



# THE NEWSLETTER

Golf Course Superintendents

Association OF NEW ENGLAND, INC.

Sponsors and administrators of the Troll-Dickinson Scholarship Fund — Awarded yearly to deserving Turf Management Students.

January 1994

## Outgoing prexy Steve Chiavaroli still has some unfinished business

### February Meeting

Tuesday, February 14, 1994  
Andover Country Club

Host Superintendent  
Wayne LaCroix

9:00 a.m.	Board Meeting	
12:00 p.m.	Lunch (\$12.00)	15.00
1:00 p.m.	Regular Meeting	
	Education to Follow	

Reservations Required  
Call by February 11, 1994  
(617) 328-9479

You must pay by check - No Cash!  
Checks payable to GCSANE

Wayne LaCroix has been superintendent of Andover C.C. for the past two years. Prior to that, for four years he was the construction/grow-in superintendent of Ipswich C.C. (1987-90), and for seven years he was the foreman and assistant at Tedesco C.C. (1980-87). He graduated from the Stockbridge Arboriculture & Park Management program in 1980, and Turf Winter School in 1983. Married to wife Julie and residing in Andover, Mass., Wayne enjoys flyfishing, hunting, and golf.

#### Directions:

Route 128 North to Route 93 North to Exit 43A (Route 133 West). Turn right off ramp (IRS building on right, Sheraton Rolling Green on left). Continue through two stop lights to Canterbury Street, a little over 2 miles on left. Clubhouse 6/10 mile straight ahead.

Route 495 North to Exit 41A (Route 28 Andover). Turn right off ramp. Go 2/10 mile to stop light. Go right on Route 133 West to Canterbury Street (approximately 3/10 mile). Clubhouse 6/10 mile straight ahead.

Steve Chiavaroli still can't believe they knew what they were doing when members of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of New England elected him its president two years ago.

What's more important, though, on the eve of his final days as the group's guiding light, is the fact that those same members probably made one of the smartest moves in association history when they elevated the likable Tatnuck Country Club super to its highest office.

Chiavaroli proves it with each passing day, even as he steps down to the role of past-president and a seat on the Board of Directors. He says he still has some unfinished business on his agenda and will be working towards its completion in the next 12 months.

There are two projects that dominated Steve's list of priorities during his tenure as president. One was GCSANE participation in the USGA's Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program, the other getting the association's Memorial Tournament off the ground.

"There's still a lot of work to be done on both accounts," Steve said. "The USGA-New York Audubon Society partnership has realized favorable responses from over 1,000 clubs and courses across the country. New England is starting to come around. The last count I had found 32 Massachusetts clubs participating. I'd like to see more join in, but a conflict of sorts seems to be holding a lot of clubs back.

"The conflict arises from assumption that climbing aboard the public relations booster means crossing the border since the New York Audubon Society is one of

the project's main movers. I don't see how something like that should keep Massachusetts courses on the sidelines. Inclusion in the program is a definite plus for the club's and super's image. Promoting wildlife is the name of the game here, so why can't we have 100% participation?"

The sanctuary program consists of means of luring birds to the golf course, forms like bird houses, nesting grounds etc. In return for the superintendent's efforts, the sponsoring groups (USGA, NY Audubon Society) recognize the courses and clubs for their interest in and concern for wildlife preservation.

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**PRESIDENT**

Steven A. Chiavaroli, CGCS  
6 Birch Street, Paxton, MA 01612  
(H) 508-752-0031 (W) 508-791-5373

**VICE PRESIDENT**

Edward L. Brearley  
189 Matfield Street, W. Bridgewater, MA 02379  
(H) 508-584-8568 (W) 508-295-7010  
Club Affiliation - Bay Pointe C.C.

**SECRETARY**

Robert DiRico, CGCS  
326 Fuller Street, West Newton, MA 02165  
(W) 617-527-6968  
Club Affiliation - Brae Burn C.C.

**TREASURER**

Paul Jamrog  
P.O. Box 38, Belchertown, MA 01007  
(H) 413-323-8519 (W) 413-536-4195  
Club Affiliation - The Orchards G.C.

**TRUSTEE**

John T. Hassett  
110 Montgomery Avenue, Lowell, MA 01851  
(W) 508-458-7300  
Club Affiliation - Mount Pleasant C.C.

**TRUSTEE**

Eric E. Newell, CGCS  
113 Cross Street, Hanover, MA 02339  
(H) 617-826-7207 (W) 617-878-5836  
club

**TRUSTEE**

Kevin F. Osgood  
62 Maple Street, Hyde Park, MA 02136  
(H) 617-364-4859 (W) 617-630-1950  
Club Affiliation - Newton Comm. G.C.

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Robert Ruzala  
69 Gelines Drive, Chicopee, MA 01020  
(H) 413-592-5780 (W) 413-256-8654  
Club Affiliation - Hickory Ridge G.C.

**GOLF CHAIRMAN**

James Fitzroy, CGCS  
357 W. Squantum Street, N. Quincy, MA 02171  
(H) 508-528-6956 (W) 617-328-1776  
Club Affiliation - Presidents G.C.

**EDUCATION CHAIRMAN**

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93 Warren Avenue, Marlboro, MA 01752  
(H) 508-485-6894 (W) 508-369-0879  
Club Affiliation - Concord C.C.

**NEWSLETTER CHAIRMAN**

James Reinertson  
19 Main Street, Wayland, MA 01778  
(H) 508-655-7415 (W) 508-358-2250  
Club Affiliation - Wayland C.C.

**PAST PRESIDENT**

Paul Miller, CGCS  
1 Leicester Road, Marblehead, MA 01945  
(H) 617-631-7910 (W) 508-369-5704  
Club Affiliation - Nashawtuc C.C.



Newsletter Editor . . . . . James Reinertson  
Contributing Editor . . . . . Gerry Finn  
Business Manager . . . . . Paul Jamrog

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The Memorial Tournament is closer to home in presentation and purpose. The event, whose initial endeavor at the Wachusett Country Club raised \$6,500, has created a benevolent scholarship program exclusively for family students of the entire GCSANE membership.

"This is something for and by our members and I mean all categories," Chiavaroli emphasized. "In effect, we're helping our own. Of course, leaning in this direction doesn't mean we're abandoning other ventures like the research fund and Troll-Dickinson scholarship program. It's something new, something that's worthwhile.

"We have to thank the Wachusett people for donating their facilities in helping the Memorial get started. Our goal for the next tournament is perhaps to double the amount of money raised, eventually build a scholarship nestegg where awards will increase and make the event a must for every association member."

It would appear, then, that Steve's work has just begun. However, he stresses the point that his continuing input into those two projects are contingent on membership approval. He maintains that GCSANE members always have called the shots, as it should be.

Aside from a desire to remain involved in the upgrade of the profession and the association, Steve looks forward to a comparatively relaxed position and life on the group governing sidelines after a two-year presidential stay that almost never happened.

"That's right," he explained. "I really didn't think I had what it takes to be president when I was going up the ranks. In fact, I seriously thought of not accepting the nomination because I was a little apprehensive of what lay ahead for me in such a high place. You know, one month after the election I found myself in front of 750 people making an introduction at the MGA Spring Conference. I admit it. I was shaking in my boots."

Steve survived that experience all right, but says to this day that he still gets a little nervous when he takes to the podium. He must keep it to himself, though, because no jitters appear to be in sight when he opens those monthly association meetings.

"Oh, I've learned to calm down some," he admitted. "And, looking back, I think being able to serve my peers as their president is probably the best thing that ever happened to me. I know it's done a lot for my confidence, my self-esteem. It's also given me an overview of the profes-

sion which you can't get sitting in the stands, so to speak."

Chiavaroli, a fixture at Tatnuck for the last 16 years, is looking forward to the freed-up time available after two years of being on call as the GCSANE representative at countless golf functions. A lot of those appearances weren't an easy commute from a place like Paxton. However, the experience was worth the late-night trips home.

"Most of all, though, I'm relieved in a sense because of the way everything turned out," Steve concluded. "I just want the members to know I appreciate the trust they had in me when they elected me president. Serving those guys was a privilege. And working with the other officers, directors, and people I came in contact with because of the position was indeed a pleasure. I just hope these past two years weren't as hectic as I thought they would be. In the end is the realization that I'm just one of the guys again. But that's a good feeling, too."

GERRY FINN

## Calendar

- |                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| Jan. 27-29        | <b>New England Grows</b><br>Hynes Auditorium, Boston, Mass.<br>Info: Virginia Wood (617) 431-1625  |
| Jan. 31- Feb. 7   | <b>GCSAA International Golf Conference Show</b><br>Dallas (Texas) Convention Center<br>Info: GCSAA Public Relations (913) 832-4470. (Hospitality Room will be open 8 p.m. - 12 midnight; you will be notified of the exact room number at headquarters hotel by your association rep in Dallas.) |
| Feb. 3            | <b>Seminar: Lawn Care Operations</b><br>Holy Cross College, Worcester, Mass.<br>Co-sponsored by UMass Cooperative Extension and the Mass. Assoc. of Lawn Care Professionals.<br>Info: Karen Connolly (508) 287-0127; Mary Owen (508) 892-0382  |
| Feb. 16-17        | <b>Turf &amp; Grounds Expo II</b><br>Holiday Inn, Suffern, N.Y.<br>Two-day program features a GCSAA Seminar, Stress Management of Turf (Feb. 16.). Split sessions will be held the afternoon of Feb. 16-17.<br>Info: NYSTA (800) 873-TURF<br>Tel. (508) 783-1229<br>FAX (518) 783-1258           |
| Feb. 28 - March 2 | <b>Mass. Turf Conference</b><br>Springfield, Mass.<br>Info: Mass. Turf and Lawngress Assoc. (413) 549-5295   |
| March 14-15       | <b>Maine Turf Conference</b><br>The Somerset, Rockland, Maine<br>Info: Pat Lewis (207) 781-5881  |
| April 5           | <b>USGA Regional Seminar</b><br>Holiday Inn, Taunton, Mass.<br>(Not April 15. Ed.)   |



# The Super Speaks Out:

*This month's question: With job security an ongoing, pressing issue, what are your views on the necessity for golf course superintendents to be protected by employee-management contracts, and what are your experiences with them?*

**Roy Mackintosh, Twin Hills Country Club:** "I'm in a unique situation in the dual role of club manager-golf course superintendent so I can look at the situation from the standpoint of both management and labor."



"Certainly, there is a need for job protection in any position that carries the responsibilities golf course superintendents assume when they are hired. Also, I can see the day, say five years down the road, when they will be automatic parts of the agreement between country club and superintendent."

"In my personal situation, I have no contract. I suppose you could say that I am over the hump as far as being accepted by club directors and members since I've been at Twin Hills for almost 30 years. In addition, I could be considered an owner of sorts since I have two shares of Twin Hills Realty, the corporation which controls the club."

"Regardless, my heart and feeling are with the golf course superintendent who seeks and is entitled to job protection. There are too many variables on the country club scene and I can see what's happening in the outlook of most young supers. They don't want to see their futures affected by the whims of certain individuals in charge of hiring and firing procedures."

"In the long run, though, I've always supported the theory that the job performance of the employee is the key to his or her job security. I maintain that if a person performs his duties at a high level and consistent rate of success, there would be no need for contracts and the like."

"However, that's just a personal assessment since I've been an addict as far as adhering to a strong work ethic. Also, I realize that the presence of personality

differences sometimes plays a part in the tenure of employees. So, over the long haul and where the entire golf course superintendents profession is concerned, contracts are the best way to go. I think they will become an integral part of the hiring process in the not too distant future."

**Bill Spence, The Country Club:** "I have had experience with positions in which the setting of my relationship with management was arranged in the form of a contract and in the form of an oral agreement. Needless to say, nothing beats the written word when it comes down in strong, legal-wise and legal-correct language."



"It's extremely important that everyone in the superintendents profession have a written agreement with his employer, a contract if you will. Job security has to be one of the high priority conditions when a superintendent decides to change jobs or start a career."

"When I talk about a written contract, I mean the complete package. I can remember one incident with a contract involved and an added oral agreement pertaining to a bonus. Strangely, the bonus disappeared when it was time to receive it. Therefore, everything should be in writing."

"In this respect, I would like to see the national (GCSAA) provide its members with legal aid in the matter of setting up work contracts. There should be a team of lawyers available to supers for making sure the agreement is ironclad and without loopholes. Such service should be part of the benefit package a superintendent receives as a full member of the profession's national organization."

"My own experience in this matter has gone from nothing in writing (Pebble Beach) to firm written contracts at my

last two places of employment (Kansas City Country Club, The Country Club). The latter arrangement has proved to be the better of the two—for both parties."

**Paul Miller, Nashawtuc Country Club:** "There's no doubt not only are contracts the coming thing, they are here and here to stay."



"In recent experiences, I have had two, three-year contracts. Presently, I am working under conditions of an extension to my last contract which facilitates the transition from one governing board of directors to the next. This arrangement serves the club and me well."

"It hasn't been that long when superintendents weren't included under a job protection agreement. In fact, as recently as ten years ago the only contracts in the relationship between club and super were nothing more than job descriptions."

"That's what I had when I first came to Nashawtuc. Eventually, I parlayed that written paper into a job evaluation standard. I wanted all my duties spelled out and in writing. I mean right down to the cut of the greens."

"Since then the job evaluation procedure has been one of the basics in setting up my contracts with the club. That standard (job evaluation specifics) carries over from one year to the next in order that a change in directors can be accommodated."

"In the future, I can see the day when a superintendent will come to a contract negotiation with a lawyer or agent just to be sure all the T's are crossed and the I's dotted. Everything has to be clear-cut. We, as supers, didn't create such a mode. It's just the way the world is today."

"Additionally, I would like to live in the situation where every super applying for a job insists that a contract be part of the hiring process. We have to take the lead in this. A binding agreement is the only way to go. It's a matter of business, a part of every business."

GERRY FINN

*"Not only are contracts the coming thing, they are here and here to stay."*

Paul Miller



# A message from the (outgoing) GCSANE President

The responsibility of representing this Association as President for the last two years has been very rewarding for me,



and I regard this experience as a true privilege. It has been 12 years now since I was offered the opportunity to serve on the Association's Board of Directors. Working with past presi-

dents Brian Cowen, Don Hearn, Dave Barber, Richard Zepp, and Paul Miller has been particularly enjoyable.

As I step down from this office, I look forward to serving two more years on the Board as Past President and Vice Chairman of our Turf Research Fund. As your GCSANE representative at MGA and Ouimet Fund activities for the last two years, I have done my best to participate with these associations on behalf of GCSANE. It has indeed been an honor and privilege to sit with individuals involved with the Ouimet Fund and the Mass. Golf Association.

Your incoming Board of Directors faces many challenges in the upcoming years. Our Association's business, book-keeping, and correspondence matters are continually growing. The need for the services of an executive secretary seems inevitable. More member participation on committee assignments may be required to carry out the added business of this Association in the years to come. Your incoming president is assuming many duties and responsibilities. He is surrounded by a group of Board members who are eager and enthusiastic to serve you. Let's make sure to support all of these Board members who work so hard, and offer you services when opportunities present themselves.

I would like to remind our members that our Board of Directors maintains an employment file which any member is welcome to review at any time. The employment committee is composed of the President, Vice President, and Secretary, with the Secretary in possession of the employment file. I would encourage any member who is in need of a golf course maintenance employee to utilize the names of the individuals in the file. I would also encourage and ask that members who may receive letters and/or resumes from individuals seeking employment in golf to forward copies of those resumes/correspondences to the Secretary. This employment file is only as complete and functional as we make it. So remember to forward those student/assistant resumes for the file as soon as you receive them. Thanks for your help on this matter.

Lastly, I would welcome two new members of your Board of Directors, Scott

Reynolds and Richard Tworig. I would also like to thank Eric Newell and Paul Miller as they leave their seats on the Board. Eric has served as trustee and government relations representative for the past three years. Eric will serve another year in government relations for GCSANE and will be slated to become President of the GCMA of Cape Cod in November 1994. Past President Paul Miller has faithfully served this association for the last 16 years and has contributed continually in the growth of our association and profession. To both Eric and Paul, thanks for your tireless efforts and dedication.

Once again, I thank you for your support during the last two years. Your new president and Board of Directors will look forward to serving you, as well as require your continual support and participation in the association's educational and business activities.

STEPHEN CHIAVAROLI, CGCS

# A message from Paul Miller, former GCSANE president, reflecting on growth & progress in 16 years with organization

Sixteen years ago this month I was elected to serve on the Board of Directors of GCSANE. The industry was rapidly changing, and professionalism was our next giant hurdle. Twelve years later, a new job and a goal to raise Turfgrass Research dollars, I had the privilege to be elected President of the GCSANE.

GCSANE not only had a new president in 1990, but a lot of new faces on the

Board. Their commitment to our association was nothing short of incredible. From a new look of our newsletter (Kip Tyler), an extremely successful Research Tournament (Dick Zepp), a very effective membership drive and directory (Bob Ruzsala), and an outstanding investing ability of our funds (Ron Milenski), our association began to flourish. Many, many thanks.

The end of my term as President was very difficult due to my personal hardship of my wife Sally's severe illness, of which her recovery has been nothing short of miraculous. I thank you all for your thoughts and prayers during that difficult time.

My last two years on the Board as Past President have been equally rewarding in my participating in the continuously successful Turfgrass Research commitment, as well as the formation of the Benevolent and Scholarship Fund. I would like to truly thank the membership of GCSANE for the opportunity to serve you, and wish the new Board of Directors best of luck in 1994 and in the years to follow.

PAUL F MILLER, CGCS

## Golf Course Superintendent position available Melrose, Mass.

A job opening has been posted for a Golf Course Superintendent at the Mount Hood Golf Course in Melrose, Mass.

The position is available for a hard-working person, with construction experience helpful. The salary is commensurate with experience. For information call Steve Murphy at (617) 598-6917.



## ***Soil in New England:***

# ***Selecting greens root zone mix requires planning and research***

*by Joe Farina*

***Golf Course &  
Golf Turf Specialist***

***Read Sand & Gravel, Inc.  
Rockland, Mass.***

You're rebuilding a single golf green or overseeing the new construction of an 18-hole facility: you'll find that making the final decisions on design adjustments concerning front-to-back elevations, percents to slope, drainage, irrigation, and turfgrass cultivars all seem to come easier and more comfortably than the selection of a proper root zone material. Of course, you sift through the latest criteria on specifications and perhaps even get your hands on a greens construction video tape. 80-20 sand sphagnum or 90-10 sand reed sedge flash in front of you like a fine souffle recipe. Follow it to the letter or your chances of problems or failure increase. Sand, sand, and sand...You've

heard the comments, "High sand greens are not for New England golf courses. This isn't Palm Springs, California or Myrtle Beach, South Carolina." Rightly so! We talk funny, say our southern neighbors, but despite our geographic distance agronomic similarities do exist. Although obviously different, cool season bentgrasses and warm season bermudagrasses require adequate infiltration rates, a balance of capillary and non-capillary pore spaces, organic content, a desirable sphericity and distribution of sand particles. I have seen new construction in Florida, and at first sight would equate the appearance of the root zone material to sugar and molasses, a medium with specification adherence that works for them.

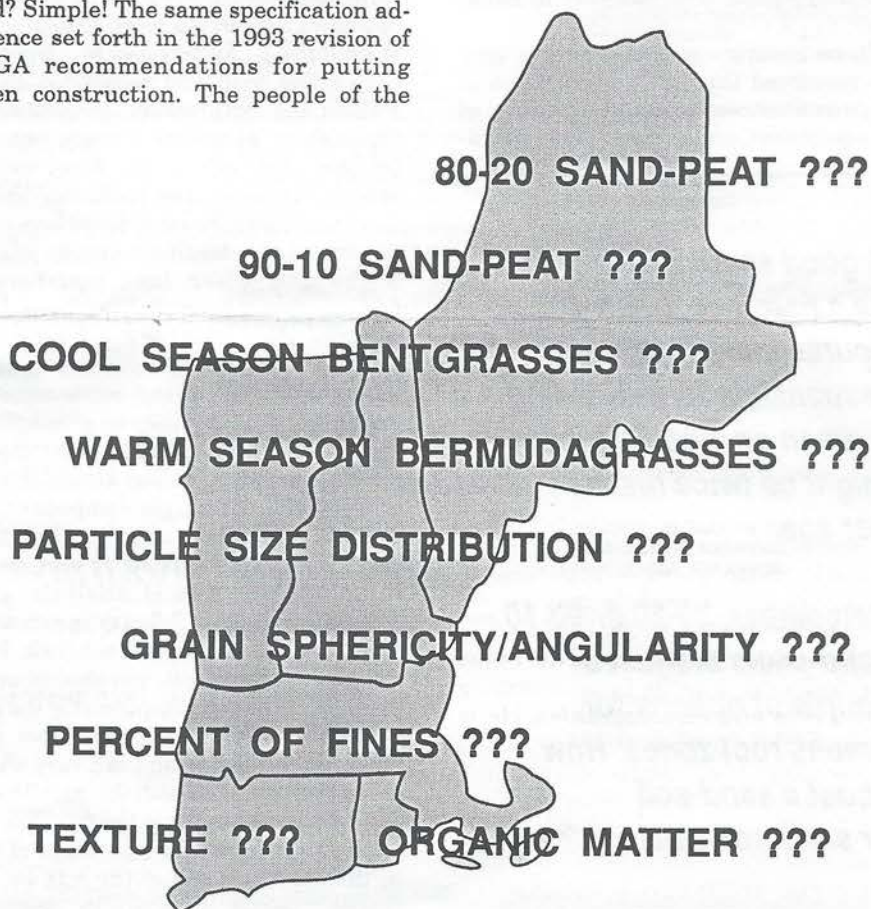
But what works for us in New England? Simple! The same specification adherence set forth in the 1993 revision of USGA recommendations for putting green construction. The people of the

USGA take painstaking measures to deliver guidelines, specifications, and recommendations for root zone mediums. Just take a look at the inside cover of the USGA Green Section Record, March/April 1993. It reads like a cast of thousands in an Academy Award winning movie. Be reminded that whether you're in Portland, Oregon or Portland, Maine these people with mile-long credentials and an impressive amount of years of experience and research are there for the benefit of the golf turf industry. What is unique here in New England is that we have some of the oldest golf courses in the United States of America, a few with prestigious names and vintage designs dating back over 100 years.

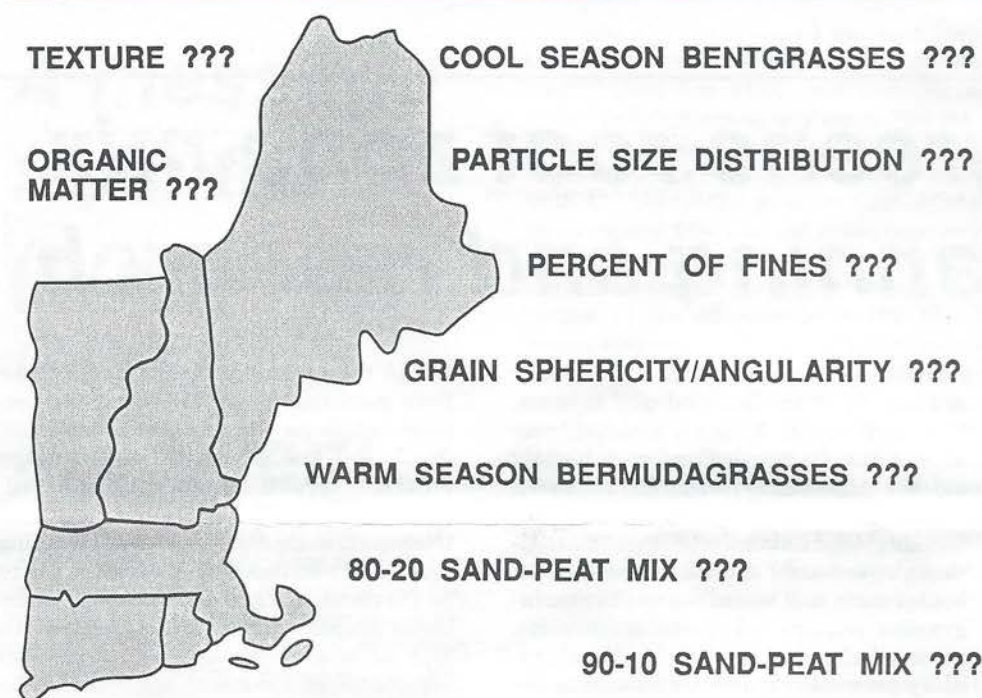
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***We talk funny, say our southern neighbors, but despite our geographic distance, agronomic similarities do exist ...***

***What is unique here in New England is that we have some of the oldest golf courses in the United States.***







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Some have a history that includes the earliest major golf events—like the young U.S. Open, where names like Francis Ouimet and Walter Hagen became famous. Other courses may not share such notoriety, but maybe they are celebrating their 50th, 75th, or 100th year in existence.

These nostalgic golf courses are very well preserved through the evolution of turfgrass sciences, current technology of turf equipment, and computerized irriga-

***A good sand-peat mix can be a hard sell to the golf course superintendent responsible for rebuilding a green on a course that might be twice his or her age.***

***Remember, 80-20 or 90-10 sand-peats are just a couple of options for greens root zones. How about a sand-soil or sand-soil-peat mix?***

tion systems. A good sand-peat mix can be a hard sell to the golf course superintendent responsible for rebuilding a green on a course that might be twice his or her age. S/he most likely would relish more the opportunity to build 18 new greens with 18 root zones of identical continuity and behavior. But fitting this one new green in is a more difficult chore. It would be nice if this new root zone were compatible with and responded equally well to the fertilization, irrigation, and topdressing programs already practiced by the superintendent. Also, ball response, firmness, and resiliency are factors that should be considered because no matter what scientific methods you use, if the new green isn't membership-friendly, you'll hear about it.

Remember, 80-20 or 90-10 sand-peats are just a couple of options for greens root zones. How about a sand-soil or sand-soil-peat mix? All of this may be accomplished and fall within specification requirements, providing you pay attention to the criteria of each single component that comprises the whole mix. Acceptability of components is evaluated by particle size distribution, textural analysis, grain sphericity and angularity, percents of fines, and organic matter analysis. If you intend to include soil, you should understand that the soil component is the most volatile element in a greens root zone. Soil types are many and can vary widely. A poor soil can diminish the excellence of the other components in the mix. Exercise efforts to minimize the percents of fines in the sand and soil of the mix by "fine tuning". Select a naturally weathered

clean or washed sand with lower counts of silt and clay, a grain angularity of sub-rounded to rounded, with a sphericity of low and medium. A native sandy loam soil consistent in texture, Ph, and lower percentage of silt and clay are best to work with. Avoid muck soils or ones with excessive fines or high organic matter. Soil sources should be abundant enough to complete the quantity of the root zone mix required. The inclusion of large quantities of soil to the greens profile is, to say the least, controversial. It is approached with a "damned if you do, damned if you don't" attitude. Therefore, proper attention to the make-up of the soil as well as the sand and peat types you propose to use is a prelude to building the mix. Component samples should be laboratory tested for adherence to USGA specifications and recommendations.

Suggested ratios for your greens root zone mix will be based on these professional test results. Don't try to blindly arrive at a good-sounding ratio mix. Without laboratory evaluation and analysis, what you can't see CAN hurt you! Don't chance it. When finally selecting the greens root zone mix, provide your information and concerns to the people directly involved in the putting green rebuilding project, club officials, assistant superintendent, golf course architect, USGA representative, contractor, fellow superintendents, and your materials supplier. Be confident that with appropriate research and advance planning, your new green will perfectly reflect the continuity of your course.

***The inclusion of large quantities of soil to the greens profile is, to say the least, controversial.***

***Therefore, proper attention to the make-up of the soil, as well as the sand and peat types you propose to use, is a prelude to building the mix.***



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Bob Healy, ASIC

**Tom Irwin, Inc.**  
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