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# Tee to Green

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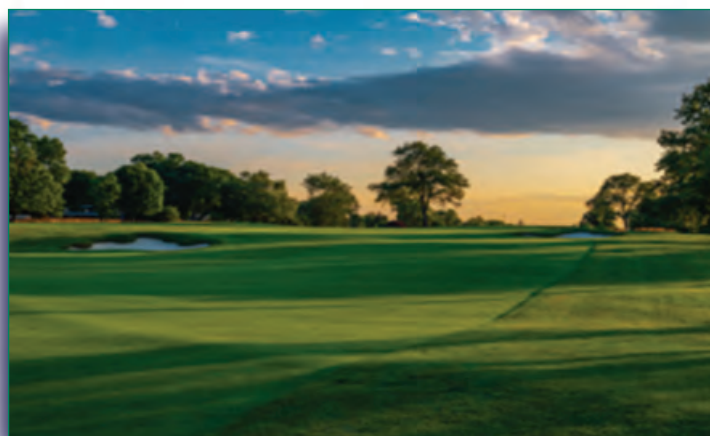
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# Tee To Green



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# President's Message

## Looking Ahead to 2024

As the new president of the MetGCSA,

I'd like, first, to thank those who have come before me in doing the necessary groundwork to get us where we are, as a profession, today. Thankfully, the *Caddyshack* Carl Spackler image of the golf course superintendent is long gone, along with the perception that turfgrass management is a trade rather than a true profession.

The golf world has a new appreciation for what we do each day as environmental stewards, communicators, educators, problem solvers, and knowledgeable turfgrass managers. This did not happen overnight. The dedication of boards, committee members, and chapter members have all been part of the evolution of this great profession. But our efforts can't stop there. We have more to accomplish.

### On the Horizon

Advocacy and staying out in front of any proposed government policies that can affect our livelihood is imperative to our future. To help guide this effort, we have begun to discuss forming a coalition in the State of New York charged with developing an economic and environmental impact study. The coalition would include members of superintendent chapters as well as allied associations. United, we will be better prepared to represent the needs and challenges that affect our ability to maintain our properties and a suitable playing field for the game of golf.

With the help of the GCSAA, we will continue to work toward having a stronger presence when dealing with the many proposed restrictions that are inevitable in the future. In the past, if it wasn't attempts to ban various pesticides, it was to limit the use of water and power equipment. Issues will inevitably arise that will be better addressed not just by the turf industry, but by the golf community as a whole.

Of course, our attempts at developing industry ties are not entirely new. We have made strides in developing a true understanding and appreciation for how our allied



*Mike Brunelle, CGCS  
MetGCSA President*

associations do business and for the everyday challenges they face.

During my tenure as president, I look to further our relationships with our allied associations of golf professionals and general managers to encourage the type of transparency in our operations that enable us to truly understand and appreciate the challenges each of us face. Our goal: to join forces as teammates in the industry and present a unified front in addressing any issues that might affect the future of the game of golf.

### More to Appreciate

As a number of our board positions change hands, I'd like to welcome those new to the board and recognize those completing their term for their years of service. First, a special thank you to our now past president, Brett Chapin, for his any-time-of-day availability, his transparency regarding chapter and industry business, and his work to keep all board members engaged and invested in the board's mission. I look forward to our continued service together.

*continued on page 7*

Happy  
New  
Year

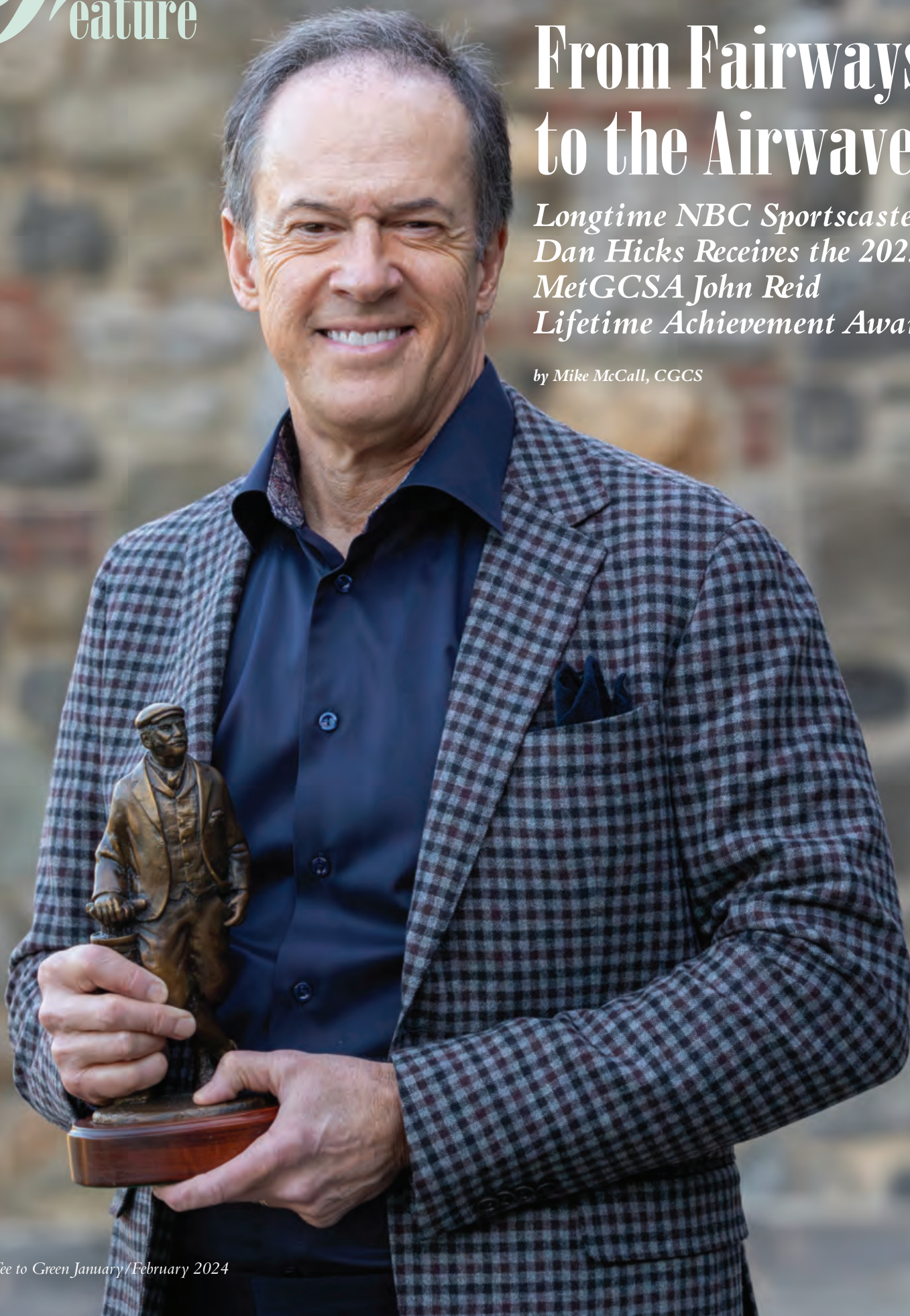


Feature

# From Fairways to the Airwaves

*Longtime NBC Sportscaster  
Dan Hicks Receives the 2023  
MetGCSA John Reid  
Lifetime Achievement Award*

*by Mike McCall, CGCS*





A

s the MetGCSA Awards Committee deliberated on potential candidates for this year's John Reid Lifetime Achievement Award, one name consistently rose to the top of the list: Dan Hicks, the renowned NBC sportscaster known for his exceptional ability to capture the essence of golf and other sports through both the camera lens and the resonance of his voice.

Traveling the globe, Dan covers the top golfers at major tournaments on the greatest stages of the sport, while always acknowledging the significant contributions of golf course superintendents.

"Golf course superintendents and their crews are the unsung heroes of these events," he said when he learned of his selection for the prestigious John Reid Lifetime Achievement Award. "So I am surprised and humbled and, well, really excited to receive this award. After all, you are the ones who are toiling behind the scenes to produce the impeccably conditioned greens, tees, and fairways we all see on TV while the golfers are out there stealing the show and we announcers talk about their every move. You're an integral part of how golf is presented, so to get an award from you guys and your organization means a great, great deal to me."

## The Wild Wildcat West

Born and raised in Tucson, AZ, Dan's passion for sports became evident early on.

"As a kid I loved sports; I loved playing them," he says. He made his mark at Sabino High School as a standout basketball player, until an injury and, finally, the realization that his athletic prowess could take him only so far led him to what he considered the next best thing: sports journalism.

"I was always fascinated by the way radio and television sportscasters made you feel like you were right there, in the moment of great sports events," says Dan. "They had the best seat in the house, too. It would be a dream come true for a sports nut like me."

Dan began his journey of turning that dream into reality in 1984 when he enrolled at the University of Arizona. Majoring in journalism, Dan also worked as a public

address announcer calling Wildcat baseball games. Upon graduation, Dan took a part-time position as a news reader at a local radio station. Eventually, he created a sports show called Dan Hicks Sports Fix. After his stint in radio, Dan became an on-camera, weekend sports anchor for KVOA-TV, the NBC affiliate in Tucson. In honor of his work there and throughout his career, Dan was inducted into The Pima County (Arizona) Sports Hall of Fame this past November.

## A Serendipitous Assignment

In 1989, having built a name for himself in the Tucson sports arena, Dan had the opportunity to move east to Atlanta, where he took a job as a sports reporter for the then-young network, CNN. There, he hosted *CNN Sports Tonight*, which included reporting on golf's major championships.

During those years at CNN, Dan's personal best was realized not in the broadcasting booth, but rather at the CNN water cooler, where he met and won the heart of another broadcasting legend, the pioneering Hannah Storm. Hannah left CNN for NBC Sports in 1992; Dan followed a month later. Two years after that, they married. They have three grown daughters: Hannah, Ellery, and Riley.

## Home at NBC

Hannah eventually left NBC to become an anchor on ESPN's *SportsCenter*, while Dan continued his professional journey at NBC. For more than 30 years, he has covered a wide array of sporting events, ranging from football and tennis to gymnastics and triathlons. He is perhaps best known and critically acclaimed for his work as NBC Sports Group's golf and Olympic commentator.

For the past 23 years, Dan has served as play-by-play host of NBC Sports' PGA TOUR Golf Channel on NBC tournament coverage, which includes THE PLAYERS and FedEx Cup playoff culminating in The TOUR Championship. Dan also anchors NBC's coverage of such elite golf

"If people had an idea of the chaos that is an almost constant presence in his ear-piece during a broadcast, they would be shocked. Yet he is completely in control. I've never seen him flustered. And he is one of the hardest workers I've known in my 40 years in the industry. Maybe the best thing I could say about Dan is that in an industry that is often unkind, Dan is the rarest of birds—he's that guy everybody likes."

—Jimmy Roberts

*Essayist, Interviewer, Feature Reporter and Studio Host, NBC & Golf Channel & 2019 recipient of the Reid Award.*

events as the U.S. Open, the Open Championship, Ryder Cup, President's Cup, and World Golf Championships.

For nearly 20 of those years, Dan shared the 18th hole tower with renowned golf analyst Johnny Miller, witnessing and bringing to life some of the most memorable moments in golf history. Their symbiotic relationship in the broadcasting booth enhanced each other's skills, contributing to their popularity and success as broadcasters.

When Johnny retired in 2019, Dan obviously felt the loss. "That tower... it's never going to be the same," he told interviewers.

A veteran of 14 Olympic broadcasts dating back to the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta, Dan has served as a swimming play-by-play commentator for the past seven Summer Olympics.

"It all started because (NBC Olympic Chairman) Dick Ebersol thought that I would be a good fit for a race caller—swimming in particular," notes Hicks. "I had no idea what I was doing so I just threw myself into it. I talked to Rowdy Gaines, who I will be doing my 8th Olympics with this summer in Paris. His advice? 'Ask questions. You can kind of become an expert at it by just asking questions.' He was right. I've found that by talking to swimmers year after year,



*Proud moment on home turf with 2020 U. S. Open Trophy.*



*Dan and Rowdy Gaines calling an Olympic swimming event.*

asking questions, you do become more knowledgeable and develop your own style when calling the races.”

That style became associated with his coverage of 28-time Olympic medalist Michael Phelps. “We called all 28 of his medal-winning races, including the 23 times he won Gold,” Dan says. “Pretty cool.”

Dan’s Winter Olympics broadcast experience includes speed skating play-by-play at Salt Lake City (2002), Torino (2006), and Vancouver (2010), Alpine skiing play-by-play at Sochi, Russia (2014), PyeongChang, South Korea (2018), and Beijing, China (2022), extensive work as a studio host, and coverage of three Olympic Closing Ceremonies.

## Memorable Moments

When asked to name his most memorable moments in the broadcast booth, Dan responds without hesitation.

“Two events—both in 2008,” he says. “First was Tiger Woods in the U.S. Open at Torrey Pines, playing on a broken leg. Hollywood couldn’t script a thing like that. And then a couple of months later at the Beijing Olympics, Michael Phelps ran the

table with eight Gold Medals. Events like those remind me that they are the reason I got into sports.”

Another memorable event Dan cites was covering the 2020 U.S. Open at Winged Foot Golf Club in Rye, NY, during the pandemic. Originally scheduled to be broadcast in June 2020 on Fox Sports, the event was bumped to September on NBC and without spectators, in an attempt to avoid the spread of COVID-19. Dan, a member of Winged Foot and a regular on the links, boasting a 6 handicap, was put in an exciting and unique position.

“Though he covers so many different sports, Dan’s love of golf and his connection to Winged Foot is clearly special,” notes Jimmy Roberts, Feature Reporter and Studio Host for NBC & the Golf Channel. “If I had a dollar for every time we were playing at Winged Foot and he stopped to remark on what a fantastic job the Director of Golf Courses, Steve Rabideau, had done, I might not need a paycheck.”

So the challenge during the Open at Winged Foot was for Dan to balance the love and pride he had for his home course with reporting on the tournament play. And then, too, there was the added challenge of keeping the viewers entertained

without the cheers or groans of spectators. Hopefully, we will all see him back in 2028 when the U.S. Open visits Winged Foot again, this time looking over thousands of spectators from the 18th hole tower.

**“When Dan Hicks’ enormous travel schedule allows, he is an active and enthusiastic participant in Winged Foot’s social and golf events. He has earned the affection and respect of the entire Winged Foot community due to the way he conducts himself. He recognizes the challenges golf course superintendents face and never fails to praise their critical role in the success of a club—or championship. Dan Hicks’ world goes well beyond our game and our area, but he is a great friend and asset to golf and a perfect choice for the John Reid Lifetime Achievement Award.”**

**—Gene Westmoreland  
MGA’s Former Senior Director of Rules  
and Competitions and 2005 Reid Award  
Recipient**





*Downtime with the family. Left to right: Ellery, Dan, Riley, Hannah, and wife, Hannah Storm.*

## On Tri-State Courses and Other Topics

Having covered high-profile golf events at courses across the country, with Winged Foot's 2020 U.S. Open among them, it was only natural to wonder what Dan had to say about the courses in our neck of the woods—the tri-state area.

"Needless to say, the desert terrain in Arizona is very different than the courses around here," Dan noted. "When I moved here and joined Winged Foot, I eventually was introduced to just about all the courses in the tri-state area. It didn't take me long to see that this is as good as it gets. It's one gem after another, and yes, there are spectacular places across the U.S., but the concentration and spirit of golf clubs in the New York Metropolitan area is beyond compare. And that's from top to bottom . . . from the crew members and assistants to club employees, officials, and members, and anyone involved in putting on a golf tournament at the metropolitan, PGA, and USGA level. The number of courses that make up the fabric of golf in the metropolitan area is unsurpassed."

On another topic, Dan was asked to share his thoughts on our organization's efforts to educate government agencies and elected officials on the economic benefits of golf—particularly the charitable contributions that golf generates.

"Regarding the economic benefits, cities that host PGA tour events really depend on the revenue these events generate," Dan says. "And as far as charitable contributions go, you can check all the various leagues of professional sports but you won't find one that gives back more than golf does. It's in the sport's DNA and is one of the great traditions of golf. Look at the give-back mentality that not only the golfers have, but also the people who volunteer and everybody associated with the sport."

Dan added that it's important to ensure that tournament sponsors get ample time to advocate their message because once the Tour leaves town, it is the sponsor and their funds that will continue to work in the communities for the next 51 weeks.

## Juggling Side-by-Side

As everyone knows, the challenge of balancing a career and family requires a lot of

juggling. Now consider the magnitude of that challenge when both parents are equally in demand.

At one point, Dan's wife, Hannah, took a position at CBS where her schedule was virtually the opposite of Dan's. That may have been their most challenging period, Dan says. So how did they manage?

"I have to credit the Great Hannah Storm for all she did for our girls," he says. "She is a master organizer and a wonderful role model for our daughters. The girls saw how hard she worked and continues to work, and I think that helped them develop their own great work ethic."

The magic of sports may rule the day, but the magic of Dan Hicks rules the airwaves and immortalizes those magic sports moments for millions of viewers and the annals of history. A great friend of golf locally, nationally, and abroad, the MetGCSA is honored and proud to present Dan Hicks with the John Reid Lifetime Achievement Award.

*Mike McCall is the executive director of the MetGCSA and managing member of the McCall Management Group, LLC.*

**"Dan Hicks has been the voice of golf for so many of us for many years. He is truly a student of the game and his love for the game comes across with every broadcast. Dan and I were colleagues during my years at NBC Sports but, more importantly, we have developed a close friendship sharing wonderful memories on the golf courses that will last a lifetime. It's no surprise to me that a fine group like the MetGCSA, so committed to the game of golf, would select Dan Hicks to receive their highest honor."**

**—Pete Bevacqua  
Former President, NBC Sports  
Athletic Director, University of  
Notre Dame**

*This year's Distinguished Member Award goes to Anthony Grasso Sr., a MetGCSA LAF member who joined our association 65 years ago in 1959, well before many members were born! In that time, he exemplified the award's criteria by displaying exceptional participation in association events and activities and cultivating camaradery and goodwill toward fellow members.*

Anthony "Tony" Grasso Sr., dad to longtime member and former Super Tony Grasso, began his relationship with the golf and landscape industry in 1946 after graduating from his hometown Tuckahoe, NY, high school. He assumed a role at Lafkins Golf and Lawn Supply in White Plains in the nursery yard and greenhouse for four years under the tutelage of Warren Lafkin and O.J. Noer.

Tony's time there was interrupted when he was called to serve in the Army. After completing his two-year term, he returned to Lafkins where he started his sales career. He called on golf courses and sports fields throughout Westchester, Long Island, and the Hudson Valley, working alongside two others well-known in the turf industry, the late John Wistrand and the late Rick Apgar. It didn't take long for Tony to earn the respect of the superintendents he visited, as he diligently kept them apprised of new products, research, and industry changes.

Quickly assimilated into his new role, Tony became a member of the Westchester Landscape Association. Not long after, in 1959, Tony joined the newly formed MetGCSA, working closely with such turf industry greats as the late Sherwood Moore, Bob St. Thomas, Bruno Vadala, and Jim Fulwider Sr.

In early 1963, Warren Lafkin passed away and Lafkins closed its doors. Tony and his coworker John Wistrand barely missed a beat, forming a company of their own: with the Milorganite distributorship in hand, they opened Metro Milorganite. Owning and operating the company for 30 years, they sold the business to its current owners: the Apgar family, who have more than carried on the company's high standards of service.

In addition to servicing golf course needs, Tony was a fixture at all Met golf and social functions, as well as the UMass and Rutgers educational and trade shows and field days. Metro also hosted seminars in conjunction



with the DEC for credit to help turf professionals keep pace with the changing pesticide rules and regulations.

He further demonstrated his dedication to the turf industry serving as director and eventually president of the O.J. Noer Turf Research Foundation, which awarded scholarships to young Ph.D. candidates, many of whom became our professors. Tony, together with John Wistrand, lent a helping hand to Sherwood Moore and Life LA member Ted Horton when they ran Winged Foot's U.S. Opens. They also were there to support Joe Flaherty Sr. when he was at Baltusrol.

Tony's dedication to the turf industry's growth and success makes him a more-than-worthy recipient of the MetGCSA's Distinguished Member Award. Congratulations, Tony, on your well-deserved honor!

*Tony Grasso, a long-tenured MetGCSA member and superintendent for 33 years, is now a horticulturist at Westchester Country Club in Rye, NY.*



## Upcoming Events

# New Year, New Events . . . and More to Come

### **Dave Mahoney Two-Ball Qualifier**

*Monday, April 29*

Rye Golf Club, Rye, NY

Host: Chip Lafferty

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

*Monday, August 26*

Metropolis Country Club

White Plains, NY

Host: David McCaffrey

### **MetGCSA Invitational Tournament**

*Monday, October 7*

GlenArbor Golf Club

Bedford, NY

Host: Joe Gikis

### *President's Message continued from page 1*

Departing from our board are some excellent individuals who have contributed to the board and the association in various ways. Many thanks to . . .

. . . Rob Alonzi Jr., our past president, for his leadership, professionalism, and friendship during his 17 years on the board.

. . . Jesse Shannon, who has chaired or served on various committees throughout his tenure on the board. Particularly notable has been his passion for the environment and supporting superintendents' reputation as environmental stewards.

. . . Our Class AF and Class C representatives, Dave Conrad and James White, for their valuable perspectives and contributions over the past two years.

. . . Upper Montclair Country Club for allowing me to spend the time necessary to contribute to this great association.

Last but not least, thank you to my wife, Jenni, and my kids, Grace (10), Tedy (8), Emmy (6), and Norah (6). Jenni, your love and support does not go unnoticed. You are the true superheroes behind the scenes.

New to the board are Joe Gikis from GlenArbor Golf Club, Casey Klossner from The Tuxedo Club, Class AF rep Brian Chapin from LaBar Golf Course Renovations, and Class C rep Luke Pittman from GlenArbor Golf Club. I am humbled to represent the best superintendent's association in the country and look forward to serving our membership to the best of my abilities throughout my term on the board as president.

Here's to a productive 2024! With the board we have in place, there's no doubt it will be!

**Mike Brunelle, CGCS**  
*MetGCSA President*

## Industry Events

### **2024 MGA Green Chairman Education Series**

*Thursday, March 28*

Alpine Country Club

Demarest, NJ

Designed to educate club leaders and the golfing public about issues affecting the golf course industry, the Green Chairman Education Series offers highly informative talks from industry experts, in addition to recognizing a member club for its environmental efforts.

### **27th Annual Rutgers Turfgrass Research Golf Classic**

*Monday, May 6*

Fiddler's Elbow Country Club

Bedminster, NJ

Plan now to join fellow industry professionals for this annual fundraiser and a day of golf, education, networking, and fun. Your participation helps fund research grants, student scholarships, equipment, and special projects for the Turfgrass Research, Teaching, and Extension programs at the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences/Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey.

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

### **National Golf Day**

*Wednesday, May 8 – Friday, May 10*

Washington, D.C.

In its 16th year, National Golf Day offers the important opportunity to meet with members of Congress in more than 250 legislative visits to advocate on behalf of golf's interests with our country's lawmakers. Another benefit to attending is the opportunity to participate in the May 10 Community Service project, which allows attendees the opportunity to undertake various beautification projects on the National Mall. New for this year as part of the CSP will be the first-ever satellite project held at Langston Golf Course.

### **UConn Turfgrass Field Day**

*Thursday, July 25*

University of Connecticut

Storrs, CT

Save the date, and watch for details.

### **Rutgers Turfgrass Research Field Day: Golf & Fine Turf**

*Tuesday, July 30*

Rutgers Horticultural Farm II

New Brunswick, NJ

Save the date, and watch for details. Call 973-812-6467 or visit [www.njturfgrass.org](http://www.njturfgrass.org) for further information.

# Jim Pavonetti Earns Two Top Honors at GCSAA Conference and Trade Show

A round of applause for long-tenured MetGCSA member and former *Tee to Green* Editor Jim Pavonetti, who was selected to receive not only the GCSAA's 2023 Leo Feser Award, but also an Environmental Leaders in Golf Award from both GCSAA and *Golf Digest*.

Now in its 46th year, the **Leo Feser Award** is presented annually to the author of the best superintendent-written article published in *Golf Course Management (GCM)* during the previous year.

A 28-year member of the GCSAA and golf and grounds superintendent at Fairview Country Club in Greenwich, CT, Jim authored the story "Gold Standards" that was published in the November 2022 issue of GCM. The story was originally published in the July 2022 edition of our own publication, *Tee to Green*, and was reprinted with permission in GCM.

For those who missed Jim's story in the *Tee to Green* or *Golf Course Management*, it examined the practice of establishing formal maintenance standards for golf courses, how Jim went about doing that at Fairview, and the lessons he learned throughout the process. The story also included a checklist of items to include when creating maintenance standards, what to avoid, and how to communicate the standards to members and avid golfers.

"I'm certainly honored to receive this award," says Jim, but it was completely unexpected. I wasn't even thinking about it when I submitted the story to GCM. I just wanted the article to be seen by as many superintendents as possible since I thought it would be of interest to them."

Jim accepted the award during the 2024 GCSAA Conference and Trade Show in Phoenix. He will also have his name engraved on a plaque that is permanently displayed at GCSAA headquarters in Lawrence, KS.

At the same conference in Phoenix, AZ, Jim was one of four golf course superintend-



ents to be named a winner of the **2023 Environmental Leaders in Golf Awards (ELGA)**. The annual awards are presented by the GCSAA and *Golf Digest* in partnership with Syngenta.

The intent of these awards is to recognize superintendents and golf courses around the world for their commitment to environmental stewardship. Right now, the ELGAs honor four specific areas of focus: Communications and Outreach, Healthy Land Stewardship, Natural Resource Conservation, and finally, Jim's area of focus, Innovative Conservation. This ELGA award recognizes unique and innovative strategies for conservation.

One of Jim's environmental innovations involves the property's ponds. His use of barley straw and dye to create clean ponds has reduced herbicide use by 90 percent. His

team uses a combination of air diffusers, black pond dye, and the barley straw to reduce algae blooms. The limiting of inputs saved the club an average of \$9,000 per year and has reduced aquatic applications by more than 90 percent.

These efforts keep the ponds clean as they eventually drain into the Long Island Sound via a river. The program benefits neighbors and the community and saves money. In addition, Jim has created more pollinator areas on the course and initiated more hand watering in fairways to reduce water use.

"Every year, we just try to tweak our applications a little, but really we just keep building on the same programs," Jim said. "I have always been drawn to nature, even before I got in the business. Protecting habitat is a natural thing for me."

Congratulations, Jim!



# Past President and SAM Award Recipient Retires—Sort of!

by David Dudones, CGCS

After 42 years as a golf course superintendent, John O'Keefe has decided to hang up his radio for the last time. Working at Preakness Hills in Wayne, NJ, the past 37 years and Westchester Hills prior, John has not only been a great superintendent and mentor to many (including me), but has set an unbelievable standard for service in our industry. They include:

1996 President -MetGCSA  
2000 President-Tri-State Turfgrass  
Research Foundation  
2003 President- GCSANJ  
2015 President- GCSAA

In 2008, John received the MetGCSA's highest honor, the Sherwood A. Moore Award, as well as the GCSANJ's Distinguished Service Award in 2021. What's not listed, are the thousands of hours after work and away from home required for such a weighty commitment.

John's wife of 45 years, Margaret, has been the glue that holds this unprecedented career together, all while having her own career in the club business and raising two very successful daughters, Adrienne and Maureen. John says, "Their support has meant everything to me, and I couldn't have imagined the career I would have had without their constant love and support."

John or "Big Daddy" (as family and younger superintendents call him) won't be riding off into the sunset just yet. John is planning on staying in the business for a few more years in sales and other ventures. Congratulations on an outstanding career and for being an excellent mentor to your neighbors and friends!

*David Dudones, a past MetGCSA president, is director of golf and grounds at Westchester Country Club in Rye, NY.*



## New Members

Please join us in welcoming the following new Class C MetGCSA members:

**Chuck Alpern**, Wykagyl Country Club, New Rochelle, NY

**Pedro Cruz**, Brae Burn Country Club, Purchase, NY

**Derek Dutille**, Fenway Golf Club, Scarsdale, NY

**Anthony Fava**, Brae Burn Country Club, Purchase, NY

**Daniel Murphy**, The Stanwich Club, Greenwich, CT

**Anthony Roach**, The Stanwich Club, Greenwich, CT

**Brian Wendell**, Rolling Hills Country Club, Wilton, CT

## Members on the Move

**Mark Chant** is now an assistant superintendent at Meadow Brook Club in Jericho, NY. Previous position: a rep at Target Specialty Products in Middle Island, NY.

**Chad Lemere** is now a rep for Kings Capital Construction in White Plains, NY. Previous position: an assistant superintendent at Bonnie Briar Country Club in Larchmont, NY.

**Tyler McGonigal** is now the golf course superintendent at Blue Hill Golf Course in Pearl River, NY. Previous position: golf course superintendent at Putnam County Golf Course in Mahopac, NY.

**Anthony Minniti** is now the golf course superintendent at Windham Mountain in Windham, NY. Previous position: an assistant superintendent at Hudson National Golf Club in Croton-on-Hudson, NY. in Accord, NY.

## Condolences

Our condolences to **Scott Apgar**, **Todd Apgar**, and family on the passing of their father/grandfather Rick Apgar at his home

in Somers, NY, on January 20. He was 90. With a degree in agriculture from SUNY Farmingdale, Rick explored all aspects of the lawn and garden trade, buying and selling several companies, including one well known among Met area superintendents: the wholesale supply company, Metro Milorganite. Involved in the industry long after selling his business, Rick was an advocate and active volunteer for the Cornell Cooperative Extension.

For those interested in making a donation in Rick's memory, please consider donating to Cornell Cooperative Extension, 3 West Main Street, Suite 112, Elmsford, NY 10523, <https://westchester.cce.cornell.edu/>, or to One Tree Planted, <https://onetreeplanted.org/collections/for-others/products/in-memory>.

# Fall Education Seminar Revisited

by Scott Olson

On November 9, members of the MetGCSA and CAGCS gathered at Fenway Golf Club in Scarsdale, NY, for the Fall Education Seminar. The Education Committee put together another great roster of speakers that drew superintendents and assistants from throughout Connecticut, New York, and New Jersey. We would like to send out a sincere thank you to Fenway Golf Club Superintendent Rob Alonzi for his team's hospitality throughout the day. What follows are the highlights of each presentation along with the presenters' contact information, should you want further information.

## Developing an Effective and Environmentally Sound Fungicide Program

Dr. Bruce Clarke, professor emeritus at Rutgers University, kicked off the program with a talk about a systematic approach to constructing a fungicide program that is not only economical, but also highly effective in reducing the potential for developing fungicide resistance. This science-based approach of selecting chemicals from different Fungicide Resistance Action Committee (FRAC) codes (which indicate mode-of-action), has proved to be effective for creating programs for cool-season turf on greens, tees, fairways, and roughs in the Northeast. By rotating fungicides with different FRAC codes, one's fungicide program will remain effective, with little chance to develop fungicide resistance.

Dr. Clarke discussed the different types of information available to superintendents, including unbiased disease control recommendations and the Environmental Impact Quotient. The EIQ calculates the level of environmental impact that a fungicide has. By using this tool, turf managers can reduce their impact on the environment by selecting products with lower EIQ. The EIQ can be found at <https://cals.cornell.edu/new-york-state-integrated-pest-management/risk-assessment/eiq#:~:text=Environmental%20Impact%20Quotient,the%20Environmental%20Impact%20of%20Pesticides>.



*Taking a moment for a photo op (left to right): MetGCSA Executive Director Mike McCall, speakers Dr. Bruce Clarke from Rutgers and Dr. Jennifer Grant from Cornell, and Silver Spring Superintendent Bill Cygan.*

For further information, Dr. Clarke can be reached at [bruce.clarke@Rutgers.edu](mailto:bruce.clarke@Rutgers.edu), or at 908-227-1190.

## Measuring the Environmental Impact of Pesticides

Dr. Jennifer Grant, director emerita of the NYS IPM Program at Cornell University, picked up where Dr. Clarke left off and spoke about how the Environmental Impact Quotient (EIQ) is determined. EIQ was first introduced in 1992. It combines the known toxicological and environmental fate information of pesticides, including toxicity to humans, fish, birds, and other nontarget organisms. It also includes such pesticide characteristics as the likelihood of the product to leach or to run off. Soil persistence and plant leaf persistence are also included in the calculation. All of these data points are put into an EIQ calculator, and a Field Use EIQ value is determined, which turf managers can then use to evaluate the level of environmental impact of different products and programs.

Dr. Grant went on to explain how, exactly, turf managers can integrate the EIQ model into their decision-making process. She shared an EIQ Spreadsheet with all attendees and then led everyone through entering the

pesticide program she developed into their own spreadsheet. Attendees were able to see real-world examples of the EIQ decision-making process and left the seminar with all the tools needed to evaluate their own pesticide programs.

For further information, Dr. Grant can be reached at [jag7@cornell.edu](mailto:jag7@cornell.edu).

## BMP Workshop

Ken Benoit, CGCS, was next on the agenda and spoke about the importance of clubs creating their own set of BMPs. He stressed that by adopting a Facility BMP program at their clubs, superintendents will have a demonstrable knowledge and, as a result, more leverage when speaking with government agencies about proposed regulations.

Ken requested that everyone bring a laptop to the seminar, and he walked the group through the quick-and-easy process of producing a set of BMPs for their club. He explained that setting up the base template takes only 5-10 minutes. From that point, superintendents can work through each section to customize the information based on their specific club.

You can find the BMP Planning Guide by going to <https://www.gcsaa.org/environment/bmp-planning-guide>.

*continued on page 15*



# Meet Your 2024 MetGCSA Board



From left to right: Vice President Bill Cygan of Silver Spring CC; Past President Brett Chapin of Redding CC; Class AF Rep Brian Chapin of LaBar Golf Course Renovations; Aaron Crouse (front) of The Golf Club of Purchase; Joe Gikis of GlenArbor GC; Stephen Rabideau of Winged Foot GC; Kevin Seibel of Century CC; President Mike Brunelle of Upper Montclair CC; Treasurer Steve Wickstrom of Burning Tree CC; Casey Klossner of The Tuxedo Club; Secretary Dave Peterson of Silvermine GC; Mike McCall, Executive Director, Class C Rep Luke Pittman of GlenArbor GC. Board member missing from the photo is Chip Lafferty of Rye GC.

## MetGCSA Committee Chairs at Your Service

We've provided a list of each of the MetGCSA's 2024 committee chairs, including their phone numbers and emails. Please feel free to contact any of them with questions, comments, or helpful suggestions.

### Awards Committee

**Brett Chapin**  
*Redding CC*  
green@reddingcc.org  
203-885-3109

### Bylaws Committee

**Bill Cygan**  
*Silver Spring CC*  
gcs@silverspringcc.org  
413-626-6814

### Club Relations Committee

**Brett Chapin**  
*Redding CC*  
green@reddingcc.org  
203-885-3109

### Communications Committee

**Chip Lafferty (Tee to Green)**  
*Rye GC*  
superintendent@ryegolfclub.com  
914-760-3331

**Casey Klossner (Tee to Green)**  
*The Tuxedo Club*  
cklossner@thetuxedoclub.org  
914-563-5873

**Kevin Seibel (Advertising)**  
*Century CC*  
kseibel@optonline.net  
914-384-1191

**Brian Chapin (Advertising)**  
*LaBar Golf Course Renovations*  
bchapin02@gmail.com  
201-247-3637

### Education Committee

**Dave Peterson**  
*Silvermine GC*  
depturf@gmail.com  
845-521-6736

**Joe Gikis**  
*GlenArbor GC*  
jgikis@glenarborclub.com  
978-790-0164

### Environmental Committee

**Aaron Crouse**  
*The Golf Club of Purchase*  
aaron.crouse@aol.com  
914-656-3379

**Steve Rabideau**  
*Winged Foot GC*  
srabideau@wfgc.org  
516-351-4845

### Government Relations Committee

**Bill Cygan**  
*Silver Spring CC*  
gcs@silverspringcc.org  
413-626-6814

**Aaron Crouse**  
*The Golf Club of Purchase*  
aaron.crouse@aol.com  
914-656-3379

**Mike Brunelle, CGCS (NJ)**  
*Upper Montclair CC*  
mb Brunelle@uppermontclaircc.com  
973-417-8199

### Investment Committee

**Bill Cygan**  
*Silver Spring CC*  
gcs@silverspringcc.org  
413-626-6814

### Long-Range Planning & Steering Committee

**Brett Chapin**  
*Redding CC*  
green@reddingcc.org  
203-885-3109

### Membership Committee

**Steve Wickstrom**  
*Burning Tree CC*  
stevewickstrom@hotmail.com  
586-945-5212

**Joe Gikis**  
*GlenArbor GC*  
jgikis@glenarborclub.com  
978-790-0164

### Scholarship & Research Committee

**Bill Cygan**  
*Silver Spring CC*  
gcs@silverspringcc.org  
413-626-6814

**Brett Chapin (Tri-State)**  
*Redding CC*  
green@reddingcc.org  
203-885-3109

### Social & Welfare Committee

**Steve Wickstrom**  
*Burning Tree CC*  
stevewickstrom@hotmail.com  
586-945-5212

**Casey Klossner**  
*The Tuxedo Club*  
cklossner@thetuxedoclub.org  
914-563-5873

### Tournament Committee

**Steve Rabideau**  
*Winged Foot GC*  
srabideau@wfgc.org  
516-351-4845

**Brian Chapin**  
*LaBar Golf Course Renovations*  
bchapin02@gmail.com  
201-247-3637

### Class C Representative

**Luke Pittman**  
*GlenArbor GC*  
lpittman@glenarborclub.com  
502-320-1164

### Class AF Representative

**Brian Chapin**  
*LaBar Golf Course Renovations*  
bchapin02@gmail.com  
201-247-3637



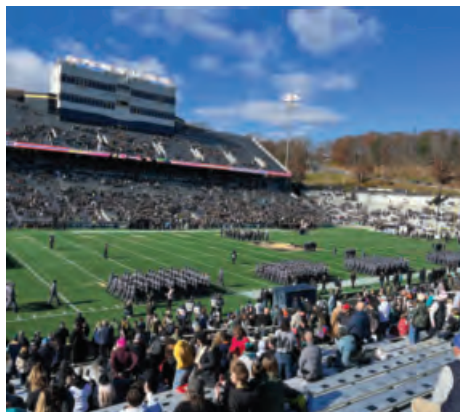
# Great Time at the Tailgate Party

by Chip Lafferty, Rye Golf Club

Once again, the Met and Hudson Valley associations joined forces in hosting the annual tailgate party at the November 18 Army football game at West Point. This year's game featured the intense matchup of our beloved Army Black Knights against Coastal Carolina. It was a hard-fought game, with Army coming out on top, 28-21.

If you have never been to an Army football game, it is something to see. The atmosphere is highly spirited and often charged with patriotism, as the Army represents the military service and values of the United States. These games typically include traditional military ceremonies, from the marching bands to cannons thundering for each score made. But the topper at this game was seeing the Black Knights parachuting in at half-time, pushing their limit with the high wind that day!

All in all, it was a great day for the members and their families to enjoy some good old-fashioned Americana. Hope to see more smiling faces next year!



# A Good Time Was Had by All at the 2023 MetGCSA Holiday Party!









## Two-Ball Qualifier Returns to Rye Golf Club

by Steven McGlone

**C**on April 29, the MetGCSA will head to Rye Golf Club to kick off the 2024 season with the David Mahoney Two-Ball Championship Qualifier. The past few seasons have shown increasing numbers of participants, enough for three flights last year! We can credit this popular season-long event to its namesake, David Mahoney. Dave, who always believed that the strength of the association hinged on its members' ability to come together and share experiences, initiated our annual Two-Ball Competition after observing the Mid-Atlantic group's two-ball event. Sadly, during Dave's term as the Met's 26th president, he passed away unexpectedly in September of 2008 at the young age of 48. This prompted the competition's name change to the David Mahoney Two-Ball Championship, in honor of Dave, the event's highly regarded creator. (See sidebar on page 15 for more on Dave.)

In its 32nd year, the David Mahoney Two-Ball Championship Qualifier will be hosted by Rye Golf Club's superintendent, Chip Lafferty. Rye Golf Club is not your ordinary club. The clubhouse is a real castle built in 1852 overlooking Long Island Sound. It was a private residence for William Chapman, a wealthy stockbroker. In 1921, this estate, as well as the adjoining Allen Estate, were combined to build the Rye Country Club with Devereux Emmet the principal architect. The golf course was later sold and renamed the Rye Wood Country Club before finally being purchased by the Town of Rye and becoming the Rye Golf Club we know today.

Chip is no stranger to hosting MetGCSA events, having hosted everything from a Met business meeting to now his third Two-Ball Championship Qualifier. He has been superintendent at Rye Golf Club since 2003 and is still at the top of his turf management game. In his early career, Chip worked in Florida, Georgia, and even Finland. Finally settling into Westchester, Chip worked for Steve Renzetti and assumed the reigns as Wykagyl's superintendent when Steve moved on to Quaker Ridge. After a few seasons at Wykagyl, Chip headed north on I-95 a few miles and took a

promising position as the super at Rye Golf Club. Twenty-one years later, there isn't a square foot of turf Chip hasn't impacted at Rye.

### Chipping Away at Course Improvements

From the time he began work at the club, he and his crew have been far from idle. In his tenure, Chip has enjoyed the challenge of updating aspects of the course to accommodate Rye's more than 30,000 rounds of golf per year while preserving some of the more distinctive course features that had been lost. For years, tackling myriad improvements in-house and without the counsel of an architect, Chip and his crew have removed problematic trees and invasive species; installed more than 90,000 linear feet of drainage; enlarged certain putting greens; extended, realigned, and leveled 17 sets of tees; recontoured all fairways; and installed a continuous cart path system throughout the entire property.

According to Chip, the club also decided to utilize a large vacant area between the pool and the 12th hole to construct a 13,000-square-foot putting course/short-game green. Continuing their projects, in 2013, Chip and his team took two of the course's existing practice putting greens to expand eight greens, add hole locations, and spread the wear-and-tear more evenly throughout the greens.

And as if all that wasn't enough, the club recently kicked off a bunker renovation master plan designed by Todd Quitno of Quitno Golf Designs. Quitno is working to return the course's bunkers to their original 1921 Devereux Emmet design. Though quality in-house bunker renovations have pretty much fallen by the wayside in this part of the world, Chip and his staff continued their tradition of performing the work themselves.

"Bringing in an outside company for a few bunkers a year is less than efficient," says Chip, "especially when everyone wants the work done in the late fall or early spring." Chip is on point for completing the project over the next three to four off-seasons.



Chip Lafferty

"All in all," says Chip, "the improvements we have made to the course over the years have enhanced the quality of the turf and the playing experience."

### Beyond the Course

With the same dedication he applies to his work on the course, Chip holds a board position and six years ago, assumed the role as *Tee to Green* editor. "I have always lived by the saying, 'You only get what you give,'" says Chip, who feels his contributions to the board have been nothing short of rewarding."

But Chip is more than all-work-and-no-play. A people person to the core, he often enjoys putting his low-single-digit handicap to the test in a challenging round of golf with his many MetGCSA friends. Beyond the course, Chip enjoys nothing more than spending time with his lovely wife of 21 years, Clare, and their four wonderful children. Jessica, the oldest, is a freshman at Rye High School and has made her mark in softball. Mackenzie is in the 8th grade and loves to ride horses in her free time. Travis attends the Winward Academy and enjoys building military aircraft out of recycled cardboard. "His finished products are spot on!" notes Chip. Matthew, their youngest, is in 4th grade and, by all accounts, a free spirit and Lego master. Clare has been working not far from their home in Rye with Holderness & Bourne, a magnificent apparel startup that has catapulted into market disrupter status.

Be sure to join Chip and your fellow association members for this season-opening event—and become a part of the boom in Two-Ball attendance.

*Steven McGlone, a member of the Tee to Green Editorial Committee, is superintendent at Siwanoy Country Club in Bronxville, NY.*



# How the David Mahoney Two-Ball Championship Got Its Name

by Steven McGlone

September 27, 2008 was a day many MetGCSA members would rather not remember. It was the day that Dave Mahoney, the highly regarded and long-tenured Siwanoy Country Club superintendent, lost his life unexpectedly to a heart condition few knew existed. Dave, sadly, left behind his loving wife, Catherine, and their two adolescent children.

Having spent his entire 25-year professional career at Siwanoy, Dave was beyond respected for his turf expertise. In the mid-'90s, mowing at .090" was unheard of with a fixed-head Jacobson mower. When managing his staff, Dave was always two steps ahead and would teach his understudies without them knowing they were being taught. He was always humble in his teachings and delivery.

Brett Chapin of Redding Country Club witnessed Dave in action, having worked for him many years ago. "Dave was a character," remembers Brett, recounting the story of his first day of work at Siwanoy: "I walked down to the shop late in the afternoon to meet Dave, and this guy stops me and instructs me to check the cut on a mower and set it to .090". So I did and then asked where Dave was. The man looks at me and says, 'Nice job setting up the mower. I'm Dave. Good to meet you.'"

Not only was Dave a great superintendent and boss, but he was also a dedicated and proud member of the MetGCSA. Having served on the board and as our association's 26th president, Dave had plenty of opportunity to show another of his special qualities:

his quick wit and dry sense of humor. He could light up a room with his entertaining Tournament Award presentations or his lively committee reports.

To Dave, our monthly golf meetings were great, but he felt all too often, the same people would play with one another. He wanted superintendents to expand their networks. Initiating the annual Two-Ball Tournament was his solution. And it worked!

Although I had never had the opportunity to meet Dave, taking over for him at Siwanoy immediately after his passing, I got to know him indirectly through the staff that worked for him for so many years. Dave was generous with his crew and treated them like family, even taking them to play soccer at a nearby school field after lunch. His peers in the industry would also remark on how he kept things light and always inserted comedy into the toughest of conversations.

The Two-Ball Qualifier is famed for twosomes showing up with inflated handicaps and constant ball busting among the fraternity we call the Met. It's amazing how many guys have the "round of their life" the first time they swing the clubs for the season. There couldn't be a better tournament to be named after Dave as he was king of the ballbusters, and, well, certainly not a low-handicap player!

*Steven McGlone, a member of the Tee to Green Editorial Committee, is superintendent at Siwanoy Country Club in Bronxville, NY.*

*Chapter News continued from page 10*

For further information, Ken Benoit can be reached at [kenbenoit1@gmail.com](mailto:kenbenoit1@gmail.com) or 914-760-3575.

## Course Tour With Steve McDonald

After lunch, Steve McDonald of Turfgrass Disease Solutions, invited attendees out to the golf course for an interactive tour that started on the putting green. Steve pulled a soil profile and discussed the results of multiple years of aerification and sand topdressing. He talked about a trend he is seeing to drag plugs before picking them up to work some of the microbial-rich soil back into the profile. Steve also discussed the importance of a fall application of Proxy for seedhead control in the spring. It seems the fall application provides more flexibility with subsequent applications in the spring.

As the tour moved down the first fairway, Steve talked about the use of Defendor in bentgrass fairways for broadleaf weed control. He offered some advice for superintendents looking to renovate their rough. He said to pay attention to how compacted the area might be from other renovation traffic and be sure to de-compact the area before seeding or sodding. The tour concluded with a conversation about bunker surrounds management. He pointed out how shade patterns created by the bunkers themselves were having an effect on turf quality around the bunkers. He finished the tour with a short question-and-answer session, responding to questions about cutting heights, topdressing, mowing frequency, and aerification techniques.

For further information, Steve McDonald can be reached at [turfgrassdiseasesolutions@yahoo.com](mailto:turfgrassdiseasesolutions@yahoo.com) or 610-633-18787.

*Scott Olson, a member of the MetGCSA Education Committee, is superintendent at Knollwood Country Club in Elmsford, NY.*

## Met Area Team Championship Contested on Home Turf

by Kevin Collins

**O**n October 10, Golf Course Superintendent Sean Cain and Sunningdale Country Club hosted the Met Area Team Championship.

The “Championship” was resurrected about a decade ago by industry stalwarts Andy Drohen and Blake Halderman. Superintendent associations from the Northeast & Mid-Atlantic regions gather to compete in the event. Each association sends eight players (four gross and four net players). The format is four, two-man best ball teams (gross & net) that vie for the lowest aggregate score and the top prize. Typically, 13 associations play in the event every year. The association that comes in last normally has to sit out of next year’s tournament. There’s always a lot of pride on the line. (See the results on page 17.)

### Leading Up to Sunningdale

Sean is originally from the Capital area of upstate New York, where he became interested in turf as a teenager. “In high school, I worked for Fred Montgomery at Mohawk Country Club,” Sean recalls. “I really liked the work.”

He liked it so much, in fact, that he applied for and was accepted to URI’s turf program. His first internship, in 1988, was at The Stanwich Club, working for Scott Niven, which Sean recounts as “a great experience.” “It didn’t take me long,” says Sean, “to know this was the profession for me.”

After graduation, Sean’s first assistant’s position was at The Apawamis Club, working for then Superintendent Jeff Scott. The five years spent at Apawamis were a turning point in Sean’s career. “Jeff tore me down and rebuilt me,” Sean laughs. “He is responsible for making me the superintendent I am today.”

In the spring of 1997, Sean was hired at Sunningdale to work as first assistant to Dominic DiMarzo. At the end of Sean’s first season, Dominic decided to retire and the club hired Sean as their superintendent.

Sean could see that the course had great potential. Convincing the membership, however, took some doing.

### Sunningdale From Past to Present

Sunningdale was established in 1913 by a group of 12 men, the majority of whom worked in the clothing industry. They leased a ready-made, nine-hole Willie Dunn golf course in Mt. Vernon, which had been the second home of the Siwanoy Country Club. Sunningdale soon felt the need for an 18-hole course and, in 1916, moved to the present 18-hole site on the western edge of Scarsdale, high above the Sprain Brook Parkway. The property had been an encampment sight during the Revolutionary War for the French Troops who had come over in 1781 to aid the American cause.

The Seth Raynor-designed course opened in 1918. The great routing and terrain make Sunningdale a precise-driving course with six tilting fairways, and now all the new greens have plenty of movement, thanks to Architect Mike DeVries.

It was in 2004 that the club hired DeVries to recapture the course’s original 1917 Seth Raynor design.

“Some of the changes we were proposing weren’t an easy sell,” says Sean, “but after some tough meetings, we were able to convince the membership of the value of reestablishing lost vistas and the integrity of many of the holes. Once we got the green light,” says Sean, “we began a slow renovation that lasted into 2017.”

Having a firm grasp on how architects from the early 1900s worked with the land and its topography, Mike DeVries was able to flawlessly recapture many of Raynor’s design features. The team built all-new greens, installed a state-of-the-art irrigation system, rebuilt all the bunkers and tees, and rerouted the last three holes (16, 17, & 18).

“We removed close to 1,500 trees,” says Sean, “many that surrounded and shaded the greens. We made an effort to keep all the specimen trees. It’s transformed Sunningdale and this Seth Reynor classic into a more open course with vistas that really show off the topography of the land.”

As if all this weren’t enough, the plan included rebuilding the halfway house, putting an addition onto the clubhouse, and constructing a new tennis shop. Future projects include a new golf shop and a new



Sean Cain, CGCS

maintenance facility, “for the next guy,” Sean laughs.

An important influence on Sean during his tenure at Sunningdale was his first GM, Ray Corcoran. “I worked with Ray for 17 years until he retired,” says Sean. “He had a major influence on the inner workings of the club—and on me. He was a leader and consensus team builder, which were essential in getting our work with Mike DeVries, and other undertakings throughout the property, approved and underway. I learned a lot from Ray,” adds Sean. “He was awesome.”

In addition to Sean’s positive industry relationships, the things that keep him grounded and happy are threefold. First is Erika, Sean’s partner and the love of his life. Second is Charlie, Sean’s Australian Shepherd who he claims, “has made him a better person.” And third is his house in Stowe, VT, where he enjoys his passion for skiing.

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



## MetGCSA Slips to Sixth Place in 2023 Met Area Team Championship

by Andy Drohen

The 2023 Met Area Team Championship was contested at Sunningdale Country Club in Scarsdale, NY. This year was host Sean Cain's second Met Area Team Championship as he hosted the event in 2001, the first since the 1917 Seth Raynor gem had been redone by Mike DeVries in 2017. Mike built bold new greens on the finishing three holes that fit right into the existing design like they've always been there. The 17th is a completely new hole and the 18th an exciting finisher where any score is possible with the pressure of a championship on the line!

This year has been one of the wettest on record, including a couple inches of rain three days before the championship. Sean worked his magic, though, and had Sunningdale in tremendous condition with picture-perfect green surfaces rolling quickly and challenging even for the best of players!

Philadelphia AGCS won for a record sixth time, and their second time in the past three years, most recently at Saratoga National in 2021. The talented field was 2 over par for the day, 2 shots clear of New Jersey.

The MetGCSA last won the title in 2018 at Hamilton Farm, but since then, it's been kind of middle-of-the-pack performances most years. However, we moved up a few spots from last year where we finished 10th at Lehigh Country Club to this year finishing in 6th place. Hopefully next year we can keep climbing the leaderboard and bring home that trophy again.

The team was looking solid through nine holes on the Golf Genius app, but the course got the best of us on the second nine. On the Gross side, the team of Tom Ashfield and Matt Lapinski finished 1 over, and Jason Meersman and Kevin Seibel finished 6 over. On the Net side, Steve Wickstrom and Blake Halderman finished even par, and Joe Gikis and Rob Alonzi finished at 4 over.

It was a wonderful day with a lot of fun, laughs, and interesting shots being made, but for sure, the highlight of the Met's day was Tom Ashfield bringing home a skin with a gross eagle on Sunningdale's par 5, 7th hole. Congratulations, Tom! Nice playing!

### Championship Offers More Than Just Fun

The Met Area Team Championship continues to raise money each year to help those in our industry going through difficult times. Over the past 10 years, we have raised over \$20,000 and have supported superintendents, industry representatives and their families in times of need.

This year, with your support, we were able to make three donations to help folks in our industry through difficult times. Sean Cain's employee, Otoniel Feliz Samboy, suffered a tragedy no parent wants to go through when his 1-year-old son was involved in a fatal accident at a daycare in New York. We raised \$2,500 at this year's championship to donate to Otoniel's family. Two assistants from the Pocono Association's Fox Hill Golf Club were involved in a serious accident this summer when heavy rain washed out a local bridge and the two drove over together and suffered serious injuries. We were able to donate \$1,000 each to John Polak and Joe Colangelo to help with their medical bills. Thanks to all who donated so generously to the 50/50s over the years!!

### Thank You to Our Sponsors!

Once again, the Met Area Team Championship is generously supported by our seven major sponsors who continue to step up to make this one of the best events across the country! Please join me in thanking Allied Nutrients, BASF, Envu, Ocean Organics, Plant Food, Syngenta, and Toro as they continue to support this fantastic event. Thanks again to Sean Cain and his entire staff, and all the folks at Sunningdale for

another successful championship! A special thank you to our local GCSAA representative, Kevin Doyle, for his help with registration, and our resident photographer, Shaun Barry, for the great photos that can be found at <https://flic.kr/s/aHBqjAZefp>. We look forward to seeing everyone next year, so stay tuned for announcements, and of course, if you're no longer the contact please let me know who is!

### The Complete Results

What follows is a list of both the team and proximity winners. Congratulations to one and all!

### Team Scores (Par 70 – 288: Ties broken by lowest gross scores, then net)

- 1st / +2 Philadelphia AGCS
- 2nd / +4 GCSA of New Jersey
- 3rd / +7 Long Island GCSA (-3 low gross)
- 4th / +7 Northeastern GCSA (-1 low gross)
- 5th / +10 Hudson Valley GCSA
- 6th / +11 MetGCSA
- 7th / +12 GCSA of Cape Cod
- 8th / +14 Rhode Island GCSA
- 9th / +19 GCSA of New York
- 10th / +24 Eastern Shore AGCS
- 11th / +25 Connecticut AGCS
- 12th / +26 Pocono Turfgrass Association
- 13th / +30 Mid-Atlantic AGCS

### Closest to the Pin

#3 / 2' 6" Dave Hicks  
GCSA of New York  
(Sponsored by Syngenta)

#8 / 7' 9" Darren Farrar  
Philadelphia AGCS  
(Sponsored by Plant Food)

#12 / 3' 0" Scott Wunder  
Mid-Atlantic AGCS  
(Sponsored by Ocean Organics)  
*continued on page 20*

## MetGCSA Triumphs in Battle of the Bridges Tourney at Wykagyl

by James White and Tyler Sandefur

**O**n November 6, the annual Battle of the Bridges Tournament was held at Wykagyl Country Club in New Rochelle, NY. This annual tournament is for assistant superintendents from the MetGCSA who compete against GCSA of New Jersey to see who has bragging rights as the better golfers. This two-man best ball tournament provides a well-deserved day off for assistants and some friendly competition, which all seemed to enjoy—especially MetGCSA contestants who took home the trophy for the sixth time since 2016!

### A Look at How They Fared

The top five net scores were taken from each association, with the Met score being a combined 317 and the GCSA of New Jersey being 366.

The Low Gross winners were Dan Murphy and Anthony Roach from The Stanwich Club, while Luke Pittman of GlenArbor Country Club and Travis Wilder of Bedford Golf and Tennis Club won Second Place Low Gross.

Low Net winners were Ben Brodeur and Carlos Montero from Bonnie Briar Country Club, while Kyle Ott of Wee Burn Country Club and Angel Soto of Bonnie Briar took Second Place Net.

Congratulations to our four Closest to the Pin winners:

#4 - Dan O'Shea from

Shackamaxxon CC

#11- Michael Ballew from Upper

Montclair CC

#16 -Tom Magazeno from Crystal Springs

#18 - David Sotire from Burning Tree CC

And lastly to our Long Drive winner:

#6 - Dan Murphy from The Stanwich Club

For those who competed, and those who didn't, here's a look at the course and those who helped to prepare it for a MetGCSA victory.



*Battle of the Bridges meeting hosts (left ot right): Superintendent Dan Rogers and assistant supers Hunter Coulthard, James White, and Charles Alpern.*



*Assistant super contestants in the Battle of the Bridges surround MetGCSA trophy winners.*



## The Site of the Competition

Wykagyl opened in 1904 as an 18-hole course laid out by Lawrence E. Van Etten. Over the past 119 years, it has undergone numerous enhancements at the hands of three golf course architects. In 1919, Donald Ross redesigned several holes, including the Hell's Half Acre bunker on 12. In 1930, A.W. Tillinghast eliminated the 1st and 2nd holes to make room for a practice area, added the current 4th through 6th holes, introduced a new 17th hole, and shortened 18 by 165 yards.

Most recently in 2006, a renovation by Coore and Crenshaw further enhanced the golf experience, adding to the course's interest and playability for golfers of all abilities. Among the architectural team's improvements were 30 new bunkers and the restoration of the others to the original look and feel.

In the fall of 2022 through spring 2023, Wykagyl underwent a restoration of their bunkers to the Better Billy Bunker system. This change has greatly helped this season with the abundant rain, including seven inches at the end of September. A new Turf Care Facility was also designed and built during the same timeframe, replacing a facility that served for over 60 years.

## About Assistant Charles Alpern

Charles, otherwise known as Chuck, is from Windham, ME. Before Chuck came to Wykagyl, he worked at Point Sebago Golf and Resort in Casco, ME. It was there, working on the club's summer crew, that Chuck realized this was the career path he wanted to pursue.

He has been learning the ropes at Wykagyl for two years, performing a variety of the course's critical maintenance tasks, from mowing fairways to, most recently, mixing and spraying pesticides.

"I'm happy being part of any activity that enhances course conditions and makes it stand out as one of the top courses in Westchester and beyond," says Chuck, adding, "I was pleased to be part of the Met's

Battle of the Bridges Annual Golf Tournament, and better, hosting it at Wykagyl."

In his free time, he enjoys watching the Yankees, Giants, Rangers, and all Syracuse Orange sports.

## About Second Assistant Hunter Coulthard

Hunter grew up in Millerton, NY, where, in high school, he spent his summers as a crewmember at Silo Ridge Field Club. But Hunter's career goal, at that point, was not turfgrass management. He went on to Cazenovia College, where he received a B.S. in Sports Management and accepted an internship at Cooperstown Dreams Park in their Field Management program. This was the turning point for Hunter. He quickly realized his true passion was turfgrass management.

Explaining his change of heart, he said, "There's something about the feeling of accomplishment in this industry when you've put the time, effort, and resources into producing the highest level of playability, aesthetics, and superior course conditions that I didn't feel when pursuing a career in sports management." These feelings are what led Hunter to Wykagyl, where he has been an integral part of the staff for four years. During his time at Wykagyl, Hunter pursued his master's from Penn State in Turfgrass Management, completing his degree the winter of 2022.

Among Hunter's favorite maintenance activities are course setup, working as a team on irrigation maintenance and repairs, and last but not least, rolling greens. "There's something about looking back and seeing those greens shine beneath the pin, flag slowly waving in the breeze," notes Hunter. "I couldn't have been prouder and more excited to welcome members of the Met and New Jersey chapters to the conditions that all of us at Wykagyl put forward on November 6."

During his time away from the golf course, Hunter says his life revolves around sports. A perfect night for him consists of a ball game and a few laughs with friends.

## About First Assistant James White

James was born and raised in Stony Point, NY, where he worked on a golf course from the age of 16. James started out as a golf cart attendant at Patriot Hills Golf Club and worked his way up to being the bag drop person and starter. With turfgrass management far from his mind, he attended Hofstra University where he received his B.S. in Video/Television and Business.

When he returned to Patriot Hills during the summers, the golf course superintendent finally asked if he would join the maintenance crew full time. Finding it difficult to break into the Video/Television business, James accepted. It didn't take long for James to realize he'd rather be working outdoors than in a dark studio.

He decided to attend the Rutgers' Professional Golf Turf Management School and completed his internship at Westchester Country Club, where he continued to work for four years after he graduated. James then took the lead assistants job at Wykagyl Country Club in March of 2020, where he has been working since.

James's favorite job is course setup. "I enjoy providing a different challenge for players," he said. "Each day, the course can play completely differently than the previous day, especially with the windy conditions we often get here at Wykagyl. I often like to move our champion tees forward on short par 4s and give our membership an opportunity to hit a green in one or they could get penalized and end up in a bunker."

For our outing this year, we played the Par 4 15th hole from the forward tees to give the players an opportunity to reach the green in one shot. On the Par 3 4th hole, we used a newer tee box that gave us a different angle toward the green. The setup served our team well!

In his free time, James enjoys going to the gym, watching Rangers hockey with his dad, and spending time with his wife, Alexa.

## Superintendent Host Dan Rogers

Dan has been the golf course superintendent at Wykagyl Country Club since 2012. He got his start in the industry when he was just 15 working on the crew at Fenner Hill Golf Club in Hopkinton, RI. Dan decided to make turfgrass management his career and attended SUNY Cobleskill where he received his Bachelors in Ornamental Horticulture & Turfgrass Management. After an internship at Bethpage State Park, Dan was promoted to assistant superintendent and then superintendent on the Black course. From Bethpage, Dan crossed the border to accept the superintendent position at New London Country Club in Waterford, CT. After five years there, Dan seized the opportunity to return to New York as the new superintendent at Wykagyl Country Club.

Dan spent eight years on the MetGCSA's Board of Directors, where he chaired the Advertising Committee. After hours, Dan enjoys spending time with his family: his wife of 15 years, Samantha, their 13-year-old son, George, and 10-year-old daughter, Abigail.

*James White, the MetGCSA's Class C rep, is an assistant superintendent at Wykagyl Country Club in New Rochelle, NY, and Tyler Sandefur is a superintendent at Westchester Country Club in Rye, NY.*

*Scorecard continued from page 17*

#17 / 3' 7" Ken Lochridge  
*Long Island GCSA*  
(Sponsored by BASF)

### Longest Drive

#1 / Gross Div. Joe Perry  
*GCSA of New York*  
(Sponsored by Envu)

#7 / Net Div. Graig Patti  
*Long Island GCSA*  
(Sponsored by Toro)

#16 / Sponsors Div. Nick DeBellis  
*Sunningdale Country Club*  
(Sponsored by Allied Nutrients)

### Low Gross Team Winners

67 Tim Falvey & Jake Reeves  
*Long Island GCSA*

### Sponsorship Team Winners

-5 Joe Perry & Andrew Stillwell  
*Envu*

### Skins Net

Eagle on 13 / Graig Patti  
Eagle on 14 / Patrick Crusty  
Birdie on 17 / Ken Lochridge  
Eagle on 18 / Chris Fernandes  
Birdie on 3 / Chris Boyle  
Eagle on 7 / Joe Kinlin

### Gross

Eagle on 1 / Matt Quinn  
Eagle on 7 / Tom Ashfield  
Birdie on 9 / Darren Farrar

*Andy Drohen, Met Area Team Championship Co-Chair and a member of the Tee to Green Editorial Committee, is a regional manager with Allied Nutrients in Granville, MA.*

The MetGCSA  
wishes you  
a successful  
season  
ahead!



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