



# TEE<sup>TO</sup> GREEN

Published by the  
Metropolitan Golf Course  
Superintendents Association



## President's Message

### Assistants Reconsidered

**N**ext time you're at one of our meetings, look around. What do you think the ratio of assistants to superintendents is? Two to one? Three to one? Guess again. There are only half as many assistants as superintendents on our membership roster.

This points up what I've long observed—and what former GCSAA President Steve Cadenelli discussed in one of his President's Messages back in '91: Assistants haven't universally achieved "professional" status—or the recognition and rewards that go along with it.

You're probably saying "So what." But like Steve, I believe that today's assistants play such an integral role in the management of our properties that they should be treated as more than superintendents-in-training there to "pay their dues" before landing their own job.

Don't forget: Their jobs, like ours, have changed. They've expanded. More and more of us expect our assistants to pitch in with tasks that were once solely in our court: training and supervising staff, budgeting, purchasing, and, most important, monitoring and evaluating course conditions.

These are duties that are critical not only to the well-being of our golf courses, but also to our success as superintendents. For that reason alone, assistants deserve professional respect. And by that I mean an ample compensation package with a full (continued on page 2)

## Special Feature

### Winning the War Against Moss

*Three superintendents share the good, the bad—and the ugly—of their moss control programs*

**P**ut turfgrass under prolonged periods of stress and you leave it open to a whole host of problems—not the least of which is moss encroachment. But unlike other weeds, silvery thread moss is tough to ditch.

Several years ago, Dr. Norman Hummel of Cornell University researched methods for moss control. (We reported on them in our August 1989 issue of *Tee to Green*.) This past year, New Zealand researchers, David Howard, a sports turf agronomist, and David Havell of Manawater Polytechnic, published the findings of their moss control studies.

All three researchers have been in hot pursuit of a chemical control for moss. They've tried Endothal, PMAS, Pendimethlyn, and Iron Sulfate, to name several. But after numerous trials—and errors—all agree that chemicals offer only a temporary, and somewhat risky, solution.

"Long-term moss control," says Hummel, "relies on a change of management practices that makes the de-

sired plant more competitive. Unless cultural steps are taken to increase turfgrass vigor (see accompanying piece on page 4), you'll find chemical control of moss a never-ending battle."

Those of you who *do* want to give chemical control a whirl should exercise extreme caution: What works well on one course may have disastrous effects on another. The researchers recommend, therefore, that you do small test areas before embarking on a large-scale chemical control program.

The following are accounts from three superintendents who are using a combination of cultural and chemical controls to combat moss on their greens. Though, in each case, the battle has yet to be won, the results, you'll see, are promising.

#### Mike Mongon, Arcola Country Club, Paramus, NJ

At Arcola, we had a severe moss problem on green #12. In fact, about one-third of the green had large mats of moss. A couple of factors were (continued on page 4)

## Also in This Issue

- ② Looking Back at the Invitational Site and Host
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- ⑦ Two Supers Have New Songs





## Assistants Reconsidered

range of benefits, including paid memberships in local and national associations and educational opportunities, both management- and turf-related. (I'm assuming, of course, that you'll not only offer these professional development opportunities, but also insist that they take advantage of them.)

We can also elevate our assistants' standing by seeing that they attend Grounds Committee meetings and special club functions, where they should

be introduced and credited for their key role in your department's success.

Keep in mind, when you help your assistants, you help not only yourself and your club, but also the profession. After all, the more valued assistants feel, the more likely they are to perform at their best—and go on to become the kind of superintendents that will serve the industry well.

**TIM O'NEILL, CGCS**  
President

### Spotlight

## Looking Back at the Invitational Site and Host

Looking out from the first tee, it's hard to imagine that the site of this year's Invitational Tournament was once a gentleman's farm—or that crops flourished and cattle grazed on what are now finely manicured greens, tees, and fairways. But before 1957, the Country Club of Darien was just a twinkle in Edgar Auchincloss's eye.

With the help of Golf Course Architect Al Tull, Auchincloss transformed his family estate into a 145-acre, 18-hole golf course and country club, complete with pool, tennis and paddle tennis courts, and one of the area's only curling rinks.

Remaining the club's sole proprietor for 29 years, Auchincloss kept a watchful eye on the operation from the home he eventually built near the second hole. Five years before his tenure ended, Auchincloss hired Met President Tim O'Neill as the club's superintendent.

Entering his 12th year at Darien, Tim has had an opportunity few—if any—Met members will ever experience: working for a solo decision maker. Though most superintendents would shudder at the prospect, Tim found it both interesting and rewarding. "Mr. Auchincloss was genuinely concerned with improving the course," says Tim. "And after he felt confident in my abilities, he was willing to go along with most of my suggestions."

In 1986, Auchincloss sold the club to

the membership, and from then on it's been "decision by committee"—the Green Committee, that is. Under the new and more conventional system, Tim has received funding for substantial capital improvements.

To help him get the most mileage for his budget dollars, five years ago, Tim hired Golf Course Architect Brian Silva to develop a master plan for course renovations. Among those Silva mapped out was the recently completed drainage project. "The course had a number of drainage ditches left over from the farm days," explains Tim. "We laid pipe in them, covered them over, and then seeded them." The project also brought relief to the course's numerous low-lying wet areas.

Another major part of the plan is tee and bunker reconstruction. "Our long-range plan includes enough to keep us busy for the next 20 years," says Tim.

Right now, the club is gearing up for a building renovation program that will take in the clubhouse, pro shop, and cart barns and includes plans for constructing staff housing. At the meeting you couldn't help but notice some of the changes afoot: new landscaping around the clubhouse and other buildings and a newly renovated flagstone patio overlooking the golf course.

Tim's interest in turfgrass management began when he was 14—and cad-dying at Pawtucket Country Club in

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Pawtucket, RI, where he was born and raised. When he turned 15, he joined the club's grounds crew, working under Les Kennedy Sr., who was then Pawtucket's golf pro and superintendent. "By the time I finished high school, I knew I wanted to become a golf course superintendent," says Tim.

He continued his hands-on experience at Pawtucket while pursuing a B.S. in Turfgrass Management from the University of Rhode Island. When he graduated in 1979, Tim accepted an assistant's position at Greenwich Country Club in Greenwich, CT. After two years with then Superintendent Paul Caswell, Tim accepted his first super's position at Country Club of Darien.

In addition to being grateful to Paul for his professional guidance, Tim also credits him for his involvement in the MetGCSA.

A member since 1979, Tim is now in his second term as the association's

president. He's also served three years as secretary and two as vice president and has chaired or served on virtually every committee. But according to Tim, he's gotten at least as much from the association as he's given: "The Met's fueled my professional development and offered me a lifetime of friendships."

When his professional duties aren't calling, Tim enjoys basketball, racquetball, running, and golf. A self-professed sports enthusiast, Tim calls himself a FANNY. Before you jump to the wrong conclusion, a FANNY is a loyal listener of the all-sports radio station, WFAN 660 AM. But right up there on his list of pleasures is spending time with his family: his wife, Jennifer, of five-and-a-half years; his 4-year-old son, Justin; and his 18-month-old daughter, Kristen. The O'Neills live in Norwalk, CT.

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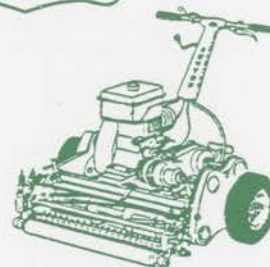
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## Winning the War Against Moss

contributing to the problem: Trees were shading a large portion of the green and poorly spaced sprinkler heads and undersized irrigation pipes were creating non-uniform water coverage.

After heavily pruning the trees and correcting some of our irrigation system flaws, I used a hand spiker and a weed weasel to remove any large mats of moss. Then I replaced the voids with a mix of topdressing, seed, and fertilizer. I did this both late fall and early spring.

Next step was to select a chemical control. I chose iron sulfate. A few days before applying it, I verticut to put the moss in a vulnerable state. Then I watered before and after applying the chemical. Doing this helps the chemical

make its way down into the plant. It's also a good idea to make your chemical application in early spring when the plant is actively growing.

I made my first chemical application in April. I mixed the iron sulfate with topdressing and applied it at 4 lbs. per 1000 sq. ft. with a rotary spreader.

The next day, the green was black, and my resume was updated! But as a few days passed, the black diminished to a dark green. The moss, itself, however, remained black for several weeks.

Days after applying the iron sulfate, I put down a half-pound of nitrogen to encourage existing turf to compete with the weakened moss plant. Just days later, I could tell it was working.

Seven weeks after the first application, the moss began to make a slight comeback and, in fact, began to emerge on two other greens: #13 and #14. Dr. Ralph Engel felt that the greensmower could have transported moss spores to these greens from #12.

We gave our procedure a second go-round mid-June, this time treating #13 and #14 as well as #12. Right now, the two- to four-inch mats of moss have been reduced to nickel- and dime-sized spots, and they continue to get smaller.

**Tony Grasso, Metropolis Country Club, White Plains, NY**

Metropolis has been battling moss for the past decade. I've been working on it since I came here three years ago. Part of the problem is that our members like hard and fast greens. That means we cut them low and aerify infrequently. What's more, our greens are severely sloped, which makes them prone to scalping. Together, these conditions add up to a perfect environment for moss.

Two of our greens—#14 and #18—are pretty badly affected. Others have only small spots. So we've experimented with a number of materials and application methods.

In the spring of '91, we tried burning the moss back with hydrated lime. We hand applied it to only the moss areas and then watered it in. This is definitely hot stuff. You've got to use it with extreme caution. We got a 50 percent reduction in the moss we treated—not enough to keep it from coming back.

Last fall, we gave Lesco's Moss Eraser a shot, but this did too much damage to the surrounding turf. It turned it brown, and the moss came back full force this season.

We also tried spraying iron sulfate at 3 ozs. per 1000 sq. ft. We did it twice, about a month apart. We put the material down, watered it in, and then once the moss dried out, we hand spiked it and seeded it. This retarded the moss growth, but it reappeared this spring.

We continued with the iron sulfate treatments, but it wasn't until several weeks ago that we launched into a more

## Cultural Practices to Keep the Moss Away

The following are a series of cultural practices that researchers have found effective in keeping moss at bay. Read them, and heed them.

**Mow less, not more.** If you want to keep moss out, maintain cutting heights that will allow a more dense turf to prosper. Skip the "clean up" pass of your triplex mower now and then; do it every other day, instead of every day. And be especially careful on the triplex ring area, on mounds, and on the base of undulations. These areas are easily scalped and, as a result, are highly susceptible to moss invasion.

Another tip: Use smooth rollers rather than grooved Wiehle rollers on your greensmower. They're less apt to thin your turfgrass.

**Feed your turfgrass, starve your moss.** When you deprive turf of vital nutrients to up green speed, you compromise the health and density of your grass plant and unwittingly allow moss to weave its way into your turf. N-P-K and micro nutrients are critical in supplying the plant with the nourishment necessary to out-compete moss—and other weeds.

**Avoid giving your greens too much of a good thing.** Moss thrives in an abundance of

free water, so the last thing you want to do is *overwater*. Beware, too, of irrigation system flaws, such as improperly spaced or worn sprinkler head nozzles and undersized pipes that can lead to an uneven distribution of water—and puddling. Also be sure to take care of any drainage problems that create wet areas.

Core cultivation followed by sand topdressing creates a system of "vertical drains" that encourage rapid water removal from the surface. Deep spiking is also effective in keeping turf puddle-free.

**Let the sun shine in.** Prune and root prune surrounding trees to allow plenty of sun and air to reach your greens. Sunlight—both direct and indirect—and air circulation are key ingredients of a good moss-control program.

**Get it while the getting is good.** In other words, try to catch—and treat—moss plants while they're small. As moss tries to establish itself, a dense mat can form. If you allow it to get to this stage, it becomes extremely difficult to control. Any large mats of moss should be plugged out and then replaced with a mix of topdressing, seed, and fertilizer.

MIKE MONGON  
Arcola Country Club



aggressive treatment program.

First, we tried hand applying the iron sulfate to the moss. This process is labor-intensive, but it seems to have offered the best control so far. It dries the moss out and turns it black within hours. Again, we spike the moss once it's dry and then seed it.

On July 6, we attacked one of our more problematic greens by spreading iron sulfate over the entire green and then watering it in. I loaded a Lesco spreader with 2 lbs. of iron sulfate and set it between the letters A and B. The moss was black the next day; the turf turned a dark green. Next time around, we plan to mix the iron sulfate with topdressing, which acts as a carrier.

Another part of our moss control program is increased fertility. We've recently upped our nitrogen levels from 1 lb. to 2 1/2 lbs. per year in an attempt to encourage the turf to overcome the moss. Grass has begun to poke through

the moss, but the jury's still out. By next spring, we'll know just how well our program is working.

**Bill Perlee, Burning Tree Country Club,  
Greenwich, CT**

When I took over at Burning Tree this February, one of my first projects was to rid the greens of moss.

There was some moss on every green, but three of them were a major problem. Around those, we thinned out the brush and trees to increase the light and air circulation.

Other cultural controls we've tried are raising the cutting height on all greens to 5/32"—just recently we brought it back down to 9/64"—and increasing fertility levels to 4 1/2 to 5 lbs. of nitrogen per year.

March 30, as the grass began to grow, we treated all our greens with ferrous sulfate. We applied 8 lbs. per 1000 sq. ft. with a drop spreader and

then watered it in. We stayed off the greens for a day.

Everything turned black. About a week and a half later, after the second mowing, the turf turned a bright green. The moss stayed black. We called it black magic.

One caution: The ferrous sulfate tracks easily, and spreader tire tracks and footprints will turn black. The footprints are tough to avoid, but the spreader tracks can be alleviated by carrying, rather than wheeling, the spreader onto the greens. You also want to avoid overlapping into the collars.

Since our initial treatment, we've been spot treating the moss every two weeks with a shaker filled with ferrous sulfate.

So far, so good. I'd say we have an 80 percent reduction in moss. On some greens, you can't find any moss at all. I'm not sure whether part of our success is due to the dryer weather this season. Next spring, we'll know more.



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## A Round-up of Fairview Meeting Results

**T**wenty-one club managers joined their superintendents May 17 at Fairview Country Club in Greenwich, CT, for the annual Superintendent/Manager Tournament. Those attending without their managers competed in a Two-Man Best Ball. A total of 88 played the course, which was perfectly manicured thanks to host Superintendent Richie Marcks and his staff. Here's how the contenders stacked up:

### Superintendent/Manager

#### Low Net Winners

- 62 E. Millett/D. Vasquez,  
*Ridgeway CC*  
(won on match of cards)
- 62 G. Stanley/R. Musich,  
*Rockrimmon CC*
- 65 M. Sinto/M. Lanzetta,  
*Madison GC*
- 66 B. Dickinson/G. Canears,  
*Willow Ridge CC*

#### Low Gross Winners

- 76 J. Carlone/B. Kennedy,  
*Middle Bay CC*  
(won on match of cards)
- 76 D. Mahoney/R. Pangaro,  
*Siwanoy CC*
- 77 J. Cotone/A. Brigandi,  
*Briar Hall CC*
- 78 D. Flynn/M. Galluzzo,  
*Brae Burn CC*

### Two-Man Best Ball

#### Low Net Winners

- 65 C. Martineau/T. James,  
*Whippoorwill Club*
- 66 J. Sarlo/M. Nissman,  
*Brae Burn CC*
- 66 B. Perry, *Wilfred MacDonald*  
J. Farrell, *Lofts Seed*

#### Low Gross Winners

- 76 M. Millett, *Old Oaks CC*  
T. Savone, *Quaker Ridge GC*
- 77 S. Niven, *The Stanwich Club*  
L. Pakkala, *Woodway CC*
- 78 M. Smith, *Sterling Farms GC*  
J. Calladio, *Milbrook Club*

### Closest to the Pin

- #3 G. Stanley, *Rockrimmon CC*
- #14 M. Lanzetta, *Madison GC*

### Longest Drive

- #6 C. Siemers, *Hawthorne Bros.*
- #11 J. Carlone, *Middle Bay CC*

Aside from the golf course, one of the best things about Fairview is the way everyone there has always treated the MetGCSA. Golf Pro Walter Campbell and General Manager Drew Campbell are two of the finest gentlemen in the golf business. Clubhouse Manager Mike Loper handled all the details of the day and did an excellent job.

To Fairview and all involved in making our tournament a complete success, a big thank you.

JOHN CARLONE, CGCS  
Middle Bay Country Club

### Notable Notes

## Two Supers Have New Sons

Congratulations to two superintendents and their wives on the birth of their sons:

Timothy Scott, May 24, to **Mike Mongon** of Arcola Country Club, Paramus, NJ, and his wife, Kathleen

Joseph Dominick, June 23, to **Tony Grasso** of Metropolis Country Club, White Plains, NY, and his wife, Lucille

## MetGCSA Two-Ball Results: Round One

**T**he first round of the Met Two-Ball came to a close in early June, with eight teams advancing to the second round. Three matches required sudden death, and no match was won by a margin greater than 2 and 1.

Here's the outcome:

- #16 Chuck Martineau/Fred Scheyhing  
*19 holes over*
- #1 Mark Fuller/Frank Lamphier
- #2 Bob Alonzi/Joe Alonzi  
*21 holes over*
- #15 Dennis Flynn/Peter Rappoccio
- #14 Mike Leary/Tony Savone  
*1 up over*
- #3 Rick Schock/Gregg Stanley
- #13 Mike Mongon/John O'Keefe  
*19 holes over*
- #4 Tim Moore/Todd Polidor
- #12 Dave Arel/Joe Cotone  
*1 up over*
- #5 Earl Millett/Mark Millett
- #11 Gary Arlio/Bob DeMarco  
*by forfeit over*
- #6 Bob Dwyer/Wayne Foster
- #10 Tony Grasso/Greg Wojick  
*2 & 1 over*
- #7 Dave Mahoney/Dennis Petruzzelli
- #9 Les Kennedy/John Streeter  
*2 & 1 over*
- #8 Tony Baviello/Matt Ceplo

All players remarked how enjoyable it was to get together with their peers and compete in a head-to-head match. The Tournament Committee will review the format and is interested in hearing your comments.

Congratulations to the advancing teams!

Second-round matches must be played by July 26.

DAVE MAHONEY  
Siwanoy Country Club



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- ☆ Glenmore Landscape Service  
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P.O. Box 336  
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- ☆ Growth Products, Ltd.  
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