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# Tee To Green

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# Tee To Green



Cover: Quaker Ridge Golf Club

Photography by Evan Schiller.

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# President's Message

## Pathway to Positive Change

Blake Halderman and son, Brendon, 2019  
Scholarship Tournament winners. See  
page 6.



# I

can't help but think of the MetGCSA membership as one big extended family—particularly this time of year, when our July and August calendars are booked with association events that bring together members and our immediate families.

We kicked off July with the always-popular Summer Social at Orienta Beach Club. Many thanks to our Social and Welfare Committee Chair Brett Chapin and his entire committee for doing such a great job with this wonderful mid-season social event.

On the heels of the Summer Social was what I consider the most important member/family gathering we host, The Parent/Child Scholarship Tournament. Held annually at Mosholu, this event represents all the best of everything we do: bringing friends and family together, organizing a fun-filled golf event, while, at the same time, honoring more than a dozen of our members' children with scholarships to support their ongoing academic pursuits.

In all my years serving on this board, I have found my time as chair of the Scholarship Committee the most rewarding and gratifying. Seeing all of the talented youth, who will someday look out for our welfare, is inspiring and has a calming effect as I ponder this country's future. Thanks to Rob Alonzi, Scholarship and Research Committee Chairman, and the rest of his committee, for taking the task of awarding our scholarships seriously.

We closed out our August calendar with the Family Picnic. As I watched the children and parents enjoying the various activities, I couldn't help but reflect on the many children who have cycled through this event over the years. Though the cast of characters changes, the smiling faces remain. I think back to all of the children who have participated in this event, and in what seems like the blink of an eye, those same kids are submitting an application for a MetGCSA scholarship. It's like watching a butterfly emerge from its cocoon and launch into flight. Truly amazing to see!



Ken Benoit, CGCSA  
MetGCSA President

### Coloring Our Way to Environmental Awareness

Now a bit of exciting news: The MetGCSA was recently awarded a grant from the GCSAA to be used in promoting our industry. Thinking outside the box, the Board of Directors has decided to use these funds to commission the creation of coloring books. These won't be your average coloring books. Designed to reach our country's youth, they will be used to promote the positive activities we are engaged in on the golf course to support and enhance the environment.

You might be thinking, "Coloring books... really?" But here's my take: Golf course management has never been under greater scrutiny in the U.S. Easing the environmental concerns among the general population continues to be a struggle for the golf industry, particularly among nongolfers who comprise an amazing 90 percent of our population.

The industry continues to be bombarded with environmental issues and concerns. We are on a collision course with environmentalists who complain about what we do "to" the environment while not understanding what we do "for" the environment.

As a result, we need to find a way to communicate and promote the value we provide to the environment. And what better way to start than with our youth. If we can help shape their view of at least our corner of the world in an honest and positive way, we will help future generations of golfers enjoy the beauty of the golf courses they play without guilt or concern that their leisure pursuit is causing harm to our environment.

*continued on page 5*

# Feature

## What Every Turf Professional Should Know About the Changing Rules of Golf

by Jim Pavonetti, CGCS



**J**

anuary 1 brought with it not only a fresh start to a new year, but also a new era in golf rules and regulations. After six years of deliberation, officials with golf's two governing divisions, the USGA and R&A, launched a new, modernized version of the *Rules of Golf*. In effect since January 1, 2019, some say that this is the most significant revision to the *Rules of Golf* in more than 60 years!

With the intention of making them easier to understand and apply, the USGA and R&A cut the number of rules from 34 to 24 and simplified the language.

These need-to-know rule changes fall into the following categories: Ball at Rest, Ball in Motion, Taking Relief, Areas of the

Course, Equipment, Playing a Ball, When to Play During a Round, Player Behavior, and a New Local Rule dealing with an alternative to the traditional Stroke and Distance.

While many of these rule changes affect only golfers, there are some that we, as turf professionals, should be aware of during course setup and certain maintenance practices—especially when marking the course. And it never hurts to be well informed in this area when speaking with our players. It gives us a greater level of respect on the golf course and credibility in the boardroom.

To keep you in-the-know, what follows is a quick guide to what's new in the *Rules of Golf*.

## New Rules Explained

### 1. Damage Control.

For years, golfers and superintendents alike have wondered why in the world a player can fix a ball mark on the green but not a spike mark or scuff mark that is in a golfer's line-of-putt?

Recognizing this folly, officials have finally changed this rule to allow players to repair any putting surface blemishes that may have occurred after the course was prepared that morning. Repairs now allowed include spike marks, scuff marks, old hole plugs, old ball marks, and damage from an animal or flagstick.

This, fortunately, eliminates the controversy that would often arise when a player attempted to repair an old or poorly repaired ball mark or another blip in the turf that could be construed as a spike mark or something else, like an imprint from an acorn! Now, all those repairs are allowed without penalty.

There are, however, still limitations with this change. Players are not allowed to repair a worn cup edge, aeration holes, or any "natural surface imperfections." So I guess that means it's possible that a natural surface imperfection could be interpreted as thin turf or a pock mark from anthracnose or another disease? Hmmmm.

### Repairing Damage to the Putting Green: Rule 13.1c (2)

### 2. An End to Flagstick Foolishness.

This is another one of those rules that has always seemed senseless. Before 2019, a player putting on the green had to remove the flagstick or suffer a penalty for hitting the stick during their putt. With the new rule, a player can elect to leave the flagstick in the hole and putt into the stick without penalty.

The objective in relaxing this rule was purely to speed up play. Taking out and then returning the flagstick to the hole, after all, takes time, particularly when someone is playing alone or without a caddy.

Though this rule may, in fact, speed up play, it may also create a headache for the golf course crew. With the flagstick in place, players will be more apt to jam their hands into the cup and scuff up the edge of the hole. Worse yet, a player may try to eject their ball from the cup by violently pulling up on the flagstick. Either way, this rule change could become a problem with hole quality throughout a day with heavy play. Lucky for us, the golfers at most of our courses only putt all the way into the hole during a tournament! For everyday play, they usually pick the ball up if it's "close enough."

### Ball Played From Putting Green, Hits Unattended Flagstick in the Hole: Rule 13.2a (2)

*Though the word "hazard" no longer exists in the Rules of Golf, the same basic options remain for a player to take relief from a penalty area, which still includes water hazards (marked yellow) and lateral hazards (marked red).*

### 3. Penalty Areas Expanded.

You might be asking yourself, "What is a penalty area?" Under the new-and-improved rule, "penalty area" has replaced the term "hazard."

Though the word "hazard" no longer exists in the *Rules of Golf*, the same basic options remain for a player to take relief from a penalty area, which still includes water hazards (marked yellow) and lateral hazards (marked red).

The new rule, however, expands the definition of penalty area beyond areas that hold water. Ravines, deserts, and thick wooded or native areas are also examples of penalty areas a committee may elect to mark. These changes, again, were made to improve the pace of play and, in some cases, to improve safety.

Now, if golfers hit into one of these areas and they're marked as penalty areas, they won't be charged with a lost ball (Stroke and Distance). They can simply take a drop within two club lengths where the shot crossed the margin of the hazard, along with a penalty shot. This is far less penal than the

old method of Stroke and Distance, which put you back at the location of your last shot and added a stroke to your score!

This rule benefits not just the golfer, but also the golf course operation. With native areas being deemed penalty areas, members are far less likely to push back on the development of these areas on the golf course.

### Areas the Committee May Mark as Penalty Areas: Rule 17

### 4. Banishing Bunker Debris.

Though moving loose impediments in a bunker has been a widely adopted Local Rule for years by many clubs, the USGA has finally added it to the official rule book. Leaves, stones, and other debris that may have blown into a bunker are more than distractions; they're downright disruptions to the shot players want to hit. No worries. Under the new rule, players are now permitted to remove loose impediments in bunkers. The intended challenge, after all, is to advance the ball out of the sand, not out of the debris.

**EXAMINING CHANGES TO THE DECISIONS ON THE RULES OF GOLF**

Working together, the USGA and The R&A have written and administered the Rules of Golf and Decisions on the Rules of Golf for more than 100 years, helping make the game more understandable for players, officials and others who participate. The Decisions are reviewed every two years, and several new, revised and withdrawn Decisions have been announced for 2014-2015.

**DECISION 25-2/0.5**  
When Ball Embedded in Ground

**WHAT'S NEW:** Illustrations were added to this Decision to clarify when a ball is, and isn't, considered to be embedded in the ground.

**WHY:** To help provide greater clarity in answering questions that have been raised at all levels of play, especially on the level of play that is sitting in a grass-lined impression in which it is not visible.

**HOW IT AFFECTS THE GOLFER:** Provides a visual illustration to help players clarify the meaning of "embedded in the ground."

**DECISION 14-3/18**  
Weather Information Assessed on Multi-Functional Device

**WHAT'S NEW:** Advise players to use smartphones to obtain weather reports on temperature or other conditions. The player is still not permitted to actively measure or gauge weather-related conditions in his specific location.

**WHY:** Because weather statistics accessed by smartphones are often miles away from the player's location. Accessing such information does not provide a measurement of immediate conditions, any more so than what the player could gather from general observations.

**HOW IT AFFECTS THE GOLFER:** Players can now access weather information or information on the threat of an impending storm in order to protect their own safety.

**DECISION 27-2a/1.5**  
Meaning of "Goes Forward to Search?"

**WHAT'S NEW:** A player will be able to walk forward some distance before determining that it would be appropriate to play a provisional ball.

**WHY:** The revised Decision reflects that often times the player is not aware that his ball might be lost outside of a water hazard or out of bounds until he has proceeded a short distance forward.

**HOW IT AFFECTS THE GOLFER:** Allows for the player to go forward up to approximately 50 yards and still be allowed to go back and play a provisional ball. (This may also help improve pace of play at all levels of the game.)

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# GOLF'S NEW RULES: KEY CHANGES

The R&A and the USGA have released golf's new Rules, which will take effect on January 1, 2019. Here are five of the most significant changes.

## How to Drop a Ball

You will drop your ball from knee height into the relief area.



## Time for Ball Search

Three minutes will be the maximum allotted time to search for a ball, rather than the current five minutes.



## Repairing Spike Marks

You will be allowed to repair spike marks and any other damage on the putting green caused by a person, an animal or maintenance practices.



## Leaving Flagstick in the Hole

If you make a stroke from on the green and your ball hits the flagstick in the hole, there will be no penalty.



## Relaxed Rules in Penalty Area

You will be allowed to ground your club and move loose impediments in a penalty area (an expanded concept of water hazards that does not include bunkers).



For more information on golf's new Rules, please visit [usga.org](http://usga.org) or [randa.org](http://randa.org).

The new Rules will go into effect on January 1, 2019.



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When removing loose impediments, golfers are allowed to touch the sand with their hand or club, but they are not allowed to put their club down and use it to improve the conditions for the stroke or test the firmness or playability of the sand. Grounding the club on the sand in a bunker in front of or behind the ball, as well as during a practice swing or back swing, is also still prohibited.

This change should take some pressure off the extreme levels of bunker management and maintenance that have been expected. Fortunately, the USGA now recognizes that leaves occasionally fall off trees, and it's in the realm of possibilities that some type of debris could end up in a bunker at some point during the day.

**Moving or Touching Loose Impediments in a Bunker: Rule 12.2a and 12.2b**

## 5. Unplayable Ball in Bunker? You Have Options.

Players may now elect to drop their ball outside of the bunker and take a two-stroke penalty when the lie has been deemed unplayable. An example of an unplayable lie is when the ball is resting up against a high bunker lip or when the bunker is very deep or steep.

Under the old rules, players could spend a lifetime trying to extract their ball from a buried lie in a bunker and then end by picking up their ball without finishing the hole. No longer.

This rule change allows players to simply remove their ball from the bunker and drop it on a line from where the original ball came to rest, no closer to the hole. Sure, the player comes out of it with a two-stroke

penalty but think of all the time—and shots—that saves!

**Unplayable Ball in a Bunker: Rule 19.3b**

## 6. Embedded Lie? No Biggie.

This is another example of a widely adopted Local Rule that has been included in the *Rules of Golf*. It used to be that when players' balls plugged in the rough, they were doomed to play it, unless a local rule permitted free relief.

Good news. The rule has been flipped. You can now get relief from a ball cratered where it sits anywhere on the course (now called "the general area" instead of "through the green") except in a hazard (including bunkers). This applies unless a Local Rule specifies otherwise.

**Relief for an Embedded Ball: Rule 16.3**

## 7. The Knee Is Enough.

Dropping a new ball back in play has never been easier. A new rule states that instead of letting go of the ball from shoulder height, players can drop from around their knee. Why the change? The intent was, again, to speed up play by increasing the chances the ball will stay within the two-club-length drop area on the first try.

**Ball Must be Dropped in Right Way: Rule 14.3b**

## 8. Sanctioning "Ready Golf."

Players whose heart rate rises, along with their score, when playing with a slow partner will be pleased with this rule change. Now, before the round, golfers can agree to play out-of-turn (Rule 6.4) and to limit the time to make a stroke to no more than 40 seconds (Rule 5.6).

Let's face it, the faster we can get players around the course, the happier they are and the easier it is to carry on with our maintenance practices.

Shaun Powers, Fairview Country Club's head golf professional and Met PGA board member, says of this rule change, "The number one topic of discussion at every Golf Committee meeting is pace-of-play, especially during tournaments. Many of these rule changes should improve on the pace-of-play, and we are seeing positive results already as a result of these changes."

**Unreasonable Delay; Prompt Pace of Play: Rule 5.6 / Order of Play When Playing a Hole: Rule 6.4**

## 9. Search and Desist.

Players now have just three minutes, instead of five, to search for a missing ball before deeming it lost. Once the ball is officially

**The term “through the green” has now been replaced with “the general area.” The general area is anywhere on the course that is not a hazard (including sand) or the putting green.**

deemed lost, players now have the option of dropping on the line where the ball went missing and playing their next shot from there. They’ll incur a two-stroke penalty but potentially be spared the far greater harm of Stroke and Distance. It also helps to move things along quicker, especially if the player didn’t hit a provisional in the first place.

**Ball Lost or Out of Bounds: Stroke-and-Distance Relief Must be Taken: Rule 18.2**

#### 10. All for Good Measure.

The use of “distance measuring devices” is now sanctioned under the new rules, so there is no need to establish it as a Local Rule—unless, of course, a club decides to ban them. But why would a club want to do that anyway?

**Use of Equipment: Rule 4.3**

#### 11. No-Fault Move.

New language assures that there is no penalty if golfers accidentally set their ball in motion on the green after it has been lifted and replaced. They just have to put the ball back, and they’re good to go. The same applies when you’re searching for a lost ball and mistakenly move it.

Today’s green speeds were probably the leading cause for this rule change. When

they wrote this rule, it was to avoid players benefiting from a ball moving after they cleaned it off, but now the green speeds are such that wind or gravity can move the ball much easier than years ago, so it has become a problem during certain weather conditions or on sloped greens.

This will avoid what happened to Dustin Johnson at the U.S. Open the last time it was at Oakmont: When his ball moved slightly on the green, he suffered a penalty stroke for it.

**When Your Ball or Ball-Marker Moves on a Putting Green: Rule 13.1d**

#### Resources Worthy of a Gander

About 2 million copies of the *Player’s Edition of the Rules of Golf* were published last fall. If you don’t have one on hand, you can track it down online at usgapublications.com. Also available at usga.org/rules are videos offering pictorial guides to the new rules.

For more information on all of the current rule changes, be sure to log on to the USGA website.

*Jim Pavonetti, a member of the Tee to Green Editorial Committee, is superintendent of Fairview Country Club in Greenwich, CT.*

*President’s Message continued from page 1*

#### Adapting to a Changing Workforce

Last but certainly not least, another topic I feel we must all address as turf management professionals: the changing needs of our workforce. I recently attended a meeting with a variety of golf industry professionals, and our discussions turned to the struggles of finding good help. We talked about how some of the Millennials’ and Gen Zs’ core values just don’t align with the long-held work philosophy of our industry.

While these youth have put a premium on work-life balance, we have subscribed to personal sacrifice to meet industry demands. In our fast-paced, pressure-packed industry, it’s easy to forget that managing employees involves cultivating relationships based on trust and respect. There must be a genuine effort to understand and accommodate the individual employee and his or her way of life. That’s certainly not always easy to do during the heat of the season. But to maintain a productive operation going forward, we must find ways to adjust our management styles to suit our employees.

Golf is not the only industry where personal sacrifices are the norm. You could make an argument there is a large degree of personal sacrifice required to build a successful career in any profession. But times are changing—rapidly. Whether our industry buys into the importance of work-life balance or not, we have to address this issue or risk losing talented, career-oriented youth to industries who have figured out how to adapt their standards to align with younger generations’ values.

Watch for a roundtable event in the future with supers, pros, and club managers where this topic will be discussed further.

All four of my objectives, as stated previously, will be addressed in each of my forthcoming President’s Messages. And in an effort to be held accountable by the membership, I will list my stated objectives at the end of each of my President’s Messages.

1. Association unification
2. Supporting environmental initiatives
3. Ensuring every member has a voice
4. Boosting member participation

If you believe I, or the board of directors, could do a better job in any of these or other areas, we want to hear your thoughts!

See you all at our season-ending events!

**Ken Benoit, CGCS  
MetGCSA President**

**REDUCED SEARCH TIME FOR A LOST BALL**

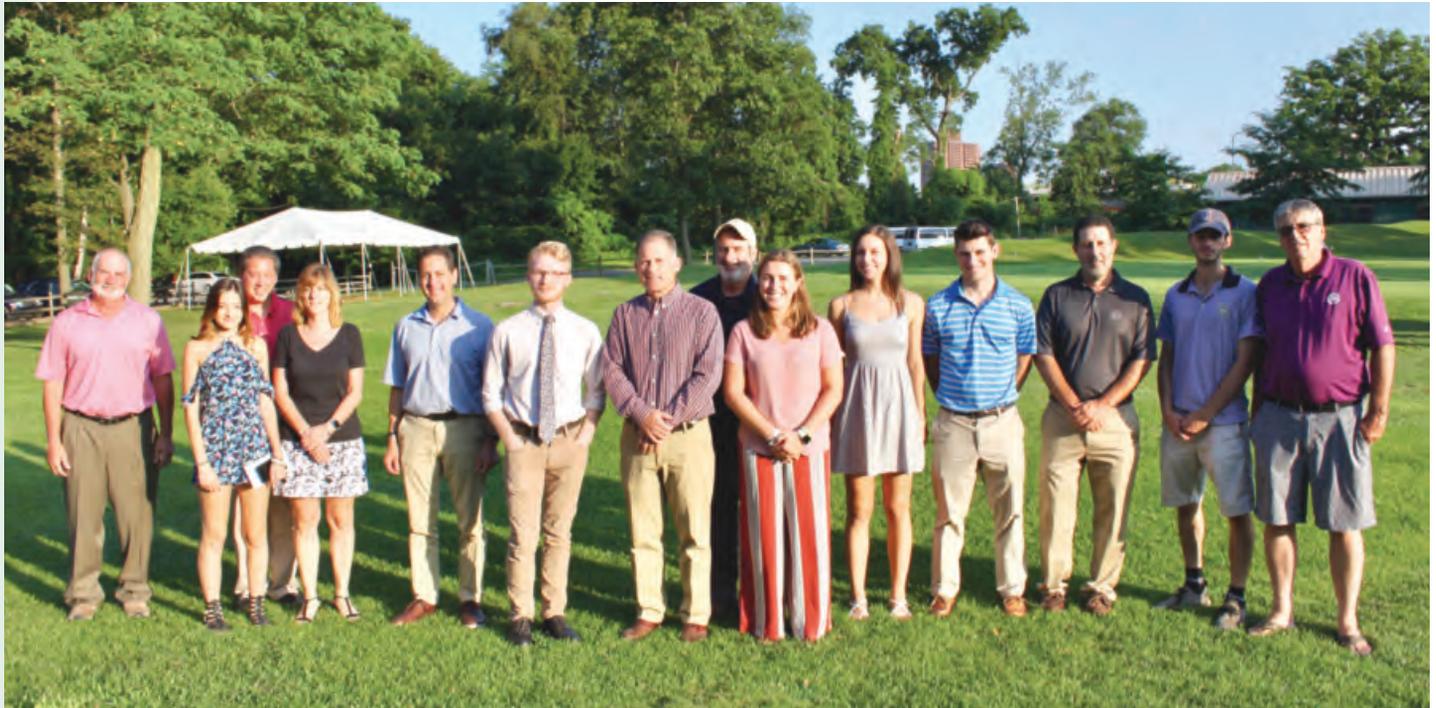
**2019 Rule**

Three minutes will be the maximum allotted time to search for a ball, rather than the current five minutes.

R&A USGA

# Congratulations to Our 2019 Scholarship Recipients!

by Rob Alonzi



*At the Mosholu Parent/Child Scholarship Tournament, 6 of the 15 scholarship recipients were able to attend to receive their well-deserved awards. From left to right: John Bresnahan accepting the scholarship award on behalf of his son, Chris; Terri and Paul Gonzalez with their daughter, Brytany; Tony Girardi accepting the scholarship award on behalf of his son, Nicholas, and daughter, Rebecca; John Genovesi and his son, Anthony; Mike Cook with his daughter, Julia; Matt Severino with his daughter, Kathryn, and son, Matthew; Peter Grace with his son, Michael.*

The 2019 Scholarship Awards Ceremony was held again this year as part of the Annual Parent/Child Scholarship Tournament at Mosholu Golf Course on July 25. This is one of America's premier First Tee golf courses located in Bronx, NY, and a perfect venue for all of our members' children (young and old) to get out and enjoy the game that's so much a part of their parents' livelihood.

We had nine parent/child teams playing in a nine-hole scramble, which seemed to be enjoyed by all. Now in its ninth year, the tournament was free to our members and was another great success thanks to Mosholu Superintendent Dave Moffett and his staff, who had the course in wonderful shape.

Congratulations to this year's tournament winners, Brae Burn's Blake Halderman and his son Brendon! (See photo, page 1.)

After golf, the golfers and guests enjoyed dining outdoors while scholarship winners were presented with their awards.

This year, the Scholarship Committee had the pleasure of awarding scholarships to 15 members' sons and daughters. With 18 applications to process, our Scholarship Committee members worked long and hard to process and evaluate the applications, which were all outstanding. As always, the winning candidates were selected based on maturity, academic history, ambition, extracurricular activities, and effort exhibited in completing their application.

### The Scholarship Award Winners

In addition to maintaining excellent GPAs, these students are all very involved in their communities and in numerous extracurricular

activities. The depth of talent possessed by the applicants for the MetGCSA scholarships this year is truly inspiring. The Scholarship Committee and board are very pleased to recognize these deserving applicants with scholarship awards.

Please join me in congratulating our scholarship recipients—and their proud parents:

**Chris Bresnahan**, son of Tami and John Bresnahan of Syngenta, is attending the University of Vermont and pursuing a degree in Environmental Science.

**Andrew Ashfield**, son of Karla and Tom Ashfield of Quaker Ridge Golf Club, is attending Michigan State University and pursuing a degree in Accounting.

**Julia Cook**, daughter of Lisa and Mike Cook of The Care of Trees, is attending University of Scranton and majoring in



*Centennial Superintendent Glen Dube with sons, left to right, Jake and Brayden.*



*Westchester Superintendent David Dudones with daughters, left to right, Taylor, Avery, and Kylie.*



*Siwanoy Superintendent Steven McGlone with wife, Margie, son, Finley, and daughter, Sidney.*

Business Administration with a minor in Operations Management.

**Lexus Disbrow**, daughter of Paula and Tom Weinert of Plant Food Company, is attending Kutztown University where she is majoring in Social Work.

**Margaret Drohen**, daughter of Donalee and Andy Drohen of Koch Agronomic Services, is attending University of Massachusetts and pursuing a major in Biology on a pre-med track.

**Rebecca Drohen**, daughter of Donalee and Andy Drohen of Koch Agronomic Services, is attending Fairfield University and pursuing a major in Finance.

**Anthony Genovesi**, son of Elizabeth and John Genovesi of the Maidstone Club, is attending The City College of NY, Macaulay Honors College, and pursuing a major in Jazz Performance.

**Nicholas Girardi**, son of Christine and Tony Girardi of Rockrimmon Country Club, is attending University of Wisconsin and studying Biochemistry.

**Rebecca Girardi**, daughter of Christine and Tony Girardi of Rockrimmon Country

Club, is attending University of Rhode Island and pursuing a Business degree with a minor in Textile Merchandising and Design.

**Brytany Gonzalez**, daughter of Terri and Paul Gonzalez of the Whipoorwill Club, is attending Manhattan College and pursuing a Liberal Arts degree.

**Michael Grace**, son of Peter Grace of H. Smith Richardson Golf Course, is attending Merrimack College and pursuing a degree in Sports Management.

**Sarah Gutter**, daughter of Loren and Greg Gutter of The Care of Trees, is attending University of Rhode Island and pursuing a degree in Supply Chain Management.

**Ted Jennings**, son of Susan and Jon Jennings of Shinnecock Hills Golf Club, is attending University of Minnesota Twin Cities and pursuing a Biomedical Engineering degree.

**Kathryn Severino**, daughter of Kristin and Matt Severino of Scarsdale Golf Club, is attending Michigan State University and majoring in Elementary Education with a minor in Special Education.

**Matthew Severino**, son of Kristin and Matt Severino of Scarsdale Golf Club, is attending the University of Connecticut and majoring in Civil Engineering with a minor in Construction Engineering and Management.

In addition to congratulating our 15 scholarship recipients, I'd like to recognize those past boards who had the foresight to initiate our Scholarship Fund, which has enabled us to assist in the ever-increasing college costs thanks to our Annual Bill Caputi Scholarship Raffle, the 50/50s at our monthly meetings, and last but not least, a portion of our dues. Finally, a special thank you needs to go out to the entire Scholarship Committee for their hard work in reviewing and awarding each scholarship.

Please remember to support our scholarship raffle. It is the major income-generator for our Scholarship Fund!

*Rob Alonzi, chairman of the Scholarship & Research Committee, is superintendent at Fenway Golf Club in Scarsdale, NY.*

# MetGCSA's Summer Social Brightened the Day and Lit Up the Night!



## Condolences

We would like to extend our sincere sympathy to **Scott Niven** of The Stanwich Club. Scott's father, Russ Niven, passed away on June 5. He was 86.

Russ was in the Marines for eight years, served in the Korean War, and was an air traffic controller at his home base in Quantico, VA, where Scott was born.

Russ began playing golf while in the Marines. He then took a job at Claremont Country Club in New Hampshire, where he wore many hats: superintendent, manager, and golf pro.

After three very successful years, he bought the Angus Lea Golf Club in Hillsboro, NH, which has been in the family for five decades.

He was a course owner, superintendent, PGA professional, and an excellent player. He shot seven holes-in-one and shared his talent teaching countless new golfers to play the game. He encouraged many youngsters to go on to become superintendents and golf pros, including Scott, Curt, and one of our past presidents, Blake Halderman. In his later years, he served as both a Green Chairman and a Golf Chairman at his winter club in Florida, Dunedin Country Club.

He was a charismatic guy with a gift for telling jokes with just the right timing and delivery to make everyone laugh. Russ Niven will be dearly missed.

Donations in Russ's memory may be sent to Dunedin Golf Club Foundation, 1050 Palm Blvd., Dunedin, FL 34698.

## Members on the Move

- Class AF member **Kathy Conrad**, previously with Spectrum Technologies in Burlington, NJ, is now with The Turf Trade in Mullica, NJ.
- **Shawn Haverdink**, previously an assistant superintendent at Quaker Ridge Golf Club in Scarsdale, NY, is now the superintendent at Baltusrol Golf Club in Springfield Township, NJ.

## New Members

Please join us in welcoming the following new MetGCSA members:

- **Kevin Logan**, Class C, Fenway Golf Club, Scarsdale, NY
- **Paul Ramina**, Class AF, BASF, Long Valley, NJ

## Births

Congratulations to:

- **Ryan Avery** of Grass Roots Turf Products, and his wife, Melissa, on the birth of their daughter, Emerson May. She was born on May 10, 8 lbs., 3 ozs.
- **Dan Coughlin**, superintendent of Trump National Golf Club ~ Westchester, and his wife, Heather, on the birth of their son, Daniel Gerard. He was born on June 5, 8 lbs., 2 ozs.

## Nielsen Brings Triple-Header Event to Bedford

*The Poa Annual/Met Championship/Met Team Qualifier  
Combine for Action-Packed Event*

by Bill Perlee

Nestled in the rolling hills of northern Westchester, the Bedford Golf & Tennis Club is well known to most golfers and superintendents in the Metropolitan area. The club is generous to amateur golfers by hosting the MGA Boys Championship every third year, as well as occasional sectional qualifiers for Met Amateur Championships, and many other local events.

Bedford is equally generous to local superintendents, having hosted numerous association meetings and golf events over the years. September 10 will mark the first time the club is hosting the MetGCSA's popular triple-header event, the Poa Annual, Met Championship, and Met Team Qualifier all rolled into one.

Securing our invitation to the club is none other than Bedford's long-tenured Superintendent Bob Nielsen. It is safe to say that every superintendent, most assistants, and a lot of course mechanics in the area know Bob Nielsen. A past MetGCSA president and recipient of the prestigious Sherwood A. Moore Award, Bob is tireless in his support of the industry.

In addition to the Met's SAM Award, he has received numerous other well-deserved local and national honors and continues to serve the industry at many levels, from sitting on numerous MetGCSA and GCSAA committees to advocating for the industry among legislators at the state and national levels. One of Bob's more recent claims to fame is his work in initiating the BMPs that are now up-and-running for New York State golf courses.

### Career in the Making

Entering his 37th year at Bedford and 28th at the helm as superintendent, Bob is pleased to host this annual event. He's been employed at Bedford for more than a quarter of a century, first as a crew member, then as an assistant, and finally, as the superintendent. In fact, Bedford Golf & Tennis is Bob's one and only stop in the golf course industry.

Like many superintendents, however, a career in turfgrass management wasn't first and foremost on Bob's mind. When he grad-

uated from Bedford High in 1977, he enrolled in SUNY, Oneonta, as a physics major. Shortly after, he shifted gears going on to get a degree in Accounting.

Not the least bit turf-minded to start, Bob's interest in the industry wasn't piqued until working on the Bedford Golf & Tennis crew while pursuing his accounting degree.

"I didn't have any intention of getting into the golf business," says Bob. "I was working part-time for a tax accountant, but then one warm, sunny March day, after sneaking outside for numerous breaks, it hit me that I wasn't cut out for an office job," says Bob.

He returned to Bedford Golf & Tennis, working as Terry Boles' assistant superintendent while he completed yet another degree: his certificate in turfgrass management from the UMass Winter School.

In 1991, after paying his dues for eight years as an assistant, Bob was promoted to golf course superintendent. "I was fortunate," says Bob. "Terry retired, and I stepped into his job."

That's not to say his efforts in pursuing an accounting degree were for naught. His skills are still frequently called into action during tax season!

### Game Changers

Bedford is among one of the first clubs in the Met section, opening in 1891 as a lawn tennis club. Just two years later, however, the club added a nine-hole course and became the Bedford Golf & Tennis Club.

It wasn't until the 1920s that the club acquired an additional 60 acres and added a front nine to the course under the direction of Golf Course Architect Devereux Emmet.

The next time the course saw significant change was in the late '90s. This time, the renovation was led by Architect Ken Dye, who added length, dramatic bunker complexes and green surrounds, and even some new putting surfaces to the club's 143 acres.

If it's been a few years since you've played Bedford, you won't be disappointed with the club's most recent changes to the course. The greens are still small and quick, fairways still firm and fast, but some of the vistas have changed, creating an ambiance that is more

Bob Nielsen, CGCS



open and grand. Trees that used to border fairways have been removed, exposing the once invisible expanse of undulating turf.

The stretch between the 13th and 16th holes is the most noticeable, but the entire course has benefitted. It is classic golf course architecture that places a premium on hitting the correct area on tee shots and staying below the hole on shots into the green.

Be sure to include a lofted third wedge in your arsenal to deal with the tricky lies around the greens, especially the par threes, which feature severe surrounds and hazards.

### Beyond the Business

When Bob is not toiling on the course or assuming one of his numerous leadership roles within the industry, he can be found at home helping his equally hardworking wife, Carolyn, raise their two energetic sons, John, 14, and Sam, 11. Carolyn runs the Pied Piper Youth Theater in Carmel and John and Sam are fully involved.

As the kids have gotten older, recent winter trips have included visits to Ireland and Costa Rica, each offering the perfect mix of fun and adventure.

Bob's two older sons, Bobby and Matt, are also a tremendous source of pride for Bob. Bobby, a former editor with *The Met Golfer*, now runs a successful restaurant in Bishop, CA. Matt works as a construction manager for a high-end commercial real estate company in Manhattan. He boasts the newest source of Bob's pride, 2½-year-old granddaughter, Gwen, and 10-month-old grandson, George!

Right now, Bob is working hard on his golf game and playing better and more often over the past couple of years than ever before. If you find yourself at the upcoming September event on the first tee beside Bob, be sure to get his current handicap as it's dropping steadily!

See you all September 10. Game on!

*Bill Perlee, a former Editorial Committee member, has been called back into service to write up this special event and host, who happens to be a longtime golf partner and friend.*

# Tom Ashfield and Quaker Ridge Welcome Met's Annual Invitational

by Andy Drohen

Tom Ashfield is no stranger to hosting majors at Quaker Ridge, and this year is no different! After hosting the 35th Met Area Team Championship in 2015, Quaker Ridge will be bringing the MetGCSA Invitational to the hallowed grounds this fall.

## About the Playing Field

Opened in 1916, this par-70, 7,005-yard course is renowned for its world-class golf conditions. A classic A.W. Tillinghast design, Quaker Ridge Golf Club is often referred to as “Tillie’s Treasure,” receiving numerous recognitions over the years. The course is highly regarded on both national and international levels. In 2019, *Golf Digest* ranked Quaker Ridge among its Top 100 courses—#71—in the United States.

According to famed architect Pete Dye, “Quaker Ridge has some of the greatest golf holes ever seen.” Former PGA champion Steve Elkington recently stated Quaker Ridge as worthy of hosting any tournament, including a U.S. Open and PGA Championship.

Quaker has, in fact, hosted its share of events, starting with the 1936 Metropolitan Open, in which Byron Nelson achieved his first significant professional victory. In 1997, there was the Walker Cup; add to that three Met Opens, three Met Amateurs, and, yes, three Met PGA Championships. In 2018, the club hosted the Curtis Cup becoming one of a select few clubs to host both a Walker Cup and Curtis Cup. On an annual basis, Quaker Ridge hosts the Hochster Tournament, which is an amateur event attracting some of the best golfers in the Metropolitan Area, as well as from around the country.

Now, on September 30, MetGCSA members will have the opportunity to experience this Tillinghast gem that so many have talked about.

## Quaker's Evolution

Though it's fair to say that Quaker has undergone relatively few changes in its nearly 100-year history, it has made some notable refinements to the course. The most significant, perhaps, was in 1925, when the

purchase of additional land at the northern corner of the property prompted the club to bring Tillinghast back to change a few holes. In 1965, Robert Trent Jones added some new tees and removed some outdated bunkers, and from 1991 to 1993, Rees Jones assisted Quaker Ridge in restoring all bunkers and adding five new championship and four new forward tees.

Over the past 14 years, Architect Gil Hanse has been hard at work restoring much of the course's original design. Bunkers have been renovated and greens expanded to their original shapes. Some of the greens were even digitally scanned and rebuilt to USGA specifications.

This past year, Tom added two of the original bunkers back to the layout on 13 and 15, as well as changed the 15th green back to its original design, wrapping around the back.

Over the next few years, the final touches will be made to Quaker. The remaining bunkers will be renovated with the Billy Bunker system, and a few more greens will be rebuilt to add modern drainage and a new greens mix, using green scan technology to ensure that the original greens' surface is not significantly changed.

## A Circuitous Career Path

Tom's love for the game dates back to his first regular job as a caddy at Orchard Lake Country Club in Michigan. He was 15 and would spend all of his summer days “looping” where he quickly became one of the top caddy-jocks at the club. Tom would regularly get under the straps for some of the better players at the club, as well as an elderly woman, who was blind and, according to Tom, had a pretty good game.

After finishing high school in 1983, Tom, like many, didn't immediately opt for a career in turf. Instead, he entered the army on the G.I. Bill to earn money for college and to become a military police officer. Still Tom had a hankering for a good game of golf and would play on whatever golf course he could find, whether it was in Germany, Belgium, or in upstate New York when he was stateside.

“We have all kidded about playing golf on a course that looked like a cow pasture,” says Tom, “but in Germany, it was actually a cow



Tom Ashfield

pasture. On several of the holes, cows would be grazing in the fairways and rough!” Tom laughs, “I liked to think of them as moving hazards!”

While stationed in Germany, Tom was selected for special duty in Belgium guarding the residence of General Rogers, the highest-ranking officer in the free world at that time, who served as NATO's Supreme Allied Commander and fought in World War II, Korea, and Vietnam.

Fortunately for Tom, he worked the night-shift from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m., three days on and two days off. When he finished his shift in the morning, he would team up with guys from other branches and find places to golf during his free time. One favorite spot was a course in Belgium where all they had was a drop box for the greens fees and a staff of two or three to take care of the links. Compare that to Tom's crew of 22 to 28 today!

In Tom's final year in the military, he was stationed at Fort Drum, located in Upstate New York. While stationed there, Tom earned a spot on the SRT (Special Reactionary Team). This unique group was trained in rappelling, hostage and terrorist situations, and marksmanship. When you get a chance to play a round of golf with Tom, make sure to ask him about the two rogue soldiers who locked themselves inside a tank one time!

After three years in the service, Tom took a job working on the grounds crew at Oakland Hills Country Club in Birmingham, MI. But having had a longtime passion for law enforcement, Tom decided to take a brief hiatus from turf and joined the Bloomfield Hills Police Department as a dispatcher. It didn't take him long, however, to realize that turfgrass management was his true calling.

He enrolled in the two-year turf program at Michigan State University while working as a crew member and then an assistant at Franklin Hills Country Club, in Franklin,

MI. After completing the program, Tom decided to further his education, earning a B.S. in Crop and Soil Science.

While finishing his four-year degree, Tom returned to Oakland Hills Country Club as an assistant where he had the opportunity to experience all that went into prepping the course for the 1996 U.S. Open. The following year, Tom was offered the superintendent's position at Edgewood Country Club in Commerce Township, MI. He worked there two years, cutting his teeth on a 60-acre golf course that averaged more than 36,000 rounds a year!

From there, Tom headed East to the Metropolitan area's Canoe Brook Country Club. He remained there as superintendent for eight years before landing his current position in 2007 at Quaker Ridge.

## A Family Man

Tom and his wife, Karla, will be celebrating 23 years of marriage on October 12, shortly after the Invitational. Their first encounter was clearly by chance, when Tom was an assistant superintendent and invited to join a fellow assistant at his relative's birthday party. Working long hours, Tom wasn't eager to go, but after some prodding, he relented, and it was there that he had the good fortune of meeting his future bride, Karla.

They lived on opposite sides of the State of Michigan, but lucky for Tom, Karla was willing to make the trek to see him while he was busy spending long days on the golf course at Oakland Hills. After dating a few years, they planned a wedding a few months after the 1996 U.S. Open, when Tom knew there would be a break in the action.

Tom and Karla have two children: Kylie, 13, and Andrew, 18. Kylie will be heading into 8th grade this coming fall, and Andrew, a MetGCSA scholarship recipient, will be a freshman at Tom's alma mater, Michigan State, where he plans to study accounting, no doubt to help track all of his single-digit-handicap father's winnings on the golf course!

## A Word to the Wise

The membership and Tom's staff are looking forward to having everyone play Quaker Ridge on September 30. The course is truly a great test of golf.

Tom's best advice: "Keep the ball below the hole whenever possible, because as you know, Tillinghast was infamous for having great green complexes with lots of movement!"

*Andy Drohen, a member of the Tee to Green Editorial Committee, is the Northeast U.S. & Canada Sr. Regional Sales Manager for the Turf & Ornamental Group at Koch Agronomic Services.*

## Upcoming Events

# Season-Ending Events

### The Poa Annual/Met Championship/Met Team Qualifier

Tuesday, September 10  
Bedford Golf & Tennis Club  
Bedford, NY  
Host: Bob Nielsen, CGCS

### MetGCSA Invitational Tournament

Monday, September 30  
Quaker Ridge Golf Club  
Scarsdale, NY  
Host: Tom Ashfield

### Met Area Team Championship

Tuesday, October 8  
Morris County Golf Club  
Morristown, NJ  
Host: Jonathan Heywood

### Assistants Championship

Monday, October 28  
Arcola Country Club  
Paramus, NJ  
Assistant Hosts: Patrick O'Brien,  
Matthew Carmichael, and Steve Gauli  
Superintendent: Paul Dotti

### Annual Meeting

November  
Date and Place TBA

### MetGCSA/CAGCS Fall Seminar

Thursday, November 7  
The Patterson Club  
Fairfield, CT  
Host: Jason Meersman

### MetGCSA Christmas Party

Friday, December 13  
Bull and Barrel Brew Pub  
Brewster, NY

## Regional Events

### NYSTA Long Island Regional Conference

Thursday, December 5  
Radisson Hotel Hauppauge-Long Island  
Hauppauge, NY

The Long Island Regional Conference offers a variety of educational sessions with leading turfgrass educators and industry professionals. For further information, visit [www.nysta.org](http://www.nysta.org) or contact the NYSTA office at 518-783-1229.

### 2019 GREEN EXPO Conference and Trade Show

Tuesday - Thursday, December 10 - 12  
The Borgata Hotel  
Atlantic City, NJ

The New Jersey Green Exp offers a comprehensive educational program providing cutting-edge applications and tactics to guarantee green industry professionals' success on the job. Offering one of the largest trade shows in the tri-state area, the expo also provides attendees with the opportunity to view the latest and greatest products and services on the market.

For further information, call 973-812-6467 or visit [www.njturfgrass.org](http://www.njturfgrass.org).

### MetGCSA Winter Seminar

Wednesday, January 15, 2020  
Westchester Country Club  
Rye, NY  
Host: David Dudones

### 2020 Turfgrass Advocacy - NYSTA'S Lobby Day

Wednesday, February 26  
Empire State Plaza, Albany Room  
Albany, NY

NYSTA welcomes all green industry professionals to attend this event. The Turfgrass Advocacy Day offers the opportunity to attend a priority issue briefing session on current legislation that could affect the turfgrass and green industry, as well as a chance to meet with your local elected officials and later discuss issues over lunch with a government official.

For further information, contact the NYSTA office at 518-783-1229, or visit [www.nysta.org](http://www.nysta.org).

# Morris County's Heywood to Host Met Area Team Championship

by Kevin Collins

On October 8, the iconic and storied Morris County Golf Club and Superintendent Jonathan Heywood will host the Met Area Team Championship (MATC). Thirteen teams will convene at the Morristown, NJ, club from the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic. Each team will be composed of eight players (four will play in the net division and four in the gross). At the end of the competition, the team with the lowest combined stroke score will bring home the title.

## The Evolution of the Met Area Team Championship

The first Met Area Team Championship was contested in 1980. Originally, the combatants were made up of six "local" associations. Whoever won would organize the next year's contest. In 2004, the MATC wasn't held for the first time in 24 years. It seemed that maybe interest in the event had peaked.

In stepped Andy Drohen and Blake Halderman to see what they could do to breathe a little life into the event. Andy and Blake found six major sponsors to help defray costs and enhance the experience. They expanded the field up to 13 teams.

In addition to providing a nice end-of-the-year break from the horrors of golf course maintenance and fostering an esprit-de-corps among the competitors, this event also raises money every year for industry people in need. Andy and Blake are especially proud of the charitable aspect of the tournament. So, beginning in 2005 at Aronimink Golf Club and now 15 years later at Morris County Golf Club, the MATC is still going strong and getting better every year. Andy proudly reports that outside of the GIS tournament, the Met Area Team Championship is the largest regional industry golf event in the country.

## Morris County Yesterday and Today

Morris County Golf Club, founded in 1894, has been unique from the start. The club was planned, organized, and operated by women 26 years before they even had the right to vote. These founding members had a clubhouse built in the first summer, along with a

seven-hole golf course, which was laid out by club member and famed NYC Botanical Gardens' Architect John Brimley.

At the end of the first season, the ladies celebrated with gala festivities, including a 14-hole golf tournament.

The fatal mistake the women made was inviting approximately 200 men—husbands and fathers—into the club as associate members. The men began to throw their weight around, literally, and, in 1896, took control of the club.

Morris County was an early member of the United States Golf Association, joining in 1895 and hosting the U.S. Women's Amateur in 1896. In 1898, the Men's U.S. Amateur was played at the club with Scotland's Findlay Douglas winning the title.

In 1916, famed architect Seth Raynor was brought in to design and build a new 18-hole golf course. The course is typical of many Raynor archetypal designs, including Punchbowl, Cape, Eden, Redan & Reverse Redan, and Maiden greens. The new course was opened for play in 1920.

The course plays 6,600 yards from the tips and boasts *poa/bent* greens, bentgrass tees, and fairways. Since Jon arrived, he's been busy with numerous renovations, including constructing four new USGA greens and regrassing all the green surrounds; rebuilding several tee complexes and a series of bunkers, adding grassed bunker faces; and removing numerous trees.

This place is a cathedral. It's very special with the look and feel that you don't get to experience on most courses.

## Jonathan Heywood, Turf and Beyond

I first met Jon at Cape Cod National. Then Superintendent Steve Cadenelli was looking to hit me up for a donation to some UMass fundraiser. I must have hesitated or stuttered about helping Steve out, so he called Jonathan over. He's a big dude, so I immediately committed to giving them a pretty substantial donation. I remember another time where Jonathan attended my tailgate party for the Jets/Patriots game at the Meadowlands, showing up in full NE Patriot regalia. There were 30 people at the tailgate and the only ones wearing green were me and Joe Stahl. The whole bunch of 'em taunted Joe



Jonathan Heywood

and me for hours on end. We were going to say something, but then again, Jon is a big dude. In all seriousness though, Jon is always a gentleman and a lot of fun to be with.

Jon was born and raised in Cape Cod, Barnstable to be exact. Jon, as a young buck, caddied at The Ridge Club in Sandwich, MA, for three summers. He also spent two summers as a cart attendant at Holly Ridge Golf Club. While operating the ball picker on the driving range, he was eventually asked if he would like to work on the maintenance crew. He began by raking bunkers and, lo and behold, knew this was the career path he wanted to follow. Not raking bunkers, per se, but being a golf course superintendent one day.

Jon enrolled in the UMass turfgrass management program, interned at Holly Ridge and at Cape Cod National, and graduated in 2005 with a B.S. in Plant and Soil Science. His first gig was as a second assistant working for Steve Cadenelli at Cape Cod National, soon moving up to first assistant.

In 2012, he moved on to Winged Foot, working for another well-known UMass graduate, Steve Rabideau.

In 2014, Jon was hired as superintendent by Morris County. The members love him because he always has the place dialed in and has the enthusiasm and drive to complete all the projects that have improved this classic Raynor course. He wanted to thank his able assistants Tyler Degen, Kenny Vierling, and Andrew Tamburrino for making his job that much easier.

When Jon can steal away from his golf course responsibilities, he enjoys, first-and-foremost family time, with his better half, Erika, and their 3-year-old daughter, Hunter-Cate. A diehard Patriots fan, Jon won't pass up the opportunity to see the Patriots play, or a good downhill run, off-season, on the slopes in Stowe, VT.

So, get ready for a memorable Met Area Team Championship. It might just end up being the best one ever.

*Kevin Collins, a member of the Tee to Green Editorial Committee, is NE/Mid-Atlantic Territory Manager for Ocean Organics.*

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