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Birnamwood Golf Course Becomes Smallest Golf Course Worldwide To Achieve Full Certification in Audubon Program

By DAN HILL

Superintendent, Birnamwood Golf Course

Birnamwood has become the smallest course in the world to achieve full certification in the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program. Owned and operated by the City of Burnsville, Birnamwood is the only nine-hole golf facility in the state to become fully certified.

Birnamwood, a nine-hole, par three course, is 1,267 yards long and sits on 21 fi acres of land. It was built in 1968 and was acquired by the City of Burnsville in the fall of 1988. The course has approximately 31 to 32,000 rounds per year.

I came to Birnamwood in January of 1999 from Minnesota Valley Country Club where I was Assistant Superintendent to Larry Mueller. He taught me a lot about the turf industry. Larry is a great teacher and I was privileged to have had an opportunity to work with him. I grew and learned more in that time than any other schooling or work experience in my career.

One area in particular that Larry got me interested in was his involvement in the Audubon International. He was the first superintendent in Minnesota and the 16th in the nation to get his course fully certified as an Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary.

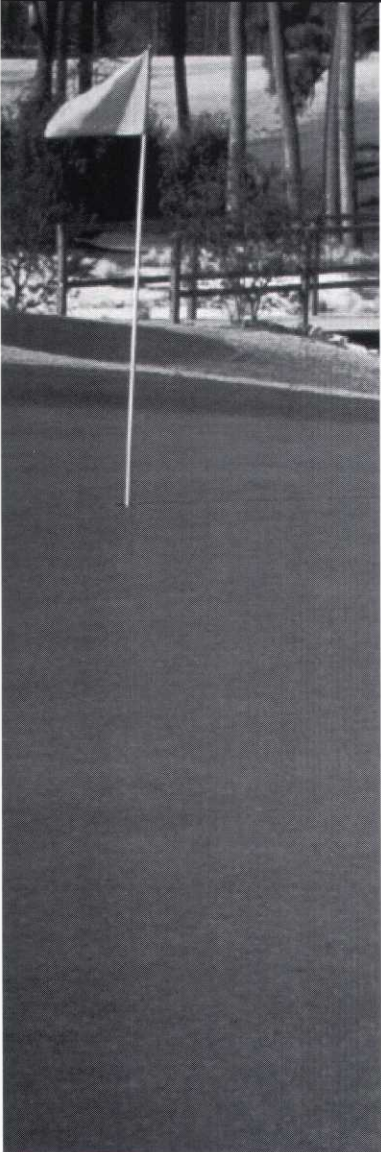
When I left Minnesota Valley and took this position I saw a great opportunity to transform Birnamwood into an Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary. It became my goal to show people that you do not need to be an exclusive 18-hole course with a huge budget to become certified. Even though Birnamwood is only the 14th golf course in the state to become fully certified, I believe that any course, if they put the effort into it, could become certified. If you have the desire to improve the environmental quality of your course and the \$150.00 for your annual dues, you can begin the process to become an Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary.

There are five categories that you have to pass in order to achieve full certification into the Audubon. The categories are:

- + Wildlife habitat management
- + Chemical use reduction and safety
- + Water conservation
- + Water quality management
- + Outreach and education

Many of the things that the Audubon asks applicants to do are things that most superintendents are

(Continued on Page 23)




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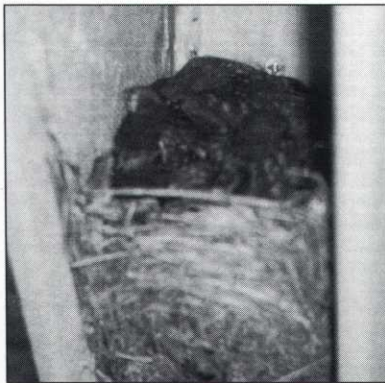
Birnamwood—

(Continued from Page 22)

already doing. Documentation is probably the most essential part of the Audubon program. Although the amount of paper work seemed overwhelming at first, I grew to enjoy the process. Being forced to look at some details of the course, that I previously paid little attention, has proven beneficial to me and my operation. I now know my course on a closer level. It seems that most superintendents know all the details about their greens, tees and fairways, but spend little time thinking about their woods, wetlands, wild areas and ponds. This is where the Audubon can help.

Some of our projects included installing 28 bluebird houses, establishing a buffer area around our pond with wild flowers and a wetland restoration project in a low area on the course that holds water. One of our feature projects was the construction of a 900-square foot butterfly garden. This was done with the help of a Burnsville High School senior class and an Eagle Scout project. It was a great way to involve the community in our golf course.

There are more innovations that we are planning in the future and ongoing projects that will always be there like monitoring water quality, which is done three times per year, and monitoring bluebird houses which is done every other week. I have found that the monitoring of the blue bird houses is the most time-consuming task involved with the Audubon, but also the most gratifying. Surprisingly, when the date comes to monitor the bird boxes I find myself reluctant to do it. I look around and see all the other things on the course that should be done. Yet every time I go out and monitor the



Baby bluebirds in nest box on the course.

boxes I come out of it feeling very refreshed and in a great mood. It gives me a whole new perspective of what this little course in the middle of Burnsville means to wildlife, and the difference we have made. The first two years I was at Birnamwood we had no bluebird sightings. So far this year we have had 11 blue birds hatch in 3 different boxes.

Being involved in the Audubon does not cost very much and in many cases saves money. Even though we only have 21 fi acres to work with, we were still able to find over 1 fi acres to turn into natural area. Our natural area saves on mowing, irrigation water, fertilizer and herbicides use. Not only is it maintenance free, but it dramatically improves the esthetics of the course.



Eagle Scout group planting butterfly garden.

At a course like Birnamwood with limited staff and a small budget we had to proceed in the certification process in small steps. But once those steps were completed we were left with a beautiful creation. Since we are a small golf course we had a lot of challenges that larger courses would not have to deal with. In my position I am not only maintaining a golf course but also managing the clubhouse. My limited staff does not even cover the daily tasks of running a golf course, not to mention the added tasks of the Audubon. The added hours of the Audubon was something I put on myself. Nobody asked me to join. I wanted to do it, and I had the blessing of the City of Burnsville to pursue it. These factors only made becoming fully certified all the more rewarding.

One thing that I found very interesting was how much the staff enjoyed the process. Their involvement in the Audubon gave their job more meaning. They had a goal to achieve and worked together to reach it. They took as much pride in passing each of the five Audubon categories as I did.

In our industry it is hard to find time to spend with our families. I have found that the Audubon is a great way to involve your family in your work. My oldest son Payton, who is 4, helped me build the 28 bluebird houses during the winter. I know he enjoyed it, and it is a time that I will remember forever. He likes to see the bluebird houses on the course knowing that he helped build them. When his brother Graden gets old enough, I will involve him also. My wife and I are already planning on joining the "My Backyard" program which is offered through the Audubon International for homeowners.

I am very proud of what my staff and I have done with Birnamwood. It has been the most gratifying accomplishment in my professional career.

If you are interested in joining the Audubon International you can contact them at (518) 767-9051.

ONE CALL HANDLES IT ALL

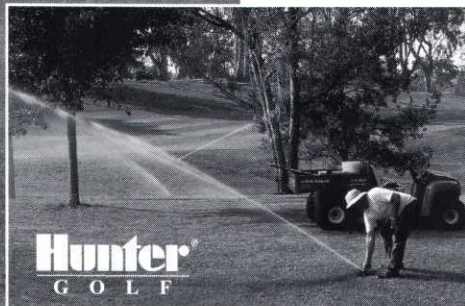
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JOHN DEERE LANDSCAPES

South Dakota State Student Learns A Lot As Hazeltine Intern for 2002 PGA

By RALPH TURPINEN

With one and one-half years of studies remaining to earn his turf management degree at South Dakota State University in Brookings, Tom Hoffer (*rhymes with gopher*) obviously is energized to learn as much as he can about the business and to do the best he can....for good reason.

Last summer his long-range goals expanded considerably when he signed on as an intern at Hazeltine National Golf Club in Chaska, Minn., site of the 84th annual PGA Championship. Moreover, he already has been accepted for another internship next year at Oak Hill in Rochester, N.Y., where the Rich Beem will defend the PGA title he won by one stroke over Tiger Woods.

Without a doubt, working with Hazeltine Superintendent Jim Nicol, CGCS, was a high point of Hoffer's young career. "Jim and his grounds staff made the summer of 2002 the most exciting time in my life," said Hoffer, who played a lot of football, basketball and baseball -- but no golf -- at Adrian High School in southwestern Minnesota. However, he began getting interested in turf management while working on the grounds crew of Adrian's nine-hole golf course and later at Brookings Country Club. He now carries an 8 handicap.

Hoffer, a Trans-Mississippi Turf Scholar, first became interested in working at Hazeltine when he saw a help wanted advertisement. In September, 2001 he e-mailed Nicol a request to be considered for an internship, was told to send a resume and was welcomed in May. Earlier this past summer Hoffer was involved in mowing greens, raking bunkers, working on construction projects and leveling tee boxes, but, for the week of the Championship his principal duty was to concentrate on the tee boxes on Hazeltine's first nine holes.

Perhaps the biggest challenge for Hoffer as well as Hazeltine's 35-member grounds crew and the 55 persons who volunteered for course keeping chores was coping with the 3+ inches of rain that fell the second night and early morning of the third day. Said Nicol and so many of his staff: "That was fun." Said Hoffer: "I really was impressed how calm everyone was, despite the stress of wanting excellence and handling any problems that arose." Tee times on Saturday were delayed two hours, but, after play began, the players -- who already had raved about course conditions, its fairness and its playability -- doubled their praise for the rapid, efficient refurbishing work that was done efficiently early Saturday.

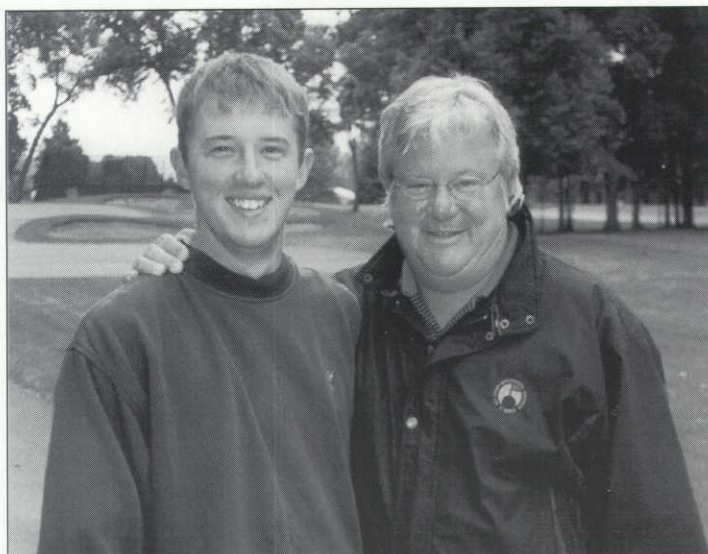
Tiger Woods, when asked if he had had the opportunity to visit the famous Mall of America in nearby Bloomington, smiled and said his Tournament Week life was "Course, home...home, course." It was much the same for Hoffer: Course, apartment in Burnsville, back to the course. Normally Tom would awaken at 5 a.m., report to Hazeltine by 6 and be completed by 2:30. However, Tournament Week duties stretched from daylight to dusk.

"They were long hours but every minute was worth it," said Hoffer. "I really enjoyed the experience."

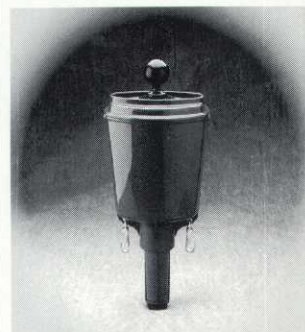
Nicol also praised Tom for the conscientious manner in which he applied himself, said he got along with

Hazeltine's staff and was most reliable. "I really couldn't have asked for anything more."

Before PGA Week, Hoffer also telephoned Paul Latshaw, Jr., CGCS, superintendent at Oak Hill and asked if he could meet with him at Hazeltine and be considered for similar duty during the 2003 PGA Championship at this Rochester, N.Y. course. He did....and was told to heat East next Spring.



TRANS-MISSISSIPPI SCHOLAR TOM HOFFER, left, a third-year student in turf management at South Dakota State University, pictured with Jim Nicol, CGCS, Hazeltine superintendent, who said, "He was a real asset to our crew." Next year he will serve as an intern at the 2003 PGA Championship at Oak Hill in Rochester, New York.



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Hard Hats

Federal law governing whether golf course maintenance staff must wear hard hats is found in 29 CFR 1910. The regulation says employees shall wear protective helmets when working in areas where there is a potential for injury to the head from falling objects.

The regulation does not specifically address whether hard hats should be worn by golf course maintenance staff on the golf course. However, a 1995 sampling of experts in regional OSHA offices revealed they did not believe hard hats would need to be worn on the golf course. It was even suggested that wearing hard hats might cause golfers to carelessly hit balls towards staff, or even tempt golfers to try to hit staff. We are not aware of any situation where this interpretation has been challenged.

Even though hard hats are probably not necessary, the law requires employers to assess the workplace [PDF] to determine if hazards are present which necessitate the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) such as hard hats. Employers need to write and keep in their files a dated "certification of hazard assessment" which is a memo or note saying that the assessment has been performed and that the equipment provided is adequate.

Code of Federal Regulations

Title 29, Volume 5
Revised as of July 1, 2001
From the U.S. Government
Printing Office via GPO Access
CITE: 29CFR1910.132
Page 422-423

TITLE 29--LABOR
CHAPTER XVII -- OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY
AND HEALTH ADMINISTRATION,
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

PART 1910
OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND
HEALTH STANDARDS
Table of Contents
Subpart I--Personal Protective Equipment
Sec. 1910.132 General requirements.

Authority: Sections 4, 6, and 8, Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 (29 U.S.C. 653, 655, 657); Secretary of Labor's Order No. 12-71 (36 FR 8754), 8-76 (41 FR 25059), 9-83 (48 FR 35736), 1-90 (55 FR 9033), or 6-96 (62 FR 111), as applicable.

Sections 1910.132, 1910.134, and 1910.138 also issued under 29 CFR part 1911.

Sections 1910.133, 1910.135, and 1910.136 also issued under 29 CFR part 1911 and 5 U.S.C. 553.

(a) Application. Protective equipment, including personal protective equipment for eyes, face, head, and extremities, protective clothing, respiratory devices, and protective shields and barriers, shall be provided, used, and maintained in a sanitary and reliable condition wherever it is necessary by reason of hazards of processes or environment, chemical hazards, radiological hazards, or mechanical irritants encountered in a manner capable of causing injury or impairment in the function of any part of the body through absorption, inhalation or

physical contact.

(b) Employee-owned equipment. Where employees provide their own protective equipment, the employer shall be responsible to assure its adequacy, including proper maintenance, and sanitation of such equipment.

(c) Design. All personal protective equipment shall be of safe design and construction for the work to be performed.

(d) Hazard assessment and equipment selection. (1) The employer shall assess the workplace to determine if hazards are present, or are likely to be present, which necessitate the use of personal protective equipment (PPE). If such hazards are present, or likely to be present, the employer shall:

(i) Select, and have each affected employee use, the types of PPE that will protect the affected employee from the hazards identified in the hazard assessment;

(ii) Communicate selection decisions to each affected employee; and,

(iii) Select PPE that properly fits each affected employee.

Note: Non-mandatory Appendix B contains an example of procedures that would comply with the requirement for a hazard assessment.

(2) The employer shall verify that the required workplace hazard assessment has been performed through a written certification that identifies the workplace evaluated; the person certifying that the evaluation has been performed; the date(s) of the hazard assessment; and, which identifies the document as a certification of hazard assessment.

(e) Defective and damaged equipment. Defective or damaged personal protective equipment shall not be used.

(f) Training. (1) The employer shall provide training to each employee who is required by this section to use PPE. Each such employee shall be trained to know at least the following:

(i) When PPE is necessary;

(ii) What PPE is necessary;

(iii) How to properly don, doff, adjust, and wear PPE;

(iv) The limitations of the PPE; and,

(v) The proper care, maintenance, useful life and disposal of the PPE.

(2) Each affected employee shall demonstrate an understanding of the training specified in paragraph (f)(1) of this section, and the ability to use PPE properly, before being allowed to perform work requiring the use of PPE.

(3) When the employer has reason to believe that any affected employee who has already been trained does not have the understanding and skill required by paragraph (f)(2) of this section, the employer shall retrain each such employee. Circumstances where retraining is required include, but are not limited to, situations where:

(i) Changes in the workplace render previous training obsolete; or

(ii) Changes in the types of PPE to be used render previous training obsolete; or

(iii) Inadequacies in an affected employee's knowledge or use of assigned PPE indicate that the employee has not retained the requisite understanding or skill.

(4) The employer shall verify that each affected employee has received and understood the required training through a written certification that contains the name of each employee trained, the date(s) of training, and that identifies the subject of the certification.

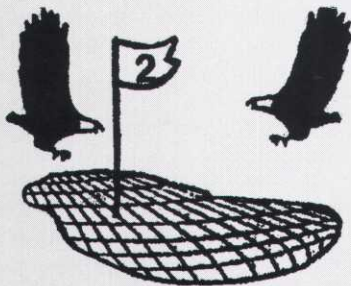
(g) Paragraphs (d) and (f) of this section apply only to

Secs. 1910.133, 1910.135, 1919.136, and 1910.138. Paragraphs (d) and (f) of this section do not apply to Secs. 1910.134 and 1910.137.

IF

*If you can start the day without caffeine,
If you can get going without pep pills,
If you can always be cheerful, ignoring aches and pains,
If you can resist complaining and boring people with
your troubles,
If you can eat the same food everyday and be grateful for it,
If you can understand when your loved ones are too busy
to give you any time,
If you can overlook it when those you love take it out on you when,
through no fault of yours, something goes wrong,
If you can take criticism and blame without resentment,
If you can ignore a friend's limited education and never correct him,
If you can resist treating a rich friend better than a poor friend,
If you can face the world without medical help,
If you can relax without liquor,
If you can sleep without the aid of drugs,
If you can say honestly that deep in your heart you have no
prejudice against creed, color, religion, or politics,
Then, my friend, you are almost as good as your dog.*

-- anonymous

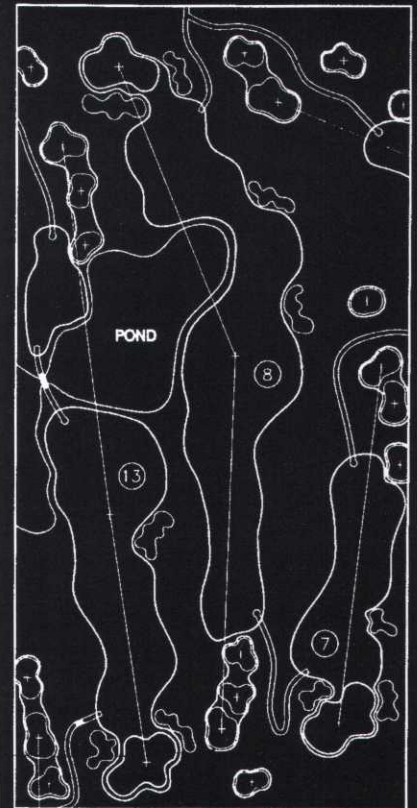


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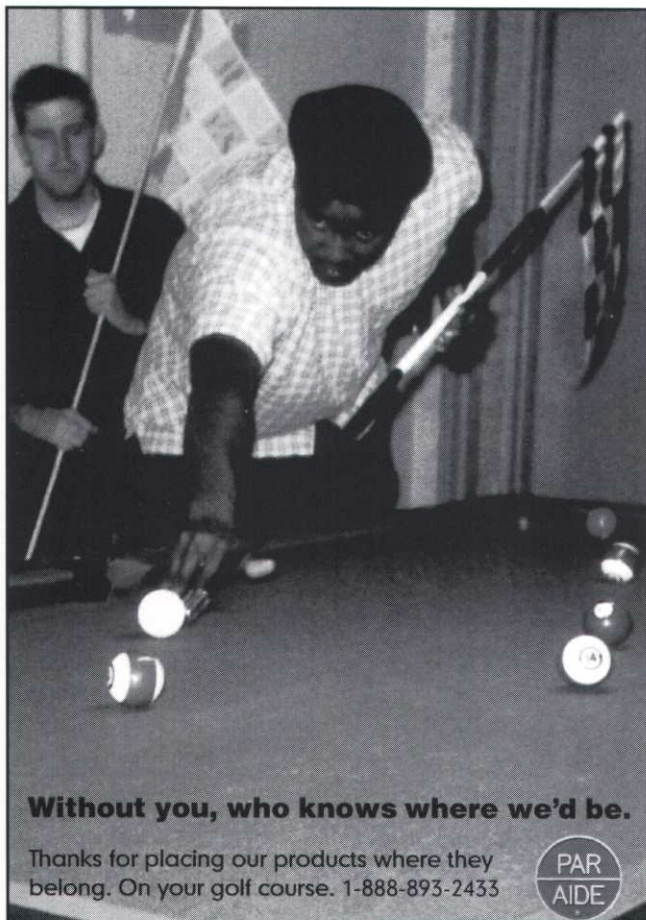
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