# HRU THE GREEN

The Golf Course Superintendents Association of Northern California

JULY - SEPTEMBER 2020



# Join Us on Monday, October 26 at Ruby Hill Golf Club For The 13th Annual Clifford & Myrtle Wagoner

Scholarship & Research Tournament



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Ruby Hill Golf Club

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# President's Message

By **PETE BACHMAN** 

GCSANC President, Superintendent, The Links at Spanish Bay

2020 has brought us an unprecedented pandemic (at least in our lives), nationwide protests, a summer heat wave, and as I write this, a new wave of wildfires, which have seemingly become as regular as the swallows returning to San Juan Capistrano each year. In fact, they tell us, this year's wildfires have been record-breaking in magnitude!

Figuring that our members had tired of reading about COVID, the original plan was for this President's Message to have a more upbeat tone, maybe focusing on one of the theme's of this issue, which is "must play" golf courses, or a look into my recent home purchase and the associated home improvement and landscape projects.

But, Mother Nature, with her late August lightning strikes, had a different plan. So, this issue I am compelled once again to focus on circumstances beyond our control. Not fun, not upbeat by any means, but certainly relevant.

In the last couple of weeks, my family and I were not put on mandatory evacuation, but "warning status." However, I know others who were forced to evacuate, and I even helped another superintendent tape up his attic vents, and prepare his home as best we could for potential dangers just over the hill.

As I redirected my thought process to this new reality, and to the message to our members, it occurred to me that "assistance" or "help" would be a good theme for this message. Just as I offered assistance to my fellow superintendent when he faced the approaching fires, similarly you can you be of aid to other superintendents, friends, co-workers, or extended family.

Are you checking in on the well-being of your crew on a regular basis to learn how things are going at home, and how their family and loved ones are doing during these assorted crises? Have you reached out to fellow GCSANC members, whom you would usually see every couple of months, just to keep in touch, ask how they are, and offer any assistance that might be needed? What about immediate and extended family? Are you finding creative ways to help your children adapt to abnormal schooling and the loss of social interaction, and are you reaching out to extended family who may be isolated and in need of assistance or human connection?

Just as importantly, don't be shy about requesting help. We all have more coming at us from every direction than we probably have ever had in our lives. The day to day responsibilities of maintaining a family and a home, managing finances, and watching out for our physical and mental health did not go away when this year's crises hit; they still exist under the mountain of fresh, new challenges. So, don't be afraid to reach out to others for a helping hand, for advice or guidance, for a fresh perspective, or even just to vent! Chances are they have experienced or are mired in a similar predicament, and they will likely welcome the reality that they are not alone.

By nature, superintendents are independent. We are hands on, "can do" types, and the universal credo of superintendents very well could be "I got this!" But, we are also leaders, and there is no shame in asking for help, nor is there any shame in offering to help others who may not be comfortable asking. So, lead the way for them.

Finally, GCSANC and the golf industry have a number of resources available for those who may have experienced hardship as a result of the pandemic, the fires, or any other challenges presented in this unpredictable year. Do not hesitate to reach out to the association office at (916) 485-6364 or email Executive Director Marc Connerly at mconnerly@connerlyandassociates. com to learn more about available assistance, depending on your circumstances.

Providing assistance to others in need can be one of the most gratifying and fulfilling acts we can undertake, and learning how many people we have in our lives who are willing to help us can be of immeasurable comfort and relief, so let's keep offering and requesting assistance and support, and hopefully the next time I address you it will be from a more upbeat (and smoke-free) perspective.

Pete Bachman



## **Editor's Note**

By **BRIAN BOYER,** GCSANC Vice President; Superintendent, Cinnabar Hills Golf Club

### Back at the Helm

I missed one meeting and suddenly I have been volunteered to be the editor of *TTG* again. The joke's on them, though, as I enjoy this position.

Having been away from the editor's position for some time now, I want to reach out and ask you, the member, what you want to read in each edition? Our Executive Director, Marc Connerly, has done a great job getting content, but we are always looking for more ideas. We are willing to reach out to whomever for content, so do not be shy.

Also, if you have a project going on, if you have made the news recently, or if you are hosting an upcoming event, don't be surprised to get a call or email asking to share your story. Remember, there is no such thing as bad press, and we want to make you look as good as possible.

We are also looking for positive stories for the last edition of 2020, so share those thoughts as well. Reach out to me directly at <a href="mailto:bboyer@cinnabarhills.com">bboyer@cinnabarhills.com</a> with your ideas and thoughts.

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#### **NORCALENDAR**

Monday, October 26
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Wagoner Scholarship &
Research Tournament
Ruby Hill Golf Club,
Pleasanton

Annual Meeting
Date and Location To Be
Announced

**Holiday Meeting**Date and Location To Be
Announced

In response to member requests, we are now pleased to offer full-color, printed copies of Thru The Green for \$40 per issue.

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## **Executive Director's Report**

By MARC CONNERLY, GCSANC Executive Director

GCSANC is very eagerly preparing for the 13th Annual Clifford & Myrtle Wagoner Scholarship & Research Tournament. Obviously, this year's tournament will have a different feel, and will be subject to unique restrictions, but I think most would agree that finding a way to continue the S & R tournament tradition, while getting out and seeing some of our industry friends and peers, will be very healthy both physically and emotionally.

Rather than the live auction that typically follows the S & R golf outing, this year's event will include golf on Monday, October 26 at Ruby Hill, and our first ever online auction, which will run through 5:00 p.m. on Friday, October 30. While the online auction is change, and we all tend to resist change, it offers the convenience of bidding from the comfort of your home or office, where you have access to your annual budget, and will provide the opportunity for those who may not be able to attend the event in person to bid on the items on the auction block.

We are also happy to announce that bidders will be rewarded with one entry in a raffle for a variety of prizes for each bid that they place on auction items. On the educational front, GCSANC will soon begin promoting a series of webinars developed by the Carolinas GCSA and made available to GCSA chapters nationwide. There will be a total of thirty (30) two-hour webinars presented at the rate of one per day from November 2 through December 18, and many will qualify for DPR hours. The webinars will be recorded, so those who cannot attend live will have up to 30 days to watch the webinar(s) of their choosing.

We are also in the process of planning a webinar presented by Dr. Jim Baird that will provide another opportunity for DPR hours. That is expected to occur in late October, so watch for details soon.

Obviously, technology and online options are the trend, and there is reason to believe that some of these new avenues for engaging with members will be here to stay. In fact, even prior to the pandemic, the GCSANC Board discussed ways to incorporate online participation into our live events, so that is something that we are likely to try once we are able to resume our traditional live events.

I look forward to seeing you at Ruby Hill on October 26!

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## From the Field



By JEFF JENSEN, GCSAA Field Staff, Southwest Region

GCSAA President John Fulling recently announced that the annual Golf Industry Show scheduled for Jan. 30 – Feb. 4 in Las Vegas will now be conducted in a virtual format the first week of February.

With the ongoing health concerns caused by the coronavirus, travel restrictions, global economy, monitoring of other national tradeshows, and bans on large gatherings, it was decided by GCSAA and its presenting partners, The American Society of Golf Course Architects and Golf Course Builders Association of America that it was in the best interest and safety of all parties involved to move to a virtual format.

GIS 2021, "Your space. Your pace. All in one place.", will take place the first week of February and will allow show participants the opportunity to attend from the safety of their homes or workplaces while still consuming

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all of the great content that GIS is known for.

Education, trade show, and special events will take place live via the virtual platform and attendees will also have the opportunity to view or review the events, education, and materials for an extended period after the conclusion of the live event.

Registration for GIS 2021 will open October 13th at https://www.golfindustryshow.com/. At the time of this article, registration costs for the event are still being determined. A short demo video of the virtual platform is available at https://player.vimeo.com/video/447145809.

While moving to a virtual format was a difficult decision, it will allow those who have attended GIS in the past to save on travel costs as well as allowing many others who have never had the opportunity to attend a chance to see what great opportunities and education GIS has to offer. The safety of our members, vendors, sponsors and other attendees always comes first.

In other related news, an upcoming announcement on the status of the GCSAA Golf Championships scheduled to be held in Palm Desert, CA on Jan. 30- Feb. 1 will be made shortly.

I hope that you and your families are safe during these unusual times, and we appreciate your continued support of GCSAA and our affiliated chapters.

If you have any questions or need assistance, don't hesitate to contact me at jjensen@gcsaa.org and make sure to follow me on Twitter @GCSAA\_SW for industry updates.



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# Innovation in Every Day: Creating a Spark in Your Routine!

By GINA RIZZI, Radius Sports Group/ARCUS Marketing Group

A typical day: Wake up. Check your phone for texts and social media. Brush your teeth. Shower. Make coffee. Have breakfast. Go to work. Get the crew out. Do tasks. Check emails. Go to lunch. More tasks and email. Go home. Maybe exercise. Make dinner. Watch TV. Go to sleep. Wake up and start it all over again.

Each and every day we have a choice to stick to our routines or break the mundane. No doubt, some amount of routine can be healthy - it helps us feel organized, reduces risks, and lowers stress. But it can also prohibit growth. We can grow accustomed to mediocrity. Unless we make the choice to create an extraordinary routine, or a sort of anti-routine. As we press through the challenges of 2020, it's a great time to resist falling into headline news negativity, and renew our commitments to everyday innovation.

According to Psychology Today, "Every time you try something new and allow yourself to be open to whatever experience arises, you are learning, and expanding your repertoire of life skills and self-knowledge." (Dr. Brenner, 2015.) This type of knowledge feeds innovation. A personal exercise that I use to spark innovation is called CAMPS<sup>TM</sup>. The acronym stands for *Connectivity, Action, Moving the Pieces, Partnerships, and Self-Improvement*.

connectivity means communicating, putting yourself out there, and connecting with others. Not only friends or family, but new friends or associates. Send a text message, a note through LinkedIn, or pick up the phone — make a connection. Check in. Especially now. Through simply interacting, you ignite the power to grow and intentionally open the door to think differently. Set a goal to connect with at least one new person and reconnect with someone at least once per week.

With **ACTION**, be deliberate and random. Make a deliberate choice to do things out of your comfort zone that may feel random or awkward. One of the most useful inventions of our time was sparked by deliberate, random action - a man and his dog on a hunting trip. The man was inspired by burrs sticking to his dog's fur, and in 1955 George de Mestral invented and patented Velcro.

As adults, we don't always consider "play" time, yet it is crucial for creativity. Go on a picnic. Listen to podcasts. Run a virtual race for a charity. Be visible – volunteer, join a board. You will ignite a spark by NOT opting out.

**MOVING THE PIECES** is equivalent to 'delegating meets chess' on a bigger, strategic scale. For example, if you work with a general contractor at your course, ask them for help beyond the traditional to move the pieces. Perhaps they can write a series of articles for your member newsletter or deliver training modules for your crew. This saves time, provides value, and shifts you toward strategic, innovative thinking. Consider what things in your life you can shift. Do this at least twice per month.

Pursue unique **PARTNERSHIPS** that make sense for you using the assets you have. If a start-up is launching, offer your



#### Continued from page 10

expertise in exchange for equity. If you love taking photos of the course - many of you take beautiful pictures - partner with a local artist to design custom greeting cards, paintings, or calendars from your photos. Look for partnerships that align with your personal passions. Aim for one per quarter.

Lastly, always seek ways of **SELF-IMPROVEMENT.** Take classes, get a certification, read, listen to podcasts, meditate, exercise...the experience of education spurs questions, ideas, and knowledge to expand your thinking. In the words of Louis Pasteur, "Chance favors the prepared mind." Knowledge and self-awareness help arm us to approach tasks with passion, confidence, and vigor. Try to push yourself to improve - in some fashion - daily.



Try **CAMPS**<sup>TM</sup>. Check in with a loved one or friend once per month to make sure you are doing it. Accomplish these items and you will create a spark in your routine for innovation in every day.

Gina Rizzi is located in San Francisco and Reno. Contact her at 312-848-9584 or gina.rizzi@radiussportsgroup.com if you have questions or need assistance.

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## Superintendent Profile: Thomas Slevin, Napa Golf Course at Kennedy Park

By BRIAN BOYER, Superintendent, Cinnabar Hills Golf Club

I first met this edition's interviewee, Thomas Slevin, at UCR Field Day a few years back. Thomas immediately struck me with his intelligence and matter of fact speaking; my kind of guy. I asked around about Thomas and knew in short order that the association would benefit from having him on board. We are lucky to have him as a decision-maker for the future betterment of GCSANC. Let us get to know him better than we did the day before.

# BB: Where did you grow up and how did you end up in Northern California?

TS: I was born and raised in Sacramento, and moved west when I took my current position at Napa Golf Club.



# BB: Tell me about your family?

TS: I've been married to my wife for 18 years and we have a 16 year-old daughter.

# BB: So how did you end up in turf?

TS: Completely by luck. I was semi-retired, my wife and I owned a pet resort hotel, but she no longer needed me there day to day. She said that word for word, by the way. I looked into the automotive industry, having once owned an auto shop, when my wife asked me, "Have you thought about doing something you enjoy?" I had not thought of that, so I decided to return to the workforce doing something I would enjoy for a change. I applied at a golf course and a museum. Golf called back first. The rest is history.

#### BB: Where did you go to school?

TS: I went through the two-year UCR online program.

BB: How long have you been at Napa Golf Club? TS: Two and a half years

BB: Having been a Superintendent for two and a half years now, what defines a good salesperson to you?

TS: Someone that is willing to put trust, honesty, and relationships before salesmanship.

# BB: With the same preface, what defines a good assistant?

TS: They must have leadership potential, a curious mind, and a willingness to fail. Leadership is the bedrock; if you cultivate that, everything else will come. A curious mind keeps us attempting to improve. A willingness to fail allows us to try to improve, fail and try again.

# BB: It is no secret that the budget at Napa Golf Club is, let's say, efficient. If CourseCo were to present Napa GC with an additional \$250K for 2021, what are the top items you would spend it on?

TS: I would purchase new equipment, some of ours is, let's say, "very experienced."

# BB: What is your favorite piece of equipment or tool to use on the golf course?

Soil probe; basic but you can learn so much from the soil, thatch, and that small amount of turf.

# BB: Do you have a COVID lesson, experience, or thought you care to share?

TS: It was the most painful thing I've had to do in my career: to tell our crew that we were closing, and they in turn would be furloughed. Then when we got the word that we were to reopen, I was unsure how many would return, with unemployment being temporarily so lucrative. I was so proud of our team that each and every one hopped at the chance to return. Fifty percent of our team has been here over 10 years. They care about this course and want to see it be the best it can be.

#### BB: What do you do in your spare time?

TS: We as a family spend our free time traveling to street, craft and antique fairs, and farmers markets. We are on the hunt for the next thing we can't live without.

# BB: Is there anything about you that most may not know that you care to share?

TS: I'm an avid outdoorsman. Almost any outdoors activity and I am in.

#### Continued from page 12

BB: Who do you consider a mentor(s)?

TS: Steven Kimbrough, CGCS and Akoni Ganir. I was very lucky to work for both of these well-respected turf managers and leaders. Both imparted lessons that I still lean on today and try to pass on to others.

BB: If you did not end up in golf, what would you be doing?

TS: Docent in a museum or gallery.

BB: What is one of the more unusual things you've seen on the golf course?

TS: Group of 11, more shockingly playing at a reasonable pac.

BB: Caddyshack recently celebrated its 30th anniversary. Thoughts?

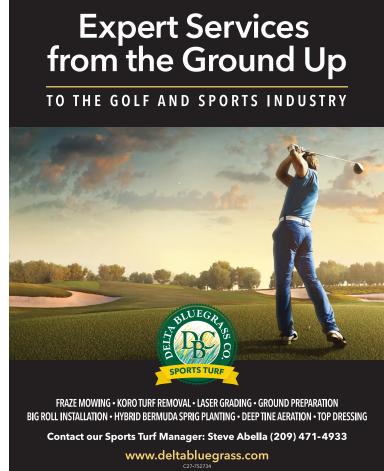
TS: Not a fan. I have never been one for comedies. I am more of a drama person.

BB: How do you feel sharing a surname with the movie, Lucky Number Slevin?

TS: This is the 49th time the movie has been brought up to me. Yes, I really do keep track. I do not know why, I just do. When I first heard of the movie before its release, I worried that it I might end up like Michael Bolton in Office Space, having to address it every time I introduced myself. Thankfully, we are only at 49. I liked the movie, though, I have to wonder, why "Slevin"?







# Assistant Superintendent Profile: Ieremy Nicholas Sharon

# Jeremy Nicholas, Sharon Heights Golf and Country Club

By ERIC GREEN, Assistant Superintendent, Poppy Hills Golf Course

It is always great to showcase some of the up and coming talent in our industry. Northern California has some of the richest history in golf, with great courses and hardworking crews that keep them in exceptional condition. For this issue, we interviewed Jeremy Nicholas, Assistant Superintendent at Sharon Heights Golf and Country Club in Menlo Park, CA.



EG: What made you decide to get into golf maintenance?

JN: My first job as a young kid was washing carts for Northwinds Golf Course, in Indian Lake Pennsylvania. That course is where I developed my love for the game of golf. After graduating high school, I moved to

Briarcliff Manor, NY to work for my cousin who was the superintendent at Trump National Golf Club Westchester. After two seasons grasping the basics of the industry, I attended Penn State University's two-year program in pursuit to become a future Superintendent.

EG: What is your proudest accomplishment in the industry?

JN: I learned how to speak conversational Spanish within six months of hearing the language for the first time.

EG: Who would you consider your most influential mentor in the industry?

JN: The person that influenced me the most throughout my career is my first Superintendent Scott Blough. I was a young kid with a lazy mentality, and Scott took me onto his crew and showed me what it meant to really work. It was the work ethic he instilled in me that has helped me grow as a person and become an Assistant Superintendent

at one of the most beautiful and prestigious private clubs in the country.

EG: Where did you grow up?

JN: I grew up in Central City, Pennsylvania.

EG: Your best nicknames?

JN: When I had a few extra pounds on me, a guy on the crew at Bel-Air Country Club (Omar), called me Charmin. He told me it was because I resembled the Charmin bear from the TV commercials.

EG: If you could drive any vehicle, what would it be? JN: This is a very difficult question, but I suppose I would choose to drive a 1962 AC Shelby Cobra.

EG: Curly fries or regular, and why?

JN: I would have to choose curly fries. You can find regular fries almost anywhere, but when you just so happen to stumble across curly fries on the menu, it is special.

EG: What is the funniest thing you have ever seen on a golf course?

JN: Something that never gets old is watching a newbie plug into a QC, and not leaving his line open when he disconnects. I think everyone experiences that embarrassment at least once in their career.

EG: What is one thing that most people do not know about you?

JN: I am ambidextrous.

EG: What was your lowest score playing golf, and where?

JN: I shot a 75 at Northwinds Golf Course, in Indian Lake, Pennsylvania.

EG: What is your favorite manual labor job on the golf course and why?

JN: If it is for a tournament, I really enjoy cutting cups.

Continued

On a standard weekday I prefer to roll greens. I love the amount of detail and perfection that goes into setting the pin for large tournaments. It really makes you proud to see the final product throughout the event knowing that everyone is looking at your work.

EG: Greatest piece of advice anyone has given you?

JN: Always assume that someone knows more than you do; strive to be that smart.

EG: If you had to survive on a deserted island for one year, aside from food and water, what five items would you bring with you to occupy your time?

JN: A guitar, my dog, frisbee, books, and a hatchet.

EG: Favorite Beer?

JN: Stone Brewing, "Fear. Movie. Lions."

EG: If you had your choice, what would you do in retirement?

JN: Travel the world to experience life in other cultures.

EG: Favorite sports teams?

**JN:** All teams Pittsburgh, especially the Steelers. I also support the Oakland A's.

EG: What is your favorite type of grass to manage as a putting surface and why?

**JN:** I personally enjoy working with creeping bentgrass putting surfaces. I prefer bentgrass for the beautiful deep green color, a rootzone that is healthy and abundant, and the lighting conditions they provide when pushed.

EG: If you could have lunch with anyone, past or present, who would it be and why?

JN: I would have lunch with Robin Williams. He was a brilliantly fascinating human being with insightful dialogue, and some heavy demons. I think it would make for one heck of a conversation.

EG: What is your favorite golf maintenance related quote?

JN: "Leave the golf course better than you found it."



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# What is Your 'Must-Play' Golf Course?

By BRITTANY CONNERLY, GCSANC Special Projects Assistant

When one gets the desire to head out to the course for a round of golf, the sense of familiarity or proximity normally guides the decision on which course to play. We all have a course to which we have become accustomed, or our "home course." However, if given the choice, it is a safe bet that the majority of golfers can name one or more dream courses they would play at if granted the opportunity.

Thru the Green asked members which course would rank #1 on their bucket list if they had the opportunity to play any one course, and here is what they had to say:

"My must play course is a bit of a cliché, but it's a deserving one. The Old Course at St Andrews is the most fun, perplexing, and infinitely challenging golf course on the planet. Between the varying weather, the wide corridors, and the wild, unending contours from tee to green, no shot ever truly plays the same. Furthermore, there are often multiple ways of playing every shot. Bump it off a contour to the left. Bump it off one on the right. Fly it all the way and try your best to get it to stop. Or pull out the putter and watch the ball wiggle and tumble up and down, left and right all the way to the hole. It can be a hard course to understand at first, but once you do, the love affair with this ancient piece of golfing ground will last a lifetime."

#### ~ Brett Hochstein, Hochstein Design



"Old Greenwood in Truckee, California."

~ Andrew Trinkino, Stone Tree Golf Club

"The course that I have not played that is on my bucket list is St. Andrews."

~ Brian Darrock, Bay Club at Boulder Ridge

"Equal: Brandon Dunes or Pacific Dunes."

~ Corey Eastwood, Retired

"One of my favorite golf courses in our area is The Meadow Club in Fairfax. It is a terrific golf experience, especially if you walk. David Sexton followed by Sean Tully have done a great job restoring this classic facility by moving and removing trees, restoring bunkers, and restoring green sizes. It is one of the quietest courses around, except for the sounds of the wildlife and NO HOMES."

#### ~ Tim Powers, Poplar Creek Golf Course

"Having trekked to more than 400 courses across the nation and around the world, including dozens of "dream courses," I have to say my grandest golf experience was the opportunity to play Sand Hills, Nebraska, the minimalist masterpiece by Ben Crenshaw and Bill Coore built in the late 1990s. Windswept and rolling over northwest Nebraska's Sand Hills region near the North Platte River, owner Richard Youngscap and architects Coore & Crenshaw simply allowed this beautiful and true links course to emerge from the land, groomed the natural sand bunkers and fescue, perfected the grass, and added 18 flagsticks. Some years in, they finally threw down a cut circle from a slender tree at the 150 yard mark on each hole to appease the measly 125 members. It's a brilliant layout (Crenshaw reported that their site review netted them 140 possibilities for great golf holes, from which they had to choose 18). But half the joy of Sand Hills is its anonymity, the effort to get invited, and the quest to reach this remote course -- 400 miles from Omaha, 360 from Denver, 13 miles from a town of a handful of buildings. Walking this links treasure is a golf memory for a lifetime."

~ Marty Boyer, Communications Advantage

Orinda Hole 8, February 2016,

Brett Hochstein, Hochstein Design



# Outcross<sup>™</sup> 9060

TURF UTILITY VEHICLE

#### FEATURES

**Turf-friendliness** – The Outcross 9060's unique electronically controlled four-wheel steer and four-wheel drive system provide turf friendliness and maneuverability. Each wheel turns and spins independently for gentle turning and superior traction. Outcross's balanced design removes the need for front counterweights, making it significantly more delicate on fine turf than an agricultural tractor.

Consistency - Set-up and save the parameters for each attachment - one time, upfront - to ensure the machine performs exactly to your specifications. Store settings for up to sixteen attachments for easy use and consistent performance, no matter the skill level of the operator in the seat.

Versatility – The Outcross 9060 will always be on the move. With 3-point, drawbar, cargo bed and loader capabilities, the opportunities to maximize this investment are near endless. The Outcross 9060 does the work of multiple machines in one compact package. Put your investment to work every day and receive consistency, efficiency, and reliability in return.

Control – Operation is simple and intuitive.
The Outcross 9060 has a hydrostatic drive system, eliminating the need for an operator who is proficient with the complicated controls and shifting commonly associated with an agricultural tractor. Cruise control, shuttle shifting, a passenger seat, and one-action controls add to the ease-of-use and efficiency.

### Do More.

The Outcross 9060 is an invaluable tool in the long-standing battle Turf Managers face to "do more with less." This machine is a time-saving, easy-to-use, multi-purpose, turf-friendly workhorse that brings year-round flexibility, consistency and productivity to turf maintenance operations. Get ready to do more. The Outcross is the first machine of its kind to be purpose-built for the management of fine turf. Its balanced design, four-wheel steer, and four-wheel drive make it extremely gentle on turf. Keep busy year-round by utilizing Outcross's 3-point hitch, drawbar, or front loader. Mow grass, spread fertilizer, load sand, haul a pallet of sod, aerate, topdress, remove snow and ice, blow leaves, prune roots, spread seed, tow a trailer, sweep a path, chip wood, and much, much more. Intuitive automotive-style controls and one-time parameter setup keeps operations simple and efficient.

#### toro.com/outcross

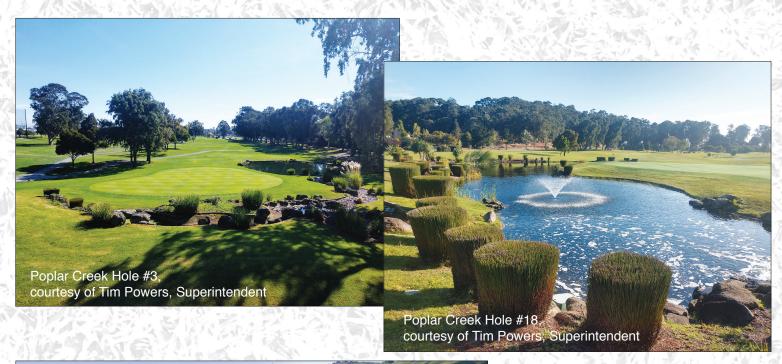




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## **Golf Course Water Features**



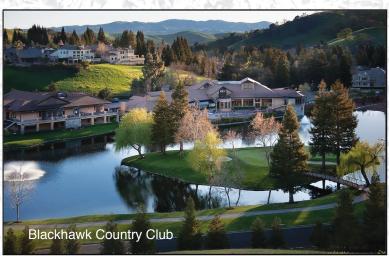
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