Noveraber 1994

AAGCS Newsletter

Turfgrass Matters

November 1994, vol. 46, no. 9

Mid-Atlantic Golf Course Superintendents Newsletter

Donn Dietrich to Host November 8 Meeting at Maryland Golf & CC

Four-man scramble to start at noon

by Donn Dietrich

Maryland Golf and Country Club is an 18-hole club located in Bel Air, Maryland. The golf course's founder, Larry MacPhail, before retirement, was highly involved in baseball. Throughout his life, he managed and owned three baseball teams, the Cincinnati Reds, the Brooklyn Dodgers and the New York Yankees (1933-1947). He was one of the few owners to win championships in both leagues-the Dodgers in 1941 and the Yankees in 1947. He was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame for his innovative and pioneering ideas, the three for which he is probably remembered most are: pioneering night baseball by installing lights in 1935; hiring the first radio announcer to broadcast games, and originating plane travel for the teams so they could compete outside their immediate cities. The other item he was instrumental in setting up was the first player contracts and benefit packages. So this is where it all started. I wonder what he would think of the multi-million dollar contracts that are standard today.

At age 57 Larry MacPhail retired from baseball and moved to Bel Air to breed race horses. He bought a farm called Glenangus and in 1960 decided to build a golf



course. The original farm house is still located on the rolling hills that overlook the golf course. The current owners still allow horses to roam but found it more profitable to sell lots and build houses which now surround the golf course.

The golf course was designed by two architects. William F. Gorden, who constructed many other courses in Maryland and Pennsylvania, designed the front nine which opened May 27, 1961. The back nine, designed and built by Russell Roberts, opened in August 1961. The golf course plays 6630 yards from the white markers and has a slope rating of 133.

In the ten years I've been superintendent at Maryland Golf we have completed the automatic irrigation system, renovated and enlarged the ponds, installed new bridges and cart paths. I am currently working with the legendary Chip McDonald in totally renovating the bunkers. This has been a very exciting project for the club and has not

See Dietrich on page 8

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Golf: 12 noon, shotgun. Call the pro shop by Friday November 4 at 410-838-5022. **Cost:** \$15 includes cart and entry fee.

Dinner: Cocktails at 5:30, dinner at 6:30. Coat and tie. **Cost:** \$30, cash bar.

Directions: From I-95 north toward New York, take exit 77-B toward Bel Air on route 24. Take a right at the first light—route 924. Go approximately 4 miles to East MacPhail Rd.; turn right. Go about 3 miles to club entrance on the left at the top of the hill. (About 45 minutes north of Baltimore.)

Inside this Issue

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Congratulations to Bill Shirk and the entire staff at the Queenstown Harbor Golf

Links for the great day.

Those of you who played enjoyed not only the 6th best new public golf course in the United States, but one of the finest conditioned courses in Maryland. I know many of us are busy at this time of year, but if you missed the MAAGCS Championship Tournament, you missed a great day! Congratulations to Cory Haney, winner of the low net Cliff Olinger Trophy, and to Bill Shirk, winner of the low gross W.H. Glover Trophy.

Speaking of busy...Mike Gilmore and the Long Range Planning Committee are in the final stage of selecting a management company. An ever-increasing workload necessitates professional assistance running the affairs of the association. More on this in November.

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Our next membership meeting will be at the Maryland Golf and Country Club. Donn Dietrich will host. This course always tests the skill of the best golfers in the Mid-Atlantic Region. Plan to attend this meeting. Sean Remington promises a lively education session.

Ohhh, I almost forgot. The John Deere Tournament was a huge success. Finch Turf Equipment again displayed a first-class, well-organized tournament. Congratulations to Gordon Caldwell and the Greenspring Valley Hunt Club staff for a wonderfully conditioned golf course as well as a grand buffet and awards ceremony. Thank you, Ray, for support to the MAAGCS.....by the way, Ray, what time did you say the plane leaves for Palm Springs??? Lou Rudinski, President

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Did you notice...

in the October issue of *Golf Magazine* that contestants in the Ohio Amateur. "were required to use Softspikes—courtesy of the Ohio Golf Association—in accordance with Scioto's [CC, Columbus] new policy banning spikes. No loud complaints were heard...and there were no complaints about spike marks on greens.

Scioto joins a prestigious list of clubs that have either outlawed metal spikes or strongly recommended to their members that they use Softspikes, including Pine Valley, Muirfield Village, Prairie Dunes in Kansas...and Robert Trent Jones Club in Manassas, Virginia, site of The Presidents Cup."



GOLF NOTES

Many thanks to Bill Shirk and his staff at QHGL and to the Birneys for providing us an excellent golf course and challenge for our annual championship. It was an honor and a privilege to play a golf course where the owners give their total support to a superintendent who has earned their respect, along with the respect of his peers. Conditions were absolutely perfect! Bill, again thanks and congratulations on a great job!

As a result of the Birneys' graciously donating the cart fees to our prize money, we were able to have a lot of winners. Tournament results were:

Gross - 1st (W.H. Glover Trophy)—Bill Shirk, 2nd—Scott Wagner, 3rd—John Newcomb, 4th— Gregg Rosenthal, 5th—Kirk Intermill, 6th—Jim McHenry, 7th—Gordon Caldwell, 8th—Bob Miller, 9th—Ron Weaver, 10th—Dave Nehila

Net - 1st (Cliff Olinger Trophy)—Corey Haney, 2nd—Nick Vance, 3rd—Walter Smith, 4th—Jon Machmuller, 5th—Walter Montross, 6th—Ken Ingram, 7th—Ben Stagg, 8th—Bill Neus, 9thBernie Beavan, 10th-John Tutich

Commercial Flight: Gross - 1st—Paul Tideman, 2nd—Paul Brandon, 3rd—Ken Braun

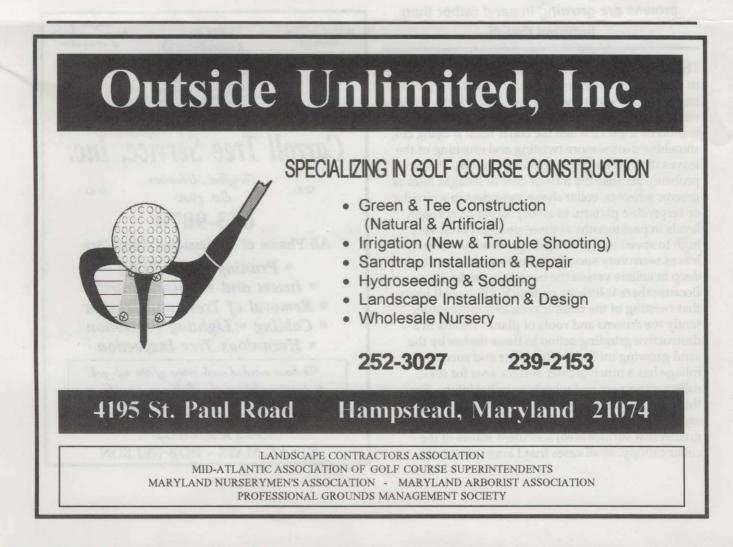
Net - 1st—Jeff Miskin, 2nd—Don Rossi, 3rd— Kevin Clair

Our thanks to our sponsors for the day: G.L. Cornell (gross division), Turf Equipment and Supply (net division), Pro-Lawn/Malehorn (long drive), Summit Hall (closest to pin), EZ Go (3 closest to pin).



November golf tournament will be our four-man scramble and will be held at Maryland Golf & CC. Check-in will be from 10:30 to 11:30. There is no need to reserve a tee time but don't be late. It will be a 12:00 shotgun start and cost will be \$15 per person (\$10 cart and \$5 tournament).

Jim McHenry, Golf Chairman



Why Are Our New Bentgrass Collars Dying?

by Peter H. Dernoeden, The University of Maryland

In the last two years I have been called upon to diagnose the cause of dying bentgrass on collars of new or newly renovated greens. In several situations entire collars died or exhibited severe thinning, but the putting surface remained in relatively good condition. Most of the problems have been associated with bentgrass grown on sand, but mineral soil growing media were not always exempted. Most injury appeared in the spring or summer following a fall seeding. In nearly all of the cases with which I have been involved, the damage was mechanical. In a small number of situations we implicated Pythium spp.

The major part of the problem...may very well be mechanical injury from a combination of mowing and topdressing succulent, immature plants whose crowns are growing in sand rather than buffered thatch.

The collars are sometimes rendered more susceptible to mechanical damage because walk-behind greens mowers often are turned on the collars. Even if this is not the case, the turning action of the mower (walkbehind or triplex), when the collar itself is being cut, somehow causes more twisting and crushing of the leaves than occurs on the putting surface. This is probably because the mower cuts in straight lines on greens; whereas, collar shape meanders in a circular or serpentine pattern. In nearly all cases, nitrogen levels in past months at these sites had been very high to speed the growing-in process. As a result, leaves were very succulent. Rooting also may be less deep in collars versus the bentgrass on the green. Because there is little or no thatch, I believe it likely that twisting of the taller leaves, and more importantly the crowns and roots of plants, results in a destructive grinding action to these tissues by the sand growing medium. This-taller and succulent foliage has a much greater surface area for reels, rollers, groomers and wheels to inflict injury. Furthermore, topdressing (mostly abrasive angular sand) also is much more damaging to the taller (i.e., greater leaf surface area) succulent leaves of the collar canopy. In all cases that I know about, the

decline in collars occurred about 10 to 14 days after topdressing. Topdressing in spring may be injurious to young succulent bentgrass, but topdressing young bentgrass in hot weather can be very destructive. No matter how gently the topdressing is applied or brushed-in, the abrasive sand (especially during hothumid weather) is very injurious to succulent leaves and crowns. Damage is greatest in walk-on and off areas or where the layout of the green makes it impossible to avoid turning the mower on the collar. Furthermore, mowing young bentgrass collars during very hot weather or when collars are very wet or spongy also causes mechanical injury. Most who experience this problem invariably conclude it must be a disease. This is not usually so; however, Pythium spp are sometimes associated with the problem. I have observed only two cases: Bethesda CC and Winters Run GC. In both cases, large numbers of Pythium spores were found in



sheaths and leaves. Pythium oospores can be found in association with roots of all bentgrass/annual bluegrass greens. Pythium spp occasionally build up to a point where they cause root dysfunction, which is also known as Pythium root rot. Root rot is a misnomer because infected roots are not usually rotted and often appear white and healthy. When huge populations of oospores are produced in roots, they lose their root hairs and can no longer function adequately. This most often occurs during very wet weather and as a result turf thins out. Again, Pythium-induced root dysfunction is not as common in the Mid-Atlantic region as you may have been led to believe. Regardless, it is rare to find these same types of Pythium spp. oospores in leaves and sheaths. It is possible that the leaves and sheaths of bentgrass on collars at Bethesda CC and Winters Run GC were predisposed to Pythium invasion by mechanical injury. When these Pythium spp. are present in high populations, Aliette + Fore, and Koban or Terreneb SP drenches have helped to alleviate the condition. The major part of the problem, however,

may very well be mechanical injury from a combination of mowing and topdressing succulent, immature plants whose crowns are growing in sand rather than buffered by thatch. Note, a similar phenomenon is common at the outer periphery of many older greens that are subjected to the stressful turning action of a triplex mower; while, the inner portions of the green remain in good condition.

Whenever mechanical injury becomes evident it is important to avoid topdressing if weather conditions are hot and humid. Avoid topdressing and any kind of cultivation or grooming practices until cooler weather, and only perform these cultivation practices when bentgrass is actively growing. During periods of heat stress, reduce mowing frequency of collars and only mow during the coolest part of the day and when the surface is dry. Also, stop applying nitrogen and rely on iron to improve turf color during stressful summer periods. Hand syringe frequently when weather conditions warrant and avoid water puddling.



COHOON'S CORNER

O Congratulations to President Lou Rudinski and the entire team from Eisenhower Golf Course on winning the John Deere tournament. Lou and his team will be competing in the upcoming national championships to be held in Palm Springs, California. Good Luck, Lou. Bring home the trophy!
O From the Local Boy Makes Good category, Tim Haines (formerly at Trotters Glen and currently at Palmetto Dunes, Hilton Head, S. C.) was in town visiting at the MAAGCS meeting at Queenstown Harbor. Tim just recently finished work on a new eighteen holes at the Palmetto Dunes complex and is now resting comfortably.

O Articles are still needed for upcoming issues of "Turfgrass Matters," both for this year and next. If you would like any particular topics covered that have not been addressed in the past, or have written an article yourself, please contact me or any other board member and we will try and meet your request.

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Dietrich, from page 1

only made the bunkers play consistently but has, through design and uniform sand color, increased visual appeal from the tee. This year we are scheduled to build new permanent restrooms on the course, install an emergency call box system throughout the course, rebuild some ladies' tees, and make some improvements to the maintenance shop area.

I started in the golf business working for Grant Pensinger CGCS at Greenspring in 1977 as a summer job. Grant talked me into pursuing a career as a golf course superintendent, and in 1978 I entered the U of M Institute of Applied Agriculture. After graduating I went to work for Bill Black CGCS and spent two years at Congressional Country Club.

In 1982 I accepted the assistant job at Leisure World and in 1984 moved back to my Baltimore roots as the assistant at Hillendale Country Club. In 1985 when Ron Hall CGCS decided to move south I became superintendent at Maryland Golf and Country Club. One of the many great aspects of working here is the staff. Within the maintenance department, I have six full-time people who share 90 years of golf course experience between them, and an assistant, David Boniface, who makes my job a lot easier. I also have the benefit of working with a golf pro of the caliber of Paul Haviland who has been here since the club opened—34 years— and, who, along with the other staff, is a pleasure to work with.

I became certified at the Dallas convention and spent three years (1989-1991) on the BOD of the Mid-Atlantic working with some of the most dedicated people I know.

I've been married for 11 years. My wife Torri works two days a week as a social work consultant for Baltimore County. We have two children— Hanna, 5, and Elli, 3. Now that both are in school and involved in other activities, our schedule has become pretty busy. In her spare time my wife volunteers for local charities, plays tennis and walks. I serve on the advisory council for parks and planning for the Town of Bel Air, helping to plan a new park and recreation area in the community. I also enjoy playing golf, and try to get out as much as possible. My goal is to play golf with John Drew.

Maybe one day.



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