects might reside in reports and papers for some number of years, unused for the most part; however, we will wait patiently knowing that someday, due to external pressures like government policy, or natural resource availability, the things we have learned will be useful to Minnesota turfgrass managers.



Figure 1: As part of the WinterTurf project, researchers at multiple universities are testing how late fall topdressing impacts winter stress damage risk. At the University of Minnesota, we are conducting this study on both creeping bentgrass (left) and annual bluegrass (right). This is the second year of the study, so there will be little waiting for results.

While we wait for hoped-for impact from longer-term, patience-testing projects, we also seek to answer more immediate challenges. Irrigation decision-making using soil moisture sensors. Dormant seeding strategies to convert higher cut turf areas to watersaving grasses. Topdressing to reduce winter stress risk (Figure 1). Testing the effectiveness of bee lawns in golf course roughs. Look for new findings on these and other topics to be reported in Hole Notes soon.

Speaking of waiting.... the long process of hiring a new turfgrass science faculty position will soon come to a successful end. Consistent and long-term support from the Minnesota Golf Course Superintendents Association was key to getting this position re-filled. Thank you to all who have been involved in this effort.

As you prepare for and wait in anticipation of the growing season ahead, I hope you can also prepare to help our team serve you better. Help us all think of what lies ahead for golf turf management. Give us feedback on what we can do better to help you. Partner with us to find new strategies and educational pathways to train the next generation of Minnesota golf course superintendents.

Thank you for your continued support of the University of Minnesota turfgrass program. Together we can discover new solutions to emerging challenges that benefit superintendents both now, and well into the future.

Follow the UMN Turf Blog for project updates!





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JANUARY 21-23, 2025

Saint Paul RiverCentre

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MONDAY Pre-Conference Sessions:

PLT Relicensure and Pesticide Recertification will be available on Monday, January 20 at the Saint Paul RiverCentre.

TUESDAY, JAN. 21

Community day for these Villages with a full day of focused education. From trends to business strategies, find everything you need to thrive!



WEDNESDAY, JAN. 22 Dedicated trade show day!

TRADE SHOW 9:00am-3:30pm BLOCK PARTY 3:30pm-5:30pm

THURSDAY, JAN. 23

Community day for these Villages with a full day of focused education, plus the trade show will be open in the morning!

TRADE SHOW 9:00am-12:00pm



SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR GENEROUS NORTHERN GREEN 2025 SUPPORTERS:













From the High Grass By: Chris Aumock

Sorry to Bother You!



As we move past this golf season and rapidly head towards another one, I just want to remind everyone that I am here to address your questions, comments, or ideas throughout the winter months. I don't expect much communication from you all during the summer months, but I am always prepared for additional requests over the winter. I am always happy to help, even if sometimes it seems like you're hesitant to reach out.

Most of my days are spent answering emails and phone calls. Many of those calls end up being spam, but the member phone calls do come through. One thing that I hear too often from these is "sorry to bother you." I find it funny every time, as it is exactly my job to be bothered (ahem...not bothered) by you! This message comes through text messages often as well, which is even funnier, because a text is even less bothersome to me!

My role is to service the membership. Most of that effort is done behind the scenes and without much awareness, but the forward-facing aspect is to address member issues. If you ever have issues or questions for me, please do not hesitate to contact me with either your simple questions or more important/complicated queries.

I try to spend time visiting our members as I travel to and from our MGCSA events. Over the 2024 summer golf event season, I made approximately 25 course visits on my travels home, looking to connect with Superintendents all over the state. Taking advantage of these logistical opportunities has been greatly rewarding for me, sharing our offerings and support with members and non-members alike.

These trips are intended to help you all, as I want to provide direct support. But if I don't stop by, or don't see you often, you can always let me know how I can help. Even if it's a simple question, or you missed that note from the last email, I am here to answer those

questions for you. I'll be really honest for a second, if you have a question about some current issue or topic, please check the Stimpmeter on Thursdays! One answer I give fairly often is, "it's in the stimpmeter."

More often than not, I feel like I am the bother when I reach out to you. Probably because I am usually in need of something; an event host, paying an overdue invoice, etc., but I am definitely not bothered by phones calls, texts, emails from our members. I am happy to do what is the core function of my job, that being to provide support to you in what ways may be necessary. Please believe me, it's really no bother at all!

MGCSA NEW MEMBERS - Nov/Dec 2024

Class C Phillip Holland Little Crow Country Club **Evan Wright Baker National Golf Course** FM Gabriel Becker Pebble Creek Golf Course Student Eric Kruse The Club at Golden Valley Class C Cecilia Flannigan Giants Ridge Class C. Keegan Larson Victory Links Golf Course Class C Matt Lamb **Affiiliate** Porous Pave