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FALL 2017

Quarterly Publication of the Michigan Golf Course Superintendents Association



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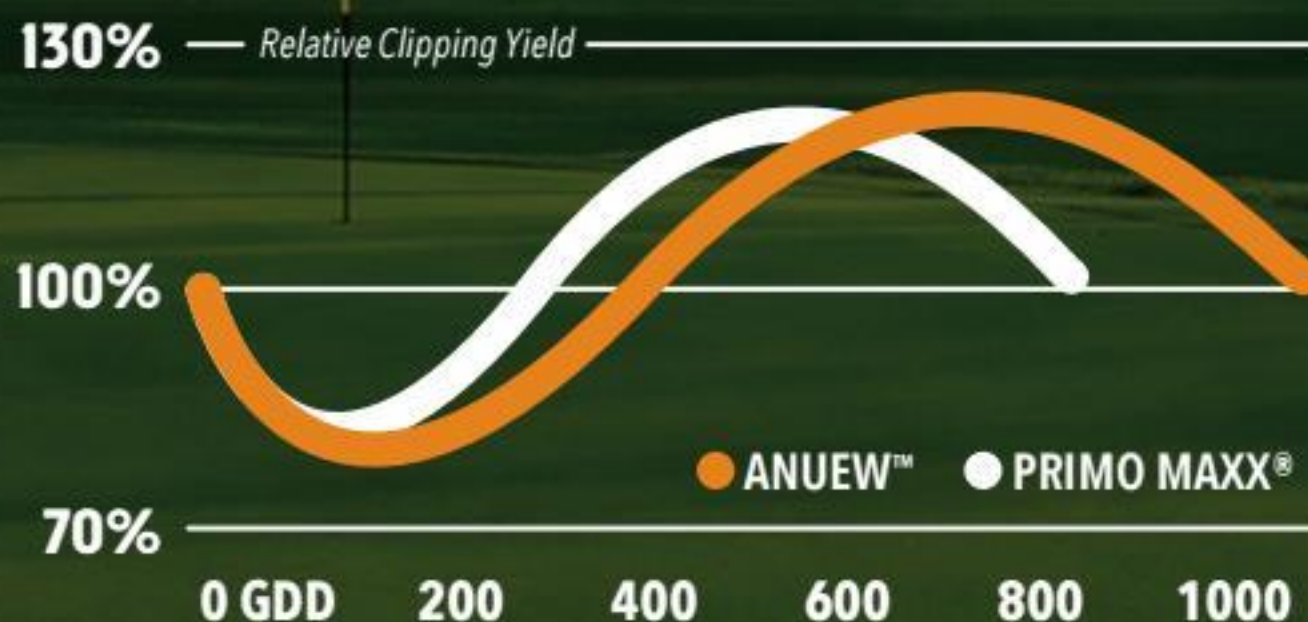
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# Dirt Guy

## Jon Scott

By Vartan Kupelian

**O**f all the many things to know about Jon Scott, a golf guy whose life and career is steeped in learning about and applying turf management and course design and construction, one stands out. He has been to Scotland three times but has never played a round of golf on the auld sod.

"When I tell people I've never played a round of golf in Scotland people look at me like I've got three heads," Scott said. "I just love walking the golf courses, wondering how did they do this? How did they do that? It's what I do. I'm a dirt guy."

Scott is president of Gull Lake View Golf Club and Resort in Augusta, Michigan. He has a landscape architecture and crop and soil sciences degrees from Michigan State University, the latter with a concentration in turf grass management. He also has a Masters Degree from Western Michigan and a Law Degree from the Cooley Law School, an educational sequence he describes as "epic."

Gull Lake View is a family-owned business and has been since Scott's grandparents, Darl and Letha, founded the resort. Jon and his father Charles are the biggest shareholders in the corporation. Charles' background is in turf management and construction with the Wadsworth crew. Charles is retired but it's not unusual to see him around the maintenance barns

at the resort, running a paver, or contemplating re-seeding greens and finding all manner of things to keep himself occupied but only when he wants to be.


There has been a common thread throughout the existence of Gull Lake View. For 55 years, it has been a top destination with an ever-growing collection of golf courses, and plenty of the intangibles that make the game so appealing.

But intangibles can sometimes be vague or underappreciated. Golfers always have fun when they visit the village of Augusta situated between Battle Creek and Kalamazoo, just north of Interstate 94.

It's true that golfers can't always articulate why they are attracted to certain courses. They just know they like this course or that more than another or prefer one resort to another. There is no such confusion when it comes to Gull Lake View where success is based on the fact that golfers can enjoy any of the six courses, always have fun there and they can't ever seem to get enough. That's the acid test. When a golfer comes off the 18th hole does he say, "Let's play nine more." Or is he ready to quit the game because he had a wretched time? At Gull Lake View, it's always, "Let's keep playing."

Another intangible at Gull Lake View





is the forward-thinking nature of the Scott clan. It goes way back to the origins in 1962 but has never been more prevalent than it is today.

Jon Scott knew there was something special about the piece of property he was looking at that sits on one of the highest points in Kalamazoo County and offers sweeping panoramic views. He knew the distinctive property deserved a golf course to match its aura. With his wide-ranging experience in the industry, Scott knew what was required.

“Let’s not make this into a golf course,” he thought to himself. “Let’s make a golf course out of this.”

It was among the lessons he learned in Scotland and Stoatin Brae was the product of that wisdom.

“If you look at a lot of courses in Scotland, for instance, they were based on what the ground was giving up. Take what the ground is giving up and put the routing on the ground. Use less resources to build a golf course. Don’t disturb the ground. Don’t move more dirt.”

He also knew how to maximize the goal.

A confluence of events led to the relationships that literally shaped the new course. It was about combining the right architect – in this case, more than one; an owner with a concept

that breaks new ground and expertise in matching grasses to the design before that ground is broken to make the sum greater than its parts.

Scott put together a collaborative effort that achieved the objective in a very big way. He brought together a team of award-winning course designers and builders from the Renaissance Golf Design, Tom Doak’s company, and secured a most respected turf consultant in Tom Mead to work with him from the outset of the project. Nothing was left to chance and nothing was an after-thought in the creating of Stoatin Brae, which in Scottish means “grand hill.”

The Scott family built four of the Gull Lake View courses and purchased Bedford Valley. Darl and Letha Scott opened Gull Lake View West in 1965. The East course within a decade. Stonehedge South was completed in 1988, followed by the purchase of Bedford Valley and Stonehedge North joined the rotation in 1995.

After a trip to Bandon Dunes, Scott went outside of the family for the first time. He sent an email to Traverse City based, golf course architect, Tom Doak, to check on a possible design on the 220-acre hilltop. Doak knew his docket was full, but he drove to the site to meet with Scott, already thinking ahead. After talking, Doak suggested an alternative plan. Scott could use the four senior designers on

his team at Renaissance Golf Design to design and shape the course. With Doak’s team already working nearby on another Michigan project, The Loop at Forest Dunes in Roscommon, the proposal had promise.

Think about it: Who better than to design the course than those who would ultimately be tasked with the construction?

Eric Iverson, Brian Schneider, Don Placek and Brian Slawnik – Doak’s senior designers – went to work. But not before there was a clear vision of the goal that produced a 6,742 yard, par 71.

“The whole scheme of the place was about building a course that we would like and would meet his needs, too, with regard to pace of play and the maintenance budget,” Slawnik said. “That’s how we wound up with bluegrass fairways. We thought having width was important to keeping the course fun to play, but it didn’t make sense to maintain that much bentgrass if they wanted to keep to their cost structure.

“We always try to make a new course look different than what we’ve built before, even for Tom. There’s a lot of time in the early going trying to feel out what the ground wants to be. It’s a big-scale property with long elegant lines, and not a lot of rumply jazz.”





The site on which the new layout would be built was uniquely different than the five existing courses at Gull Lake View courses. The other courses are Parkland, with tree-lined fairways. The Stoatin Brae project called for a new approach for a hilltop orchard site with no trees.

The notion of shifting gears was an appealing but not entirely without challenges and trap doors for Jon Scott, at least early in the process.

"I'm not sure he could quite visualize what was going to make it look good in the beginning, but he had faith in us to sort that out," Iverson said. "Absent trees on the interior, some people would have said it was just barren property, but we saw a lot more in it than that."

And although the Stoatin Brae site wasn't sandy or resembling the kind of courses Doak has deigned recently, his influence was always there.

"The fact it wasn't a sandy site meant it would be different than most of the courses we've built for Tom lately," Schnieder said. "That meant fewer bunkers, for starters. There were times as I was building things where I did try to think how Tom would edit what I'd done."

Added Placek, "We're used to collaborating with Tom and with each other building holes in the field. Typically, Tom has the final say. In this case, it was the guys building the

holes, but not without some comment from the rest of the group."

"I just know how much talent there is among the other three guys, and I was excited to see them get a free swing at it. We all knew it was a great chance to demonstrate that we're an excellent, affordable option for the right project."

Each of the four designers took an independent swing at a routing. With the property in a long, narrow north/south orientation it was likely there would be some similarities, and that proved to be the case. The key that unlocked the final routing was hole No. 12.

"Having confidence that we could make No. 12 work unlocked the rest of it," Iverson said. "We knew there would be some cool par-3 holes back in the corner of the property, but No. 12 allowed us one more two-shot hole that helped get a bit more out of it. We had to cut a ridge down about 12 feet at the landing area to make it work. That's one thing we've learned from Tom; sometimes making one big change lets everything else stay more natural."

The routing of Stoatin Brae, the balance and sequencing of the holes, focuses on the rhythm of the layout.

"I'm convinced people really don't understand routing," Scott said. "The difference between a good golf course and a not-good golf course

is good routing or not-good routing. There is rhythm to a golf course. It's the most obnoxious thing in the world to play a course with a poor routing. It spoils the experience for me.

"One thing Tom (Doak) is really good at and his guys understand is ability to keep that rhythm and use it to develop views and backgrounds and landmarks. It's the art of routing."

The financial benefits can't be understated, either.

"Fundamentally, it's one of the biggest issues because it effects the costs from the ground up – construction costs, irrigation costs, effects almost everything. It's a huge impact on the economics of the golf course. If you spend \$1.5 million moving dirt at some point you've got to pay that back. It's all money in your pocket at the end of the day."

There was another essential component to the equation for success of Stoatin Brae.

Tom Mead is widely-respected as an independent consultant on turf matters. He's a Michigan man, based in Traverse City, and his company, Sustainable Golf Solutions, specializes in golf course maintenance, construction and environmental issues. He was instrumental in the grassing of much-honored courses like Sand Hills and Whistling Straits. Mead's business model is based on sustainable designs, standards and







*Thank you to Dave Richards, Resort and Golf Marketing*





practices, with short- and long-term goals. His creative approaches offer financial solutions to golf operations, whether it's a new-build or a renovation.

Scott spent nearly three months trying to figure out what he was going to do for grass. During that process, he sought input from industry sources about best options. Mead's name came up in discussions Scott had with Dave Richards, a longtime industry voice on marketing, is just as likely to be found on a construction site discussing budgets. Richards knew it would be a good fit because Mead had a relationship with Doak and his designers, going all the way back to High Pointe, where Mead was construction superintendent. Scott followed up with the call to Mead the next day.

"I knew fescue couldn't handle the cart traffic," Scott said. "I wanted the course to play faster than bentgrass plays. I was at a loss to figure out what to do. Tom came in and solved that piece of the puzzle. He did a fantastic job."

Mead admits he was surprised, pleasantly, to be involved with Stoatin Brae. Early-on during his career, Mead was familiar with the Scott family and what it was accomplishing with the Gulf Lake View courses. To be asked by Scott to contribute on such a high-profile destination course was a compliment.

"Renaissance didn't want to do a standard project," Mead said. "Jon didn't want Renaissance to do a standard project, either. He wanted Renaissance to do its best work."

To achieve that goal, Scott stepped out of the box. He added Mead to his team. Getting in early, Mead said, was key. He was able to specify grasses for the entire project – fairways and rough – with keen insights on how Stoatin Brae would play, look and feel. It's all too common for those kinds of decisions to be made after an architect delivers the blueprint.

"I listen to goals and desires, collect input and spend a lot of time looking at a site," Mead said. "We developed (the plan) as a team."

But to get the plan formalized early required identifying the concept. Two ideas were discussed – plus/minus 20 acres or less of fairway or something in the 50/55-acre range.

"Renaissance wanted wide fairways to create a lot of strategy off the tee and that required 50 or 55 acres," Mead said.

The use of bentgrass is standard in southern Michigan courses. But that's cost-prohibitive for larger fairways in terms of overall inputs. That left two alternatives – fescues or Kentucky bluegrasses.

Stoatin Brae anticipated high rounds, about 20,000 annually and the

resulting plenty of cart usage. The wearability of fescue would not have functioned properly, Mead said, when all those rounds and carts were factored in. That left bluegrass, specifically three improved varieties of bluegrass. The fairways were planted with a three-way blend of improved, low mow Kentucky bluegrass cultivars.

"It was unprecedented but seems to be doing well," Mead said. "Nobody else is doing that today in Michigan. People have tried bluegrass in Michigan since I've been around and always failed. This seems to have good promise."

Scott said, "It looks almost like bent but plays almost like fescue. Tom figured that out. Without it the project isn't nearly the same. There's a lot of anxiety in hoping a plan works. We sort of put all these things together and they worked well."

The proof is in the dirt at Stoatin Brae.

"Jon Scott is a knowledgeable owner," Mead said. "He understands, he was born on a golf course and he was around the development of several golf courses. He understood value of getting everybody together at the beginning, getting consensus and being integrated from the beginning."

"That's a lot of talent there. The Renaissance guys are some of the top designers in the world today."





An owner who understood how all the elements have to come together rather than the designer handing over the design and calling somebody like me to grass it. It was fun."

Just like the golf course, which was Scott's desire from the beginning. Stoatin Brae is a challenge without sacrificing the enjoyment factor. Even before the finishing sequence of holes there is anticipation of "playing nine more."

For Paul Hallock, the superintendent, the early-on collaboration between the responsible parties paved the way for both the short-range and long-range success of Stoatin Brae.

Hallock said the extra sets of eyes paying attention to different phases of the project was an extraordinary piece of the puzzle.

"They're all good at different things," said Hallock, who arrived on the scene in June, 2016, after six years at a signature Tucson, Arizona, resort. "Renaissance Golf specializes in design and construction. Jon is familiar with that also but it may not exactly be his forte. Tom got to hunker down on what seed to use, not only the blend but what would germinate a little quicker.

"All have their specialties and that makes it a better product now and definitely in the future."

Hallock studied turf management at the University of Massachusetts/Amherst, the same school that Charles Scott attended. Hallock has worked in the golf industry, in some capacity, since high school. That's 28 years and he's seen just about everything. At Stoatin Brae, 80 percent of the project was complete

when he arrived but he's proud to call it his first full construction project.

"It was one of the hot buttons for my career that I wanted to tick off," Hallock said. "There's great satisfaction to see it now. Even though I came in near the end there was still tons to do and all of the detail stuff needed attention."

The early collaboration will "help a great deal" in that regard.

"All the things they did as a group just made things progress and work a little smoother," Hallock said. "The routing, seeding, choice of grass, construction, that stuff is all spot-on. I didn't have many headaches thinking about whether the tees are in the right spot. I could focus on the golf course presentation instead of dealing with other stuff that might have slipped through the cracks."

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# Golf Course Dragons

BY PAUL ALBANESE, ASGCA

**F**ollowing the Golden Age of Golf in the 1920's was the Depression and World War II, both of which had it's own affect on the form of golf.

First, the WPA (Works Progress Administration) programs from the New Deal of the 1930's involved quite a bit with golf. Robert Trent Jones Senior, the golf course architect with the most credited work to his name, cut his teeth on these type of government funded projects that employed millions of people during this era. And, the golf forms that evolved reflected the demographics of the time. The WPA brought golf to the public sphere. Prior to, golf was played and accessible only by the upper classes. Because the upper class had wealth, the forms created were not influenced by any dearth of money. That changed when the WPA programs introduced the general public to golf. Golf courses needed to be more cost effective to maintain, in order to keep the costs lower, as dictated by WPA economics. Therefore, to keep a golf course easily maintainable, the forms and shapes were created so turf could be cut quickly and easily. As form follows function, the simpler and straighter in dimension a golf feature, the more cost effective maintenance can be achieved. Hence golf courses from the era took on unadorned, even geometric appearance.

Following the Depression came World War II and the mechanized era of golf course creation. As the inventions and innovations that led the Allies to victory made their way into American life at home, so did the evolution of form on golf courses. Significant innovations experienced during this time and into the 1950s are the use of machinery for maintenance. Maintenance equipment that could be ridden upon versus walked caused the creation of curves and the shrinking of features. Golf features, such as greens or tee "boxes" that may have been originally designed with square shape, were being inadvertently changed due to the turning radius of machinery. While cutting a green or a tee with a riding mower, the turning radius makes it impossible to keep a square form. Therefore, over time, a square or rectangular tee or green, will trans-FORM into a circle due to the FUNCTIONal constraints of the machine being used to maintain the turf.

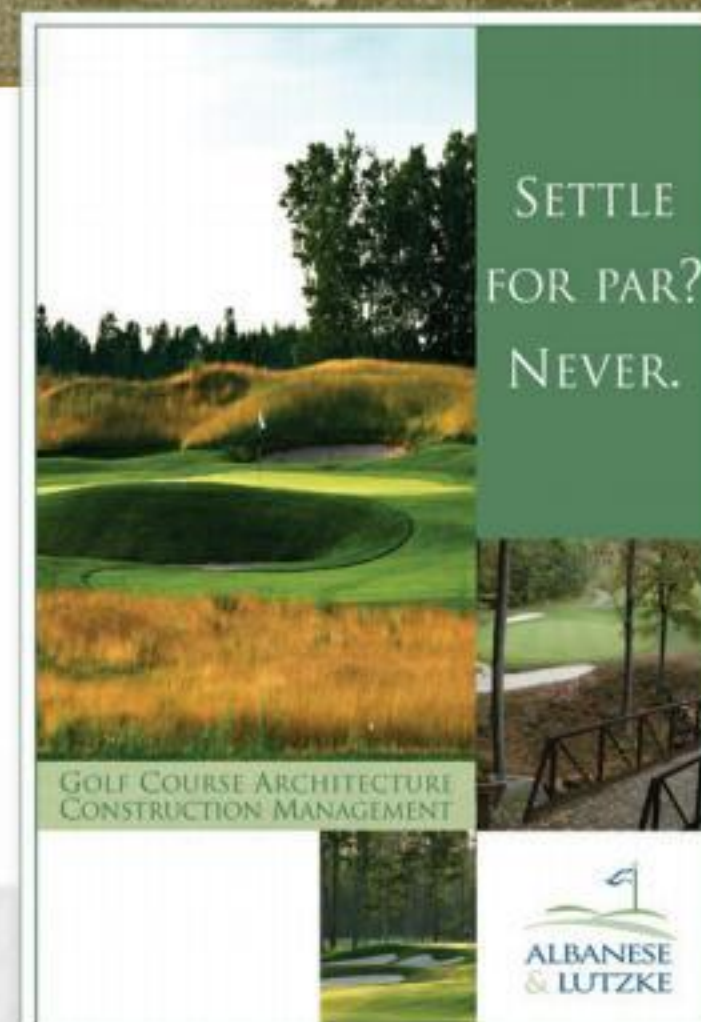
Another notable FORMal change that occurred due to post-WWII mechanization is the advent of gang mowing turf using tractors. These gang mowers made the cutting of turf more cost effective, especially for the newly developed, cost conscious courses from the WPA programs. To allow these gang mowers to easily traverse

the golf course, and especially near greens, the formal relationship between bunkers and greens changed. One can see on courses of this era, the distance between a green edge and bunker edge is wider than from the Golden Age, or from the modern era (when newer machines were developed). Gang mowers needed 20-25 feet sometimes to mow in-between the green and bunker, necessitating bunker locations farther away from greens, often to the detriment of the designer desired golf strategy. In other words, the functionality of the machine dictated the formal quality of the design.

Form continues to follow function. And, the function of this period of time was to ensure golf was cost effective and available to more people. The simple forms of golf form this era reflects this function.

Golf form continues to evolve based on every designers goals or vision as to what they believe is the proper function of the golf course. Whether that function is to "Wow" golfers on every hole, or to ensure golfers get around the course fast. The form will follow.

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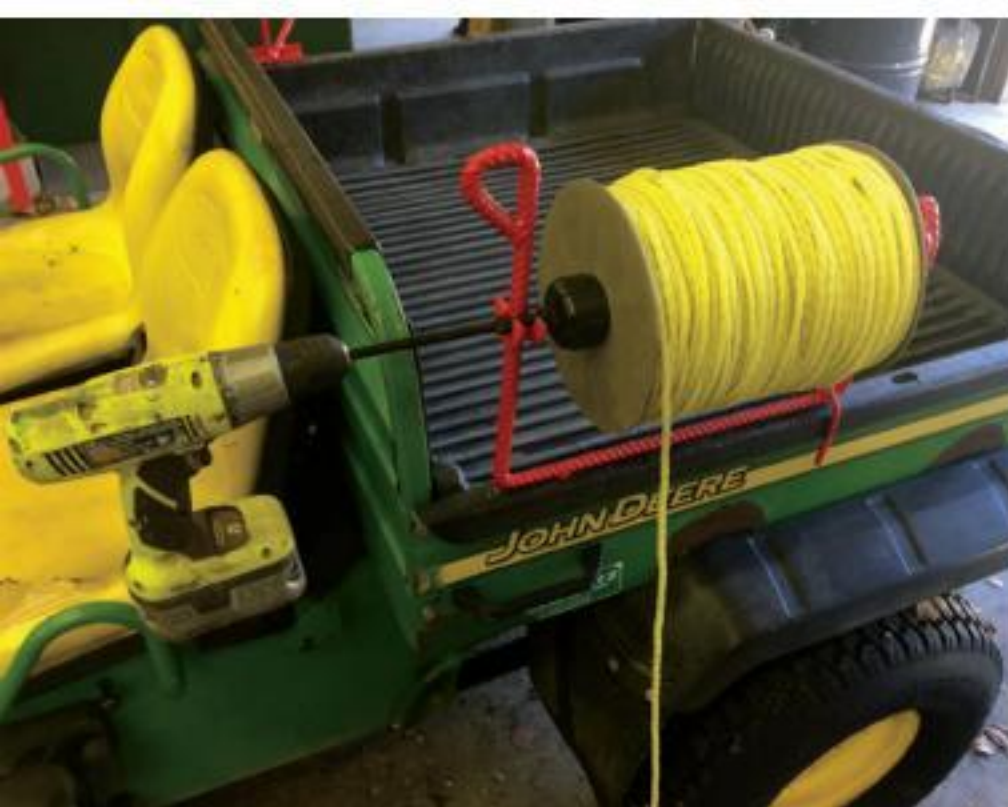
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# THE WRENCH

By: Sam Holysz & Friends

By Aaron Kirsch, Saginaw



**M**y name is Aaron Kirsch, I have been the Equipment Manager at Saginaw Country Club since March of 2013. I grew up working on motorcycles, cars, and tractors. I learned to fabricate at a young age by watching my Dad. When I was 10 I got a job at a neighbor's farm and put what I learned to use. Machinery breakdowns are detrimental to a farm and need to be corrected as soon as possible; by any means possible. Our goal to repair the equipment as quickly as possible required quick thinking and fabrications skills. To this day, I still get excited when I am given a fabrication project.

As we all know winter can be tough on a golf course; too much snow that melts to form ice sheets or too little snow that allows wind desiccation can cause turf damage. Unfortunately, Mother Nature isn't the only thing that can severely damage turf. Any course near residential housing knows that the damage that a few kids searching for some winter fun can do. I'm talking about sledding, skiing, sliding, or just walking on partially exposed green surfaces that can lead to winter kill. It seems that smooth angled surfaces are a magnet for kids looking to expel some winter energy, but can make your spring turf look like a Jackson Pollock painting. We ran into this exact problem one winter and decided to rope off all our greens the following year. Roping off the greens sounded like a pretty simple and easy project, but I learned quickly it wasn't. Three of us working at a

generous pace were not getting the job done as fast as we would have liked, so I needed to think of something to make unwinding and winding the spools of rope easier and more efficient. I had about an hour to come up with a solution so I grabbed some scrap steel and fired up the torch.

My first project was to make something that would allow us to use a utility vehicle to spool the rope around the 4' rebar stakes we put around the perimeter of the greens. Using an acetylene torch, I heated and bent a piece of rebar into a "Z" shape that was slightly larger than the spools of rope we were using. I then welded a washer to one side to be used as a stopper for the spool axle, the other side was bent up to act as a stopper for the other side. I bent and added another piece of rebar to act as a guide for the rope while it unspools. The entire contraption was mounted to our utility vehicle without drilling any holes or bolting anything in place. The shape of the mount wraps around the bottom of our Gator and holds it in place. This tool allowed us to tie the rope off on one of our stakes and then drive around the perimeter of the green putting the rope where we needed it quickly.

My second project was to figure out a way to wind the rope quickly back onto a spool for storage in the spring. I heated and bent a piece of rebar into a "U" shape just wider than a spool. I welded a washer on





This article will be in every issue of **Course Conditions** featuring a new idea and author. If you have a helpful tip and would provide a contribution please contact Sam Holysz, Equipment Technician at Gull Lake Country Club by E-mail: [sholysz@gmail.com](mailto:sholysz@gmail.com) or on Twitter: @GLCCTurfMec. Is your Equipment Technician an MiGCSA Member? They can be for only \$25 a year.

one end of the rebar to act as a guide for the spool axle; I used a half a washer on the other end so the spool axle could be removed when full. A piece of 3/8" threaded rod was used as the spool axle. A combination of wooden dowels and 1 1/2" PVC caps were drilled to "sandwich" and hold the spool tightly on the axle. While the spool sits in the cradle a cordless drill can be tightened onto the 3/8" threaded rod axle to wind the rope back onto the spool. The entire project took me a couple hours to do and has saved



us many hours of labor each year. We can now rope off the greens on the golf course in a few hours with 3 people. One person drives the stakes while the other two unspool the rope and hang it on 4' rebar stakes. In the spring two people remove the stakes while a person winds up the rope left in place around each green.



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Chris Ballosh, 41, is the golf course superintendent at Apple Mountain Golf Club in Freeland, and has been with the club as superintendent for three years. He is a Saginaw native and has coached high school football as an assistant varsity coach for 20 years, most of them at his alma mater Saginaw Swan Valley. He is a graduate of the Turfgrass Management Program at Michigan State University. He is married and he and his wife, Cindy, have a daughter Hayden, who is 7.

# Chris Ballosh

1

## HOW DID YOU BECOME INVOLVED IN THE GOLF BUSINESS?

During college (Delta College) I needed a summer job, and one of my mom's friends worked at Kimberly Oaks in St. Charles and told her they needed some help. I went out and talked to them. I had golfed since high school and loved it. I started working there on the crew, and I was working there when I learned about the turfgrass program at Michigan State.

2

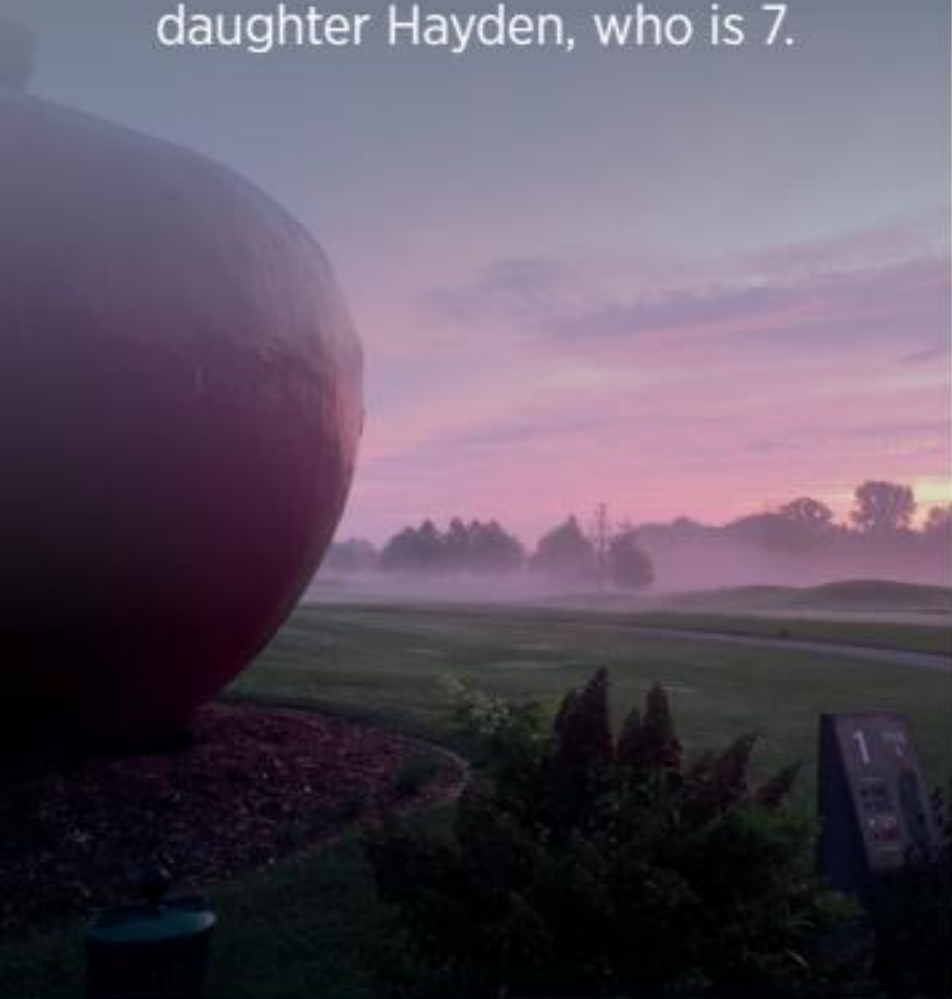
## WHEN DID YOU DECIDE YOU WANTED GOLF TO BE YOUR CAREER?

I was working at Kimberly Oaks and I loved going to work, being outdoors working, but hated going to class. It was frustrating to go to school when you were not sure what you wanted to do. Then I went to Michigan State, and being there it seemed easier to go to class because it was something I loved to do. I was learning and it fit.

3

## WHAT ARE SOME OF THE COURSES YOU HAVE WORKED AT?

I worked at Kimberly Oaks starting in 1996 for a few years, then got into the turfgrass program and my internship was at Spring Hill in Minneapolis, a new course, an exclusive club where you could walk only and you had to take a caddie. I came back to school, graduated in 2000 and my first assistant job was at Little Traverse Bay in Harbor Springs. Then I sort of took the more money route and went to work for the City of Livonia, which has three courses. I worked there for three years and was happy to go back home and be an assistant for two years at Apple Mountain. My first head superintendent job was at a small private club in Hemlock, Michigan, but it struggled to survive and then it was sold and finally shut down. About that time the job I have now at Apple Mountain opened up and I applied and got it.







**4 WHAT PART OF YOUR EDUCATION DO YOU USE THE MOST?** There are two things really. Pesticide and fertilizer applications because it seems like I'm always spraying something, and then irrigation was huge for me. There are always irrigation issues. That seems to be the bulk of what I use. Turfgrass is always changing and getting new stuff to try, but you still have to calibrate spreaders, that never changes, and you have to irrigate.

**5 HOW HAS YOUR JOB AT APPLE MOUNTAIN PROGRESSED?** I always try to build a good relationship with employees and I think I've done that. As far as the golf course goes, I've put my own stamp on it by the way I edge the bunkers and a few other things. I tend to keep the rough a little shorter so it plays a little easier, and for the same reason the fairways a little longer than in the past. I keep the greens true and smooth and fast, but not so rock hard that they can't hold the ball. I try to maintain a consistent

condition and I think I've done that.

**6 WHAT ARE YOUR EXPECTATIONS OF THE MICHIGAN GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENTS ASSOCIATION?** I expect them to provide more opportunities for education and connecting with others for more information. I like working with them. I feel like I can call all of the people on the board and ask questions. We have a good community of golf course superintendents. I can call the guy down the road and we can help each other out, borrow a piece of equipment, whatever. I hope the association helps us keep that kind of thing going.

**7 WHAT IS YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH THE MICHIGAN TURFGRASS FOUNDATION?** Not a lot. I don't have an assistant, so I don't have the time to get to a lot of events. I'm glad it is there for the funding and those things for the turfgrass program.

**8 DO YOU HAVE HOBBIES OR SPECIAL INTERESTS AWAY FROM THE GAME?** I have coached football as an assistant varsity coach for 19 years, 18 at Swan Valley and one when I was working up at Little Traverse Bay at Harbor Springs. I'm an offensive guy, coaching the offense. Right now I'm the running game coordinator and we've changed the offense some. Snowmobiling is my other passion. My downtime is in the winter, so it is snowmobiling in the winter. I love being outdoors I guess.

**9 WHAT IS THE HARDEST PART OF YOUR JOB?** These days it is trying to find able-bodied people to work and then teaching them things when they are not looking down at their phones. It's hard to develop them and teach them skills, or to show them how to work hard. There seems to be a lot of people who just think, well, somebody else will do it. I try to get them to put the phones and other stuff



## 5 THINGS PEOPLE MAY NOT KNOW ABOUT ME

1. I am a Pyro technician and I've shot the Saginaw Fireworks for the last 4 years.
2. I was diagnosed with Type 1 Diabetes as a freshman in high school.
3. On my first date with my wife I took her to order a new snowmobile. (She calls it the other women.)
4. My daughter and I like to go metal detecting, Hayden calls it treasure hunting.
5. I volunteer my time and take care of the Swan Valley Football field.





away. If they will put the phone down, I'll teach them to work but also help them become better people.

**10 WHAT IS THE EASIEST PART OF YOUR JOB?** When our owners always play on Wednesday night and they say golf course is great, it makes me happy to pass that along to my guys. My name is on it, but without them it's not possible. I enjoy letting my guys know the compliments we get. I had a superintendent's outing here and we received a couple of nice letters. I passed them along to the 18 guys who work with me, they make it happen.

**11 WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST ISSUES FACING GOLF?** I think trying to get new people to play and making it affordable for them. It's tough to get young people interested. We need new people to play the game so we have golf courses and jobs in the future.

**12 IS THERE RESEARCH YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE ACCOMPLISHED IN TURFGRASS MANAGEMENT?** Ways to use less water is a huge deal to me, and the way we use chemicals. I want to see the chemicals be less harmful to the environment. I would also like to see the American golfer not expect everything to be green. Golf was invented in pastures, and in Europe they play where things are brown and it is no big deal. Here, everyone wants green, hard, firm and fast and at times it makes the job impossible.

**13 WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN 10 YEARS?** I still hope to be here at Apple Mountain, have good conditions for golf, be in the area, still coaching football. I like where I'm at right now.

**14 HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE REMEMBERED 100 YEARS FROM NOW?** Just say I was fair, a good person, a good boss to work for, someone who made a difference in the community.

**15 WHO HAS INFLUENCED YOU THE MOST IN YOUR TURFGRASS CAREER?** Charlie Menafee, who retired from caring for the lawns at the state capitol now, is one. I worked for him at Little Traverse Bay and he taught me a lot. Also, Jason Farah, now at Crystal Mountain, was my boss here when I was an assistant. Both guys taught me turf practices, how to be fair, how to manage people. They were good for me.

**16 WHAT IS THE MOST VALUABLE THING YOU'VE LEARNED THAT YOU USE ALL THE TIME?** For me it is treating the people that work for you fairly. I try to teach my employees like I teach the kids I coach, to be better people. I'm always here. I never take days off and I want them to know they can come talk to me and that they are accountable, those kind of things.

**17 HOW DO YOU RATE THE IMPORTANCE OF A SUPERINTENDENT IN A GOLF OPERATION?** I'm not the one smiling at the front door, but without us there is no golf operation. I think the superintendent is at the top of the food chain. Without super and maintenance staff there is no golf operation.

**18 WHAT PERCENTAGE OF TIME DO YOU DEVOTE TO NON-AGRONOMIC GOLF COURSE MANAGEMENT?** These days with our facility, the barns and buildings we have, the people we have, probably 30 to 40 percent.

**19 WHAT IS YOUR OPINION OF THE ROLE OF AN ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT?** I would love to have an Assistant, to have somebody do that because there is plenty of work and hours. It's just not in the numbers right now for us, but hopefully someday.

**20 WHAT IS YOUR OPINION OF THE ROLE OF THE GOLF COURSE MECHANIC OR TECHNICIAN?** They are so valuable. I don't have to worry about blades and wheels and things working when we need them. They play a huge role. I haven't always had one at some of my other jobs. I was the one fixing it. Here I have a mechanic and it is huge. It would almost be impossible to do the job without him.





## 21 WHAT IS YOUR OPINION OF GOLFERS WALKING VERSUS RIDING IN A CART TO PLAY?

I wish they would all walk because carts are a privilege, and people abuse the cart privilege. I'm all over the cart users. I don't let them out when it's too wet. We go cart path only when we need to do it. Golf carts are bad for the turf.

## 22 WHAT IS YOUR BIGGEST PET PEEVE IN GOLF COURSE ETIQUETTE?

Not fixing ball marks, divots, and golfers just being lazy and taking carts where they are not supposed to be.

## 23 WHAT OPINION DO YOU HAVE OF GREEN SPEEDS IN TODAY'S GAME?

There is a fine line. At a private club scenario where golfers play the same place all the time, you can make them faster because they know the greens. Here or at a resort where you need to keep traffic moving, the key for us

is smooth and true and I don't want them too fast. I think we get carried away with green speeds. I'm fine with double digits, but 13 or more and you don't have much grass left.

## 24 DO YOU HAVE AN INTERESTING STORY YOU CAN SHARE FROM YOUR CAREER?

On my internship at Spring Hill in Minneapolis, I was cutting cups in front of the PGA Tour player Tim Herron, you know "Lumpy," and his sister was in the group, and she was a really good player at the University of Minnesota, and there was another really good golfer in the group. It was over 100 degrees, and the whole summer was like that, especially in that stretch of about two and a half weeks. Anyway, Lumpy is walking, and at 18 he is in the fairway and I'm on a cart over on the side watching after cutting the cup. He is standing there, sweating like crazy, smoking a cigarette and sees me over there. He nods at me like he wants to

come over. I drive over and he tells me I have a good set-up on the course. He tells me he is not sure what he is doing out in the heat. He said he is just hitting the ball and playing horrible. He said he didn't know why he was there because of the heat and that it was dumb to be out there. Then he just takes his club, no practice swing, never looks at the green even and just hits it. The ball lands two inches from the hole. He doesn't even react. He just said "I gotta get out of here." It was kind of a cool moment. I'll always remember that.

## 25 DO YOU HAVE A FAVORITE GOLFER AND WHY?

Freddie Couples is it. I would talk to him when I would go to the Buick Open every year. Freddie and Phil Mickelson would always talk to you. Good guys and watching Freddie swing so easy and hit the ball a mile as fascinating.





A huge student turnout in 2017

# 2017 7th Annual MiGCSA Student Networking Event

Student Perspective

SEAN MCGORISK, MSU TURFGRASS MANAGEMENT STUDENT  
MSU TURF CLUB PRESIDENT

**M**ichigan State turfgrass students and members of the Michigan turfgrass industry met at College Fields Golf Course on September 8th, 2017. The MiGCSA offers this event for students and members of the turf industry to connect, network, and enjoy a great day of golf. This was my second year participating in the event.

We had a great turnout this year, with 31 MSU turfgrass students participating in the event. We had 5 members from the turf grass industry that were scattered among the groups of students. I was lucky enough to work closely with Adam Ikamas, MiGCSA Executive Director, in organizing this event. I learned from Adam the

struggles of golf event planning but the feeling when everything came together and the reactions from the participants made it all pay off.

After the best ball round, all of us gathered at the club house for some hot dogs and hamburgers. We then did an informal Q&A with the turfgrass industry panel. This was my favorite part of the event, because the students asked the panel questions regarding the industry, the next steps in our careers, internships, and life advice.

In conclusion, this event was a huge success. I want to thank Adam Ikamas and Carey Mitchelson, GM of College Fields, for making this event possible. I also want to thank Greg Bishop,

the superintendent of College fields. Finally, I want to thank all of the participants, from the students to the all of the turfgrass professionals. They are the ones that made this event special and I was glad to be part of it.



The post golf industry panel Q&A

## 2018 GIS Winner

Kirby Keltner from Bird Creek Golf Club in Austin Michigan is heading to San Antonio to attend his very first Golf Industry Show.

When he found out about his win Kirby said "I'm so thankful for the opportunity to attend the GIS this year. I couldn't even begin to go without the help of the MiGCSA. I am excited to see the

new trends in the industry and brush up on some of the latest practices and innovations."

Proceeds from the MI Turf T shirts are being used to provide this opportunity along with the support of our 2017 Industry Partners, please remember to support those who support you.





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Our 2017 State Champion Host Craig McKinley

# The 2017 MiGCSA State Championship

**M**iGCSA Class A Member Craig McKinley had Bucks Run Golf Club set up for a Major Championship. The 10th Annual State Championship, the MiGCSA Major, was a great success. This event is not just for those competing for the trophy there is also a 2 of 4 net team game so everyone can get in the game. The course was perfect thanks to the great work by Craig and his staff. At the end of the day Dr. Kevin Frank shot 73 to win his record third State Championship.

## Here are the rest of the winners:

### Team best 2 of 4 net

**1st place:** Score of 120 - Joe Rebone, Bob Stipcak, Joey Stimac & Garrett Rebone

**2nd place:** Score of 129 - Kevin Frank, Chris Wilczynski, Carey Mitchelson & Dave Pawluk

**3rd place:** Score of 127 - Marc McCoy, Jeff Holmes, Ken Hunt & Kevin Thielke

### Individual:

2017 State Champion - Dr. Kevin Frank

2017 Low Net Champion - Bob Stipcak



2017 Low Net Champion Bob Stipcak



2017 State Champion Dr. Kevin Frank wins his record third State Championship





# COURSE Conditions

FALL 2017

Quarterly Publication of the Michigan Golf Course Superintendents Association



**FEATURE  
SUPERINTENDENT**

Chris Ballosh



**INSIDE THIS ISSUE:**

FEATURE: Dirt Guy Jon Scott

Industry Partner Profile: Nick Binder

Assistant Superintendent Profile: Zachary Redman

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# Nick Binder

1

## HOW DID YOU GET INVOLVED IN THE GOLF BUSINESS?

I was in pharmaceutical sales and decided I didn't want to be a part of that any longer, that I needed a different direction. There was company reorganization, downsizing in the whole industry really. I knew I didn't want to do it my whole life and I thought about what makes me happy, playing soccer, coaching soccer, playing golf. As a soccer guy and golfer I had an interest in turf from that perspective, and I was living in East Lansing and got into the turf program at Michigan State. My internship in grad school was in research. I guess I just switched gears, from the medical field to something more of my interest. I sort of combine my three degrees in this - business management, turf management and research - in many ways. I've found something I enjoy every day. I feel good when I hit the road every day. The customer I'm working with and talking with now is a golf course superintendent instead of an M.D. or D.O. I just really enjoy getting to know the

2

## WHO WAS YOUR GREATEST INFLUENCE IN YOUR PERSONAL LIFE?

I played soccer at MSU and my coach was Joe Baum, who just was named to the Hall of Fame at Michigan State. From him I learned a lot about soccer, but so much more. I learned how to treat other people from watching how he treated everyone around him.

3

## WHO WAS YOUR GREATEST INFLUENCE IN YOUR PROFESSIONAL LIFE?

It goes without saying from being in the program and doing research that I worked closely with Thom Nikolai, a professor at MSU (specialist, associate coordinator of the Golf Turfgrass Management program), for four years. He influenced me with the way he approaches the industry with a very realistic perspective, but also with his outlook on life and the way he treats people. He is a down-to-earth guy and you can have a good conversation with him.

## Nick Binder

is a sales representative for WinField United and a high school soccer coach in Mason. He holds three degrees, including one in golf turfgrass management from Michigan State University. He is 37, married and he and his wife Samantha were expecting a second child any day at the time of this interview. Maggie, their first child, is 2.

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He looks out for other people's interests. He is really genuine in that regard.

**4 WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE ARE THE BIGGEST ISSUES FACING SUPERINTENDENTS TODAY?** The thing I hear more than anything else is labor and budgets. Their challenges are much more than to continue to put out good product and have the turf where it needs be. That has become a smaller part of the job even though it is so important. The bigger part is managing crews, hiring and firing. So much more goes with being a business manager than a turf manager. The emphasis is on them being a delegator and multi-tasker and yet in the end the product must still be top notch.

**5 WHAT ARE YOUR EXPECTATIONS WHEN WORKING WITH THE MICHIGAN GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENTS ASSOCIATION?** I see them as the center of a wheel. You have a lot of superintendents and sales

people out there like islands, alone all day with what they have to produce. I feel the association's role is to connect them whether through education or seminars or technology. I see the main role as a connection medium to make everyone better at their job, and to help make their jobs potentially easier.

**6 DO YOU HAVE AN EMBARRASSING MOMENT IN YOUR CAREER?** I'm only in my second full year, but I once sent an embarrassingly large quantity of Anuew, a plant growth regulator, to a client. A one became a 16 somehow on the computer. It was way too much product. He needed just one bag for his greens, so what I sent him would have lasted for years. We took care of it, took it back. You know, it was dealing with typing and computers, being busy on the road, up late at nights. It was certainly a surprise on his end.

**7 WHAT IS YOUR BEST ADVICE TO DECISION MAKERS WHEN DOING BUSINESS?** I would say ask a lot of questions. Bad things happen when you assume a lot of things. Ask the whys and hows and use sales people as resources. If they are claiming something ask them why now, things like that.

**8 WHAT IS THE MOST REWARDING PART OF BEING IN AN INDUSTRY SUPPORT ROLE?** I think it is getting feedback on the product or solution you recommended, helping solve an issue and then getting feedback back that they are happy with what was put together. It is great to be recognized as a resource rather than just somebody who gave a product and a price.

**9 WHAT IS YOUR BEST SUCCESS STORY SO FAR?** I can't pin it on one customer, but maybe the trust built with them through helping to solve a disease and agronomic issue. In the short time I've been around there are a few I feel I've really



## 5 THINGS PEOPLE MAY NOT KNOW ABOUT ME

1. My front right tooth is fake (pond hockey accident as a kid).
2. Played Varsity Soccer for four years at MSU.
3. I have had MSU Basketball season tickets since 2006.
4. I have a beer cellar at home with over 300 Bourbon Barrel Aged Beers.
5. Completed 2-year turf program in three semesters with a 4.0 GPA.



gained trust with, a few I've gone from cold calling and them not even knowing my name to being a trusted resource, and that feels like success.

**10 WHAT DO YOU ENJOY THE MOST ABOUT YOUR POSITION?**

I really enjoy getting out on the course, in a cart or walking around and seeing how they do their job. It is one thing to talk about chemicals and products. I like learning how different guys do things, and maybe potentially being able to pass that on to another. It goes back to being in college. I must enjoy learning and being in that environment.

**11 DO YOU HAVE SOME TRAVEL TIPS?**

I think the biggest travel tip I could give is to plan ahead as much as possible, plan the route and cut down on wasted time so you are not back tracking and doubling up in certain areas. Essentially I cover most of Michigan except for metro Detroit and the Upper Peninsula. It's quite a bit of travel. I plan more than my route. I plan phone calls, what I'm going to listen to in the car and try to be as productive as I can while driving.

**12 HOW MANY DAYS OF THE YEAR ARE YOU ON THE ROAD?**

In the golf season I would say four to five days a week. Sometimes I take an office day on a Friday or a Monday. This is just my second winter coming up so it may be different as I add more customers, but in the off-season or winter I'm on the road two to three times a week. I bought a new truck in February and will have gone about 45,000 to 50,000 miles by the end of things this year."

**13 WHO HAS THE NICEST SHOP YOU CALL ON AND WHY?**

Midland Country Club, partly because it is a newer build, but I would feel very OK eating off of the floor in their shop. It is just a very clean, well-organized shop. I'm always impressed when I go there.

**14 DO YOU HAVE A FUNNY STORY YOU CAN SHARE FROM THE ROAD?**

I haven't been doing this job very long, but I can go back to my pharmaceutical sales days. I sold Cialis, so you can imagine the jokes. I suppose the funny thing about this job that all sales people run into is that the short meetings and cancellations all seem to come on the same day, and likewise the extended meetings and long sales calls all land on the same days.

**15 WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER THE BEST PRODUCT YOU OFFER AND WHY?**

The best deal is a product called Droplex. It is a drift control product developed in agriculture. It is the best deal for the cost - under \$5 an acre. It is not rocket science for what it does. It gets more product down to the plant. When a client is spending hundreds, even thousands on chemicals, it makes sense to get more of that down to the plant.

**16 WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE ITEM TO SELL/DEMONSTRATE?**

A software program called GeoTech. It is used in farming, and now there is a software platform that works with GPS sprayers. It allows spraying at variable rates across their course with more precision, at a cost savings and with lower environmental impact. It's new to the golf industry. It is definitely the future and the way it is going.

**17 WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE GOLF COURSE TO PLAY?**

For me, it is the easiest one I can find when I have the time. I grew up on Eldorado in Mason. It is comfortable for me, close by and I enjoy it. My brother (Tim) lives in Traverse City and plays Lochenheath. It has everything that is great about Northern Michigan, the bay views, and it is really a nice track, too. Tim being there gives me a place to stay when I'm in that area, and getting to play that course is nice.

**18 IF YOU HAD A DIFFERENT PROFESSION, WHAT WOULD IT BE?**

I think I would enjoy being a teacher and a coach. I coach now. In grad school I enjoyed the education side of things. I would probably be a high school teacher and soccer coach.

**19 DO YOU HAVE A FAVORITE GOLFER AND WHY?**

Growing up it was always Jack Nicklaus. That was before I knew he was an Ohio State guy. My name was Nicholas, so that was probably first connection, but I really respect his body of work, his success in the game, how well in performed as a younger guy and as he got older.

**20 DO YOU HAVE A NICKNAME AND IS THERE A STORY BEHIND IT?**

I guess only one, and it didn't really stick. My last name is Binder, so I was called Three Ring. Three Ring Binder. It wasn't much.

**21 HAVE YOU EVER HAD A HOLE IN ONE?**

No, maybe a foot-and-a-half is the closest I've ever come. My Dad has an ace and a 300 game in bowling. That's a pretty good double.



**22 WHAT ARE YOUR HOBBIES OR ACTIVITIES AWAY FROM GOLF?** I coach high school boy's soccer, the varsity team and I was an assistant before that. I'm at Mason High School and we just finished our season. I never want to calculate by hourly pay on that job. It might be less than \$1. Soccer is just something I grew up doing and I really enjoy coaching. I've been the varsity coach for 11 years. I also play a little bit of golf, not as much as I would like, and I like to largemouth bass fish, too.

**23 WHAT DO YOU ENJOY DOING OUTSIDE OF WORK?** I like hanging out with my wife and daughter. I'm glad to put the golf clubs or the rod down and take the dog for a walk.

**24 IF YOU COULD TRAVEL TO ANY TIME IN GOLF WHEN WOULD IT BE AND WHY?** It would be the late 1800s and early 1900s. In my master's research I had to go back and do a lot of reading about the history of golf course equipment, the rollers and mowers, using sheep or goats on the fairways and tending rabbits on the green for cutting the grass. Some of the methods for rolling the greens and why fascinate me. That they were able to keep the grass alive while using what they were using was amazing. I would like to see the agronomic practices back then, see what they used and see how far they have come. I'm sure there were probably things they did then that are still done today.

**25 WHO HAS THE BEST MAINTENANCE DEPARTMENT DOG?** Chris (Ballosch) at Apple Mountain. He has a puppy named Sprinkles, a Chocolate Lab who

is very active. It brightens my day to go in there and play with the puppy. We have a Chocolate Labradoodle at home named Hagrid. I like dogs.

**26 HOW MANY CONFERENCES AND EDUCATIONAL EVENTS DO YOU ATTEND PER YEAR? WHICH ONE IS THE BEST TURF CARE PROFESSIONALS CAN ATTEND?** It is probably around six. The MTS Conference in January is great. From the education standpoint they do a good job of bringing speakers in, and there is a large group that attends. It is a large group of like-minded supers in similar situations. They really can get good ideas from each other. Formal education is one thing, but a great opportunity to hear and learn from each other is really good.

**27 HOW MANY ROUNDS OF GOLF DO YOU PLAY IN A YEAR?** If I'm lucky I play four or five times. I hurt my shoulder playing soccer two years ago, so my golf has dwindled down to two or three times each summer.

**28 HOW DO YOU THINK THE INDUSTRY WILL BE DIFFERENT IN 10 YEARS?** Obviously in technology I think. Look at how precise things are in agriculture, and you see. It is not only cost saving, but environmental impact. There is pressure on guys to maximize inputs and then get the most out of those inputs and be as responsible as possible with the applications and they can.

**29 ARE THERE ANY NEW PRODUCTS ON THE HORIZON?** We've gotten a pretty extensive pipeline on growth regulatory and also wetting agents, and

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there are more coming in that realm. A lot of different adjuvants used in farming are being looked at in turf as well. WinField just launched a new research facility in Wisconsin. We will see what comes out of that.





## A Message From



**F**or the last few of years I have had the opportunity to update all of you in this magazine, items related to Michigan Turfgrass Foundation. It has been a pleasure and I would like to thank the Board of Directors of the MIGCSA and Executive Director Adam Ikamas for allowing the MTF and the Turf Team at MSU the opportunity to pass along our communications and related issues thru your media. Many of you are members of both organizations and conveying our message thru your magazine indicates how allied our state is when it comes to the golf industry. Relying and supporting both organizations is important and it is a partnership that is unique and admired by all other states.

As I step down from my role as President of the MTF I would like to say it has been a pleasure to serve in that capacity for the past two years. I was humbled to be considered, nervous about fulfilling expectations, thankful for those who helped see me thru it and indebted to those held this position in the past. Those that assumed that role previously did so because they believed in the Foundation and all it does. I am sure our incoming President, Amy Fouty understands all of this and I know she will continue to serve and improve the Foundation as she takes on her leadership role at the completion of the conference in January.

I always enjoy looking up quotes when relating topics that are being discussed. It gives a sense that someone has been there before...and more often than I...been able to express how to put it into words. The anonymous quote below is one I share with you that can be used in your everyday world....

"The six most important words: I admit I made a mistake. The five most important words: You did a good job. The four most important words: What is YOUR opinion? The three most important words: If you please. The two most important words: Thank You. The one most important word: We. The least important word: I."

I believe the Board of Directors that you have elected and the new ones seeking a position on the board all have a common goal for the MTF and if they employ the simple 6 steps above will continue to improve the Foundation and its message to you the members. Election to the Board is both an honor and undertaking that is not taken lightly. They take on the responsibility, time commitment and desire to improve our industry. Undeniably, they believe the following.

"We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give."  
Winston Churchill

Finally, thanks to all who have been involved during my time on the Board. There are too many of you to name .... Please know your thoughts and input were important and I greatly appreciate all you have done.

**Carey Mitchelson**  
President – Michigan Turfgrass Foundation

"Don't cry  
because  
it's over....  
**Smile**  
because it  
happened"

Dr. Seuss



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**Tyler Cooper** is 29 and has been the assistant superintendent at Forest Lake Country Club in Bloomfield Hills for three years. Originally from the Lansing area, he has been married over a year and he and his wife Rebecca have two dogs, two cats and a bunch of fish.



# Tyler Cooper

1

## HOW DID YOU BECOME INVOLVED IN THE GOLF BUSINESS?

When I was in high school I applied for a job at a local golf course where I'm from. They didn't hire me two years in a row. I knew I wanted to do something on the golf course, and I enjoyed being outside working. I went to Michigan State and was actually in the landscape architecture program at first. I didn't know about the turfgrass program until I got there. After the first semester, I switched to the four-year turfgrass program and it was great.

2

## WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST JOB IN GOLF AND WHAT WAS A KEY THING YOU LEARNED FROM IT?

I worked at Walnut Hills Country Club. I wanted to get a feel for being on a crew before going on internship. I worked one summer there and learned I liked the work. I also worked a summer for the Hawk Hollow properties, and then interned at Shoal Creek in Alabama.

3

## WHAT WAS YOUR FAVORITE PART OF THAT FIRST JOB?

My favorite part of that job was the actual work. I love walk mowing. It is one of my favorite jobs on the course. I did that almost every single day I was there. It kept me active. I loved that aspect of the turfgrass industry, being outside, being physical getting exercise. I just enjoy it a lot.

4

## HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN AT YOUR CURRENT GOLF COURSE?

This is my third season at Forest Lake. I graduated in 2010 from MSU, then worked in New York at Sebonack for one year, then in Pittsburgh at Fox Chapel Golf Club for a year, then Kent Country Club in Grand Rapids for a year, then Tanglewood in South Lyon and then came to Forest Lake where I've finally settled in. I've enjoyed every minute since I've been here.







**5 WHAT ARE YOUR CURRENT RESPONSIBILITIES?** We have a smaller crew so I take on a bigger manual labor responsibility. I'm a jack of all trades. Most mornings I do course setup while also helping to manage the crew. Any fertilizer or chemical applications I do because I'm responsible for those. I'm involved in almost all aspects, especially any construction or repair work and the mowing that is needed. We only have 15 to 18 people on the crew in the summer. We are sometimes short-staffed, so I pitch in wherever because we need to get it done.

**6 ON THE JOB, WHAT PIECE OF EQUIPMENT WOULD YOU LIKE TO HAVE IN YOUR ARESENAL FOR GOLF COURSE MANAGEMENT?** That would definitely be aerators. We have two machines and without them our greens would get so beat up. You have to have aerification. We've built up a good sand layer doing the right things here.

**7 WHAT IS THE OLDEST PIECE OF EQUIPMENT STILL BEING UTILIZED IN YOUR FLEET?** We have a lot of old equipment, but we have an old John Deere 301 tractor from the 1970s that we still use to tow stuff around. It has multiple uses and we probably use it 10 to 15 times each year.

**8 WHO ON YOUR CREW MAKES YOU LAUGH THE MOST?** There are several guys that make me laugh. We have a half Hispanic and half non-Hispanic crew, a friendly crew that goes back and forth in funny ways. The other assistant here, Shannon Storey, is probably the guy that makes me laugh the most. We have a personality connection and he is in his 50s and he comes up with random sayings I've never heard before. It just cracks me up.

**9 IF YOU HAD A MULLIGAN ON A DIFFERENT CAREER CHOICE, WHAT WOULD IT BE?** I don't really know. If I chose something different in school it probably would have been math-based,

accounting or something like that. I've always liked math.

**10 IF YOU COULD CHANGE ANY GOLF HOLE ON YOUR COURSE WITHOUT REPERCUSSION, WHICH ONE WOULD IT BE?** Probably hole No. 16. The green is really pitched and it makes it hard to find a hole location without getting complaints. It has three different tiers and is sloped from front to back. There are just a couple of spots where there is a place for a pin, and that is it.

**11 WHAT IS THE CULTURAL MANAGEMENT PRACTICE YOU COULD NOT DO WITHOUT?** I would go with aerification and verticutting. Verticutting is important as well, to get rid of that thatch layer. We try to verticut and top dress often, depending on the golf schedule.

**12 HOW MANY CREW MEMBERS ON MAINTENANCE STAFF?** We have 15 to 18 crew members depending the time of year and the employee field. Not having



## 5 THINGS PEOPLE MAY NOT KNOW ABOUT ME

1. I enjoy going to different breweries and trying new craft beers.
2. I like to Travel with my wife Rebecca. (I've been to Europe 3 times).
3. I enjoy cooking and trying new dishes.
4. In my spare time I like to do home renovations and build things.
5. I love animals (have 2 dogs, 2 cats, and several fish)





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enough help is a trend in this industry.

**13 WHAT TYPE OF IRRIGATION SYSTEM DO YOU HAVE AND HOW MANY HEADS?** We have a Toro Lynx system with Network VP satellites, and probably 800 heads. We have a small irrigation system, mostly around the greens. We do a lot of hand watering.

**14 WHAT ARE YOUR EXPECTATIONS FROM THE MICHIGAN GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENTS ASSOCIATION?** I expect some networking events, but I really like going to the local education events in the spring and fall. They get you amped up for the spring and thinking about turf again.

**15 HOW HAVE YOU GIVEN BACK TO YOUR PROFESSION?** I feel like I could give more. I try to attend networking events and education events and give feedback as much as I can to help in that aspect. The networking events benefit everybody and they are fun to go to.

**16 WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST ISSUES FACING ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENTS TODAY?** One of the biggest things that we face is a competition for the next level, and just competition for assistant jobs. I know in the Detroit area when there is a job they get several applications, and all are qualified. It's tough. Michigan State is not the only one training qualified people. There are several programs around the country putting out qualified people.

**17 WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN 10 YEARS?** Hopefully I will have a superintendent's job by then. My wife and I have talked about moving out of state for that. I wouldn't mind living in Detroit area for that.

**18 HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE REMEMBERED IN THE FUTURE?** I like to be remembered as a good guy, good person to work for. I don't have to be remembered as somebody who stood out, but somebody who made contributions, a person that went someplace and left it better than when he started there.

**19 WHO HAS INFLUENCED YOU THE MOST ABOUT TURFGRASS MANAGEMENT?** My current boss Ryan Moore has been influential in getting me more involved in MiGSCA and networking. He has allowed me to continue to my education. Jim Simmons down at Shoal Creek had a big influence on me, too. He's a great guy, easy to work for. He let me do or try anything on my internship.

**20 WHAT IS THE MOST VALUABLE THING YOU HAVE LEARNED?** The most valuable thing I've learned about working at golf courses is attention to detail. It is the little things that stand out to the golfer. It is the small stuff. Keeping your tee markers, benches and tees areas clean, for instance. When come up to tee they like seeing that. The presentation of the starter greeting them is another. The fine details are what matter and set you off from being a good golf course to a great course.

**21 HOW DO YOU RATE THE IMPORTANCE OF AN ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT'S ROLE?** I think it is very important to the golf course operation. The super can't be there all the time. The assistant is an extra set of eyes



on the golf course, and an extra manager to make sure everything is done properly and efficiently.

**22 WHAT IS YOUR OPINION OF THE MECHANIC?** I think the mechanic is really important as well. Without the mechanic machinery will not run well and it is an area where I can do only so much. I'm learning more, but without a mechanic a golf operation will not run efficiently.

**23 WHAT IS YOUR BIGGEST PET PEEVE CONCERNING GOLF COURSE ETIQUETTE?** My biggest pet peeve is repairing divots and ball marks. It drives me nuts. And people driving carts wherever they feel like going. We had one drive up on the green the other day. It's hard to explain calmly to a member why we can't have that.

**24 WHAT ARE YOUR OPINIONS OF GREEN SPEEDS AND THE GAME OF GOLF TODAY?** I think people these days value green speed too much. If the ball is rolling smoothly, if you are having fun, then speed should be less important. People think differently though. Members ask the question all the time. They are infatuated with what speed you have them at. It seems to be a big topic in golf these days, and it is not that necessary as long as you are consistent on the course.

**25 IF YOU COULD CHANGE ANYTHING ABOUT GOLF COURSE MANAGEMENT, WHAT WOULD IT BE?** The hours worked, and not necessarily the amount I put in. It is more the lack of ability to have time off over the summer. Many of my bosses have said grass doesn't sleep and neither should you. It is

getting to be a lot of hours that assistants and superintendents put in, and members don't see that a lot.

**26 DESCRIBE YOUR RECYCLING PROGRAM?** The only recycling program we have is me taking home newspapers. I would like to get one going. I think we need it.

**27 AWAY FROM GOLF, WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE SPORT?** Hockey and also baseball – I played hockey since I was a little kid. Haven't played recently, but up to three years ago I was in an adult recreation league. The Red Wings have always been my team, and Stevie Y will always be my guy.

**28 DO YOU HAVE A FAVORITE GOLF COURSE?** St. Andrews is big for me. I've never played there, but I want to go. My uncle has played there. He loved it and it think I would enjoy it.

**29 WHO IS THE GREATEST INFLUENCE IN YOUR PERSONAL LIFE?** It is my father Dave because he is just always so supportive of what I do. He tells me he is proud of me, and when I get a new job he is excited for me.

**30 DO YOU HAVE A FAVORITE FOOD OR RESTAURANT?** My wife and I are pizza fanatics. A place called Mamma Mia's pizza. It is in Redford where we live. The service is great, the pizza is great, the breadsticks are great, everything is great

**31 WHAT VEHICLE WOULD YOU DRIVE IF YOU HAD A MONEY TREE GROWING IN YOUR YARD?** I actually have this thing where I love the old Jeep Wrangler. I just want one that I can go off-roading with all the time.

**32 WHAT IS YOUR DREAM SCRAMBLE TEAM?** My dad, me and I'm a Tiger Woods guy. I would love to play golf with him someday. And then by best friend Giddy, Aaron Gidcomb. That would be a great team.



Non-retouched client photo: GreenJacket System coming off in the spring!

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By Shane Conroy

# Course Conditions Fall 2017

**N**ow that we are officially past Thanksgiving, I hope you all had a great fall! It's hard to believe another season is almost in the books, but as the saying goes 'time waits for no man'. I wanted to take this opportunity to keep you updated on what's happening at GCSAA this fall.

First off, a HUGE thank you to all the Michigan GCSA members who donated to GCSAA's Disaster Relief Fund. At the time of this writing, over \$50,000 has been raised through GCSAA members, chapters, staff and industry partners since Hurricane Harvey hit the Texas coast in August. This money will go directly to GCSAA members who have been displaced or suffered personal or property loss through natural disasters. Unfortunately, this was a tough year for many of our members throughout the nation. It comes as no surprise to see others in the industry step-up and help our peers, that is what our profession is all about. Also, another HUGE thank you to the MiGCSA board for matching all member donations, one of only two chapters in the country to do so.

The Member-Get-A-Member campaign is back again this fall after a successful campaign last year. If you're not familiar with the program, the campaign allows any current GCSAA member to receive a \$50.00 gift certificate which can be used for GIS registration, merchandise, or your own dues for every member you help sign up. New memberships can be used across every membership classification, including your equipment manager or assistant superintendent.

Earlier this year, GCSAA and Columbia Sportswear Company came together to form a partnership which will offer savings to GCSAA members and their facilities. Columbia is offering a 50 percent discount to GCSAA members on outdoor wear purchases. In

addition, members can customize orders for a small charge. Visit <http://www.ocsapparel.com/gcsaa/> to view available options.

Late this past summer, Golf Course Management (GCM), the official publication of GCSAA launched its very own website (<http://www.gcmonline.com/>). With its new platform, GCM will be better serve the industry through an expanded and reinforced reach, and a solid online platform to go along with its already strong print and social media presence. The website is a fully responsive site, meaning it can be viewed on mobile devices such as tablets or phones, and will offer varying industry news, member profiles, agronomic and research information, as well as business and career reports.

Finally, as many of you know, the GCSAA Golf Championships and Golf Industry Show are just around the corner. This season's events are taking place in San Antonio, TX February 3-8 at local courses and the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center. Registration and housing officially opened on October 17, so please visit <http://www.golfindustryshow.com/registration> if you haven't done so already. You can save \$50.00 off the GCSAA Championships by registering by December 20, 2017, and save \$100.00 off GIS registration if you register by January 5, 2017. This year's Old Tom Morris award winner (GCSAA's highest honor) will be awarded to PGA Tour professional and Els for Autism founder Ernie Els. One of golf's greatest ambassadors, this will be an Opening Ceremony you won't want to miss.

I wish everyone a fantastic remainder of 2017, and look forward to seeing you all soon! As always, please reach out if I can assist with anything or if you have any questions.

Shane Conroy



# The 2017 Big Event Fundraiser



*Thank you Dan Billette for hosting the 2017 Big Event*



*MiGCSA Vice President Dan Dingman thanks Dan Billette for having us at Bloomfield or Birmingham C.C.*

The 2017 Big Event was sold out at Bloomfield Hills Country Club on Monday October 9th. This event is the last of the three fundraisers the MiGCSA has every year. All of the proceeds from these events go to fund the future of our industry by the way of scholarships, philanthropic causes related to turf and funding research at Michigan State by way of donation to the Michigan Turfgrass Foundation (MTF).

A very special thank you to our 2017 Premier Fundraiser Sponsors Advanced Turf Solutions, BASF, Bayer, F.I.P. Irrigation Services, Jacobsen, Matt LaFontaine Automotive, Site One Golf, Spartan Distributors, Syngenta, and Target Specialty Products. Also, a thank you to the hole sponsors Control Dynamics, J.W. Turf, Key Turf, Parjana, Rhino Seed & Standard Golf. Thank you to our Beverage Sponsors Harrell's and

Herman & Associates. There were 10 proximity prizes thanks to the Premier Sponsors and Sue Shockey & Rich Locke from Target Specialty Products hosted the Texas Hold Em' poker game contest that was won by the team of Derek Carroll, Craig Henderson, E.J. Martin & Matt Kelly. The MSU Turf Club President Sean Mcgorisk along with Reid Rahoi and Connor Witbeck made more than \$300 that was donated back at the putting contest won by Dr. Trey Rogers who was the only one to make the putt.

Thank you to Superintendent Dan Billette, Assistant Superintendent Troy Evans, Equipment Manager Jeff Dolin, General Manager Nick Graczyk, PGA Head Professional Mike Erikson and the entire staff and Membership at Bloomfield Hills Country Club for helping to make this such a great event.





*Dan Billette thanks his Assistant Troy Evans for all of his help*



*MTF President Carey Mitchelson thanks the attendees for the participation*



*Derek Carroll of FIP Irrigation Services receives a check from the Wee One Foundation to help support his son Ashton as he battles Lukemia*



*GCSAA Field Staff Representative Shane Conroy speaks about all of the great things happening at HQ*



## Here are the results:

### Closest to the pins:

Lee Collins, Gary Thommes,  
Nate Hollenbeck & John Cooney

### Long Drives:

John Sabat, Ryan Reynolds, Mark Fink,  
A.J. Plaskey & Mark Ostrander

### Winning Scramble Teams:

#### 1st place

57 - Derek Carroll, Craig Henderson,  
E.J. Martin & Matt Kelly

#### 2nd place

58 - Doug Ware, Mike LaCroix,  
Don Rohraff & Ryan Yoder

#### 3rd place

58 - Nate Hollenbeck, John Cooney,  
Dale Bauer & Marty Gossage



# 2017 Western Golf Day Fundraiser



*Thank You Jeff Hopkins our  
2017 Western Golf Day Host*



**M**ore than 80 members and friends took part in the 2017 Western Golf Day Fundraiser at Muskegon Country Club on Monday September 18th. This event is the second of the three fundraisers the MiGCSA has every year. All of the proceeds from these events go to fund the future of our industry by the way of scholarships, philanthropic causes related to turf and funding research at Michigan State by way of donation to the Michigan Turfgrass Foundation (MTF).

A very special thank you to our 2017 Premier Fundraiser Sponsors Advanced Turf Solutions, BASF, Bayer, F.I.P. Irrigation Services, Jacobsen, Matt LaFontaine Automotive, Site One Golf, Spartan Distributors, Syngenta, and Target

Specialty Products. Also, a thank you to the hole sponsors Control Dynamics, J.W. Turf, Key Turf, Parjana, Rhino Seed & Standard Golf. Great Lakes Turf supplied the food at the turn for the day and thank you to Beverage Sponsors Harrell's and Herman & Associates. There were 10 proximity prizes thanks to the Premier Sponsors and Derek Carroll of FIP Irrigation hosted the Texas Hold Em' poker game contest won by Phil Owen, Steve Rose, John Helms & Dave Rossman.

Thank you to MiGCSA Board member Jeff Hopkins, Director of Golf & Marketing Stephany Pawlowski and the entire staff of Muskegon Country Club for helping to make this such a great event.

## Here are the results:

### Closest to the pins:

Quinn Ostien, Kevin Frank, Andrew Chapman & Matt Suzio

### Long Drives:

A.J Rings, Josh Teitsma, Adam Hahn, Joe Balaskovitz, Shawn Pranger & Andrew Chapman,

.....

### Winning Scramble Teams:

#### 1st place

60 – Jeff Hopkins, Joe Balaskovitz, Wes Eklund & Paul Shatney

#### 2nd place

61 – Steve Hammon, Casey Cowell, Barry Cutler & Dave Drettman

#### 3rd place

61 – Adam Garr, Eric Davey, Jesse Shaver & ???

**The 2017 Champions Jeff Hopkins, Joe Balaskovitz, Wes Eklund, Paul Shatney**





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# Membership Renewal is Now Open

You can renew in many ways, the fastest and easiest is to log in to your [account at www.migcsa.org](http://www.migcsa.org) and click on the “Renew your MiGCSA Membership Here” link. If you would rather print and mail in your membership renewal you can [Click Here](#) for the renewal form. This form can be mailed to MiGCSA 316 Glencarin Dr. NE Rockford, MI 49341 or faxed to 1-888-364-4272. You may also scan and email the form [toinfo@migcsa.org](mailto:toinfo@migcsa.org).

Your membership dues and continued support within the MiGCSA has helped make all of the items below possible, so thank you for your support of the largest single state chapter in the country.

## In 2017 your Association:

- Hosted over 1,000 members at our Meetings, Golf Events & Fundraisers.
- Donated \$19,247.59 to the Michigan Turfgrass Foundation to support Turf Research at MSU
- Donated \$3,650 to the Wee One Foundation
- Awarded \$10,000 in Scholarships to MSU Turf Students and MiGCSA Member Dependents
- Produced four issues of the industry leading Course Conditions Magazine
- Produced the Membership Directory
- Partnered with the Michigan Golf Alliance (MGCOA, PGA, GAM, MTF, and CMAA) to host the Michigan Golf Day in Lansing
- Received more than \$100,000 in Industry Partner Support
- Year to date over 100,000 visitors to [migcsa.org](http://migcsa.org)
- Hosted three Fundraisers to support the Michigan Turfgrass Foundation Research, The Michigan Golf Hall of Fame, The Wee One Foundation, The Environmental Institute for Golf, MiGCSA Member Scholarships & MSU Student Scholarships.
- Worked hard every day to provide value to our members through programs and services that enhance and promote our profession.





Sales Representative for WinField United: **Nick Binder**



28



Superintendent at Apple Mountain Golf Club: **Chris Ballosh**

18



Assistant Superintendent at Forest Lake Country Club: **Tyler Cooper**

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Adam Ikamas, CGCS

# Teamwork Makes the Industry Work

There are always a lot of articles and education sessions about teamwork, so I was somewhat hesitant to write about it again. However, there is good reason for it to be a popular topic, it is really important!

Of course, most of you I would hope reading this know how important it is for your crew to work together to produce the results you plan for. You all know how important it is to work as a management team with the other decision makers at your facility to get the results for your golfers or members. No one person can do it alone no matter how smart or skilled you are, you must all be working towards a common goal and each link in the chain must be as strong as the next or the entire operation can be put at risk.

The same concept is true for the MiGCSA and the turf industry here in Michigan. We are all part of a large team that strives to be good representatives of our profession. From the officers and board of the chapter to the committee chairs and their committee members to those that attend the meetings and the more than 700 dues paying members of the Association. Take that to the next level like the management at your facility to the Michigan PGA,

Michigan Golf Course Association, the Golf Association of Michigan, the Michigan Club Managers and the Michigan Turfgrass Foundation. If we work together for our common greater good and prosperity, we do much more together than if we are working in different directions.

We all want the golf industry in Michigan to do well. We all want our profession to be respected and admired for what we do. We all want the world class research at MSU to continue to be a leader. I ask you to ask yourself what you can do to help meet these goals, maybe you're already doing them. Everyone does not need to be a board member, committee member or chapter president to be part of the success. As you make plans this fall and winter, maybe try to incorporate one more meeting than you did last year. Meet your fellow members and form bonds that you will both rely on. Identify where you can help the industry be a success which in turn is helping you and all your fellow members be successful.

**Adam Ikamas, CGCS**  
MiGCSA Executive Director



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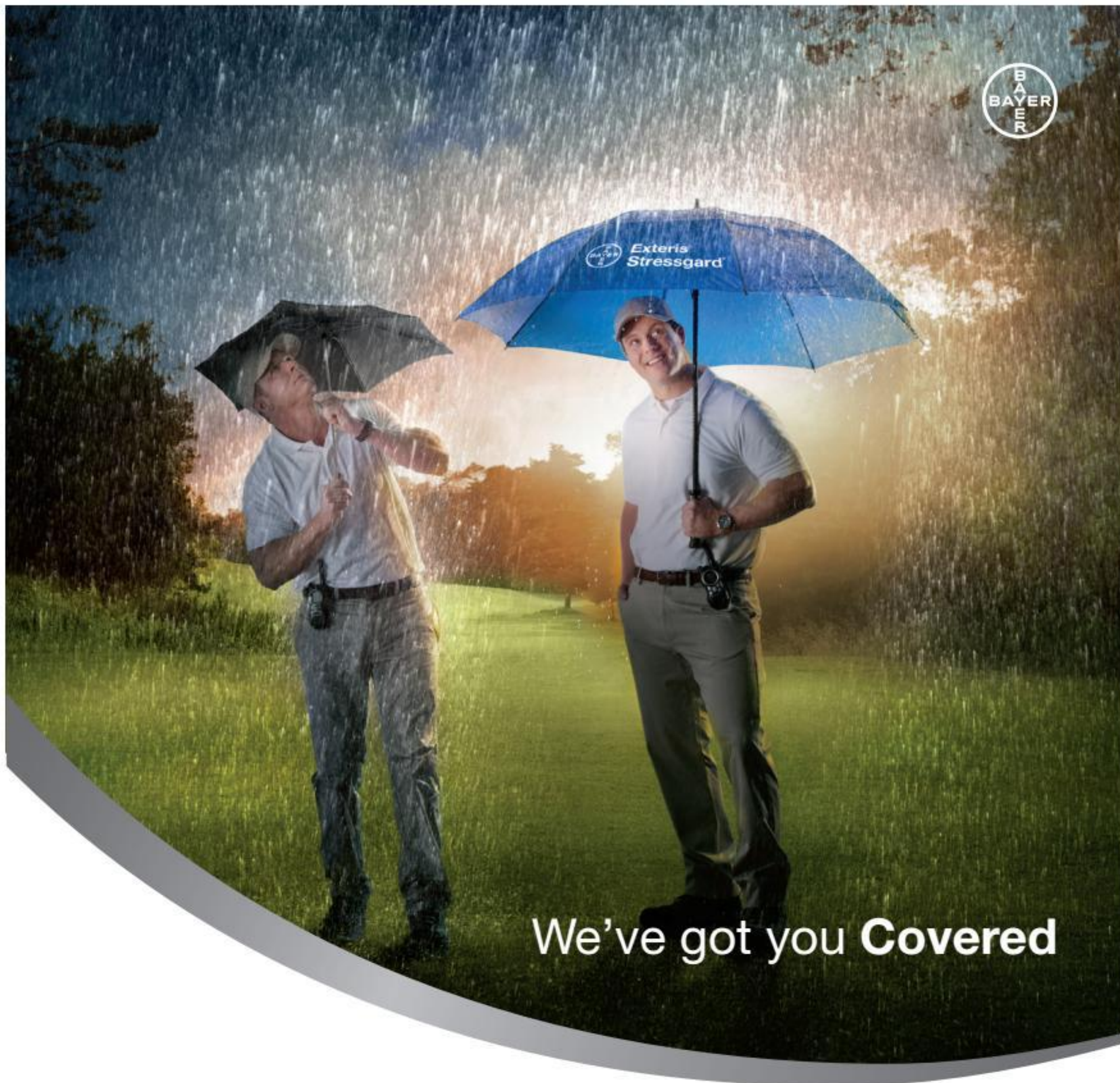




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**BOARD MEMBERS** JEFF HOPKINS, CGCS  
Western-Class A  
Muskegon County Club

ROB STEGER, CGCS  
Mid-Class A  
Saginaw C.C.

JEFF SWEET, CGCS  
Mid-Class A  
Bucks Run G.C.

DAVID J. PAWLUK, CGCS  
Greater Detroit-Class A  
The Inn at St. John's

DOUG WARE  
Greater Detroit-Class A  
City of Livonia

**ASSISTANT LIAISON** TROY EVANS  
Greater Detroit-Class C  
Bloomfield Hills Country Club

**COMMUNICATIONS  
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JEFF SWEET, CGCS  
Vice Chairman

ANDREW DALTON  
MIKE MAUSOLF  
JUSTIN BICKEL  
AL LYNCH  
COLLIN ROMANICK  
DAN MAUSOLF

Profile interviews conducted by  
Greg Johnson, Greg Johnson Media L.L.C.

JIM BLUCK, CGCS  
Northern-Class A  
Arcadia Bluffs Golf Club

MIKE ROSEN  
Northern-Class A  
Treetops Resort

ANDEW DALTON  
Class A  
Metamora G&C.C.

JESSEE SHAVER  
Class A  
Gull Lake C.C.

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# MiGCSA Membership Report

## SUMMARY OF CLASSES

	CURRENT MEMBERSHIP	FALL 2016 MEMBERSHIP	
Class A	241	235	Please log in to your account at www.migcsa.org to renew your membership for 2017. If you are unsure of your status contact us at info@migcsa.org or 1-888-3-MiGCSA.
Class B (this used to be SM)	56	64	
Class C	99	82	
Class AA	38	37	
Class AFF	145	149	
Class EM	34	38	
Class E	18	17	
Class H	33	30	
Class R	9	8	
Class SA	26	23	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>699</b>	<b>683</b>	

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 1 -**  
Detroit Holiday Party  
(The Lodge at Keego Harbor, Keego Harbor)

**THURSDAY, DECEMBER 7 -**  
Northern Holiday Party  
(Buffalo Wild Wings, Traverse City)

**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 8 -**  
West Holiday Party  
(The Blue Moose, Grand Rapids)

**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 15 -**  
Mid Holiday Party (Bottoms Up, Holly)

**WEDNESDAY-FRIDAY, JANUARY 3-5 -**  
Michigan Turfgrass Conference  
(Kellogg Center, East Lansing)

**WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 3 -**  
MiGCSA Annual Meeting  
(Kellogg Center, East Lansing)

Please visit [www.MiGCSA.org](http://www.MiGCSA.org) for all of the latest and most up to date information. You can quickly and easily register for events, view past issues of Course Conditions, browse and post items for sale, post and browse classifieds, and so much more. If you need help logging in email us at [info@migcsa.org](mailto:info@migcsa.org)



# President's PERSPECTIVE

**T**he life of a superintendent is very demanding. We wear many hats, are our own worst critic and often find it difficult to say 'no'. We strive for perfection on a daily basis, selfless in our devotion taking care of the golf course we love. We spend endless hours caring for an asset that others use for leisure. This is what makes us so valuable to the golf operations we serve.



*My advice to upcoming superintendents is committing to finding balance in your life. Yes, your new position will demand a lot from you. It will force you to make tough decisions and sacrifices. You will sweat. You will be sore. Your hands will look like leather gloves. You will be stressed. Those are all part of pain felt before enjoying the reward of the few moments each season where you will look at the courses' perfection and realize that was your vision.*

*I recommend that you keep your own life's priorities in perspective. Don't miss your daughter's softball game because you are worried that the 7th green is going to wilt. Don't skip the family vacation because spring cleanup might happen that week. Visit your parents rather than catching up on the rough mower at the end of the day. Network with friends and colleagues at an event because that weekly meeting with the golf pro can be moved. The one constant I have figured out in my career is that the golf course will be there tomorrow.*

*I'm not suggesting that you don't pour every ounce of your passion into your career. I am simply stating that you will be a happier, more rounded person if you find a healthy balance. Make certain that you have solid practices and processes in place so that the job can get done in a timely manner. Surround yourself with good people that will help carry the load. Form solid relationships with your teammates and members at your club. Let them figure out that you are more than the guy that silently cares for the course.*

*I recently lost my father that meant the world to me. I am so grateful for the time that we shared, and he invested in me. I was willing to drop everything in my life when it was time to give back to him. It made me wonder if I was doing the same thing for my children. That's a choice I have. Not a decision that is being given to me by membership. It's ours to make.*

*So, when you have an event that you need to go to, punch out at 3:30 and go. However, make sure the ballwashers are full first because that is truly all "they" seem to really see!*

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Ostrander".

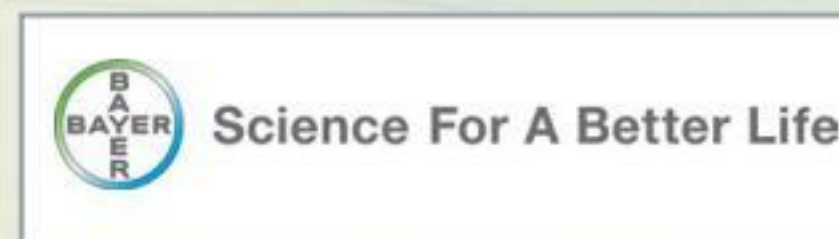
Mark Ostrander  
President, MiGCSA



# THANK YOU

## TO MiGCSA'S 2017 INDUSTRY PARTNERS

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THAT SUPPORT YOUR ASSOCIATION



FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE INDUSTRY PARTNER PROGRAM PLEASE  
CONTACT THE MiGCSA AT [INFO@MIGCSA.ORG](mailto:INFO@MIGCSA.ORG) OR 1-888-3-MIGCSA



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