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About the Cover

Pictured on the cover is the 9th hole on Bobby's Legacy Course at Craguns.
Photo courtesy of the Legacy Courses at Craguns Superintendent Matt McKimmon.



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UPCOMING EVENTS

June 13

MGCSA Scholarship Scramble
Dellwood Hills Golf Club, Dellwood
Host Superintendent: Eric Peterson

July 28

U of M Turf & Grounds Field Day
TROE Center, St. Paul
Hosts: Larry Vetter, Dr. Brian Horgan

August 1

Harold Stodola Research Scramble
Brackett's Crossing Country Club, Lakeville
Host Superintendent: Tom Proshok

September 26

MGCSA Championship
Midland Hills Country Club, St. Paul
Host Superintendent: Scott Austin, CGCS

October 11

Fall Mixer
Monticello Country Club, Monticello
Host Superintendent: Rick Traver, CGCS



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Three Great Gatherings In April and May

By Robert Panuska

Many activities have taken place since last month's column. Of course the weather has once again dominated our lives and caused us all great grief! What was to be, a very good start in early April, was not to be in May. Just when we thought the parkas and winter gear could be stowed away, out it had to come again. You all know we are off to a rough start this season and patience is thin and frustration is high. The only advice I can give is to keep the lines of communications open with your staff, club leadership, management, your members and patrons. This is NOT easy, because conditions may not be what we want and there is nothing we can do to speed the process of recovery until our weather turns the corner and helps us out.

* * * *

We have had three gatherings in April and May that have provided a great opportunity to network with others in the golf business. Our first assistants-focused mixer was held at North Links Golf course in Mankato on April 25. Many braved the bitter northwest wind and played golf after a very informative presentation by Dr. Janna Beckerman, extension plant pathologist from the University of Minnesota. Thanks to all who attended and to host superintendent Eric Peters. Then on May 6 over 140 superintendents, club officials and interested parties attended the 1st Annual Turfgrass Forum at Midland Hills Country Club in St. Paul. This event was co-sponsored with the Minnesota Golf Association and offered everyone in attendance the opportunity to hear Bob Vavrek from the USGA discuss and answer questions related to the severe winter damage we have experienced this season. Finally, on May 16, we held the BASF people vs. the pro qualifier at Stillwater Country Club. Thanks to Marlin Murphy, host superintendent, and to everyone who attended. Please check the events schedule for the remainder of the season and plan to attend as many as you can.

* * * *

Who is the most valuable or important player on the team? Is it the pitcher, the quarterback, the center, the CEO or the CFO or the Pro or the superintendent? I guess if you go by the salaries in pro sports then the answers are fairly clear. However, I would argue that if we concentrate on trying to "prove" or "justify" who on the team is "most" valuable or important, then we have missed the whole point. That point being "THE TEAM" as a whole is what really matters. No one individual is "most" if the organization is truly operating as a unit with a common goal, be that goal winning the game or providing a great golf course. Unfortunately, it seems when revenues are down and budgets get tight, the "I" am most important talk starts when it should be "WE" will solve this together. As the saying goes, there is no "I" in team.

Until next month,
Rob

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An Enlightening Journey

By JIM SCHNEIDER

Club President, North Oaks Golf Club

My first month as president of North Oaks Golf Club has been an enlightening journey. Although I am not an agronomist, I now know more about grass on a golf course than 99% of the golfers in the Upper Midwest. I have read numerous articles, met with representatives of the MGA, and attended a seminar with the USGA Senior Agronomist for the North Central Region. I have seen slideshows depicting the damage to greens and fairways in Wisconsin, Minnesota and Michigan. I have discussed course conditions and state of greens and fairways with presidents and vice-presidents of most of the major Twin Cities private golf clubs. This month's President's Report hopefully will convey to the membership what I absorbed from all of these resources.

It's the Grass

First and foremost, it's the grass. Poa annua grass is the culprit. This dominant bluegrass in an old-fashioned Minnesota winter with lots of snow and normal temperatures will be a hearty viable plant in the spring. The problem is lack of snow cover and extreme temperature variations causing thawing and refreezing. This process kills Poa annua grass. This last winter was a Poa annua grass-killer not only in Minnesota but in the entire Upper Midwest. This spring, greens and fairways in Michigan and Wisconsin were many times in worse condition than greens and fairways at North Oaks Golf Club.

Bentgrass

The so-called good grass is Bentgrass. Bentgrass is very hearty and can survive

even a 2004-2005 Minnesota winter. The new courses around town including Troy Burne, Spring Hill and TPC of the Twin Cities are all Bentgrass golf courses. North Oaks unfortunately is primarily Poa annua grass and will remain primarily Poa annua grass no matter how often we overseed with Bentgrass. Poa annua grass will always outgrow Bentgrass when they exist in the same soil. That is why a club like Spring Hill (100% Bentgrass) has your golf shoes cleaned by their locker room attendant before you are allowed to play as a guest. Their fear is that your golf shoes might contain Poa annua grass seeds which would then take hold on their course and eventually spread over the

(Continued on Page 7)

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An Enlightening Journey-

(Continued from Page 5)

entire course. Clearly, Bentgrass courses don't want *Poa annua* grass. It reminds me of the Eurasian Milfoil problem in Minnesota lakes. The Minnesota DNR requires you to check your boats, motors and livewells after taking your boat out of the lake so as not to spread the Milfoil menace to the next lake that you put your boat in.

Grass Length

Length of grass is also a very important consideration. Long grass winters well. (See our roughs.) Fairways that are cut short suffer damage in a bad winter. (See our fairways.) Greens that are cut very short sustain the worst damage. (See pictures of our greens in early April.) Jack MacKenzie, our Green Superintendent, can give you the technical reasons why length of grass is critical. The bottom line however is that the shorter the grass is when winter sets in determines how susceptible the grass is to damage in the

spring. That is one reason why it is problematic to cut the greens after October 15. That extra grass height might be the difference between damaged greens and healthy greens the next spring.

"First and foremost, it's the grass. *Poa annua* grass is the culprit... the so-called good grass is Bentgrass."

Green Covers

Green covers have also been a major topic of conversation. There is simply no consensus regarding green covers. Two years ago Rolling Green and Minikahda used new green covers on some of their greens only to find those greens dead in the spring while uncovered greens were fine. This year some courses that used covers had good greens while other courses like Rolling Green again experimented with covers only to find dead greens when the covers were removed. Different covers produce different results depend-

ing on the type of winter. A certain green cover will work in a mild winter while another green cover would work better in a harsh winter. Unfortunately, golf course superintendents and green committees cannot predict what type of winter we are going to have to determine if a cover should be used and what type of cover would be the best choice.

Conclusion

My conclusion is that a golf course is susceptible to winter kill no matter what is done in the fall because you cannot predict the winter. The job of the superintendent and the Green Committee is to make decisions based on the best information available to them each fall. We have an excellent green superintendent, and a knowledgeable Green Committee. Your Board of Directors working with the green superintendent and the Green Committee will make the best decision possible for the turf at North Oaks Golf Club. Mother Nature will grade us next spring on our efforts. See you on the course.



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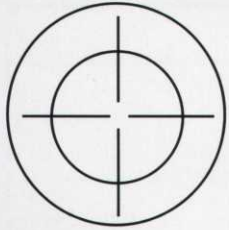
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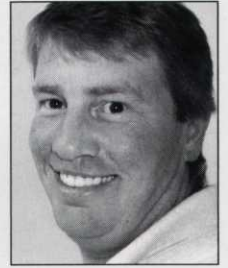
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MDA Now Considers Japanese Beetle Established in Minnesota



By PAUL DIEGNAU, CGCS

Keller Golf Course

A funny thing happened at my golf course last year. The occasional adult Japanese beetle (*Popillia japonica*) we would see on a green or in a garden suddenly blossomed into numbers we were uncomfortable with. The no-mow buffer strips around our water features had become gathering points for the consumption of wild aster and reproductive orgies. We placed pheromone traps in areas of concentrated activity and were amazed at the numbers collected. For close to two weeks, the traps were full in one or two days and had to be emptied. I grabbed a pair of binoculars and started searching the tops of our lindens and maples. Sure



enough, the metallic, coppery green critters could be seen skeletonizing leaves in their feeding frenzy. I could only wonder what 2005 would bring.

Well, 2005 is here. The Minnesota Department of Agriculture has determined that JB is established in Minnesota and has dropped its trapping and monitoring program for this species. What kind of ride are we in for, both short and long term? Is it time to start scouting and monitoring for larvae? How will this beetle affect our maintenance budgets and our playing conditions? I put these questions to several local superintendents with JB experience and out into cyberspace on the "Turfnet" forum. I

received responses from Michigan, Iowa, Toronto, Massachusetts, Virginia, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. The information I received was very informative, insightful, and even somewhat alarming. This information is being offered in the hope that proactive golf course managers will be better prepared to deal with JB as the need arises.

The adult beetle has an iridescent green color to its body with copper-colored wing covers. They are easily identified by the six white tufts of hair located on each side of their body. The adult beetle has a voracious appetite, feeding on over 300 species of plant material. Their favorite meal is a sampling of Lindens, Norway maple, members of the rose family and grape vines. They feed between the veins in a leaf, leaving a skeleton behind.

When populations are sizable, they can defoliate an entire tree in a short period of time. One golf course superintendent from Michigan shared a story of being able to hear the buzz of the beetles feeding in the trees above...over the noise of a golf cart engine!

Most JB veterans will tell you to avoid using traps if adults are not visible. The pheromones and scents in these traps can lure beetles onto your property from a mile or more away.

Once you have identified adult populations on your property, a month of trapping in July will give you some perspective on the quantity of JB you are dealing with. Trapping for more than a year may



lead to problems, such as those experienced by David Longville, CGCS, who is currently the head superintendent at Mill Run/Wild Ridge Golf Courses in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. While previously serving as superintendent at Hillcrest Golf and Country Club in Eau Claire, Wisconsin,

David managed to collect eleven 55-gallon trash bags full of Japanese beetles! The sheer volume of such a catch led to disposal issues. He attempted to freeze them in a freezer but they generated too much heat and would not freeze. His only recourse was to burn them in a 55-gallon barrel. Needless to say, mass trapping is problematic and not an effective control method.

Opinions and situations vary as to whether adult beetles need to be



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