

THRU THE GREEN

The Golf Course Superintendents Association of Northern California

May/June 2023

Northern California Chapter
GCSAA
GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENTS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

*Thank you to CordeValle
for hosting the 2023 S&R Tournament*

Inside this Issue:

- Meet Your Board of Directors
- S & R Recap
- 5 Reasons for Golfers to Rethink Expectations

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THRU THE GREEN

The Golf Course Superintendents Association of Northern California



Neunsinger • 5



Connerly • 12



Jensen • 14



COVER PHOTO: *CordeValle, San Martin, California*

INSIDE

- 4 Chapter Officers & Directors
- 4 Advertisers Index
- 5 President's Report
- 6 Introducing the 2023 Board of Directors
- 12 Executive Director's Report
- 14 From The Field
- 16 Best Management Practices
- 18 16th Annual S & R Tournament
- 20 GCSANC Preferred Partners
- 22 How to Ruin a Golf Course With Trees
- 24 First Green Recap
- 26 Five Reasons for Golfers to Rethink Their Expectations

NORCALENDAR

Wednesday, July 19
DPR Meeting presented by Syngenta
Contra Costa Country Club

Thursday, October 19
Electric Equipment Field Day (in conjunction with NCSFMA)
McKelvey Park, Mountain View

Monday, November 27
GCSANC Annual Meeting
Richmond Country Club

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The Golf Course Superintendents Association of Northern California

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Richmond Country Club



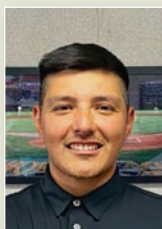
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Silver Creek Valley Country Club



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Apex Golf



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West Coast Turf



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Cinnabar Hills Golf Club



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BRIAN DAUM
Turf Star Western



DIRECTOR
ADAM LEVINSOHN
Berkeley Country Club



ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT LIAISON
DERICK MARA
Mayacama Golf Club

*Photo
Coming
Soon*

DIRECTOR
RYAN NICHOLSON
Diablo Country Club

ADVERTISERS INDEX

Assured Aggregates	11
Belkorp	28
BEST	11
Brandt/Grigg	15
Delta Bluegrass	15
G3 Minerals	23
Ginkel Design	11
Golf Irrigation Consultants	13
GrassRoots Turf Supply	15
Pacific Material Resources	15
Seed King Enterprises	15
Sierra Pacific Turf Supply	27
Simplot Turf & Horticulture	11
SSB Construction	11
Syngenta	15
Sunbelt Rentals	13
Target Specialty Products	13
TMT Enterprises	27
Turf Star Western	2
West Coast Turf	27

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To order a copy, to be shipped to you via mail, submit your name, address and payment information to mconnerly@connerlyandassociates.com.

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President's Report

I hope this message finds you well. As the “Dog Days of Summer” are right around the corner and we try to hang on to every blade of turfgrass, I want to take a quick moment to share some association highlights from the first several months of 2023.

First, I would also like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to Brett Thornsbury and the entire CordeValle team for their exceptional hospitality and support during our recent S&R event. The success of the event would not have been possible without their dedication and commitment to our association. Their partnership has truly made a HUGE difference, and we are grateful for their invaluable contribution.

I am delighted to share that this year, our Rounds4Research initiative achieved unprecedented success, breaking records and surpassing our expectations. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to everyone who generously donated rounds to support this cause. Your contributions have made a tangible difference by directly funding research endeavors that are crucial for our region. For those unable to contribute rounds, I want to emphasize that there are alternative avenues for supporting our research. Many clubs offer cash donations, which play a vital role in our ongoing efforts. These monetary contributions directly support the advancement of research and scholarship opportunities.

In closing, this year we proudly awarded a total of six scholarships, recognizing the incredible talent and potential of our young minds. Among these, two were legacy scholarships and four turf scholarships, highlighting the importance of sustainability and their continued future contributions to our industry.

Jay Neunsinger

2023 BOARD OF DI

Meet Your Board



Jay Neunsinger, *Richmond Country Club*

BOARD PRESIDENT

Growing up on a farm in South Dakota, I quickly started exploring the US and have lived in 7 different states. For the past 12 years I have settled into Northern California, where I met my wife and we have 2 small children.

I have been at Richmond Country Club for almost 2 years now and it has kept me very busy with upgrading years of deferred maintenance. I have a dog that will bark on command if I say the word “Salesman.”

I enjoy playing poker and people watching at airports (something about seeing how others navigate during high stress times is intriguing to me).

This is my second stint on the Board at the GCSANC. I love being involved and learning from other superintendents, assistants and manufacturer reps on ideas that can help move our industry forward.

I look forward to seeing everyone at RCC for the annual meeting on November 27th.



Steven Spatafore, *Contra Costa Country Club*

BOARD VICE PRESIDENT

Steven Spatafore is the Golf Course Superintendent at Contra Costa Country Club in Pleasant Hill. Born and raised in Yuba City, California, he has spent most of his 10-year career interning and working full time at courses in the state of California, including at Pasatiempo Golf Club, Cypress Point Club, and Pebble Beach Golf Links. Other experiences include an internship at Valhalla Golf Club in Louisville, KY, and time as the Field Manager for the baseball program at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, where he earned his Bachelor's of Science in Turfgrass and Sports Field Management.

Steven is a past recipient of the Dr. Ali Harivandi Turfgrass Scholarship, and credits that experience as being a large motivator behind his drive to serve on the Board. This is his second year on the GCSANC Board of Directors and he most enjoys working to provide opportunities for Superintendents and Assistants to come together and form the tight sense of community within the industry that he most loves about his job.

Outside of work, he enjoys travelling with his wife, Courtney, and their golden retriever Graham. Any chance they can return to San Luis Obispo for some relaxation time is an opportunity they cherish.

RECTORS



Mike Adkins, *Silver Creek Valley Country Club*

BOARD SECRETARY/TREASURER

My name is Mike Adkins, and I am the Golf Course Superintendent at Silver Creek Valley Country Club in San Jose. To be honest, hobbies are lost since moving back to California to take this job at Silver Creek Valley Country Club. As almost everyone knows, learning a new property is time-consuming and doesn't leave much time for anything else.

When I do have free time, I like to go to the range and shoot guns. Shooting in USPSA and IDPA competitions is something that I took up many years ago and it is a fun way to clear your mind from the everyday burdens of being a golf course superintendent. One other thing I like to enjoy for some quiet time is picking up a guitar and just playing for a little while.

One of the things I enjoy about being on the Board is the opportunity to collaborate with fellow industry professionals who share the same passion for golf course management. The exchange of ideas, knowledge, and best management practices is invigorating and helps drive positive change within our community. It's inspiring to be surrounded by individuals who are committed to enhancing the golfing experience for players and maintaining the highest standards in course management.

I chose to be on the Board because I believe in the power of collective action and the impact it can have on our industry. Serving on the Board allows me to actively contribute to shaping the future of golf course management, advocating for the interests of our members, and promoting sustainable practices.

I'm dedicated to fostering a community where we can all come together to share our expertise, learn from one another, and ensure the long-term success of golf course management.



Will Barragan, *West Coast Turf*

BOARD AFFILIATE DIRECTOR

Hello, I am Will Barragan and I am with West Coast Turf. I have been with West Coast Turf for 7 years. Believe it or not, I got into the sod industry not realizing it was a product you can buy. I learned as much as I could as quickly as possible in hopes of being of decent service to you all. I do enjoy answering phone calls, texts, emails, and telepathic messages most often while on the road.

I live in Merced with my girlfriend and two pups. I do have some hobbies when I'm avoiding work on the weekends. I like to ride my Harley, boat/water ski in the summer, mow my lawn as the sun rises, and play mechanic when these things break down.

I'm on my third year of Board service for this chapter. Biggest reason for joining was to further dive into the industry and be a part of a group of that is dedicated to maintaining and further improving the benefits and experiences of the association.

My favorite part of Board service is being part of a team to brainstorm on ideas and work together to come to a conclusion. Simple as that.

I'm always happy to help in any way possible, feel free to reach out any time!

2023 BOARD OF DI

Meet Your Board



Brian Boyer, *Cinnabar Hills Golf Club*

BOARD DIRECTOR

Yeah, yeah, I know... “He’s on the board again?” What can I say, I enjoy the friendships and I enjoy serving. Not much has changed since leaving the Board the first time. I’m coming up on 18 years at Cinnabar Hills, and I still love to run when I’m not injured, which seems to be happening more than I’d like.

Kids are older and I’m now coaching travel softball along with middle school cross country and track. As I write this, I’m currently celebrating my 20th wedding anniversary with my wife, Jennifer, in Alaska.

All in all, I can’t complain. I look forward to serving with such a strong group of leaders in our industry.



Joe Budinich, *Peninsula Golf & Country Club*

BOARD DIRECTOR

I have been on the Board for the past 4 years and it is a joy to serve the association that supports its members and the golfing community as a whole. Being able to give back is the main reason I wanted to join the Board, as many of you helped in my development to get to where I am today.

My favorite part of my service so far is having a part in instituting the internship program. Though many of these interns may go to highly prestigious clubs in the area, it is helping attract to Northern California turf students who will ultimately serve as Assistant Superintendents someday throughout the area.

I have been working in this industry for the past 19 years and have been the Superintendent at Peninsula Golf and Country Club for the past 4 ½ years. To say I have a passion for what I do is an understatement. I drive my fiancé crazy, as my work is the topic of one too many conversations at home.

Speaking of fiancé, I get to marry the love of my life this December in San Diego, and can’t wait to start a family with her.

In my spare time I like to fish, golf, and attend concerts and sporting events.

RECTORS



Brian Daum, *Turf Star Western*

BOARD AFFILIATE DIRECTOR

I was born and raised in Ohio and fell in love with golf when I started playing with my father and grandfather when I was 10 years old. I graduated from The Ohio State University and moved to California in 2000 and have done the “Tour de California” over the past 23 years.

I spent 7 years down in LA at Bel Air CC, Palos Verdes CC & Calabasas CC, then took my 1st superintendent position in 2007 at Riverbend Golf Course (now Dragonfly) in Fresno. I moved to the Bay Area in 2010 as Superintendent at Baylands Golf Links in Palo Alto, and in 2018 had a great opportunity to move to the “Dark Side” of the business and joined the Turf Star family as a Territory & Northern California Irrigation Manager.

I was involved at the Board level when I was in Fresno, with GCSA of Central California, working my way up to Vice President, but then took a break when I moved to the Bay Area. Now that I’ve got my feet somewhat beneath me at Turf Star, I wanted to get back involved and do my part to continue the success of the Nor Cal Chapter.

I enjoy the camaraderie of the business and thoroughly enjoy helping where I can. I am a sucker for volunteering at tournaments, enjoy getting dirty with irrigation issues, can rake a mean bunker and bomb divots like a pro. If you ever need help, I’m a phone call away!

Outside of work I enjoy golfing, snowboarding, playing basketball, being outside in nature, and traveling to see all the amazing places that we have access to in Nor Cal. I enjoy riding anything on two wheels, from the motorcycle to multiple bikes that I own, and scuba diving is a hobby that I absolutely love doing. Getting underneath the waves to see the oceanic world is amazing to say the least. My favorite destinations to visit and dive are Monterey, Hawaii, La Paz, and Bali. Next adventure is great white shark diving at Guadalupe islands.



Adam Levinsohn, *Berkeley Country Club*

BOARD DIRECTOR

Hello, my name is Adam Levinsohn, and I am currently the Superintendent at Berkeley Country Club in El Cerrito, CA. I have lived in California for 9 years now and have been at Berkeley CC for the past 5.

After growing up in Ohio and attending Ohio State University, I moved to Long Island, NY, where I worked as an Assistant Superintendent at Brookville Country Club in Old Brookville, NY. I learned a lot about the industry during my time there and even met my wife while working at the club.

Eager for something new after a few years of being married, my wife and I decided to take a chance and move to California. I eventually took a job at Round Hill CC in the East Bay while my wife decided to switch careers and enter the technology field. We quickly fell in love with California and have enjoyed exploring the many things it has to offer.

Over the years I have developed a fondness for the outdoors, and I have really enjoyed exploring the California wilderness. I took up hiking after moving here and have taken advantage of the many different parks and trails throughout the state. I also enjoy snowboarding, golfing, and traveling whenever possible.

After a few years of general membership here with the association, it has been a pleasure to begin service on the Board of Directors for the GCSANC. I have been a member of the Board now for about 8 months and it has been a great experience and a privilege to give back to the industry that has been so good to me over the years.

Throughout the remaining term I look forward to serving our organization and its members as well as contributing to advancing the turfgrass maintenance industry throughout Northern California.

2023 BOARD OF DI

Meet Your Board



Derick Mara, *Mayacama Golf Club*

ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT LIAISON

My name is Derick Mara, and I recently joined the Northern California Chapter as the Assistant Superintendent Liaison. In March 2023, I relocated to Sonoma County to assume the role of Lead Assistant Superintendent at Mayacama Golf Club in Santa Rosa. As a member of the Board, I take great pleasure in participating in the planning and coordination of the chapter's events and seminars. One of the most rewarding aspects is the opportunity to connect with peers and develop relationships within the turf world.

My journey in this industry began in my hometown of Gardner, Massachusetts, at Gardner Municipal Golf Course. During high school, I was fortunate to participate in an externship program that allowed me to explore my interest in pursuing a major in Golf Course Management.

This experience led me to enroll in the SUNY Delhi Golf Course Management program in Delhi, New York. Throughout my college summers, I gained valuable experience through internships at

Wianno Club in Oysterville, MA; Winchester Country Club in Winchester, MA; and Vineyard Golf Club in Edgartown, MA.

After graduating, I returned to Martha's Vineyard and worked my way up to Senior Assistant Superintendent at Vineyard Golf Club, providing me a unique experience with its 100% organic spray and fertility program.

In 2020, I embraced the opportunity to become the Lead Assistant Superintendent at Shady Canyon Golf Club in Irvine, California, where I served on the So Cal chapter Board for over a year before transitioning to the Northern California region.

Beyond the realm of work, I am a die-hard Boston sports fan, with the New England Patriots being my favorite sports franchise. I find enjoyment in participating in sports such as pickleball, golf, and various adult sports leagues.

Living near the beach throughout my adult life has been a fortunate circumstance, and I relish spending a day there with friends, grilling food and playing beach games. Although I have only been in Sonoma County for a few months, I have already enjoyed exploring the coastline and countryside, and I eagerly anticipate discovering more of what Northern California has to offer!

Not Profiled:

Josh Lewis, *Gradoville and Hertzling Management Group*

PAST PRESIDENT

Ryan Nicholson, *Diablo Country Club*

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Executive Director's Report

By **MARC CONNERLY**, *GCSANC Executive Director*

With a successful Scholarship & Research Tournament behind us, GCSANC is mostly taking a brief break from events during the summer heat and vacation season, except for a few planned meetings for DPR hours. However, that doesn't mean that the Board and association staff won't be busy preparing for end of year events and working on other programs.

Those "other programs" include the intern housing assistance program, which is in its second year. The Board has reviewed the applications received and will soon notify the interns and issue checks to assist with their housing needs.

We will also open the annual awards for nominations in early September, with a deadline of early October.

In case you haven't seen the emails, those "planned meetings for DPR hours" are being hosted by GCSANC Vice President Steven Spatafore at Contra Costa Country Club. A June meeting featured Simplot Turf & Horticulture, and the upcoming meeting on July 19 will be presented by Syngenta. Steven has plans for additional brief educational sessions at his course in the coming months, and we will continue to publicize those events to GCSANC members via email.

We are in the planning stages of an Electric Equipment Field Day, which will be hosted in conjunction with the Northern California Sports Field Management Association (NCSFMA) at McKelvey Park in Mountain View on Thursday, October 19. The event will focus on electric equipment options and is intended to educate superintendents and assist in compliance with upcoming electric equipment mandates.

Additionally, the Annual Meeting, including our annual awards ceremony, will be held on Monday, November 27, at President Jay Neunsinger's Richmond Country Club. We anticipate some very special award recipients and an exciting keynote speaker, so watch for details soon and register early.

Finally, we are also working on plans for the annual Holiday Meeting in December, and work is underway on planning for the 2024 Assistant Superintendent Boot Camp and the 2024 Institute.

We hope to see you at a GCSANC event in the coming months, and we hope that the hot months ahead go as smoothly as possible.

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From the Field

By **JEFF JENSEN**, GCSAA Field Staff, Southwest Region

I hope this finds our GCSANC members doing well. It was great to see many of you volunteer for the recent First Green field trips at Cinnabar Hills and Monterey Pines. GCSANC continues to lead in developing our future workforce and growing the game!

It has been busy in my world, as I have been booking field trip sites in the greater Phoenix area for the 2024 Conference and Show. The field trips will be held Monday, January 29, and Tuesday, January 30, at numerous local golf facilities across the valley.

This is the second year that GCSAA has embarked on hosting the trips, which give Conference and Show participants the opportunity to leave the convention center and visit local facilities for interactive education.

At the time of this article, GCSAA has booked the below field trips:

- BMP Field Trip at the JW Marriott Camelback Resort in Scottsdale. Camelback Superintendent Troy Thompson will serve as host and the field trip will focus on BMPs, including turfgrass reduction projects, native areas, flood control, water efficiency, pollinators, and upcoming renovations to the resort's Padre Course.
- Tournament Prep Field Trip at TPC Scottsdale. TPC Scottsdale Director of Agronomy Brandon Reese will host the trip, which will highlight tournament agronomy, infrastructure/buildout of the WMO Open, a visit with Tournament Director Chance Crosby and projects from Seed Research.

- Water Management Field Trip at Paradise Valley Country Club. Paradise Valley Superintendent Rob Collins will host, and the focus will be on irrigation system management, sub-surface irrigation, different grassing opportunities, opportunities for elimination of overseed, turf research plots and community engagement on golf's use of water.
- Renovation Field Trip at the Arizona Biltmore. Hosted by Arizona Biltmore Superintendent Jason Snyder and consultant Mark Woodward (former GCSAA President and CEO), the trip will focus on the course's current renovations, including a new irrigation system and pump house, bunker renovation, Tif Tuff Bermuda conversion, re-grading and lengthening of the course and renovations to the cart barn and member areas.

Three additional field trips are in the works, including a shop tour, First Green event and a trip focused on golf course maintenance technology. More information will be available soon on the Conference and Show website at <https://gcsaaconference.com/future-dates>.

We look forward to our GCSANC members making the drive or short flight to Phoenix next January! If I can be of any assistance, please don't hesitate to contact me at jjensen@gcsaa.org and follow me on Twitter @GCSAA_SW for industry updates.

Jeff



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Best Management Practices

By **MARK JOHNSON**, *Director, GCSAA Environmental Programs*

THE FOLLOWING IS SHARED ON BEHALF OF MARK JOHNSON, DIRECTOR, GCSAA ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS

On May 23 GCSAA provided every member golf facility with a facility BMP manual via GCSAA's on-line facility BMP planning guide. This was for member facilities that do not have a current manual; those with pre-existing manuals were not included.

The manuals will be modeled after the corresponding manual for that facility's state. As non-members join GCSAA they will also be provided a manual.

On the next page is a copy of an email that was sent to superintendents at facilities that currently do not have a facility BMP manual within GCSAA's on-line planning guide.

Key points about this effort:

- This initiative is designed to better enable members to participate in Facility BMP creation by streamlining the process.
- The current message for advocacy will not change. For example, "GCSAA created a national BMP template and assisted all 50 states with the development of state specific BMP manuals from which every GCSAA member facility received a digital copy. We encourage each facility to customize their facility BMP manual to best represent the management needs of their own facility. GCSAA has provided the tools, education, etc. for members to achieve success."
- GCSAA is doing this to help every facility document and demonstrate that they are good environmental stewards and valuable to the community. The manuals provide a roadmap to success for maintaining golf courses with minimal environmental impact.
- Members can log in to the facility BMP planning guide with their GCSAA.org username and password.
- There are brief how-to videos (step by step instructions on customizing a facility BMP manual), BMP webinars, and recorded BMP workshops on GCSAA's website. These will help superintendents customize their manuals at their own pace to achieve success.
- Our goal is for every member facility to have a manual, and we are asking for our members to complete Step 2 (BMP Section) and Step 3 (Cover, introduction, and references pages section) to be recognized as participating facilities.
- GCSAA encourages all chapters to continue providing BMP workshops, related communications and promotion, as the industry is strengthened through BMPs.
- GCSAA will continue social media and other communications as part of an on-going effort to encourage members to "complete" their manuals. Please encourage all superintendents in your chapter to log in and customize their manuals.

Questions? Feel free to reach out to Mark Johnson at mjohnson@gcsaa.org.



ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS

GCSAA is making it easier for you to protect the future of your facility and profession by continuing to grow the Essential Role you play in your facility's success with a streamlined process for creating a custom GCSAA BMP manual.

WHY ARE WE DOING THIS?

A facility BMP can help elevate your professional reputation at your facility while strengthening golf's position when securing the valuable resources you need to succeed at your job. GCSAA knows your time is valuable. By listening to your requests to streamline the process, we are pleased to announce that you can now efficiently prepare a BMP by going to GCSAA.org/BMP to build your customized BMP at your pace. This BMP can be shared with stakeholders to show your comprehensive plan for managing your facility.

This streamlined process has been created based on GCSAA member feedback. When you go to GCSAA.org/BMP, you will find a pre-built BMP manual that you can quickly customize to fit your needs.

Not convinced this is for you? Go to GCSAA.org/BMP to learn more and to see how other members have benefited.

GCSAA

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16th Annual Clifford & Myrtle Wagoner Scholarship & Research Tournament

GCSANC's 16th Annual Clifford & Myrtle Wagoner Scholarship & Research Tournament was held at CordeValle in mid-May for the second consecutive year, and the event was a huge success on many levels.

Not only were the course conditions impeccable and the food from High Five Catering a huge hit, but the event raised more than \$40,000 for legacy and turf scholarships, as well as turf research.

Helping us to reach such a significant amount for scholarships and research were the many companies who donated to the silent and live auctions, as well as the many sponsors, including title sponsor Turf Star Western, lunch sponsor Simplot Turf & Horticulture,

beer sponsor Sierra Pacific Turf Supply, and tee sponsors Affordable Turf & Specialty Tire, Belkorp Golf & Turf, Pete Bowman/BoTerra LLC, Target Specialty Products, and Turf Star Western.

Auction donors included BASF, Delta Bluegrass, DHR Construction, Envu, E-Z-Go/Cushman, GCSAA, Graniterock, GrassRoots Turf Supply LLC, Harrell's, Hunter Industries, Pacific Material Resources, Peter J Galea CGCS, Precision Lab, Rain Bird, Sierra Pacific Turf Supply, Simplot Turf & Horticulture, Sustainable Turf Science/STS Turf, Syngenta, Target Specialty Products, Tee-2-Green, Turf Star Western/Toro, West Coast Turf.





This year, GCSANC awarded a total of \$9,600 in scholarships to six worthy recipients, including four turf students and two family members of GCSANC members.

The four turf scholarships were awarded to the following individuals:

- **RYAN BOWLER**, pursuing Penn State Turfgrass Management degree, with anticipated graduation date of December 2023. Ryan works at Pebble Beach Golf Links and made the Dean’s List in fall of 2022.
- **DERRICK LE**, pursuing Turfgrass Management degree at UC Riverside Extension, with anticipated April 2024 graduation. Derrick works at San Jose Country Club and was a three year, three sport athlete in high school.
- **RILEY LEDIN**, pursuing Turfgrass Management at Penn State World Campus, with graduation date of 2026 projected. Riley works at Contra Costa Country Club and was an excellent high school lacrosse player.
- **JOSHUA POSHARD**, pursuing Turf Management degree at University of Pennsylvania, with anticipated 2024 graduation. Joshua works at San Jose Country Club and is active in baseball, golf and coaching kids camps.



Following are the two legacy scholarship winners:

- **COLIN BASTIS**, who will attend Cal Poly San Luis Obispo and pursue Agricultural Business, with a planned graduation date of June of 2027. Colin has also worked at Menlo Country Club.
- **MIA NETTZ**, who will attend Cal State University Fullerton and is pursuing a Business degree. Mia was a successful high school soccer player and has worked at Crumbl Cookies in Novato.



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How to Ruin a Golf Course With Trees

By **PAUL JACOBS**, *USGA agronomist*

Trees are a wonderful part of many golf courses and they are iconic features on some of the greatest courses in the world. They provide strategic interest, habitat, and they can give a golf course a unique sense of place. However, trees must be planted and managed in a thoughtful way to avoid big problems. To be honest, there may be no better way to ruin a golf course than by haphazardly planting trees.



Interfering with shots, building walls between holes and shading key playing areas are just some of the useful roles that trees can play on a golf course.

The right trees in the right locations can be an asset to any golf course, but when trees begin to negatively affect turf health or playability they become a serious detriment. Here are a few of the best ways trees can be used to ruin a golf course:

Be sure to select the cheapest trees you can find. A tree is a tree, right? Who cares if it has aboveground roots and constantly drops debris? As long as it grows fast and doesn't break the bank, what else really matters?

When planting trees, don't worry about how big they'll be in the future. That's somebody else's problem.

Plant trees as close to greens as possible to provide a beautiful backdrop. All great golf courses have a wall of pine trees behind each green.

Don't limit yourself to trees that are native to your area, or even your continent. Including trees from around the world on your golf course is a recipe for success.

Don't worry about the nuts, fruit, bark, sticks or other debris some trees may drop on the course. The maintenance team will be happy to clean up any additional mess.

If you think a hole is too easy, planting trees is the best way to fix it. No need to consult with a golf course architect, just watch where most players hit their shots and plant a bunch of trees near that spot.

Plant as many trees as you can close to tees and fairways. Who really needs turf on tees anyway? The ball is on a tee for a reason. Thin fairways? That's what fertilizer is for.

Don't even think about removing trees unless you want the course to be too easy. No golf shop can handle the overwhelming number of complaints that too many birdies are being made after a handful of trees are removed.

We may have been kidding around with this list, but the unfortunate reality is that these are common mistakes that happen on golf courses everywhere. Courses often spend lots of money creating tree issues and then spend even more money to fix them. Golf courses with trees should invest in a professionally prepared tree plan to guide planting and management decisions so they get the most benefit from their trees without all the headaches. Golf course architects and USGA agronomists are valuable contributors to such plans.

Can You Guess The Golf Courses Where These Trees Are Located?



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Tree Course 2



Tree Course 3



Tree Course 4

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GCSANC members Brian Boyer (*Cinnabar Hills Golf Club*) and Rob Esposito (*Pacific Grove Golf Links*) hosted First Green events at their courses in May

Following are photos from Cinnabar Hills





Five Reasons for Golfers to Rethink Their Expectations

By **GEORGE WATERS**, *Manager, Green Section Education*

Golfer expectations are one of the most powerful forces shaping our game. Everything from the cost of a round, to pace of play, to how much water a course uses is influenced by our desires and expectations. Unfortunately, we may not always think about how reasonable our expectations are for a particular course, or about the long-term effects our preferences could have. A new year is a great opportunity to reassess priorities and think about how changing our mindset can help change golf for the better. Here are five reasons to rethink our expectations:

EXPECTATIONS COME WITH A PRICE TAG

When it comes to golf course conditioning, amazing things are possible. Superintendents routinely deliver incredible results on difficult sites, through challenging weather, and with plenty of interference from us golfers! However, those amazing conditions require more than a green thumb and skillful management, they require resources that are directly tied to the cost of playing a course. While golfers should always expect a good experience for their money, we shouldn't be surprised when a course with higher green fees offers a higher level of conditioning or dials in a few more details.

WE CAN'T ALWAYS GET WHAT WE WANT

Like many businesses, golf courses face a growing list of challenges that make it hard to deliver everything a customer might want. Superintendents are struggling to hire and retain staff, essential materials are scarce and increasingly expensive, and equipment upgrades are facing long lag times. What was routine in the past may not be possible this year, or in the years to come, and we may have to adjust our expectations accordingly.

WE CAN HELP GET WHAT WE NEED

What we ask for as customers guides how courses spend money. While there are plenty of things that might be nice to have in terms of course conditioning or presentation, most golf courses don't have unlimited resources, so choices have to be made. If we're less concerned about bunker consistency or weeds in naturalized areas, that makes it easier for courses to focus more resources on the playing surfaces that matter most, like greens and fairways.



Our expectations for course conditioning and presentation have a direct impact on the cost of playing golf and the resources required for course maintenance.

DON'T FORGET ABOUT FUN

Sometimes high expectations for conditioning can make courses less fun to play. The desire for faster green speeds is a great example. There are many courses – including some of the most famous in the world – that sacrifice outstanding hole locations and make golf more frustrating for many players because the expected green speed is too fast for the putting green contours. Lush green rough is another example of how expectations can overstep enjoyment. It might look nice from the tee and offer a “championship test” but dense rough means a long day for someone with a wayward driver – and the players following behind them.

THINK ABOUT THE FUTURE

Golfer expectations influence how courses are designed and built, how much space they require and the resources needed to maintain them. When we think about the footprint of our game, and the economic and environmental sustainability of golf, we should also think about the role our expectations play in the equation.

If there's anything the disruptions of the past several years have shown us it's that golf is still a great game even if the experience is different from what we're used to. Just because we've come to expect certain things in terms of course conditioning or presentation doesn't mean those things are necessary for us to enjoy the game. It also doesn't mean that we can't adjust our expectations to fit a new reality or our own changing priorities.

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