



COURSE Conditions

Issue #53 - Q4 2021-22

Quarterly Publication of the Michigan Golf Course Superintendents Association



FEATURE SUPERINTENDENT

Alex Lincoln
Flint Golf Club

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FEATURE: Back to Golf's Future

Industry Partner Profile: Adam Palmatier, Branch Manager, Helena

Assistant Superintendent Profile:
Sam Bekins, Assistant Superintendent at American Dunes Golf Club

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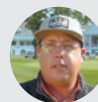


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Erwin McKone is a Michigan native, growing up in Flint, Michigan was introduced to turf at Genesee Valley Meadows. Erwin earned a Bachelor of Science in Biology at the University of Michigan and was a Research Assistant for Bruce Branham at the University of Illinois. Erwin served as Chief Operating Officer and Director of Golf Operations at Briar Ridge Country Club prior to joining the Turf Ventures team in 2016.

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President's PERSPECTIVE

What a season! I'm sure there are quite a few of us that are very happy it has come to a close. It was a long season full of ups and downs with record setting numbers of players for most, if not all of us. Of course, with courses closing and winter setting in it doesn't mean the work stops for us. Many will stay busy with tree work, drainage projects and even some renovations. I do hope that all of us will get to spend some time away from the course with our family and friends. This year was not easy and a little rest and relaxation will go a long way.

Some big news for the MiGCSA is the candidacy of Steve Hammon (Traverse City CC) for GCSAA Board of Directors. I had the opportunity to travel with Steve to the GCSAA Delegates meeting in Kansas City. That meeting allowed Steve to talk to the voting delegates from almost every GCSAA chapter across the country. Steve was fantastic! He received a ton of compliments and got his campaign off to a great start. If elected, he will be an outstanding representative for Michigan and the GCSAA. Hope to see you in San Diego at the GCSAA Conference to celebrate Steve's election victory. Some may have heard about Steve's son Elliot and the health issues he and his family are dealing with. Please, keep Elliot, Steve and the entire Hammon family in your thoughts during Elliot's recovery.

With the start of 2022 came the opportunity to return to the MTF Conference. It was great to finally be back and have it in person. I wanted to take this chance to commend the MTF on the conference they were able to hold. The education they were able to provide was excellent and the change of venue worked out wonderfully. I really hope we are able to return to Soaring Eagle Resort again in 2023.

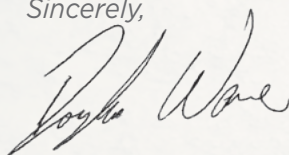
With this being the President's perspective I figure it's the appropriate time to share how I gained some serious perspective in my life this season. On August 15th, at what I thought to be a normal Sunday dinner at my parent's house, my family sat me down to talk with me about my alcohol drinking habits. They pointed out some hard truths to me. Definitely took me by surprise and frankly angered me at the time. Angry at them, angry at how the situation was being handled, but mostly angry at myself. I knew I had an issue that needed to be addressed, but really wanted to take care of it on my own. My "social" drinking had become "self medicating". A relaxing beer or bourbon after work became drinking away the stress and anxiety of life. That very next day I decided to begin to channel that anger and disappointment. I decided to take it out on my treadmill. No longer allowed it to sit there and collect dust. I of course started slowly, walking everyday. The key to my success was actually my Apple Watch. I paid close attention to the activity rings. It honestly became, and still is a bit of an obsession. Making sure I closed all three everyday. With all this activity and lack of alcohol the pounds began to melt off. One day I decided it was time to start running again. Strapped up the shoes and went for a run around the neighborhood. That turned into running at least 3 miles a day. It wasn't easy, but to this day I'm still following through with it. It's not perfect, but it helps me deal with my issues in a healthier way all while dropping about 50lbs. As for the drinking, I'm still on the wagon. I figured attending golf events, holiday parties and conferences would be really difficult and stressful,



but that was not the case. The amount of support I have received through this from family, friends and peers has been overwhelming. I'm fortunate to have a family that did the difficult thing and confronted me with their concerns. I know I'm not the only one out there that has gone, will go, or is currently going through this. For whoever needs to hear this, you are not alone. There can be a light at the end of the tunnel. If anyone reading this ever needs to talk, please call, text, email, stop me if you see me at an event. As you can see, I am not afraid to share my story and will help in any way I can.

I will finish this by saying, it has been an honor to serve as the MiGCSA President this past year. Things have not always gone according to plan, but I think we made the best of it. I'd like to thank the Board of Directors for their work and support. I especially like to thank my Executive Officers, Ryan Moore and Doug Hoeh. They will do great things in the coming years for the MiGCSA. I also must thank our Executive Director Adam Ilkmas. He makes sure things run smoothly for all of us and we are lucky to have him. Lastly, I need to thank my family. They supported me through all of what I mentioned before, plus allowing me to be at every fundraiser, meeting or event. Thank you all.

Sincerely,



Douglas Ware

GCS City of Livonia

MiGCSA President



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BACK TO GOLF'S FUTURE

BY PAT JONES

Let's jump into Marty McFly's DeLorean for a minute and take a spin back to 2019. There (then?) we would find 2019 Pat Jones giving the same state of the industry speech he'd been giving for five years. In a nutshell:

- Courses were slowly dying off because play had been sluggish for years but this was actually healthy in the long run to normalize supply and demand
- Supers' biggest problem was labor and the possibility of mandatory \$15 minimum wage
- Baby boomer supers were starting to retire
- Budgets were largely flat
- We were at the tail-end of a decade-long remodeling boom that made Gil Hanse rich
- Robot mowers and autonomous operations were the future
- On the bright side, a few more women and girls were coming to the game and golf as exercise was growing in popularity.

Then the thing happened and lots of stuff changed. Let's review.

First, everyone needs to get one fact straight: the pandemic didn't save golf...superintendents saved golf. Supers are, first and foremost, problem-solvers and the craziness of March 2020 demanded that big problems be solved fast and cheap. You folks, with a handful of staff, showed up and kept the big green things alive and viable as businesses. Golf should be forever grateful to its turfheads. But don't hold your breath.

And, what's more, the years of grassroots work, participation in state and national lobbying and relationship-building by supers and associations paid off in spades. In many regions, chapters took the lead in responding on behalf of the other



associations. More than a decade of proactivity by GCSAA and chapters like Michigan GCSA paid off big-time.

I know it wasn't perfect, but golf returned much more quickly than I had ever dreamed it could. By the end of the year, rounds were up 25-35% nationally and in basically the rest of the world. The press about golf was great and, rather than hurting some of the good trends we'd been nurturing, the pandemic accelerated play by women, kids and, of course, avid golfers who were no longer tethered to an office Monday through Friday.

The only economic downsides pandemic-wise were the loss of group and event revenue in 2020 at facilities that do a lot of outside stuff and, of course, wear-and-tear costs caused by more play and single-rider carts (where that was a thing). It was a huge win for an industry that needed it.

So, golf's problems are all solved! Happy days are here again and we all can sail off into a profitable sunset, right?

As Lee Corso says, not so fast my friends!

We learned in 2021 that retaining the gains of the Great Covid Golf Bubble (I refuse to use the word "boom") won't be easy. For one thing, weather still dictates the success or failure of the golf business and Mother Nature was not nearly as kind about golf-friendly weather in 2021 vs. 2022. Rounds lagged behind 2020 but were still way ahead of 2019 in most places.

Better cash flow slowed course closings to about half of recent years but, honestly, we need to get supply and demand right some day. There are still too many courses out there just selling 18 holes for \$18 without really creating much value in the market. Oversupply remains a big problem.



Then there's the issue of exhaustion. I've lost count of the number of supers I've talked with who describe the pandemic golf era as one long grueling 20-month season. It was a short winter and then a slobby mess through the actual '21 golf season. And, of course, most maintenance teams remained at what felt like half-strength. Virtually every superintendent asked said they were at 40-60% of necessary staffing, particularly after they lost students in August.

The result has been way more hours and time spent out on the course for most superintendents and, of course, their assistants. Everyone was wiped out. And until we right-size wages for staff and salary/work life balance issue for assistants, this problem will continue.

If there's one thing about the pandemic of which I am certain it's that it turbocharged a bunch of trends that were already emerging. Families played a lot more. Women took up the game with a passion. And the growing WFH (work from home) trend blew up. The good news is that is here to stay. Corporate America is thrilled to be getting out of the commercial real estate business. WFH is the new normal for a big chunk of our best customers. Woo-hoo!

Pandemic magnification also continued to widen the gap between the "haves" and "have nots" in the spectrum of facilities. Clubs with good resources and leadership made the most of it by greenlighting improvements, adding apprenticeship programs, offering new services and – as always – emphasizing hospitality. At the other end of the business, it's still a struggle. Too little of that new cash flow is trickling down to maintenance. And that struggle will get even tougher as wages, fuel and cost of goods all rise in 2022 and play – weather permitting – stays at levels above 2019.

So, where does that leave 2019 Pat's key points? Let's update them for 2022.

- Course closures have temporarily slowed but will ramp back up as more folks move out of cities and countryside real estate development starts to gobble up failed facilities.

- Supers (and their bosses) need to rethink their old staffing and wage assumptions and figure out how to field a smaller, smarter, better-paid and highly motivated crew.
- Baby boomer superintendents are retiring – or being retired – rapidly. Demand for up-and-coming turf pros hasn't been this good in 30 years and salaries will reflect that.
- Many budgets will jump 15% but much of that will go to hourly wages, gas and fertilizer.
- Gil Hanse is still getting rich but our friend Andy Green is right up there with him. Renovations are massive among the "haves."
- Robot mowers are still coming. I swear.

Finally – and most importantly – 2022 Pat will finish his speeches with a reminder that golf has this one shining moment to respond and grow and not just blow another opportunity to expand the reach of this great game. We cannot go back to treating women, kids and anyone who's not an old white guy like second-class customers. Stop letting the geezers dominate your agenda. Focus on fun and exercise and families and, most importantly, hospitality.

The difference between the winners and the losers in the Great Golf Covid Bubble will be making customers feel welcome and appreciated. It's as simple as that. In that way, the post-pandemic future really isn't all that different than the past. The question isn't so much what changed during all this craziness, but whether we can use this moment to evolve and get back on track to a better future for golf.



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2021 Assistant Superintendent CHAMPIONSHIP

BY KYLE SCHIERLINGER, ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT, FOREST LAKE C.C.

The MiGCSA assistants capped off the hectic year with another successful Assistants Championship! This year we were hosted by Superintendent Mike Montney at Western Golf and Country Club in Redford Township, MI. However, the event didn't go off without a hitch this time around. Like so many of us, Mike had been battling the seemingly endless rains (or maybe monsoons) of 2021 and a few days before the originally scheduled date, he came in to find that Western looked more like a wetland park than a golf course. There were pins on greens that could barely keep their flags above water and widespread damage across the rest of the course to turf and trees alike. All this is to say how proud and ecstatic we were that Mike, and his team were able to quickly get everything back in order and reschedule to host us only a couple of weeks later.

Once we were able to tee it up, we continued our streak of great weather days, this time in October! The course played great, and once again we topped the previous year's turnout. The 2021 championship saw nearly 30 participants come out and included MiGCSA President Doug Ware and Dr. Kevin Frank from MSU and MTF.

This year's setup was similar to last year- individual and best 1 of 4 team scoring with long drives and closest to the pins. Once again, we spent time at the 19th after the round, grilling steaks and having a great time discussing the day and all the stories from the past summer over some good food and drinks. Dr. Frank and Doug Ware also gave us updates on the MTF and MiGCSA respectively.



We crowned Matt Prince as the 2021 Assistant Champion. Big congrats to him for holding off a competitive field as many of the other guys kept it very close.

The outlook for 2022 continues to look up for MiGCSA's assistants. As we continue to navigate the "new normal", more events and career building opportunities are on the horizon. We're all looking forward to a more typical winter that includes things like the MTF and GIS conferences (in person!) and of course a few months of relaxation and recharging under a blanket of snow.

Another well-deserved thank you to our host Mike Montney, his staff and Western GCC membership for having us out to that wonderful property. Also, to Adam Ikamas and the MiGCSA as a whole for the help organizing and for providing these opportunities to get together each and every year. Here's to a great 2021 and to a safe and happy holiday season for everyone!



Thank you to our host Mike Montney



*The 2021 Assistant Superintendent Champion
Matt Prince from Franklin Hills*



HAVING FUN WITH woodworking

BY SCOTT RETTMANN, SUPERINTENDENT, WALNUT CREEK C.C.

My passion for wood working began when I was living and working in Philadelphia. Tree removal was the main item on our agenda for winter work so there was plenty of good wood available. Living in an apartment wasn't ideal for woodworking so I used the golf course shop after hours. The first thing I tried to build was a clock from a slice of a tree trunk and it was an epic fail. I purchased an orbital sander, a router, and a clock making kit online. I had been very careful to cut what I thought was a nice even slice out of the tree trunk and figured making the clock would be a breeze. After countless hours of sanding, the slab was still uneven and had plenty of deep grooves from the chainsaw blade. I was frustrated and stopped working on it.

Fast forward 5 years and my wife and I had moved back to Michigan and bought a house. Having a long list of home improvements and a spacious garage to complete them in allowed me to start seriously thinking about woodworking again. I started by acquiring new tools needed to complete those home improvement plans, which included finishing the basement, installing new interior doors, installing hardwood floors, building custom closets, building an eat-in kitchen nook, building kitchen cabinets to enclose our refrigerator...just to name a few! Doing these things sparked by interest again in woodworking and fueled the start of my new favorite hobby.

Completing home improvement tasks was fun, but my true passion has been learning how to do more fine woodworking. I started to follow woodworkers on instagram and researching blogs which gave me new ideas and taught me a few new things. I began understanding why my clock didn't turn out as I had wished years ago! I quickly added tools like a planer and a jointer to my shop as well as a fancy tool called a mortise and tenon jig for future projects.

Some of my favorite items I have made so far include a wine rack, a liquor shelf and wine glass hanger, serving trays with epoxy inlays, and a kitchen sideboard. Most have been from black walnut, which of all the woods I have worked with is my favorite.

I'm currently working on my favorite project yet which just so happens to be the hardest and most complex piece; a full black walnut dining room table with two benches. I used google sketch up to come up with the design and I've been working on it for the last 3 winters (I don't have any time in the summer, obviously). I started by acquiring a tree cut down by a local construction crew and I had the trunk sections milled by a mobile saw mill. The wood was then kiln dried; I ended up building a wood rack so I could safely store it in my garage. I planed down some of the boards and turned them into dimensional lumber so I could work with them. I built one bench and was very happy with it and decided to move on to the actual table. I again planed down six boards and used a track saw to take off the live edge, then used a mortise and tenon jig to join and glue the boards together and form the raw table top. Unfortunately, I'm still learning, and regretfully did not use a jointer to make sure my edges were perfectly square. When the glue was dry, I released the clamps and the tabletop was so warped that I wasn't able to flatten it using my router planer jig...ouch.

After that huge blow, I reevaluated how I was going to build the table top and planed down another 6 boards. This winter I plan to run each board through the jointer to square up the edges and I will try it again. When the table top is finished I plan to build the table base and last bench. The project is certainly big and frustrating, but also rewarding, and, most of all, fun.



After working on a lot of different woodworking projects, I'd say the most important thing is to take your time and measure! In fine woodworking, a truly good cut matters. Precision in cuts makes an enormous difference in the outcome and professional appearance of the finished piece. It's easy to rush through portions of a build because a particular part isn't as fun but you won't be happy with it in the end.

A good starter project for an aspiring woodworker is anything you're interested in. If you're a bird hunter, maybe a bird call is a good starter. If you enjoy wine, maybe a wine rack. Have fun with what you're building and don't stress out if you make mistakes along the way!

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Retirements



Dahlin Family



Ron Dahlin, superintendent at The Meadows at GVSU

Ron Dahlin's first retirement task is building, with his wife KaLee, a new home in Northern Michigan, just outside of Honor on the Platte River.

"I would not be leaving right now if I didn't have the task of building a new home in front of me," said the 63-year-old Dahlin, who has been the head superintendent at The Meadows at Grand Valley State University in Allendale for the last 20 years.

"I'm a little worried about not staying busy, but with nine acres to take care of and a house to build I should be good for a while. And I've been married to a wonderful woman for over 30 years, and it's time I spent a little time around her as well."

Dahlin and KaLee have been working on their retirement plan for the last five or six years with 2022 in mind. KaLee recently retired from Amway Corp., after working there 30 years in research and development, food, and nutrition. They have two children, Bryson, who is 24 and has a career in construction, and Caitlin, 21, who is a junior in the nursing program at Grand Valley.

"It's a great time for us to leave our careers behind," Dahlin said. "We are still young enough and healthy enough to do the things we want to do. We have been diligent, saved money for retirement and our financial planner, a couple years ago, gave us permission to be done."



Ron Dahlin Golf on the Edge

Prior to coming to The Meadows, Dahlin was the superintendent of the Valley course at the 36-hole Egypt Valley Country Club in Ada, working for 10 years with the facility's longtime golf course manager Jeff Holmes.

He is originally from LaSalle, Colo., where he grew up on a farm 50 miles north of Denver. He has always worked outside, first in weed and pest control and then at age 27 embarked on undergraduate work in biology and agriculture and a masters in horticulture and turfgrass management.

"In my masters' program we worked a lot with golf courses in Colorado," he said. "Colorado for the most part is an easy place to grow grass. There are some issues, but the big cost is on water management and keeping your course irrigated. When I came to Michigan it was a different ballgame. There are more plant and disease issues here. The money spent in Colorado on water, is spent here on taking care of the plant."

Dahlin said he simply got into the sport of golf and taking care of courses.

"I really think it is a noble sport, and a noble profession to be in," he said. "The people who work in golf are a great group of individuals to be associated with. They work hard, they try their best, there is great camaraderie and I latched on to that. That's the hardest thing to give up in retirement."

Working for a golf course on a university campus has been great Dahlin said.

"I've enjoyed working with the (college) kids," he said. "They are just working and their goal is not to work on a golf course for a career, but they are super and some of them have never had a job before. I enjoyed teaching them what it meant to work, and some really bought into working in golf. We've had 10 students go on to Michigan State after Grand Valley to be in the turf program there."

He said the highlights over the years was The Meadows hosting multiple state tournaments for high

school golfers and six NCAA national championship tournaments in the last 20 years.

"NCAA Tournament golf is awesome," he said. "You spend the amount of prep time like any tournament, building it up to give them the best product you can and then you see really great golf," he said. "It's rewarding to the staff, to everybody involved at Grand Valley."

Jeff Bodziak has been Dahlin's assistant at The Meadows for the last 19 years and is taking over in 2022 as the head superintendent. Dahlin is elated.

"I worked really hard to keep him here," he said. "He knows the physical property better than I do. He is a person that can match the right person to the right job. He has a knack for that. I feel so good about him taking over. At a public golf course you see things that make you shake your head at times, but Jeff knows that and has helped me manage that."

Dahlin has been greatly involved in the Michigan Golf Course Superintendents Association (MiGCSA) since its inception.

"It is bigger now than I ever thought it would be, and better than I thought it would be," he said. "There are so many good and intelligent people working together to move it forward. Before, we were scattered all over the state on different boards, and now we work together. Adam Ikamas (executive director) gets a gold star. He has been great."

For the future Dahlin would love to see more young people embrace working in turfgrass at golf courses and plan to become superintendents.

"The job is to make the value of the product the best it can be every day," he said. "I was blessed to be in an industry like that. I'm excited to move on to another stage in my life, but when I look back I don't have a regret at all. It's been good for me and my family, and I loved getting out there every morning and seeing the sunrise."



Tom Stark

Tom Stark, superintendent at Dunham Hills Golf Course

Tom Stark's retirement day and last day as the superintendent at Dunham Hills Golf Course in Hartland was Dec. 31, his 65th birthday and the final day of 36 years working at one course with one ownership family and one goal each day.

"I always tried to get everything about good as you can get it," he said.

The superintendent's job at Dunham Hills was the only head superintendent's job in his career. He worked two years at Riverwood in Mount Pleasant and two years as an assistant at Western Golf & Country Club in Redford before taking on the lead role at Dunham Hills in 1985.

"I've been here ever since and I had really good owners (Lefler family) that never really interfered with me and what I did with the golf course," he said. "They were owners who had another business. They always knew what was going on, and they knew the golf course conditions and they let me be my own boss that way. They trusted I knew what needed to be done and I wasn't scrutinized. It's hard to beat the situation."

As for retiring, he said it is just time.



"I'm tired, don't have a lot of staff and no assistant and the last few years I was the mechanic, spraying, and doing maintenance seven days a week April through Thanksgiving," he said. "My wife (Margaret) retired three



years ago and I think she was getting impatient for me to retire. It's time."

He said it might sound strange but he will miss Saturday mornings at the course the most.

"Getting there with the guys ahead of the first tee shots and get the course as good as you can get it, and it just always seemed like a good day," he said. "I'll miss doing that with the guys."

Stark is originally from Bridgeport, graduated in the centennial class of 1976 from Bridgeport High, met Margaret in high school and they have been married 45 years and have one son, Sam, who has also made his career in golf. Sam Stark is in his first year as the head golf coach for men and women at Ferris State University where he was also a standout collegiate player from 2010-2015. He was most recently the head coach at Coker University in Hartsville, S.C., and prior to that Alderson Broaddus University in West Virginia.

Stark said Sam grew up on the golf course, became a standout amateur that played in Golf Association of Michigan and USGA tournaments and eventually turned professional via the Professional Golf Management Program at Ferris State. He still competes at the section level in PGA tournaments but is otherwise building the games of those he coaches.

"That's one of the things we plan to do in retirement, go to tournaments, especially when they go south, and watch the kids play and Sam coach," Stark said. "We've been doing some of that and we really enjoy it. I walk, my wife rides on the cart with Sam as he coaches. We went all over the place when Sam was playing, the Michigan Amateur, Michigan Open, USGA Publinx tournaments. We enjoyed that, too."

Stark said he is happiest when he is outside and he loves competition.

"Even in my work I was competitive," he said. "I wanted to maintain a better course than the guy down the street. It wasn't always easy, but I enjoyed getting the

greens the way the golfers wanted them, setting the pin locations, having something different to do every day, staying busy and I was never bored working outside."

He said he will not miss having the weather dictate everything he did on the job.

"That has taken a toll on me, too," he said. "We have so many trees here and there was always a tremendous amount of cleanup. When you have 2,500 trees out there, it's a lot of work."

He said the fall when the leaves are starting to change and fall cleanup hasn't started might be his favorite time of the year outside.

"You made it through the hot summer and you are looking forward to college football," he said.

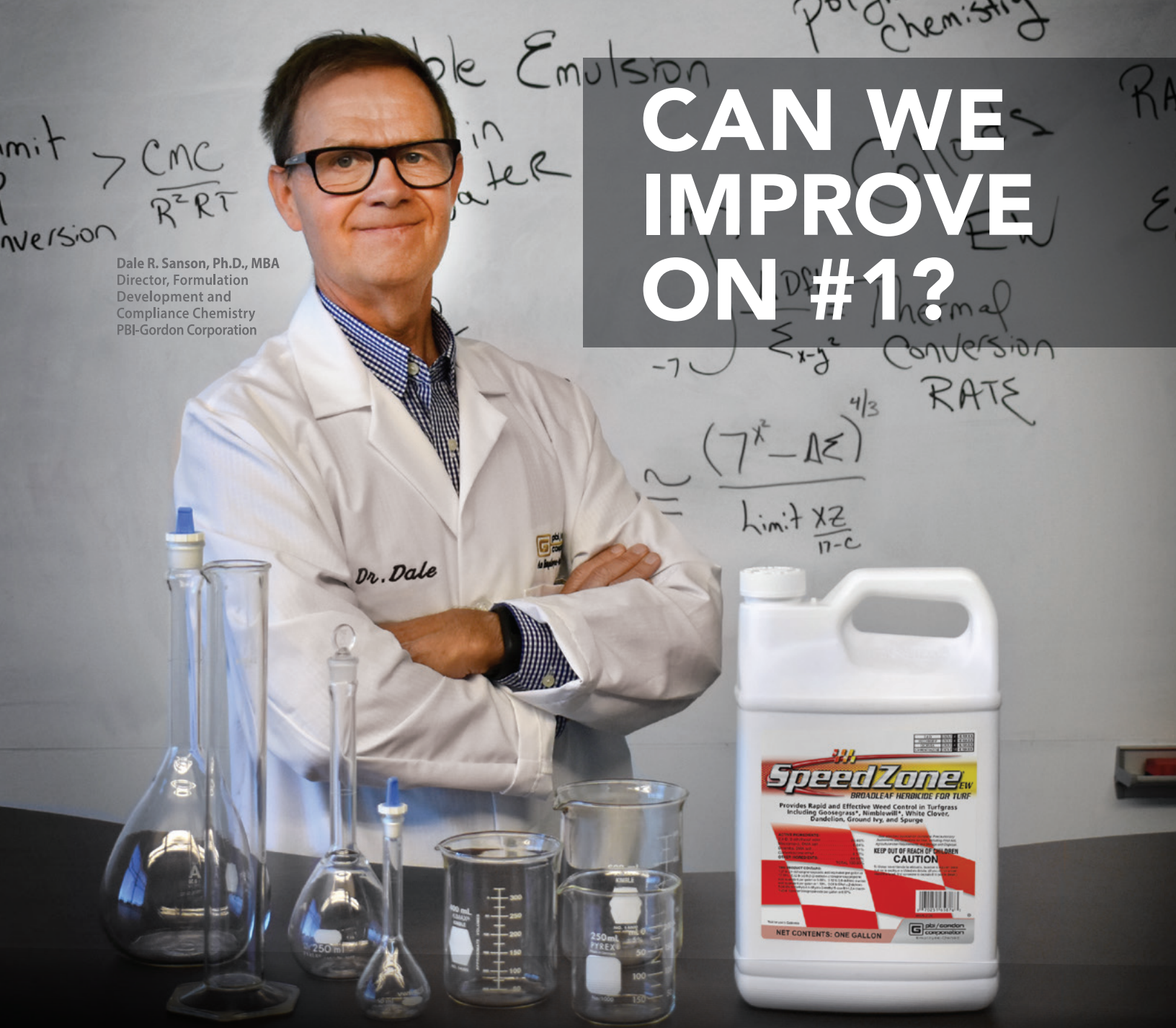
One of his favorite things to do with his staff was to run a "pool" for the guys during the golf majors.

"We'd have 20 guys and each drew three names each, and of course we had one guy who complained about the guys he had no matter who he had," he said. "Then one year he wins two of the four because he had Charles Schwartzel winning the Masters and Darren Clarke winning the British Open. He couldn't complain about that. I'll miss doing that kind of stuff with the guys."

He said he probably won't sleep in a lot even in retirement.

"But I will get up and not have to think about being responsible for the crew and whatever the situation is with the weather," he said. "It will be an adjustment. I was always on the go. Maybe I'll get a part-time job or something. I think I will work on the golf game. I feel like I'm a halfway decent golfer and I would like to try and play some."





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The 2021 **BIG EVENT** FUNDRAISER

The 2021 Big Event was hosted by Aaron McMaster at Orchard Lake & Country Club on Monday October 4th. 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 via donation to the Michigan Turfgrass Foundation (MTF).

A very special thank you to our Premier Fundraiser Sponsors BASF, Bayer, EZGO, Matt LaFontaine Automotive, Site One Golf, Spartan Distributors & Adam Garr with Syngenta. Thank you to our hole sponsors Baker Vehicle, Bio Health, FIP Irrigation, Golf Cars Plus, Harrell's, Revels, Michigan Synthetic Turf, NuFarm, Porous Pave, Rhino Seed, Standard Golf, Target Specialty Products & Trimax/Timberwolf Turf. Complimentary beverage station thanks to Earthworks and Herman & Associates.



Thank you to our host Aaron McMaster



MiGCSA President Doug Ware thanks the many event sponsors and industry partners



Here are the results:

Closest to the pins were won by Scott Gardiner, Brad Lear, Rod Leverage, Tom Lewis the long drives were won by Trent Foreman and Jeff Davis Bob Badovinac and longest putt was Trent Foreman.

Winning Scramble Teams:

1st place - Jeff Davis, Archy Hosvepian, Matt Siemiantkowski and Jarrett Weinrich

2nd place - Kevin Frank, Jeff Nabozny, Michael Leach and Scot Gardiner

3rd place - Andy Keilen, Don Knop, Bob Badinovich and Adam Ikamas

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2021 MSU Student SCHOLARSHIPS

BY GENE DAVIS, MIGCSA SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN



The MiGCSA scholarship committee once again had the privilege of interviewing currently enrolled students in the turf program at MSU and awarding them much deserved scholarship dollars. On December 15th 2021 the committee traveled to East Lansing and interviewed nine applicants for this year's awards. The committee was extremely impressed with all of the applicants and enjoyed hearing about their future goals and aspirations within the turf industry. After the interview process the committee decided to award four of the applicants with awards. Adam Nadeau, Connor McBride, Matthew Dishon and Brendan Stuchell received the 2021 scholarships. We encouraged all applicants to continue to be involved with the association and take advantage of this great scholarship opportunity in the future. On behalf of the MiGCSA and more specifically the scholarship committee I would like to thank committee members Jesse Scholl, Jim Priebe, Tony Geib and Co-Chair Jared Milner.



ALEX Lincoln



Alex Lincoln

started as superintendent at Flint Golf Club in March of 2020 just as a global pandemic shut down the country.



BY GREG JOHNSON

“It’s probably one of the worst times ever to start a new job,” Lincoln said and laughed. “It has been a struggle but we’re making progress.”

Lincoln, 30 and a native of Ionia, has a bachelor’s degree in turfgrass and crop and soil sciences from Michigan State University, but first studied to become an engineer.

“I realized I would hate a desk job,” he said.

He has been doing essentially three jobs at Flint working without an assistant or a mechanic on his crew for two seasons.

“It has been difficult, starting in the COVID year and that being followed by a year where everybody is having labor struggles so we had

to get creative and get things done with a minimal crew,” he said. “I was hired here to try and bring plant health back as a priority. There’s been some hiccups. Some people would tip-toe into a new job, but I went for it, killed some grass in a few spots, but we are bringing it back and it will be great. It’s a cool, old Willie Park (designed) course and really has been untouched to a certain extent. We’re working with Mike DeVries (golf course architect) on our greens, a few at a time, and slowly over time bringing things back that were lost.”

He first worked in golf in his hometown of Ionia at Shadow Ridge Golf Course, which was formerly known as Ionia Country Club and was a unique nine-hole design of Donald Ross.





“I just started there as a grounds guy thinking I would like to work outdoors and along the way I became interested in turf sciences,” he said. “I was a golfer, enjoyed being on golf courses and just applied at Shadow Ridge. I worked in the pro shop and then on the grounds for a year and working on the grounds intrigued me. From there I ended up at MSU.”

Between his junior and senior year at MSU in 2012 he worked an internship at Country Club of North Carolina and landed his first assistant superintendent job out of school for three seasons at Lost Dunes Golf Club in Bridgman. His next stop was Chikaming Country Club in Lakeside for five seasons where he worked for Eric Rank and then he landed his first

head superintendent job back in southwest Michigan in 2019 at Whitaker Woods where he worked before taking the job at Flint Golf Club.

He has settled in at Flint, met assistant golf professional Andrea Richards and they have a seven-month-old son Jackson.

“It works well for us right now,” he said. “Andrea brings Jackson in with her, and he is sort of a pro-shop mascot and then I take him home. I hope to be here a while, see our restoration of the greens through and see the club kicking butt and bouncing back from these last few years. We’ll see about down the road. I know I want to continue being a superintendent. Restoration and renovation really interest me.

Being part of that project is great and I like working outside. I can’t see doing something else.”

Time management of his job is currently his biggest challenge.

“With having to-do tasks that an assistant or a mechanic might do I really have to figure time for everything,” he said.

“Thankfully I’ve had some great field experiences. It was great to learn all the chemistry and how applications work and the ideas behind what we do but putting it into play is most important and making time for it all isn’t easy. “

Lincoln is hoping golf’s resurgence in rounds and more people playing the game and returning to golf will help his role in golf.



5 THINGS PEOPLE MAY NOT KNOW ABOUT ME

1. I’m color blind with red and green so I had to learn to find stress in grass different ways. It was my first problem as an assistant.
2. I have four brothers, ages 13 to 33.
3. I played varsity golf for four years in Ionia, but I was also a trumpet player in the marching band, jazz band and symphonic band. I don’t play anymore.
4. I met Andrea Richards here and we have a son. She is assistant pro and now director of operations, which makes her one of my bosses, too.
5. I have a five-year-old lab, Cooper. He is with me all day every day and the members tell me he has made the situation with geese here at Flint better.

“Right now the interest in golf is not translating to an uptick in resources at least at the club level – we’re being asked to do more with the same amount of resources because play is up – but let’s hope that eventually comes into more of a balance,” he said. “Then Covid could be a blessing in disguise for us.”

Lincoln credits Rank, his boss at Chikaming, for having considerable influence on him and he hopes to influence young employees to stay in turf and become superintendents.

“He took me under his wing when I was still kind of green from working just a short time at Lost Dunes and then gave me the opportunity to do anything and everything in golf course operations – tee renovations, all sorts of stuff that is paying off now. I’ve modeled the way I do crew management and the treatment of staff from the way he did things, too. I think it’s the biggest thing for the future in turf – getting young people interested in this as a career like he did for me. That’s missing right now.”

Away from the course for Lincoln means spending time with Jackson. He likes to play video games when he has time, and he remodeled his last home in Berrien Springs and doubled his investment when he sold it.

“I don’t play much golf anymore even though I would like to play more,” he said. “I don’t think I’m much of a player any more, and I haven’t ever beaten Andrea. She is scratch.”

Andrea would make his dream foursome, of course.

“I would go for fun with myself, Andrea, Tiger Woods and Bill Murray,” he said.



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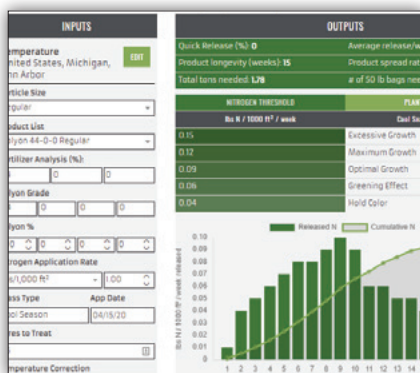
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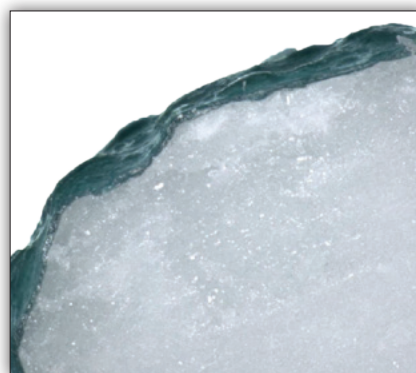
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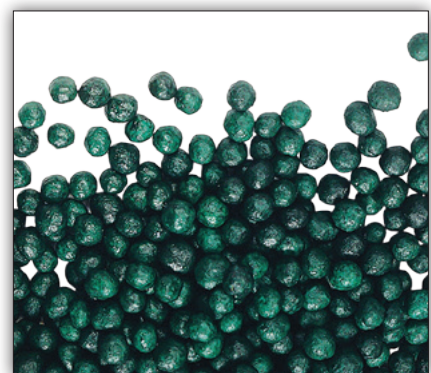
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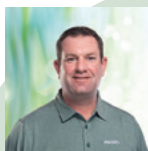


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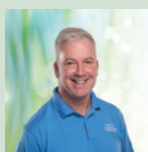
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ADAM Palmatier



Adam Palmatier had been working as a territory account manager at Helena in Central and West Michigan for 18 months and recently was promoted to Branch Manager, in this role he will continue the same service to his territory and customers. He was previously the operations coordinator at the Hancock Turfgrass Research Center for Michigan State University. He has also been a research assistant in turfgrass pathology, a golf course superintendent, and a lawn care owner/operator. He and his wife Ronda have been together since high school and were married in 2000. They have three children. The 48-year-old Palmatier attended Lansing Community College with the intention of becoming a school teacher. After receiving an associates degree he went to Michigan State University where he earned his two-year certificate in golf turf management.

- 1 **HOW DID YOU GET INVOLVED IN THE GOLF BUSINESS?** I got started in golf when a superintendent friend (Bob Stipcak) of mine needed some extra help in the evenings and on weekends. After a couple of months he came to me and said: "You're really good at this, have you ever considered making a career out of it?" The rest is history from there
- 2 **WHO HAS BEEN YOUR GREATEST INFLUENCE IN PERSONAL LIFE?** My wife, Ronda.
- 3 **WHO HAS BEEN YOUR GREATEST INFLUENCE IN YOUR PROFESSIONAL LIFE?** There have been so many that it is impossible to name just one: Dr. Joe Vargas, Bob Stipcak, Nancy Dykema, Al Bathum, Charles Fort, Jim Cola, and Billy Goodrich to name a few.



4 **WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE ARE THE BIGGEST ISSUES FACING SUPERINTENDENTS TODAY?** I'm sure I sound like a broken record, but no doubt it's labor or lack of it.

5 **WHAT ARE YOUR EXPECTATIONS WHEN WORKING WITH THE MICHIGAN GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENTS ASSOCIATION?** For them to be knowledgeable, well-informed, and professional.

6 **DO YOU HAVE AN EMBARRASING CAREER MOMENT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE?** Probably calling a customer by the wrong name.

7 **WHAT IS YOUR BEST ADVICE TO DECISION MAKERS WHEN DOING BUSINESS?** Don't put off until tomorrow what you can accomplish today.



8 **WHAT IS THE MOST REWARDING PART OF BEING IN AN INDUSTRY SUPPORT ROLE?** For me it's building relationships, but a close second is the self-gratification of helping a customer. That can be a recommendation or something as simple as getting them their product on time.

9 **WHAT IS YOUR BEST SUCCESS STORY?** My Family. My wife Ronda and I have been together since I was a sophomore at Ashley High School (1990). We were married in 2000 and have lived in Williamston since 2002. We have three children; Noah, 20, Meah, 17 and Ava Marie, 14. Noah attends Michigan State University and is majoring in packaging and minoring in business. He also is the men's soccer team student manager. Meah is the captain of the varsity volleyball

team, plays on a national AAU volleyball club and shows pigs. Ava Marie plays volleyball, soccer and shows pigs.



10 **WHAT DO YOU ENJOY THE MOST ABOUT YOUR POSITION?** One the things I enjoy most about being a branch manager is the fact that each day is different. I enjoy traveling to each part of my territory on a regular basis. I also enjoy working with Territory Manager Mike Leach and the rest of our staff at our specialty branch in Greater Lansing.

11 **DO YOU HAVE SOME TRAVEL TIPS?** We bought into the Disney Vacation Club when the kids were young and we have really taken advantage of it.

12 **HOW MANY DAYS OF THE YEAR ARE YOU ON THE ROAD?** About 200 days but I'm back home most every night. I put on close to 80,000 miles.



13 **WHO HAS THE NICEST SHOP YOU CALL ON AND WHY?** I'm sure folks will say I'm "butt kissing" but I like Egypt Valley Country Club's layout and design. It seems like it is very efficient. The Hancock Center's shop is nice to work in too.

14 DO YOU HAVE A FUNNY STORY YOU CAN SHARE FROM THE ROAD? There are too many to tell, but most of them revolve around common acquaintances in our industry. I can be in the middle of nowhere see a golf course and just stop in and sure enough the superintendent will know someone I know or we will share a story from turf school or our internships. These times are always funny and enjoyable for me, being able to relate with superintendents and knowing how I have been in their shoes before.

15 WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER THE BEST PRODUCT YOU OFFER AND WHY? There are many, but my favorite is Helena's ORBIX next-gen foliar product. It maintains balanced growth for up to three weeks while producing stronger plants.

16 WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE ITEM TO SELL/ DEMONSTRATE? Our CoRoN line of products is my favorite product to sell because it has proven throughout the years to be a phenomenal slow release liquid fertilizer with balanced growth.

17 WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE GOLF COURSE TO PLAY? Buck's Run in Mount Pleasant.

18 IF YOU HAD A DIFFERENT PROFESSION, WHAT WOULD IT BE? If I were in a different profession it would have something to do with livestock. Over the years I have learned a lot about the feeding and raising of pigs in particular. Raising a good show hog is a lot like raising a quality turfgrass plant. One has to know how much or how little to put into it to get the high-quality results.

19 DO YOU HAVE A FAVORITE GOLFER AND WHY? Right now, I am partial to Jon Rahm. He goes after it.

20 DO YOU HAVE A NICKNAME AND IS THERE A STORY BEHIND IT? Palm, and I think it's kind of obvious (PALMatier).

21 HAVE YOU EVER HAD A HOLE IN ONE? Not yet...

22 WHAT ARE YOUR HOBBIES OR ACTIVITIES AWAY FROM GOLF? Well, like most parents, your hobbies become the hobbies your kids are into doing. Ours happens to be showing pigs. My kids have become some of the top show performers in the Midwest.

23 WHAT DO YOU ENJOY DOING OUTSIDE OF WORK? Most everyone knows I hunt here in Michigan, primarily at my family's farm north of St. Johns. We have season tickets for MSU football and basketball, and although I haven't done it in a couple of years, I really enjoy coaching youth sports.

24 WHO HAS THE BEST MAINTENANCE DEPARTMENT DOG? Drew Paxton at Spring Lake Country Club.

25 HOW MANY CONFERENCES AND EDUCATIONAL EVENTS DO YOU ATTEND PER YEAR? The average would be seven or eight.



5

THINGS MOST PEOPLE DON'T KNOW ABOUT ME:

1. I'm Vice President of the Ingham County Youth Livestock Association.
2. I collect Disney Pin's.
3. I have been shot by a 243 deer rifle. We won't say where...
4. I attended the 1992 Barcelona Olympics and saw the Dream Team.
5. I graduated high school with 36 people (and that's a big class).

- 26 WHICH ONE IS THE BEST TURF CARE PROFESSIONALS CAN ATTEND?** Not taking anything away for the others, but I prefer the MTF Conference.
- 27 HOW MANY ROUNDS OF GOLF DO YOU PLAY IN A YEAR?** I am starting to get back in the swing more and more, so I would say around 25-30.
- 28 HOW DO YOU THINK THE INDUSTRY WILL BE DIFFERENT IN 10 YEARS?** The industry will continue equipment and chemical innovation that will result in fewer inputs on the environment. Lower use rates products, along with the use of adjuvants, surfactants and bioscience materials will play a large part in reducing those inputs. With the lack of labor help we will see more and more autonomous vehicles.
- 29 ARE THERE ANY NEW PRODUCTS ON THE HORIZON?** This falls right in step with the previous answer, Helena is now offering a program called Rx360. This program will allow turf managers to have an accurate picture of each and every variable on the course from soil management, tissue testing, water analysis, diagnostic reports and more. This is done with precise property mapping and electro-magnetic equipment that can be turned into app ready controller files.



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A Message From



Michigan Turfgrass Foundation makes **\$1 million lead gift to Michigan State University** to endow a chair in Turfgrass Pathology

A \$1 million gift from the Michigan Turfgrass Foundation to the Michigan State University (MSU) College of Agriculture and Natural Resources (CANR) launches a \$5 million campaign to endow the Joe Vargas Chair in Turfgrass Pathology.



The Michigan Turfgrass Foundation made a \$1 million gift to the MSU College of Agriculture and Natural Resources on Jan. 4, 2022 to endow the Joe Vargas Chair in Turfgrass Pathology.

EAST LANSING, Mich. – A \$1 million gift from the Michigan Turfgrass Foundation to the Michigan State University (MSU) College of Agriculture and Natural Resources (CANR) launches a \$5 million campaign to endow the Joe Vargas Chair in Turfgrass Pathology.

“Endowed positions are a cornerstone for recruiting outstanding faculty and supporting innovative research,” said MSU President Samuel L. Stanley Jr., M.D. “We are fortunate to have the Michigan Turfgrass Foundation’s partnership in our efforts to advance solutions to pressing challenges in turfgrass science in ways that will improve lives and strengthen communities.”

Funding for the endowed Joe Vargas Chair in Turfgrass Pathology will ensure that a strong and robust program is possible in perpetuity, and that MSU’s land-grant tradition of linking research to our region’s needs continues to advance the economic development, environmental stewardship, and improved quality of life in Michigan and around the world.

This endowment honors Dr. Joe Vargas who has dedicated his 51-year career to improving the quality of turf on every continent except Antarctica. His knowledge has been shared in over 200 articles and over 1,000 presentations.



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Joe Vargas, Ph.D.

As an international expert on turfgrass diseases, he is a member of the Michigan Golf Hall of Fame.

“At the forefront of our turfgrass program are our faculty members who are global leaders in their areas of expertise,” said Brian Horgan, Ph.D, chairperson for the MSU Department of Plant, Soil and Microbial Sciences, which houses the Turfgrass Program. “By investing in this endowed chair position, Michigan Turfgrass Foundation shows their commitment to creating new knowledge through research, while educating and inspiring the students who will become the next generation of leaders in turfgrass science.”



Brian Horgan, Ph.D.

Established in 1957, the Michigan Turfgrass Foundation (MTF) is a non-profit organization which supports turfgrass research and education. The organization’s members represent a vast portion of the industry including: homeowners, golf courses, seed, sod and stolon growers, municipalities, parks and recreation, schools, landscape and lawn care contractors, athletics and cemeteries. MTF annually sponsors the Michigan Turfgrass Conference and supports the MSU Turfgrass Field Day at the Hancock Turfgrass Research Center in East Lansing, Mich.

“The Joe Vargas Endowed Chair continues the Michigan Turfgrass Foundation’s partnership with Michigan State University that has been successful for over 50 years,” said Carey Mitchelson, Michigan Turfgrass Foundation executive director. “This initiative helps to ensure that the MSU Turfgrass Program continues into perpetuity, sustains MSU’s place in cutting-edge turfgrass technology, and furthers the advancement of turfgrass students. The combined efforts of MSU and the Michigan Turfgrass Foundation exhibit the true meaning of a land-grant university working with its partners to provide a template and foundation of future research and educational programs for generations to come.”



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The research taking place within the turfgrass program not only serves to positively affect our campus community and the state of Michigan's economy, but also the U.S. and the world. Greenspace and turf are valuable for communities, as these spaces provide positive ecosystem services including stormwater management, pollinator friendly habitats, urban cooling and environmental protection and preservation.

MSU offers a two-year certificate program, a four-year undergraduate degree, and graduate degrees in turfgrass science and management. The programs bring together faculty, specialists, and educators who work with both professional turfgrass managers and homeowners in managing turfgrass in an environmentally responsible manner.

Learn more about the Joe Vargas Endowed Chair in Turfgrass Pathology at <https://canr.msu.edu/turfgrassendowedchair>. ■

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UPDATE



A few areas I want to highlight in this article include the Equipment Manager Certificate Program (EMCP), the various video series available to GCSAA EM members at GCSAA.org as well as the Melrose Equipment Management Experience.

The Equipment Management Certificate Program Level 1 is a series of exams designed to demonstrate proficiency in key competency areas related to turf equipment. The exams allow EM to earn certificates and skills recognition in the various areas needed to be successful in their role.

The program is made up of eight exams covering the key competency areas of:

- cutting units
- drivetrain systems
- electrical systems

- engine technology
- hydraulic systems
- metalworking and fabrication
- spray systems
- fundamentals of turfgrass operations

Exams don't need to be taken all at once. You can take one exam or complete all eight to earn the EMCP Level 1.

The Equipment Management Certificate Program Level 2 naturally follows the EMCP Level 1. The Level 2 certificate is earned by successfully passing one proctored exam which addresses the following competency areas:

- Administrative Management
- Best Management Practices
- Cutting Units
- Drivetrains
- Electrical Systems
- Engine Technology
- Hydraulic Systems
- Metalworking
- Spray Systems
- Turfgrass Operations

To be eligible to begin EMCP Level 2, you must complete EMCP Level 1.

The second area I want to highlight are the various education video series available to EM members. These series include:



Shane Conroy

5-MINUTE FIX VIDEOS

This collection of 5-Minute Fix Videos offers quick and simple solutions to equipment-related issues. Current videos available cover everything from backlapping, to hydraulic hose repair, to cleaning carburetors, and many in between. EM members can submit a great idea for a 5-Minute Fix Video to add to the video library.



INSIDE THE SHOP VIDEOS

The “Inside the Shop” area at the 2019 Golf Industry Show was an instant success, and host Hector Velazquez presents a monthly Inside the Shop video series with trouble shooting, how-tos and demonstrations concerning many areas of golf course equipment management.

EMCP PREP SERIES VIDEOS

You’ve heard about the eight exams that make up Level 1 of the EMCP, but did you know GCSAA now has courses to help you have a positive result when you take the tests? Seminars held at GIS were recorded, edited and are now available On Demand in the Learning Hub.

Finally, the Melrose Equipment Management Experience supports the professional development needs of GCSAA golf course equipment manager members by providing select individuals the opportunity to attend the GCSAA Conference and Trade Show.

The Melrose Equipment Management Experience was established in 2019 by the late Ken Melrose, retired CEO and chairman of the board of The Toro Co., and is supported by a \$1-million gift to the GCSAA Foundation from The Kendrick B. Melrose Family Foundation. This program will have a positive impact for each equipment manager selected and ultimately, the game of golf.

Class members will receive the following:

- GCSAA Conference and Trade Show registration
- Education seminars and leadership sessions
- Airfare
- Five nights’ hotel accommodations
- \$200 spending money

The Michigan GCSA has one of the more robust EM memberships in the country. Combined with the local education, events and camaraderie provided at the chapter level, there are numerous resources available to EM members. I hope you take advantage of these resources, and as always, please don’t hesitate to reach out if you need anything. All the best this season!



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MI-OH Matches



The inaugural MI-OH Matches were played on October 19th at Sylvania Country Club hosted by Golf Course Superintendent Steve Brown. This is a new annual event with a team from Michigan and from Ohio.

The MiGCSA Team was comprised of MiGCSA President Doug Ware & State Champion Josh Shaw, Match Play runners up Terry Poley & Aaron McMaster, Match Play champion's Kevin Haack & Skip Connolly (sub for Bill O'Connell) and Match Play

Consolation winners Jay Eccleton & Greg Pattinson (sub for Marc McCoy).

The Ohio team was represented by Kyle Fredrick, Jon Soukup, Joe Enciso, Eric Skorich, Andy McCormick, Jacob Selby, Harry Helsel and Nathan Goebel.



In the end the 18 hole stableford scoring matches were tied at 142! It was decided to go out to #10 the par 3 10th hole for a sudden death between one player from each team, Josh Shaw hit a great shot in and two putted for par to win the hole and the inaugural MI-OH matches for team MiGCSA!

The 2022 matches will be played in Michigan. Get into the match play championship, the state championship and the Tuck Tate shootout to qualify!



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SAM BEKINS



The dream scramble team foursome for Sam Bekins

includes his Grandpa Howie, who introduced him to the game of golf, Jordan Spieth, who he enjoys watching compete on the PGA Tour and musician Kid Rock.

BY GREG JOHNSON

Bekins, 25 and single, rocks talents beyond the golf course. He plays guitar and he got a chance to meet Kid Rock during the grand opening of American Dunes last spring because of his day job. He is an assistant superintendent at the golf course/monument to the Folds of Honor Foundation created by Jack Nicklaus on the former site of Grand Haven Golf Club.

“I talked to Kid Rock and saw him hit a few golf shots, too,” he said. “Music is a big part of my life. I wanted to meet him.”

Bekins has performed with his guitar at American Dunes, but much more of his time is spent on the golf course.

“I get there before the crew and pull out all the equipment we plan to use for the day,”

he said. “I find if I get it all out before the crew gets there we can avoid some problems by finding it early and things go a lot smoother. I’m involved in the planning, the normal day-to-day maintenance, special projects, all of those things.”

American Dunes, recreated in a natural sand dune area close to Lake Michigan, presents some unique challenges for Bekins and the rest of the golf course maintenance staff. He has been involved from the start of seeding.

“It’s a whole different beast than I’ve worked before and a big learning experience,” he said. “I went from working with heavy soils and mainly clay push-up greens and now I’m working with a



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straight sand layer. It demands different management of water to get through the day with play.”

His road to American Dunes can be traced back to his start in the golf industry. He was 16 and his parents said it was time to get a job. Evergreen Golf Course in Robinson Township outside of his native Grand Haven took him on under the guidance of then superintendent Joe VerDuin, who these days is the superintendent at American Dunes and Bekins’ immediate supervisor.

“From the first day at Evergreen I had a landscape rake and started raking bunkers,” he said. “The first year was also Joe’s first year there and he and I had free rein of the whole place. We took trees out, cleaned up ponds, did mechanics and we ended up hiring my Grandpa on Tuesdays and Thursdays to service carts.

“It was a very family-like atmosphere. Everybody treated me like family and it was a family-owned business. It was fun place to work, and great experience for a first job. It ended up with me thinking I’m going to do this. I’m going to go to school for it, too, so I make better money I decided to go for it.”

He enrolled at Northwestern Michigan College in Traverse City and dual enrolled in Michigan State University’s landscape management program. While in Traverse City, he worked at Lochenheath Golf Club, and

after graduating worked for Wuskowhan Players Club near Holland.

“I kept learning and liking it and here I am,” he said. “I’ve kind of been in the right place at the right time. I’ve worked at some great places, and when I found out Joe (VerDuin) was at Grand Haven (Golf Club) I let him know I was ready. He had really been my mentor all along.”

Bekins comes from a family of mechanics in other industries, and it helps him appreciate the mechanic at the golf course, too.



5

**THINGS MOST PEOPLE
DON'T KNOW ABOUT ME:**

1. I’m a type 1 diabetic and I wear the pump. I’ve had it since I was 13.
2. Music is more than a hobby. I play electric and acoustic guitar, I sing and I write music and perform in bars, at weddings, things like that.
3. I played four years of soccer, two years of golf and two years of basketball in high school. I’m only 6-foot, but I did get a dunk in a game.
4. When I was 15 I tried to be a charter boat mate on Lake Michigan.
5. I played an outside gig at American Dunes last summer and it was awesome.

“I have a high level of respect for what they do and anything I can help with, I’m right there,” he said.

His start at American Dunes happened about the same time as a significant wind storm off of the waters of Lake Michigan toppled about 80 trees a few weeks before the planned start of seeding.

“That pushed seeding back some, but we got it cleaned up and going,” he said. “It’s been great since day one there.”

He thinks American Dunes, beyond its mission to help the Folds of Honor Foundation, is a special place.

“It’s one of the most special places I’ve golfed at, and not just because I helped grow it in and all that,” he said. “I think it’s because almost any golfer can go there and have a good time. As long as they play the right tees or tee it forward, they will have good shots and enjoy it. It’s really a great design.”

As for his job at American Dunes, Bekins is concerned about the manpower situation at the course and many others in the state, and he thinks the hardest part of his job is keeping the crew morale in a good spot.

“It’s important to get out on the course and check on everybody while they are working, make sure we try to keep a good family atmosphere and not just be people working,” he said. “I try to keep a smile on my face and keep people motivated, smiling and ready to work.”

In the end he tries to create and build relationships.

“I think that’s the key to almost any job, and it takes some work,” he said.



“The easiest part of the job, that’s just being outside in a beautiful place, seeing sunrises. The sunrises, and the sunsets, especially here on the West side of the state, are spectacular.”

After sunset, music takes over. He said he emulates John Mayer and his influences include Van Morrison, the Zach Brown Band and Tom Petty among others.

“If I’m not at the golf course, I’m doing music, and if I’m not doing music, I’m at the golf course,” he said.



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2021 Western Golf Day FUNDRAISIS



Thank you to our host Drew Paxton

It was a great day for the MiGCSA Members and friends took part in the 2021 Western Golf Day Fundraiser at Spring Lake Country Club on Monday September 27th. 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 Premier Fundraiser Sponsors BASF, Bayer, EZGO, Matt LaFontaine Automotive, Site One Golf, Spartan Distributors & Adam Garr with Syngenta. Thank you to our hole sponsors Baker Vehicle, Bio Health, FIP Irrigation, Golf Cars Plus, Harrell's, Revels, Michigan Synthetic Turf, NuFarm, Porous Pave, Rhino Seed, Standard Golf, Target Specialty Products & Trimax/Timberwolf Turf. Complimentary beverage station thanks to Earthworks and Herman & Associates.



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Thank you to Golf Course Superintendent Drew Paxton, Assistant Superintendent Derek Koster and Equipment Manager James Apsey! Also special thanks to Kevin Green, General Manager, Josh Lathwell, Head Golf Professional, Kristen Rappleye, Clubhouse Manager, Ray Davis, PGA Assistant Golf Professional, Brandon Jamieson, PGA Assistant Golf Professional, Emily Umstead, Events Coordinator and the Membership of Spring Lake Country Club.



MIGCSH		MIGCSH	
Drew Paxton		Dan Diener	
Jean Hegerick	65	Kenny VerDein	66
Brandon Thomas		Ken Keatrl	
Derek Koster		Sam DeKline	
Dylan Barry		Matt Chapman	64
Dan Contreras	70	Paul Hindust	
Ken Turner		Ryle Hecum	
Paul Wise		Matt Siska	
Jim Black		Mark Bush	67
Lee Collins	67	Nick Derry	67
Dan Lucas		Mark Fish	
Nicah Wise		Matt Van Dier	
Brad Fry		Ryan Osborn	61
Scott Gohlsteche	67	Shawn Peangor	
Carlos Guerrero		AJ Kings	
Levi Brindley		Steve Schultz	
Jeff Nakwang	59	Tim Kasper	67
Brian Kishibony		Nic Lapinski	
Jeff Wanner		Ken Pierce	
Chad Kasanov		Jason Reetz	
Chris Kable	60	Jeff Helms	70
Paul Lawrence		Rich Pyle	
crutin zachone		Collin Romanick	
jean shaver		Jeff Smith	



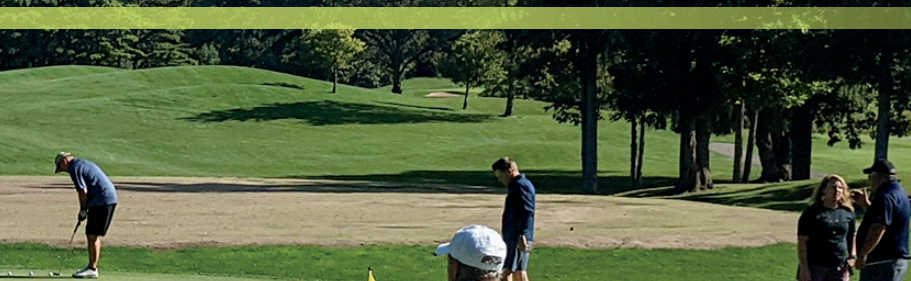
The 2021 MiGCSA STATE CHAMPIONSHIP

MiGCSA Class A Member Troy Looney hosted the 14th annual State Championship, the MiGCSA Major, on September 15th at The Emerald G.C. in St. Johns. This event is not just for those competing for the trophy there is also a 1 of 4 net team event so everyone can get in the game. The course was really in remarkable condition thanks to the great work by Troy and his staff.

The 2022 event was well contested with a few rounds in the 70's on a tough layout and set up. In the end the 2020 Champion defended his title, Josh Shaw, Superintendent at Timber Trace in Pickney with a 69. The low net champion was Dylan MacMaster, Superintendent at Lochmoors C.C. who shot a net 69 to win. Congratulations to both of our individual winners! The best 1 of 4 net game was won by the team of Adam Garr, Dylan MacMaster, Doug Johanningsmeier and Doug Palm with a 59. The long drive was won by Josha Shaw. The closest to the pins were won by Derek Koster, Chet VanDenburg and Jay Eccleton who had a hole in one on #4! The longest putt on #18 was won by Adam Garr.

With this win Josh will be heading to the Michigan Open in 2022 thanks to the exemption offered thanks to the Michigan PGA. Thank you to our 2021 Industry Partners for making events like these possible.







Adam Ikamas, CGCS

Thank you RON DAHLIN, CGCS

In 2006 I was asked to join the Northern Michigan Turf Managers Board of Directors. During this time there was talk of forming a statewide chapter. John Fulling was the tip of the spear with many right there with him from the other chapters like Steve Hammon, Dan Bissonette, Jay Eccleton, Tim Dorner, Rick Hakken, Kirk Carls, Mike Jones, Mike Mulkey, Greg Pattinson, Mike Morris, Jeff Holmes and Scott Pulaski to name a few (sorry if I missed anyone, it was a long time ago all of the sudden!). One of the most involved in every aspect of this transition was Ron Dahlin.

Ron was an absolute critical part of this process, His attention to detail as de facto secretary whipping out minutes in almost minutes, usually the evening of the meeting in deep detail. Simply put there is no way this chapter is where it is today without Ron. He is retiring from Grand Valley this winter and I have asked a few of the others involved in those early years to help me thank him for all he did for all of us.

MiGCSA Founder and 2009 President Steve Hammon: Ron's passion and dedication for improving the lives of golf course superintendents and their golf courses in Michigan and around the country is unmeasurable. The period of time that he spent leading the phosphorus use legislation in Lansing was just one of those examples of his strong leadership. Ron worked with the committee creating a plan, then educated and testified in front of the legislation on behalf of all golf properties in the state of Michigan.

This natural leadership really shined during the long road of merging four chapters in Michigan. Ron's style and sharp focus working through those tough obstacles to actually merge these groups together was a key part of the successful process and ultimately the merger.

I always admired Ron's family first focus. Ron is a great friend of mine, and I will continue to call on him when I need help in life with work or family.

MiGCSA Founder and 2010/11 President Jay Eccleton, CGCS: Organization, leadership, and communication are three ingredients to a true mentor. I would categorize Ron Dahlin as a great example of one. His continued support of the MiGCSA and his incredible dedication to the formation of this statewide organization has created the pathway for what we now know as the new normal. In the early stages of the formation of our MiGCSA state chapter, Ron dedicated enormous amounts of time and energy to the formation of By-laws, membership outreach, communication, and the overall organization of information and people resources to make this a reality.

As the MiGCSA Board of Directors is purely voluntary and the commitment of time is sometimes daunting, Ron never wavered in his passion to create something that gives back to his industry that he loves dearly. His acceptance of roles and responsibilities and his time on the Executive Board were as faced with many uncertain times as the association was developing its legs. As we look back at the success of the MiGCSA, we can never forget the contributions that Ron so graciously contributed.

I am sure so many others could share stories about Ron and his professional and personal impact he has had on so many people. I am a better person because of my time spent with Ron. I am happy for him and his family that he is retiring, and I look forward to his continued guidance for the chapter and for myself. Congratulations Ron!

Adam Ikamas, CGCS
MiGCSA Executive Director



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