



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.

November 1998

Two former golf course superintendents reflect on their second career in sales

The jump from golf course superintendent to golf course equipment sales: Is it one giant leap or just a short hop?

"It's somewhere between those two," remarked Jack Pluta, who left a 21-year career as a superintendent to take over the Connecticut sales district for Turf Specialty Inc. two years ago.

"There are a lot of similarities in the two professions," explained John Winskowicz, who works the sales routes for Turf Products Corp. after a couple of flings, first, as a teacher, then, as a golf course superintendent. "So the transition went as smoothly as one would hope it to go."

One glaring factor appears to motivate the change from superintendent to salesman. It's the insecurity of the superintendents' profession. Both Winskowicz and Pluta made it clear that they were caught in the clutches of politics and uncertainty when they

found themselves deep in the throes of the golf course maintenance business.

Winskowicz, who grew up in Danvers and graduated from Boston University in 1970, has always been in the people business, so to speak.

At first, he thought teaching was his first and only career goal, and set out to prove his perspective right by teaching at St. John's Prep in Danvers for five years. However, his enthusiasm for that profession eventually waned and he pulled stakes for a westward trek to California.

Once there, the course maintenance field appealed to him, and he latched onto a rising star at the Lou Galbreith Golf Course near Oakland.

"I was willing to start at the bottom, and that's what I did," Winskowicz disclosed. "I began on the regular day crew, moved up to night waterman, then made it to assistant superintendent. The next step was head super, and that came in time. So, things were really looking up."

Unfortunately, things weren't all that rosy for the golf course. Somehow, it was set upon by financial troubles and before it could recoup, the state came in and reclaimed the course.

"I could see the handwriting on the wall," Winskowicz winced. "Rather, I could see the handwriting on my paycheck and those of my crew. The checks all bounced, and pretty soon I was looking for another job."

The insecurity that has caused more than one golf course superintendent to look in another direction for that next career position hit Winskowicz, who reacted by taking a sales job with Toro Products in Monterey. Then John decided to return to Massachusetts, where he found employment with Turf Products.

"Both (superintendent and sales) are good professions. But I think the stress is greater there (golf course maintenance). There's just too much politics on the golf course. But I'm happy now, and that's what really counts."

**John Winskowicz
Turf Products Corp.**

"I've never regretted any of my moves," Winskowicz reflected on his past. Both (superintendent and sales) are good professions. But I think the stress is greater there (golf course maintenance). There's just too much politics on the golf course. But I'm happy now, and that's what really counts."

Winskowicz worked in turf management only eight years. On the other hand,
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Pluta knew no other vocational way until his 11 years at the Country Club of Pittsfield came to a halt when he accepted a position with Turf Specialty.

"My whole life had been golf course maintenance," Pluta revealed. "I was born and brought up in Gilbertsville. That's near Ware, which is, well, between Worcester and Springfield. Anyway, when I was 13, I was working on the crew at the Dunroman Golf Course. My pay was a free membership, and my boss was Gary Mondor (now head superintendent at the Crestview Country Club).

Pluta took to the profession without any trouble and soon he had his own job at the Ludlow Country Club. That was in 1975, and two years later he was hired to put a spit and polish on the grounds at the Westover Golf Course. Jack spent eight years at Westover before getting the call and accepting the head man's post at the Country Club of Pittsfield. And after 11 years there, he made a hard decision.

"Turf Specialty was looking for someone to take over their Connecticut sales territory," Jack told. "I was kind of itchy, anyway. I had played the game of politics as a super for 21 years and I was sick of pleasing everyone who thought they were my boss. It's a change after all those years planning and worrying about maintenance programs. However, it's a new challenge and I'm ripe for it."

Jack sees a big difference between a superintendent and a salesman. When you're a superintendent, you sort of live in your own little world," he said. It's your second home and, sadly, for some superintendents, it's their first. I mean, whoever thought of weekends when they were a superintendent? I didn't. "When I woke up in the morning . . . Monday, Wednesday, Sunday, or whatever . . . my first thoughts were focused on the condition of the golf course. Now, on a Sunday, I can turn over and go back to sleep."

Pluta doesn't mean to demean the superintendents' profession. "On the contrary," he emphasized. "They're the heart and soul of the golf business. I deal with them every day. In fact, when I call on a customer, I'm glad I can put myself in that customer's shoes. We've

"They're (superintendents) the heart and soul of the golf business. In fact, when I call on a customer, I'm glad I can put myself in that customer's shoes. We've both been there. That's a bond no one can break."

**Jack Pluta
Turf Specialty, Inc.**

both been there. That's a bond no one can break."

The sales business, like the maintenance business, entails just as much, if not more, physical input. "Oh, definitely," Jack remarked. "I do 40 to 50,000 miles a year traveling my route. And there's more than just lunches and snappy conversation that goes into this job. Heck, I'm more tired at the end of the day than I ever was. And, I have to tell my old super pals: Guys, there isn't any down time in the winter here!"

So, at the end of this particular study, it can be concluded that super and sales are almost like peas in a pod. "But there's that one big difference," Pluta added. "Now, I don't have to please as many people as I did two year's ago, and that's a relief."

GERRY FINN

Calendar

- December 11 **GCSANE Christmas Party**
Belmont Country Club
Belmont, Mass.
- January 12 **GCSANE Monthly Meeting**
Franklin Country Club
Franklin, Mass.
Supt. - Gary Luccini
- Feb. - TBA **GCSANE Monthly Meeting**
Heritage Hill Country Club
Lakeville, Mass.
Supt. - Robert Garrity
- March - TBA **GCSANE Monthly Meeting**
Hickory Ridge Country Club
Amherst, Mass.
Supt. - Robert Ruzsala

The Super Speaks Out

This month's question: What is the extent of your tree maintenance program, and how is this program faring?

Greg Mackintosh, Tara Hyannis Resort:

"We're really into a maintenance program for our trees because of the circumstances of the course, being part of a hotel-resort presentation, and the fact that our heavy tree population has to be monitored to provide space and breathing room for conditioning the course.

"First of all, we're fortunate because we contract the Bartlett company to overlook and service the trees around the hotel. Its people come in every month to assess the situation, which means checking for disease and other cosmetic changes that affect the looks and health of the trees. In effect, they do all the heavy work, then turn the rest over to us. The relationship has worked out well and our hotel tree maintenance program is thriving.

"Out on the course we do extensive work after the golf season slows down. We're always looking to keep the width of fairways in reasonable shape, and sometimes we have to make a major cut or real close trim to retain the original look of the playing area.

"Trees around the tees and greens get special attention. Generally speaking, we keep all trees in those areas pruned up to 10 feet high. In order to increase the air flow around the tees and greens and assist in the turf growth process, we make it a rule not to retain branches below 10 feet.

"We have a lot of pine trees here and pine bore has become a problem for us. There are years when we lose up to 10 pine trees because of this disease, and we have countered those losses with a tree planting program that makes up for the ones we lose.

"Other than that, we confine our slow-season tree maintenance activity to cleaning out deadwood hangers and keeping tee chutes open by getting any branches out of the way. In the summary of all this, I have to add that providing tree maintenance here is one of our top priorities."

Brian Howard, The Thompson Club:

"We're very aware that tree maintenance is an important part of our overall conditioning program. However, except for emergency situations, we confine it to the off-season, or roughly between the months of November and March.

"We are part of a condominium community and it's a rare day when we're allowed to cut down a tree. The rule is out there, too. I can't take out any tree without permission.

"But that's a restriction I can live with. On the up side, I'm fortunate because I have use of a cherry picker (actually an old telephone truck) and it allows our crew to trim up to 40 feet from the ground. That's a big advantage.

"The overall picture of tree population and appearance is changing here because the deadwood cleaning-out work has been neglected in the past. I'm in my second year here and just starting to catch up in that area of tree maintenance. But again, the timing has to be right, which means

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**Greg Mackintosh
Tara Hyannis Resort**

weather conditions after the golf season ends dictate how much I can put into it.

"During the golf season I do have tree maintenance in mind even though it has to be put on the back burner. At that time I try to mark the trees which will need attention when the golfers are gone. That can be a problem, too, because by the time I get to them the leaves have dropped and they don't look all that bad.

"Pruning involves a simple formula. I shoot from the ground up to let air and sun in where those elements are coming up short. I have five people in the off-season for maintenance work, and I am allowed outside help to chip hardwood and stack brush. It's getting there, though, just as long as the weather cooperates."

Kevin Miller, Bedrock Golf Course: Tree maintenance at Bedrock (only seven years old) turns out to be a community project and a hands-on effort that's doing the job.

"There are two arrangements, if you will, that have helped our program tremendously. Without them it would be hard to keep up with overgrowth and the like because the course is loaded with trees. In fact, every hole is separated from the other by woods.

"Anyway, in the spring or April school vacation, I conduct a junior membership program. I hire kids (12 and over) to work one week on the course, concentrating on cleaning out the underbrush my regular crew missed the previous winter. For that contribution, each one gets a free membership.

"Another aid comes in the form of a member who owns a tree service. Again, I have to do business. He gets a free membership in exchange for providing stump grinding services. It's worth it, too. Last winter he did 100 stumps!"

"We're thinning out the trees year by year. But there's a lot of thinning out to do because of our heavy tree population. Most of the tree work comes in the winter. Most of the attention in the golf season goes to marking trees that are blocking out the air and sunlight.

"Oh, there's another deal I forgot to mention. We stockpile fireplace wood and offer it to members at a reduced cost. I guess you'd have to say that bartering is alive and well at Bedrock. Maybe I missed my calling."

GERRY FINN

Effective evaluation of new turf products

by *Gail Schumann*
University of Massachusetts
Monica L. Elliott
University of Florida
Paul Vincelli
University of Kentucky

Anyone who had the opportunity to visit one of the trade exhibits at the turf conferences last winter could not help but be amazed by the variety of biological or organic turf products that purport to help grass grow better and relieve pest problems. Dozens of new products become available each year, and intelligent consumers want to know if they really work.

Turf managers who buy chemical pest control products are familiar with the extensive university testing most chemicals have undergone. They may be assuming that similar testing has been done for all new products. However, many new products have little or no independent testing completed before they are introduced to the turf market. Many biological/organic product claims are based on non-scientific testimonials, non-turfgrass evaluations, or simply unproven theories. How does one evaluate a new product to determine if it works and if it is cost-effective?

Many new products have little or no independent testing completed before they are introduced to the turf market.

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Here are some questions to ask the vendor:

Has the product ever been evaluated by independent researchers, that is, by people with no financial interest in the product? Ask for names and a copy of their reports. There are two reasons that university results are usually reliable. Most university studies include side by side evaluations of products from many companies in their trials to see how they perform under local conditions. Each company typically pays a modest fee for each treatment in the study. Most of these studies are conducted on public lands where anyone can arrange a visit and see the results for themselves. Many of the experiments are featured at research field days, and most researchers indicate which companies sponsored which studies. Because the salaries of researchers have traditionally been paid by the public, the financial incentive to obtain favorable results for a particular product is reduced. This is an excellent reason for the turf industry to continue strong support for these research programs in the face of continuing university cuts as it helps to keep researchers financially independent of individual companies and products.

A second and equally important reason for confidence in university results is that faculty researchers receive career rewards for work that can be published in scientific journals. We have a strong incentive to conduct sound and unbiased studies. Scientific journals typically require results from at least two seasons or from two different sets of research plots before a paper can be considered for publication. Anonymous peer review of the experimental protocol, results, and analysis of data is also a requirement for publication. Peer review allows other scientists to evaluate the quality of both how the study was designed and how the results were interpreted. Many single year studies are found in the *Fungicide and Nematicide Tests and the Biological and Cultural Tests* published annually by the American Phytopathological Society.

These reports are also subjected to peer review and require replicated treatments, randomization, controls, and statistical analysis, all of which are hallmarks of proper experimental design.

Has the product ever been evaluated in turfgrass field experiments? For what problems is this product recommended? Many biological/organic controls show great promise in the laboratory and greenhouse, but fail to be effective in field trials. Many products may also be successful in one kind of cropping system, such as annual crops of corn or potatoes, and not work well in perennial turfgrass. Finally, most biological controls are relatively specific in their mode of action and may work well for one disease or pest but not all problems. The same is true, of course, for many chemical products. A product that claims to reduce all pest problems and improve turfgrass quality should be regarded with suspicion.

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GCSANE News

NE Regional Turfgrass Conference & Show set for March 2-4, 1999 in Providence, R.I.

The second annual New England Regional Turfgrass Conference and Show (NERTCS) will take place March 24, 1999. Due to the overwhelming success of 1998, the show will remain at the Rhode Island Convention Center in Providence, Rhode Island.

The three-day trade show will feature over 300 industry exhibitors from throughout the United States including professionals in the many phases of

turfgrass management and the latest in equipment, turf care products, and supplies. Those professionals in the green industry: landscape/lawn care, managers and designers, golf course superintendents, and growers, should plan on attending. All interested exhibitors and attendees should call (401)848-0004 to reserve their space. Exhibit space is already 3/4 sold out!

The education/conference portion will offer industry seminars geared for turf professionals. Recertification credits can be earned at these programs. Turf is our focus, and seminars will feature sessions on golf course management, lawn and landscape care, sports turf, athletic field and municipal turf management, as well as machinery & shop maintenance.

Presented by the New England Regional Turfgrass Foundation, the New England Regional Turfgrass Conference and Show, in cooperation with the University of Rhode Island and University of Massachusetts, welcomes additional exhibitors and all interested attendees. Proceeds are dedicated to support and develop turf research and education. For additional information on the New England Regional Turfgrass Conference and Show, please call the show office at (401) 848-0004, or check out their website at www.nertf.org.

GCSANE News

Remember when?: GCSANE's past

Remember when? looks at significant events and individuals of GCSANE's past.

25 years ago

More than 40 teams of golfers braved the wind and rain on Monday, Sept. 24 at Blue Hills to play in the Super-Celebrity Tournament. The fierce battling ended in a tie for first low net between Danny Gregory and Tony Conigliaro of Tedesco, and the team of Ken Mooradian and Bob Philips of Hopedale. After each duo scraped it around Blue Hills for a net 65, they remained deadlocked, and agreed to break the tie in a playoff at Brae Burn in late October. The tournament's low gross honors went to Charles Borden and Ron Hobson with a nifty 70.

The much anticipated Pro-Super meeting and tournament will be played Oct. 12 at Brae Burn. Tee times are open after 9 a.m. and host Bob Grant promises a minimum of oak leaves.

15 years ago

Finally, the results of the sales division grudge match between Bobby Brown and Bill Perry of Sawtelle Brothers and Steve Butler of Larchmont and Larry Bunn of TPC are in. The clash surfaced in the GCSANE's annual tourney of two championships where Butler and Bunn had been victorious three straight years. As reported earlier, Bobby Brown won the individual sales title at Marshfield, at

which time Butler pronounced the win a fluke while vowing to bomb Brown when the field assembled for the tourney of two event. Bunn, who didn't play at Marshfield, added fuel to the fire by claiming that his absence was the only reason Brown backed into the victory. When Butler and Bunn promised to even the score in the tourney of two at Salem, they added they'd quit the game if they couldn't upend Brown and Perry. Well, they should have held their tongues, since Brown and Perry put them away, 4 and 3. Happy fishing, Larry and Steve!

5 years ago

The Francis Ouimet Scholarship Fund announced a record \$370,000 in college scholarship awards for 1993-94, with 14 percent of the total going to course superintendent help.

"This has been a great year for us and we are very grateful to the Golf Course Superintendents Association of New England and its members for their assistance," said Ouimet Fund president Edward H. "Ted" Kenerson II. "We're proud that 14 percent of our awards is going to young people who help in course superintendent operations. We're also grateful for the help of Steve Chiavaroli, your outgoing president, who we are also proud to say is a Ouimet Scholarship alumnus."

GERRY FINN

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The education/conference portion will offer seminars for turf professionals, and recertification credits can be earned at these programs.

DIVOT DRIFT...announcements...educational seminars...job opportunities ...tournament results...and miscellaneous items of interest to the membership.

GCSANE NEWS

The GCSANE announces its nominating committee and nominees for 1999:

Nominating Committee: James Fitzroy, CGCS; Paul Miller, CGCS; David Mucciarone; Dave Stowe; and chairman Michael Iacono, CGCS.

Nominations: President, Kevin Osgood; Vice President, Robert Ruzsala; Secretary, James Fitzroy, CGCS; Treasurer, Michael Iacono, CGCS; Trustee (3 years), Arthur Silva, CGCS; Trustee (2 years), Greg Misodoulakis; Trustee (1 year), David Comee; Education Chairman, Ronald Dobosz, Jr.; Finance Chairman, Daniel Higgins, CGCS; Golf Chairman, Michael Hermanson; Newsletter Chairman, Russell Heller; and Past President, Robert DiRico, CGCS.

EXTENSION NEWS

The UMass Turf Program has a website at: <http://Nwww.umass.edu/umext/turf>. The site includes the diagnostic sheet, how to take and send a sample, and weekly pest updates, as well as other information useful to turf managers. We welcome suggestions of additional information to include. There is also a new address to use when sending turf samples to UMass: Dr. Gail Schumann (or Dr. Robert Wick for nematodes only), Dept. of Microbiology, Fernald Hall, University of Massachusetts, Amherst MA 01003-2420. Be sure to use express delivery services that deliver directly to UMass offices. Regular priority mail or UPS will go to the Campus Delivery, delaying samples by a day or more. Call ahead to make sure the lab is receiving samples: (413) 545-3413. If Gail Schumann is out of town, she will leave alternative diagnostic lab information on a voice mail message.

INFORMATION

Kip Tyler, course superintendent at Salem Country Club, has completed a renewal process for maintaining his status as a Certified Golf Course Superintendent (CGCS) with the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America. Tyler has been superintendent at the Peabody, Mass., course since 1982. He initially achieved his title of CGCS in 1988.

GCSAA instituted the certification program in 1971 to recognize outstanding and progressive superintendents. More than 1600 golf course superintendents currently hold CGCS status. To become certified, a candidate must have at least three years of experience as a golf course superintendent, be employed in that capacity, and meet specific post-secondary educational requirements

and/or continuing education units (CEUs). The candidate must then pass a rigorous six-hour examination covering: knowledge of GCSAA and its certification program; rules of golf; turfgrass management; pest control; safety and compliance; and financial and human resource management.

To fulfill certification renewal requirements, Tyler earned 10 CEUs, with at least several coming from GCSAA tested categories. Maintaining certified status requires a renewal process be completed every five years since initial certification.

Hunter Industries has announced the acquisition of the popular Legacy Golf line of irrigation products from Buckner, Incorporated of Fresno, California. Hunter acquired the Genesis Central Satellite and the Viking Decoder Control Systems, which have been marketed with Hunter golf rotors and sold under the Legacy Golf Irrigation banner since 1995.

"This acquisition signals Hunter's absolute commitment to the manufacture and marketing of golf course irrigation products," reported Richard E. Hunter, CEO, Hunter Industries. "The purchase of the Legacy Golf line is an important step in Hunter's long-term growth strategy to become a major supplier of golf course irrigation equipment worldwide," he said.

Hunter Industries, San Marcos, California, will continue to produce Legacy Golf control systems in the Fresno area. Legacy rotors, including the G-60, G-70, and G-90, will be manufactured at plants in San Marcos and Cary, North Carolina. All golf products will be marketed under the Legacy by Hunter trade name.

An industry leader in the sale of gear-driven rotary sprinklers, Hunter first introduced a line of golf rotors in 1989. These sprinklers became part of the Legacy Golf Irrigation product line in 1995, and have been sold to golf courses worldwide under the Legacy name since then. The Legacy line is a direct descendent of golf's "first family" of golf course irrigation products, dating from 1912. The company produced components for the first automated golf course irrigation system, which was installed at Sea Island, Georgia, in the 1950s. Today, Legacy equipment has been specified at championship courses throughout the U.S. Hunter Industries is among the world's leading irrigation equipment manufacturers and offers a complete line of rotors, spray heads, valves, and controllers for turf and landscape. The company was founded in 1981 by industry pioneer Edwin J. Hunter. Under Richard Hunter's direction, Hunter has expanded to markets in over 60 countries worldwide and reports over \$100 million in annual sales.

SYMPOSIUM

Special Symposium: Current Topics in Weed Management for the Green Industry, January 7, 1999, 2-4:30 p.m., Cambridge Marriott, Cambridge, Mass. The Northeastern Weed Science Society, in cooperation with Massachusetts Cooperative Extension, offers an educational program in conjunction with the 53rd annual meeting of the Northeastern Weed Science Society and the Northeastern American Society for Horticultural Science. Topics include where weed problems in the landscape come from and what we can do about them; controlling broadleaf weeds; post-emergent grass weed control; an update on FQPA and its impact on ornamentals; non-selective weed control; fertility practices and their effect on weed control; and product selection and formulation issues. Speakers include Dr. Joe Neal, North Carolina State University; Dr. Todd Mervosh, Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station; Dr. Ray Taylorson, University of Rhode Island; Ray Frank with IR-4, Dr. Larry Kuhns, Pennsylvania State University; Jeff Derr, Virginia Tech; and Dr. Thomas Watschke, Pennsylvania State University. Registrants are welcome to participate in any and all of the other research presentations. Registration is \$45 in advance or \$65 at the door. If you plan to stay overnight, convention rates have been arranged at the Cambridge Marriott. Contact the hotel at (401) 849-1000 and specify you will attend the Northeastern Weed Science Society Annual Meeting. For information about this symposium contact Renee Keese at (317) 337-3124. Registrations can be sent to Andy Senesac, L.I. Research Lab, 3059 Sound Ave., Riverhead, NY 11901.

POSITIONS AVAILABLE

Assistant Golf Course Superintendent. Plymouth Country Club, Plymouth, Mass. is seeking a highly motivated assistant superintendent with a minimum of three to five years golf course maintenance and a two or four-year degree in turf management or a related field. All applicants must have a current pesticide applicator's license. Salary to be commensurate with experience. Send resume by January 15, 1999 to: Ronald Sherman, Superintendent, Plymouth Country Club, Warren Avenue, P.O. Box 3477, Plymouth, MA 02361.

Golf Course Mechanic, Marlborough County Club. Individual will be responsible for repair of all golf course equipment. Must be self-motivated. Knowledge of hydraulics and electrical diagnosis is preferred. Compensation is commensurate with experience. Benefits include health insurance, vacation, 401K plan, and paid holidays. The job is available January 1, 1999. Call (508) 460-8933, or send resume to Ken Crimmings, 200 Concord Road, Marlborough, MA 01752.

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Evaluating new turf products continued from page 4

Has the product been tested in your area? There are many examples in which products perform well in some soil types, at some soil pH levels, on some turfgrass species, and/or some climates, but not others.

If experimental data is available, look for these features when judging the results:

Non-treated plots: These are necessary to determine how much stress or pest pressure (weeds, diseases, insects, nematodes) was present. These pressures are difficult to predict from year to year and even from area to area. Some disease trials require inoculation with a pathogen to ensure uniform disease in each plot. Ask what steps were taken to decide what pest or disease was present and how uniform the problem was. This same

concern applies to any experiments with "growth stimulants."

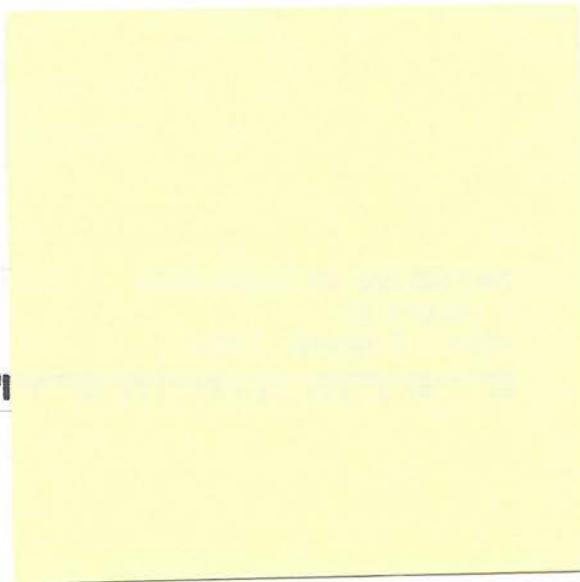
It is always important to leave non-treated areas. Consider what happens if you don't. Suppose you are seeing less dollar spot pressure this year than last. Could it be due to a change in your fertility practices, different weather patterns, the new product you applied to all 18 greens, or some undetermined factor? Or suppose you have a brown patch outbreak. Did the turf recover from the disease this week because of a change in the weather or because of that new product you applied? Turf managers may think that they know the answer to these questions, but without non-treated areas for comparison, no one can be sure, *not even the most highly respected turfgrass pathologist in the world.*

Replications: Field trials should include replications of all treatments. For example, if you are testing five new products, you would need six plots, one

for the non-treated control and one for each new product. You would then need three to four more *sets*, or replications, on these six plots for a total of 18 or 24 plots. There are several ways to do this, but typically we have the five treatments plus the control randomized within each row. As the season progresses, you can see if the same results occur in *each* of the three or four replicated plots that received the same treatment. This helps separate out real differences among treatments from variation simply due to the turf environment. The same reasoning is used for the World Series which is settled by the best-of-seven and not just a single game.

(Part II in next month's issue.)

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