

Green Speeds—

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Big Canyon both chose the lightning-quick A-4.

“The two rebuilds were especially challenging,” Harbottle says. “At LA Country Club (built in 1911) they wanted their old George Thomas greens basically matched, and at Big Canyon we actually increased the slope. In theory, you have to try and tone down some areas for pin placements, but that can be tough on small greens with slopes of 4 percent or so.”

The project at LACC involved both the North and South courses. Years of topdressing the old push-up *Poa* greens had actually softened Thomas’ original design. Besides being seeded to the new bent, the greens were rebuilt to USGA recommendations.

“The A-4 has been great, but we’re still battling some

“I’ve found that with most of these new grasses, they’ll be fast no matter how a green is designed and built.”

—John Harbottle III

water and soil issues that I feel are not related to the new putting surfaces,” says Bruce R. Williams, CGCS at LACC. “High maintenance is necessary, but that’s also normal for any top course.”

Williams, a 23-year GCSAA member and president of the association in 1996, adds that the project has generally enjoyed rave reviews.

“It’s enhanced the overall play of the golf course; it’s firm and fast because of lower water consumption, and its old look and style have been retained,” he explains. “It’s what the members wanted.”

The greens complex renovation at Big Canyon was a \$4 million-plus operation at the 27-year-old Robert Muir Graves layout. Harbottle added slope and character to the old *Poa* greens to allow the A-4 to strut its stuff. So far the membership couldn’t be happier, according to superintendent Jeff Beardsley.

“Everyone is very pleased. As for maintenance, it’s definitely challenging,” says the 12-year GCSAA member. “Hole locations are especially challenging. It’s a short course and the premium is on the greens.”

Always the defining element of a golf course architect’s work, maintenance is more important than ever, designers say, with the emphasis on more length, more speed and more consistency in overall playability.

“In actuality, maintenance itself is the difference between championship play and normal play on anything we do,” Cupp notes.

Facts Dictate Choices

Another perspective on the greenspeed issue comes from the current president of the American Society of Golf Course Architects, John LaFoy of Greenville, S.C., a 27-year veteran in course design.

LaFoy, who cut his teeth in the business during a 10-year stint with George Cobb in the 1970s, has written on the effects of green speeds and slopes on the game, but it’s his recent research on the new super grasses that provided him with an outlook based more on specifics than generalities.

LaFoy has been involved in the design and building of some USGA greens at Birmingham (Ala.) Country Club. The study has charted the new grasses’ characteristics from week to week. LaFoy says they’re learning that the cultivars change — sometimes considerably — from season-to-

“Speed is nothing new; we’ve been dealing with it all along in stages. It’s important to remember that the improvements the new grasses bring are actually quite incremental.”

season as well as over shorter periods of climatic change.

“The location of a golf course has always been vital to design and turf considerations, but the choices that must be made with these new grasses also have to include season and climate and how they perform during the changes,” he explains.

LaFoy says he believes the impact of the built-for-speed cultivars will be less on design than it will be on playability, aesthetics and, especially, maintenance.

“It’s like picking out wallpaper,” he says. “These new grasses give us more options — like bents that can be successful in the South. They give us a better tool for creating courses, especially putting surfaces.”

A Sizable Issue

Work with the new cultivars has led to two different approaches for designers: easy does it for renovation/restoration projects, and bigger is better for new construction. Mostly, the latter points to larger greens.

In the South, Johnston notes that the new bentgrasses allow for the building of greens 7,000 square feet or more. The sleek new bermudas, he adds, can be tamed on surfaces 15-20 percent smaller. Again, there are many options.

Knott agrees that larger greens are a viable solution because they can give a client appealing undulation along with flat and sane putting and pin-placement areas. But, he adds, large greens are costly to maintain and encourage slow play.

Most designers admit that the disease- and weather-tolerance bred into the new greens cultivars, as well as their low dependence on water and turf-care products, are attractive buffers to the issues of speed. Most also hope these grasses improve to new levels of overall performance — more durability and more efficiency in care, and, it’s hoped, less dependence on ultra-low cutting heights for more precise, case-by-case management.

“Speed is nothing new; we’ve been dealing with it all along in stages,” LaFoy says. “It’s important to remember that the improvements the new grasses bring are actually quite incremental. They’re not something we can’t work with.”

1999 Stodola Research Scramble Results

The Legacy Courses at Cragun's
Sunday, September 12

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Tournament Notes

Spring Hill Golf Club, led by superintendent Tim Johnson, eagled No. 2 for a skin. Mike Klatte, CGCS, and his Elm Creek team eagled No. 16 for the only other skin.

The Net Division winning team was Birch Bay Golf Course with a net 53.4. Second Place went to Spring Hill Golf Club at net 56.9 and third place honors, with a net 57.2, went to Deacon's Lodge.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

NEW MEMBERS: SEPTEMBER 16, 1999

	Class
Daniel J. Nagy St. Croix National Golf Club 1603 Cty. Rd. V, Somerset, WI 54025 W: (715) 247-4260	A - GCSAA
Jonathan Barnes St. Croix National Golf Club 648 8th Street N., Hudson, WI 54016 W: (715) 247-4260	C
Adam Carl Fabian Winona Country Club PO. Box 792, Lewiston, MN 55952 W: (507) 454-4009	C
Don Knop Great Oaks Country Club 840 Oakwood Dr., Apt. 191, Rochester, MI 48307 W: (248) 651-9159	C - GCSAA
Anthony Gerald Rahe Dacotah Ridge Golf Club 408 3rd St., Morgan, MN 56266 W: (507) 644-7844	C
Brandon Schurtz St. Croix National Golf Club 424½ Second St., Hudson, WI 54016 W: (715) 247-4260	C
David Lee Forsting The Preserve Golf Course 9115 Shoestring Loop, Rice, MN 56367 W: (218) 568-7388	Student
Jason Habeck Iowa State University 20010 25 Street SE, St. Charles, MN 55972 H: (507) 932-4689	Student
Phillip Poepping Anoka-Hennepin Technical College 21998 Hwy. 27, Little Falls, MN 56345 H: (320) 632-4426	Student
Roger K. Tychsen North Star Turf Supply 40153 Meadow Bay, Frazee, MN 56544 W: (651) 454-3106	Affiliate

RECLASSIFICATIONS

Chris Youngbauer Youngbauer's Landscaping	A to Associate
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-Tom Meier
MGCSA Membership Chairman

1999 MGCSA MONTHLY MEETINGS

MONDAY, OCTOBER 11
Albion Ridges / Host: Brooks Ellingson

DECEMBER 8, 9 & 10
MGCSA Annual Meeting
MTGF Conference & Trade Show
Minneapolis Convention Center

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EDITOR'S CORNER

By Steve Shumansky
Perham Lakeside Country Club



Almost Done

As we put our courses to bed for the year, I can't help but wonder if I remembered to do everything. Kind of feeling like Santa Claus checking my list twice. Greens, tees and fairway chemical applications all taken care of. Irrigation system's blown out, snow fence put up where needed, etc. etc. One thing does come to mind that I don't know if everybody knows about it. To help keep mice out of your irrigation controllers, throw a few moth balls inside the base. I used to have mice chew up wires on a couple of controllers every winter. But since I started using moth balls, no more mice.

As we finish up the last of our fall projects, driving around hearing blowers in the distance and looking at all the trees. The colors the leaves have changed to and how beautiful it is. I take a deep breath, and as I let it out, I think to myself, what a nice profession we're in. There aren't too many offices that are 100-plus acres or that have

the beauty ours do. The stressful times are behind us for another season. Frosty mornings are here and the pace has slowed. Soon there will be a blanket of snow covering our courses. Enjoy it while you can.

Golfer Relations

Some are good, some are bad and some are just there. Nonetheless we always remember the ones that are back year after year. The relationships we build can be nice.

For instance, I had a member, an older retired gentleman, stop by my shop the other day with a clipping on greens aerification. He said, "Here, give this to all the ones who complain if they don't understand or believe you, why you punch the greens." I thought that was a nice gesture. So, I put it up on the bulletin board. In talking with this member I find out he had recently had a slight stroke, so I made sure to let my staff know to keep an eye on him in the event he had another one while playing. I look at it as a part of a good communication practice, but more like people helping each other. This gentleman helps myself and my staff out once in a while. Like another set of eyes. He has never been critical, it always starts as, I just wanted to let you know. "Oh, there's water bubbling up on 14 fairway, or the scorecard box is out of pencils." You get my drift. I appreciate people like that and have respect for them. The ones that jump all over you because you weren't on hole 2 and 17 at the same time because they missed that putt. Or you were and you're following me with that machine just to irritate me.

Yes, the complainers, they wouldn't be happy if you hung them with a new rope!! But, we have to deal with them all in one fashion or another. I for one am glad the season is coming to a close. Some I'll miss over the winter months, and others I wonder which course in the south they go to and want to phone the superintendent to warn them, that they're on their way. With that I'll close. I hope you enjoy one of the prettiest times of the year. See ya next month.

— Steve Shumansky
Editor

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GCSAA Membership Reaches All-Time High of 20,000

Continuing a decade of strong growth, membership in GCSAA has climbed past the 20,000 mark.

Since January 1994, GCSAA membership has grown 48 percent (up from 13,300). Membership totals are computed on the last day of each month and include all membership classifications. The GCSAA membership reflects a broad spectrum of professionals, including superintendents, assistant superintendents, golf course management executives, educators, students, corporations, industry representatives and others with a vested interest in golf course management. Members enjoy the numerous services and benefits provided through GCSAA membership. A professional staff of 115 serves the membership from association headquarters in Lawrence, Kans.



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