

August 2023

COURSE

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE

ONTARIO GOLF SUPERINTENDENTS' ASSOCIATION



**One Team
Creating
Excellence
The RBC
Canadian Open**

**The Assistants'
Tournament**

**Data Collection:
What's all the
fuss about?**

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TSP GCSA JUL23

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ON THE COVER

St. Thomas Golf and Country Club, host of the 2023 Assistants' Tournament. OGSA image.

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Express Gratitude. Offer Guidance. Support Growth.

As summer arrives, it brings with it heightened expectations. In this, my 21st season as a Superintendent, I am well aware that pressure is at its highest as we strive to provide optimal conditions and keep our staff motivated.

Our crew's well-being should be at the forefront of our priorities. By expressing gratitude, offering guidance, and fostering an environment of camaraderie and growth, we lay the foundation for our team's success. Together, we will navigate the challenges that come with the summer months and continue to provide exceptional experiences for our members and guests.

Our diverse workforce ranges from bright-eyed 16-year-olds to seasoned individuals in their 70s. We are responsible for training them to deliver high-level conditions daily and keeping them safe. However, we recognize that the early start times and scorching summer heat can take a toll on our staff, making it crucial for us to engage with them and inspire them to achieve our shared success.

At Markland Wood, one of our key strategies revolves around showing our crew members that we are grateful for their efforts and treating them with the utmost respect. This approach has resulted in an outstanding employee return rate which helps to reduce the stress of hiring each season. But moreover, our team culture helps to shape character and build a work ethic. It warms my heart to share two recent instances that genuinely touched me. Firstly, a member joined our greens committee who had once been a part of our crew in 1998 during his high school days. Secondly, I had the pleasure of meeting a guest who attended our member guest event and had previously worked on our crew from 2010 to 2013. Both gentlemen spoke fondly of their time with us, expressing gratitude for

the structure and guidance we provided them. It is truly remarkable to witness their growth into successful careers as a chiropractor and a corporate real estate agent. These stories remind us of our significant role in shaping our employees' young careers. Moreover, by providing a culture of appreciation and respect, we also create an enjoyable experience for our retirees, allowing them to relish in the team camaraderie while working outside and maintaining the quality conditions our members expect.

*"By expressing gratitude,
offering guidance, and
fostering an environment of
camaraderie and growth,
we lay the foundation for our
team's success."*

Managing a diverse crew and adapting to their individual schedules can undoubtedly be stressful, particularly for our assistant superintendents. We owe an incredible debt of gratitude to our assistants, who remain calm under pressure, keep everyone engaged, and skillfully manage the schedule to ensure we have enough hands to get the job done.

I'm thrilled to share with you that the Assistants' Tournament at St. Thomas GC sold out for the first time in recent memory. This tournament is an exceptional opportunity for our assistants to come together with their peers, share their challenges and celebrate their successes. The OGSA strongly believes in the importance of such gatherings, as they foster valuable friendships that can shape careers in profound ways. We are happy to see so many



Owen Russell, OGSA President, Superintendent, Markland Wood GC.

of you sending your teams to this excellent appreciation event.

Community outreach also fosters positive relationships with people and builds awareness around our industry. I want to highlight an exceptional initiative called First Green, which was launched by the GCSAA in 1997 and has since gained immense popularity. This season, Ryan L. Scott, OGSA's immediate past president and golf course superintendent at Oakville GC, hosted Ontario's first, First Green outing at his golf club. He and his team engaged young members and provided them with insights into the meticulous care that goes into maintaining a golf course. Through this educational experience, Ryan has succeeded in connecting STEM education to our profession and the tasks we perform daily. Please follow Ryan's lead and introduce this initiative at your respective clubs. It's an excellent opportunity to expose young members of your community to our work and career opportunities in our industry. If you want to know more, reach out to us. As a chapter of the GCSAA, we have access to this exceptional program and, together, will provide support.

Finally, I'm excited to see such support for the 2023 OGSA Championship for the second year in a row. This event is a fantastic opportunity for all OGSA members to come together, share stories, and strengthen the bonds of friendship and camaraderie. Our board members are looking forward to connecting with you to celebrate the end of another successful summer season.

Last, we are ramping up for the 2024 OGSA Centennial Conference, where we will celebrate 100 years of growing golf. Registration will open shortly, and we hope to see you all there. ■

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

A BIG THANK YOU

to our editorial team for producing another excellent magazine for OGSA members! The OGSA annual awards luncheon is around the corner, and this year we want your vote for the best article! Stay tuned to Clippings for more information!



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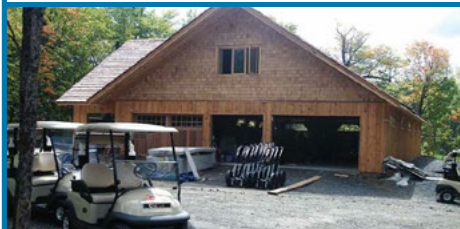


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WHAT'S NEW



By Courtney White, Executive Manager,
OGSA and ONCourse Editor.
manager@ogsa.ca

The OGSA has been busy planning and executing three excellent member events. We are excited to share that the Championship and the Assistants' Tournament both sold out this year. With 280 members participating, these events are such a great way for all of us to connect during the summer months. Thank you very much for your support.

We have an excellent winter planned too! In 2024 the OGSA turns 100-years old, and we are off to Niagara Falls to celebrate! Please mark your calendar and plan to attend the upcoming conference and especially the OGSA Centennial Celebration January 16, 2023, at the Niagara Parks Power Station, Niagara Falls. We'd love as many of our members to join us and more details will follow in Clippings and on the social media outlet formerly known as twitter. We're working on a great line up of speakers and events. Don't miss it.

If you aren't following us on X, (do we X now, or tweet?), please do! @OntarioGSA. This is just one place we announce upcoming events, showcase #TodayInOntario, and share general happenings!

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

UPCOMING OGSA EVENTS

Sept 25 & 26, 2023

OGSA Championship
Deerhurst Resort & Muskoka Bay
Muskoka, ON

January 16 – 18, 2024

Ontario Golf Course Management Conference
Niagara Falls, ON

January 16, 2024

OGSA Centennial Celebration
Niagara Parks Power Station, Niagara Falls, ON

January 17, 2024

OGSA AGM
Fallsvue Casino Conference Centre,
Niagara Falls, ON

We also want to welcome all our new members so far this year. We are on a mission to reach 1000 members by the end of 2024! Tell your colleagues and encourage them to join us. The more the merrier, and together we are capable of so much more; more turf research, better member events, more resources to help you with your careers.

The Ontario BMP document is well underway, and we are excited to release it within the next couple of months. This valuable tool will be made available to members, and support

will be provided to those who want to create facility BMP documents. You will learn more about this great tool at the 2024 OGSA Conference, and access to the document will be shared to all members.

This issue has great articles in it. Be sure to read them all. From your President's Message to Data Collection to One team creating excellence at the RBC Canadian Open, I have no doubt that you will draw inspiration from the experiences that your colleagues share inside this issue. ■

WELCOME to Our New Members

Mark Peters Islington GC	Class C	Jon Haggerty Southbrook G&CC	Class F
James Papineau Seven Lakes Championship Golf & Estates	Class C	Jordan Mills Southbrook G&CC	Class C
Nicole Hillier Southampton G&CC	Class B	Mary Evelyn Bushwood GC	Class D
Ken Bird Monterra Golf, Blue Mountain Resort	Class B	Kurt Bratsberg Islington GC	Class F
Ryan Harvie Monterra Golf, Blue Mountain Resort	Class C	Mark Gibson Greenhills CC	Class B
Robert Stevens Turtle Creek GC	Class A	Kyle Payne Essex G&CC	Class C
Michael Richardson The Golf Club at Lora Bay	Class B	David Mackenzie Oakville GC	Class F
Anthony Filice Southbrook G&CC	Class F	Jay Anderson Meadowbrook G&CC	Class C
		Zach Robertson Tarandowah GC	Class C



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First Green Initiative



*Written by Ryan L. Scott, Superintendent,
Oakville GC. Photos taken by Courtney White.*

On July 6th, OGSA immediate past president and Ontario golf course superintendent Ryan L. Scott, hosted Ontario's first, First Green program at The Oakville Golf Club. First Green is an interactive program that is designed to demonstrate how superintendents and their teams incorporate STEM education on the golf course and expose youth to golf course maintenance practices.

This fun afternoon ran between 4:30 – 6pm and was incorporated into a scheduled junior clinic day at Oakville GC. The junior members measured and calculated the area of a green, got their hands dirty discussing the different types of soil found on golf courses, experimented with solar power technology and simple electrical systems, and learned how the irrigation system works. The last stop on the four-station tour was 'Cool Tools' where the juniors were able to use a moisture meter, Stimpmeter and a prism gauge in various locations, take readings, and explore other gadgets golf course superintendents use every day.

After the event, the children gathered to sign a First Green flag, take a group photo, and leave with a great swag bag provided by the GCSAA.

The impact of First Green is substantial. It inspires students' and sparks interest in STEM by providing a hands-on experience on a golf course. It brings awareness to your community about the work that superintendents do every day, it helps to advance golf by exposing youth to the career opportunities on a golf course, and it's really fun.

We would like to thank Kevin Doyle of the GCSAA for coming up and helping with our first event. Also, much appreciation to the Oakville GC professional staff with helping with the correspondence and organizing the Junior clinic program. As well, Ryan's staff: Assistant Superintendent, Ben Parent, Mechanic, John Lopes, Irrigation Guru, Matt Stone and Turf Intern, David MacKenzie.

The OGSA hopes to help host a number of these events each season. One of the easiest ways to incorporate a First Green program at your club is to approach camps held throughout the summer, junior programs or other already existing programs involving youth in your community. For further assistance, contact the OGSA staff at admin@ogsa.com; we are more than happy to help guide you in the right direction. It's easier than you think. ■

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Superintendent Recognition



Brad Hutchinson, OGSA director, & Tim Colin of Allturf recognize the Superintendent, Kevin Kobzan & the maintenance crew at Peterborough G&CC for hosting the ON. NextGen Championship.



Ian McQueen, OGSA vice president, & Scott Pratt of Allturf, recognize Superintendent Patrick Greenman alongside his team & their volunteers at Oakdale G&CC, for their efforts in hosting the RBC Canadian Open.



Ian McQueen, OGSA vice president, & Kerry Whale of Allturf recognize Superintendent Ryan Brogan at Deer Creek for hosting the ON. Champion of Champions.



Andrew Nieder, OGSA director, & Nigel Rennie of Allturf, recognize Superintendent Carol Turner at Bigwin Island GC & her team for hosting the PGA Championship of Canada.

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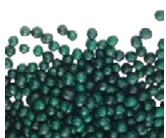
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WHAT'S NEW



Ryan Scott, OGSA past president, & Mike Fraser of Allturf, recognize Superintendent Jeremy Krueger at Cherry Hill Club for hosting the 2023 U.S. Open Local Qualifier.



Al Schwemler, OGSA director, & Peter Sojack of Allturf, recognize Superintendent Matthew Eastman & the maintenance crew at Cataraqui G&CC for hosting the ON. Women's Match Play Championship.



Sean Gunn, OGSA secretary treasurer, & Alex McNeill of Allturf recognize Superintendent Scott Clayworth at Wooden Sticks GC for hosting the Junior Boys' Spring Classic.



Ian McQueen, OGSA Vice President, & Scott Pratt, Allturf, recognize Superintendent Paul Halk & his team at Donalds Club for hosting the 108th Ontario Women's Amateur and Mid-Amateur Championship.



Kevin Collier, OGSA director, & Kerry Whale of Allturf, recognize Superintendent Ian Hiltz & his team at FireRock GC, for hosting the Jr. Girls' Spring Classic, Canadian University/College Championship, & Ontario Super Camp & Junior Tour.



OGSA member Chris Andrejicka & Alex McNeill of Allturf, recognize Superintendent Paul Lemieux at Kingsville G&CC for his hard work in preparing for the PGA Women's Championship of Canada.



Owen Russell, OGSA President, & Nigel Rennie of Allturf, recognize Superintendent Robert Ackermann (not pictured) at Weston G&CC for hosting the ON. Adaptive Championship. The award was accepted by Dave Jacobsen & Sam Griffiths.



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Written by Al Schwemler, retired superintendent, OGSA director. Photos provided by Mark Schneider.

Mark Schneider's career in the turfgrass industry has spanned over 44 years and counting. He has filled roles as a golf course superintendent and a technical sales rep. Meeting superintendents, Hugh Kirkpatrick and Warren Vout, 44 years ago changed the course of Mark's life. These gentlemen were the first to encourage Mark to pursue a career in turfgrass management, and he is very grateful for their advice.

Mark's first job in golf was picking rocks at

Conestoga GC in the spring of 1979. Later that year, he moved on to take a position on the grounds crew at Westmount G&CC in Kitchener. It was here that Mark's career became entrenched in the golf industry. He enrolled into the Turf Managers Short Course at the University of Guelph in 1983, then furthered his education by graduating with an Associate Diploma - OAC 85A in Turfgrass Management from the University of Guelph. Upon graduating, Mark became the assistant superintendent at Westmount from 1985-1988. He accepted his first superintendent position at Beach Grove G&CC, near Windsor ON., and managed the property from 1988-1993. From here, he moved north

IN THE HOT SEAT

Q: Favorite Major or Sport?

A: The Open Championship!

Q: Best piece of turf equipment, tool, or product?

A: Computer controlled irrigation system

Q: Lowest round ever and where?

A: 89- Mono Hills GC

Q: Ultimate foursome?

A: Me, Hugh Kirkpatrick, Stanley Thompson, C.E. (Robbie) Robinson

Q: Favorite Season?

A: Spring

Q: Favorite movie?

A: Cool Hand Luke

Q: Favorite meal?

A: Anything Italian

Q: Favorite golf course?

A: Capilano GC

Q: Favorite course designer?

A: Stanley Thompson

Q: Favorite Band?

A: Springsteen

and worked as the superintendent at Owen Sound G&CC (1993-2003) and Saugeen GC (2003-2005).

In 2005, Mark made the decision to make a career change from managing golf course properties to becoming a technical sales rep within the turfgrass industry. His educational background, work experiences, and network of colleagues were a perfect fit for this new role. That year, he was hired by Alliance Agri-Turf and then moved to his current technical sales position with Nutrite in 2014.

When asked for advice on transitioning from being a superintendent to sales and technical support, Mark stated: "Be patient and flexible. While the roles are different, the responsibilities are the same, providing the club that you're visiting with excellent service and value. Use your extensive turf knowledge to help your client. Sell yourself, no matter what product and company you represent."

As an associate member of the OGSA, maintaining a relationship with your clients is very important. Mark expressed that "technical reps should be in touch with their clients regularly and don't just show up when up you expect a purchase. Phone calls, emails, and texts are easy to do and help express support to your clientele; especially during challenging agronomic times."

One thing that helped Mark throughout his career and achieving his current position was, "being ready for change and challenges; life is never linear." Also, having a network of influencers and friends to help guide him throughout his career has been very beneficial. Over the years, he has received guidance from Hugh Kirkpatrick, Warren Vout, Dr. Lee Burpee, Corrie Almack, Dave Smith, and many of his 85A classmates (Josh Bourget, Angelo Capannelli, Jim Flett, Eric Ruhs, John Scott, Dean Baker, Jerry Richard, Ian Bowen, and Dave Cherry). Based on his professional



(L-R) Mark Schneider with Dean Baker and Norm McCollum.

network of colleagues, it now makes sense that one of his favorite quotes is: "If I have seen further, it is by standing upon the shoulders of giants" – Sir Isaac Newton.

As with most long-term turf professionals, Mark has worked alongside many of whom eventually became superintendents. He feels that one of his greatest accomplishments has been mentoring up-and-coming men and women within the turfgrass industry. He believes that it is the industry's responsibility to develop these qualified individuals internally

and to promote interest in the business as turf management can be a rewarding career. His advice to those entering the turf industry today is to "stay focused and develop a strong mentorship with someone within the industry. Work hard on your work/life balance early on in your career. Don't give everything to your job; sacrifice time with others, especially family. You don't get that time back!"

During Mark's lengthy career, he has been very active in numerous turf associations. He has been a member of the OGSA, CGSA,

"Guelph's 85A graduates would refer to Mark as 'Punch' (long story). Mark has always had an agronomic wisdom, being a superintendent and now sharing his knowledge and experiences through his sales network; never forgetting what he has learned or a good story. Sitting down with Mark is always an education."

– Dean A. Baker (CGCS), superintendent,
Burlington G&CC



Mark Schneider (L) with Hugh Kirkpatrick (R) at the podium.



Mark's turfgrass management cohort at the University of Guelph - OAC 85A.

GCSAA, and was a founding member of KEGS in 1990. He has served on the boards and committees of the OGSA, Stanley Thompson Society, KEGS and GBGSA. Mark is currently involved with the OGSA Centennial Committee (2024), the OGSA Seniors' Golf Tournament, and the Landscape Ontario Turf Group.

Mark's fondest moment/memory throughout his career is "any time spent with Donnie Campbell, on or off the golf course."

Mark and his wife, Heather, have been happily married for 31 years. They have two grown children (that have finally moved out). His favorite place to travel is California and he has a passion for restoring antique cars in his spare time. When asked about his plans for retirement, his response was "not for a while... lol."

My first interaction with Mark was sitting across the lunchroom table, in the Westmount maintenance facility while being interviewed

for a summer position while I was attending the University of Guelph in 1985. Mark was very instrumental during my tenure at Westmount in having me focus on my career goals and further teaching me the nuances of turf management and administration. He has been a stout supporter of the OGSA; unselfishly gives back to the industry, willingly shares his knowledge and experiences, and has been a positive influence on many throughout his long career. ■

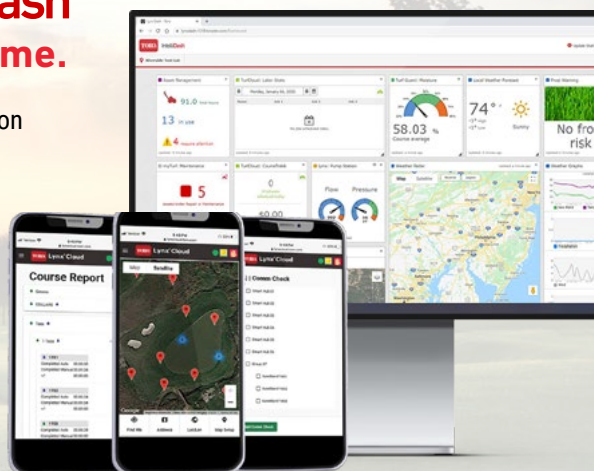


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Oakdale Golf & Country Club's superintendent Patrick Greenman, his crew and volunteers celebrate Nick Taylor's historic win at the 2023 RBC Canadian Open.

One Team Creating Excellence

THE RBC CANADIAN OPEN

Written by and photos provided by Mark Wiebe, Assistant Superintendent, Oakdale G&CC.

Eagerly awaiting fans crammed the grandstands, and all the standing space in between on that rainy June afternoon. The crowd fell silent. Three playoff holes had already passed. A nervous and excited energy was reaching another climax as Tommy Fleetwood and Nick Taylor played their final hole. Taylor took another look at his putt. Caddy Dave Markle stepped away as Taylor finished lining up the 72-foot, uphill putt that would clinch his historical win at the 2023 RBC Canadian Open at Oakdale Golf and Country Club.

NEVER UNDERESTIMATE THE VALUE OF A GOOD TEAM MOTTO

Five months before that spectacular finish, we were entering what felt like the final laps in our race towards hosting Oakdale's first Canadian Open. On a chilly January morning, senior and middle management from each department had met in the clubhouse. Shelley MacDougall, leadership coach from GGA Partners, had been invited by Molley Jagroop, the general manager at Oakdale Golf and Country Club, to help us understand what makes a good team great, and the type of leadership required to get there.

The opportunity to host the RBC Canadian Open was an extraordinary one, and the team leadership seminar presented both a personal and collective challenge: to lead and to do our individual

parts to ensure a successful tournament and to max-out our team culture potential.

The seminar reminded us all that there wasn't a certain formula to follow. The hard way and the right way continued to be same. Like forming good habits, choosing to have a consistently positive mindset, and embodying the persona of a leader evolves over time and with experience. There's no question, it's hard. It's hard to stay consistently motivated, it's hard to get team buy-in, sometimes it's hard to wake up in the morning.

"How do you want to show up as a leader every day?" MacDougall asked the group. "Think about conscious leadership, purposeful leadership where we're deliberate about how and what we communicate."

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We talked about how consistently fulfilling a leadership role can feel overwhelming yet, for those who want it, the effort tends to provide great fulfillment. We talked about how overwhelming it can be to step into a leadership role, but for those who want it, the effort tends to provide great fulfillment. Patrick Greenman, Oakdale's property director, had already gathered around him a team of people with a range of leadership experience. This level of commitment was something we'd been a part of for some time now, but with the unique opportunity of hosting a national event on the near horizon, we were taking our skills, motivation, and dedication to the next level.

"Success depends on us all working together as a group with no silos," said Jagroop when asked what our new motto meant to her. "Everyone's job is important," she added, "it's the little things that count."

All teams have mottos. Chants. A collective mantra that keeps them going when they need to reinvigorate their mindset. We wanted that. We also wanted something easy to remember. We discussed the vision, mission, and values tied to Oakdale and this event, and finally the last suggestion summed it up perfectly. "How about, 'One team creating excellence'?"

Our new motto, the words we'd say and embody for the next five months and beyond, had been decided on.

As always, April is the most important time with orientations and on-boarding, but this year, it had never been more crucial. New and returning staff got a first taste of what was to come for the next several months leading up to the RBC Canadian Open. The onboarding included in-depth orientations for new and returning staff, as well as a new training regimen with introductory, in-class sessions to get people more comfortable with the job before on-course or practical training began.

"ONE TEAM CREATING EXCELLENCE"

We opened each orientation with our new motto and discussed what it meant. It starts when members and guests arrive through the front gate; as a team, we're creating an experience and, more so in our case, delivering a product (the golf course) that in every way embodies excellence. We also made a new-hire team manual. It contained information to help reinforce what it means to be a good team member, with some basic golf course and team principles, as well as property and individual hole maps, emergency procedures, and guidelines on greenkeeping.

It all aligned well with our new motto. In a short time, we built a strong team foundation with credibility, respect, and trust. We were working toward a common goal.

It didn't take long to see the new motto come to life in other ways; leaders emerged amongst both

the staff and management team. The extraordinary began to take shape. The golf course conditions, and the turf team culture were on an upward trajectory.

The excitement, nervousness, positivity, and negativity always seem to exist together in an individual or group, especially with so much on the line. These emotions can be used as fuel to either benefit or cause detriment to an individual or group. It's imperative for everyone, especially leaders, to consistently commit to a positive group effort, or buy in, for everyone to overcome this natural or human condition.

We found one of the best antidotes to combat the excitement and nerves, being proactive. And, when the work was done for the day, a plan was made for the next day's work, and the day after that, and the day after that, and so on. We imagined the best scenario and planned for the worst. Consciously, each of us continued to buy in. And, when

"Consistency was key to our success, breaking everything down into manageable parts to work through any challenges that arose."

Patrick Greenman, Property Director, Oakdale G&CC



Leadership team members of the Oakdale Turf Department: (L - R) Second Assistant, Devan Kennedy, Assistant Superintendent, Mark Wiebe, Director of Property, Patrick Greenman, Assistant Superintendent, Mike Jackson and Administrative Assistant, Marianne Beaubien.

there were days that felt like there was a lack of commitment to one team creating excellence, we remembered our motto, and adjusted.

BEFORE WE KNEW IT, JUNE WAS UPON US

PGA Agronomist, PJ Ringenberger, who had been there since the previous year to help guide us on our journey, joined us for advanced week and the week of the tournament. Aside from the invaluable agronomic and general advice linked to the physical golf course, he exemplified conscious leadership and provided a personable and motivating attitude that boosted morale and helped to keep people engaged. When asked what his favorite part of his job was, Ringenberger answered, "The people. Working with and getting to know all the different people is always very rewarding."

We were in the homestretch, and during the week of the Open, a lot of the turf team, including myself, chose to sleep on-site. A small RV park assembled in the shop yard complete with camping chairs

Taylor and Fleetwood play their last strokes, a small and very fortunate touch-up crew ended up over the ropes and beside the green for those last surreal moments, after raking the bunkers and blowing the green on the 18th.

We had worked hard for months. The adrenaline was pumping, our nerves were tingling. Watching that last putt drop into the hole was unbelievable. With our arms raised, we joined the crowd's roar which replaced the silence...it was over. We all felt like we'd won; along with Taylor and his caddy Markle, we too felt the glory.

"You did pretty good...for a bunch of rookies," Ringenberger said jokingly near the end of our post-tournament interview. He was right. With all the extra excitement and nervousness, the heightened expectations and standards coming to an end, we felt a great fulfillment.

With our first win at the 2023 RBC Canadian Open in the history books, we continue to go back to our motto every day, "One Team Creating Excellence." Hard to do, easy to remember, worth the effort. ■



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image courtesy of BraeBen



2023

Assistants' Tournament

Written by Somer Swan, OGSA Member Services & Marketing Coordinator.

CELEBRATING SUCCESS AT THE ANNUAL ASSISTANTS' TOURNAMENT: ST. THOMAS GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB

The Annual Assistants' Tournament again proved to be a resounding success, drawing an enthusiastic turnout. While much of Ontario was under severe weather warning and reports of flooding were rolling in, 140 players descended on Union, ON, where the Sun Gods appeared to shine down on the stunning St. Thomas Golf & Country Club.

Everyone was in high spirits as they teed off at 11am. Food and beverages were provided (thanks Brett Young and Allturf). Longest drive, closest to the Pin and Hole in One competitions were underway (thanks Vanden Bussche, Belchim, and Plant Products). The day was perfect until 3 o'clock, when the storm clouds rolled in and players beelined to the club house for shelter and refreshments while they waited. The downpour was too much, and a tough call was made to end the game. Most groups played 10 holes, and several groups made it to 12 holes. Although the crowd was a little wet, and disappointed that they couldn't finish playing the 43rd top course in Canada (according to Score Golf), no one understands the impact of weather on a golf course better than this group.

Nothing cures disappointment like a good meal and lots of prizes. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Chef Michael and the



1st Place winners - \$250 each. Dave Jacobsen, Weston Golf & Country Club; Amy Curlew; Matt Atkinson, Atkinson Irrigation; Bob Pozzebon, Mobilicab Club Car.



2nd Place - \$200 each. Gary Tate, Allturf; Lucas Rogers, Spring Lakes GC; Bradley Miller, Granite Golf Club; Trevor Lorimer, Granite Golf Club.



3rd Place - \$150 each. Scott Herod & Jared Foster, Redtail GC; Derek Fox, Maple City G&CC; Jesse Booker, Turf Care.



4th Place - \$100 each. Bill Martel, Turf Care; John MacAleese, Barrie Country Club; Matt Coburn, The Toronto GC; Steve Fierbeller, The Toronto GC.

kitchen staff who were able to react quickly and provide dinner to the group by 3:45pm, hours before schedule. Chicken, Ribs, mashed potatoes, salads, plus a barrage of desert was served, and awards were presented.

Longest drive and closest to the pin prizes were put into a draw, because not everyone got a chance to play hole 4 and 8. Although the elusive \$10,000 Hole-in-One prize sponsored by Plant Products remained unclaimed, Tyler Szela gave our hearts a jolt when his ball landed just inches from the

hole. Practice makes perfect, and we're eagerly anticipating the prospect of a triumphant winner next year!

There were also draw prizes on hand, yeti bottles, golf bags, hats, and gift cards, provided by suppliers, and each assistant left with a \$75 gift card; our way of saying thank you for the contribution every assistant superintendent makes to the golf course turfgrass industry.

Due to the weather event, the team scores



Crowd gathers due to rain delay.



A big thanks to Mike Temple, Vanden Bussche, (centre) for presenting our draw winners with their \$250 prize: Zach Robertson, Tarandowah GC; Greg Koebel, Blue Mountain G&CC.



A big thanks to Billy Joe Carey, Belchim, for presenting to our draw winners: Ryan St. Germain, St. Andrews Valley GC, Nicholas Turner, Bayview G&CC.



Ryan Beauchamp from EnvU addresses the crowd.



Mark Wiebe, Oakdale G&CC, presents host assistant superintendents, Dylan Oderkirk and Jordan Satchell with their recognition plaque.

were based on the first 10 holes played. Ties were broken by calculating the score between the shared holes each team played.

Special thanks go to Mark Wiebe from Oakdale G&CC for emceeing the awards and Ryan Beauchamp with ENVU, our Award Dinner partner, who presented our team winners with their prizes.

Most importantly, a BIG thank you to superintendent, Wade Beaudoin, and assistants Dylan Oderkirk and Jordan Satchell who graciously hosted the event, provided an exceptional playing field for all participants. There was a full crew putting the final touches on the course the morning of the event, and the course was awesome.

The success of our tournaments is not possible without the generous support of our partners. Their contribution is paramount to the success of our events. Be sure to say thank you.

A call to superintendents: This exceptional recognition and networking event serves to acknowledge the impact that assistants have on our industry. We're already on the lookout for a club to host next year's tournament. If your club is interested in hosting this significant event, we welcome you to get in touch with our office!

Thank you to all the participants, hosts, sponsors, and partners who contributed to making this event truly awesome! ■



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Building Quality Relationships

BETWEEN SUPPLIERS AND SUPERS

Written by & photos provided by Joel Johnston, Superintendent, West Haven G&CC, and Chris Lecour, Sr. Turf Sales Representative, BASF.

In the realm of golf club management, building quality relationships is essential for success. As a golf superintendent, your ability to cultivate strong connections with club members, staff, and stakeholders can significantly impact the overall experience, reputation, and success of both your club and your own career. Building a solid relationship with suppliers is no exception. Gone are the days when customers would count on sales reps' to solely take orders and make last-minute deliveries; turf sales reps today are well-educated with prior turfgrass

management experience and therefore have the ability to also provide sound advice and recommendations. In this article, we will explore key aspects of building quality relationships between suppliers and superintendents, beyond free hats, bundle programs, and double-double deliveries.

PUNCTUALITY AND RELIABILITY

At the core of any meaningful relationship lies honesty, integrity, and reliability. Mutual respect for one-another's time is key; make the most of each visit by:

1. Schedule appointments in advance and honour the commitment to the best of

your ability. Ensure reliability - no one's time is more important than the other; punctuality sends a powerful message that you value the commitments you make with fellow industry professionals. Of course, sometimes cancellations are unavoidable due to unforeseen circumstances, but last-minute cancellations should be the exception, not the norm.

2. Strive to make the most of each visit. Many suppliers are travelling great distances to see their customers, often scheduling multiple visits in the same area for efficiency and to make the most of their day on the road. A sales rep may not be in that area again for several weeks or even months.

3. Be productive with intention by suggesting an agenda. Not only should everyone provide context for requesting a meeting, but they should also prepare several key points of discussion and have them at the ready. For suppliers, this could include new products, new services, or even follow-up inquiries from the previous meeting; or golf course maintenance crews, this could include agronomic issues or interest in equipment demos.
4. Superintendents - avoid last-minute orders whenever possible. We all know that external factors like weather, changes in member events, and life in general can wreak havoc with the best-prepared superintendent's plans, but like last-minute cancellations, make it the exception. Planning material orders reduces stress, and help suppliers better manage rising fuel costs, delivery schedules, and inventory control.

SHARED MUTUAL SUCCESS

Nurturing relationships based on shared mutual success is pivotal in golf club management. Here are a few ways to develop those positive relationships:

1. Offer solutions, not just sales. Instead of focusing solely on sales and transactions, emphasize offering

solutions to customer needs. Take the time to understand their challenges and concerns, and work collaboratively to find appropriate remedies. As a supplier, demonstrating a genuine commitment to a customer's success allows you to establish yourself as a trusted partner rather than a mere service provider.

Strong relationships develop over time through consistent effort, open communication, and a genuine desire to meet the needs of others.

2. Be an active listener. Actively listening to your customers concerns and feedback is essential for building strong relationships. This level of attentiveness shows that you value your client's opinions and are dedicated to addressing their specific concerns. Listening actively not only to challenges but also to successes is an opportunity to gather proven knowledge that could be useful to another customer.
3. Do your research. Stay informed about the latest advancements and solutions within the golf industry. By being well-versed in current trends, you can offer informed recommendations to your customers. This demonstrates your

commitment to providing top-notch service and ensures that you are prepared to meet their evolving needs.

4. Strive to exceed expectations. By consistently delivering high-quality results, you not only build trust but also foster a positive image for yourself and your company. This may involve going the extra mile, delivering ahead of schedule, or providing innovative solutions that surpass expectations.

TRUST AND HONESTY

Suppliers are often sounding boards to the frustrations of superintendents. Those frustrations could range anywhere from budget constraints to difficult employees. Exude trustworthiness and always assume confidentiality! Visiting sites across large territories can expose you to numerous rumors about movement within the industry. Being professional and not spreading these rumors can help avoid unnecessary embarrassment or friction for all parties.

Strong relationships develop over time through consistent effort, open communication, and a genuine desire to meet the needs of others. Following this "Blueprint" will no doubt help superintendents and suppliers build quality relationships and possibly long-lasting friendships. ■

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Data Collection

WHAT'S ALL THE FUSS ABOUT?

Written by and photo provided by Andrew Marsan, Turf Technical Sales, Plant Products.

Data collection is a hot topic these days. Many see the value but don't know how to get started, others think it's nonsense, and some can't be bothered either way. One thing was for certain when I started down the rabbit hole: there was a heck of a lot of information available. There are various collection methods, units of measurement, and tools at our disposal. Where do you start, and how does one determine what is valuable data and what isn't? How do you track this data?

First, we must identify what we are trying to achieve through these processes. Then, through consistent collection methods, interpretation, and adjustments tailored to our ideal performance targets, we can start to get dialed in. Let's explore data collection

This data will allow one to see the golf course with a different set of eyes, and over time, it will start to tell a story

with an emphasis on putting surface performance and how it can be utilized to produce the desired playing conditions for your site. By reviewing these processes at their most basic, we can illustrate how they can be implemented at any club with a budget of any kind. Measuring clipping volume is an essential practice because the growth rate of your turf will have a direct effect on many different factors. These include mowing requirements, the effects of PGR and fertilizer applications, recovery, playability, green speeds, all things thatch, and the list goes on. One that is attuned to how much the grass is growing will have the ability to identify the best conditions and playability for that site and what clipping volume is associated with those conditions. This can be replicated over time, establishing when the surface looks and performs its best and then adjusting to nudge the grass in the desired direction. Our process for collecting this data is simple and takes a matter of minutes throughout a mowing event.

OUR PROCESS

1. Clippings are collected from six greens, located in a variety of microclimates. Unless you plan on managing each green differently based on this data, I wouldn't fret about trying to measure all of them. Even measuring one green is beneficial and better than doing none.
2. All three buckets are measured from our triplex mower using a five-gallon graduated pail. This is excluding the clean-up cut due to the inconsistency in occurrence. No-mow days are recorded as '0.'
3. Wrap your head around this one – dump clippings, shake, measure, and move on. Our operators use a scorecard to record the numbers. Unfortunately, I can't take credit for that idea, but it's a great one, nonetheless. The numbers taken in the field are then entered daily into a spreadsheet.
4. We measure in L and convert to mL/m² as it seems to be the most common unit of measurement and thus easily transferable between locations when making comparisons. It is imperative to know the area of your putting surfaces.
5. Be careful not to get attached to the daily values and instead pay attention to the seven-day average. Variations are normal; don't panic.

The goal is to find the ideal amount of growth for your site by measuring the clipping volume and then using the information to make better-informed decisions. If there is no number associated with how the grass is growing, how can one know if the growth rate is too fast, too slow, or just right?

Before we started to look at things differently, taking daily stimpmeter readings was something I could not wrap my head around. When I started to change my tune, I ended up pulling ours out of the scrap metal pile. Thankfully, the equipment technician



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didn't use it to MacGyver something in the shop. Over time and with regular use, the value of this tool has become quite clear. Our primary focus is consistency from green to green, day to day, not chasing speeds.

It is important to be able to quantify the effect that maintenance practices are having on ball roll distance, and we can do this by taking daily measurements.

- Readings are taken from three greens daily. By design, these are the same surfaces that clippings are collected from.
- We use the Brede equation to compensate for the slope.
- While measuring green speed, we perform a visual test of the quality of ball roll on the surface, coined 'the bobble test.' This is the simplest way to associate a number with smoothness and trueness of the surface.
- In conjunction with the STRI Smoothness Scale which considers variables such as golf ball bobble, chatter, and snaking, and provides a rating from 1-10 based on visual results.

Although it can be overwhelming at first, remember that it's not all or nothing. Start slowly, focusing on one thing at a time and what you feel is most valuable

- This method is the easiest to administer but other tools can be used including the STRI Trueness Meter, ParryMeter, Dispersion Test, and the USGA's GS3 ball.

The final piece of the puzzle in our data collection program is firmness and moisture readings. As we know, how a ball bounces on a green is crucial from a playability standpoint, and there is a strong relationship between the two.

- We take firmness readings once per week and associate a VWC% with the number.
- These measurements are taken from the front, middle, and back of the green, and as is the trend, it is from one of the greens where we collect the rest of our data points.
- A firmness reading could be as basic as walking on a green and asking oneself, "is this surface too firm, too soft, or at an acceptable level?" while linking a number with each.
- Digging deeper, we can use tools such as the Clegg Hammer, TruFirm, or the Precision USA Firmness Meter, which is what we use at our facility.
- It is not only moisture that influences firmness, of course; consider the amount of organic material, top dressing practices, and rolling frequency, among other factors that have a direct impact on surface hardness.
- To dial in our moisture levels, we use a FieldScout TDR accompanied by a colour-coated flag system. We associate a different coloured marking flag with the VWC% range, and we water based on the predetermined target for the day. The introduction of soil moisture meters such as those by Spectrum Technologies or POGO sure has a leg up on the old-school soil probe, allowing us to always be aware of the soil moisture content.
- As with the rest of our data points, this information is noted on a scorecard and entered in a spreadsheet daily.

This is nothing new or groundbreaking; the above points are just easy and effective ways to optimize the quality of your putting surfaces. This data will allow one to see the golf course with a different set of eyes, and over time, it will start to tell a story. Like anything worth doing, it takes time to see the benefits, and during the process, consistency is key. Although it can be overwhelming at first, remember that it's not all or nothing. Start slowly, focusing on one thing at a time and what you feel is most valuable, and go from there. Set your goals, measure the performance, and implement management as needed. There are a variety of different tools available and numerous methods of managing and analyzing the data you take on the golf course, such as the GreenKeeper App, the USGA's Deacon platform, or basic Excel or Google Sheets; there is no right or wrong way. Dig into the data and see what you find. ■

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Chris Tritabaugh

Golf Course Superintendent, Hazeltine National Golf Club



Pat Jones

Industry marketing expert and candid observer of the trends shaping the golf business.

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January 17: Networking Lunch & OGSA AGM

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We Grow Golf.

Marie Thorne Donated Turf Book Collection to the University of Guelph



Cam Shaw, Manager of the UofG DTM program with Marie Thorne & her generous donation.

Written by Cam Shaw.

Marie Thorne, a pioneer of women in the turf industry in the past 30 years, will pass forward her turf industry book collection to the University of Guelph Turf Management programs this month. "It's all in support of the students," says Thorne. "It feels good to provide a lasting resource to the next generation of turfgrass professionals."

Thorne's donation comes at a time when the U of G Diploma in

Turfgrass Management (DTM) was reviewing their current textbook collection and archives in the MacLaughlin Library. "Throughout her impressive career, Marie has amused an impressively diverse and valuable treasure trove of turfgrass management books" says Cam Shaw, Manager of the U of G's DTM program. Shaw continues: "Her personal library covers all aspects of the industry such as: fundamentals of irrigation, drainage, soils, pathology, insect pests, IPM, golf design, and architecture, as well as more modern principles in sustainability, land stewardship, and ecology on golf courses. We are so grateful for Marie's thoughtful gift." Shaw states the books will be housed at the GTI as well as within MacLaughlin Library's turf reserve collection to increase accessibility and visibility for U of G turf students of all levels.

Despite the fact that we live in the digital age, Thorne hopes that students will never stop enjoying the tactile pleasure of reading a learning from a book. "We have enough screen time as it is," said Thorne. "I've always found picking up a book can truly be a welcome alternative to surfing and scrolling." She remembered that late, great Gord Witteveen peddling books at many past golf conference. "He was always eager to make a sale," she said, "and I'd happily return home a stack of the latest editions." Thorne's donated collection includes such classics such as the late Houston Couch's *Diseases of Turfgrasses* and *Creeping Bentgrass Management* by Peter Dernoeden.

"Turf books are like buying shoes," she chuckled, "when you're in the biz, you can't get enough of them."

Thorne hopes that this donation will inspire others to do the same. ■



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OGSA donates \$20,000 TO TURFGRASS RESEARCH

Written by Debbie Conrad, OTRF

The OGSA is pleased to announce a donation of \$20,000 to the OTRF to support golf turfgrass research. This donation was presented at the Annual OTRF fundraising tournament held August 21, 2023, at Woodington Lake Golf Club.

“OGSA proudly supports The OTRF in their turfgrass research efforts. This partnership benefits our members by providing valuable insights and best practices for maintaining top-level golf courses. The years of research supported by The OTRF have been instrumental in helping Golf Course Superintendents achieve the highest standards in course maintenance.”, Owen Russell, OGSA President

The OTRF’s connection with the OGSA has a long-standing history with OGSA members who have always recognized the importance of supporting turfgrass research

and it’s role to assist in keeping up with the environmental and economic pressures of maintaining today’s golf courses.

OTRF’s focus has always been to provide the turfgrass community, including golf courses, with research that will have impact and aid superintendents in continuously improving their knowledge and operations.

Check out these examples of OTRF-funded research projects for a snapshot of how the OGSA’s annual financial donation contributes to improved course conditions and player satisfaction.

- Are you continuously looking for opportunities to reduce your nitrogen and water use? What if you could reduce your usage of nitrogen and water by simply having probiotics as part of your turfgrass program? University of Guelph’s Dr. Manish Raizada is working on his project, **“Testing Probiotics to Reduce Nitrogen and Water Use in Turfgrass,”** with a goal to reduce the number of inorganic

fertilizers, limit drought stress by improving root density and growth, and improve the overall health of turfgrass by increasing its disease resistance.

- Are endophytes really in your turf seed? And if so, how much? How well do endophytes actually protect your turf from stress and insect pressure? Which particular turfgrass cultivars with endophytes are best for improving sustainability and maintenance? To help answer these important questions, OTRF provided funding for the **“Evaluation of stress response characteristics facilitated by endophytes in commercially available perennial ryegrass, tall fescue and fine fescue cultivars”** research project by Dr. Alec Kowalewski from Oregon State University.

The OGSA joins the OTRF in the excitement of seeing the results of these projects and the value they will bring to the golf course industry. ■

Ten Years Ago, Today



2013 Board of Directors (L-R) Rob Gatto (pres), King's Forest, Mark Prieur, Trafalgar, Rod Speake, Mill Run, John McLinden, Toronto Ladies, David Kuypers, Cutten Fields, Phil Scully (vice), Granite Club, Cory Janzen, Westmount, Doug Breen (past), Brookfield, Chad Vibert, Mad River, Jason Boyce, Smuggler's Glen, and Scott White, Donalda.

The 2013 Board of Directors **Rob Gatto** (pres), King's Forest, **Mark Prieur**, Trafalgar, **Rod Speake**, Mill Run, **John McLinden**, Toronto Ladies, **David Kuypers**, Cutten Fields, **Phil Scully** (vice), Granite Club, **Cory Janzen**, Westmount, **Doug Breen** (past), Brookfield, **Chad Vibert**, Mad River and **Jason Boyce**, Smuggler's Glen, and **Scott White**, Donalda.

ON THE MOVE

Michael Bell moved to Maitland Country Club. **Philip Brown** left the Summit and was replaced by **Dave Patterson**, assistant from Magna. **Sean DeSilva** left as general manager at Cedarbrae and returned to Coppinwood. The assistant from Beacon Hall, **Colin Young**, moved to a new course in Aurora, Lebovic Golf Course. Allturf Ltd. was pleased to announce the hiring of **Sean Kenny** as their newest sales representative.

IN MEMORY

Dr. Jack Eggens passed away in August at the age of 77. Jack was a graduate of the Royal Military College in 1960, and

the University of Guelph in 1970. He was Professor Emeritus of the Department of Horticulture, OAC, University of Guelph (Guelph Turfgrass Institute).

The Ontario Turf Equipment Company announced that their long-time employee of over 35 years, **Len Huras**, passed away in December.

TOURNAMENTS

The CanAm Challenge was held at Essex Golf and Country Club hosted by **Chris Andrejicka**. The Canadians brought the cup back to Ontario with a close victory of 26.5 to 24.5 over the Americans.

The Pro Super Challenge was held at Oviinbyrd Golf Club hosted by **Greg Aljoe**. The winning teams were **Mike Powers** (67), National Pines, **Jason Winter**, Deer Ridge and **Jason Crawford**, and Eagles Nest.

The Alex McClumpha Memorial Tournament was held at Trafalgar Golf & Country Club hosted by **Mark Prieur**. **Bill Gilkes**, Scarboro, was low gross with a score of 77 and he also won the George Darou

Trophy for low score for superintendents over 50. Second and third low gross scores were achieved by **Mitko Marinov**, Lionhead, with a 79 and **Chris Andrejicka**, Essex, with an 80.

MILESTONES AND AWARDS

At the OGSA/CGSA joint conference in Toronto, **Bernie MacDonald** and **Doug Suter** were recognized as 50-year members of the OGSA. 25-year members were also recognized: **Marc Brooks**, Stone Tree, **Al Schwemler**, Toronto, **David Cours**, Ambassador, **Alex Dolensky**, Huntsville Downs, **Marlon Gieseler**, Brooklea, **Colin Nisbet**, Westview and **Tim Webb**, Sunningdale.

Retired superintendent and past president of the CGSA, **Bob Heron**, was the winner of the CGSA's John B. Steel Award.

Andrew Hardy, Pheasant Run Golf Club, received the Environmental Leader in Golf Award at the recent GCSAA conference in San Diego (for the second year in a row).



Mark Prieur presented Greg Aljoe, host superintendent of the Pro Super Challenge, Oviinbyrd GC with an appreciation plaque.



2013 Assistant Tournament winners (L-R) Alan Dolick (Wildfire GC), Matt Legg and Dave Jacobsen (Weston G&CC) and Christopher Thompson (National Pines).



Paul Cooper (Turf Care) presents the George Darou Trophy to Bill Gilkes, superintendent at Scarboro G&CC.

Angus Glen Golf Club, Douglas Erwin, was selected to host the golf event at the upcoming Pan Am Games in 2015.

The Lebanon Turf "Dog of the Year" award went to **Tim Muys** and his dog Maple, from Piper's Heath Golf Club. The \$3,000 check will be used to sponsor the "Paws in the Park" event being held in September in Toronto.

The Guelph Turfgrass Institute celebrated its 25th birthday. The GTI is now recognized as a world-class centre for research, extension work and professional development for the study of turfgrasses. The idea was largely conceived by **Dr. Jack Eggens**, **Dr. Bob Sheard** and **Dr. Clayton Switzer**. Other individuals who were involved with its early success were **Mac** and **Beth Frost**, Spring

Lakes, **Bill Campbell**, Fairlawn Sod, **Des Rice**, the Weed Man and **Ron Craig**, Turf Care Products Canada. Superintendents **Paul Dermott**, **Keith Nisbet**, **Alan Beeney** and **Thom Charters** also played key roles in the early days of GTI and the Ontario Turfgrass Research Foundation.

The Barrie Country Club celebrated their 100th birthday. **Ed Doda** was the superintendent. ■



Rob Gatto, OGSA President (R) presents Chris Andrejicka, Essex G&CC (L) with the host superintendent plaque.



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AUTUMN 2023

Southern Ontario – A Place to Grow

*Written by Doug Breen,
Superintendent, Golf North
Properties.*

Most Ontarians are unaware; but recently, there was a proposal from Queen's Park, that every farm in the province be allowed to sever three lots from their property and sell them on the open market. The thinking was, that this sudden influx of available building lots would reverse the trend of rising housing prices. While this may have sounded good in a boardroom in downtown Toronto - when someone actually did the math, they realized that it would have made it essentially impossible to farm, due to Minimum Distance Separation rules. And even if one were to ignore the MDS legislation (which keeps a pig barn from operating next to someone's swimming pool) – this one decision would have taken more acres of farmland out of production, than all the urban sprawl of the past few decades combined.

Wearing my County Councillor hat, I made several impassioned speeches about the uniqueness of the climate, water, and soil quality of Southern Ontario, and how fortunate we are to live in this magical place where regular rains, nutrient rich soils, and temperate climate allow us to produce more food per acre, than anywhere else in North America. Back in my University of Guelph days, they used to make us memorize things like wheat production by province, so I knew where to look for the statistics. To give some perspective: in 2022, wheat production in Ontario was just over 96 bushels/ acre, Manitoba was only 59 bu/ac, and Alberta was 52 bu/ac.

In short, we live in the best place in North America to grow stuff – and that includes turfgrass. Now that my professional role has expanded to include other parts of the country, I'm beginning to see how much



Poor soil, long periods of drought, prone to flooding when it does rain, and poorly drained. Sounds like a perfect location to build a golf course! (Did I mention that it's always windy?)

more difficult it is to take care of a golf course on top of a mountain, next to the ocean, or on the dry, sandy prairies.

In Ontario, we think of a drought as lasting a few weeks, and when one occurs, we can irrigate relatively freely. In the region south of Calgary, a drought might last for months, and irrigation water is much more difficult to get. An Arizona course can expect to spend more than a quarter million US\$ annually for water rights, and similar programs are being considered for the Canadian prairies. When rains do come, the average southern Alberta course can expect 350 millimeters of rainfall per year, and most of that barreling out of the mountains in the month of June, washing your golf course to Saskatchewan. And if you're lucky enough to have a well, there's a good chance that it is so high in sodium, that you'll toxify the soil if you use too much of it. In Toronto, we can count on 831 millimeters of precipitation, high quality irrigation wells are plentiful, and we haven't had a truly horrific flood since Hurricane Hazel in 1954.

When it comes to soil, being a glacial floodplain and ancient lake bottom has deposited a growing medium that the rest of the country can only dream of. At Highlands Links in Cape Breton, there were only two

pockets of decent soil on the entire property, and in the late 1930's, Stanley Thompson had eleven feet of it removed (by hand) and spread "no more than two inches thick" on top of the piles of rocks, boulders, and hardscrabble that made up the other fifteen holes. As a result, the only three holes with a reasonable amount of topsoil, are now eleven feet more prone to flooding (one with briny seawater). Most courses in the Rockies did the same - or capped million-year-old granite outcroppings with sand, which is like growing grass in beach sand on top of a parking lot. Speaking of beach sand, that's all there is from the Rockies to Winnipeg.

The soil is so unstable, that when the early settlers broke up the native grasslands with moldboard plows, it caused the dust bowl within two decades. Apart from Muskoka, soil quantity and quality really isn't something that we worry much about in Ontario.

Living under the influence of the Great Lakes means that our climate has more temperate winters, less heat waves, and more predictable precipitation patterns – which certainly makes our job easier. It's no surprise, that in the early days of golf in Canada, many other regions didn't even try to build traditional greens, but built sand greens instead. There aren't too many folks left who have actually played them, but I'm told that these environmental nightmares of packed sand and oil, made a pretty good putting surface. Before widespread irrigation, this was the best anyone could hope for.

Years ago, I worked for a Superintendent, who often said, "Doug, if we do nothing – grass grows." While this might be true for those of us here, it's certainly not true in many other parts of the country. So let's raise a glass to our comrades across the nation, and take a moment to be thankful for the advantages that we have, growing grass in Ontario. ■

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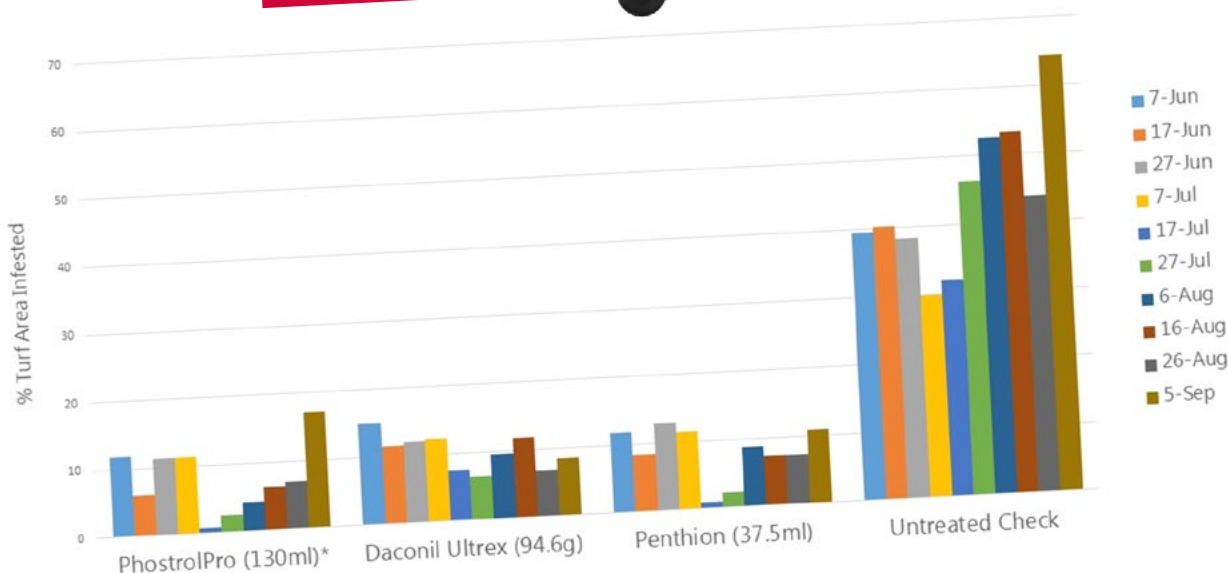
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