



CHIPS & PUTTS

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POCONO TURFGRASS ASSOCIATION

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APRIL 2004

Notes & Such....

Volunteers are needed to work at Glenmaura National G.C. June 14, 16, 17, 18, and 19. Please call 570-457-8733 and ask for Andy or Mike.

Did hyperoydes eat you alive ??

Got MOSS —
Call Bill Rusk at Wild Pines.

PSU Field Days -
August 11th-12th...



May Meeting: Schuylkill CC Host: Jim Rattigan, Golf Course Superintendent

This month's tour swing brings us to a relatively untouched gem: Schuylkill CC. The course is a Donald Ross Design built in 1921. It plays 6,888 yards from the tips and gets 9000-10,000 rounds per year. Schuylkill is a private club with 200 golfing members and 200 social members.

Course Highlights: The greens are grassed with Schuylkill Poa Annua with some assorted bents seeded in over the years. Fairways/Tees are also predominately Schuylkill Poa with some bent making a comeback. The course has been relatively untouched over the years so it still contains many of the original Donald Ross classic characteristics.

Our Host: Jim Rattigan is a 2002 graduate of Penn State University with a B.S. in Turfgrass Science. Prior to graduation, Jim spent a year working as an intern at another Donald Ross gem, Aronimink GC in Newtown Square, PA. Prior to Aronimink, Jim spent 5 years working his way up the ladder at Schuylkill CC. He is currently with his girlfriend Rachel of 2 years, and sports a 2 handicap. In 2003 Jim qualified for the Nationwide Tour event in Hershey and enjoys playing as many courses as he can throughout the season. The most challenging part of his job is maintaining consistent conditions on such a wide variety of grasses. He has been the Superintendent at Schuylkill since 2002. He manages a crew of 6 full timers and 4 part timers. Most recent projects at Schuylkill include: tree work, winter recovery, and drainage. This is the first time Jim has hosted a Pocono Meeting, so let's show him some support!



President's Message.....

Special "Thanks" to Chris Butler and Jim Rattigan for two great meetings to get our season off to a positive start. The courses were immaculate, the food was excellent, and the value of the days was priceless (that was a jab at you no-shows). Also, thank you to our meeting sponsors: John Wiblishauser from Bayer and Bob Seltzer from Fisher & Son. One small observation if I may....It is humiliating to have to call a host club's general manager on a Friday before the meeting and tell him that we have seventeen people signed up. Bear in mind, most courses are not interested in tying up their facility for seventeen people, and we will certainly encounter difficulty in securing meeting sites at some point down the road. "What do you want us to do?" you ask in a panic. You know who your neighbors or your clients are. If they are not active in this Association, then make the effort to try to get them to attend at least one meeting with you. It has also gotten popular for a few of you to sign up at the last minute. Out of respect for the host club, please let Melinda know of your desire to attend at least three days in advance so she can give the host club an accurate number for which to prepare.

Eric Reed

From the Editor's Desk.....

My apologies for the delay in production of this issue. I am sure you wore a path to the mailbox while checking to see if it had arrived yet. I could make excuses, but I won't. We have had quite a busy spring. As you can see by the back page, lots of new faces occupy new places. (including yours truly) Hopefully, they can be sure to attend some meetings this year.

Schuykill CC was definitely a treat. A good time was had by all. I must say, Donald Ross definitely knew where to locate his bunkers. I have played many courses with three times the amount of bunkers and did not visit as many there as I did at Schuykill. Of course, my sand game was left at Woodstone. So I will try to locate my sand game for our meeting at another Donald Ross gem, Elkview CC. John Downer and his crew are planning to make those couple of extra miles you have to drive worth it.

In addition to Elkview, Glenmaura is also hosting the NEPA Golf Classic for the Nationwide tour. Andy could still use a few brave souls to volunteer. It is truly a fun event to volunteer for. Best of Luck to Andy, Mike and crew. Hopefully we can dry out by then!

See you at Elkview.

Charlie Koennecker



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Managing Greens Under Stress

by Stanley J. Zontek

Director, Mid-Atlantic Region, USGA Green Section

Reprinted from the USGA Green Section Record
1988 May/June Vol 26(3): 1-4

Among the responsibilities of today's golf course superintendent, the need to maintain a good stand of grass on putting greens is perhaps the most basic of all. Greens are the bread and butter of a golf course, and the reputation of a course and the superintendent who maintains it is often determined by the consistency of those greens. As long as the greens look good and putt well, golfers are inclined to overlook other weaknesses on the course. If this consistency fails for even a short time, though, the superintendent will be criticized - and golfers can be merciless in their criticism of even the least significant flaw.

Maintaining good putting green turf for most of the season is not as difficult as it once was. Science has given us a better understanding of how to maintain closely cut, heavily trafficked turf, and well-timed practices such as aeration, topdressing, fertilization, overseeding, and other renovation work can prepare the turf and the soil for the next period of stress. With the coming of the summer stress season, however, putting green management often takes on a meaning all its own: doing what is necessary to keep the grass alive under stress conditions.

Turfgrass stress can be defined in a number of different ways. By the book, stress is the "strain or pressure causing a departure from the normal equilibrium." For the turf manager in the field, stress is what causes the grass to wilt and die right before his eyes, just like it did during the summer of 1987, the East's summer of despair. The turf on greens is exposed to many elements that can cause stress. The turf manager has little or no control over some of these factors, such as the amount of play a course receives, under what weather conditions this play occurs, and whether the players wear spiked or spikeless shoes. Other stress factors are imposed by the superintendent himself. These include extremely close mowing, the abrasion caused by turning heavy triplex mowers on the green perimeters and collars, deep vertical mowing, too much or too little irrigation, and misapplying certain chemicals. These stresses can be broadly grouped under mechanical stress.

The other category of stress the turf manager must deal with is given the name environmental stress. Temperature or humidity that is either too high or too low, rainfall that is too much or too little, and the

presence of frost, are examples of environmental stress.

Generally speaking, any of these environmental or mechanical stress factors will not cause the loss of grass by themselves, but when a combination of stresses occurs at the same time (e.g., close mowing when it is too hot), the turf can be severely weakened, and may wilt and die. When this occurs on greens, it means an immediate public relations problem between the golf course superintendent and those who play the course.

Following is a listing of some of the management factors the golf course superintendent can control to some degree as he manages his turf under conditions of stress. Some may seem obvious, while others are less obvious, but all of them are worth considering in preparing for another period of heavy summer play and the accompanying stresses. After all, loss of turf on greens is something that every golf course superintendent and golfer wants to avoid.

Managing Environmental Stress

Heat, moisture, disease, and nutrient stresses are key problems in maintaining healthy turf during the summer. Good management techniques can minimize these stresses, though sometimes the chemicals and materials used to prevent injury cause stresses of their own. Following is a checklist of management factors to consider for handling various environmental stresses.

- Syringe the turf occasionally to reduce heat and moisture stress. Applying the correct amount of water is the key to this program. Syringing is often overdone, causing wet wilt and disease. Syringing is best done by hand, using trained workers with some good judgement, and applying water only to those sections of the greens that require it. Hand syringing is time consuming during the summer, but it is necessary, given the demands of golfers today.
- Open up pocketed greens. Summer heat stress problems are always more severe on pocketed greens, those partly enclosed by a dense stand of trees and underbrush. It is always hotter and more humid in these pocketed areas, and the grass is always weaker because of it. Air circulation can be improved by thinning out the extraneous trees and underbrush near the green and pruning up the

(Continued on page 6)



Golf Course Turfgrass Management Program Celebrates Commencement

The 45th Golf Course Turfgrass Management Program class graduated on March 6, 2004. Twenty-four students received their certificates at a ceremony held at the Nittany Lion Inn. Dr. Bruce McPheron, Associate Dean of Research and Graduate Education and Director of the Pennsylvania Agricultural Experiment Station addressed the graduates during the commencement ceremonies. The keynote speaker was Mr. Mark Kuhns who is Director of Grounds at Baltusrol Golf Club in Springfield, NJ.

Scholarship and award winners were as follows: Trans-Mississippi Golf Association-Stephen Holmes, Seth Miller and Jesse Trcka; Penncross Bentgrass Growers Association-James Bezanson, Stephen Holmes, Christopher Lare, Steven McGlone, Seth Miller, Christopher Penn and Jesse Trcka; Duff Shaw Memorial-Eric Hummel; Myles Adderly Technical Report Writing Award-Seth Miller; PSU Alumni Outstanding Student Award-Seth Miller and Jesse Trcka; Zimmerman Memorial Award (sponsored by Lesco, Inc.) for Outstanding Turfgrass Student as selected by fellow classmates—James Bezanson.

For more information on the Golf Course Turfgrass Management Program, please contact Heather Treaster at 814-863-0129, email hgw1@psu.edu or write to: Golf Course Turfgrass Management Program, The Pennsylvania State University, 456 Ag. Sciences & Industry Building, University Park, PA 16802-3507. The application deadline is March 1, 2005 for the Fall 2005 term.

Turfgrass and Ag. Equipment Service Technician Program Graduates First Students

On March 6, 2004, the Turfgrass and Agricultural Equipment Service Technicians Certificate Program graduated its first class of students. These students have completed four, eight-week sessions over a period of two years during which time they have studied both mechanical and non-mechanical topics.

All of the eight graduates are employed in Pennsylvania at jobs they look forward to working. Two of the graduates returned to family farms, one is employed at a large farm, one is a mechanic at a John Deere dealership, and the remaining four have returned to the golf course or turf equipment industry. Many of those seeking employment had multiple opportunities to choose from, another indicator that these graduates are in high demand.

As a golf course superintendent consider mentioning this program to those employees, either part or full-time, that you feel are excellent technician candidates. Perhaps your course can either wholly or in part sponsor the employee, who returns to you as a more valuable technician because of the additional skills gained.

As a course employee, perhaps enrolling in this program will gain you skills needed to advance in your present position or position yourself strategically for a position that may become available.

Program course work includes topics in gasoline and diesel engines, electrical and electronic systems, hydraulics, communications, inventory control, machine maintenance and many additional topics relevant to the outdoor power equipment industry. Additional information about this program is available from Dr. James W. Hilton at the Penn State Agricultural Engineering Department, University Park campus. Phone Dr. Hilton at 814-863-1817 or email jwh2@psu.edu.

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PTGA Membership

Our current membership stands at 158 members. The breakdown is as follows.

- 50 class A - Superintendents (>3 years)
- 11 class B - Superintendents (<2 years)
- 21 class C - Assistant Superintendents
- 4 class AS - Associate Members
- 47 class AF - Affiliate Members
- 10 class H - Honorary Members
- 15 class R - Retired Members
- 0 class D -
- 0 class S - Student Members
- 0 class I - Inactive Members

The membership numbers are up from the last two years. In 2003 we had 139 members and in 2002 we had 143 members.

Penn State Survey

Penn State has initiated a survey of putting green conditions in Pennsylvania. The objective of the survey is to evaluate putting green characteristics, such as green speed, surface hardness, thatch depth, etc., and other non-agronomic factors like operating budget and determine which factors are strongly correlated with one another. Over 70 golf courses will participate in the study, which represents about 10% of the total golf courses in the state. The survey will be concluded in the fall of 2004 and results will be published in early 2005. The results will help golf course superintendents and golfers better understand the what conditions are required in order to maintain fast green speeds and how their golf courses compare to golf courses within the same economic status.

The study is being funded by the Pennsylvania Turfgrass Council, Greater Pittsburgh Golf Course Superintendents Assoc., Mountain and Valley Golf Course Superintendents Assoc., and the Philadelphia Assoc. of Golf Course Superintendents. For more information please contact Dr. George W. Hamilton at 814.865.3007 or Bob Raley at 814.777.3007.

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ower branches of the remaining specimens. Without a doubt, good air circulation is critical in allowing the turf to transpire and cool itself by releasing moisture through its stomata. Providing good air circulation is also helpful in drying the green to minimize disease and algae problems. Therefore, anything that can be done to improve air drainage in the vicinity of golf greens should receive high priority by the green committee.

- **Control diseases.** Many turf diseases become active when the weather is hot and humid and the turf is under stress. A good example is Summer Patch (*Magnaporthe poae*), a disease of *Poa annua* and one where disease severity is directly related to the degree of stress experienced by the *Poa annua*. Controlling this and other diseases during the summer is particularly important, as turf lost from disease activity at this time of year will be slow to recover. To prevent this from occurring, compress your preventive fungicide spray schedule if necessary, be sure to make an accurate diagnosis of the disease if symptoms are observed, and use curative rates of the most effective yet least phytotoxic fungicide labeled to control that disease. Also, be sure to alternate materials or tankmix contact and systemic fungicides when appropriate for broad spectrum disease control and to reduce the potential for fungal resistance problems.

Do not apply pesticides, fertilizers, or combinations of products that have the potential to burn the turf. Cool-season grasses under heavy stress often react

negatively to what are usually considered mild herbicides or moderate rates of certain types of fertilizers. If in doubt, spray during the cooler evening hours or defer treatments until temperatures moderate, when the turf can tolerate the applications better. If crabgrass or other weeds must be treated during the summer, consider hand picking rather than using herbicides. Though time consuming, it may be better than dealing with burned grass. Misapplications can be especially devastating during stressful weather. Applying the wrong rates or allowing overlapping (which essentially doubles the intended rate) is a common cause of turf injury during hot weather. If you're not confident about important applications, consider using foam markers or application dyes for spray applications, or switch to granular formulations and drop spreaders if necessary.

If fertilization is deemed necessary, keep rates in the light to ultra-light spoon-feeding range. Soluble fertilizer sources containing N-P-K plus micronutrients seem to work well at rates as low as 1/16th or as high as one-quarter pound of actual nitrogen per 1,000 square feet per application. Non-burning, low-nitrogen-content natural organic fertilizers can also be used to good advantage, but keep the rates low, in the range of one-quarter pound of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet. Keep in mind that more fertilizer can always be added if it is needed. If excess fertilizer has been applied, though, nothing can be done but live with the consequences.

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GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENTS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

A message from your golf course superintendent and GCSAA



(Continued from page 6)

If the greens begin to thin and you feel they are in trouble, consider aerating the turf. That's right, aerate. Though it may seem inconsistent to aerify while at the same time trying to avoid turf stress, there is usually more to gain than to lose. Aeration helps a soft, wet soil dry out, and allows oxygen back into the root zone where it is so badly needed. It also improves water infiltration into tight, compacted soils, and relieves the effects of isolated dry spots. Very often, the turf begins to improve within a few days after aerification. As a precaution, use small tines, and do not let the green dry out too much. Solid-tine aerification or deep spiking may also be of help in this situation.

Consider applying hydrated lime when conditions warrant. For example, when algae becomes established on the surface of the greens and cannot be controlled with fungicides containing maneb, a light application of hydrated lime sometimes does the trick. Consider hydrated lime also when a green takes on an acidic, musty odor (ominously referred to as the smell of death), usually during periods of hot, humid weather. As with aerating greens under severe stress, something may be gained by sweetening the surface of the soil with a light application of not more than one pound of hydrated lime per 1,000 square feet. This is an old remedy that can still be used to good advantage. Be careful. While light rates of hydrated lime have little effect on the grass, heavier rates can burn.

Finally, communicate with the people at your course. Discuss the situation with the green committee chairman, president, golf professional, course administrator, general manager, or anyone else who has a need to know. Begin the conversation by saying something like, "Gentlemen, we will have a problem if things continue as they are . . ." That should get their attention. No one likes a surprise, especially finding dead greens that only a few days before were fully turfed and in beautiful condition.

Tell them the story in clear, concise terms. People tend to be understanding if they know the facts. After all, no matter how good a job a golf course superintendent does, he cannot control the weather. Without a doubt, weather extremes remain the number one stress factor on golf courses today.

When the Weather Breaks . . .

When the period of stress is over, assess the condition of your golf course. Count your losses and analyze what you think caused the problems your course experienced. After all, there is nothing like a prolonged period of stress to bring out whatever strengths and weaknesses exist on the course. You may determine the greens need more and deeper aeration, that a better irrigation system needs to be installed, or that trees need to be removed from around pocketed greens.

Also, use the experience in a positive way to determine which practices need to be altered and which programs should be implemented to better manage turf when it is under stress. Rest assured, summer heat, with its associated stress-related problems, will occur again.



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POCONO ROUNDUP

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE POCONO
TURFGRASS ASSOCIATION

NEW SUPERINTENDENTS in the AREA !!

- **Bobby Brown** is now at Eagle Rock Resort
- **Jason Brown** is tending Berwick CC
- **Mark Brown** has taken over Glen Oak CC
YES, they are brothers !!!
- **Mike Salinetti** is the new super at Country Club of the Poconos.
- **Joe Champion** is the new "man in charge" at Hideaway Hills.
- **Derrick Hudson** (formerly asst. supt. at Wyoming Valley) is now at Bellewood.
- **Matt Cook** took over at Windsor Heights.
- **Jason Barndt** is now assisting Chris Butler at Woodstone.
- **Cory Pries** (former Assistant at Fox Hill) is now at Towanda CC.

FOOTBALL CAMP ??

Ron Jaworski has assumed management responsibilities at Edgewood in the Pines under the watchful eye of Bob Price.

WOW——Hope that's all !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Riverview GC in Easton (**Brian Bachman**) is set to open in July or August. Another Blaukovitch wonder !!

Blue Ridge Trail has commenced construction of their new nine.

POCONO TURFGRASS MEETING SCHEDULE

June 16	Elkview C.C.
July 13	Panorama Golf Course
August 23	Great Bear G. & C.C.
September	C. C. of Scranton
October	Wyoming Valley C.C.



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