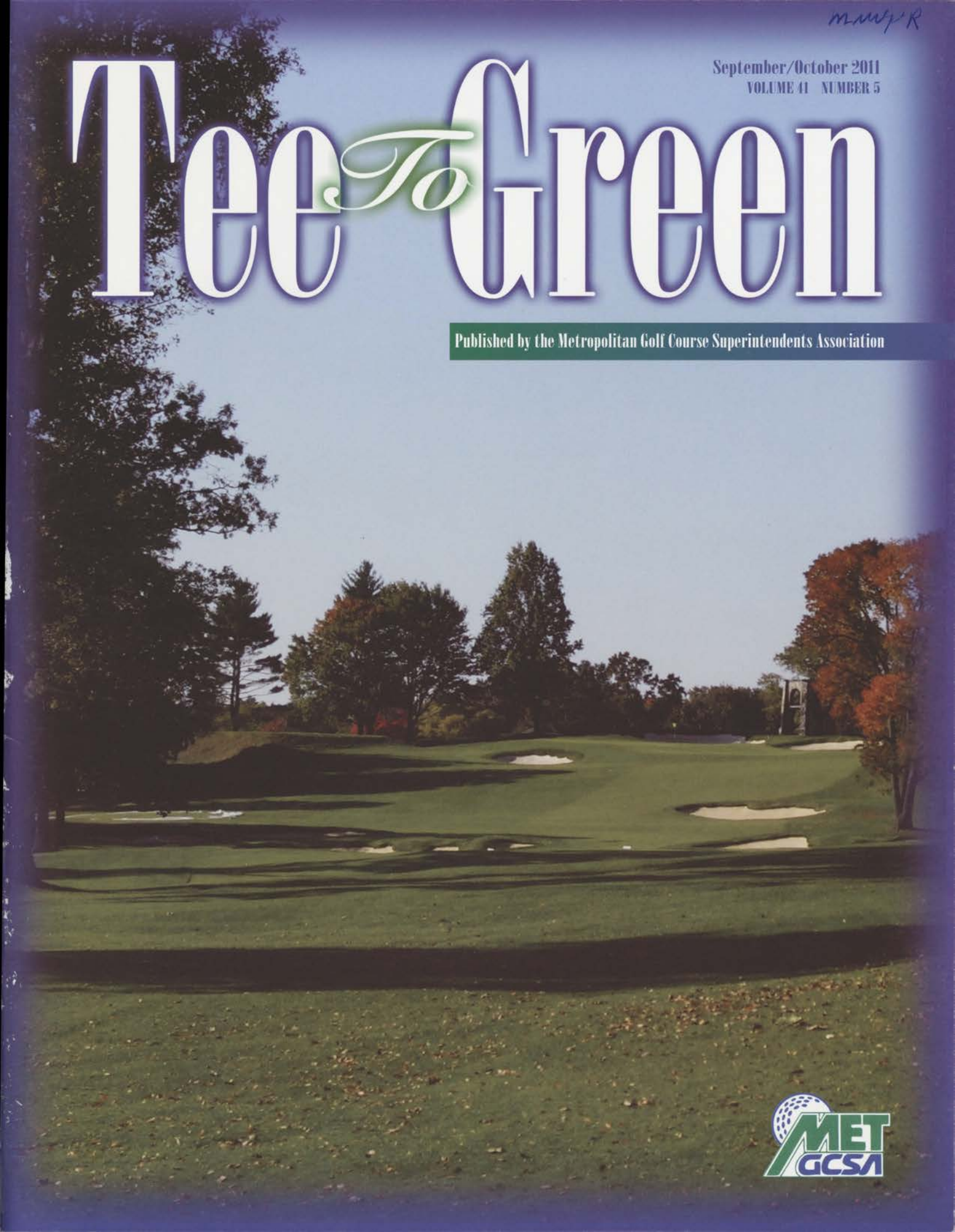


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Tee To Green

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President's Message

Speaking of the Weather . . .



swore to myself after my last message that I was not going to discuss weather in this one. But the better question is: How can I not talk about the weather? The year is currently the fourth wettest in history and we still have more than two months to go. Rounds are down just about everywhere, and cart revenue has taken a huge hit. In my 30-plus years in this crazy business, I cannot recall a time when the course has been closed to carts this many times in a season.

Weather Report

Not only is the weather affecting conditions at our own clubs, but our association events have been severely hampered by the weather. We have had the last three Met events shortened or canceled due to rain. Thankfully, our assistants had one of the best days of the year to play their tournament. Nice to see, since they needed the break as much as any of us! Held at Redding Country Club, one of the true sleepers in the area, the event couldn't have been better. From all accounts, Brett Chapin and Steve Kubicki and the rest of the staff had the course in superb condition, making the event all the more enjoyable (see Scorecard on page 9).

Hopefully, we will be able to book another event in the near future at Mount Kisco Country Club as I'm sure Greg Gutter had a great day planned for us.

Speaking of weather-related problems, be sure to read our Feature articles offering insights from industry experts and area superintendents on what you might do to up your chances of coming out clean in the spring. Unfortunately, trying to guard against winter injury can be like playing roulette. What works on one green may have little effect on another. Removing the snow on some of my greens seemed to have dramatic positive results compared to years past, while others seemed to show signs of damage from being cleared too aggressively. Go figure.

Educational Opportunities Ahead

Though the fall season means we're drawing closer to that now-dreaded winter period, it's a time when I look forward to seeing

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*Bob Nielsen, CGCS
MetGCSA President*

what the educational opportunities might be in the area. The fall seminar is sure to be a big hit at The Patterson Club on November 30. On December 6, the NJGCSA and NJTA are once again united at the Turf Expo in Atlantic City. Ushering in the new year is our Winter Seminar, which will be held on January 18. On the heels of that is the NYSTA Southeast Regional Conference on January 24, and don't forget that the New England Show has been moved to February 6. Finally, the GIS has moved this year from its typical timing in February to the first week in March, topping off an amazing lineup of educational opportunities.

Not only do we have some wonderful educational opportunities coming up, but we have two great social events to look forward to. Our Annual Meeting, held this year at Rockrimmon, will mix business with pleasure (see Spotlight, page 10), offering anyone who attends the opportunity to join fellow members on the course for a few laughs and nine holes of golf after the meeting.

Last, but far from least, is our annual Christmas Party on December 9. Hosted by Sean Cain at Sunningdale Country Club (see Spotlight, page 11), this event is sure to be a huge success with great food and entertainment in one of the most pristine settings the Met has to offer. Make sure to get your raffle tickets so we can support our scholarship recipients. Hope to see you all at both of these special events!

**Bob Nielsen, CGCS
President**



From the Executive Director

Taking a Three Cs Approach to Planning Met Events

A

s Bob mentioned in his President's Message, the weather this year has been a huge challenge that has not only created a lot of stress for all of you out there, but has also resulted in the postponement or cancellation of many of our association golf events.

Speaking of association events, we are working with our Tournament Committee, headed by Sean Cain and Ken Benoit, to explore event options that will better serve our membership and offer more opportunities for all of you to participate. We plan to have changes in place for our 2012 golf season. These improvements will be made possible largely through the continued advertising revenue of our major sponsors (please see the back of this issue) and will be guided by what we're calling our "Three Cs" approach:

1. Convenience

We know that it is hard to break away from your course during the height of the season, so our Invitational Tournament will be the only 18-hole golf event held from Memorial Day to Labor Day. We are also looking at creating the same "9 and Dine" format that our friends on Long Island have used with great success. Members would have the opportunity to invite a guest—maybe one of their assistants to get them more involved in the association—play nine holes, and then have a bite to eat. We might even combine the golf with a bit of education. Whatever format the event takes, it won't eat up your whole day.

2. Cost

Realizing that budget cuts are forcing many more of you to go into your own pockets to attend our meetings and social gatherings, we are going to make sure that none of our events will see an increase in price next year; in fact, some will be reduced—thanks, in large part, to the financial commitment of



*Ed Brockner
Executive Director*

our sponsors. Don't forget to support those who support our association!

3. Camaraderie

I'm sure you've all experienced the benefits of joining fellow members for a little respite from the inevitable stress of managing a golf course. You also must know that the more who attend these get-away-from-it-all events, the merrier. That's why we are committed to finding ways to make it possible for the lion's share of our membership to get together throughout the season . . . even if only for a few hours.

Thank You

Thank you to all of the host clubs who opened their doors for us in 2011, as well as those who will be doing the same in 2012. I look forward to doing everything I can to serve the needs of our membership and welcome all of your input on how we might build on the success of the MetGCSA.

*Ed Brockner
Executive Director*



When the Ice Man Cometh . . .

*Cornell's Dr. Frank Rossi
and the USGA's Jim
Skorulski offer new hope for
helping your greens
survive the winter freeze*

Ice damage on putting greens is nothing new. What is new is that ice damage, once a cyclical problem that struck northern courses every five to ten years, is becoming an annual event in some areas.

By spring, turf that has been covered by ice for lengthy periods of time exhibits what USGA Agronomist Jim Skorulski calls the "smell of death." The odor is a combination of a buildup of toxic gasses, such as ethylene and cyanide, underneath the ice layer;

crown hydration; and a lack of oxygen.

Collecting reliable research data about turf damage caused by ice cover or ice encasement (where ice saturates the soil) and how to treat it has been spotty in the past. That is because ice damage is influenced by numerous variables, including temperature, moisture, and myriad in-season maintenance procedures that can compromise turf hardiness.

To help superintendents increase their



Greens display damage typical of crown hydration.



Shaded greens remain highly susceptible to winter damage.

odds of surviving an icy winter, we turned to industry experts Jim Skorulski and Dr. Frank Rossi, associate professor of horticulture, Cornell, for their prescriptions for success. Each offers a unique perspective—Jim's culled from his extensive work in the field and Frank's from his expertise as a researcher. Both Frank and Jim have been witness to a variety of maintenance do's and don'ts that shed light on not only the causes of ice damage, but also what you can do to increase the likelihood that your grass will emerge healthier come spring.

The Truth About Ice

Frank Rossi Not all ice affects turf in the same manner. How ice affects grass depends on how it was formed. An icy cover over grass plants formed when slushy snow melts and slowly refreezes can temporarily insulate the plant from the cold. However, freezing rain can saturate the soil, encasing the turf with no insulation against the cold.

Studies also show that different varieties of turfgrass respond to ice in different ways. Creeping bentgrass and Kentucky bluegrass are better able to withstand ice encasement than are perennial ryegrass, tall fescue, and annual bluegrass. Simply put, superintendents on courses with more susceptible varieties of grass have more to worry about during the winter.

Jim Skorulski There are certain weather events that you just know spell trouble for annual bluegrass. A warm weather period in December, the January thaw, and the classic Nor'easter often create a mixed bag of weather that leads to problems. The transition period from late winter to spring is probably the most dangerous period for the turf.

I still believe that more turf is lost not from duration of ice cover as much as from a quick exposure to cold temperatures. I would argue to say that most of the injury I observe in the Northeast occurs as the ice

forms on the surface. That is not to say that grass lying under heavy covers of ice and snow will not suffer from anoxia or suffocation. It does—especially farther to the north where snow and ice cover can last well over 100 days. It is just that too much emphasis can be placed on duration of ice cover and that can lead to some questionable management decisions regarding the removal of snow and ice. Tactics like breaking up ice through aeration or the use of heavy equipment have sometimes proved more harmful than good, especially when the ice was not as thick as the superintendent had thought or the green surface was not frozen underneath the ice cover.

Fending off Winterkill

Whether you've had grass die from direct low-temperature kill (usually after a warming period in the late winter/early spring when hardiness is reduced), winter diseases, or suffocation under ice, there are short- and long-term management options that can help you guard against a repeat performance. Here are the top four:

1 Drainage

Frank Rossi The first and most important solution to winterkill is proper surface drainage. Simply, if the water moves freely from the surface and does not settle in a low area, more grass will survive. Comparatively, when water settles in the low areas and becomes ice, no management tack (including grass type) will help it survive without immediate removal of the ice.

The long-term solution to surface drainage problems is to regrade the putting surface to insure proper surface drainage. A short-term solution could include stripping the turf from the low area, setting it aside, and trenching to a low point off the green. The trench would stay open for the winter and then be refilled and regressed again in the spring. Deep-tine coring will not solve problems with poor surface drainage.

Jim Skorulski Deep-tine aeration with the Verti-Drain machine may not *solve* poor surface drainage, but the open fractures do provide some added pore space and an opportunity for water to move through the surface during periods of rain or thaw in winter. In my opinion, it is a worthwhile practice for soil-based greens in late fall.

I have also seen some positive results with the use of dry wells in lower pockets on greens. Using cup-cutters or augers, the dry wells are installed in late fall to as deep a depth possible (preferably to an underlying drain line) to move water off the surface. The dry wells are marked with wire or nails in spring and reused each winter. It is not ideal but a practical means to deal with low pockets that would otherwise be too disruptive or costly to correct.

Another area to watch closely is green perimeters where collar dams or "shoulders" can form and restrict the flow of water off the surface. The dams are a result of topdressing being dragged into the collar areas. These can be easily fixed without having to disrupt the green's surface. As Frank said, any steps that can be taken to insure the flow of water off the surfaces will go a long way toward reducing the severity of winter injury.

2 Turf Covers

Frank Rossi The most consistent management practice for survival under ice is protective covers. Studies have shown that covers that simulate the air insulation produced by snow significantly enhance survival. These covers include a system where a permeable cover is laid on the turf surface, straw is piled or stakes are used to create an air layer, and then an impermeable cover is pulled tightly over the air layer. There are other systems where impermeable covers with air bubbles are used to directly cover the green.

Jim Skorulski I agree that the use of cover systems probably offers the best protection

Expediting healing by using a temporary green (background) and plugging out damaged areas on putting surface.

for annual bluegrass putting greens on northern golf courses. Impermeable covers are placed over greens with poor surface drainage in hope of preventing water from accumulating around the grass plants. While it's common to use an insulating layer beneath impermeable covers to prevent wide temperature fluctuations in northern parts of the region, there are a number of golf courses in central New England that have had success using impermeable covers with little or no insulation.

We have found that white-colored covers are beneficial because they reflect the sun and help keep the canopy temperatures cooler when the covers are exposed.

Be aware, however, that covered greens are not immune to winter damage! Managing the installation and removal of cover systems requires a significant investment in time and labor and close monitoring of turf conditions throughout the winter. I generally recommend more extensive covering systems only on golf courses where the potential for winter injury is high, and that is on golf courses usually located farther to the north.

3 Sunlight

Frank Rossi Research shows that direct low-temperature kill can be reduced through proper management. Assuming there is good surface drainage, the limiting factor for winter hardiness could be late-season light levels due to shade.

Light fuels photosynthesis that generates the energy the plant needs for growth. Temperature is the "throttle" that governs at what level energy is produced. Simply, when a turf plant produces more energy than it needs for growth, the "excess" energy is stored and can enhance winter hardiness. In contrast, when the plant uses more energy than it produces, there is a net depletion of energy and the plant is weakened.

As the sun angle sharpens and direct light levels are reduced, the turf plants no longer have the light (fuel) to produce energy. During these times, I feel it is critical to reduce your management intensity: Cut back on mowing frequency, preferably



mowing only two to three times per week; reduce nitrogen fertility to avoid stimulating top growth that will further deplete energy storage; maintain a dry, but not drought-stressed, surface; and avoid severe cultivation and topdressing practices that cause the plant to expend energy to survive.

Jim Skorulski I absolutely agree with the importance of sunlight in the winter survival of turfgrass. Grass that is shaded in fall will not gain the same level of cold-temperature hardiness as turf growing in full sun. Shaded turf plants are also likely to be more hydrated entering dormancy.

In looking back through my 20-plus years of TAS visits, winter-damaged greens more often than not are shaded greens. This includes turf growing in areas of dense afternoon shade. Often, the damage will match the shade patterns.

The solution is obvious: Remove trees that are shading the turf! The added sun will keep more cold-tolerant bentgrass competitive with annual bluegrass and will improve the winter survival of all the grasses.

4 Disease Management

Frank Rossi Problematic winter diseases caused by *Fusarium* spp. (*Microdochium* spp.) and possibly *Typhula* spp. can be reduced through proper management. Our research at Cornell University indicates that high potassium rates during the season (greater than 1 lb. K/1000 sq. ft. per year if using up to 4 lbs. of N) increase winter disease, especially gray snow mold.

In addition, avoid high-rate, late-season

nitrogen applications that stimulate top growth. The more lush the turf is, the more susceptible it will be to infection. Of course well-timed fungicide applications will reduce the incidence and severity of winter disease.

Recovering From Winterkill

While there's no surefire prescription for preventing winterkill, there are some tried-and-true steps you can take to speed your greens' recovery, should they succumb to winter damage.

Frank Rossi In the event of severe winterkill, the success of your spring recovery is dependent on your attention to detail. First and foremost is understanding that you have to sacrifice playing quality for seedling or sod establishment. If you do not allow the area to be nursed back to health, you will be selecting for more annual types of annual bluegrass or reduce the vigor of any creeping bentgrass plants from seed or sod.

Research from Wisconsin demonstrated the effectiveness of hollow-tine cultivation with .5" to .75" tines on 2-inch spacing in the spring. It's been shown to increase soil temperature by enhancing soil drying. In addition, the aerated soil creates an ideal seedbed for the already-present annual bluegrass seed that the coring brings to the surface. In severe, low areas where the surface is blackened by lack of oxygen, it's best to core and leave the surface uncovered for several days to allow for gas exchange and enhanced drying, reducing the potential for algae growth.



Sodding in progress.

Once the coring is completed, it's a good idea to cover the green and allow the temperature to increase. If you have dark sand or can have your topdressing sand blackened, this will further enhance soil warming. Once the soil warms to 50 to 59 degrees, all of the cool-season turfgrasses will germinate and grow.

Many have opted for regrassing with sod. It will provide a short-term solution to expediting spring play, but it also comes with its own set of challenges. As anyone who's sodded knows, it's generally difficult to mesh the appearance and performance of your existing turf, and it will likely struggle through the stressful summer months while it adapts to your management.

Jim Skorulski Greens that are severely damaged need to be closed to play if they are expected to recover. Foot traffic is extremely damaging to young seedling plants and will

reduce the rate and success of recovery.

I see good results from combining several seeding methods, including shallow dimple seeding, traditional aeration, and slice-seeding. A combination of both dimple seeding and slice-seeding is preferred. Start the process early, and be prepared for setbacks along the way. As Frank mentions, it's good practice to use covers, black sand, and other darkening agents to warm soil temperatures and promote earlier seed germination. Keep covers handy to protect seedling plants from spring freezes and cold, desiccating winds.

Do not expect rapid fertilizer responses with the cooler soil temperatures. Use ammonium nitrate, potassium nitrate, and ammonium sulfate as soluble fertilizers, along with a starter fertilizer (with seeding) in cooler temperatures. Equip mowers with smooth rollers, and keep the height of cut above .150 during the early establishment period.

Sod is another recovery option for winter-damaged greens. A nursery sod is ideal to plug out areas that have been slow to recover from seeding. Golf courses that deal with frequent winter damage will develop larger bentgrass nurseries grown on the same sand that was used to topdress their greens. Commercial bentgrass sod can also be used, but there will likely be layering concerns that can affect establishment and long-term performance. The bentgrass sod will also remain very conspicuous on an annual bluegrass green, so usually it is the last resort unless the entire surface is going to be regrassed. Some golf courses will use sod from a chipping green to repair damaged greens and then purchase a commercial sod to replace that turf.

The Harsh Reality

In the end, there are political realities. Your golfers will want to see you doing something, even if it's a short-term fix. Some could argue that allowing spring play is critical and not worth waiting for the surfaces to recover.

The reality: No matter how you attempt recovery, these areas often struggle the entire season. Clearly communicating what golfers can expect through the season will assure them that you are fully aware of the agronomic challenges and capable of restoring your greens to good health.



Covering seeded areas to raise soil temps and speed recovery.

Area Supers Share Their Tactics for Ensuring Their Greens' Survival Through Winter

by Jim Pavonetti, CGCS

Given that more than just a few Met members were faced this spring with bringing winter-damaged greens back to life, the *Tee to Green* Editorial staff felt it would be helpful to survey fellow superintendents about the measures they typically take to protect their greens from the ill effects of icy temperatures—both before and throughout the winter.

After querying six supers (names listed at end of article), what most of us already knew became all the more evident: Sometimes, despite our best efforts, greens succumb to a harsh winter's weather.

Here, you'll find a summary of the superintendents' responses—mine included—to our line of questioning. What they have to say may shed new light on how to best protect your greens through winter. At the very least, it will help confirm that what you're already doing isn't too far afield.

First Things First: Improving Environmental Conditions

Shade Protection

All who responded to our survey said that they've taken measures to remove trees that were affecting green conditions due to shade. For some, it was obvious which trees were a problem. Other clubs, such as The Stanwich Club and Fairview Country Club, turned to firms like ArborCom, which use computer modeling to identify any and all trees that were affecting—or could potentially affect—the health and welfare of their greens.

Bob Nielsen of Bedford Golf & Tennis Club echoes the benefits of tree removal, particularly in areas where it improved morning sun and facilitated afternoon sun melting the snow on his greens. He was surprised to find, however, that even his greens with only an increase in morning sun have become more prone to wilt.

Managing Drainage Issues

Joe Alonzi at Westchester Country Club, Mark Fuller at Connecticut Golf Club, and Scott Niven at The Stanwich Club have installed subsurface drainage (XGD) in all

or some of their greens, while others have relied on aeration techniques, such as Verti-Draining or Drill-and-Fill, to enhance water infiltration.

Those who installed XGD drainage couldn't emphasize enough the long-term benefits. All agreed the "wounds" from installing internal drainage on their greens were challenging to maintain for a year or two. But despite the hand watering, precise fertilization, topdressing, and rolling required during the healing process, everyone we talked to felt the outcome made it all worthwhile.

At Fairview, I've addressed pocketed areas on greens where water collects by cutting channels with a Miltons sod-cutter to allow water to run off green surfaces. We preserve the sod by placing it in a nearby bunker and covering it with bunker sand. In the spring, we simply dig the sod up and put it back in place when the ground thaws. This has worked well on areas that tend to puddle and then refreeze during the end of winter or early spring.

Preparations Before the Storm

Cultural Practices to Prepare for Winter

All respondents seem to agree that it's best to raise heights of cut and stop mowing at some point in November to allow the greatest amount of leaf tissue possible to help protect the plants' crowns.

One technique that I picked up from some of the veteran superintendents in the Saratoga/Adirondack region where I had worked, is to Verti-Drain the greens and leave the holes open through the winter. These holes usually stay open even if an ice layer develops, and during freeze/thaw cycles, they allow any surface water to drain away from the crowns. This worked well for me up North, so I've continued this program at Fairview with good success.

To Cover or Not to Cover?

In our area, it seems that impermeable covers may be overkill, but some superintendents did report using semi-permeable covers with success on their chronically challenged greens. David Dudones at North Jersey Country Club plans, in the future, to pro-

tect some of his more problematic greens with covers. His approach will include placing a thin layer of straw between the cover and the green to help with airflow.

Most of the superintendents we surveyed prefer to apply a heavy application of topdressing to the greens, instead of covers, just as winter sets in.

Keeping Greens Alive and Well Through Winter

Snow Removal Philosophies

All of those who responded said they remove snow only if there is a layer of ice underneath for a substantial period of time. Everything from skid-steers, front-end loaders, snow blowers, Ventrac's (Steiners), and hand shoveling were used, depending on the location and the thickness of the ice layer below.

Ice Removal: When and How?

All of the superintendents we talked to felt it wasn't necessary to remove ice until it has been on their greens for 50 to 60 days or if it's still there around March 1.

Everyone who entered into breaking up and removing ice seemed to start the process by applying a dark material to make the ice porous, such as black sand, Sustain, Milorganite, or sunflower seeds. Once the ice becomes porous enough, they remove it by hand.

If They Had to Do It Over Again...

After substantial research and many conversations with fellow superintendents affected by winter damage, North Jersey's David Dudones said it became all the more clear that no one course of action is guaranteed to prevent winter damage. People who covered their greens had damage; people who aerified had damage; people who removed snow had damage, particularly those with *Poa*/bent greens.

If David had to do it over again: "I would not bother trying to regrass the problem areas on my greens from seed. This past year, we waited to sod, hoping the seed would germinate in a reasonable amount of time.

But because of the cool, wet spring, recovery was slow even with covers. You just can't count on spring weather to speed up the recovery process. Once we sodded with the thick sod from our nursery, the greens were playable a week later, and the members were thrilled."

If Bob Nielsen had to do it over again: "I'd remove more of the snow from the higher green surrounds to prevent excessive runoff from entering the greens. I'd also be sure to keep damaged greens closed until they're fully recovered. Trying to grow in damaged areas while the greens are open for play is almost impossible."

The Real Problem

Let's face it. The reason that crown hydration is an issue is that most of us are growing *Poa annua*. Converting to bentgrass would completely change the way most of us prepare for and worry about winter since bentgrass is so much less susceptible to winter injury.

In the May/June 2011 issue of *Tee to Green*, Scott Niven put together a comprehensive piece on what it takes to successfully convert to bentgrass greens. Not an easy—or low-cost—proposition, which is why a good number of us, I fear, will be stuck growing *Poa* for a long time to come.

The good news is that there are some practical steps and precautions you can take (see also the main feature, page 3) to guard against winter damage, no matter what you're growing on your greens. We hope these articles provide some helpful tips—or at the very least, some solace knowing you're not alone in the battle to protect your greens.

Thank You to Our Survey Respondents

We would like to thank the following superintendents for taking the time to respond to our survey:

- Joe Alonzi, CGCS, of Westchester Country Club
- David Dudones of North Jersey Country Club
- Mark Fuller, CGCS, of Connecticut Golf Club
- Bob Nielsen, CGCS, Bedford Golf & Tennis Club
- Scott Niven, CGCS of The Stanwich Club
- Jim Pavonetti, CGCS, of Fairview Country Club

Jim Pavonetti, chairman of the Tee to Green Editorial Committee, is superintendent at Fairview Country Club in Greenwich, CT.

Upcoming Events

Year-End—and Year-Beginning—Events

Annual Meeting

Wednesday, November 9
Rockrimmon Country Club
Stamford, CT
Host: Tony Girardi, CGCS

MetGCSA/CAGCS Education Meeting

Wednesday, November 30
The Patterson Club
Fairfield, CT

MetGCSA Christmas Party

Friday, December 9
Sunningdale Country Club
Scarsdale, NY
Host: Sean Cain, CGCS

Industry Events

36th Annual New Jersey Green Expo Turf and Landscape Conference

Tuesday–Thursday, December 6–8
Trump Taj Mahal Resort & Casino
Atlantic City, NJ

MetGCSA Winter Seminar

Wednesday, January 18, 2011
Westchester Country Club, Rye, NY

Southeast Regional Conference

Tuesday–Wednesday, January 24–25, 2012
Ramada Conference Center
Fishkill, NY

Member News

Members on the Move

- **Ryan Batz**, previously with John Deere Golf, is now working with Grass Roots, Inc. in Randolph, NJ.
- **Anthony Hooks** is the new superintendent at Richmond County Country Club in Staten Island, NY. Previous position: Superintendent at the Pelham/Split Rock Golf Club in Bronx, NY.
- **David Porter** is a new assistant superintendent at Old Westbury Golf & Country Club in Old Westbury, NY. Previous position: Assistant superintendent at The Seawane Club in Hewlett Harbor, NY.

Births

Congratulations to:

- **Brett Chapin**, superintendent of Redding Country Club in Redding, CT, and his wife Grace-Marie, on the birth of their son, Nathaniel Richard Chapin, on September 3.
- **Dave Moffett**, assistant superintendent at Ardsley Country Club in Ardsley-on-Hudson, NY, and his wife Valentina, on the birth of their son, Jackson Renwick, on May 12.

Well Wishes

Wishing **Ernie Steinhof** of Metro Turf Specialists a speedy recovery after his second hip replacement surgery on September 6.



Annual Assistants Tournament

by Doug Vanderlee

The Annual Assistants Tournament was held this year on October 6 at Redding Country Club in Redding, CT. We couldn't have picked a better day—or venue—for our annual event. Many thanks to Assistant Superintendent Steve Kubicki and Golf Course Superintendent Brett Chapin. They had the greens rolling perfectly and the entire course in top condition, which made playing this fine Rees Jones course all the more pleasurable.

Scott Curry of Lake Success not only ran away with the individual title, but also helped his teammate, Scarsdale Assistant Scott Olson, to capture the team title. Congratulations to the winners, and many thanks to the entire staff at Redding for putting on such a wonderful event.

I would also like to thank the AF members who donated their time and resources to making our event possible: Our title sponsor Westchester Turf Supply, and also Metro Turf Specialists, Steven Willand, Morris Golf, Turf Products, LaCorte Equipment, Dryject N.E. / Turf Pounders, Tanto Irrigation, Harrell's, Plant Food Company, The Care of Trees, and Growth Products.

If there is an assistant out there who would like to host next year's tournament, please contact me or any board member. Hope to see you all next year for this fun opportunity to unwind with fellow assistants.

Gross Team Winners

- 79 Scott Curry, *Lake Success GC/Scott Olson, Scarsdale GC*
- 83 Doug Vanderlee/Eric Yount, *Westchester CC*

Net Team Winners

- 61 Marc DuBour, *CC of New Canaan/A.J. Lewis, Fenway GC*
- 69 Justin Adams/Mike Aube, *Sunningdale CC*

Individual Gross Winner

- 82 Scott Curry, *Lake Success GC*

Individual Net Winner

- 69 Steve Toro, *Pleasantville CC*

Doug Vanderlee, a Class C rep on the MetGCSA board, is an assistant superintendent at Westchester Country Club.

Guess Who's Made It to the Finals in the Mahoney Two-Ball Championship?

by Larry Pakkala, CGCS

Neither rain . . . nor Hurricane Irene could prevent our teams from completing their Two-Ball rounds. Progressing to the finals are the opposing First Flight teams of Blake Halderman/Glen Dube and Matt Ceplo/Jim Swiatlowski. In the Second Flight, Ken Benoit/Greg Gutter will take on the team of Chris Alonzi/Mike Cook for the championship trophy.

Leading up to the finals in the First Flight . . .

- The team of David Dudones and Grover Alexander was defeated by Matt Ceplo and Jim Swiatlowski at Alpine Country Club. The match was pretty close heading into the back nine. A birdie on the difficult 10th helped Ceplo and Swiatlowski take the lead, and they never looked back. The highlight of the day was joining host Superintendent Steve Finamore in the clubhouse for a little shoot talk—and camaraderie!

- Ceplo and Swiatlowski went on to defeat Sean Cain and Steve Rabideau in the Semi's at the challenging Quaker Ridge. The lead went back and forth for the first few holes. A par on the sixth hole gave Ceplo and Swiatlowski the lead that would never be relinquished. Host Super Tom Ashfield joined the teams at the turn and treated them to one of those world-famous Halfway House hotdogs (say that three times fast). Jim was afraid that the break would squash the teams' momentum, but the 10th was parred and then the 11th and 12th. Ceplo and Swiatlowski were able to keep the pressure on till it was finally decided on the 16th.

- The former champions, Blake Halderman and Glen Dube, played Tony Hooks and Jeff Wentworth at Century Country Club. It was a neck-and-neck match. On 17, with Halderman and Dube 1 up, Hooks made an awesome up-and-down 3 from the bunker to go even into 18. What a nail biter!! Then Halderman made the only par on 18, winning the match one up.

Leading up to the finals in the Second Flight . . .

- The team of Nick Lerner and Kevin Collins vowed revenge in a rematch of last year's championship match against Ken Benoit and Greg Gutter. Unfortunately, fate wouldn't have it. The team of Benoit and Gutter got off to a quick start, then after an hour rain delay, ham-and-egged it around the course, soundly defeating the gritty team of Lerner and Collins 4 and 3. Afterward, while enjoying a fine dinner sponsored by the match losers, Gutter was overheard gloating about the victory and, apparently, had even predicted a back-to-back championship was inevitable.

- Chris Alonzi and Mike Cook beat Greg Wojcik and Brett Chapin at Mount Kisco Country Club back in August on the 14th hole. Cook, apparently, started out on fire with birdies on the first two holes and then never looked back. Alonzi/Cook went on to take the next match by default. Mike Reeb and his partner, Jake Green, were tied to the course after Hurricane Irene threatened their maintenance schedule.

So stay tuned for the Finals. They look to be very challenging with former champs from both flights assuming the inside track for both matches. Good luck gentlemen!!

The Results in Full

Here's a full account of the Second- and Semi-Final-round results:

First Flight Winners

Elite 8: Round Two

- Sean Cain/Stephen Rabideau (Sunningdale CC/Wheatley Hills GC) defeated Bert Dickinson/Chip Lafferty (Willow Ridge CC/Rye GC) 4 & 3 at Willow Ridge

- Matt Ceplo/Jim Swiatlowski (Rockland CC/Montammy GC) defeated Grover Alexander/David Dudones (Hudson Hills GC/North Jersey CC) 2 & 1 at Alpine

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Annual Meeting Plans to Mix Business With Pleasure

When the Annual Meeting rolls around, that's a sure sign the season's truly coming to a close. But this year, the course at Rockrimmon Country Club will remain open for play to all who attend one of the association's most informative meetings of the year.

At the MetGCSA Annual Meeting on November 9, members will not only discuss association business, they'll also have the opportunity to join meeting host and Past President Tony Girardi on the links for a friendly nine-hole event. "We are excited to host this year's Annual Business Meeting. We encourage everyone to attend and enjoy a good round of golf following the meeting," says Tony, Rockrimmon's superintendent.

Career Building

A Narragansett, RI, native, Tony started in the business with a B.S. in turfgrass management from the University of Rhode Island. No stranger to the turf industry, Tony and his brother, Michael, had run a successful landscape and nursery business through their high school years. Once in college, however, Tony chose business over turf—before happening upon a summer job in the golf course business. "A friend in URI's turf school convinced me to work with him one summer on a golf course," remembers Tony. "We signed on with Tim O'Neill at Country Club of Darien, and I guess you could say, I caught the bug. It was an awesome experience."

Tony transferred into URI's turf school, interned another season with Tim, and then, after completing his degree in 1992, moved across town to Woodway Country Club. He spent the next three years, as Tony puts it, "working for and learning from one of the best," the club's then superintendent, Larry Pakkala.

In April 1995, Tony succeeded Gregg Stanley as superintendent of Rockrimmon. In his nearly 17-year tenure, Tony has led the charge on numerous improvement projects.

Adhering closely to a long-range master plan developed by golf course architect Roger Rulwich and The Golf Group, Tony has directed the rebuilding of three green complexes, the reconstruction or renovation of every tee complex, the installation of all new cart paths, the complete renovation of every bunker on the course, and the installation of a state-of-the-art RainBird irrigation system.

Clearly proud of all he's accomplished, Tony credits the club's membership for making it all possible. "The members here at Rockrimmon have a true passion for their course, and they put a premium on maintaining the highest quality conditions," says Tony, grateful for the opportunity to make a mark on the course.

Professional Involvement

Two years after signing on at Rockrimmon, Tony was tapped for the Met Board of Directors. Rising through the chairs over the past 15 years, Tony is entering his final year as the association's past president. "Being elected a board member many years ago and then becoming president of our association is one of the highlights of my career. It was extremely rewarding, and I am very proud of our association and its members."

In his lengthy tenure on the board, Tony has chaired numerous committees, including the Tournament, Government Relations, Club Relations, Website, Membership, and Scholarship & Research committees. Though he's enjoyed every committee assignment, he's most proud of his role in initiating—and developing—the Met's first-ever website. "The website is something we started from scratch," says Tony, noting just how satisfying it was to get the site up and running.

In addition to his commitments to the MetGCSA, Tony serves on the boards of the Water Wise Council of Connecticut and the Tri-State Turf Research Foundation.



Tony Girardi, CGCS

Still Time for Fun

Though you'd think Tony's schedule would leave little time for R&R, he manages to enjoy his life outside of work. Besides playing golf to a 14 handicap and spending time on the links with friends, Tony enjoys maintaining several saltwater reef aquariums—his true hobby away from the course.

The other highlight of his life is his family. Married to his wife, Christine (also a Rhode Island native), for 15 years, Tony has three children: Nicholas, 13; Matthew, 12; and Rebecca, 10. Together, they enjoy attending many school social and sporting events, vacationing in Rhode Island, or just hanging out at home over a board game or the billiard table.

Plan to join Tony November 9 for the Annual Meeting—a great way to keep in step with the future direction of our association.

Cain Welcomes Met Members to Ring in the Holiday Season at Sunningdale

by Chip Lafferty

This year on December 9, Christmas comes to Sunningdale Country Club in Scarsdale, NY. Playing host to his fourth Met function over the years, Superintendent Sean Cain is looking forward to ringing in the holidays with fellow Met members at the association's Annual Christmas Party.

Though Met members will miss the opportunity to see the course's many enhancements, they'll be treated to fine dining and dancing in the club's nicely appointed clubhouse.

Sunningdale's Evolution

Sean's been at the helm of Sunningdale's maintenance operation for the past 13 years and is continuing the program of improvements he began when he accepted the position in 1997. Sean's first order of business was to bring Sunningdale into the 21st century. Sean's predecessor, Dominick DiMarzo, made the transition very easy.

"When Dom handed over the keys to me, he left me with a great stand of turf and a brand-new irrigation system," says Sean. "We had all the resources in hand, and we ran with it, concentrating on attention to detail."

In 2006, Sean began working with Architect Mike DeVries to recapture the original 1917 Seth Raynor design.

"My green chairman at the time, Mike Moss, found newspaper articles on micro-film dating back to the club's beginning. Not only was he able to confirm that Raynor did route and build the course, he also discovered that two years later, in 1919, club members, dissatisfied with some of the tougher holes, made a change to the 'alps' design on number six. This was the beginning of the long chain of changes that took place over the next 80 years to Raynor's original design," Sean explains.

"Fortunately, Mike DeVries understands how the great architects from the early 1900s worked with the land and its topography. He was able, for instance, to recapture the sixth hole by reestablishing the strategy of the alps hole and adding some of his own

brilliance to the green and tee complex," adds Sean.

So far, the club has renovated six holes—numbers five, six, seven, eleven, twelve, and the fourteenth green complex—with more planned when the economy recovers.

"Listening to Michael Devries' plans for the course," says Sean, "it's easy to get excited about the kind of product we can provide the members looking forward into the future."

The Making of a Superintendent

Sean began his career in turfgrass management when he was a young lad working for Fred Montgomery, then superintendent of Mohawk Golf Club near Sean's home turf in Schenectady, NY.

Passionate about the work and the game of golf, Sean completed a B.S. in turfgrass management at the University of Rhode Island, where he also had the opportunity to play Division I baseball.

While pursuing his degree, Sean had the good fortune of interning with The Stanwich Club's Scott Niven. This not only reinforced Sean's passion for the game and golf course management, it also confirmed his desire to pursue work in the greater New York Metropolitan area.

After graduating from URI in the 1991, Sean accepted an assistant's position at The Apawamis Club in Rye, NY, under then superintendent Jeff Scott. Here, Sean learned the ins-and-outs of crew management and acquired an ever-important eye for detail. "Jeff was tough, but I learned a lot from him," says Sean explaining, "Jeff expected a lot and got a lot out of his guys. If there's one thing I learned from him, it was how to be tough but fair."

After four years at Apawamis, Sean knew it was time to move on. "You just know when it's time to get your own gig," says Sean. "I learned a tremendous amount from Fred, Scott, and Jeff. They gave me not only the training and experience, but also the confidence I needed to take the next step. I was ready when Sunningdale opened up," Sean says.



Sean Cain, CGCS

Beyond Sunningdale

Taking a break after four years of service on the MetGCSA board, Sean returned to the board last year, keeping more than busy with his duties as co-chair of the Tournament Committee and chair of the Membership Committee. "It was important to get back to service and hopefully help our chapter recapture some of the same camaraderie and enthusiasm for the association and its mission that so many have enjoyed over the years," says Sean.

When Sean can break free from industry obligations, he enjoys playing golf at the Met area's many fine golf courses, and with a single-digit handicap, Sean's a stiff competitor in Met golf events.

But as soon as the leaves are cleared from the course, that's Sean's signal to give his clubs a rest and head north. An avid skier, he spends most weekends in the off-season at his "fortress of solitude," a home he owns near the slopes in Stowe, VT.

"I love it up in Stowe," Sean says. "I've had the house a while now, and it gives me something to look forward to when the heat of summer kicks in. I just think about the mountains and skiing, and before you know it, another season is behind us."

And before you know it, December 9 will be here. So pull out your party duds and get ready to kick up your heels at Sunningdale and the association's premier social event of the season. And don't worry, Sean promises to stick around that weekend!

Chip Lafferty, a member of the Tee to Green Editorial Committee, is superintendent at Rye Golf Club in Rye, NY.

- Tony Hooks/Jeff Wentworth (Pelham/Split Rock GC/Pelham CC) defeated Guy Gurney/Ernie Steinhofner (Orange CC/Metro Turf Specialists) 6 & 4 at Hudson Hills

- Glen Dube/Blake Halderman (Centennial GC/Brae Burn CC) defeated Dave Lippman/Matt Topazio (Westchester Turf Supply/New York CC) 1 up at Bedford Golf & Tennis

Final Four: Semi-Final Round

- Matt Ceplo/Jim Swiatkowski (Rockland CC/Montammy GC) defeated Sean Cain/Stephen Rabideau (Sunningdale CC/Wheatley Hills GC) 3 & 2 at Quaker Ridge

- Glen Dube/Blake Halderman (Centennial GC/Brae Burn CC) defeated Tony Hooks/Jeff Wentworth (Pelham/Split Rock GC/Pelham CC) 1 up at Century

Second Flight Winners

Elite 8: Round Two

- Ken Benoit/Greg Gutter (Glen Arbor GC/Mount Kisco CC) defeated Eddie Binsse/Dan Cancelleri (Life A/Life AF) 6 & 5 at Round Hill

- Kevin Collins/Nick Lerner (Aquatrols, Inc./Bonnie Briar CC) defeated Paul Boyd/Matt Leverich (Greenwich CC/Playbooks for Golf) by default

- Mike Cook/Chris Alonzi (The Care of Trees/Elmwood CC) defeated Brett Chapin/Greg Wojick (Redding CC/Playbooks for Golf) 4 & 3 at Mount Kisco

- Jake Green/Mike Reeb (CC of New Canaan) defeated Kevin Seibel/Bob Wolverton (Century CC/Edgewood CC) with a coin toss

Final Four: Semi-Final Round

- Ken Benoit/Greg Gutter (Glen Arbor GC/Mount Kisco CC) defeated Kevin Collins/Nick Lerner (Aquatrols, Inc./Bonnie Briar CC) 5 & 4 at Century

- Mike Cook/Chris Alonzi (The Care of Trees/Elmwood CC) defeated Jake Green/Mike Reeb (CC of New Canaan) by forfeit

Larry Pakkala, a member of the Tee to Green Editorial Committee, is territory manager with Plant Food Company in Cranbury, NJ.

Book Review

Brassies, Mashies, & Bootleg Scotch

Growing Up on America's First Heroic Golf Course

Reviewed for Tee to Green by Mel Lucas Jr., Links Counsellor, S. Dartmouth, MA

In only 162 pages, author Bill Kilpatrick offers an up-close-and-personal look at golf before computerized irrigation systems, chemicals, and motorized maintenance equipment. The son of a greenkeeper who, for years, was at the National Golf Links of America in Long Island, Kilpatrick has tales to tell about his experiences living and working on the course that famed golf writer Herbert Warren Wind dubbed the "First Heroic Course."

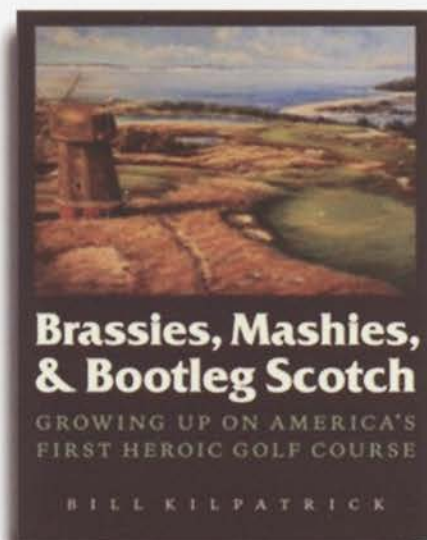
He relates the challenge of growing up on a course with almost no neighbors or children to play with; attempting to live up to the expectations of a father whose standards were exceedingly high; sanding and painting every one of the course's 123 croquet ball-sized tee markers; hauling fire-hose sized hoses to huge sprinklers on the fair-

He offers amusing stories about his stints as a caddy where 25 cents was the typical tip for hauling a golfer's bags 18 holes. The cheap ones, he reminisces, offered a stick of gum—or nothing at all.

ways; and standing by as a favorite mower-pulling horse was euthanized.

He offers amusing stories about his stints as a caddy where 25 cents was the typical tip for hauling a golfer's bags 18 holes. The cheap ones, he reminisces, offered a stick of gum—or nothing at all.

Kilpatrick's father was born in St. Andrews, Scotland, and emigrated to the U.S. as a young man, taking a job on the maintenance crew at Siwanoy and then on the construction crew at Century. He was so hardworking that he was singled out by architect A.W. Tillinghast when both were building the Sunningdale golf course in Scarsdale. He was greenkeeper there before moving on to Maidstone and then National



Golf Links. Post World War II, he restored Silver Spring in Ridgefield, which had been allowed to return to seed during the war. From there, he went on to become the greenkeeper at Garden City Golf Club, and finally, Glen Head Country Club.

When my dad, the senior Mel Lucas, went to Piping in 1960 and I became greenkeeper of Garden City in 1966, the senior Kilpatrick was spoken of often at LIGCSA meetings and among those who had worked for him at Garden City.

Those of us who followed in our father's footsteps know this life, and for the many who live on a course, this book aptly describes what your families are faced with.

Filled with many names of Met area golfers and golf courses, this book is a wonderful history of our past. Interestingly, more than 10 thousand books have been written on golf, but *Brassies, Mashies, & Bootleg Scotch* is only the fifth book written about a greenkeeper. It's a great one. . . . A must for any golf course superintendent's library, especially a MetGCSA library.

Bill Kilpatrick is a retired golf writer for the Fort Myers News-Press and has done numerous articles for *Popular Mechanics*, *Better Homes and Gardens*, *Good Housekeeping*, *Esquire*, *Fly Fishing*, and *True*. FYI: *Brassies, Mashies, & Bootleg Scotch* is available on Amazon.

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