



COURSE Conditions

Issue #50 - Q1 2021

Quarterly Publication of the Michigan Golf Course Superintendents Association



FEATURE SUPERINTENDENT

Daniel Graft
Travis Pointe Country Club

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Industry Partner: Steve Rebhan
2020 MiGCSA Scholarship Winners
MSU Turfgrass Alumni Update

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Superintendent at Travis Pointe Country Club. **Daniel Graft**

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Industry Partner: **Steve Rebhan**

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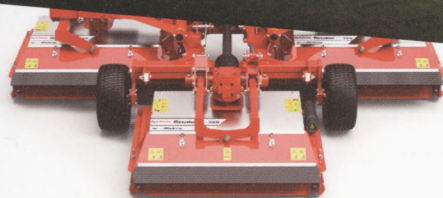
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President's PERSPECTIVE

Fellow MiGCSA Members,

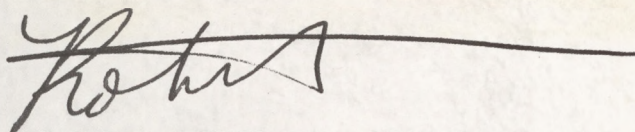
It has been an honor to serve as the President of the best GCSAA Chapter in the land, thank you! I cannot thank our Executive Director Adam Ikamas enough for all his hard work navigating a challenging year for the Association. Here is to hope that 2021 gets us closer to some type of normalcy.

The Spring of 2021 seems to have gone from zero to 100 overnight. This is the earliest I have even ran a nighttime irrigation cycle in my career. My Twitter feed was full of drought stress pictures in March. Behind every picture of drought stress is a Grounds Team member with a hose in their hand, doing what we do; adapting to whatever mother nature throws at us and overcoming adversity. I think the work ethic and ability to run through brick walls that every Superintendent seems to possess is what makes my most proud of what I do for a living. The number of challenging circumstances and problems you all solve daily is incredible.

I think the most challenging part of the coming year will be finding the employees we all need to produce outstanding conditions. I saw someone posted there were 185 Assistant Superintendent positions posted on the GCSAA website about a month ago. While this is a huge number, I am confident that we will all find a way to get the job done regardless of staffing levels. I am also hopeful that simple economic theory will soon kick in and we will see an uptick of Turfgrass Students. Golf posted record rounds in 2020, people who have not played in 10 years took the game up again. It will not be long until more people recognize golf can be a career path and there are more eager students ready to fill positions on our teams.

I wish Doug Ware the best as our 2021 President, with Adam, Ryan Moore and Doug Hoeh and the rest of the Board of Directors behind him; the Chapter is in great hands. I would also like to thank our Industry Partners for their continued support of the Association, their financial help allows us to think big when coming up with ideas how to better serve you the members of the MiGCSA.

Best Regards,



Rob Steger, CGCS





Doug Ware, Golf Course Superintendent with the City of Livonia to Lead Michigan Golf Course Superintendents

Doug Ware the Class A Golf Course Superintendent for the city of Livonia has been elected as the Michigan Golf Course Superintendents Association (MiGCSA) Chapter President for 2021.

The MiGCSA held its 13th annual meeting and elections on Wednesday February 24th via Zoom online meeting.

Other officers elected to the MiGCSA board include Vice President Ryan Moore of Forest Lake Country Club and Secretary/Treasurer Doug Hoeh from Treetops Resort.

The election marked the end of board service for Past President (2019) Jeff Sweet, CGCS from Bucks Run Golf Club. Our deepest gratitude for his service to our industry.

New members elected to the board include Craig McKinley from Bucks Run Golf Club and Ross Miller from Country Club of Detroit. This also marked the end of board service for John Tuckerman from The Ravines Golf Club, thank you John for your service.



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.

Turf Ventures is a major distributor of chemicals and supplies. The company philosophy emphasizes playability as guiding principle for agronomic decisions. Turf Ventures believes in common sense agronomic principles and proven cultural practices to ensure the success of its partners.

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Scholarship Winners

2020 MSU STUDENT Scholarship Winners

Spencer Cole



I am a junior at Michigan State, who enjoys the beach, hiking, traveling, and time with family and friends. After graduation, I want to stay in Michigan and be active in the turf industry. I aspire to grow the industry and bring awareness to youth about all the possibilities a turf degree can bring you. One day I would like to return

to West Michigan and replace my Dad, Harvey Cole, at The Falls at Barber Creek.

Jackson Severns



Hello, I am Jackson Severns a turf grass management student at Michigan State University, and I come from the city of DeWitt, Michigan. Growing up I've always enjoyed being outside and working outside which led me into the turfgrass field, where I have really felt at home. I Have had the opportunity to work on a handful of athletic fields as well as two golf courses both private and municipal which has given me a great

perspective so far. In the future I would like to further my experience working on golf courses. I would love to see the Maintenance practices implemented on courses across all regions of the country. Furthermore, I have set a goal to become a superintendent and manage a course of my own someday. Looking ahead I am excited for what the future may have in store and am eager to keep working towards my goal.

Payton Perkinson



Hello, my name is Payton Perkinson and I am currently a junior at Michigan State University. I am enrolled in a Bachelor of Science in Crop and Soil Science-Turfgrass Management program with a minor in Horticulture. My first experience working on a golf course was in 2019 and have worked at River Forest

Country Club in Elmhurst, IL, and Oakmont Country Club in Oakmont, PA. In April, I will be going back to start my internship at Oakmont Country Club. I am thrilled to have the opportunity this summer to work the 2021 U.S. Amateur. My ultimate career goal is to become a Superintendent at a golf course. When I am not studying or working on the golf course, I like to play golf and spend time with my friends and family.

Steven Page



My name is Steven Page and I am graduating from Michigan State this spring with a bachelor's degree in Crop and Soil Sciences with an emphasis on turfgrass management. I would like to thank the MiGCSA for

choosing me for one of the student scholarships this year and for all they do for the MSU turf program. After graduation I will be heading out to Shinnecock Hills Golf Club to be an Assistant Superintendent. I am looking forward to this next step in my turfgrass career and hope to make the MSU turf program proud.

Brendan Stuchell



My name is Brendan Stuchell and I am from Union City, Michigan. I attend Michigan State in the 4 year Turfgrass Management Program. My turf industry history has included working at Battle Creek Country Club and currently working as an intern at La Quinta Country Club in La Quinta, California. This summer I will be doing another internship at Arcadia Bluffs in Arcadia, Michigan. My future plans after I graduate is to start

looking for jobs as an Assistant Superintendent at a golf course. I would like to stay in Michigan, but I am willing to look outside of Michigan if needed. My long term goal is to become a Superintendent at a golf course. This scholarship will help me very much in the future as the cost of tuition is very high and I will be facing a lot of student loan debt. I believe this scholarship will help me reach my goals. For that I am thankful I was chosen as a recipient.

2020 HERITAGE Scholarship Winners

Meghan Roznowski



My name is Meghan Roznowski daughter of Jason Roznowski, superintendent of Red Hawk Golf Club. I graduated from Alpena High School in the spring of 2020, and I am currently working towards a Political Science degree at Grand Valley State University. I hope to use my degree to help others find their voice and make a positive impact on society.

I will put this scholarship towards my tuition for next fall. Winning this award means that I get to continue working towards something that I love knowing that I have even more people supporting me. Thank you MiGCSA for supporting members and their families through the Heritage Scholarship Program.



2020 HERITAGE Scholarship Winners — Continued

Caitlin Dahlin



My name is Caitlin Dahlin and I am currently a Sophomore at Grand Valley State University. I am in my first semester of GVSU's Bachelor of Science in Nursing program and am pursuing a minor in Spanish. I plan on using this scholarship to offset the cost of a joint Spanish and

Healthcare study abroad in Chile. If Dad gets lucky then maybe, I'll take him and his MiGSCA hat with me abroad. Thank you for the opportunity!

David Pulaski



Graduating last year from Petoskey High School, I now find myself into my second semester at Michigan State University. I plan to major

in either Finance or Accounting after my Sophomore year. I look forward to putting the scholarship money towards my books and other school necessities in the coming three years.

Caleb Keilen



I am currently a freshman at Oakland Community College, and I plan to major in Supply Chain Management at Michigan

State University. I enjoy reading, golfing, and working on the staff at Knollwood Country Club. From time management to problem solving, working on the maintenance staff at Knollwood has taught me valuable life lessons. I believe those life lessons have made me into a more well-rounded person. I am grateful to have been selected as a scholarship recipient in 2021, and I want to thank MiGCSA for supporting continuing education.

Joseph Wilczynski



My name is Joseph Wilczynski and I am a senior at Saline High School. Next fall, I will be attending Michigan State University where I will be majoring in the 4 year Crop and Soil Sciences Turfgrass program. I am honored that the MiGCSA has selected me as a recipient of the Heritage scholarship. As a third generation Spartan, I have always wanted to attend Michigan

State University and have worked very hard to be accepted to this program. The Heritage scholarship is very important to me as I will be using it to help fund my education in a field, I am very passionate about. Thank you, MiGCSA for your support!

Aidan Goike



I am from Alpena Michigan, and go to Delta College. This is my second year at Delta, and I have also been playing baseball here. This scholarship is very important to

me as it will help me with college expenses. With playing baseball at Delta, I do not have the time to work a job, for that reason I am thankful for this scholarship. This scholarship will also help my expenses when I transfer from Delta either this year or next year to pursue a business degree. It means a lot to me to receive this scholarship, I am beyond thankful for this opportunity.

Hailey Kempf



I am currently a senior at Grandville High School, and I'm involved in cross country, marching

band, National Honor Society, student council, and my school's Be Nice chapter. I've been accepted to

the University of Michigan, where I plan to pursue a degree in chemical engineering and eventually become a scientific researcher. Receiving this scholarship will open up many opportunities to expand my academic interests throughout my college career. I'm excited to have been chosen as a recipient of this award, and am grateful for the generosity of the MiGCSA to help students like myself further our education.

Luke Hammon



My name is Luke Hammon, I am a freshman at Michigan State University. I am currently studying to become a Biosystems Engineer with hopes of making great changes for our planet in my future.

This scholarship will assist my tuition and housing costs, and will help me in my journey of becoming the engineer I have always dreamed of being. I am extremely grateful to receive the Heritage Scholarship, not only for the financial aid, but the high honor this scholarship rewards. Thank you MiGCSA!



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2021 Event Calendar

All events are subject to change in date and/or location.

Please check www.MiGCSA.org for all the latest event information



MTF Events in Green
GCSAA Events in Silver
Wee One Event in Blue
Volunteer Opportunities in Red

Monday, March 1 – 2021 Match Play Championship Registration Opens

Sunday, April 25 – May 9 – Tee Times for Turf Online Auction Live

Wednesday, April 28 - Spring Opener (Railside Golf Club, Byron Center)

Monday, May 24 – Wee One Fundraiser (Wyndgate Country Club, Rochester Hills)

Sunday, June 6 – Northern Fundraiser (Arcadia Bluffs - South Course, Arcadia)

Monday, June 7 - Northern Fundraiser (Arcadia Bluffs – Bluffs Course, Arcadia)

Tuesday, June 15 - Oakland Hills Construction Tour (Oakland Hills C.C., Bloomfield Hills)

June 17 - June 20 - Meijer LPGA Classic (Blythefield C.C., Belmont)

Wednesday, June 23 - LaFontaine Golf Outing (Coyote Preserve, Fenton)

June 28 – July 4 - Rocket Mortgage Classic (Detroit Golf Club, Detroit)

July 11 - July 17 - DOW Great Lakes Bay Invitational (Midland C.C., Midland)

Wednesday, August 11 – MTF Field Day (Hancock Turfgrass Center, East Lansing)

Thursday, August 12 - MiGCSA State Championship (The Emerald, St. Johns)

August 23 - August 29 - The Ally Challenge, by McLaren (Warwick Hills G&C.C., Grand Blanc)

August 28- September 2 - 66th U.S. Senior Amateur (Country Club of Detroit, Grosse Pointe)

Thursday, September 2 - The Tuck Tate Shootout (Treetops, Gaylord)

Monday, September 20 - Western Golf Day (Spring Lake C.C., Spring Lake)

Week of September 27 – Assistant Superintendent Championship (TBD)

Monday, October 4 - The Big Event (Orchard Lake Country Club, Bloomfield Hills)

Tuesday, October 19 - The MI-OH Matches (Sylvania Country Club, Sylvania OH)

Friday, December 3 - Detroit Holiday Party (The Lodge at Keego Harbor, Keego Harbor)

Thursday, December 9 - Northern Holiday Party (Buffalo Wild Wings, Traverse City)

Friday, December 10 - West Holiday Party (Big E's Sports Bar, Grand Rapids)

Friday, December 17 - Mid Holiday Party (Goodrich C.C., Goodrich)

Tues-Thurs, Jan. 5 - 7 - Michigan Turf Conference (Kellogg Center, East Lansing)

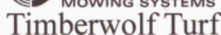
Wednesday, January 19 - Curling Fundraiser (Detroit Curling Club, Ferndale)

Mon-Fri, February 5-10, 2022- Golf Industry Show (San Diego, CA)

Wednesday, February 9 – Michigan Gathering (TBD, San Diego)

Wednesday & Thursday, March 2 - 3 - The Spring Meeting (Boyne Mountain, Boyne Falls)

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Retirements

Gary Thommes, CGCS Retires After Career of Caring, Sharing

Gary Thommes started his career in golf at Lake Doster Golf Club in Plainwell by picking the range, doing bag room duties, helping in the pro shop and working on the grounds crew. It was 1971.

"Back then we were allowed to work without shirts on the grounds crew and to be able to work for money and get a tan at the same time was perfect for a summertime job," he said.

Thommes retired last fall as the golf course superintendent at Red Run Golf Club in Royal Oak, a position he held for 38 years while tanning and working with his shirt on.

"I can't say enough how rewarding it has been working in the golf industry and meeting some of the nicest people ever," he said. "The sharing of information among colleagues is unprecedented."

Thommes grew up with golf-loving parents, went to Plainwell High School and then off to Michigan State University where he changed majors a few times, enthusiastically enjoyed the college experience and graduated five years later with a marketing degree.

During his MSU days he found himself in need of money and applied for work at nearby Walnut Hills Country Club. Kurt Thuemmel, the superintendent, didn't see a need for a business student on his staff especially with MSU turf program students at his disposal, but Thommes made a convincing experience-based argument.

"It took a lot of convincing and he reluctantly hired me and I ended up working for three seasons at Walnut Hills," Thommes said.

After graduating he moved to Phoenix, Ariz., with a classmate, but his marketing interviews yielded no income and he ended up working in golf at McCormick Ranch and then the Arizona Biltmore Club. It prompted



Michelle and Gary Thommes

him to call Kurt Thuemmel at Walnut Hills, who had previously suggested MSU's turfgrass management degree, and it was back to MSU in 1980 with Thuemmel's help navigating the program's waiting list.

Thommes said his two years in the program were memorable.

"My internship was at Oswego Lake Country Club in Portland and I rode a bike to work every day and didn't even own a car at the time," he said. "I was using any money for tuition and books. My second year in the turf program I studied like I was in law school and read every book cover-to-cover from all the great authors like Jim Beard and Al Turgeon."

A GCSAA scholarship and the Norm Kramer award from Michigan Turfgrass Foundation pushed him along, he purchased "a very old car" and started sending out applications.

"I applied at Red Run Golf Club and was hired in the spring of 1982 as an assistant and after two years I was promoted to become the golf course superintendent at a golf course that was built in 1914 by Willie Park Jr.," he said. "Red Run had a lot of history of golf in general and hosted several PGA events back in the mid-fifties."



At the time Thommes took over, Red Run had some condition challenges in a time when spraying fairways for Anthracnose was a huge cost item, and the budget did not include preventative treatments for Antennaria and Aphodius grubs.

"Red Run was fortunate to have four committed greens committee members that insisted on getting the funding needed to improve turf conditions and they were on a mission," he said.

An aggressive sand topdressing program, a proper chemical budget, better mowers and more staff followed. The first real construction project under Thommes watch was the result of three wells that fed the irrigation pond.

"The water quality was just short of ocean water with sodium levels off the charts and not suited for growing much of anything," he said. "The need for more funding for city water was recognized along with our irrigation pond capacity being nil."

Mark Caverly excavated the pond in 1986, Red Run bought their own bulldozer for course improvements

including new tee boxes and that led to a new wall-to-wall irrigation system designed by Carol Colein and new bunkers designed by architects Raymond Hearn and Paul Albanese in 2000.

"The golf course took on a whole new appearance with large and deep bunkers with flashed sand on slopes throughout the golf course," Thommes said. "The golf course also took on a completely new golfing strategy and we started hosting more and more events throughout the state with GAM events such as the Michigan Amateur two separate times and then a national event with the Western Junior Amateur in the year 2016."

Thommes said a major achievement in his time at Red Run with the committee was the installation of reverse osmosis system that would produce up to 180,000 gallons of pure water daily for use as irrigation for the golf course. Piped through the three existing wells the system eliminated the need to purchase city water for irrigation at well over \$100,000 per year. Red Run invested \$300,000 in the system and in just the last seven years with greatly improved turf the savings has been over \$1 million.

He has witnessed multiple changes in his time in the industry like more frequent intervals for topdressing, less pulling of gang mowers for rough areas, new sit-down rollers for better prices, better machinery, vertical turbines, water sensors, system controls via a phone, bunker drainage and erosion control, cultural practices, equipment design, improved pesticides and more.

"Those things have taken the industry to a level where daily perfection is now the norm," he exclaimed.

As for his longevity in this business, he said there is no magic.

"Well, other than remembering mostly that the golf course is the members and not yours to manage as you see fit," he said. "The complexity of maintaining a private club at a high level is when all departments cross boundaries to succeed on a daily basis and there is no 'that's not my job'."

Thommes recommends developing a team approach with set values, having a mission statement, and setting goals.



Neil, Gary and Nic Thommes

"When the golf course is at its best, say less, when the golf course is need of improvement, have a structured plan for improvement and communicate, communicate, communicate," he said.

Thommes said no matter what happens he advises superintendents to never lose their cool.

"Don't use expletives, stay calm and be in control of each situation as it arises and build a great and flexible team that is there to help your through any situation. Mother Nature will always test your patience over time in this business and there is no defense to that and she can beat you down to submission. Sometimes it really is what it is, but never give up and remember that you can't change things that happen to you, you can only change how you react to it."

Thommes said his wife Michelle still has her career in the pro shop for the next several years so they plan to stay in Michigan most of the time and travel during the winter months to a warmer climate. He also wants to spend more time with their sons Nicholas and Neil, play more golf, do more reading and he recently started playing pickle ball.

He can also share this did-you-know item:

A native of New Jersey, the son of William and Nancy, his aunt Elaine was married to a Thomson while his mom married a Thommes. The Thomson in the family was Bobby Thomson, the baseball player from the New York Giants that hit the home run famed as 'the shot heard around the world' against the Dodgers in 1951.



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Jim Olli RETIREES

Hands down Jim Olli's favorite job on a golf course was hands on.

"My favorite job has always been cutting cups," he said. "I used this as a way of evaluating the overall health of the greens while it also gave me a look at how all the equipment was functioning and kept me available to supervise the maintenance crew."

Olli, 69 and the superintendent at Michaywe' Pines Golf Course in Gaylord for the last 20 years, announced his retirement recently after working on a golf course for 48 years, including the last 37 as a superintendent and 25 as a Certified Golf Course Superintendent (CGCS) in stops at Grandview Golf Club in Kalkaska, The Loon, Lake and Classic courses in the Gaylord area, Marquette Golf Club and Grand Traverse Resort's Spruce Run.

Instead of cutting cups, he plans to knock a few more golf balls into them by playing the game more often along with a little cycling and cross-country skiing.

"I've always played golf, but in recent years not as much as I used to because I watched my daughter play a lot of soccer," he said. "I enjoyed that, and I'm looking forward to playing more golf."





Olli and his wife Marne, a licensed professional counselor in private practice, have four daughters (Jessica, Susan, Stefanie and Reagan) and nine grandchildren.

"We're not going anywhere," he said. "We've had our home on Opal Lake for 25 years. It's home, and it was a short commute to the golf course the last 20 years – about two miles."

Judy Mason, the head golf professional at Michaywe' is counting on seeing Olli often just as she has counted on his work over the years.

"Over decades he has always presented pristine conditions on every course he worked at," Mason said.

"I've worked at three facilities over the years with him and at every course I where I worked with him I was so proud to stand in the pro shop behind the counter because I always had such great confidence in the course conditions he consistently produced over many decades."

Mason said he made her job easier.

"With him as a partner, with me in the shop and with him on the course I always felt confident we were giving the best golf course we could to the customers. I felt bad because I would hear all the compliments about the course as golfers came in. I would try to pass them on to him and there was a consistent flow of positive comments over the years."

Olli grew up in Livonia in suburban Detroit and started in the turf business as a seasonal laborer for the City of Livonia golf courses while he was attending Schoolcraft College. Two years there led to a full-time job with the city's Whispering Willows Golf Course and his career path was set. His education also continued at North Central Michigan College in Petoskey, winter short courses in turf management at Michigan State University and Ohio State, and he has attended over 20 GCSAA educational seminars and over 20 Michigan Turf Conferences and 10 National Turf Conferences.

He worked for Mike Garvale, who he considers his mentor, first at the then Sugarloaf Golf Course in Cedar and then at Grand Traverse Resort as his assistant.

"We grew in the new nine on Spruce Run, did other golf construction and grow-in projects and hosted two Michigan Opens," Olli said.

His parents are natives of the Upper Peninsula and he especially enjoyed his time at Marquette Golf Club.

"Great people and avid golfers, they would come out in the spring and shag balls between snow piles," he said. "They do handle golf carts differently. We had over 100 member-owned golf carts so there was a mix of every different make and model of golf cart that you could imagine.

Golfers in the U.P. haul their golf carts to different courses in pickup trucks or on small trailers and most courses would have a loading/unloading ramps."

His favorite work story is what he described as a call-in, can't make it to work story.

"I had an employee call me early in the morning telling me he wouldn't be in to work," he said. "It seems that he was out late partying on Mackinac Island, lost track of time and missed the last boat off the island. He was stranded until the boats started running in the morning."

Olli takes pride in not leaving his employers stranded over the years. Mike Normand, who first started working for him in 1989 at Marquette GC and in recent years has been the equipment manager at Michaywe' is taking the helm as superintendent.

"He's been a super on his own before, has a turf degree from Michigan State, the course will be in good hands," he said.

Over the years Olli is pleased that the golf industry has changed for the better by promoting that they strive to



be good stewards of the land, and he offers these words of wisdom to young superintendents: "Keep up with technology as best as you can and surround yourself with talented people."

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Relationship Goals, An Architect's Perspective on Post Renovation Success

BY ANDY STAPLES, ASGCA

PHOTO CREDIT: @THE_FRIED_EGG



Over the past few years, the golf architecture geekdom has expanded significantly. Websites, podcasts, blogs and social media, have brought this very small but global industry to the hearts and minds of passionate golfers everywhere. It's no surprise course renovations receive much of the attention, but an aspect of renos that seldom gets discussed, is the crucial role the superintendent plays in helping the architect orchestrate these projects for long-term success.

Although the architect gets the lion's share of the praise when reno projects go well, the clubs that maintain their praiseworthiness over many years, owe such accolades to the combined efforts of the superintendent and their staff. *Golf architecture shines the brightest when superintendents are integral in developing the design intent, and successfully bridge the art with the science through superior course maintenance practices.* Simply put, great superintendents make good architects look great, and great architects look even better.

Speaking candidly as a golf architect, I can attest to the existence of countless Golden Aged courses that were gems in their heyday (as well as courses from other eras), which have now succumbed to unintended





changes for the worst, based on the slow erosion of the understanding of the original design intent. These misfortunes occur due to shifting maintenance practices from: budget reductions, lack of training in staff, the best intentions of over-reaching stakeholders, unsaid maintenance nuances from retiring superintendents, and even yes, poor original design.

It's my opinion that for a golf course to have the best chance of having its design integrity maintained, the architect needs to get on the same page with the superintendent from the very start. But even further, it's important we as architects document our design intentions through something like a *Design Guideline* or *Operating Manual*, created in partnership with the superintendent.

It's always the architect's hope the superintendent appreciates our vision and are earnest in their intentions of maintaining the design integrity. From our perspective, it's paramount the superintendent has a vested interest in developing an operating manual. While I won't pretend every superintendent/ golf architect relationship establishes a dream-team, but long-term success requires both parties to do everything they can to come together.

With the above being said, I'd like to use a recent project of mine, Meadowbrook Country Club in Northville, MI, near Detroit, as an example of

what I'm proposing as a best practice. MCC is undoubtedly one of the project's I'm most proud of, and the process we developed there has been instrumental in my convictions on the present subject. There's no doubt our project's sustained success has absolutely been borne out thanks to Jared Milner's maintenance regimes we developed in our *Operating Manual*.

Aside from the bigger infrastructure improvements like new greens, tees and bunkers, along with the miles of new drainage, new turf, and tree management, there are a number of maintenance aspects that really make the course shine.

The most critical aspect of our renovation was to improve how the course plays, focusing much of our effort to what happens to the golf ball once it hits the ground. Therefore, to ensure the course's new playing surfaces provide this exact playability, our manual stressed: grass be cut at the appropriate height, the correct amount of drainage installed, water be managed properly, and the high-play areas be top-dressed regularly (almost like an extension of the putting green). These are the types of nuances critical to ensuring the new design is maximized to its fullest.

Another guideline that made its way into the manual, was to ensure Meadowbrook continued to be known for the greens. Matching the everyday green speeds with the slopes of the

putting surface design was as important as any aspect of our design. Our work focused on building putting surfaces with unique shapes and contours to provide interest for all skill levels. The maintenance regime has continued to produce an incredible surface that highlight the green slopes, while not letting the speeds get out of control.

Lastly, many of the most dramatic changes to the course involved the integration of design concepts found on some of the oldest, most classic courses in the world. As an example, the new 3rd green is a green inspired by the 4th hole at Huntercombe Golf Club (the home course of the original architect, Willie Park Jr., outside of London). This green features a design that harkens back to the turn of the century, with a unique back level, lowered by almost 4 feet to create a punch bowl effect within the putting surface. The green is flanked on the left with a rather ordinary looking fescue berm that serves as

separator to the 4th tee, while directing drainage from the surrounding home sites and away from the putting surface. The presentation of this green exemplifies the balance of aesthetics and overall design style with the expectations of quality conditions, and playable shot making. There are many other examples across the course, but this green happens to be my favorite, in large part due to the maintenance product Jared and his staff deliver every day, again, as outlined in our manual.

In closing, most of us architects, the design geeks that we are, stress detail and work hard to match our design to the unique qualities of a site while integrating the vision and objectives of the owner and stakeholders during master planning. It's my opinion our responsibility as architects is to work together with the superintendent in order to protect the long-term vision for the course which we all set out to create. In the end, it's this relationship that really matters most.

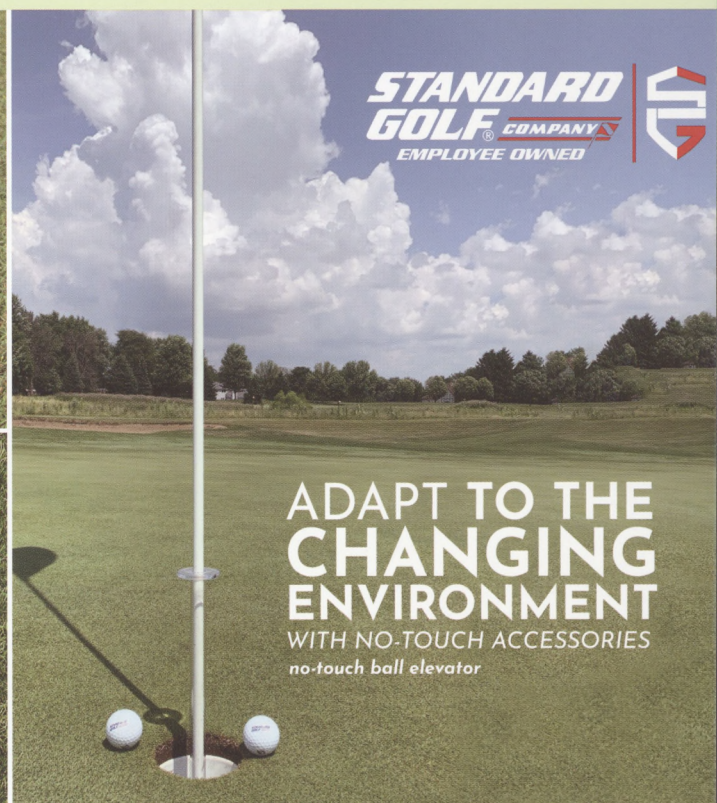


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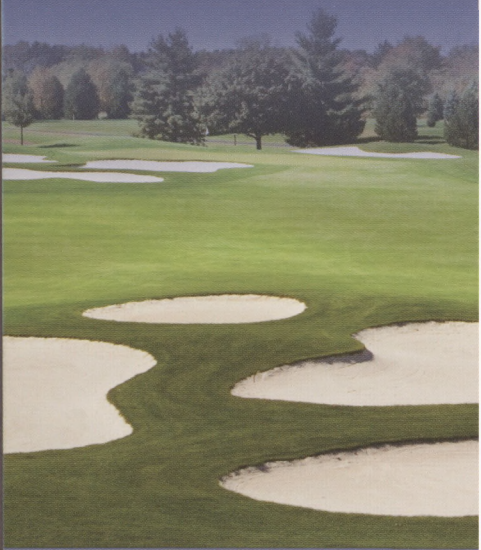
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DANIEL Graft

Daniel Graft has been on the turf staff at Travis Pointe Country Club for 10 years and took over as the superintendent in 2019. A graduate of Michigan State's turf program, he started working on golf courses at the age of 16 and was a superintendent at Willow Wood Golf Club in Portland, Mich., by age 21. The 36-year-old Graft and his wife Kimberly have been married for eight years and they have three children; Jocelyn, who is 7, Payton, who is 3, and one who is due this summer.



- 1 HOW DID YOU BECOME INVOLVED IN THE GOLF BUSINESS?** A golf course was built right next to my grandparent's house out in the country. I went over and applied for a spot on the grounds crew and fell in love with it.
- 2 WHEN DID YOU DECIDE YOU WANTED GOLF TO BE YOUR CAREER?** At the age of 18. It took a while to get into MSU due to the high demand at that point in time, but I finally made it.
- 3 WHAT ARE SOME OF THE COURSES YOU HAVE WORKED AT?** Willow Wood Golf Club, 6 years; Walnut Hills Country Club, 3 years; Milwaukee Country Club, 1 season (internship); Travis Pointe Country Club - 10 years.

- 4 WHAT PART OF YOUR EDUCATION DO YOU USE THE MOST?** I would say math. We are always using math for our spray applications, budgeting, ordering (chemicals, sod, sand and soil) and figuring out square footages. Also disease identification would be a close second.
- 5 HOW HAS YOUR JOB AT YOUR CURRENT COURSE PROGRESSED?** I started as the Assistant Superintendent in 2011. In 2019, I took over for the Golf Course Superintendent (John Seefeldt) when he retired.
- 6 WHAT ARE YOUR EXPECTATIONS OF THE MICHIGAN GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENTS ASSOCIATION?** They are a fantastic resource for us to use, whether it's for networking or





research. They are the standard and set the bar in leadership in the country. Even though I don't get to attend things as much as I would like, I appreciate all they do for us. We are lucky to have them.

generation any chance I get, whether that's helping someone get started on this as a career choice or just informing the general public of what we do. Also, having one of my children play golf would be very rewarding to me as well.

This last year, I would have to say the hardest part of the job was dealing with COVID-19. With all the guidelines constantly changing and having to quarantine employees twice, it was a challenge.

7 WHAT IS YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH THE MICHIGAN TURFGRASS FOUNDATION? I think the work and research that they do is top notch. I love attending the MTF conference in the winter and seeing all of the research that the professors have done to help us be more successful in our jobs.

9 DO YOU HAVE HOBBIES OR SPECIAL INTERESTS AWAY FROM THE GAME? I love spending time with my family and watching sports. I am a big NFL guy and avid diehard Detroit Lions fan. I have a tendency to drink the Kool-Aid every year.

11 WHAT IS THE EASIEST PART OF YOUR JOB? Watching the sunrise and seeing the instant results of all the work everyone puts in. Nothing beats it.

8 DO YOU FEEL LIKE YOU HAVE GIVEN BACK TO GOLF? I feel like it's still a work in progress. Every day we give back in the aspect of providing excellent playing conditions for the golfers. I want to grow the profession for today's

10 WHAT IS THE HARDEST PART OF YOUR JOB? In my first year it was balancing work with family time. I wanted to be at the course all the time but being a father means the world to me. I have figured out a great balance between the two now.

12 WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST ISSUES FACING GOLF? I think there are a few issues we face today and two of the biggest are staffing and wages. Finding staff to hire can be a challenge especially when the interest in working in the game has declined and you can't pay as much as other businesses. There are a lot of golf courses closing due to lack of revenue.



5 THINGS PEOPLE MAY NOT KNOW ABOUT ME

1. I survived a car accident that I shouldn't have.
2. I was a model when I was a child.
3. I was an extra in the Batman vs. Superman movie.
4. I have a 13-year-old brother.
5. I love antique tractors.

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Assistant superintendents are getting out of the business due to the long hours and not enough compensation. With the cost of living going up and wages not, it can make it tough career to get your footing.

13 IS THERE RESEARCH YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE ACCOMPLISHED IN TURFGRASS MANAGEMENT?

There is so much research being done today that helps Supers and make our jobs easier. There is no particular one that stands out. The industry is always changing whether it is technology, better chemicals or more precise equipment. All that helps make our jobs easier.

14 WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN 10 YEARS?

I am just the third superintendent in 43 years at Travis Pointe Country Club, so hopefully I will still be here in 10 years. It is a great family-oriented club that allows my family to be part of the Travis Pointe family. Family means the world to me, so the club allowing them to be a part of my professional career is something I don't take for granted and appreciate.

15 HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE REMEMBERED 100 YEARS FROM NOW?

As a hardworking, loving, caring husband, father, and grandfather.

16 WHO HAS INFLUENCED YOU THE MOST IN YOUR PERSONAL LIFE?

In the early stages it would be a man by the name of Kurt Grost. He

took a chance on a 16-year-old curious kid and turned me on to this path. He showed me the course operations and helped spark my interest into this profession. Starting my career with him was very insightful and helped get me to where I am today. The second person would be my former boss, John Seefeldt. He hired me in at Travis Pointe out of college and helped me grow into the position and superintendent I am today. Lastly would be my family. They have shown their full support and love every step of the way. Without these people, I would not be where I am today. I appreciate everything they have done and endured more than they will ever know.

17 WHAT IS THE MOST VALUABLE THING YOU'VE LEARNED THAT YOU USE ALL THE TIME?

Adaptation. With our profession the weather can make things difficult on us and sometimes things don't go as planned and you need to learn how to adapt on the fly. Also, this last year COVID-19 was something that we had to adapt to while the rules and regulations were changing throughout the year in the state.

18 HOW DO YOU RATE THE IMPORTANCE OF A SUPERINTENDENT IN A GOLF OPERATION?

Obviously I think it is very important. He's the head coach of the operation and we as superintendents have to answer to the members whether it is good or bad. We provide the everyday direction of the club to ensure our



members get the best playing conditions we can provide. If the members come off the course and they are happy, then we are doing our job. Of course without a good staff our job is impossible. I am lucky to have such a great staff surrounding me.

- 19 WHAT PERCENTAGE OF TIME DO YOU DEVOTE TO NON-AGRONOMIC GOLF COURSE MANAGEMENT?** I would say about 30-35 percent. With technology I think we spend a little more time in the office responding to emails from members and vendors, keeping track of our budgeting, and hosting committee meeting virtually.



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20 WHAT IS YOUR OPINION OF THE ROLE OF AN ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT? Having an assistant superintendent is a huge benefit to our jobs. I am lucky to have two outstanding assistants (Colin Zegarzewski and John Jones) who step up every day and give Travis Pointe their all. It is nice having the extra set of eyes, hands, and dedication to make the club the best it can be. It also allows us who have children to be there a little more for our kids, which is very important. I think most superintendents can agree that our jobs would be harder without them.

21 WHAT IS YOUR OPINION OF THE ROLE OF THE GOLF COURSE MECHANIC OR TECHNICIAN? They are very important. The mechanic is the lifeline of your equipment. Obviously having a crisp clean cut and maintaining the equipment goes without saying. Also, at a club like ours where we tend to have some older pieces of equipment, having someone who is excellent at maintaining those older pieces means we can use them longer than their recommended shelf life.

22 WHAT IS YOUR OPINION OF GOLFERS WALKING VERSUS RIDING IN A CART TO PLAY? Well since the game started with walking only, I think that is the best way to enjoy the game. However, with the working members today trying to get a quick round in after work or before getting the kids, I understand the usefulness of riding in a cart. I am guilty of it as well.

23 WHAT IS YOUR BIGGEST PET PEEVE IN GOLF COURSE ETIQUETTE? We have cart paths on most of the holes throughout the golf course. So when we put out "carts on path only" signs after it rains and people drive around the signs and through puddles in the fairway just to get closer to their ball, it can be irritating at times.

24 WHAT OPINION DO YOU HAVE OF GREEN SPEEDS IN TODAY'S GAME? I feel that it is something that golfers think about way too much. People watch golf tournaments on TV and want greens to be as fast as the tour course. We try to keep green speed around 11 through the peak

season. I feel you have to be reasonable with the speeds due to all the different skill levels and types of players.

25 DO YOU HAVE A HUMOROUS OR INTERESTING STORY YOU CAN SHARE FROM YOUR CAREER? Growing up watching golf the first thing I noticed about golf courses was the stripes. Any time I mowed my grandparent's four-acre yard I would try to make the nicest, straightest stripes I could because I wanted it to look like a golf course. In my first year working for Kurt Grost, and being young and ignorant, I asked him why we didn't use fleet of Simplicity lawn mowers to mow the rough because they striped so beautiful. After the guys teased me about it that summer, I later learned that they make golf course equipment that already does that. LOL.



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BY SHANE CONROY AND GCSAA STAFF

As the Golf Industry Show concluded this year in its virtual format, the first-class education, special events and association business were still very much a part of the show.

The education component of the event featured 88 sessions, and more than 200 exhibitors were part of the trade show.

“Like so many organizations this year, a virtual show was uncharted territory for us, and frankly it was difficult to project how our traditional attendance would translate to the virtual world, so we are extremely pleased with the very enthusiastic response,” GCSAA CEO Rhett Evans said. “I was particularly excited to see that many facilities that took advantage of our All-Access package for everyone on the team. It really shows the desire for education for every member of the facility, and we hope our curriculum helps enhance their careers and facilities.”

Jim Nantz, three-time Emmy winner and lead anchor of CBS Sports’ golf team, received GCSAA’s 2021 Old Tom Morris award. He joined the GIS live from his home in California during the [Opening Session on Feb. 2](#), which was presented in partnership with Syngenta. The [General Session: Managing the Challenges of Disruptive Change](#) on Feb. 3, which was sponsored in partnership with Bayer, featured Evans, PGA Tour Commissioner Jay Monahan, LPGA Commissioner Michael Whan, USGA CEO Mike Davis and PGA of America CEO Seth Waugh in a live discussion of golf’s reaction to the pandemic and how the golf industry is moving forward.

On Feb. 4, the key players of the PGA Frisco gathered virtually for a live discussion on the project during



the [General Session: Behind the Scenes at PGA Frisco](#), which was presented in partnership with the Toro Company.

Mark F. Jordan, CGCS, a 34-year GCSAA member and superintendent at Westfield Country Club in Westfield Center, Ohio, was elected to a one-year term as president. Mark is the 85th president in the association’s history.

“As Col. John Morley was establishing GCSAA in 1926, he used the altruistic principles of justice, faithful brotherhood and generous benevolence as foundational elements. These timeless principles continue to guide the association today,” Jordan said. “I am humbled and honored to lead this same organization that Col. Morley and every single president before me has led.”

Other elected officers were Kevin P. Breen, CGCS and golf course superintendent at La Rinconada Country Club in Los Gatos, Calif., as vice president, and Kevin P. Sunderman, CGCS, director of grounds at Isla Del Sol Yacht and Country Club in St. Petersburg, Fla., as secretary/treasurer.

Board members Jeff L. White, CGCS and superintendent at Indian Hills Country Club in Mission Hills, Kan.; T.A. Barker, CGCS and superintendent at Fore Lakes Golf Course in Taylorsville, Utah; and Paul L. Carter, CGCS and superintendent at Bear Trace at Harrison Bay in

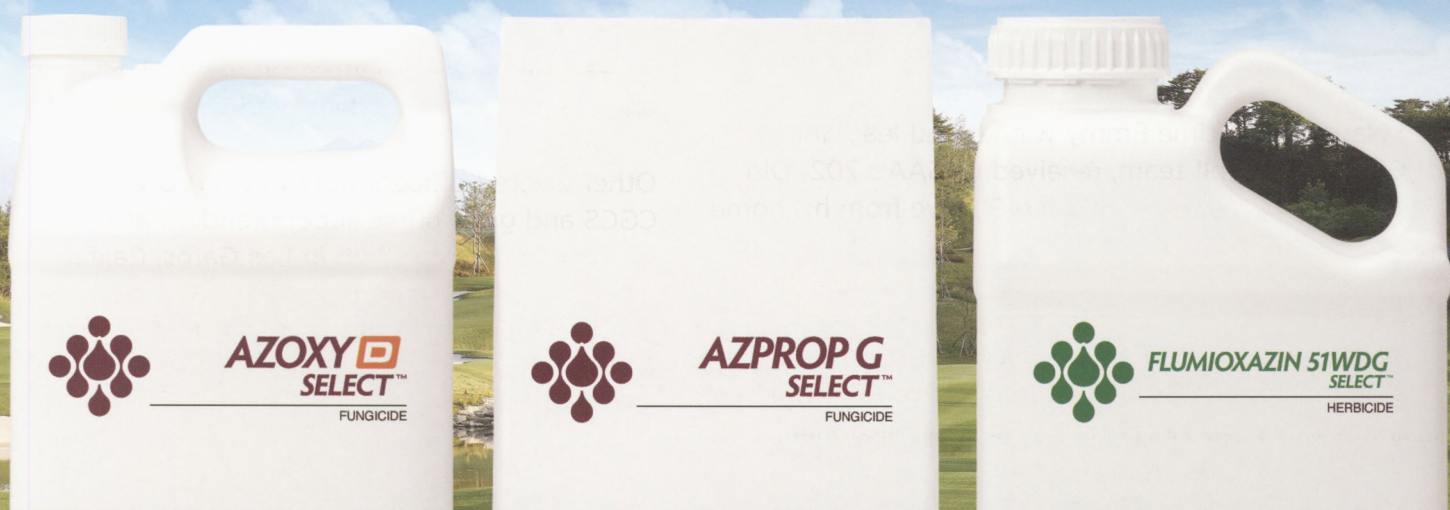
Harrison, Tenn., were elected to serve again, while Marc E. Weston, CGCS and superintendent at Indian Hill Country Club in Newington, Conn., was newly elected to the board.

Douglas D. Dykstra, CGCS, golf course superintendent at White Mountain Country Club in Pinetop, Ariz., will continue his board service, while MiGCSA's own, John R. Fulling Jr., CGCS, will

serve as immediate past president. Past president Rafael Barajas, CGCS and the director of golf course operations at Boca Grove Golf and Tennis Club in Boca Raton, Fla., retired from board service.

And please mark your calendars as the 2022 Golf Industry Show is currently scheduled to be an in-person event in San Diego Feb. 5-10, 2022, at the San Diego Convention Center.

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MSU Turfgrass Alumni Update

BY DR. TREY ROGERS

Greetings from the (Empty) Land of Green and (it is all gone now) White,

To call the past school year unusual would be an insult to the word unusual. My beginning

turfgrass class had 16 students, 10 from the IAT programs and 6 in our BS program. (We were down from 14 in IAT, since 4 decided to defer to Fall 2021.) Since we were 100% on-line, our only thoughts were to send each student the 16 grasses we needed them to learn, seeds for our germination studies, and a grow light (needed that back). I thought for the most part they hung in there with learning the grasses and got some valuable lessons regarding overwatering. Of course, (Now Dr.) Thomas Green was invaluable with his assistance as well as TA, Jackie Guevara. I was quite proud of the efforts of all the students. They really gave me all they had considering the circumstances.

In October 2020, it became clear to me that things were not going to get any better for spring 2021 and we were not going to be any different from fall in terms of on-line teaching. so, we took matters in our own hands and started making calls to courses in California, Arizona, Texas and Florida to see if we could get these students to a golf course for the winter. Heck, why be in the house taking classes when we could be taking the same classes and working on a golf course, making money and getting experience? So, when classes started in January, we started the 'great experiment'. There were 6 students in California, 4 in Arizona, one in Texas, and 6 in Florida all working and full-time in class. The students had classes with faculty on Tuesday and Thursday mornings to accomplish necessary

classwork. Since this is a heavy lab semester, and we cannot perform hands on labs easily, we used the technicians and specialists at these golf courses as our adjunct instructors.

The semester has ended and most of the students have headed to their respective summer internship courses. Three students chose to stay the full time at their winter course. All in all, things went quite well. The students appreciated the hands-on learning, and what it was truly like to work and go to school full time. And they were not cold!

Of course, this now begs the logical question, 'will we utilize this model in the future'? I know we are discussing this very idea right now. It would provide a very good alternative for the right type of student, and it would be an attractive option to several. The idea of offering both traditional classroom and this 'Crewship' model is not difficult, as offering synchronistic classes via zoom while in the traditional classroom does not seem as far fetched as it did one year ago. Stay tuned.

Keep looking for lost souls.
Trey Rogers

There is plenty of room in all Programs for Students!

Deadlines for Applications is July 2021!

In fall 2019, the administration of the Golf and Sports Turf admissions changed the application process to 100% on-line. Most of the bugs are worked out as we move into 2021, and it appears pretty seamless now.

I do see a slight increase in interest from prior years.

Learn More about **Turf Programs**

2020-2021 Student Scholarship Winners

MSU Turf students have a long history of earning scholarship awards and recognition, and, while interviewing was a challenge, 2020 was no exception.

GCSAA Scholarship Winners

Steven Page	Spencer Cole
Nathan Howard	Ty Barschdorf

Trans- Miss Golf Association College Scholarships

Darryl Jackson

Sports Turf Managers Association – Jim Watson Award

Keith Koch

Michigan Turfgrass Foundation Scholarships – Norman Kramer Award

Payton Perkinson	Colin King
KT Payne Award	

Sports and Commercial Turf Award

Keith Koch

MTF Merit Scholarships

Spencer Cole	Clayton Hoekwater
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Michigan State University Scholarships Robert Osterman Scholars

Spencer Cole	Steven Page
Joel Doecker	Payton Perkinson
Jack McCarthy	Brendan Stuchell

C.E. ‘Tuck’ and Becky Tate Scholars

Clayton Hoekwater	Colin King
Darryl Jackson	



Hal and Mark Vogler Memorial Scholars

Ty Barschdorf	Adam Edick
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James and Harriet Beard Outstanding Turfgrass Graduate Student Award

Jackie Guevara

Michigan Golf Course Superintendents Association Scholarship

Spencer Cole	Jackson Severns
Steven Page	Brendan Stuchell
Payton Perkinson	

Michigan Sports Turf Management Association Scholarship

Keith Koch

If you would like to drop a line to any of these winners, just contact me and I will happily give you their contact information. (Several of you know I have notified you in the past on these activities, and that will continue next year as we are in a transition period with our database.) While the year will never be forgotten for many obvious reasons, for my wife and I, it will never be forgotten as we welcomed our first grandchild into the world, Miles Lee McMillan.



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STEVE REBHAN



Are you married, if so how long and what is your spouse's name?

Liz, 21 years

Do you have any children? What are their names and ages?

Luke 15, Noah 12

Where did you receive your education?

Go Green, Go White



1 HOW DID YOU BECOME INVOLVED IN THE GOLF BUSINESS? My freshmen year of college I was two days into the worst summer job as a mail sorter at the USPS. My friend was working at Wabeek CC for the legendary Ken Debusscher and told me that someone was fired, and I should apply. Less than 24 hours later, I was a professional Flymo operator.

2 WHO HAS BEEN THE GREATEST INFLUENCE ON YOU IN YOUR PROFESSIONAL LIFE? I've been fortunate to have had some great bosses over the last 35 years, but Ken Debusscher not only taught me it was acceptable to wake up early and work hard, but it was ok to have fun while you're doing it. He was a great grassfarmer, but we all know that is the easiest part of the job. He made an 18-year-old kid want to come to work and care about his job. Also, we've talked about a humorous story from my career, but I yield my time to Mr. Debusscher. His tale of falling off the topdresser, getting trapped under the machine while it was still in gear, being dragged around the sand-covered green having his skin exfoliated is the best. Ken is retired now, but there's no shortage of Wabeek alumni around the state. Please ask one of us to tell you "the rest of the story".

3 WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST ISSUES FACING SUPERINTENDENTS TODAY? The shortage of quality equipment technicians. A golf course ET needs to be mechanically talented, a team player, with good leadership skills. When I was a superintendent, my best teams had a great mechanic. When your shop has a good vibe, it is reflected across the entire operation. It is a promising step that our industry is committed to promoting being a golf course equipment technician as a career path by providing training, better working conditions, and fair compensation to encourage the next generation to consider the profession.

4 WHAT ARE YOUR EXPECTATIONS FROM THE MICHIGAN GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENTS ASSOCIATION? I can answer that by saying that MIGCSA has exceeded all my expectations. I've been a member of multiple superintendent and club manager organizations during my career. MIGCSA does an incredible job with limited resources. Adam along with all the people in our industry who donate their time deserve much credit. As a failed board member, I understand how their time spent volunteering takes away from the job and the family.





5 WHAT IS YOUR MOST EMBARRASSING MOMENT DEALING WITH A CUSTOMER? About 15 years ago, a large group of members organized a family camping night on the lakeside at Battle Creek Country Club. I was part of a big effort by the staff to make sure everything was perfect, and it truly was a great evening and a perfect night for camping. Then about 3:00AM the clubhouse irrigation started and rotated through all the zones. I still get reminded at least 3-4 times a year.

6 WHAT IS YOUR BEST ADVICE TO DECISION MAKERS WHEN DOING BUSINESS? Remember it is a business and use concepts like "Return on Investment" (ROI) when making decisions or proposing capital investments. The unique part of our business is that ROI needs to be measured in both cash flow and customer satisfaction because anything that raises public opinion of your club, will ultimately lead to an increase in revenue. As a country club general manager, I learned the lesson that playing conditions affect wedding venue decisions. Internally we may not see the connection, but the father of the bride remembers playing a quality golf course and trusts the club to deliver the same for his daughter's big event.

7 WHAT IS THE MOST REWARDING PART OF BEING IN AN INDUSTRY SUPPORT ROLE? Problem solving. Being a golf course superintendent is a stressful profession. My goal is to reduce that stress. It might be a small repair item or introducing someone to an irrigation consultant that develops into a large capital project; either way there is a sense of satisfaction.

8 WHAT IS YOUR BEST SUCCESS STORY? I was part of a team that worked for twenty years to restore Battle Creek Country Club to reflect its history as an original Willie Park Jr. parkland course. Golf Course Architect Bruce Hepner provided the vision and kept two decades of greens committees and board members focused on the goal. The goal of restoring greens and fairways to their original dimensions; reestablishing approach angles and hole locations. In addition, over 2000 pine and spruce trees were removed, bunkers were rebuilt, added or eliminated, and the membership was educated on the idea that "brown doesn't mean dead". Current superintendent, Marc Chappell, is still working with Bruce to ensure that next generation of club leaders understands the vision established by the previous committees and boards. If you're a fan of golf course architecture, Battle Creek CC is worth the visit.

9 WHAT DO YOU ENJOY MOST ABOUT YOUR POSITION? Without a doubt, the opportunity to see how some talented superintendents do their job. Many days I'll be driving home from an appointment wishing it was possible to travel back in time and share an idea or a concept with a "35-year-old me".

10 WHAT ARE YOUR TRAVEL TIPS FOR THE LESS SEASONED TRAVELER? Even when traveling on business, take a moment to

research an area before visiting and spend some time experiencing something unique to the local area. I traveled with my mountain bike a few times last year and found some climbs that were a little bit more serious than my local trails.

11 WHAT ARE YOUR HOBBIES OR SPECIAL INTERESTS? In the last ten years I've developed a passion for mountain biking, snowboarding, and bourbon. The best part is being a novice in these areas and having the opportunity to learn more when I meet someone who shares an interest in one of the three.

12 HOW MANY MILES DO YOU DRIVE IN A TYPICAL YEAR? 20,000 miles.

13 WHO HAS THE NICEST SHOP THAT YOU CALL ON AND WHY? Walnut Creek Country Club starring Hector Velazquez. Personality matters!

14 WHAT WOULD YOU CONSIDER THE VERY BEST PRODUCT YOU OFFER AND WHY? The Rain Bird IC System is something completely unique in our industry. It is the most sophisticated, yet simplistic irrigation control system in the market. The technology has been around for a decade, yet superintendents are still finding ways to expand the technology. I'm working with a club in Cincinnati to integrate the IC System to control the platform tennis court heaters from their mobile devices instead of having to be on property.

15 WHY DID YOU CHOOSE THE PROFESSION YOU ARE IN? I've been told if you're 50 years old and someone offers you a job that challenges you, you should take it.

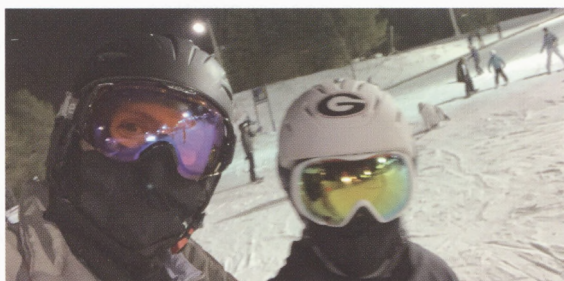
16 WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE ITEM TO SELL/DEMO? Again, the Rain Bird IC System. Superintendents that have invested the time to learn about the technology, come away as fans. It is truly unique.

17 HOW LARGE IS YOUR TERRITORY? Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, and Kentucky... but I'm a member of a great team.

18 WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE GOLF COURSE TO PLAY? Battle Creek Country Club. It is a special place to me. A great course to walk by yourself, play with friends, or work at for twenty years. It is even better now that they have Marc and Doc; playing conditions now equal the architecture.

19 WHO IS YOUR FAVORITE GOLFER AND WHY? No brainer, it is Phil. I'm left-handed.

20 DO YOU HAVE A NICKNAME AND IS THERE A STORY BEHIND IT? I've been called Reb since elementary school. People attended my wedding who didn't know my first name was Steve.



21 HAVE YOU EVER HAD A HOLE IN ONE?
Three.

22 IF YOU COULD TRAVEL TO ANY TIME IN GOLF WHEN WOULD IT BE AND WHY? I'm a fan of now. I prefer old-school golf course architecture, but golf is in a good spot now. I appreciate how these older courses are being restored, new designs are better than those of 30 years ago, playing conditions are superb, and golf just is better with 460cc driver and a bluetooth speaker.

23 WHO HAS THE BEST MAINTENANCE DEPARTMENT DOG? WHAT IS ITS NAME? Unfortunately, this needs to be awarded posthumously, but the greatest golf course dog ever was Magic. Magic's home course was Gull Lake CC, but he came to visit Battle Creek CC one afternoon and eliminated twenty Canadian Geese in about 90 seconds. The athleticism was incredible. The event served as a good deterrent as we didn't see a goose for a couple of years. Memorial Trees are my least favorite thing on a golf course, but Magic got a memorial tree when his life ended way too soon.

24 HOW MANY CONFERENCES/EDUCATIONAL EVENTS DO YOU ATTEND PER YEAR? Unfortunately, zero in 2020. These events are a great opportunity to connect with superintendents. Ironically, as a superintendent I failed to take full advantage of these events.

25 HOW MANY ROUNDS OF GOLF DO YOU PLAY A YEAR? Less than 10. Not working at a golf course has had a negative effect on my golf game in both quantity and quality of my game.

26 WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE BEST EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY/CONFERENCE THAT TURF CARE PROFESSIONALS CAN ATTEND? GIS is special. Not only is the education top-notch, the opportunity to network with people in different regions of the country is very valuable. It's always good to get out of your "bubble".

27 HOW DO YOU THINK THE INDUSTRY WILL BE DIFFERENT IN 10 YEARS? I don't know, but hopefully it includes accessible and affordable public golf. I grew up playing a golf course that cost \$50 a year for a junior membership. Yes, it was a mowed swamp, but we didn't know any better.



28 ARE THERE ANY NEW PRODUCTS ON THE HORIZON? Rain Bird is developing new software. I've only seen a little and can't wait to learn more about it. Because Rain Bird takes great pride in making sure their products are "backwards-compatible", it is a challenge to make sure current satellite, decoder, and IC systems can eventually operate on this new platform.

5

THINGS PEOPLE MAY NOT KNOW ABOUT ME

1. Chased my current boss out of my office the first time we met when I was a new superintendent and he was my Lesco sales representative.
2. Tom Ford, former Head Athletic Trainer at Oakland University, is a friend who has battled ALS for the last 5+ years. His courage and positive attitude is beyond my comprehension. "Every Second Counts".
3. Birdied the 18th at St. Andrews and received an incredible round of applause from the surrounding crowd of tourists.
4. I knew Adam Ikamas when he was a golf course superintendent.
5. Two years ago I had never heard of the Rain Bird IC System, but it has been love ever since.

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Coaching High School GOLF

BY MARTY MILLER



What are the connections between a golf course superintendent, sales representative and consultant, and a varsity high school golf coach? For me, it is the love of the game, the ability to work outside in God's creation, and passing lessons learned to the next generation.

Sometimes it takes a major disruption or loss in our life to consider connections, a new path, or set new goals. How does one transfer the experience and skills learned in their career into new areas where they can be useful? It is a challenge faced by many golf course superintendents and one that I confronted in 1996. Fortunately, two of my close friends and mentors offered sound counsel as I considered which career path to choose.

After many meetings with them and discussions about my options, I concluded that it was the right time

to consider another path of employment -- one that could extend the duration of my working life and still allow me to maintain my lifelong passion for the game of golf. The sales and consultant career would also allow me to stay in the turf industry and work with many existing friends and contacts. It permitted me to work outside and provide service to my peers, which I enjoyed as a golf course superintendent and also now as a sales representative and consultant.

While I was going through this career transition, an opportunity arose to coach the golf team at the school my kids attended. I previously taught golf to a PE class in the early 1980s, was involved on the school board and athletic committee, and helped plan and supervise the renovation of the athletic fields, which made this job a perfect fit. As I taught the PE class, I enlisted the aid of the assistant PGA pro at Knollwood Country Club to help make the students aware of summer jobs



available in the golf industry such as caddying or as course maintenance employees. Needless to say, when the Varsity Boys Golf Coach position was available, I immediately applied and was hired.

This role allowed the use of my skills, experience, and love of the game to encourage new golfers and to help grow the game of golf. It permitted me to be involved in the lives of our youth and pass on lessons learned. My career as a high school golf coach ended in 2016 as the school's population and students' interest in the sport of golf dwindled. The school has not offered golf as a sport since that time.

As I look back on what was accomplished in 20 seasons, I have many great memories of these young students). During my coaching career, a handful of players earned college golf scholarships and two of them are still working as PGA Assistant Pros. One former student completed undergraduate studies as an Evans Scholar at MSU and just entered medical

school. Most of these former players have families now and careers in many different areas. I still see many of them at the annual golf fundraiser for the school and maintain contact via text message or the occasional phone call. I am happy to say that nearly all of the golfers I coached still play the game.

Being a golf club superintendent is more than a job it is a passion. Most superintendents develop a variety of skills and experience that are successfully applied to other professional opportunities, such as agronomists, sales representatives, facility managers, property managers, or any number of professions which utilize your history or talents. At the same time one may find opportunities to share their passion for golf with future generations through golf coaching or mentorship. If one considers changing career paths, there are many ways to reach those goals. Look for roles that will bring fulfillment, fit skills and experience, and afford the necessary income required.



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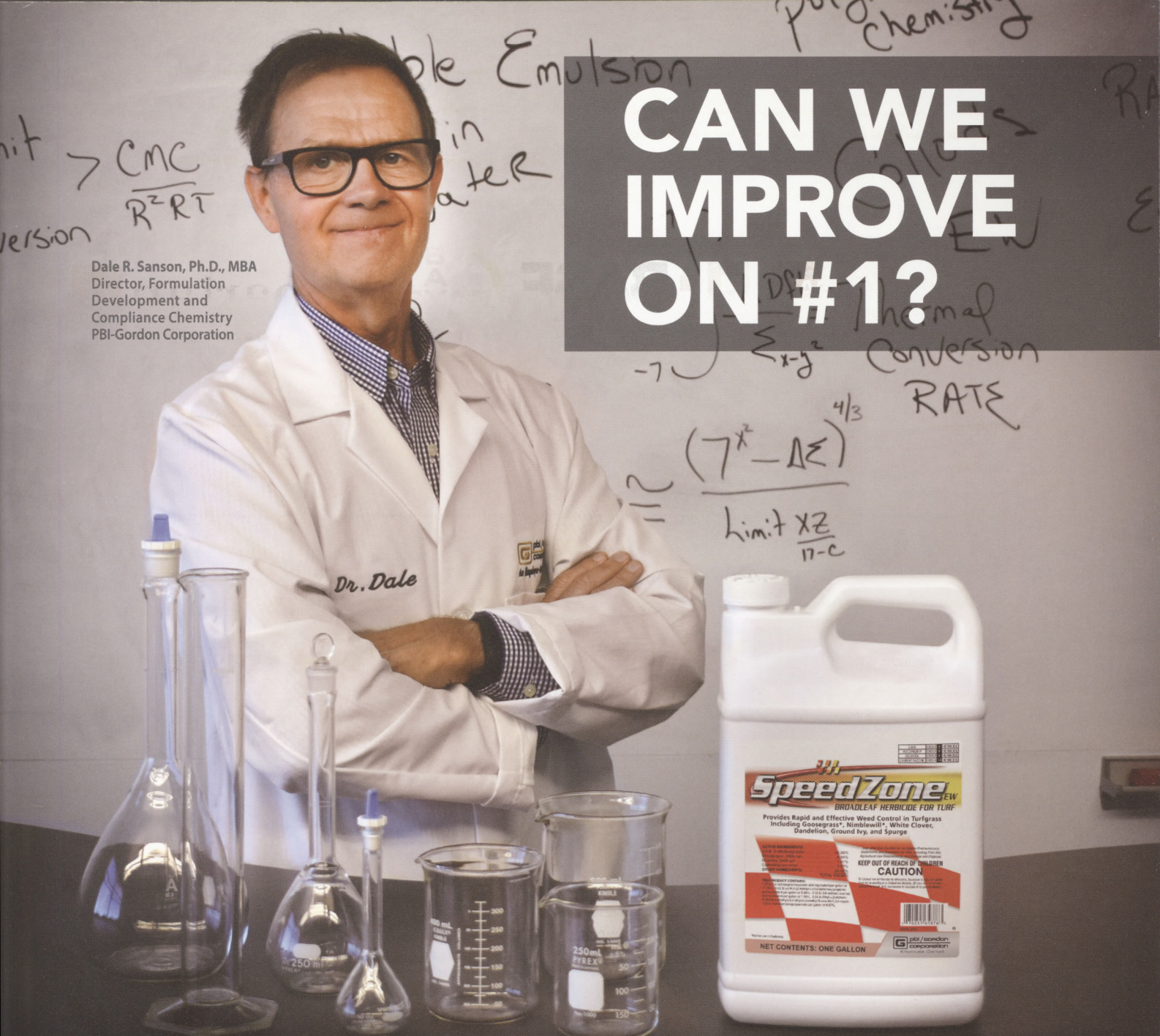
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Happy NEW YEAR

It is great to be looking at our event schedule for 2021 this spring and not dealing with the legalities of raking bunkers. To be answering questions on when the Northern Fundraiser at Arcadia Bluffs will be (always the first Monday in June by the way) and not if you need special permission to drive to work in case you get pulled over for being out of the house. It is so nice to be preparing for the onslaught of new golfers to courses instead of trying to figure out how much damage the pandemic is going to cause our members and our industry. I know we are not out of the woods globally on COVID-19 but one year later we know so much more than we did in March of 2020, and for that I am grateful. In this issue you will find the 2021 calendar of events, as we always warn this information is only as good as the day it is printed, keep an eye on your email and migcsa.org for all the most current information.

I would like to touch on a few of the highlights for 2021. First off, we return to Arcadia Bluffs after a one-year hiatus due to COVID uncertainty on June 6th and 7th. The optional South Course round on June 6th is a great tee time afternoon event followed by one of the largest chapter golf fundraisers in the country at The Bluffs course the next day. Historically we see well over 200 attendees at this flagship event and expect a blowout in 2021 so make sure you get registered with your favorite Industry Partner who will get early registrations based on their partnership level. General registration will open May 10th. The 2021 State Championship returns to The Emerald in St. Johns in August, the winner will again gain entry into the 2022 Michigan Open thanks to our friends at the Michigan Section PGA and will also gain entry into the all-new MI-OH Matches at Sylvania Country Club in Ohio on October 19th. This new match play event with a team of 8 from Michigan playing a team of 8 from Ohio should be a great new tradition with the Ohio Superintendent Network. The rest of the team will be made up of the winners of the 2021 Match Play Championship and the winners of the consolation bracket, the winner of the Assistants Championship and the two-person team who wins the all-new Tuck Tate shootout. The format for the annual Northern Championship is changing from an individual event to a team event. On September 2nd we will have an 18-hole event on the Tradition course where teams of two will play in a best ball handicapped format to try to make it into the Tuck Tate shootout. The top ten scoring teams will head over to the par 3 Threetops course for a

shootout, all ten teams will play hole #1 and we will eliminate one team per hole based on the best handicapped score. The team still standing on hole #9 will be the 2021 Tuck Tate Shootout Champions and gain entry into the MI-OH Matches. This should be the start of another great tradition up north near the end of the season. The golf event season will wrap up in style with the Western Golf Day at Spring Lake and the Big Event at Orchard Lake. The end of year holiday parties and into the conference season with the Michigan Turf Conference and Golf Industry Show. After that the return of the Spring Meeting, the best 24 hours in turf at Boyne Mountain March 2 & 3. We are also looking into some regional lunch meetings in season to thank our Industry Partners and provide an opportunity to connect with your fellow members locally and in person to discuss the current season.

The MiGCSA Board has been diligently working on these opportunities for all their fellow members, please remember that this is your association, and the possibilities are almost endless of what we can accomplish. If you see a deficiency in the calendar or would like to add something to it all you need to do is reach out to your local board member representative and offer it up. This chapter was made by you and for you, it is not a corporation that tells you what you can do, it is the other way around. You hold the power as a member to present opportunities to your fellow members and that process has never been easier. So, make sure you come out to an event this year, or help produce your own. I am also always available directly via email or my cell phone 231-714-7365. I love hearing from the membership, and I am here to help. Have a great season and enjoy the time outdoors working in a safe and booming industry!

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MiGCSA Executive Director



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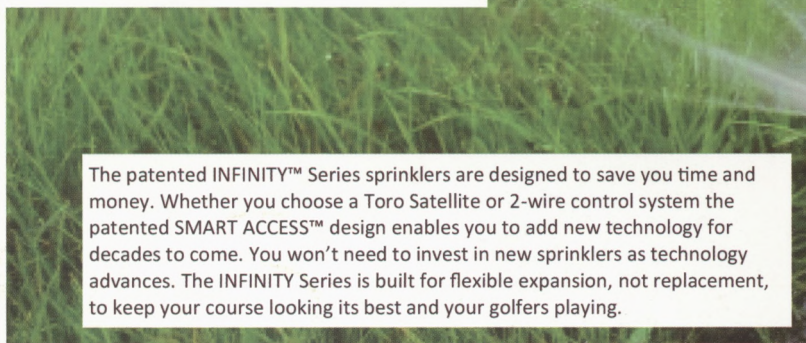
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