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HOLE NOTES

Official Publication
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Minnesota Golf Course
Superintendents' Association

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From Your President's Desk

From Board Room to Water Cooler Everyone's Talking About Weather



E. Paul Eckholm, CGCS

What a great day for golf. Mike Nelson had the golf course in terrific condition and the weather, for once, cooperated. Thanks Mike to you and your staff for providing a great venue for the Scholarship Scramble. While many of you were at Dakota Dunes, others were at the Pines in Nisswa for the E-Z-Go appreciation event. Another fine golf course and more good weather, how did that happen?

From the board room to the water cooler, just about all anyone is talking about is the weather and for good reason, the season has been terrible. Enough said. Wait a minute, there may be another reason to talk about the weather. With all of the lost rounds everyone is feeling the financial crunch. A KARE 11 report had Braemar losing as much as \$18,000 per day. And the public courses are not the only ones feeling the pain. Private clubs, even though they have already received their dues, are feeling the pinch in the clubhouse. Without golf there is lower food and beverage revenue as well as fewer guest fees. Where does all of this lead? If history is doomed to repeat itself then it leads straight to the Golf Course Superintendent (GCS). Boards and owners are sure to come calling on the GCS to start cutting costs. Eliminate fertilizer applications, cut the labor budget, cut the improvements. These are the cries we are all soon to hear.

This may be the best opportunity we have had in many years to promote ourselves. We must point out to all those who scream that the grounds department must cut costs that the grass doesn't really care if it is raining or not. That all the rain really does is increase our cost, more labor to put bunkers back in place after a downpour, more fertilizer to replace that which has leached out of the system, more pesticides to combat disease. However, it is also a chance to show how well we are spending the money of others. We can show them how we can or have cut the labor needs by fixing bunker faces to eliminate erosion, how we are spoon feeding the turf so as not to lose a months worth of fertilizer the minute it rains. These are but a few of the examples we must point out to the decision makers at your club or course. Show that not only are you trying to control cost but are doing it in a way as to provide a better facility when the rains do come to an end and we finally see that big orange orb in the sky.

If you are looking for some timely weather information we have added some links to some good sites on the mgcsa.org web site. The wunderground site offers some realtime data for all major cities in the state including radar information. This may save many of you from the high cost of weather information services. That is if you don't have a problem hitting the refresh button once in a while.

Take the time to promote yourself and show with facts how you truly are the most valuable member of the staff. Keep smiling for the sun is sure to shine one of these days.

Respectfully,
Paul Eckholm, CGCS
President

HOLE NOTES (ISSN 108-27994) is published monthly except bi-monthly December/January, February/March for \$2 an issue or \$20 per year by the Minnesota Golf Course Superintendents' Association, 240 Minnetonka Avenue South, Wayzata, MN 55391-1617. Scott Turtinen, publisher. Periodicals postage paid at Wayzata, MN. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to HOLE NOTES, 240 Minnetonka Avenue South, Wayzata, MN 55391-1617.

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Monday, August 20
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Tuesday, September 25
STODOLA SCRAMBLE
 Edina Country Club
 Host: Mike Kelly

Wednesday, October 3
MGCSA FALL MIXER
 Ruttger's Bay Lake Lodge
 Host: Joe Wollner

Tues.-Thurs., December 4, 5, 6
MGCSA ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING AND MTGF CONFERENCE AND SHOW
 Minneapolis Convention Center

The Mystery of Dollar Spot

By JON POWELL
University of Minnesota

As many of you have noticed this has been quite a year for dollar spot which started with a heavy outbreak in early June. Within the last couple of years, we have noticed dollar spot developing severe epidemics fairly early in the spring and lasting late into the fall. In some cases these epidemics have been remarkably severe and the spots have appeared to be more damaging than we are used to seeing. The result of these atypical dollar spot epidemics has lead to some confusion with respect to diagnosis of the disease.

Perhaps the most disconcerting aspect of these outbreaks is the fear that these are outbreaks of a relatively new disease, bentgrass dead spot, caused by the fungus *Ophiosphaerella*. While the two diseases may be confused, bentgrass dead spot has yet to be positively identified in Minnesota. Bentgrass dead spot has only been identified on young bentgrass (under 6 years old). The initial symptoms are actually more similar to microdochium patch (A.K.A fusarium patch; pink snow mold), having a reddish brown color. This color eventually fades to a bleached/tan color typical of dollar spot.

So how do you make sure that you are dealing with dollar spot? A relatively simple test for dollar spot is to remove a 4 inch

diameter plug containing an infected spot(s). Place the plug in a plastic bag along with a small amount of water. Seal the bag closed and place it in a warm (~72E F) place overnight. Most dollar spot samples will form a white fluffy mycelium (strands of the fungal pathogen) within this time period when placed in a moist chamber. Bentgrass dead spot will not form any noticeable mycelial growth.

Fungicide resistance in Minnesota? For the most part, dollar spot will exhibit resistance to the benzimidazole fungicides (Cleary's 3336, Cavalier). Beyond that there has not been many reports of resistance to other classes of fungicides (DMI and dicarboximide) used to manage dollar spot in Minnesota. Does this mean we don't have to be concerned with dollar spot resistance? During a recent class at the U of M we examined several isolates collected around the state and found a couple of isolates that exhibited significant levels of resistance to the DMI fungicides (propiconazole, tridimefon, fenarimol, triticonazole). So with these isolates out there the question becomes; Will your management practices promote the development of resistant populations? This does not mean you avoid using DMI fungicides for management of dollar spot, but rather use them wisely (and timely).

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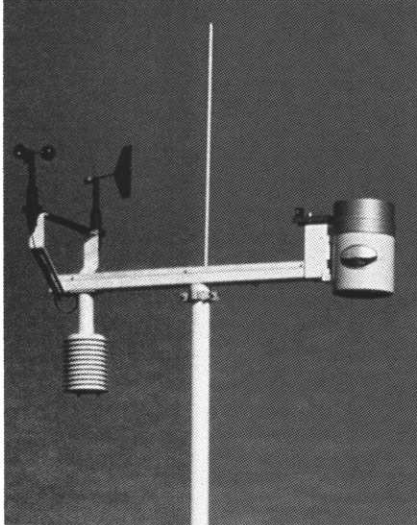
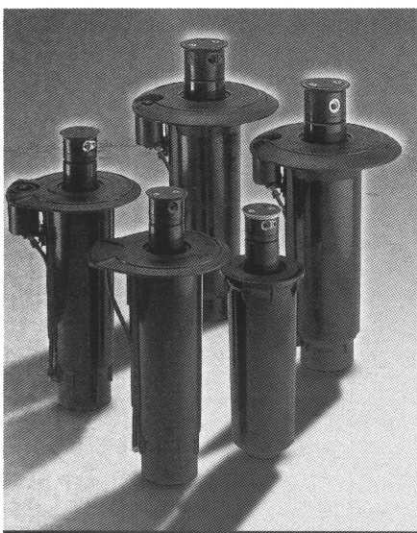
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GCSAA Internet Commerce Meeting

Outcomes Summary

The GCSAA Internet Commerce Industry Discussion Meeting was held at GCSAA Headquarters, Lawrence, Kansas on April 16-17, 2001. The materials presented at the meeting can be viewed at <http://www.terline.com/gcsaa>.

The goals of the meeting were to introduce the GCSAA net market technology supplier partner XS Inc.; preview the initial capabilities of the defined commerce pilot; solicit feedback and better understand the impact on manufacturers and their distribution chain, and provide a forum to pose and answer questions.

The meeting and its purpose were introduced. A discussion of why GCSAA is augmenting their membership offerings with Internet commerce, and the process and rationale for selecting XS Inc., were presented. This was followed by a detailed discussion by XS Inc. of its background and experience, the technology platform and capabilities they are providing, and how suppliers can leverage these capabilities. The discussion continued with details about the commerce pilot, and targeted buyer and seller benefits. The remainder of the meeting was focused on identifying and discussing issues and concerns, and gathering industry feedback.

After a brief description of the commerce pilot, these issues are discussed.

Commerce Pilot

The purpose of this pilot or "soft launch" is to provide an "initial (real) potential solution" to enable buyers and sellers to:

Experience the possibilities of Internet commerce first hand;

Determine the "value" opportunities for themselves;

Guide the development of future offerings to the broader market; and

Decide if the GCSAA organization, an established trusted third party, can be of value in bringing the benefits of the Internet to buyer and seller members in this market.

The initial product group selected is plant protectants. The pilot will last approximately 60 days. On the buy-side, approximately 300 superintendents will be invited to participate in the Pilot, and on the sell-side, it is open to all suppliers.

The pilot, as described in the meeting, will consist of two major capabilities:

The Golf Super-Market - a neutral exchange where sellers can list their products (either anonymously or using their name) and buyers can bid to purchase items. Initially, only fixed price listings will appear on the exchange. As a buyer's option, a function called "Name Your Price" can be used. This allows a buyer to identify a product and what he

is willing to pay to acquire that product. Sellers can respond to the buyer's request with the appropriate bid to secure the purchase. XS Inc. handles the financial transaction, and subsequent fulfillment (delivery).

The Golf Super-Store - a web-based storefront where suppliers can list their products, transact business, and handle the fulfillment themselves.

The initial capabilities and their details were described at the meeting.

Key Issues

A number of significant issues emerged from "why is GCSAA in commerce?" to "what is the performance and capacity of this capability?" A discussion of these issues follows.

Why is GCSAA offering Internet Commerce as a membership service? Is it consistent with the mission of the association? Is this a conflict of interest for GCSAA?

Serious investigation of the benefits of Internet commerce for our members was recommended first by a supplier focus group in August 1999 and then by the superintendent member-based Web Strategy Committee in June 2000; the GCSAA Board of Directors subsequently approved that direction. Both groups (suppliers and superintendents) believed that GCSAA was in the best position to take the leadership role in providing the one-stop shop of services in support of the superintendent, and that this service offering, if designed appropriately, would complement existing information content and membership services. They believed that it was consistent with the organization's mission, and was a major element of GCSAA's strategy to:

Leverage the Internet to provide member support anytime (24 -7), anywhere (globally), and

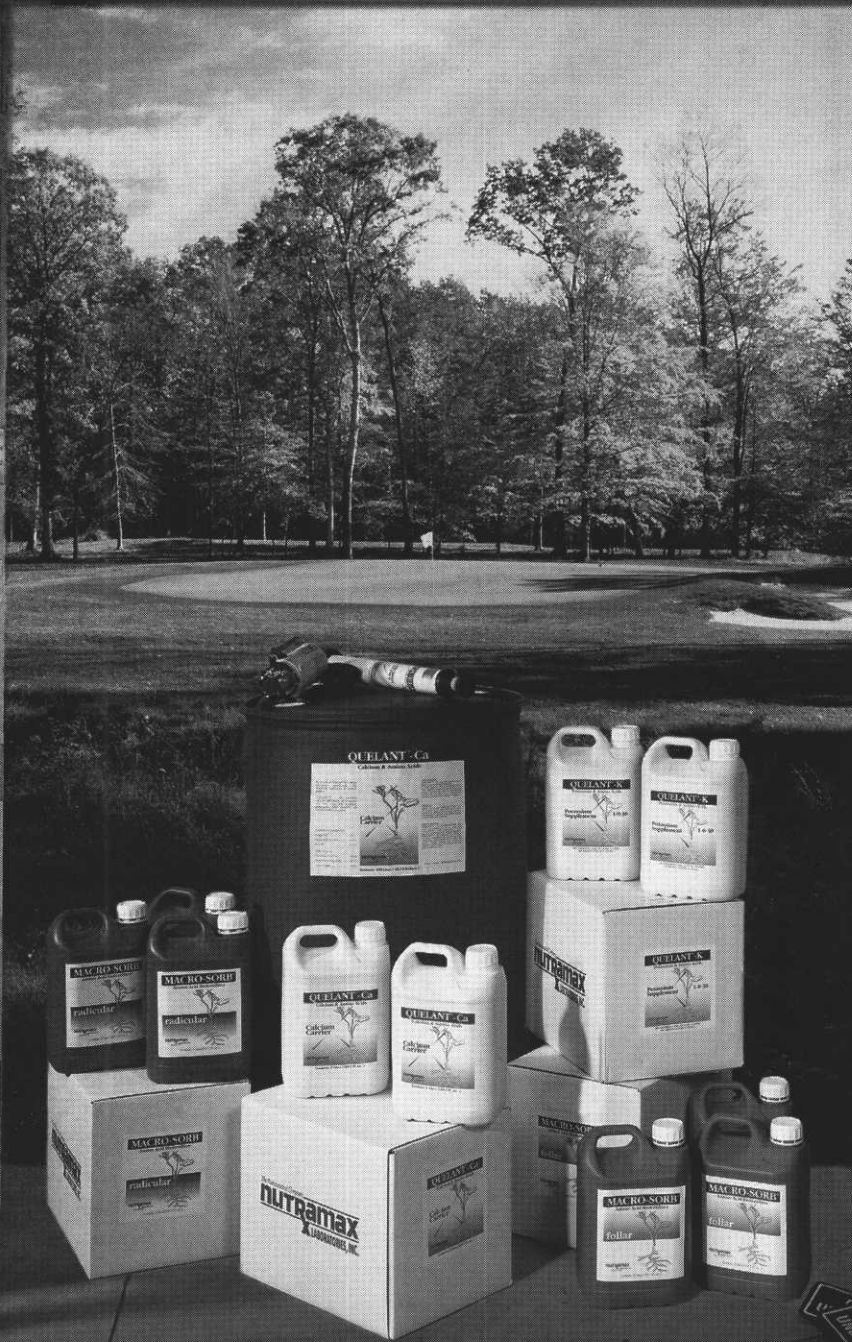
Provide a one-stop Internet location where superintendents can manage most aspects of their jobs and career.

Is this a potential conflict of interest for an association, a trusted third party?

Again, it is believed that this offering is being developed for the right reasons (see above), and that Internet only provides a venue, much like a tradeshow floor or publication, for sellers to provide information to buyers. It is provided as a service, voluntarily, to buyers and sellers who choose to participate. It appears universally believed (by GCSAA, superintendents and industry) that the Internet will not, and should not, displace valued pre- and post-sale service and support, and that many companies have already begun to investigate the tremendous functional power of the Internet in service to the buyer.

(Continued on Page 21)

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NORTH CENTRAL REGIONAL UPDATE

ON THE ROAD WITH THE USGA

By **BOB BRAME**
Agronomist

It has been an unusual spring. Much of the lower portion of the North Central Region went through a period when the daytime temperatures were warm (mid 70's and above) and yet the nighttime temperatures dropped back significantly; and as a result, holding down soil temperatures. Those trying to recover from winter injury or growing in newly-planted surfaces are very aware of what the cool soil temperatures did to growth.

Most areas of the lower North Central Region had been dry until just recently. Yet, the recent rains have reversed the year-to-date totals that were previously in the red. Despite daily rain over the last seven to ten days the Cincinnati area continues to be more than six inches down for the year. Clearly, weather conditions are a very real issue in manag-

The last few days of travel have exposed a number of active diseases, which include *Microdochium nivale* (pink snow mold), dollar spot, and take-all patch. Many golf courses also are experiencing cutworm activity. Perhaps a bit early, but weather patterns have been unusual.

There continues to be significant discussion about *Poa annua* seed head control on greens. Unfortunately, this is not a simple topic that can be handled the same in all situations. The most common strategy for minimizing seed head impact on ball roll is to utilize Primo. This plant growth regulator does not stop seed head production, but it will soften the negative playability that can otherwise occur. For other options that may be better fitted to your course, give us a call (859/ 356-3272).

Another common topic on recent visits, and one that often occurs in the spring, is rough playability. On one hand it is important to avoid slowing play due to the cutting height or grass density. On the other hand, rough means not easy. After all, without rough there would be no incentive for hitting the fairway. Ideally, try to establish a mowing height that balances health and playability over a season long perspective. A slightly higher cut in the spring will yield better turf dependability in late summer. Often the best approach is to mow more frequently in the spring and maintain the cutting height that provides the greatest package of year-round benefits.

As we move into late spring and early summer, initiate the use of soluble fertilizers applied through a spray tank at light and frequent rates (spoon-feeding). The target is to protect what was established over the fall and spring and not to push additional topgrowth. Thus, should an application of a soluble fertilizer yield a noticeable growth increase,

reduce the rate. Consistency with spoon-feeding will improve turf quality and dependability as we move into the summer months.

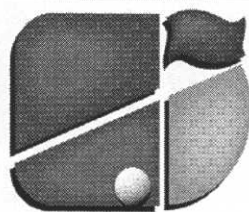
As always, feel free to contact our office should concerns arise or if you see anything unique and worthy of passing on.

* * *

(Editor's Note: Bob Brame can be reached at bobbrame@usga.org or 859-356-3272.)

Clearly, weather conditions are a very real issue in managing golf turf. Not a surprising or profound statement, but often golfers fail to consider how dramatically weather conditions impact turf growth and, as a result, course playability.

ing golf turf. Not a surprising or profound statement, but often golfers fail to consider how dramatically weather conditions impact turf growth and, as a result, course playability. It reminds me of an often used phrase, "the only thing that happens fast in agriculture is crop failure."



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