

Turfgrass Matters



May 1993, vol. 45, no. 3

Mid-Atlantic Golf Course Superintendents Newsletter

Superintendent-Pro Tournament May 11

Walter Montross to host at Westwood

Westwood CC, built in 1954 and known originally as Westbriar CC., was designed by architect A.H. Tull, an Englishman who worked in the D.C. area in the early 50s. The course was built on a dairy farm purchased by a Mr. Horowitz to develop a golf course and home sites. In 1962, due to financial difficulties, it was sold to a group of 62 members who changed the name to Westwood.

Other than the original routing of the course, little to nothing remains of the past except the dairy barn, now the site of our maintenance facility. Many of the changes are the redesign work of Ed Ault and subsequently Brian Ault.

Over the years a few of our association members earned their stripes here—Buck Wetsel, Mike Burkholder, Jack McClenahan, Wally Steading and his humble assistant, Angelo Cammarota, Ken Comminsky and Tom Haske. I am still trying to figure out which one used the dynamite to aerate the 16th green. I heard this story years ago and I also heard they had to clean the sod off the barn roof! I assume the practice was discontinued about this time, but imagine the extra benefit of long-term grub control.

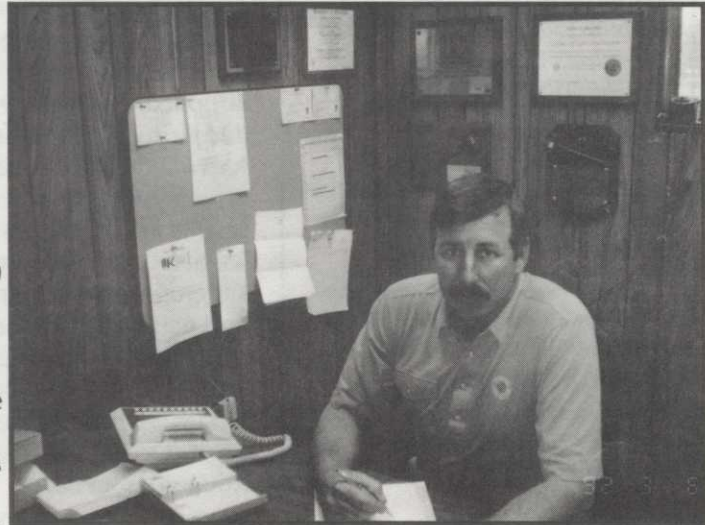
All these men put their personal stamp on the place, but the real changes occurred during Tom's 17 years: all the greens—except #7—were rebuilt, many new tees were added, cart paths

installed, and many of the trees I enjoy were planted.

Notes Walter, "I started here in April 1990 and have tried to put my own stamp on the place. With the generous support of the member-

ship we have been actively involved with change. Many new projects have been initiated and many still to be done. The most exciting: converting the 95% *poa annua* fairways to bentgrass in the fall of 1990. We hoped to achieve around 80% bent to 20% *poa*. We have not reached these numbers yet, but are slowly gaining on it."

Another project is replacing the old bridges. "We have done two and hope to do a third this fall. We also continue to rebuild the old tees. In the last three years we have five new ladies' tees and two men's tees. The major project last year was complete restoration of our sand bunkers. We removed all the old sand—3,000 tons—established new drainage and added new sand. While we were at it, we decided to build seven new bunkers and build target greens in the driving range with the waste material generated from the bunkers. All this, coupled with



Golf/Dinner: Because this is the Super/Pro tournament your entry fee covers all costs for golf, lunch, dinner and the cocktail party. If you are not playing in the tournament you are most welcome to come to the cocktail party and dinner. Cost for this is \$35 which is inclusive. Cocktails are at 6:00, dinner at 7:00. Coat and tie are required in the dining room.

Directions: From Baltimore/Eastern Shore take I-495 across the American Legion Bridge. Take exit 11B (Rt. 123, Chain Bridge Rd. toward Vienna). You will pass through Tyson's Corner, a large shopping mall. After approximately 2 miles on Rt. 123 Westwood will be on the right. From the west, take Rt. 66 to Rt. 123 north toward Oakton/Vienna. After approximately 6 miles, the club will be on your left.

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Revised Education Schedule

June 8 - **Mrs. Stephanie Hau**,
Hydrogeologist, Hydro-Tera, Inc.,
"Golf Courses and ground water
usage."
July 13 - **Mr. Roger Maxwell**, Vice
President, Marriott Golf, "The
Future of Golf."
August 10 - No speaker
September 14 - **Mr. Arthur Hills**,
Arthur Hills and Associates, "Golf
Course Design."
November 9 - **Mr. Jeff Blind**,
Hillendale Country Club, "Greens
Drainage."

*For locations, please see schedule
in March or April issues of
Turfgrass Matters.*

GOLF NOTES

Thanks to Fred Heinlen, CGCS, and the rest of the River Run staff, our April golf tournament was a very enjoyable experience. Even the weatherman helped with an outstanding day for golf. Thanks also to those members who helped me tally up the score cards, especially Ben Stagg who kept me supplied with plenty of shrimp and drink during this process. We had a total of 47 golfers play in the point system tournament. The results are as follows:

1st net: Paul Taliaferro (+5);
1st gross: Sean Remington (28)
2nd net: Mike Gilmore (+3);
2nd gross: Scott Wagner (28)
3rd net: Lentz Wheeler (+3);
3rd gross: Jim Purcell (27)
Closest to the pin (Hoechst-Roussel): Tim Sage
Closest to the pin (Pro-Lawn): Paul Taliaferro
Closest to the pin (Harford): Paul Masimore
Closest to pin (Lofts): Joe Perry
Longest Drive (Hoechst-Roussel): Nick Vance
Thanks to this month's sponsors.

**Golfer-of-the-Year
points for April**

Sean Remington	50
Scott Wagner	40
Mike Gilmore	40
Lentz Wheeler	40
Bill Neus	30
Rick Fritz	30
Steve Potter	30
Bill Shirk	20
David Rudinski	20
Tom List	20
David Cammarota	20
Adam Rayan	20
Nick Vance	10
Ben Stagg	10

Bill Shirk, CGCS
Golf Chairman, MAAGCS

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The April meeting at River Run in Berlin, Md. was a lot of fun. Our host, Fred Heinlen, had the golf course in great condition. The use of knolls and swales made for an interesting round on what would otherwise be a flat tract of ground. River Run's generous Eastern Shore hospitality featured shrimp and raw oyster hors d'oeuvres which satisfied all seafood lovers. Members of the Eastern Shore group also attended, so it was nice seeing fellow superintendents we don't often see at regular meetings. We hope that we can get down to the shore again next year.

There was a problem with the count this month: 20 reservations were not honored. This cost your association \$500; that equates to 2% of your dues. Please be more considerate of your association and your host. The BOD is trying to meet the membership's needs yet remain fiscally responsible. This will be difficult if money must be paid for no-shows.

By now you have received your survey. Please fill it out as completely and honestly as you can so that all opinions can be compiled and evaluated. The BOD feels it is imperative to plan for the future and we want to do it with your interests as the plan's impetus.

The next meeting is the Superintendent/Pro hosted by Walter Montross at Westwood Country Club in Vienna, Va. The day promises to be a lot of fun and the BOD hopes it will be an opportunity for superintendents and professionals to interact socially away from their home clubs.



Steve Potter, CGCS
President, MAAGCS

Bentgrass Fairways on a Public Course?

by Bill Shirk, CGCS, Golf Chairman, MAAGCS

As I complete my 21st year as a golf course superintendent in the Mid-Atlantic region, one of the most discussed topics is what type of grass to grow in fairways. There have been many debates on cool-season grasses versus warm season grasses. This article will relate my past experiences and present adventures in fairway grass production.

When I graduated from Penn State in 1972, I went to Seaford Golf and Country Club in Seaford, Delaware. I started with some of the early varieties of perennial ryegrasses which were mostly Manhattan and Pennfine. The fairways quickly improved to the point of being able to play summer rules on a regular basis. The usual maintenance practice of reseeding every year was a constant event. The fungicides sprayed on the fairways increased to combat dollar spot and pythium. Fungicides weren't a major concern as we were directly related to E.I. Dupont Co. and the products Tera LSR, 1991, and Tera SP, were as common and easy to get as household sugar.

In 1978, I moved to Prospect Bay, a new course, and started out with A-34 bluegrass fairways. This bluegrass was very aggressive from early summer to fall and required very little overseeding in the fall. This grass provided an excellent playing environment, but it was very slow to get growing in the spring. It was late May or early June before A-34 would finally get aggressive. As a result, there was a lot of encroachment from other grasses, such as *poa trivialis*, *poa annua*, and more common, bentgrass. Before leaving Prospect Bay, it was my full intention to convert to

bentgrass fairways as it seemed that's what really wanted to grow there. But as everyone knows, I made a move to Queenstown Harbor Golf Links.

This was, and is still, intended to be a very upscale public golf course. The decision was made to have bentgrass fairways and that was the beginning of a very scary time in my professional career. We all know how difficult bentgrass greens and tees are to maintain, but the thought of 40 acres of bentgrass can be somewhat intimidating and sometimes scary. Penneagle was chosen because it is one of the less aggressive bentgrasses and hopefully would cut down on thatch problems. As some of the fairways are reaching their second anniversary, the summer of 1992 was a very good one for them.

They have improved tremendously since the Superintendent-Pro tournament in May. They now look mature and truly provide a great playing surface.

I'd like to highlight some aspects of the maintenance program. I mow at 1/2 inch with Toro's 223D and collect all clippings. I fertilize with a 16-16-16 blend using Nutralene. Two

applications were made in the spring and two in the fall at 1 lb/m. Scott's 29-2-3 fluid fertilizer was used at 0.3 lb/m per application starting in July and repeated every two to three weeks until September.

TGR Turf Enhancer was applied the first week of June at 1/2 lb/acre. This created some uneasy moments for a two- to three-week period. The use of TGR at this rate did cause a lot of discoloration but this downside was far outweighed by the vast improvement in the density and lateral movement of the turf. While using TGR, mowing was cut from twice a week to once a week with very little clipping removal. Last September and mid-October, TGR was again applied

continued on page 7

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COHOON'S CORNER

○ Two of our members have changed jobs in the past month. **Tom Tuttle** has left Caves Valley Club in Owings Mill, Md to accept the assistant superintendent position at Ridgewood Country Club in Monroe, N.Y. **Tim Spillane** of Fairview Links in Easton, Md. is moving but staying in the Mid-Atlantic area as assistant superintendent at Columbia CC in Chevy Chase, Md. Congratulations and good luck to both of you in your new positions.

○ Our best wishes for a speedy recovery go to two members: **Dr. Ron Seibel**, Director of the Institute of Applied Agriculture at the University of Maryland, who is recovering from a broken hip. Also, **Jeff Facto** of Heritage Harbor is on the mend

after having surgery on his shoulder.

○ Now joining the ranks of certified golf course superintendents is **Andy Sheehan**, CGCS, of Kenwood Country Club. Andy recently passed the exam and becomes another of the nearly 1,300 superintendents who have earned certified status. Congratulations to Andy for bettering himself and our profession.

○ **Attention Shoppers!** Don't forget to use the advertisers and sponsors found in this newsletter for all of your golf course maintenance needs. These companies are valuable members who provide the resources for many of the benefits that you enjoy through this association, as well as the research programs that make our jobs easier. Without them, our jobs would be much

more difficult than they already are and we would most certainly be paying more in dues. So the next time you need to obtain goods, remember, a purchase with one of our sponsors is an investment in your association.

Study on Superintendents and Pesticides

The first-ever independent study of occupational pesticide exposure among golf course superintendents will be conducted at the University of Iowa's College of Medicine. Sponsored by GCSAA Scholarship & Research, it will be a thorough study of causes of death among superintendents over the past 23 years to determine whether superintendents have higher-than-average rates of cancers or other illnesses that could have been caused by long-term exposure to pesticides.

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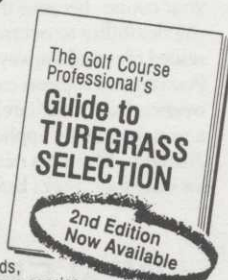
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How to Prepare for a Job Interview

by Lou Rudinski, Vice President MAAGCS

The golf course industry at present is experiencing some recovery from the slowdown of the past few years. Golf course superintendent job openings are scarce but when they occur, there is a flurry for a short time. Being prepared when the time arises will help in securing an interview.

If you are an assistant going for your first superintendent interview, you've already rewritten your resume, applied to the

A job interview is really a conversation about whether there is going to be a perfect match all the way around.

courses that may suit your values and goals, networked with salesmen and other superintendents (hopefully the outgoing superintendent can help you), and it has finally paid off—you've landed an interview. But so have a half-dozen other hopeful applicants. There are no guarantees, but following basic interviewing guidelines can give you an advantage.

One key to a good interview is to focus on the needs of the golf course doing the hiring. The golf course should share what they need from a new superintendent. Then you should share your background with them. You want to help the Green Committee/General Manager see how you can help get them from Point A to Point B.

If you don't have certain experiences they are looking for, be honest, but let them know you have the training to find the answers. Not all superintendents have built greens, but we all know who has. State confidently that

through your involvement with the MAAGCS you have developed a rapport with superintendents of many courses experiences similar directives.

Listen carefully and when speaking find out what the course needs and be prepared to demonstrate how you can fill those needs. Most of the time courses hire a superintendent, not because of their skills, but because of the personality of the applicant. Your values and theirs must be a perfect match. Emphasize the teamwork ethic you will bring with you toward the golf professional and the clubhouse staff. An interview is really a conversation about whether there is going to be a perfect match all the way around. Learn how to market yourself so as to help the officials conducting the interview.

Make a list and be able to say you are creative, intelligent, organized, etc. Offer proof by example, give a good picture of yourself, allow your strengths to shine through.

Ask questions about the important issues, budget, equipment, irrigation system, direction the club is going. Do they realize the cost involved, does the

budget reflect their expectations? Remember, Rome wasn't built in a day. Stress that careful planning and goal setting should be prime objectives before jumping into a major project.

Do a dry run. Make sure your clothing is neat, clean and professional. Be sure you know where you are going even if you must drive out the day before. Review your resume, be as prepared as you can so nothing stresses you out. Always leave the interview on a positive note. If you don't get the job, your name could be passed on to other clubs in the area. If possible, leave with a clear-cut idea about a follow-up interview or an appraisal if you've been turned down. The appraisal will help you in your next job search.

It's important to communicate well with the committee since they will be assessing how well you get along with others. Maintain eye contact, listen carefully, and respond appropriately. Be positive. Don't bad-mouth a former employer. It's a small world in the golf business.



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Bentgrass, from page 3

at the rate of 1/4 lb/acre for each application. This has cut back the discoloration from the TGR. My plan for next year is to use Cutless spring and summer and TGR in the fall.

For my fungicide program, I would spray 0.25 oz/m Banner plus 1.5 oz/m 2787; wait three weeks and spray with 0.25 oz/m Banner plus 0.25 oz/m Bayleton; wait three weeks again. This was my main diet of spraying. I went once with a full rate of 2787, 6 oz/.m, and once with a full rate of 26019, 4 oz/m, just to give some variation. My main spray applications were these very light rates and the results were great, also a big savings in the chemical budget. Spraying for pythium was done preventively during July and August using Subdue and Banol at the recommended rates.

One other thing I did was hire

two full-time people to do nothing but fill in fairway divots. For the year, 40 tons of topdressing mix has been used specifically for this purpose. I felt the added cost was more than beneficial as it helped keep the fairways level and provided a better atmosphere for the bentgrass to fill over and keep out unwanted weeds. Dimension was applied the first week of May for crabgrass control. I feel Dimension will give me flexibility in the aerating program which will be not to aerate this fall in hopes of cutting down on the *poa annua* germination. I plan to do two fairway aerifications in spring and early summer. This is a new management technique for me and only time will tell if it succeeds in keeping *poa annua* out of the bentgrass fairways.

Now, I'm not preaching that bentgrass is the best turfgrass for fairways. There are many factors

to consider and bentgrass may not be for every club or golf course. But bentgrass is gaining popularity in the Mid-Atlantic and I am pleased with its performance at Queenstown. I'm sure in years to come we will still be debating which is the best fairway turfgrass.

NEW MEMBERS

Lawrence Harrison, Towson GCC
 Thomas Kessel, Westwood CC
 Richard Isaac, Worthington Valley GC
 Mike Tyson, Swan Point CC
 Chip Chandler, River Bend CC
 Joseph Gallagher, Jr., River Bend CC
 John Gregory, Manor CC
 Harlyn Goldman, Manor CC
 Greg Connelly, Hunt Valley GC
 Dottie Stancill, Harford Industrial Minerals
 Brendan Lynch, CID, ASIC, Lynch & Associates, LTD.
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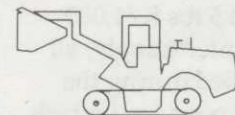
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Continued from page 1

our own horticultural efforts has kept us quite busy. But we're not done yet. We hope to install a new irrigation system next winter and begin extensive erosion control work around the ponds and creeks.

"As I mentioned above, our goal is to grow bentgrass. There is still plenty of *poa annua*; after 20 years of cultivation, it won't go away easily. We are trying everything: growth regulators (excellent), preemergence products (?), and Prograss (I think it will ultimately be the answer). We are gaining in bentgrass percentages but the battle is yet to be won—and may never be fully won."

The greens are Penncross, the new tees are Penncross with the latest ones being Dominant. The old tees are ryegrass. The fairways are predominantly Pennlinks with Dominant overseeded the last two years. The greens and tees receive approximately 4 lbs. N/1,000 sq.ft. and 6 lbs. K/1,000 sq.ft. per year.

"We are gaining in bentgrass percentages but the battle is yet to be won—and may never be fully won."

The fairways receive 2 lbs. N/1,000 sq. ft. and 5 lbs K/1,000 sq.ft. per year. Interestingly, all fertilizer is applied during the summer. They spoon feed which pushes the bentgrass when the *poa* is naturally being stressed. Greens are cut daily at 5/32". We used to cut at 9/64" but, with the heavy contouring of the greens, the members found them to be too fast. The old ryegrass tees are cut at 1/2" and the bent tees are cut at 7/16". The fairways and approaches are cut at 1/2". Tees and

fairways are cut three days a week which is plenty with the use of growth regulators.

Walter is a 1975 graduate of the I.A.A., University of Maryland. He became a Certified Superintendent in 1984 and was president of the MAAGCS in 1989. His wife Linda teaches Latin at the high school level. "I don't know anything about this subject," says Walter, "but she can't tell the difference between Pythium and wet wilt, so we are even.

"We are blessed with two great kids: Tracy, who will turn 10

the day of this meeting. She was born the evening of this tournament in 1983 when we were at Washington GCC, and was the last time I won the 50-50. Geoffrey is 8. Both love all the things kids love and keep us busy shuttling them from event to event." Walter's interests are reading, gourmet cooking, hunting, fishing and golf.

Westwood's assistant superintendent is Kirk Intermill; the host golf professional is Glenn Brown, and the general manager is Michael Miranda.



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