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THE FRONT OFFICE

OPINION PAGE

A SHOW FOR ALL SPORTS TURF MANAGERS



The big show for the American turf industry is right around the corner—the 59th Annual International Golf Course Conference and Show in Houston, TX, February 1-8. It's one of the top 50 shows held in this country every year, with more than 12,000 people attending.

Virtually every hotel within 30 miles of the George R. Brown Convention Center will be filled with golf course superintendents, grounds managers and suppliers from across the U.S. and around the world.

The Golf Show is a shining symbol of how the golf course maintenance industry has grown in the past 20 years. Nowhere else in this hemisphere can the superintendent and professional turf manager see the

assortment of equipment and supplies designed specifically for him. He can also take advantage of a wide array of seminars given by top experts from across the country.

The show makes two major statements. First of all, the industry has grown to a multi-billion dollar part of the U.S. economy. It is beginning to rival the television industry, the airlines industry, and even agriculture in its importance to the U.S. economy. You couldn't say that ten years ago.

But, to me, the show says the "greenskeeper" of the past has risen above the status of a specialized maintenance person. Today he is recognized as a manager of a very valuable resource. His salary exceeds the national average because he is the product manager of a business worth millions of dollars. Under his management the condition and playability of golf courses has reached new heights. The chemicals and equipment he uses are also more expensive and effective. The Golf Show, the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA), the university system and manufacturers have enabled progressive and ambitious superintendents to become professionals rather than tradesmen.

That's terrific for the golf course superintendent—but what is the show doing for the park superintendent, the grounds manager at schools and colleges and the stadium field manager? In many respects, these other important turf managers are where the superintendent was ten years ago. Why can't the Golf Show help them as it helped superintendents?

The reason I ask is that all managers of high-use, recreational turf in England share the benefits of another show, the Institute of Groundsmanship's Exhibition held every September in Windsor. This past year nearly 38,000 people attended this three-day show. On one day more than 16,000 grounds managers packed the show ground. Those who have attended this show have told me it caters to everyone in the turf and landscape industry, from the mower operator to the head groundsman. Golf course superintendents from some of the greatest courses in the world attend the show religiously to compare notes with their peers and talk with manufacturers about new products. In their hearts, they are groundsmen too.

I guess it boils down to how GCSAA members feel about their cousins in turf management. Now that hard work and recognition have placed them on a pedestal, do they feel a kinship with other managers of high-use, quality turf? If they do, are they willing to open up their show to other related organizations outside of golf? There apparently is some question by GCSAA board members as to whether the Sports Turf Managers Association should be part of its show. Is this doubt felt by most GCSAA members?

Just as important, are other sports turf management organizations willing to work with GCSAA? Does every organization have to have its own show? There are practical limitations for the associations, their members and the exhibitors that have to be considered with one, large industry show like the Institute of Groundsmanship. All parties will have to give up something to gain something in return.

The principle behind this magazine is for all managers of sports turf to share their knowledge. If one group makes strong advances, then it can and should help bring others up to speed by sharing its expertise. I think the same principle should apply to shows.

Brent F. Shank

EVENTS

CALENDAR

JANUARY

19-21 28th Virginia Turfgrass Conference, Richmond Centre, Richmond, VA. Contact: J.R. Hall, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA 24061, (703) 961-5797.

FEBRUARY

1-8 59th International Golf Course Conference and Show, George R. Brown Convention Center, Houston, TX. Contact GCSAA, 1617 St. Andrews Drive, Lawrence, KS 66046, 1-800-GSA-SUPT.

6 Sports Turf Managers Association Conference, George R. Brown Convention Center, Houston, TX. Contact: Mary Giles, STMA, 400 N. Mountain Ave., Suite 301, Upland, CA 91786, (714) 981-9199.

9-10 Southern Grounds & Turf Maintenance Exposition, Myrtle Beach Convention Center, Myrtle Beach, SC. Contact: South Carolina State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education, 111 Executive Center Dr., Columbia, SC, 29210, (803) 686-3737.

21-26 Pacific Northwest Maintenance Management School, Fort Worden State Park, Port Townsend, WA. Contact: National Recreation and Park Association Pacific Region Office, 1600 Sacramento Inn Way, Suite 217, Sacramento, CA 95815, (916) 646-9050.

23-25 Western Pennsylvania Conference & Trade Show, Pittsburgh Expo Mart, Monroeville, PA. Contact: Randall Zidik, Rolling Hills Country Club, 261 Center Church Rd., McMurray, PA 15317, (412) 941-8552.

23 Grounds Maintenance Short Course, Holiday Inn, Greenville, SC. Contact: George Hyams, South Carolina Landscape & Turfgrass Association, PO Box 12109, Charleston, SC 29412, (803) 762-1595.

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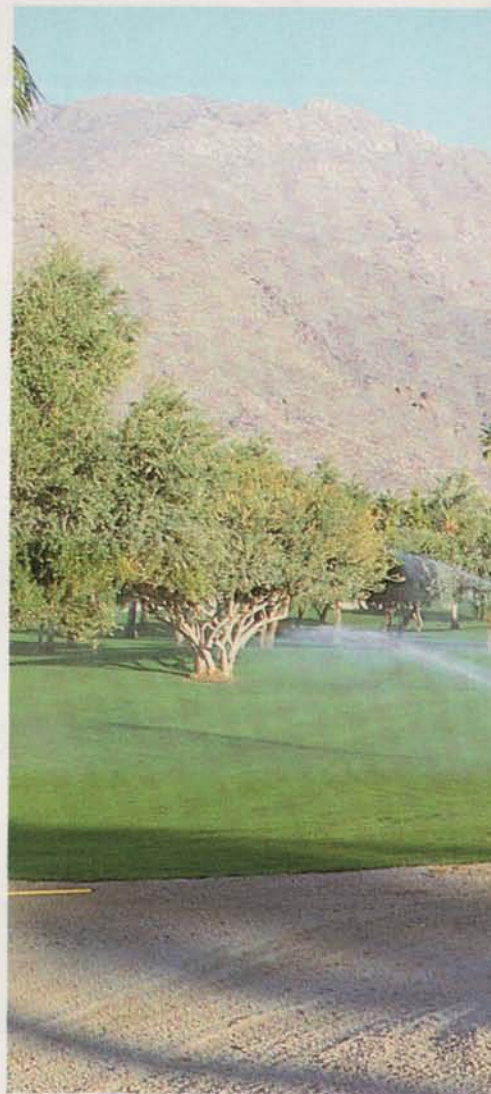
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Regaining Control:

A Tale of Two Golf Course Irrigation Systems



Low pressure heads at Canyon Country Club are le



The greens on the east nine of Atlantis Golf Club are the only greens in southern Florida that follow USGA specifications exactly.

The early morning routines of growing number of golf course superintendents have changed this past year. Like most superintendents in the U.S., they wake up before dawn, get dressed, grab a quick breakfast and head for the course. As they drive to work, they go over the work schedule for the day in their heads.

A few items weigh heaviest on their minds. In the spring, it might be the persistence of overseeded ryegrass in bermudagrass. In the summer, it may be the spread of turfgrass diseases. In the fall, it could be the condition of the overseeded ryegrass as they prepare their courses for winter golfers. But during every season superintendents start their day wondering whether or not the irrigation system malfunctioned during the night due to a break, pump problem or power failure.

Before last year, Mark Henderson at Atlantis Golf Club in Atlantis, FL, and Rick Sall, at Canyon Country Club in Palm Springs, CA, had just one way to find out if the irrigation system worked properly the night before, by jumping in a turf vehicle and inspecting the course hole-by-hole. But, that has



One to problems with drift and lower the pressure demand on the pump system.

changed. Today, Henderson and Sall can check the status of their irrigation systems from their offices with the push of a button. A quick glance at a computer screen or printout tells them everything they need to know in seconds.

If you asked Henderson a year ago if he expected to become a "computer superintendent," he would probably have said no. Ironically, for Henderson and Sall it was other improvements in their irrigation systems that led to the addition of computerized central controllers.

Atlantis Golf Club is a 27-hole private course built in the early '50s by the Kintz family as a centerpiece for its planned community development called Atlantis. Located just south of affluent West Palm Beach, the Kintz family envisioned Atlantis as a community of fine homes to serve affluent northerners during the winter. Golf course architect William F. Mitchell carefully threaded the first 18 holes through the slash pine covering the coastal flatland in the '50s and returned a decade later to add nine more holes.

It wasn't long, however, before the fine,

sugar sand and four separate pump stations started to wreak havoc on the quick coupler irrigation system with its galvanized pipes. To regain control, in 1972, the course installed one of the few electric valve systems in southern Florida. Four heads were grouped on each station. Each of the 14 separate controllers had 23 stations. "On the same station, two heads would be elevated and two would be in low spots," says Henderson. "One area would be too dry while the other area was always wet." Changing the start and run times was a huge task, but it was still a major improvement over the old quick-coupler system.

Water was supplied on a piecemeal basis by four pumps spread out across the course, three from wells and one from a canal. Each well had a line shaft turbine pump with a pressure reducing valve. Only one pump had a hydropneumatic tank to protect the old lines from pressure surges. In addition, the wells were beginning to pump sand into the system. Nevertheless, the decision was made to leave the pumps and the aging water mains alone.

Southern Florida is frequently referred to

as the lightning capital of the world. Lightning that strikes the ground near a valve will send a surge of current through the wires to the controller, damaging both. For this reason, an estimated 97 percent of the golf courses in southern Florida install hydraulic valves and controllers. The small, pressurized tubes of water between the valves and controllers protect the controllers from electrical damage.

By the time Henderson joined Atlantis from Mayacoo Lakes Country Club, a Nicklaus course in West Palm Beach, the irrigation system was out of control. "We had to repair five or six leaks every day as the old pipes gave out," he recalls. "The sand was also causing the rotary sprinkler heads to malfunction and we had to keep a close eye on all four pump stations. We were spending more than \$30,000 every year for irrigation system maintenance." Every day was like sticking more fingers in more and more holes in the dike.

Atlantis not only had a new superintendent, it had a new greens chairman. Bob Maloney was a retired Air Force colonel and

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It was taking more than 12 hours to irrigate the course. That meant Atlantis was paying peak rates for electricity for the pumps.

Regaining Control

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former vice president of RCA. The engineer, trained at West Point and Harvard, was accustomed to developing solutions for complex problems. He had chosen Henderson for his six years experience with Nicklaus and his turf management degree from Lake City Community College. The two of them started to identify all the various problems with the system.

"My main concerns were the pipes and wires on the old north and south nines and the sprinkler heads," Henderson states. Not only was high pressure from the pump system rupturing the pipes, the heads were getting stuck. It was taking more than 12 hours to irrigate the course. That meant Atlantis was paying peak hour rates for electricity for the pumps.

The Tidwarf greens and Ormond bermudagrass fairways on the east nine were suffering from poor drainage since muck soil had been brought in when the third nine was added. "I thought some of the moisture problems could be solved with single head control, at least around the greens,"



The new pump station at Atlantis is concealed in an attractive pump house nestled in a grove of trees. All pump components were hot-dipped galvanized to resist corrosion.

Maloney called in golf course architect and irrigation consultant Ted McAnlis of North Palm Beach to help construct an overall renovation plan that could be presented to the private club's 380 members. The more McAnlis talked to Maloney and Henderson, the more he realized that they needed more control than a hydraulic system could provide. Engineers from Rain Bird and Toro were called in as was USGA Green Section regional agronomist John Foy about the greens on the east nine. Maloney and Henderson started visiting other courses in the area to see their irrigation systems.

"Our goal was to utilize water to its maximum capability and to get our irrigation maintenance costs down to less than \$10,000 a year," said Maloney. The main

focus was on the pumps, pipes, wires, and heads on all 27 holes and the greens on the east nine.

The first decision was to build one central pumping station drawing from a lake instead of wells. The old well pumps would be used for backup only. "There is a growing concern in this area about salt water intruding into the ground water," says McAnlis. Atlantis is only five miles from the Atlantic Ocean. The course has an abundance of surface water and a 23 acre lake that could serve as an irrigation reservoir.

All pipes, wires, heads and controllers would be replaced. To provide maximum control, nearly all heads would be valve-in-head. This favored staying with an electric system as opposed to an hydraulic. It also made a strong case for going to a centralized computer controller.

All the greens on the east nine would be rebuilt to "exact" USGA Green Section specifications. No course in Florida had ever followed the USGA specs to the letter, said Foy. That challenged the Atlantis team. Furthermore, drainage would be installed in problem muck soil areas on fairways and tees on the east nine. The pipes on the east nine would stay, but everything else would be replaced. Altogether the tab for the project was nearly \$1 million.

"The heads are the heart of an irrigation system as far as I'm concerned," Henderson points out. "You build the system around the heads." Henderson favored the Toro gear-drive heads. That gave Chuck Watson from Hector Turf, the Toro Irrigation distributor for southern Florida, the idea that Atlantis could become the first course in Florida to install the computerized Network 8000. Henderson had seen the Rain Bird Maxi III central computer system operate and liked what it could do. Boynton Pump,



This single AquaTurf pump station replaced four separate pumps that were previously located at different locations on the 27-hole course.

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"I have only eighteen concerns when selecting my greensmowers."

*Peter Smith, Superintendent
Shinnecock Hills Golf Club*

"When you're hosting the U.S. Open, the quality of your greens is going to be evaluated by the best golfers in the world and a national television audience. That's why I use only Buntun mowers to maintain my greens here at Shinnecock Hills," says Golf Course Superintendent Peter Smith.

Since he discovered Buntun mowers, Smith has purchased eight greensmowers and two teemowers. Here are some of his comments.

On the tournament:

"For three years before the 1986 Open I mowed my greens at 5/32" with 22" Buntun walk-behinds. For the tournament I mowed at 1/8". The Buntun doesn't have a floating head so I get a true 1/8" cut once I set and lock in the height. With the new Buntun tournament knife I can easily get down to 7/64" without digging into the green."

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On teemowers:

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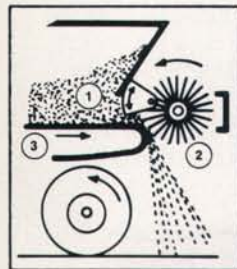
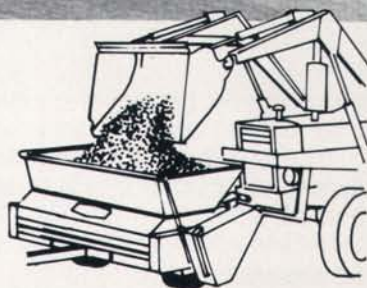
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INDUSTRY ASSOCIATIONS ELECT NEW OFFICERS

The Professional Grounds Management Society (PGMS) and the Sports Turf Managers Association (STMA) have announced their new officers for 1988.

Elected to a second one-year term as president of PGMS was Jeffrey Bourne, chief, bureau of parks, Howard County, MD. He has led the group into numerous joint ventures with other associations to increase the conference opportunities for PGMS members. A prime example was the Green Team Exhibition with the Associated Landscape Contractors of America (ALCA) last fall outside of Washington, DC. The two groups will cohost the second Green Team Exhibition in Nashville, TN, this coming November.

Russell Studebaker, senior horticulturist for the Tulsa, OK, Parks Department, was elected first vice president of PGMS. Both Studebaker and second vice president Ted Shull, grounds superintendent at Kettering Medical Center in Kettering, OH, have won numerous awards for their work. The same applies for Thomas Smith, senior vice president of the Cemetery of Spring Grove in Cincinnati, OH, the new treasurer.

New directors elected by PGMS members include Robert Rubel, president of Rubel's Landscape Services in Fort Worth, TX; Earl Wilson, vice president of Thornton-Wilson, Inc., of Maineville, OH; and Charles Wilson, groundskeeping supervisor at California State University at Los Angeles, CA. Steve Chapman, grounds manager at Digital Equipment Corp., in Salem, NH, was appointed by Bourne to fill a vacancy on the board.

Steve Wightman, turf manager at Mile High Stadium in Denver, CO, completed his second year as president of STMA. Mark Hodnik, supervisor of grounds at California Polytechnic Institute in Pomona, CA, has been elected president for 1988. David Frey, facilities supervisor at Cleveland Stadium in Cleveland, OH, was elected first vice president and Dr. James Watson, vice president and chief agronomist for The Toro Company in Minneapolis, MN, was elected second vice president. Sam Monson, facility supervisor for the Minnesota Vikings in Eden Prairie, MN, was elected treasurer and Twyla Hansen, grounds supervisor at Nebraska Wesleyan University in Lincoln, NE, is the new secretary.

Steve Cockerham, director of the sports turf research center at the University of California at Riverside, CA, and Mike Schiller, director of parks for Glenview, IL, started new terms on the board of directors.

KALAMAZOO UPGRADES GOLF COURSE IRRIGATION

The Kalamazoo, MI, Municipal Golf Association will complete the conversion of all the city's municipal courses to state-of-the-art irrigation this winter by updating Red Arrow Golf Course. The golf association board has been updating the city courses to reduce energy costs, conserve city water and reduce labor and maintenance costs for the irrigation systems.

The previous irrigation system at Red Arrow, a nine-hole par-3 executive course, used Kalamazoo city water. The new system will save operating funds since electric costs to run the pumps will be lower than the cost of buying city water.

Red Arrow's system features a new Berkely pump system drawing water from the Kalamazoo River, Rain Bird RC Series controllers and valves, 118 Hunter I-40 pop-up heads and all new PVC pipe. The system, with single-row, 60-foot spacing on the fairways and separate controls for the greens, was designed by Michael Lambeth, vice president of Maple Hill Sprinkling, Inc., of Kalamazoo, the contractor for the project. Century Rain Aid is providing all materials.

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