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GOLF COURSE INDUSTRY

Bold and peaceful dreams

Whether serving in the military or boosting his family, facing challenges or receiving praise, Virginia superintendent **Jarrold Taylor** strives to leave everything better than he finds it.



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On the cover: Jarrod Taylor of Willowbrook Golf Course. Photograph by Caitlyn Blankenship Photography.

VOL. 36 NO. 6

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WHAT CAN 18 DO FOR YOU?

Professionals who work on golf courses frequently lament the lack of personal time available in the summer.

Tournaments, outings, packed tee sheets and revenue pressures define June, July and August in cool-season climates. These days, in warm-season climates, population shifts stemming from the Sun Belt migration yield more summer and shoulder-season play, condensing the invasive cultural practice, project and vacation window.

Commerce and heat can be a toxic mix for the well-being of golf maintenance professionals, as summer demands delay and halt robust habits diligently formed during cooler months.

Who has time to read, run, lift, walk or perform yoga when a green surrounded by shade on three sides shows signs of wilt?

For that green to perform its best, the people maintaining it must be at their best. Here's a modest idea to help manage summer: devote 18 minutes twice per workday toward physical or mental fitness. Ideally, the 36 minutes should be spent away from a golf course or a screen.

Why 18 minutes? The pragmatists involved with TED Talks, the popular and transformative speaking series, cap presentations at 18 minutes because that represents the ideal length to capture and maintain somebody's attention. Concise speaking leads to more wisdom retention. Perhaps conference organizers should use TED Talks as a model when devising speaking schedules and lineups. Eighteen quality minutes will help a busy professional learn more than they could during one, two, three or four blabbering hours. Shorter presentations open time for extra 18-minute networking conversations when attending educational events.

Coincidentally, 18 also represents the number of holes on a regulation golf course. It's an easy metric for anybody working in the industry to remember. When and how to use the 36 minutes will be one of the most important decisions of a summer day.

Avoid stacking the 18-minute sessions. Let's say you use 18 minutes in the morning to read a golf, turf, business, self-help, science or business book — or this magazine. Don't immediately follow the session with a workout. You'll need the second 18 minutes later in the day.

Like keeping an aging piece of equipment functioning or preparing the course for play with eight workers instead of the 10 listed on the day's schedule, ingenuity will help maximize each 18-minute session. A run, walk or lift can be combined with listening to a podcast. Need listening ideas? Our Superintendent Radio Network is approaching 600 episodes, and they are archived on popular podcast distribution platforms. The same platforms host thousands of non-industry podcasts with tremendous educational and inspirational value. Learning while moving is a potent combination for time-limited individuals.

Youth sporting events are excellent places to squeeze in an 18-minute walk or run. We're not suggesting missing your child's at-bat or action time. Consider using pregame, intermission and gaps between games for motion, either in solitude or with family members.

Stopping to walk or jog on a trail or sidewalk, at a park on the way home from the course, or to the kids' activities offers another opportunity to squeeze fitness into a packed day. Delaying one, or both, 18-minute sessions for too long might result in missing one, or both, of them. Bad habits emerge when tasks are delayed to the next day.

Quality reading material always tones the mind and keeps life and work in perspective. We introduce a quartet of books with industry or golf ties in our summer reading guide (page 26). The books profiled, which include a personal memoir by one of your peers, are breezy reads with impactful lessons. They can easily be consumed in 18-minute chunks. Hard copies work best because screens induce fatigue, plus you're supporting somebody's creative work.

Summer will never be easy in the golf industry. But strategies exist to ensure bodies and minds won't wilt over the next three months. The body and mind are your two most important life and work tools. They deserve to be part of your summer routine. **I**



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To provide an independent, innovative and inclusive voice for today's — and tomorrow's — golf industry professionals.

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NOTEBOOK



For starters, plenty of natural woods for area wildlife, like sandhill cranes, redbird hawks, blue herons, a bald eagle (maybe), osprey, owls, ibis, “billions” of rabbits, armadillos, lizards, moles, even coyotes — but, oddly enough, no gators. (Uzar has yet to spot one on the course.) Also, new range tees, a new tee box on 14, repaired cart paths, and a new loader, finally.

“I’ve been here just over a year,” says Uzar, who in his scant free time co-hosts Turf Talk on X Spaces with his friend and fellow Florida turf pro **Ty Robb**. “It feels like a long time. I feel like I’ve gotten a lot done since I got here.”

Uzar did land one more highlight for the course: The third annual #Turfheads-Grilling cookout.

Uzar submitted a recipe for smoked pulled pork, heavy on the spices — a half cup of brown sugar?! — for the third annual Turfheads Guide to Grilling, published in our December 2023 Turfheads Take Over issue. That simple list of ingredients and instructions earned him and the Hammock Creek maintenance team a morning and afternoon filled with burgers, brats, sides and more.

Bill Brown, the director of marketing and brand developer for #TurfheadsGrilling sponsor AQUA-AID Solutions, joined us for the event, which featured national sales manager **Russ Warner** behind the Nexgrill and account manager (and scratch golfer) **Jimmy Clark** talking strategy with Uzar. Maintenance team members filled up for lunch and had plenty of leftovers to take home. Uzar was quick to highlight the work of every member of his 15-person team, including foreman **Antonio Jacinto**, who started working at Hammock Creek before it was built and knows every square inch of its 140 acres, and mechanic **Dave Brown**, who helps the course avoid bad cuts.

Want us to visit your course for the fourth annual #TurfheadsGrilling cookout next year? All you have to do is create and submit a recipe that winds up in our next recipe guide, which will be published in our December 2024 issue. The deadline is Friday, Nov. 1 — you have plenty of

SOUTH FLORIDA SIMMER

#TurfheadsGrilling hit the road for our third annual cookout, this time recognizing the work of Hammock Creek superintendent Rob Uzar and his team.

By Matt LaWell

Rob Uzar has played Hammock Creek Golf Club in Palm City, Florida, probably 50 times — an impressive feat for a Sunshine State superintendent who recently wrapped up his first year at a new tract, and who carves out plenty of time for four kids at home, a Walt Disney World annual pass, and a weekly online gathering for folks who love turf.

Of course, most of those rounds happened back when he was a high school golfer, long before the start of his turf maintenance career.

“Growing up, we would play 16-17-18

cross-country as one hole,” Uzar says during a course tour in late April. “You could tee it up one more time. I would always wait until my second shot here, because you would have to clear all those trees to make it to 18. They were a little smaller back then, but you still had to hit it over them.”

Uzar takes a different approach now on Hammock Creek, a **Jack Nicklaus** and **Jack Nicklaus II** design that opened in 1996 and was renovated in 2013. He respected the course during his rounds as a South Fork High School Bulldog. But he *knows* the course now, and he knows what it needs.

Hammock Creek Golf Club is a popular public course in Palm City, Florida.



photo will receive #Turfheads-Grilling swag, and those selected for the guide will receive a gift box and a chance to have us come grill for you and your team in 2025.

Maybe next year we can even grill some gator — if anyone finally finds one.

Matt LaWell is Golf Course Industry's managing editor. He picked up some delicious mushroom burgers while shopping for this year's cookout.

time! — and everybody in the industry can participate by emailing ingredients, instructions and images of their favorite

recipes to editor-in-chief **Guy Cipriano** at gcipriano@gie.net. Everybody who submits a recipe and corresponding

Tartan Talks 95

Telling a group that something they love, such as a golf course, might be undergoing an invasive overhaul requires tact and a willingness to field wacky suggestions.



▲ Larsen

Erik Larsen demonstrated both during an open microphone session while plotting a South Florida project.

"This guy says, 'Me and my buddy went over to this place and they had dirt cart paths, and you can play your ball right off them. Can we have those?'" Larsen recalls on the *Tartan Talks* podcast. "Then his buddy said, 'I have a question for you, Mr. Architect: Do you leave the rake in the bunker or outside?'"

That one had absolutely nothing to do with me."

Larsen spent part of the hour-long podcast describing his playbook for handling the nonsensical and practical aspects of golf design work. His careers spans four decades — he worked for **Arnold Palmer** and **Ed Seay** before establishing his own firm in 2011 — and he has helped guide projects in places ranging from the mountains of Kazakhstan to flat layouts

near his Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, home past the finish line.

"I try to keep it pretty simple," Larsen says. "I'll start with developing a program, which is let's do an assessment of what do we have, what do we need, what do we want and how do we get there."

And, no, he's never designed dirt cart paths or told a superintendent where to place bunker rakes. And, yes, the podcast is simple to find on the Superintendent Radio Network page of popular distribution platforms.



COURSE NEWS

Jerry Pate Design will lead a restoration of the **Pete Dye**-designed Teeth of the Dog in La Romana, Dominican Republic. The project will start in January 2025 and features the addition of three inches of sand to fairways, regrassing playing surfaces with Pure Dynasty Paspalum, restoring greens surrounding edges, and reshaping and expanding greenside bunkers. ... **Beau Welling** is as busy as ever. Welling started work with senior designer **Scott Benson** on a par-72 layout at the Travis Club, a planned community in Austin, Texas, that will debut in late 2025. He also unveiled The Clutch, a walking-focused 12-hole, par-3 course hugged by the Gulf of Mexico at South Seas on Captiva Island, Florida. ... **Trey Kemp** and **John Colligan** are teaming up again, this time to guide the renovation at Crown Colony Country Club in Lufkin, Texas. The duo is focusing on greens, tees, bunkers, drainage, bridges and tree trimming at the 46-year-old



Teeth of the Dog is set for a major renovation beginning in January 2025.

Bruce Devlin and **Robert Von Hagge** design. Sanders Golf Course Construction will work with them on the project. Superintendent **Clayton Creel** is preparing his team for an October reopening date. ... **Alex Hay**, who runs the Canadian

office of the London-based Lobb + Partners design firm, is heading a project at University Golf Club in Vancouver, British Columbia. The sixth hole will become a par 3 and the seventh, currently a par 3, will become a par 4. Work will be split between this year and 2025. ... Boyne Golf in northern Michigan recently opened four more holes echoing classic **Donald Ross** designs. All part of the Donald Ross Memorial at The Highlands, the holes were reno-

vated to replicate No. 4 at Plainfield Country Club, No. 15 at Seminole, No. 11 at Aronimink and No. 10 at Pinehurst No. 2. ... The Fort Club in Ninety Six, South Carolina, reopened after an extensive renovation on its back nine. **Colton Craig** and **Tom Coyne** guided the architectural work on the **George Cobb** design, superintendent **John Franklin** led the agronomic efforts and Landscapes Unlimited was the builder. ... Elsewhere in South Carolina, Fripp Island

Golf & Beach Resort is planning a renovation of its Ocean Point course, contracting with Dye Designs Groups to oversee the project, which will include the conversion of more than 200,000 square feet of grass to sand-based waste areas. **Cynthia Dye** will lead work on the course, which was also designed by Cobb. ... Princeville Makai Golf Club in Hawaii is in the midst of a three-month, \$3 million course refinement project that will include bunker renovations, cart path upgrades and agronomic enhancements aimed to address drainage and turf health on the **Robert Trent Jones Jr.** design. ... Atlas Turf Arabia provided harvested sod and sprigs to the Diriyah Gate Development Authority's new golf project, which features the first internationally recognized championship course in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The course will be Platinum TE paspalum. ... Bobby Jones Links is now managing Green Oaks Country Club, a Ross design in Verona, Pennsylvania. ... Escalante Golf added the 550-acre Wilderness Club in Montana, its first property in the Big Sky State and its 23rd overall in the United States.



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INDUSTRY BUZZ

A combined \$1 million commitment from the USGA and donors will fund the Greenkeeper Apprenticeship Program through 2029. Currently based out of Sandhills Community College near Pinehurst, North Carolina, the program is designed to provide classroom education and paid on-course maintenance work at partner golf courses for as many as 200 apprentices. ... The GCSAA Foundation research endowments is funding two new research projects through 2026: "Nematode Resistance Management on Golf Course Turf" by **Dr. William T. Crow** of the University of Florida, and "Implementation of a Continuous Soil Surfactant Program and Implications for Preemergence Herbicide Persistence on Golf Courses" by **Dr. Becky Bowling** of the University of Tennessee and **Dr. Travis W. Gannon** of NC State University. ... The Andersons acquired the assets and business of Reed & Perrine Sales. ... Envu's Resilia root health solution is now available for purchase in Hawaii. ... Harrell's launched Azo Root, a plant health and root development enhancer for agricultural and horticultural applications. ... Heritage Links, the construction, renovation and management division of Lexicon, acquired Environmental Solutions. ... John Deere launched its Operations Center PRO Golf, part of its PRO suite remote management system. ... SiteOne Landscape Supply recently added FMC's



A \$1 million commitment from the USGA and donors will fund the Greenkeeper Apprenticeship Program through 2029.

PEOPLE NEWS

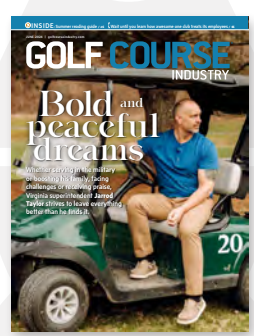
Tim Hubbard returned to Landscapes Unlimited as vice president after 16 years working throughout the industry. Hubbard previously worked at the company from 1993 to 2008. ... Longtime golf course superintendent **Mark O'Mell** recently moved from Piñon Hills Golf Course in Farmington, New Mexico, to Audubon International, where he is the director of Signature Sanctuary Certification. ... **Matthew Crowther**, **Sean Lehr** and **Chris Quinlan** all joined PBI-Gordon as sales representatives. ... Superintendents **Bryce Gibson**, **Dustin Plemons** and **Patrick Van Vleck** won GCSAA Grassroots Ambassador Leadership Awards. Gibson is at Interlachen Country Club in Winter Park, Florida; Plemons is at Cleveland Heights Golf Course in Lakeland, Florida; and Van Vleck is at Unicorn Golf Course in Stoneham, Massachusetts. ... Six new graduates completed the EXCEL Leadership Program, a three-year mentorship and networking opportunity: **Aaron Cabanaw** of Inver Wood Golf Course in Inver Grove Heights, Minnesota; **Charles Cecil** of Augusta National Golf Club in Augusta, Georgia; **Ethan Howard** of Pole Creek Golf Club in Winter Park, Colorado; **Miranda Robinson** of Victoria Golf Club in Victoria, British Columbia; **Madison Rudsinski** of Paradise Valley Country Club in Paradise Valley, Arizona; and **Kal Zaranec** of Circling Raven Golf Club in Worley, Idaho.

Durentis fungicide to its offerings. ... Sand and aggregates supplier Turf Materials is the new exclusive distributor of LifeSoil's COMAND specialty soil amendment in 15 states, including much of the Midwest and the South. ... Werk-Brau is partnering with Valley Tool Manufacturing in a deal designed to expand distribution of mulchers, mowers and landscape rakes.

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OPEN SEASON

Pinehurst No. 2 is ready for its first U.S. Open closeup in a decade — in part thanks to some new turf tech.

By **Matt LaWell**



▲ Pinehurst No. 2 assistant superintendent Eric Mabie takes less than 90 seconds per green to roll the GS3 down a Stimpmeter and log agronomic benchmarking data points.

Outside the ropes at Pinehurst Resort, everything is a zoo.

Sod installers and asphalt pavers are working around grandstand builders and so many vendors. Dozens of maintenance team members are shuffling between the resort's 11 courses and 189 holes. This is what happens ahead of the 124th U.S. Open — and the fourth at Pinehurst No. 2. "You have to be real flexible and try to prioritize needs," No. 2 superintendent **John Jeffreys** says. "There's just a ton going on right now."

Inside the ropes, though? "We couldn't be better," Jeffreys says.

A warm spring helped Jeffreys and his team avoid a late frost, which allowed them to start tournament prep

a little earlier. Some timely rainfall roused much of the course to life out of winter. The resort also opened a new golf course — the **Tom Doak**-designed Pinehurst No. 10 welcomed its first foursomes on April 3, just 69 days before the start of the U.S. Open — but not even that could slow the team. Those 69 days represented a world of breathing room compared to 2014, when the resort acquired National Golf Club, now called Pinehurst No. 9, about two weeks before the start of hosting the U.S. Open and U.S. Women's Open in consecutive weeks. "We can't make it easy," Jeffreys says with a laugh. "We got to throw some kind of curveball in there."

Jeffreys has read every curveball per-

fectly, in part by increasing his work hours to about 80 per week starting in late April to attend to every cranny on No. 2. Like most golf course superintendents, he has focused plenty on greens — and specifically on firmness. They need to be a little faster for the pros.

"Firmness is not something we manage for daily play, but it is something we do for championships," Jeffreys says. "Turf and plant health and moisture levels are what dictate firmness, and we're not going to try to get them overly firm for normal play — we'll get 'em fast — but if moisture is

the biggest contributing factor to firmness, we're just looking at keeping the grass healthy 99 percent of the time. Championship week is when we drive down and get 'em really firm."

And during this dawning era of big data, Jeffreys does have a firmness number in mind. "It will probably be around 330 or 340," he says, quickly adding, "Now, that doesn't mean anything to anybody who doesn't have a GS3, but it is significantly firmer than what we normally maintain."

Jeffreys introduced the USGA's GS3 smart golf ball on No. 2 last year. With over 15,000 data points, the tiny tech measures speed, trueness, smoothness and, yes, firmness, all with a few Stimpmeter rolls per green. Assistant superintendents **Eric Mabie**, **David Chrobak** and **Andrea Salzman** normally incorporate the job into the rest of their normal rounds around the course, with the data uploaded to and stored on the USGA's DEACON cloud platform. Jeffreys checks the numbers every day on a cell phone app.

"It gives you some data that you can look back on that tells you what occurs when you perform certain cultural practices, whether it be mowing, vertical mowing, topdressing, venting, rolling," Jeffreys says. "Every time you use it, you gain data that you can look back on and retrieve when you need to do something to get to a certain benchmark. So now that we know what our target is for Monday, we know what we need to do looking back on previous practices that got us there. Part of that is the GS3 itself and part of that is the DEACON platform to keep all that information for us."

The firmness of the greens on No. 2 normally measures around 380 or 390. Again, Jeffreys says, "that doesn't mean anything to you, and going to 330 may not sound like a big difference." Bermudagrass, he notes, plays firmer, around 290. "It's just a matter of how you get there and what you do to get it.

"You're not going to take a green that hasn't been maintained properly

and get it firm by just topdressing this week," Jeffreys adds. "There's a program approach to it over years. You try to dilute organic matter, schedule aeration programs, all that. Using the GS3 can help you manage year-in-year-out, so when you have a championship you'll know what to do."

Jeffreys has also been talking even more than normal with **Darin Bevard**, the director of championship agronomy for the USGA Green Section. Outside of tournament prep periods, the two talk voice to voice about every other week — often more about fishing than about golf — with far more frequent texts. "Whenever he has a question or whenever I have a question, there's some sort of communication," Bevard says.

Their conversations haven't changed much since the GS3 rolled onto No. 2, "other than the fact we get feedback about what he's seeing and the functionality of the ball," Bevard says. "The biggest thing about our conversations now is that, unlike when we had the (FieldScout) TruFirm (firmness meter), which just the agronomists had, with them having the GS3, we're able to communicate about what they're seeing."

The USGA rolled the earliest version of the GS3 at the 2020 U.S. Open at Winged Foot — which teed off that September — where Bevard described it as "clunky." The tech returned eight months later for the 2021 U.S. Women's Open at The Olympic Club, "and the jump in what was done during that period was incredible," Bevard says. "The numbers validated themselves. The GS3 told me that the practice green, immediately after it was mowed and rolled, had better surface quality than it did at noon after it had been trampled by 150 golfers."

The improvements during the last three years are even more marked.

Bevard used the GS3 at the 2023 U.S. Women's Amateur at Bel-Air Country Club in Los Angeles — where director of golf course and grounds **Justin DePippo** now relies on the tech — and the 2023 Women's Mid-Amateur

at Stonewall in Elverson, Pennsylvania. And this U.S. Open will be the first men's or women's major to employ the most recent iteration of the smart ball.

Jeffreys realizes that plenty of turf pros still rely on feel and that everyday play might not need to be as dialed in to years of historical data as tournament and major play. He still recommends it to everybody.

"There are mom-and-pops out there that have three maintenance crew members and the guys in the grille are wondering why their greens can't be that fast or smooth or true or firm," Jeffreys says. "It's hard to compare what we do for the U.S. Open to the everyday. But I do think having the tool will help people make better decisions with their resources. It'll show that some things negatively impact the readings we're looking for, and some things impact them positively, and it may not take as much as you thought.

"Everybody can get something out of it. How do you tell someone who has a \$300,000 budget they have to spend \$3,000 on this? It's tough, but I think everybody can learn from it and they can be better at what they do."

The GS3 might even be more beneficial for everyday play because everyday players putt more than the pros. Improve their experience on the greens and the whole round improves.

"If your greens are bad, it doesn't matter how good your tees and fairways are, and if your greens are good, it doesn't matter how bad your tees and fairways are," Jeffreys says. "Greens are where it's at."

And this month, with television cameras, round-the-clock attention and the eyes of the professional golf world at Pinehurst No. 2, Jeffreys and his team are ready. The course is ready. The greens are definitely ready.

"As soon as somebody makes that putt on 18 on Sunday, it's over," Jeffreys says. "Construction is a crescendo, you're building to something. This is what we've all ramped up to." 🏌️



Scan here to purchase the GS3 ball

Vanja Drasler

MONTCLAIR GOLF CLUB

When it comes to the turf industry, **Vanja Drasler** should be called a world citizen. Drasler is a superintendent at Montclair Golf Club in Montclair, New Jersey, working under **Michael Campbell**, the director of golf course operations. Her two years at Montclair comprise just one element of what has been a truly remarkable career in turf.

A native of Slovenia, which, in her early years was a part of Yugoslavia, Drasler was initially drawn to a career in turf because, like so many others before her, she wanted to work outdoors.

"I worked in government, and it was kind of boring," she tells **Rick Woelfel** on the *Wonderful*

Women of Golf Podcast. "I didn't like to spend eight hours of a day in an office. I was looking to get something outside like landscape architecture or something similar."

At the encouragement of a friend, Drasler applied for a job at Diners Golf Club in Ljubljana, Slovenia's capital city. That was in 2008. By 2010, she was the superintendent. Two years later, she received accolades after hosting the International European Ladies Amateur Championship.

Drasler went on to work at clubs in Germany, the Czech Republic and Austria. But her ambition was to work in America. With that goal in mind, she volunteered at tournaments at every opportunity, including two PGA Championships, a U.S. Open, a Players Championship, an Open Championship, a Ryder Cup and a Dunhill Cup, splitting time between her job responsibilities in Europe and volunteering in the U.S.

Along the way, she earned a golf course management certificate (with distinction) from Ohio State. She also took on internships at Baltusrol Golf Club in Springfield, New Jersey, and Harbour Town Golf Links in Hilton Head, South Carolina. Drasler says the variety of experiences allowed her to not only grow professionally, but also share her knowledge.

"I learned at every course. Every tournament I learned something new. When I went back to Europe, I always shared my experience and knowledge with my assistants and other people. I shared with other people what I did."

Drasler arrived at Montclair in July of 2022. The move required giving up her position at Attersee Golf Club in Austria, where she had spent seven seasons, and overcoming an abundance of bureaucratic and visa-related hurdles.

It also meant adjusting to a new set of agronomic circumstances. "I knew what (I wanted a golf course to look like), but I didn't have budgets like I have here," she recalls. "Weather-wise, I would say it's pretty much the same as back home. The only difference is we didn't have the high humidity we have here.

"Grass-wise, I didn't have bentgrass on fairways and didn't have bentgrass on tees"—in Europe, Drasler was primarily managing bluegrass. "And we didn't have as much disease as here, of course, because of all the humidity."

Drasler also notes that her fungicide and pesticide options in Europe were extremely limited due to government regulations.

Calling Montclair a busy place is an understatement. The present golf course debuted in 1922. The First, Second and Third Nines were designed by **Donald Ross**. The Fourth Nine, created by **Charles "Steam Shovel" Banks**, opened six years later. "I never worked before on a course like this one," Drasler says. "It's kind of unique (with four distinct nines) We have to be ready in the morning on each nine at the same time.

"I take care of the Third Nine and Fourth Nine. **Mike Sharpe** takes care of the First Nine and Second Nine, but that doesn't mean we don't help each other if there is something going on. I'm glad I have (Campbell) above me who is helping us and teaching us how to do things."

Drasler says her time at Montclair has been a great learning experience. "I've learned a lot in the last two years," she says. "I've learned so much. I've never worked at a place like this one. It's really busy. There's always something going on. But with a great team around you, you can manage." 🌱



I've never worked at a place like this one. It's really busy.

There's always something going on. But with a great team around you, you can manage."



SUPERINTENDENT
R·A·D·I·O N·E·T·W·O·R·K





LET'S TALK TECH

GOLF COURSE
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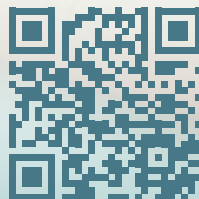
2024 TURF TECHNOLOGY SHOWCASE

JULY 18, 2024

1:00 P.M. ET

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HEIGHTENED HEAT ALERTNESS

Forecasters have predicted another hot summer is about to blanket nearly the entire United States. From June through August, temperatures are predicted to run at least two degrees above historical averages across more than half of the country. Unless you live in Lake Tahoe, Acadia National Park, or a few other temperate climates, millions of Americans will soon be hunkering down inside and cranking up the AC.

Of course, those folks don't have your job or your crews' jobs. They are not charged with nurturing and maintaining the nation's golf courses and are not required to be exposed to the dangerous and sometimes life-threatening effects of the sun for extended periods.

Your people are your most valuable resource. Caring for them and keeping them safe is a superintendent's top priority and a major consideration for the entire management team. As we get closer to summer's peak temperatures, it's a valuable exercise to review the differences in heat stroke and heat exhaustion, and to know what to do in the critical moments after someone begins exhibiting signs of heat-related stress.

Some symptoms of heat exhaustion and heat stroke are similar. In both instances, for example, a person may have a severe headache and be nauseous or vomiting. The most obvious difference between the two is that a person suffering from heat exhaustion will show signs of heavy sweating, while someone in the throes of heat stroke will not be sweating; in fact,

“It's at this time of year that the sun becomes our chief ally while at the same time presenting the greatest risk.”

their skin will be dry.

The other early warnings of heat exhaustion are dizziness and fainting, cold or clammy skin, muscle cramps and excessive thirst. At the first sign of heat exhaustion, it is important to take the following steps:

- Move to an air-conditioned space and lie down.
- Take a cold shower or use cold compresses to cool off.
- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Remove tight or extra clothing layers.
- If vomiting continues, seek medical attention.

Unlike heat exhaustion, heat stroke requires immediate medical attention. In addition to being nauseous and vomiting, someone experiencing heat stroke may seem confused and lose consciousness. They also may have an elevated heart rate. The medical marker is a core body temperature of 104 degrees.

If heat stroke is suspected, call 911 immediately and begin cooling the affected person steadily. Also take the following steps:


- Move the person to a cooler place.
- Use cold compresses to get their temperature down.
- Do not give fluids.
- Lay the person down and raise their legs and feet slightly.
- Remove tight or heavy clothing.
- Monitor the person carefully.

In addition to health-related concerns, extreme heat also takes a toll on productivity. According to a report from the National Commission on Climate and Workforce Health, ex-

treme heat reduces productivity by more than 295 billion work hours globally each year. Concerned about a loss of productivity, managers not accustomed to their crews working in extreme heat may be dismissive of its effects. What's more, some workers diminish their symptoms to indicate their readiness to work, especially if their teammates continue their work.

Experienced superintendents and managers know that if left untreated, heat exhaustion and heat stroke can have serious consequences, including death. Preventative tactics being used by seasoned superintendents include:

- Liquid consumption competitions with the goal being to drink one-half of your weight in ounces through the day.
- Ice-down breaks that allow workers to return to the shop to cool down or for a co-worker to bring ice and cold water onto the course for their teammates.
- More breaks per day to ensure that workers are cooling down.
- Supervisors checking workers' readiness before they are allowed to return to the course.

It's at this time of year that the sun becomes our chief ally while at the same time presenting the greatest risk. As temperatures begin to climb, so do the risks for superintendents and their crews. Don't take chances. Know the warning signs for heat exhaustion and heat stroke and be prepared to act quickly. Your actions could save a life. 



HENRY DELOZIER is a partner at GGA Partners, trusted advisors and thought leaders. He is currently Chairman of the Board of Directors of Audubon International.



LIFELONG LEARNER

NEARLY FOUR DECADES INTO HIS RUN AT THE COUNTRY CLUB OF BIRMINGHAM, **LEE MCLEMORE** IS STILL PICKING UP NEW TRICKS.

By Matt LaWell

Lee McLemore arrived at the Country Club of Birmingham as an assistant superintendent in March 1987. He landed the top job by May. Given his youthful appearance, you might wonder exactly how old he was during that first whirlwind season.

"I was 12," McLemore says with a deadpan delivery. "I struggled with organic chemistry a little bit at that age, but I got through."

In reality, McLemore was 23 and fresh from the loveliest village on the Plains, having just graduated from the turfgrass management program at Auburn University. He had landed internships at the club — which features 36 holes originally designed by **Donald Ross** — for both the 1985 and '86 summers, and was hired as

an assistant superintendent for the '87 season. Shortly before he started, he learned that his predecessor would be heading south to work on a Florida course with **Pete Dye** and **P.B. Dye**. The club still wanted him to start as an assistant. They

also wanted him to interview for the superintendent position. "They brought in some really big names," McLemore says, "but they hired me. I was not ready for that position at that age, obviously."

McLemore says he was blessed to be surrounded by excellent mentors. A recently retired construction company head. An Auburn turf professor still beloved in the industry. A host of Alabama superintendents happy to help the new kid. "You just have to surround yourself with good people, and you got to let the pride down and ask for help when you need it," he says. "That was the key." That and building up a staff with people who had a commitment to quality work.

Now the director of golf course operations, McLemore has managed to bring in or retain great people, and keep them for years or decades. Landscape superintendent **Jeff Rainwater** has worked at the club for more than 20 years. East Course superintendent **Bobby Knight** is at 29 years. West Course superintendent **Tim Kocks** is at 39 years. Seven of the 30 or so full-time maintenance team members are at 20 or more years.

The decades have been filled with projects and special moments: the 2013 U.S. Mid-Am Championship, a 2019 East Course renovation with architect **John LaFoy**, and regular visits from and work with Pete Dye throughout the 2000s following his 1980s West Course renovation. Lots of learning occurred along the way.

"You have to always be challeng-

ing yourself to get better," McLemore says. "Can you do things better? Can you change the way you've done it? And there are lots of things we're doing differently today than we did, five, 10 or 30 years ago."

Including labor-intensive maintenance of the West Course, which is filled with fly- and hand-mow areas. The Country Club of Birmingham is among the first courses in the country to test a variety of products. McLemore long ago introduced plant growth regulators, including SePRO's Legacy, on those hard-to-mow areas, as well as on fairways — normally 12 to 24 ounces per acre, depending on the time of year. Cutless Granular and QuickStop are used to manage landscape plant growth, and SeClear and Captain XTR are utilized to control algae in lakes.

He has also used Legacy in many of the club's numerous shaded turf areas. "Typically in the South, you give Bermudagrass the least little bit of shade and it's not going to grow," he says. "You hold your hand over it and it doesn't like it. We have almost 12 acres of cool-season turf in shady areas. Where we really started using some of the SePRO products was in those areas trying to control *Poa annua*. We knew that was going to be a challenge, so that's where we started using Legacy, from really a seedhead suppression standpoint. We were finding there was so much *Poa* in there it was putting more seed pressure on all our Bermuda areas too. Once we started using Legacy in those areas, it really did a great job of controlling that seedhead. Now it's hard to find the *Poa* and the bluegrass/fescue growth is much easier to manage."

Managing people is, at times, far less challenging.

"This is just a special place," McLemore says. "It's a beautiful, unique piece of property that Donald Ross was able to craft 36 holes out of. And what makes this place special is the people. The members we work for are a very appreciative group who really treat you like family." ■



A green golf cart is parked on a grassy area of a golf course. The cart is in the foreground on the right side, with its front wheel and part of the body visible. The background shows a lush green golf course with several large trees and a clear sky. The overall scene is peaceful and scenic.

Bold and peaceful dreams

Whether serving in the military or boosting his family, facing challenges or receiving praise, Virginia superintendent Jarrod Taylor strives to leave everything better than he finds it.

By Lee Carr



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49 WINCHESTER, a band that hails from the Appalachian foothills in Russell County, Virginia, named their fourth album “Fortune Favors the Bold.” The lyrics from the title track foretell that “Some are born beautiful, some are born fools / some play fair and some break the rules / but fortune favors the bold.” Bold choices are hard to miss.

Adjacent and northwest of Russell is Dickenson County, where **Jarrold Taylor** was born in June of 1977. He was raised in Haysi and graduated from the local high school. He then travelled extensively as a helicopter gunner with the Marines, stared down medical issues, started a basketball team, hustled as a woodworker and is now the superintendent at Willowbrook Golf Course, in Breaks, Virginia.

While he served in the military, Taylor was based in California for five years, working primarily as a mechanic. Taylor visited many places but never made it to Europe (he will go some day!). After being discharged, he studied mechanical engineering at Mountain Empire Community College. Taylor was designing coal mining equipment for West River Conveyers when he fell ill with a blood clot disorder. “I got real bad health problems and I was disabled for a long time,” Taylor says.

He has had several ablations and multiple back surgeries, one resulting in a severe infection that required a follow-up emergency surgery. After being on oxygen for four and a half years, he decided it was time to try working again.

Taylor had some friends at Willowbrook, a semi-private 9-hole course owned by Buchanan County (on the shared border with Dickenson). When Taylor first saw it, the course was struggling. It was full of weeds and had poor drainage. There are three par 3s, the par 5



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“When I do a job, I do it with all my heart. I guess it’s one of my faults: I want everything to be perfect. I know it won’t be, but I strive to get it that way.”

is 579 yards and there are water hazards in play. The fairways are Bermudagrass; the bentgrass greens are demanding. It’s a tough track. Local lore has it that it was built in the mid-1960s and the original designers were coal miners.

“I started there just to help out,” Taylor says. “International Golf Maintenance, a consulting group, was giving us advice and they sponsored me to take a course.” Specifically, he worked with **Tyler Minamy**, a former regional manager for IGM who was overseeing maintenance and management operations.

Minamy arranged for Taylor to take the certified turfgrass professional program offered through Virginia Tech. Taylor has attended many football games at Lane Stadium and yes, he loves it when “Enter Sandman” plays and

the whole place starts jumping. Taylor himself jumped at the chance to enroll in the program, noting “I am all over any kind of education!”

“I have always believed strongly in growing talent and investing in people,” says Minamy, who accepted a superintendent position at The Omni Homestead Resort in Hot Springs, Virginia, earlier this year. “In getting to know Jarrod, he was smart, worked hard and really cared about the course. Helping him acquire some technical skill and knowledge was a logical thing to do.”

While the learning was ramping up, communication was never an issue. “I always enjoyed kidding Jarrod and some of the other folks at Willowbrook about their particular use of the English language,” Minamy jokes. “I’m pretty

sure Jarrod adds a syllable to every word he speaks.”

Taylor’s experience has helped him in many ways. “I knew that with Jarrod’s military service, he wasn’t likely to give up easily. Given an opportunity, he would make the most of it,” Minamyers says. “The golf industry should be more of a haven for veterans for a number of reasons. Golf courses can offer vets jobs and work closely with veteran organizations.”

Taylor loves golf and being outside. He loves mowing and he loves mechanical work. This role encompasses all these things and is a natural fit. “Jarrod began to establish programs and practices that did not previously exist,” Minamyers says. “Some of the most important have been proper handling and storage procedures for chemicals and fertilizers.”

The Willowbrook staff consists of five people, four work outside and one inside. Taylor’s leadership and learning has helped in many ways. Some of the grass was too short and they were scalping. The weed and pest identification skills from class helped because while there weren’t many pests (mole crickets posed the biggest challenges), there were plenty of weeds. Profits have more than doubled since Taylor has been there and he will be the first to tell you that it has been a group effort.

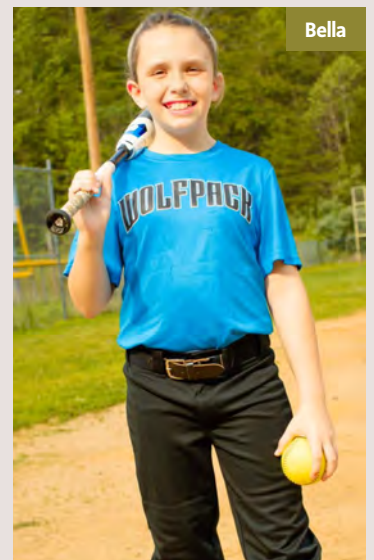
“Jarrod’s personality is warm and sincere which helps him establish trust with people very quickly,” Minamyers says. “Willowbrook gave Jarrod the inspiration to pursue turf management. He found something he enjoys and is good at. Working with him is great. He absorbs information, provides thoughtful feedback and asks questions as needed.”

Taylor is happy. “It’s great when you are out there and you are mowing, or whatever, and people come in and stop or honk their horns at you,” he says. “I have met a lot of nice people, people I would not have

▼ Woodworking is one of Jarrod Taylor’s passions.



Caden



Bella

Life on course

One beautiful aspect of being a partner, mentor or parent is sharing something you love with people who are special to you. With his wife, **Kayla**, Jarrod Taylor has two children, **Caden** and **Bella**, who will be 16 and 13 this year. Taylor has taught them both to play golf and they laugh at the bad shots and at the great ones, like the first time Bella drove the green on No. 9 at Willowbrook Golf Course.

“I think golf is really fun,” Bella says. “It’s fun for the whole family.”

Caden plays for his high school team and agrees.

“I love the sport,” he says. “It’s something I can do my whole life but you have to have patience. Golf involves so much patience.”

Caden thinks his father is good at what he does and Bella says, “When my dad works at the course, he does an excellent job even though some people mess it up and do not follow the rules. He still manages to do his job awesomely and I think he is a great dad.”

Taylor’s kids recognize what being a superintendent requires.

“My father is a hard-working man and tries to satisfy everyone,” Caden says.

“Sometimes it can be a burden, but he pulls through and keeps pushing forward to try his best in everything.”

otherwise met or come across.”

Willowbrook’s authentic presentation is a good fit for Taylor. “We are at 30 members and that’s just right because the public play, too,” he says. “Sometimes people bring me breakfast or plants for the course,” With few nearby courses, many people are contributing to this scenic piece of property. Willowbrook is thriving.

“We started with a game plan, set a schedule for each week and stuck with it. That’s when everything started coming around,” Taylor says. “We have players from 9 through 89. Working on the greens is my favorite part. I love that. They are beautiful now but there

have been some challenges.”

The team uses Kubotas, a rotary mower and two zero-turn mowers. They refer to the reel sharpener, even though it works great, as “the dinosaur” because it is very old. Several drainage issues were improved last winter. “We did so much that even if it rains heavily, there is not even a mudhole out on the course,” Taylor says. The other big challenge for Willowbrook, in addition to keeping up with the tee sheet, is irrigation.

“It seems like every week I was having a blow-out somewhere and having to fix it,” Taylor says. “In a span of two weeks, I bet I fixed eight

leaks. It's very time-consuming. We would get one fixed and the pressure would build and blow out somewhere else. You expect to go to work having a good day and the next thing you know you are covered up in mud. It's not a very glamorous job. A lot of these golfers really don't see what happens behind the scenes with all of the maintenance that goes on. It's very aggravating when you see someone abuse the course. It's like, man, you don't know what we put into this to make it look like this." Taylor has only been a superintendent for a few years but he sure is experienced.

Taylor tries to give back. For a while, he and his wife, **Kayla**, coached a basketball team for kids with challenges and disabilities that ranged from

physical differences to ADHD to autism. "When they put their uniforms on, to me, they look like superstars," Taylor says. "They forget about their disabilities. They are awesome kids. We started the program to help them, but I learned these kids aren't different from any other kids except for how the world treats them."

He also is an ardent woodworker, taking requests and carving, whittling and engraving special pieces for birthdays, anniversaries and other occasions or just because. Taylor's favorite beverage is Pepsi, but it has to be out of a can. Why? "I'll tell you," Taylor laughs (he laughs so easily!). "It's got a completely different taste. When it's in a bottle it's got a plastic taste to it. I always liked it out of a can.



A really cold can of Pepsi just tastes a whole lot better."

Willowbrook allows teens to play and practice for free. A group of three ladies walks the course almost every morning. "They always say, 'Oh, you've got it looking good!'" Taylor says. "They give me thumbs up and stuff if I am out mowing greens or anything. I told them they are walking one of the hardest courses. There are a lot of hills on this one!"

Even when the course is crowded, the vibe is friendly, peaceful and quiet.

"When I do a job, I do it with all my heart," Taylor adds. "I guess it's one of my faults: I want everything to be perfect. I know it won't be, but I strive to get it that way. I put everything into it and I pay attention to details. That's what makes it good. You have to pay attention to the details."

In another 49 Winchester song, "Russell County Line," the band shares "And in the dirt was planted seeds of hope / And from them grew the flowers of our lives." Taylor's life is filled with seeds, turf, hope, friends and loved ones.

"We live back in the mountains," he says. "There are a lot of talented people in this area, but some really never pursue their dreams."

He's boldly trying. 🏌️

Lee Carr is a northeast Ohio-based writer and senior Golf Course Industry contributor.

◀ Jarrod Taylor has forged strong relationships with crew member James Tackett (right) and the rest of the Willowbrook Golf Course community.





IT TAKES A CERTAIN TYPE

After years — decades, really — writing about the work lives of golf course superintendents, I've come to the sobering realization that I don't have what it takes to become one.

This is more a confession than a revelation. And it has to do less with the requisite knowledge base than with character type and profile. To be sure, all those years I spent as a graduate student at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst had nothing to do with campus offerings in horticulture, turfgrass or agronomy. My only affiliation then with the university's famed Stockbridge School was that I regularly passed the building it occupied on my way from my Political Science Department in Thompson Hall to the Campus Center for more coffee. If these days I get introduced as "Dr." or "Professor" when giving golf industry talks, I correct any potential misimpression about the field in which I am technically certified.

Yet 40 years of articles, books, podcasts and consulting on golf course design, management, setup and renovation have given me a distinct perspective on the character traits needed to thrive on the job — or in some cases, merely to survive. I judge things less by the nutrient levels or thatch layer that superintendents achieve, or how consistent a topdressing program they maintain over a season. Instead, what I see is their ability to adjust, establish personal equilibrium, handle difficult circumstances and respond to undue demands by people in positions to overrule them, even when those same folks don't have the technical knowledge to know what it takes to do the job.

I have seen all kinds. Folks with enormous patience. Workaholics with no sense of "enough is enough" because they too readily compensate for an utter lack of discipline by piling up more hours. I've seen greenkeepers who didn't show up until 9 a.m. and changed cups only three times a week. I've seen drug addicts, embezzlers and those more interested in side hustles than executing their main job. I can recall superintendents who were afraid to grow new grass and those who thought it a virtue to push the turf until it came within an inch of dying out. And I've seen course managers who could not wait to take on new tasks and teach their crew another skill set.

Superintendents answer to a wide variety of people as part of their everyday routine, including a few too many folks whose agronomy knowledge is limited to the latest article they just read online. Worse yet are those golfers who mistake their wealth or playing skill for the qualifications to suggest course alterations — like the need to install flash white bunker sand or their advice about the proper way to battle ash tree decline.

If I were a superintendent, I would have a very hard time heeding my own advice in such cases, which is simply to "pretend to listen." But even those annoying encounters don't come close to the real test of a superintendent's character — dealing with folks who have the power to make or break you professionally.

It might be a general manager whose contract pays a bonus

for all those profitable Monday outings, which means no "downtime" for the course or grounds crew to recover. Or the meddling owner who paid too much for his daily-fee course and now monitors the staff he mistrusts through cameras installed at various workstations. Equally frustrating is the small, determined group of members convinced that the superintendent has suddenly "gone stupid" and is holding the club back from top-100 status.

Of course, there are lots of emotionally balanced superintendents whose jobs are reasonably well-paid and who can delegate enough time to get through the "100 days of mid-season hell" without forgetting the names of their kids. Like everything else in life, the industry has its own hierarchy and class structure. For every well-paid, comfortable position there are many more where the pay is low, the hours long, the physical demands great and the sense of emotional fulfillment lacking.

In that way, the golf world is akin to academia, where for every esteemed professor at a Harvard or a Stanford teaching two courses a semester in their specialty, there are many more at low-paid service schools teaching eight courses a year of remedial writing and general studies. No wonder folks quit, burn out or have trouble recruiting.

Given the job's demanding nature, it's all the more reason to admire those who stick with the trade for the duration of their working lives. It takes considerable strength of character to be a superintendent. 🏌️



BRADLEY S. KLEIN, PH.D. (political science), former PGA Tour caddie, is a veteran golf journalist, book author ("Discovering Donald Ross," among others) and golf course consultant. Follow him on X at @BradleySKlein.

NO WRONG CHOICE

When a respected company develops multiple solutions in the same product line, superintendents must sift through some intriguing options. Let's dig deeper into Posterity.

By **Guy Cipriano**

Dr. Lisa Beirn uses an analogy to describe her role as a Syngenta technical services manager.

"You can think of us like extension agents for the industry," she says.

Based in New Jersey, Beirn covers a North-east and Mid-Atlantic territory spanning from Virginia to Maine. She supports sales and registered products in the region, develops agronomic programs for those products, and coordinates research on how to use them.

Lots to cover. Lots to know.

Ron Townsend can relate to Beirn's job duties. Townsend is a Syngenta technical services manager for the Western territory. His territory stretches from Colorado to Hawaii, a geographically stunning and agronomically diverse region with snow-covered mountains, arid deserts and temperate coasts.

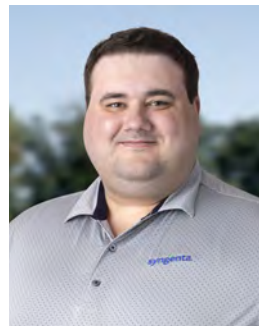
Beirn and Townsend are ideal sources when learning more about developing a disease control program. We recently turned to them to better understand the Posterity fungicide line. The line debuted when Syngenta launched Posterity in 2018. The

company released Posterity XT and Posterity Forte two years later. Differences exist among the fungicides — all three feature ADEPIDYN technology as an active ingredient, but Posterity XT and Posterity Forte also possess propiconazole and azoxystrobin at different rates — so we asked Beirn and Townsend about how to find the right fit for your course.

How would you describe the Posterity brands in your own words?

Townsend: The first word that comes to mind when we talk about Posterity is powerhouse. Between the ADEPIDYN, which is a strong SDHI on its own, then you factor in propiconazole and azoxystrobin, two of the better-known fungicides in their classes... I think of these three different combinations as a whole.

Beirn: Posterity as a solo product is very strong on its own, and then you add in



Ron Townsend



Lisa Beirn

these other active ingredients in Posterity XT and Posterity Forte, and it makes it much more broad spectrum. Between all three of them, I think you have a fit for whatever type of turf you're growing and whatever type of disease you're trying to control. There's a lot of options and flexibility there.

How are the Posterity brands different than other Syngenta fungicides?

Beirn: Posterity is our latest SDHI chemistry, so that's part of it. What we did by developing Posterity XT was take what was a

Enhanced Spring Dead Spot Control

great product in Headway and pair it with the powerful ADEPIDYN technology to make it Posterity XT. The benefits are that it is broad spectrum and you have three modes of action now for resistance management concerns, which is very important. Using newer chemistries and employing new tools are important when we think about resistance management strategies.

How are superintendents in your region using Posterity?

Beirn: In the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic, there are really two different uses where it's fantastic.

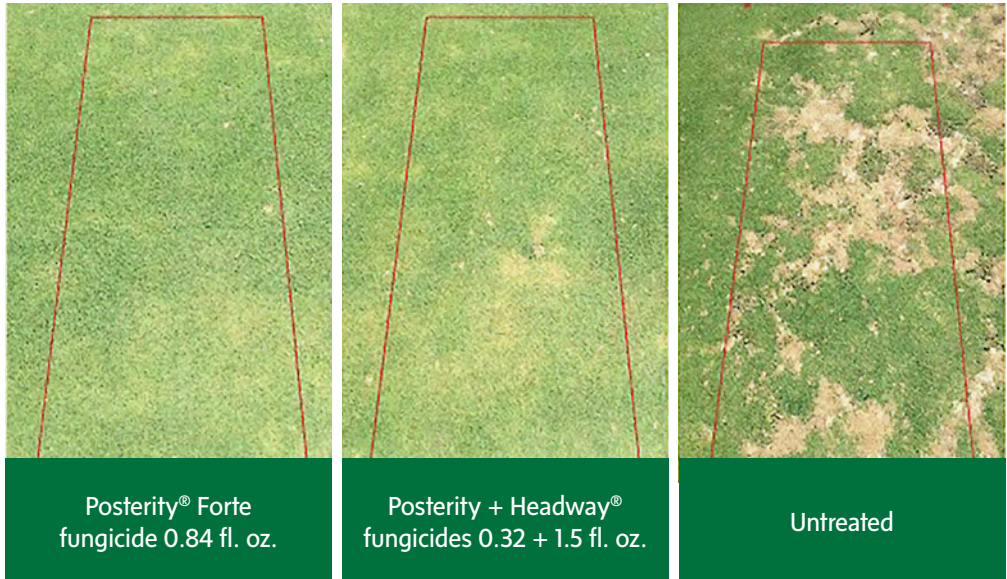
I see a lot of usage with dollar spot. It's an excellent dollar spot material, and then as you creep down into the Mid-Atlantic and some warm-season turf areas, it's a really phenomenal spring dead spot product as well.

Townsend: Posterity is such a great dollar spot material. But we don't see the dollar spot pressure out here as much. The interesting part is the SDHI class of chemistries is active on spring dead spot as well, so being able to use that on Bermudagrass down in Southern California, Nevada and Arizona is phenomenal as a rotation partner.

How are superintendents in your region using Posterity XT?

Townsend: It's the broad-spectrum of disease control that we are able to see, with summer patch control being the big one. But it's also a good rotational partner with the *Microdochium* pressure in the mountains, and that's how I have built it into a lot of our fungicide programs.

Beirn: Posterity XT has wide utility for a lot of diseases. You can water it in for summer patch control and still achieve some dollar spot control. There are also people using it for foliar diseases, so Posterity XT is really timed well in that summer window when you can pick up dollar spot, brown patch and gray leaf spot activity. You really get a



'Champion' Bermudagrass, 2019-2020. Apps made on Oct. 17 and Nov. 21, 2019. Rates per 1,000 square feet. Photos taken May 26, 2020.

broad-spectrum product with Posterity XT.

How are superintendents in your region using Posterity Forte?

Beirn: This one actually surprised me a little bit. When we launched Posterity Forte, we thought it was a primarily southern product for things like spring dead spot, which it's very excellent on. However, there are quite a few superintendents who do use this in the Northeast and the Mid-Atlantic for very early spring applications targeting dollar spot or very late fall applications targeting dollar spot. Because of the loading of the active ingredients, you get a very good slug of material for dollar spot to knock back that population, but you also have two other actives in there for some of these lesser-known things like leaf spot that you can see in the spring and fall time.

Townsend: That increase loading of ADEPIDYN in there tends to really do the trick on spring dead spot on fairways — in particular, from what we have seen in the research trials and on golf courses.

What's the best Posterity option to use in the summer on cool-season turf and what makes that specific brand effective during the hottest months?

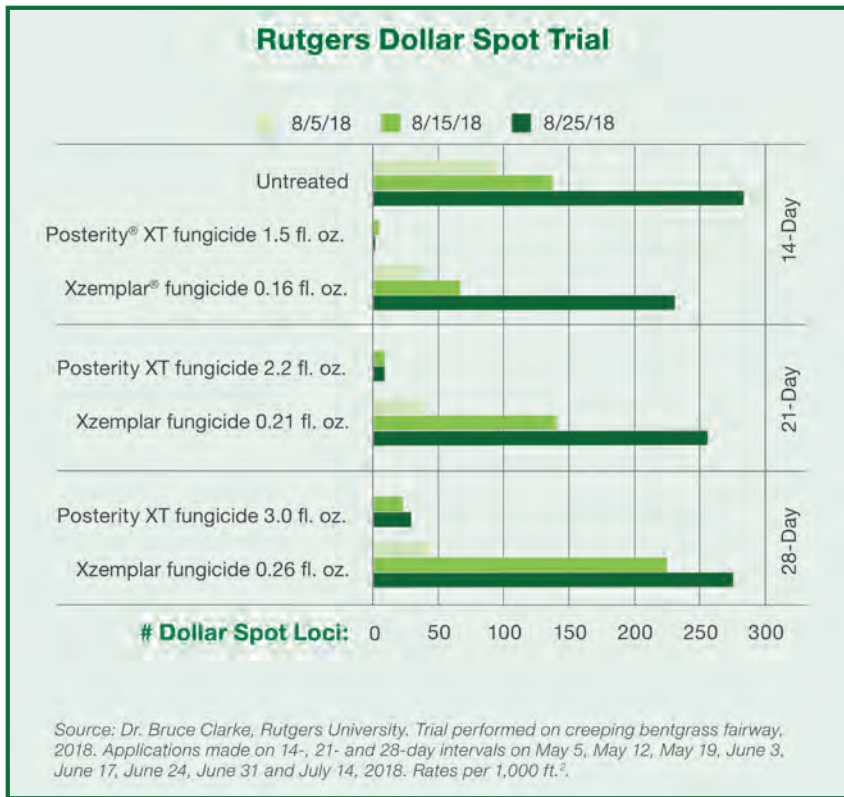
Beirn: For the folks dealing with cool-season turf in the Midwest and Northeast, I

like Posterity XT because you are targeting multiple diseases with that application. Of course, there are situations when you get further into the northern Midwest, perhaps Minnesota or even Wisconsin, where dollar spot is the primary concern. In that type of situation, Posterity would be a fine product to recommend.

Are there situations where it makes sense for a superintendent to have more than one of the Posterity brands in their program for different uses? If so, can you give an example for cool-season turf as well as warm-season turf?

Beirn: I know it can be confusing with all three. If you're dealing with primarily dollar spot, Posterity is an excellent choice for you. However, if you have concerns about brown patch and summer patch in addition to dollar spot, then Posterity XT is an excellent choice for you. If you're looking for something for those fall applications, Posterity Forte is a very good fit to do some cleanup for leaf spots. If you're talking about Bermudagrass, that's primarily where you would find a use for Posterity Forte.

Townsend: I echo that. Posterity XT in the springtime does a really good job as a cleanup app, is how I look at it. Then you have Posterity Forte as the backbone for any spring dead spot issues that you have on Bermudagrass.



growth regulator to the mix, even though it's not a fungicide. The addition of Primo Maxx works well together, especially down in the desert where water quality is really an issue – it works well in a combination with fungicides for turf quality.

What are the tank mixing capabilities of Posterity brands and what should superintendents know about tank mixing them?

Beirn: All three are very flexible with tank-mix partners. When we talk about Posterity XT and Posterity Forte, they are SE formulations, which generally lend themselves to tank mixing very well. When we think about using these products for something like dollar spot that can be prone to resistance, particularly for SDHI chemistries, one of the biggest approaches that I like to recommend is to tank mix your SDHI products with something like a multi-site contact to help with that resistance management strategy. That would stand true for these Posterity-branded products when you are trying to treat for something like dollar spot.

Townsend: It works out really well as a tank mix. For snow mold, one of our guarantee programs is Posterity XT and Ascernity. That combination is really strong on pink snow mold and gray snow mold. ●

Are there key rotational products you recommend using with Posterity brands for increased turf quality and resistance management?

Beirn: Certainly multi-site contact fungicides like Secure Action and Daconil Action are key, particularly with something like dollar spot. When it comes to targeting

dollar spot, which is prone to resistances with SDHI chemistries, I like to recommend no more than two applications back to back. In those cases, I would recommend including something like Secure Action or Daconil Action.

Townsend: I would add Primo Maxx plant



EXPLORE YOUR PERFECT POSTERITY BRAND

Visit GreenCastOnline.com/PosterityBrands or scan the QR code

Posterity

Active ingredient:
ADEPIDYN[®] technology
(pydiflumetofen)

Strengths for:

- **Warm-season turf:** Spring dead spot
- **Cool-season turf:** Dollar Spot

Posterity Forte

Active ingredients:
ADEPIDYN[®] technology
(pydiflumetofen),
azoxystrobin,
propiconazole

Strengths for:

- **Warm-season turf:** Spring dead spot
- **Cool-season turf:** Early spring or late fall applications targeting dollar spot, leaf spots



Guarantee: Spring Dead Spot + Take-all Root Rot Guarantee

Posterity XT

Active ingredients:
ADEPIDYN[®] technology
(pydiflumetofen),
azoxystrobin,
propiconazole

Strengths for:

- **Warm-season turf:** Spring dead spot
- **Cool-season turf:** Cleanup and broad-spectrum control, including summer patch, dollar spot, brown patch and gray leaf spot



Guarantee: Fairy Ring



Guarantee: Snow Mold

Summer READING GUIDE



PULLING WORDS, NOT WEEDS

Illinois superintendent Stephen Hope produces a potent memoir about his turbulent childhood.

By **Judd Spicer**

Stephen Hope's life is an open book.

Quite literally.

Hope, the head superintendent of grounds and greens at The Club at Wynstone in North Barrington, Illinois, released his memoir, "I Am Hope," earlier this year. As the title suggests, the book details the travails of an upbringing with a drug-addicted mother who was eventually arrested for cooking and dealing methamphetamine out of the author's childhood home.

"The book is about hope, and the reason I wrote it was to help people understand what it's like to grow up with addict," Hope says, "and to be able to sympathize with people who might be in that same moment in their own lives, to show them it's not a losing battle, no matter how much it feels like it."

Hope's own battles and life journey are further detailed through the memoir's taut 150 pages, ranging from significant bodily injuries to his career climb up the superintendent's rung.

Inspired by reading about the broken father-son dynamic in **David Goggins'** 2018 bestseller "Can't Hurt Me," Hope, a nascent author, began performing research and due diligence on "I Am Hope" as far back as 2019.

"I thought I had the material to

write a book, but it then became about the 'Why,'" Hope recalls. "And I really did and do believe that it can help people who are in the same situation that I was. I also think it can help people who are around the situation, to help them understand it more. And then, for an addict or an alcoholic, if I can get this book in their hands, maybe they can understand the damage they did or are doing to the ones they love the most."

Hope began a regimented writing process in autumn 2020, and finished his first draft in the spring of 2021, amid his golf off-season. Two years of editing ensued, as did another year of dealing with publishing toils.

"There were a lot of different points in the process where it was, 'Why am I doing this? Will anybody want to read this?' And there were a lot of times I wanted to quit," Hope says. "When we got into the deep dive of editing and moving things around, it was so overwhelming. There were all these points of, Should I just call it? Or should I keep going? I mean, I've got money into this project and I'm married with two kids now. But being resilient with this, working hard, seeing it through and not quitting—I don't know, maybe I was just too stupid to quit."

Such candor emanates from Hope's writing style of succinct sentencing and chapters, leaving the reader with a clear sense that Hope didn't require

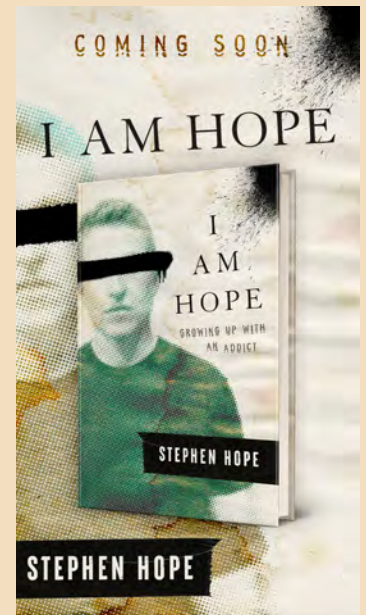
any ego hurdle to undress his life on the page.

"No, I didn't," he says. "I'm a hillbilly from Kentucky. My mom was a meth addict and I was a trailer trash kid. How can somebody strip me down more than what I am? People can call me whatever they want, but it's probably not worse than what I am."

The motivation of empathy for others in rough upbringings and those surrounded by substance abuse fueled the author's process to the final page.

"Sometimes it's more about surviving than thriving, but there are steps you can take to get through it," Hope says. "And it is going to be a lifelong battle because, guess what, the foundation that your very being was built on is cracked. That's just the way you were raised, and you're gonna have to deal with that, to grow from it and to understand it."

As for leaving



any overtly sensitive out of the memoir?

“No. This is what happened,” Hope adds. “You can’t change the past.”

In the short time since the book’s spring release, the superintendent has had ample readership and reaction from friends, colleagues, employers and grounds staff.

“One of my guys, he just told me that his dad was an alcoholic and used to beat the crap out of him, so there was a real empathy there,” Hope says. “And I’m not a big person for small talk, but I love real conversations, so to get into that with an employee was great.”

Such conversations are what Hope ultimately eyes as his own greatest aim for the memoir. While he doesn’t think that, say, a sizable GCSAA seminar setting is a fit for him or his message, the author believes that intimate, one-on-one or small group connections with people in situations similar to his own can extend the written word to interpersonal bonds — and, ultimately, make a real difference in people’s lives.

Such connections have already commenced.

“I just got my first (reader) email, from a semi-retired superintendent in Florida,” Hope said in early April. “He heard me on the *Beyond the Page* podcast. He’s had his own life issues and he ordered the book and he wanted to schedule a call and talk to me. So far, that’s the best thing that’s happened with the book. These are the types of conversations that I’m looking forward to because my goal with this is really to help people, to show there is a light at the end of the tunnel. I hope I get more messages like that one.”

Judd Spicer is a Palm Desert, California-based writer and senior *Golf Course Industry* contributor.

More from Stephen Hope

The Club at Wynstone superintendent of grounds and greens **Stephen Hope** joined managing editor **Matt LaWell** on Episode 54 of the *Beyond the Page* podcast to discuss his book, “I Am Hope.” Find the podcast on the Superintendent Radio Network page of popular podcast distribution platforms or by scanning the QR code.



TRUTH IN THE TITLE

We asked some golf maintenance-focused questions to the author of a book about managing and leading hourly workers

By **Guy Cipriano**

Soaring above clouds sparked the creative inspiration **Scott Greenberg** needed to finalize a central element of a major project.

On a flight from Los Angeles, where he lives, to Nashville, which he frequently visits, Greenberg developed a catchy title for a book designed to help business owners, operators and managers leading teams comprised of hourly workers. “I started describing what these work environments are actually like, and *shitshow* came up pretty quick in my brainstorming,” he says. After softening the language, “Stop the Shift Show” emerged as the final title.

Hourly workers are essential parts of the golf industry — imagine your course without a reliable nucleus — and connecting with them sometimes requires outside help. Enter “Stop the Shift Show.” A former Edible Arrangements franchisee-turned-business coach, Greenberg blends macro-level insights and research with micro-level case studies to generate practical ideas for businesses seeking to construct and retain effective teams.

We read the book (*Golf Course Industry* recommendation: it deserves a spot next to your turf textbooks) and followed up with Greenberg on his ideas for golf maintenance-related labor challenges.

What do you think when you hear a manager in 2024 say things such as “nobody wants to work anymore” or “I can’t find people?”

People have a lot more options now because there’s remote work and gig work. There’s the same amount of fish in the pond, but there are a lot more anglers.

There’s a lot more people who are fishing, so employees, especially good ones, have a lot more choice. My son worked through the pandemic. His first job was at In-N-Out Burger, and he loved it. But when it was over, he was 18 and he realized he could make more money delivering fast food through Door-Dash than by cooking the

food. The issue wasn’t that he didn’t want to work. He had options and he wanted to exercise them. The businesses that are going to be able to find and retain people are going to be the ones that work to become an employer of choice.

What are the competitive disadvantages for industries like golf where you can’t do remote or gig work and what can be done to overcome those competitive disadvantages?

There are a few hourly jobs that are remote, but for the most part workers in the hourly sector are still going somewhere to work. What gives people an advantage is creating a better employee experience.





rience. What most employers have done and continue to do to find workers is pay them more with higher starting salaries and signing bonuses. That was the big thing at the tail end of the pandemic when everybody was desperate. What good is getting them if you can't keep them? I distinguish between what I call hard needs and soft needs. Most employers try to appeal to workers with hard needs. The primary one is more money. They also have soft needs like psychological and emotional needs. It's not necessarily about what they get, it's about how they feel. Just like customers want a customer experience that feels good, employees want a work experience that feels good, especially younger generations.

A golf course superintendent leads hourly workers who must wake up early, work week-ends and be willing to handle all weather conditions. What would you do to attract, retain and engage an hourly workforce in that situation?

You have a smaller pool of people to choose from. In order to compete for that smaller population, you need to offer something that the competition is not. It's not going to be money. Anybody can pay them an extra dollar per hour. Fewer people are going to

pay closer attention to culture and the specific values of the workers they want and then work to meet those values and honor those values. That's how you can have a competitive advantage. It's no different than what you do for customers in any industry. You can't judge them for what they want, you figure out what matters most and then you try to meet those needs.

One thing golf maintenance can offer that other industries can't is free golf and golf privileges. How does that perk help recruit hourly workers?

I don't think that's what gives you an advantage. That probably allows you to keep up with the competition. That's an example of hard needs. That's not how you earn loyalty and that's not how you build culture. It's a lot more about how people are treated and how the experience feels.

Many golf course superintendents must cope with standard indoor facilities for their employees. How important are modern and spacious workspaces to hourly employees?

The advantages are that they communicate something. Spend the money to put a better microwave in there, and, yes, it's a place to heat a sandwich or a bowl of soup,

but it's saying you matter and your experience matters. But you could also have beautiful facilities and treat people terribly. I don't care how good the microwave is, I don't care how great the golf course is, if you treat people terribly, they aren't going to stay. They are more likely to stay in a place that has bad facilities, but a great work environment and great work culture. How you make them feel matters the most.

What's the difference between a coach and manager? And should somebody who leads a team in a field like golf course maintenance be thinking more like a coach when it comes to their hourly workforce?

Sometimes it's semantics. I think great managers act like great coaches. And great coaches manage their teams very well. I think the perception is that a coach is somebody on my side who's not only invested in my success but shares in it and we're both after the same thing. But a manager might be somebody who I perceive is just the authority, the boss who is telling me what to do, who's trying to get me to meet their goals and their needs but isn't necessarily invested in my needs. With a coach, there's more of a perception of a shared purpose and they are more invested in my success, whereas with the manager the perception is the only success that matters is what the manager wants and they are trying to use me to help them achieve their goals.

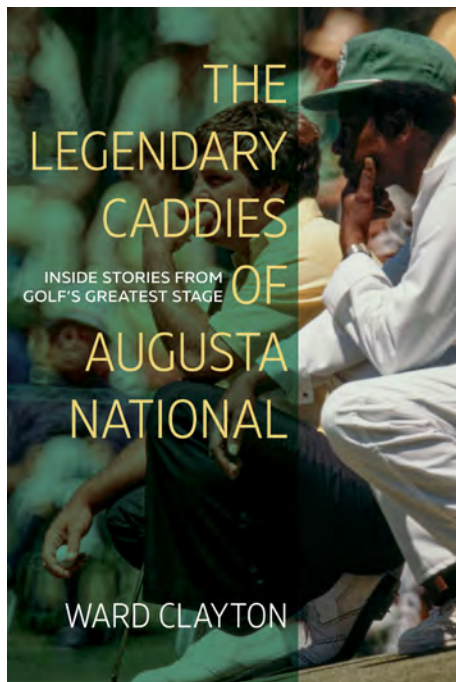
How will technology such as AI help managers lead hourly employees?

In good and bad ways. There are efficiencies that AI will help with, such as scheduling and or-

ganizing training. I think organizations that rely on AI or any technology to manage the human element of the business are going to be in trouble, because ultimately the data shows that what drives human happiness more than anything is a connection to other people. Even shy people and introverts have a need for connection. The more we robotize the workplace, the more we rely on technology, if we replace human connection in the process, people are going to disengage.

How important is schedule flexibility to workers in 2024?

Essential. These days there's such a huge priority placed on life balance and quality of life. The employee is not going to skip their sister's wedding because you want to have a shift covered. There's more demand for their time from other sources. Hourly workers are statistically more likely to be going to another job, going to classes and going to activities, and their schedules are constantly changing. They are constantly having to juggle. The more flexibility you can provide them allows them to fulfill the other needs in their lives. The more you enable them to have that life-balance, the more they are going to appreciate you. The idea of full-time, part-time, the eight-hour shift, are all constructs, some of them created by **Henry Ford**. They aren't written in stone. The idea that I'm only going to hire employees who want to work 40 hours a week is something we need to let go of and schedule for 2024. We have to build in schedule flexibility so employees can have that life balance whether we like it or not.



FOR MASTERS ENTHUSIASTS

The early 1980s changed the agronomics and local spirit of the Masters.

Tom Watson won the first Masters contested on bentgrass greens in 1981. Seve Ballesteros won the first Masters with players having the option of using their own caddies in 1983.

Neither Bermudagrass putting surfaces nor widespread usage of local caddies have returned to the event.

While stories of Augusta National Golf Club agronomics remain mostly secretive, the tales of the club's caddies are preserved in Ward Clayton's "The Legendary Caddies of Augusta National." The second edition of the book was released in April and learning about local icons with nicknames such as Stovepipe, Pappy, Cemetery, Fireball, Iron Man and Burnt Bisuits will captivate Masters and golf enthusiasts seeking insight into the personality of the tournament and game.

Clayton is the ideal person to tell the caddies' stories. A

golf lifer, Clayton worked as the Augusta Chronicle sports editor from 1991 to 2000 and produced the 2019 documentary "The Caddie's Long Walk." His understanding of the people and dynamics of Augusta and the city's Sand Hills neighborhood, the home of numerous Augusta National caddies, adds context to what the Masters spotlight meant to the all-Black caddie corps. The hilly neighborhoods surrounding Augusta National and Augusta Country Club, where many caddies started their careers, go mostly unnoticed by Masters Week patrons and viewers.

Unfortunately, nobody will experience a Masters with all-local caddies again. The tournament, like every other significant sporting event, outgrew its origins as financial coffers and television audiences expanded. Clayton explores the magnitude of then-Augusta National chairman Hord Hardin's decision to allow players to bring their own caddies from the perspective of the local loopers and their families, the community, the club, and professional golf. His reporting and writing provide a rare dose of objectivity in a media era filled with subjectivity. The Augusta National caddie dynamic further changed in 1996 when the club started outsourcing its program.

Carl Jackson, the looper for Ben Crenshaw's emotional 1995 triumph, was the last local caddie to carry a winning bag. Clayton devotes more space to Jackson, who worked 53 Masters, winning two with Crenshaw, than any other caddie profiled in the book.

Crenshaw lauded Jackson for helping him navigate a course defined by subtleties that hosts a tournament filled with emotion. But Clayton also reveals anecdotes of caddies whose off-the-course struggles and lack of preparation hindered their players.

Balanced reporting yields an understanding of complex subjects and stories. Balanced reporting means not all stories boast clean endings.

The Masters moved on from local caddies. Fortunately, Clayton hasn't moved on from deftly sharing their fascinating stories with new audiences.



▲ Ward Clayton

GUIDED BY HUMILITY

Jimmie James played every course on a top-100 list in the same year, yet the life lessons are more impactful than the golf anecdotes in his new book.

By Guy Cipriano

Relying on supportive people allowed Jimmie James to experience all of Golf Digest's America's 100 Greatest Golf Courses in the same year. His vast support network included a golf course maintenance employee he encountered multiple times during a round at Oak Tree National in Edmond, Oklahoma.

Playing as a single on the private course, James struggled finding the second hole until spotting the employee. "He pointed me in the right direction," James says.

Later in the round, James hit a well-struck shot and noticed the same employee. "And," James says, "he knew exactly where my ball went."

Finally, as James stood in the parking lot following the round, the employee appeared again as a solar eclipse emerged. "I said, 'I wish I could look at that thing,'" James remembers. "And he said, 'I have a pair of glasses for looking at it.' He pulled out some of his viewing glasses and let me use his viewing glasses to see the eclipse. In addition to making the courses amazing for us to experience, that day one of the grounds crews guys was my guardian angel."

— Guy Cipriano

James encountered hundreds of helpful people while cramming multiple lifetimes of bucket-list golf into one year. He shares his journey in “Playing from the Rough,” a book that brilliantly blends his personal history with glimpses inside elite golf venues.



▲ Jimmie James

The golf portion of James’s top-100 journey commenced at Augusta National Golf Club. But his personal journey started in 1959 as the son of **Thelma James**, a single mother of eight children living in Jim Crow-era Texas. The birth certificate for James in the Walker County Courthouse listed him as “colored” and “illegitimate.” He never knew his father and Thelma raised her children in a shack lacking plumbing and electricity. James became the first person in his family to graduate high school. He then earned an engineering degree from Prairie View A&M University and ascended to an executive position with ExxonMobil.

James started playing golf in his mid-40s and developed an immense passion for the game, which intensified upon his retirement following a three-decade career with ExxonMobil. Through family support—James and his wife, **Erika**, have two young adult children, **Jordan** and **Alexandra**—networking, meticulous planning and flexibility, James went from Augusta National to Wade Hampton Golf Club, with many dreamy in-between stops, in the same year.

“There are two journeys combined: my life’s journey and that golf journey,” James says. “And the challenge was striking the right balance between the two. What I had in mind is that some people will come for the golf and stay for the stories. Others will come for the stories and hopefully be

captivated by the game of golf.”

James’s humility surfaces early in the book as he describes his interaction with Hispanic workers tending to the azaleas on Augusta National’s 12th hole. Instead of being immersed in playing one of the game’s most famous holes, James stopped and thanked the workers for their efforts.

“The azaleas are part of the experience of being at Augusta,” he says. “There are people who make those flowers pop. They are so integral to the experi-

ences we have at these courses. I would talk to locker-room attendants, I would talk to the staff in dining rooms, and show them my appreciation and let them know the whole experience is made possible by the work that they do.”

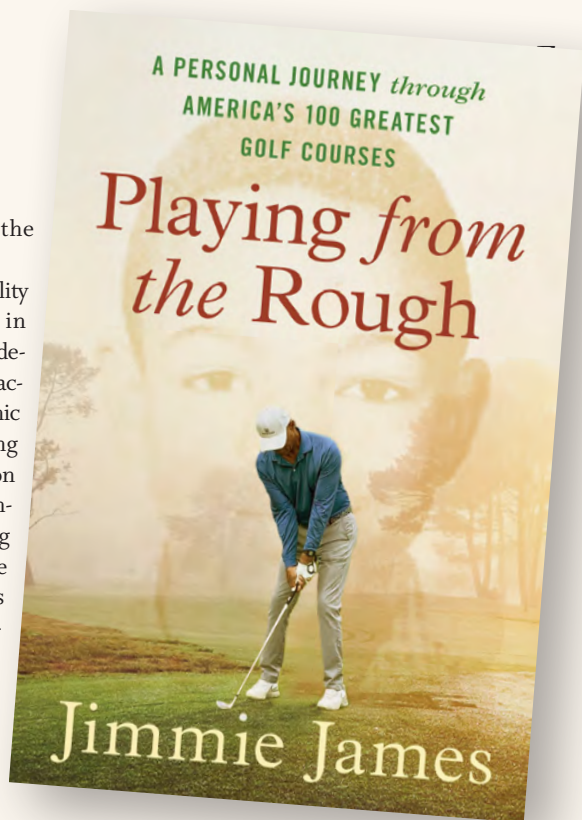
A few of James’s interactions with club and industry workers were arranged. At Canyata Golf Club, a secluded rural Illinois facility, James was paired with superintendent **Michael Boudreau**. Turf duty condensed Boudreau’s round. “As things happened, a pump failed and he needed to address that,” James says. The pair played the back nine together. Boudreau went on a birdie binge and James posted a run of pars extended by his partner’s local knowledge. “I had a putt that was a 12- or 15-foot putt to keep my string of pars going and he said, ‘Do you want me to help you with the read?’ And I said, ‘Sure.’ He gave me the perfect read and the ball rolled into the cup.”

At The Golf Club at Black Rock, in north-

west Idaho, James played consecutive par 3s, Nos. 13 and 14, with course designer **Jim Engh**. “He told me exactly where to hit the ball,” James says, “and I came so close both times to making aces.”

James has now embarked on playing every course on a world top-100 list. He’s less than 20 courses from accomplishing that global goal. The release of “Playing from the Rough” and continued golf travels are expanding opportunities to share his inspiring story.

“It’s becoming a platform to talk about overcoming adversity and challenges in life,” he says. “Some people get upset that golf is hard, but golf is intended to be hard. It’s a mistake to think it’s not supposed to be hard. It’s the same with life. Life is hard. But you can overcome the challenges you face, just like you can overcome the challenges on a golf course.” 🏌️



Vibe check

Jimmie James requested the same information upon arrival at courses with staffed gatehouses during his quest to play America’s greatest courses, which he chronicles in “Playing from the Rough.”

“I’d always ask the security guard, ‘If you were to give me one

piece of advice for playing this course, what would it be?’” he says. “That help set the tone. It gave me a sense of the place. Was this person friendly and open? Were they warm and welcoming? Or were they staid?”

After entering club gates, James found members and staff

overwhelmingly welcoming throughout his journey, which included rounds at 85 private courses.

“The feeling of unease was more self-imposed,” he says. “First of all, I never would want to do anything to embarrass my host

and, secondly, I was trying to play all the courses in a single year and all it would take is one faux pas at one place, because that world of elite golf is such a small world, and everybody knows everybody and word spreads pretty quickly, and my quest would be doomed.”



WHAT'S YOUR STYLE?

In golf, style applies to many things. Each architect has a design style, the pros have different swing styles, there are many different styles of golf apparel. But you don't hear much about superintendents having their own styles. The general public assumes we all do things the same way, or there isn't much variation in what we can do.

Wrong.

With the explosion in golf's popularity, maybe it's time you consider your personal golf course aesthetic and agronomic style. Besides forcing you to think about what you do and why, it will enable you to explain to your staff and your members how you want the course to look and perform, and to define yourself in job interviews.

Early in my career, superintendents tended to adopt the style of their mentors, often evolving from a "family tree" started by the best in the business: **Paul Latshaw**, **Oscar Miles**, **David Stone** and my mentor, **Fred Meda**. Under Fred's tutelage, my style was formed, one that I would describe as a tireless work ethic and dedication to the golf course.

Latshaw, who famously was the superintendent at Oakmont Country Club, Augusta National, Wilmington Country Club and Congressional Country Club, had an enormous impact on our profession. When he retired, his protégés and past assistants oversaw agronomy at seven of the top 10 courses in the country. Paul's emphasis was on preparing courses to championship standards and challenging the players to beat him and his courses.

I'm not here to recommend one style over another. But if you've

never thought about your style, maybe it's time. Here are some factors to consider:

Type of operation. What kind of facility are you at? Private? Daily-fee? Resort? Single-owner? Management company? Equity ownership? Whether you report to one person or answer to a committee will affect daily setup, feature presentation and, perhaps most significantly, budget.

Type of course. Classic or modern? Name architect or not? When a course was designed (or redesigned) and by whom is critical to how it is meant to be played. There are many and varied maintenance practices for maintaining and showcasing features that are part of that person's and/or era's style.

I know a superintendent who is a **Donald Ross** devotee. His original goal was to get a job at a Ross course (which he did), and then ascend to another, more prestigious, Ross course (which he did). He'll soon have the opportunity to oversee the renovation of his Ross course to make it more suitable to the modern era.

No surprise, his preferred aesthetics are the typical Ross attributes: open-front greens allowing run-up approach shots; layouts that follow the natural contours of the land; shallow bunkers; and green surfaces located above their surrounds. His preparation and style embrace and enhance these characteristics.

Geography. Another superintendent I know is all about the mountains. He only wants to maintain courses in those environments, preferring to prepare courses at high altitudes.

Some of you and your style may

fit the classic, fescue look found throughout New England; others like the flattish, water-rich layouts prevalent in Florida.

They definitely don't all look — or are maintained — the same. But when your style meets the correct course, everyone wins!

Who is playing the course?

Are you preparing it for members, daily-fee golfers or resort guests? Each audience comes to a course with a different set of expectations, and your presentation must both challenge and entertain them.

If the type of player — particularly their skill or lack thereof — is forcing you to adopt an uncomfortable style of maintenance, then maybe it's time to change. If the greens can't be too fast because most players can't handle them, or if your golfers expect "championship conditions" day after day without a proper budget, labor and equipment, that's going to negatively affect your maintenance style.

Is your "style" really what you like? How do you feel about how you have to maintain and prepare your course? Do you love it? Or is it just a job? These are all important considerations, especially when you go looking for another job. The search committee will want you to describe your style. What style is going to make you happy, and how unhappy will you be if you can't prepare the course to that style? These are all things to keep in mind. 🏌️

Editor's Note: Not sure of your superintendent style? Or looking for ways to change your style? Visit www.golfcourseindustry.com for more style guidance.



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Tournament Flagstick

Royaline™ Flagstick

Practice Green Rod



Same old favorites, **new natural look**

Introducing three faux-wood flagsticks

Change the look of your course

By popular demand, we are proud to introduce three faux-wood flagsticks: our Practice Green Rod, 7 ½' Royaline Flagstick and 7 ½' Tournament Flagstick.

Now featuring a classic, timeless wood grain appearance while still maintaining their solid, resilient, fiberglass construction and veil-wrapped coating.

The best part? No splintering, splitting or color fading!

MORE INFORMATION ON
WOOD GRAIN FLAGSTICKS



- Solid, resilient fiberglass construction
- Royaline Flagsticks and Practice Green Rods are standard with a veil-wrapped coating
- Regulation flagsticks are standard with our Smart-Fit™ Pro Ferrule

**STANDARD
GOLF COMPANY**
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ANOTHER SUMMER



TRAFFIC SPREE

Neither golf rounds nor the year-round turf stress caused by carts are decreasing. Superintendent **Ron Furlong** and his peers contemplate ways to handle the dilemma.

We're a season removed from an extremely tough year for turfgrass health in the Pacific Northwest, especially at the course where I work, Avalon Golf Club in Burlington, Washington.

Three major factors made 2023 more challenging for producing healthy turf than previous years:

1. It was an extremely dry year. It wasn't that hot, but it was very dry. Eleven of 12 months recorded below-average rainfall. In the peak-play months of May through August, we had a grand total of 3½ inches of rain.

2. Ecology has put some major water restrictions on how much we can now draw and, more specifically, when we can draw from our well.

3. For the fourth year in a row, golf rounds were off the chart.

Concerning this last factor, one theory of mine regarding the golf boom of the last four years is that golfers new to the game are responsible for the spike in rounds. These new players have quickly become avid golfers and they are joining golf clubs around the country. Some of them are perhaps not as up to speed on golf etiquette as long-time players.

A big thing encompassed in golf etiquette is how one drives a golf cart. Or, to be more specific, *where* one drives a golf cart. Cart etiquette is not only simply adhering to signage, but being aware of the rules at each particular golf course you play because rules vary greatly among courses.

Some courses are cart-path only year-round. Some have

a very strict 90-degree rule in-season. Some like you to get to the fairway and stay on the fairway, basically the opposite of the 90-degree rule. Some have a mishmash of the above rules.

Getting newer players to follow signs and rules seems to be a bit more of a challenge than one would think. This goes far beyond just driving golf carts around. Ball marks, bunker raking, replacing divots and speed of play are all bigger issues than they used to be. Teeing area recovery has also become a huge issue. But the ignoring of cart-traffic rules, because of the huge number of players on our golf courses these days, can truly drive superintendents batty.

Our course, for instance, has either a daily policy of cart-path only or 90 degrees. Many people who play our course and rent our carts truly believe that 90 degrees for carts simply means you can drive off path and pretty much go wherever the heck you want to. Ninety degrees has lost its actual intent and now simply means off the path.

This has led to some interesting conversations lately between myself and our director of golf, **Eric Ferrier**. We're trying to determine the best way to get golfers on board with what Eric and I are now calling a "True 90-Degree Rule." For us, this means staying on the path from the tee to the point the fairway begins, then heading 90 degrees out to your ball, then back to the path. Enforcing this is proving to be challenging. It's hard for golfers to see or even care about protecting healthy looking fairways today for what they might become later in the year. But following the rule is crucial for the health of the fairways by the

“Overall, there is just too much play. It's impossible to control where carts go if you don't have the technology to provide restrictions.”

- Marc Szablewski



TURF MAINTENANCE

▶ An example of a cart traffic management tactic used by superintendent Casey Cunningham at The Club at Old Hawthorne.

end of the summer.

Just changing the name of it alone, from 90 degrees to the “True 90-Degree Rule,” might seem silly, but I feel it can be helpful. Getting members to think twice about what we are asking is perhaps the first step in getting the 90-degree mindset changed from, “I can drive wherever I want,” to actually adhering to our rule of straight out to your ball, straight back to the path.

PERSPECTIVE FROM ELSEWHERE

I checked with a few other superintendents to get their thoughts on this expanding issue of too much play and how it's affecting turf recovery.

Marc Szablewski is superintendent at St. Andrews Golf Course in suburban Kansas City. St. Andrews is part of the very busy — and very successful — City of Overland Park municipal golf system.

Marc also thinks golf dynamics have definitely changed in the last four years, and he mentioned a longer golf season becoming the norm. “The golfing season here in Kansas City feels like it has gone from eight solid months to 10 months now,”

he says. “The issue with this is that dormant turf and still being busy don't exactly make for a good match. We have bent-grass tees that see little to no recovery for four months and still get a lot of play.”

Marc agrees with me that rules and signage are great, in theory, but hard to actually police. “Overall, there is just too much play. It's impossible to control where carts go if you don't have the technology to provide restrictions.”

Casey Cunningham, the superintendent at The Club at Old Hawthorne in Columbia, Missouri, believes technology can help direct carts to where you want them to go. “We have GPS in our carts now and can limit areas that carts are allowed,” Casey says. “But even

with that option, we still see areas that get worn out.”

Casey drives around every day and can adjust the GPS accordingly, depending on where he wants carts to travel. But not even that tactic is foolproof. “The biggest issue I have is we allow members to bring their own carts. I cannot control their carts and they pretty much drive where they want.”

Casey added something else re-



▼ A few of the strategies longtime superintendent and author Ron Furlong uses to control traffic at Avalon Golf Club.



© TOP: CASEY CUNNINGHAM
BOTTOM: RON FURLONG

latable to our situation here in western Washington. “I personally think every course should set a standard that is carts on path all winter long,” he says. For Casey, in Missouri, the issue is carts driving on dormant zoysiagrass and damaging fairways. For us, in the Pacific Northwest, it’s driving on saturated ryegrass and *Poa annua* fairways needing a break to



recover from the stress of summer, and instead we’re just beating them up all year now. And then people are wondering why the fairways are so thin and stressed in July and August.

Having a rule in place during the winter that no matter how nice it may get (or, for us, how dry) carts simply staying on the paths is a huge help. Before this golf boom, the pro shop rarely asked me about a 90-degree option during the winter. But that has all changed. It is now a daily question I must field. And if not 90 for everyone, how about 90 for handicapped players? If your course isn’t well-marshalled in the afternoon and you don’t have GPS technology, how do you even police this?

I also contacted **Damon Hitti**, the superintendent at Weissinger Hills Golf Course in Shelbyville, Kentucky, to learn how he’s handling the cart traffic. Weissinger Hills also has experienced a significant increase in rounds played. “When I started here 10 years ago, we were at 27,000 rounds,” Damon says. “This past year we hit 38,000, and

in 2024, so far, we are on pace to surpass that number.”

Damon agrees with my theory about the new wave of golfers perhaps being a bit different than those who played the game for many years. He differentiates these two groups as “golfers” vs. “players.”

“I often say we now have more players than golfers,” Damon says. “A golfer being someone who follows course etiquette and rules.” He didn’t define “player,” but I think we can assume it means somebody who does the opposite.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

The daily abuse courses are taking is not sustainable. Changes must be made. What exactly those changes are will differ from course to course, but sitting back and doing the same thing you did five or 10 years ago is simply not proving to be successful for many of us.

We are all using signage, ropes and paint to direct traffic and keep carts away from worn areas and green surrounds. At Avalon, I paint a white line on every hole where the

approach meets the fairway. This marks the line of demarcation.

I’ve found this line, if kept fresh, is actually fairly effective. The downside is I spend a significant chunk of time each week repainting the lines and a significant amount of money purchasing marking paint. In fact, with a 27-hole golf course, I spend so much now on marking paint I just made it a line item in our budget for the first time.

I don’t think the takeaway should be that superintendents are simply commiserating and complaining about too many golfers on our courses (although we are a little bit). That revenue drives the bus. But we do need to acknowledge that all this traffic is having a detrimental effect on many golf courses.

We’re acknowledging it, talking about it and trying to find some realistic solutions to a problem that doesn’t seem to be going away soon. 🏌️

Ron Furlong is the superintendent at Avalon Golf Club in Burlington, Washington, and a frequent Golf Course Industry contributor.

▲ Heavy play and year-round cart traffic are big challenges facing superintendent Marc Szablewski and the St. Andrews (Kansas) Golf Club team.

Low-cut

TEST Zoysiagrass has yet to become a widely considered option on greens. Could the conversation be changing?

By **Rick Woelfel**

Zoysiagrass was introduced to the United States from its native Asia in 1892. Golfers have long celebrated its virtues, citing its carpet-like texture and feel that make it a wonderful playing surface. Superintendents in warmer climates, where zoysiagrass thrives, appreciate that it requires less maintenance inputs than other warm-season turfgrasses.

While zoysiagrass's thick texture is ideal for fairways and tees, it was for many years considered impractical for use on greens because it many believed its thick blades would make the putting surface slower than desirable.

That mindset has evolved as researchers have developed strains of zoysiagrass suitable for greens.

The movement toward zoysiagrass greens has its origins in 1982 when **Dr. Milt Engelke** from Texas A&M University and **Dr. Jack Murray**, then with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, made a trip to Asia and brought back zoysiagrass samples from throughout the continent, from the Korean Peninsula to Malaysia.

Due to illness, Murray eventually sold his material to Bladerunner Farms outside San Antonio. But Engelke brought his samples back

to Texas A&M where the research effort he helped launch continues today under **Dr. Ambika Chandra**, a professor and the assistant director of the Texas A&M AgriLife Research & Extension center in Dallas, where she's been since 2007.

"At the Dallas center we are maintaining a clonal copy of that original collection," Chandra says. "Over the past 40 years we have lost a few because these have to be maintained in a vegetative form in order to maintain their genetic integrity. Right now, we have about 650 plants that we have maintained and that gives us an



Dr. Ambika Chandra oversees zoysiagrass greens developmental efforts at the Texas A&M AgriLife Research & Extension center in Dallas.

advantage, having that collection, the foundation for the breeding work.”

Engelke took on the long-term task of developing new strains of zoysiagrass. The first to be introduced was Diamond, which reached the market in 1996. It was intended for use on fairways and tees. But Engelke was approached by numerous facilities having challenges with Bermudagrass or creeping bentgrass greens, often due to shade or salinity issues. Engelke suggested they convert their greens to Diamond, the finest-textured zoysiagrass available at the time.

“I think that was the moment when people really realized that zoysia (could be utilized) on putting greens,” Chandra says. “There was a need that existing species of turfgrass were not able to fill, whether it was shade or salinity. That’s what really opened up people’s minds about zoysia for putting greens.”

The team at Texas A&M went on to create Lazer — what Chandra calls “the next generation of zoysia.”

“Diamond was crossed with a species called *Zoysia minima*,” she says. “It’s a species native to New Zealand. *Minima* is a very small, tiny little beady plant, very fine texture, dwarf, good color, but what it lacks is adaptability. In our environment, it will not survive the winter or other stresses.

“We took *minima* and we crossed it to Diamond, which we know is adapted, and we created Lazer. Meantime, Bladerunner Farms is doing its own work in the area of zoysiagrasses and in recent years has introduced Prizm and Primo for putting greens.”

Ken Mangum had a long career as the director of golf courses and grounds at the Atlanta Athletic Club. During his time at the famed club, he guided the conversion to zoysiagrass fairways on the Highlands and Riverside courses. Today, Mangum is a

consultant and one of the industry's foremost authorities on zoysiagrass on all playing surfaces, including greens.

"The leaves come off the rhizomes at 90 degrees, so you don't need as many cultural practices as you do on the Bermudagrasses," he says. "It's got great cold-weather tolerance. You don't have to cover (zoysiagrass greens) as much as you do Bermudagrass. You hardly see any ball marks on them, because it is a tougher grass. If you've got shade, if you've got cloudy weather, or if you've got cold or you've got a limited crew or a limited budget, it can fill a lot of different needs that people have."

ZOYSIAGRASS ON GREENS TODAY

Almost two dozen golf courses, all of them in warm climates in southern states — save for one in California — have installed zoysiagrass greens.

Bo LeHew is the general manager

at the Golf Club of Texas, a 24-year-old semi-private facility in San Antonio with a **Lee Trevino**-designed golf course. The club prospered for more than a decade but closed in 2013 after a severe drought caused course conditions to deteriorate.

When it reopened two years later, the golf course had been tweaked by architect **Roy Bechtol** and completely regrassed with zoysiagrass — Zeon on tee boxes, JaMur on fairways and L1F on greens.

LeHew was hired during the regrassing effort. It took several years for the greens to respond how ownership wanted. Ironically, they were too firm and approach shots that landed on the putting surfaces tended to bound off the back.

But over the last year, LeHew and superintendent **Emilio Alvarez** adopted new maintenance protocols for their greens. Simply put, they had been getting too much water.

"Zoysia has a thicker blade of grass," LeHew says. "So, if you water it every day, it's going to go down about an inch and then just stop. You're filling up its stomach but it's not getting into the intestine. In not watering it every day, you're allowing (the moisture) to hit that one-inch mark, and then all the grass root system that's four or five inches underneath that and is thirsty is actually getting down through because it's not getting trapped at the top."

The greens at the Golf Club of Texas are normally watered every other day, but sometimes less often if conditions dictate fewer irrigation inputs. LeHew notes how the greens have responded to the change in watering protocols.

"They're greener than they've ever been," he says. "They're more lush. They're exactly what you would want. It's amazing how something so simple as watering it less (improves performance). It's amazing the difference in



just six months.”

Don Garrett has led the golf course maintenance efforts at The Walker Course at Clemson University, a semi-private facility in north-west South Carolina, since 1999. He assumed his post 3½ years after the course opened for play. Conditions were, to put it delicately, unsatisfactory.

A Clemson turfgrass graduate, Garrett had a personal and a professional stake in his new assignment.

“I’m from this area,” he says. “I’m from right outside of Clemson — at least my dad was. I was an Air Force brat for 14 years. When he retired, we moved back here. This is home and my wife is from nearby.

“It was home but also, coming to Clemson, I was like, ‘This golf course has not performed. You need to go in and make it perform and you cannot fail because you’re right here in front of the university and turf professors I had and people you know and friends and family.’”

When Garrett arrived, the greens were bentgrass. When some clubs in the area began converting to ultradwarf Bermudagrass, Garrett was hesitant to follow because of shade issues. Several of his green sites are in shaded areas and the trees producing that shade are located on adjacent properties. He experimented with ultradwarf Bermudagrass on a chipping green, but shade concerns remained.

Garrett was swayed toward zoysiagrass greens after a USGA seminar



highlighting the approach. It was suggested he could install zoysiagrass on shaded greens and ultradwarf Bermudagrass elsewhere—two South Carolina courses had taken that approach — but Garrett demurred. “I didn’t really want to manage two grasses,” he says.

The decision was made to convert all 18 greens to zoysiagrass. The conversion was scheduled for an eight-week stretch in summer 2015, following the conclusion of the university’s golf camps. The project was timed so the course would be open the week before Clemson’s first home football game.

Garrett finds managing zoysiagrass similar to maintaining Bermudagrass putting surfaces. “I think it’s pretty similar to ultradwarf,” he says. “I talked to other superintendents in the area that had them. It’s a lot like managing ultradwarf. We use a little less fertility, a little less nitrogen. Zoysia doesn’t need as much. Probably a little less topdressing than you do on an ultradwarf, but all in all, it’s pretty

much the same.”

Since converting to zoysiagrass, Garrett is seeing reduced disease pressure. “I think fungicide- and disease-wise, the ultradwarf seems to get more disease than the zoysia does. We just haven’t seen hardly any disease with it.”

The zoysiagrass greens are also having a favorable impact on Garrett’s bottom line. “We spray a little less than half of what we were treating with in fungi-

cides,” he says. He was also able to eliminate 12 large fans that were used to improve circulation around the bentgrass greens. He estimates that change has trimmed utility bills by \$28,000 annually.

As far as performance is concerned, Garrett knows his greens may not provide as fast a putting surface as bentgrass or Bermudagrass. But he doesn’t see that as problematic.

“They’ve performed very well,” he says. “It’s hard to get them very fast. (But) we in the golf industry, in my opinion, have gotten carried away with green speed. We talk about growing the game and then somebody comes out, a first-time golfer or somebody wanting to take up the game, and they can’t get the ball in the hole because they get to the green and they can’t control it because of green speed.” 🌱

Rick Woelfel is a Philadelphia-based writer, senior Golf Course Industry contributor and host of the Wonderful Women of Golf podcast.

◀ The Walker Course at Clemson University was one of the first courses in America to install zoysiagrass greens.



▲ Spanish students Manuel Salado Fernández (left) and Pablo Barragan Ferreira (right) are working as interns at neighboring Charlotte clubs this summer.

Pablo Barragan Ferreira started his first spring in America as the only occupant in a three-bedroom house surrounded by a dense stand of trees and shoulder-high shrubs. Five steps and a paved access road separate the house from his indoor workspace. Slim gaps between the trees separate the house from his outdoor workspace.

The fairway, the 18th on the South course at Carmel Country Club, is zoysiagrass, a turf species covering thousands of golf acres in this country's toughest growing

region. Zoysiagrass attracted Barragan to Carmel Country Club, where he's living in a modest employee house, in the middle of a residential south Charlotte neighborhood, in a country with cultural, linguistic and geographic contrasts, but similar turf trends to his native Spain.

"They're starting to turn to zoysia in Spain," Barragan says during an early spring conversation inside a tidy Carmel Country Club maintenance facility conference room filled with course enhancement blueprints and boxes of new hats and shoes for employees. "Because of that, I'm here. I want to learn more about

zoysia when it comes to Spain."

Fellow Spainard Manuel Salado Fernández is experiencing more separation from work. His temporary employer, Quail Hollow Club, established a lease agreement with a Charlotte apartment complex to provide housing for aspiring turfgrass and club management talent. Salado doesn't envision prolonged stretches in the apartment. Salado, like Barragan, is spending the hottest months in the Queen City for a defined career purpose.

Site of an annual PGA Tour stop and the 2025 PGA Championship, Quail Hollow is seemingly always



TARGETED TRAINING

A long-distance learning journey has brought **Manuel Salado Fernández** and **Pablo Barragan Ferreira** to neighboring Charlotte clubs for internships.

By **Guy Cipriano**

preparing for the next big event. “I was looking for one of the top golf courses — and Quail Hollow is one of them,” Salado says. “I really love tournaments and I really love construction.”

Barragan’s and Salado’s presence in Charlotte epitomizes the measures that motivated young people — in this case, crossing an ocean and six time zones — are taking to obtain targeted training to accelerate their careers. Their respective internship programs at Carmel Country Club and Quail Hollow also demonstrate how American clubs are finding creative solutions to fill specialized

positions, for a summer or perhaps even longer.

“It’s a constant recruiting effort to find good, quality turf interns and hopefully lead them into becoming future turf professionals,” says Carmel Country Club director of greens and grounds **Brannon Goodrich**.

THE GREEN SECTION of the Spanish Royal Golf Federation is sponsoring and funding Barragan’s time in the United States. The scholarship program incorporates Barragan’s studies in the Penn State University two-year turfgrass management program. The purpose of Barragan’s

stint in the United States involves requiring education and skills difficult to obtain in Spain, a country with 47.5 million residents and 408 golf facilities — which is 52 fewer than North Carolina, a state with 10.8 million residents.

Barragan, 26, says his situation would be comparable to the USGA Green Section funding an overseas study program to help a student receive high-level agronomic knowledge not easily accessible in the United States. Barragan has assisted in the agronomic efforts at Spanish tournaments, and he’s also helped underfunded facilities make improvements.

“It’s an opportunity to learn, because you see a lot of golf courses,” he says. “Each one has different programs. You can learn a lot in a short time.”

His classroom learning intensified when he enrolled at Penn State last September. Barragan’s English is solid, as evidenced by the 30-minute interview he deftly navigated during a *Golf Course Industry* visit to Carmel Country Club. But learning new skills taught in a non-native language requires grit and calculated time management. “One U.S. student needs two hours to learn something that I need four hours to learn,” he says.

Supportive classmates and faculty eased the academic transition. “When I was in Spain, I thought people in the north of the U.S. would be closed-minded,” says Barragan, who hails from Bollullos Par del Condado, a small southern Spain town. “But it’s been different than I thought. All the people here are open-minded. They help you with everything in the class. It’s harder because of the language. Sometimes you feel impotent because you want to say something and

you have to think about it first. That’s the most difficult thing for me, but it’s better than when I arrived here.”

Away from the classroom, Barragan adjusted to a different climate. Fall and winter temperatures are significantly cooler in State College, Pennsylvania, than in Bollullos Par del Condado, which possesses a Mediterranean climate with mild winters. He hasn’t attended a Penn State football game, although he plans to endure the potential cold to watch one in 2024. Barragan is an ardent soccer fan and had a month-long stint working turf maintenance at Santiago Bernabéu Stadium, the historic home of Real Madrid.

“At the beginning (of my career) I wanted to work in a fútbol stadium,” he says. “But in a fútbol stadium all the days are the same. On a golf course, you have the opportunity to choose, because you have different heights of cut, you have bunkers, you have greens, you have more possibility to do different things.”

Goodrich and assistant superintendent **Matt Brooks** met Barragan at a job fair last fall in State College

employees. Superintendent **Micah Pennybaker** oversees the maintenance of the South Course, which includes zoysiagrass short-cut turf and A1 bentgrass greens. Superintendent **Eric Downs** oversees the maintenance of the North Course, which includes 419 Bermudagrass fairways and Champion Bermudagrass greens.

“What we try to sell the turf guys is all the different grasses we have underneath this one piece of property,” Goodrich says. “Pablo was very interested in zoysia. That’s what we went to Penn State selling. . . . all the different grasses and we can get you out of the cold and into the South.”

Barragan is surrounded by a diverse team. Carmel Country Club has superintendents and assistant superintendents holding degrees or certificates from schools such as Auburn, Catawba Valley Community College, Clemson, NC State and Rutgers, crew members hail from multiple countries, and fellow 2024 interns represent multiple universities.

The camaraderie and demands of turf maintenance shrink the world. “This is the correct place to grow in this sector,” Barragan says.

BARRAGAN ARRIVED IN Charlotte with a friend who can relate to his personal experiences.

Salado started at Penn State at the same time (yes, they lived together in State College) and the pair volunteered at the 2024 Players Championship before reporting to Charlotte to begin their respective internships. Barragan’s and Salado’s concurrent time in Charlotte is a coincidence.

“The U.S. is so big, so massive,” Salado says. “We spent a year together, we went to the Players together, and I was like, ‘Where are you going to do your internship?’ And he said, ‘I’m going to Carmel.’ I said, ‘I’m going to Quail Hollow. Come on man!’”

Quail Hollow is one of the Southeast’s renowned turf talent incubators. International interns were common before director of green and grounds

organized by **Dr. John Kaminski**, the director of Penn State’s two-year golf turfgrass management program. The scale of Carmel Country Club allows Goodrich to offer young talent opportunities to perform a myriad of tasks. The 36-hole club is flourishing, with 1,000 members and their guests playing 65,000 rounds in 2023. Goodrich leads a turf and horticulture crew of around 60 em-

Knowledgeable neighbors

Directions from Carmel Country Club’s gas-lamp-lined entrance to Quail Hollow Club’s white gatehouse are straightforward. Hang one right, then two lefts, while traversing a stylish Charlotte neighborhood. The drive takes five minutes and covers 2.4 miles.

The club’s golf course maintenance teams foster a strong working relationship, and friendships exist among the respective staffs. Both departments are led by highly regarded turf leaders with refined talent-development philosophies.

Those leaders shared their philosophies during our spring swing through Charlotte.

*Carmel Country Club North Course superintendent **Eric Downs** on managing interns:* “We try to pride ourselves on giving a unique internship experience. We expect them to know the basics and we want to get into chemical applications, running sprayers, managing crews and working on small projects.”

*Quail Hollow director of green and grounds **Keith Wood** on teaching interns:* “We’re going to open the playbook to everything. A lot of time I call it low-hanging fruit and a lot of time I put low-hanging fruit out there and I’m going to expect the intern to reach up and grab it. When an intern says, ‘Hey, what was in the spray tank?’ That’s not a good question. I’m not going to accept that question. We post what we sprayed, and there’ll be avenues for them to understand what’s in the spray tank. The better question is, ‘Hey, why did you use eight ounces of the growth regulator this time, and last time you used 12?’ What I want them to do is something very similar to what I have to do.”

*Carmel Country Club director of greens and grounds **Brannon Goodrich** on developing a team at a 36-hole club:* “You’d like to build it from within at a place like this because it’s very busy. I want somebody who knows what they are getting themselves into. If you bring somebody in here that’s from a sleepy, quiet golf course that doesn’t have a lot of play, they are going to be overwhelmed very quick.”



Pablo Barragan Ferreira (third from right) has been embraced by the turf management leadership team at Carmel Country Club in Charlotte.

Keith Wood's arrival in 2015, and the club's program continues to attract motivated young professionals from other countries, including Spain, the home of **Lara Arias**, the superintendent for the 2023 Ryder Cup at Italy's Marco Simone Golf & Country Club. Arias interned at Quail Hollow in 2017, when the club hosted its first PGA Championship. International interns and employees are omnipresent at Quail Hollow.

"We are learning about their culture, learning about them, learning about how things are done in the countries they come from, learning about their parents and family atmosphere and how they share meals, celebrate holidays," Wood says. "It makes us better people on a whole."

During a conversation inside Wood's office four weeks before the 2024 Wells Fargo Championship, Salado occasionally glanced at his boss's mementos, including the South Carolina Gamecocks driver head cover. Salado, 23, is work-focused this summer — "I don't have plans to take any days off at the moment," he says — although he hopes to begin using his own clubs more.

"I discovered golf course management and fell in love with golf," says Salado, who has an engineering degree from Universidad de Sevilla in southern Spain. "I try to play golf. I play really bad, but I love it. One of my goals is to grow as a greenkeeper and in turfgrass management, and to try and improve my golf."

Wood urges interns to find time to play golf. "If you work on a golf course, you need to be able to enjoy the game of golf and go out and play every once in a while," he says.

Barragan relishes tournament golf and his résumé includes internships at 2023 Solheim Cup site Finca Cortesin in southeastern Spain and DP World Tour site Yas Links in Abu Dhabi. **Luis Pinto**, a 2017 Quail Hollow intern and head greenkeeper at Ombria Resort in Portugal, connected Salado with Wood.

Quail Hollow offered Salado something difficult to find close to home. He says Spain has around 10 "really high-level golf courses." Charlotte boasts a half-dozen upper echelon clubs, including two in the same neighborhood. Similar situations exist in other prominent U.S. markets, es-

pecially in the expanding Sun Belt. "The golf culture is really big here," Salado says. "We don't have that in Spain."

Salado and Barragan love Spain, and they will likely experience homesickness at some point this summer. But advancement in the golf industry means facing unfamiliarity — and even living at work.

"I'm happy here because there are people here who speak Spanish and I can improve my English," Barragan says. "And I also can speak Spanish with the people who speak Spanish. I'm so fortunate to stay here with these guys and learn from these guys." 🇺🇸



I'm happy here because there are people here who speak Spanish and I can improve my English. And I also can speak Spanish with the people who speak Spanish. I'm so fortunate to stay here with these guys and learn from these guys."

— Pablo Barragan Ferreira

Globetrotting consulting agronomist **Terry Buchen** visits many golf courses annually with his digital camera in hand. He shares helpful ideas relating to maintenance equipment from the golf course superintendents he visits — as well as a few ideas of his own — with timely photos and captions that explore the changing world of golf course management.



EMPLOYEE FRINGE BENEFITS AND MEMBER DONATIONS: THE ULTIMATE EXAMPLE

I recently visited The TwinEagles Club in Naples, Florida, and they have the best golf maintenance employee fringe benefits and member donations that I have ever seen or heard of in my entire career. The membership at this 36-hole private club, which is part of a housing development, is the kindest I have witnessed toward providing membership donations to employees. This club has very little employee turnover, as most of the year-round, full-time hourly employees have worked there for numerous years.

“TWINEAGLES CARES” MEMBER DONATIONS INITIATIVE

HURRICANE IRMA EMPLOYEE RELIEF FUND

Hourly employees received \$1,000-plus in funds to help with displacement during the hurricane. Members also donated household items to help with losses after the storm. This marked the start of the vast, year-round employee member-donation program.

HOUSEHOLD GOODS DONATIONS

Members began donating household

items, clothing and food to all hourly employees to help with natural disasters. It has remained an ongoing, year-round project to continue donations like refrigerators, dishwashers, washers and dryers, and any other items that could be of use in employees’ homes. This has continued even without any disasters occurring, as the members like to continually help the workforce. During my visit, a large area rug, tuxedo, formal dress, ceiling fan, lamp, hats, sport coats, home accessories and trinkets were donated. Goods are collected continually all year long at

the maintenance building’s director of agronomy’s office.

TWINEAGLES EMPLOYEE SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Each November through February opens the employee scholarship applications for continuing education for all TEAM Members and their dependents. This year, members donated more than \$150,000 (preliminary estimate) during a member ScholarSIP Dinner Experience. They truly appreciate each employee’s efforts every day. Four employees and five employee dependents received continuing education scholarships this year through the program.

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

The membership provides help for employees to obtain Habitat for Humanity homes for their families. One family has been awarded a home thus far.

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TURF & HORTICULTURE

SCHOOL SUPPLY DRIVE

Each summer the membership holds a school supply drive for the hourly employees. The donations include school supplies and gift cards to cover all supplies for the upcoming school year. Collier County provides the school supply list for the employees and their children to choose from. There's no set limit.

CHRISTMAS PRESENT DRIVE

All full-time employees provide a list of desired Christmas gifts for their children in the true spirit of gift giving. TwinEagles member families adopt employee families to provide items on the wish lists, which are then distributed a few days before Christmas. Gifts normally total \$250 or more.

FOOD STIPEND

Each golf course maintenance employee receives freshly cooked hot meals daily in the golf maintenance building employee lunchroom, which also has a free soda fountain dispenser. When the clubhouse was being renovated, each employee received a \$100 monthly gift card food stipend.

COVID-19 TIME OFF

During the pandemic, the membership gave all employees two weeks paid time off to help take care of their families. This alleviated the financial worry and stress of family affairs.

EMPLOYEE FRINGE BENEFITS

GROUP MEDICAL, DENTAL AND VISION INSURANCE

Full-time, year-round TEAM Members may participate in the health insurance plan subject to all terms and conditions of the agreement between TwinEagles and the insurance carrier. The club pays for a portion of the cost for each individual TEAM member. Additional medical coverage is available for dependents subject to terms and conditions.

401(K) SAVINGS PLAN

TwinEagles has established a 401(k) savings plan to provide TEAM Members over the age of 21 with the potential for future financial security for retirement. The 401(k) savings plan allows them to elect how much salary and wages they wish to contribute so they can tailor their own retirement package. Employees must complete at least six months of service before being eligible to enroll in the program.

TwinEagles provides matching funds up to 4 percent. The maximum amount funded per year is approximately \$27,000 for employees 52 years old and under and \$30,000 for employees over 52.

EMPLOYEE REFERRAL BONUS

An employee receives \$150 upon each applicant hired, with an additional \$150 bonus paid after successful completion of the new employee working 90 days.

HOLIDAY PAY

Full-time and part-time TEAM Members are entitled to the following seven paid holidays immediately upon hiring: New Year's Day, Easter, Labor Day, Independence Day, Memorial Day, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day. If a holiday is worked, an employee receives holiday pay plus overtime pay if they worked more than 40 hours per week.

PAID TIME OFF

The TwinEagles Club, Inc., believes that restful and relaxed time away from work benefits both the TEAM Members and the club and, in some instances, is needed due to circumstances out of anyone's control.

PTO is available to full-time, year-round TEAM Members to use for vacation(s), personal use and/or sick time. Accrual of PTO hours begins on the first day of service for eligible team members and may be used right away, upon approval from the TEAM Mem-

ber's supervisor, using the following accrual schedule:

- New hire (non-exempt) 1.85 hours biweekly — 48 hours max
- New hire (exempt) 3.08 hours biweekly — 80 hours max
- After first anniversary 3.39 hours biweekly — 88 hours total
- After second anniversary 3.39 hours biweekly — 88 hours total
- After third anniversary 4.93 hours biweekly — 128 hours total
- PTO does not accumulate from year to year.
- Employees may borrow up to their maximum number of hours ahead of time.

SHORT-TERM DISABILITY

Short-term disability insurance is offered for all full-time, year-round eligible TEAM Members. This policy provides pay continuation for extended periods of time. Special rules apply.

LIFE INSURANCE

Full-time, year-round TEAM Members are eligible for a set amount of life insurance paid for by the club. Full-time, year-round TEAM Members are also eligible to purchase additional life insurance. Coverage is available at attractive rates during open enrollment. \$25,000 is provided by TwinEagles and employees can buy up to \$250,000.

MEALS

Full-time and part-time TEAM Members are provided in-house hot meals when working. Hot meals are provided during lunchtime on weekdays and also when working on weekends.

UNIFORMS

Full-time and part-time TEAM Members are provided with five sets of shirts, five sets of pants and a cap at golf course maintenance. Employees are responsible for laundering. 🧺



Terry Buchen, CGCS, MG, is president of Golf Agronomy International. He's a 51-year, life member of the GCSAA. He can be reached at 757-561-7777 or terrybuchen@earthlink.net.

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9-HOLE HEROES

I have been a member of the British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association since 2010 and joined their Master Greenkeeper ranks in 2016. Their monthly publication is titled *Greenkeeper International*, and a few years ago, they had a regular feature called *Nine-Hole Heroes*. The feature would be one or two pages with a brief question-and-answer with the superintendent of a 9-hole golf course somewhere in the United Kingdom.

I loved it. I got my start in this career at a 9-hole golf course, and I have seen the game and the industry come full circle as it relates to the respect 9-hole golf courses receive. There was a time — and I too was guilty — of referring to 9-hole courses as “little.” As in, “I used to work at a little 9-hole course,” as if it somehow wasn’t real golf compared to an 18-hole course. And if you only played nine holes, you had to wait until you played a second nine holes and combine the two scores to produce a score suitable for handicap purposes.

And then ... **Peter Grass** became GSCAA president while he was superintendent of Hilands Golf Club in Billings, Montana. The course started as six holes in 1922 before expanding to nine holes and being incorporated in 1923. Peter is a true 9-Hole Hero.

And then ... the USGA began to recognize the impact our fast-paced society was having on one’s time available for recreational activities. They created a slogan, “Play 9,” to encourage time-crunched folks to at least play nine holes in order to squeeze in more golf. In 2024, you can now post 9-hole scores for handicap purposes.

There are 9-hole golf courses that are revered on social media for their architecture and even have cult followings. Winter Park Golf

Course in Winter Park, Florida, just outside Orlando, and Sweetens Cove Golf Club in South Pittsburg, Tennessee, outside Chattanooga, are just two that come to mind.

Anthony Pioppi has written two books celebrating 9-hole golf courses. His first book, “To the Nines,” released in 2006, and “The Finest Nines,” released in 2018, shine the spotlight on lesser-known golf courses, some of which were designed by America’s most renowned golf course architects.

The inspiring cover story **Lee Carr** wrote about Marine veteran **Jarrod Taylor**, superintendent of Willowbrook Golf Course, is the epitome of what a hero truly is. He just so happens to also be a 9-Hole Hero.

And what if I told you this former 9-Hole Hero is from the same neck of the woods as Jarrod Taylor? I grew up in Castlewood, Virginia, in Russell County. That’s the same Russell County as in the song. I always knew of Willowbrook Golf Course, but never managed to play it back in my day. But I did play high school football against Haysi, the school Taylor attended.

Maybe you know of **Paul Carter**, CGCS of Bear Trace at Harrison Bay outside Chattanooga, Tennessee. Paul grew up across the county line in Wise County, Virginia, home of Lonesome

Pine Country Club in Big Stone Gap. Lonesome Pine was a 9-hole course from its inception in 1924 until it expanded to 18 holes in 1967. Paul is also the current secretary/treasurer of the GCSAA.

In fact, the entire region is full of 9-hole or former 9-hole golf courses. Glenrochie Country Club in Abingdon, Virginia, was designed by **Alex McKay** in 1958. They were known for being the best conditioned nine holes in the region. Glenrochie expanded to 18 in 1989 with help from **Dan Maples**.

Scott County Park in Gate City, Dan Hall Mountain Resort outside Coeburn, Saltville Golf Course in Saltville, Steele Creek Golf Course in Bristol, Tennessee, and the abandoned King College Golf Course in Bristol provided places to play and served as introductory outlets to this great game. For some of us, they offered introductions to this great industry.

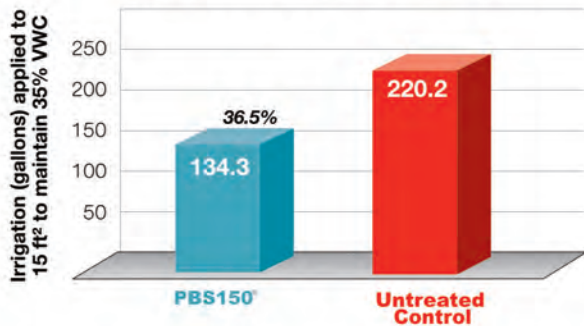
I’m proud to have worked at a 9-hole golf course. I’m prouder still that a 9-hole golf course in the Appalachian Mountains is the home of a true American hero. Looks like where I come from is still producing hard-working folks who appreciate the outdoors and they are being developed to be the next generation of 9- or 18-hole heroes, wherever this great game may lead them. 🏌️



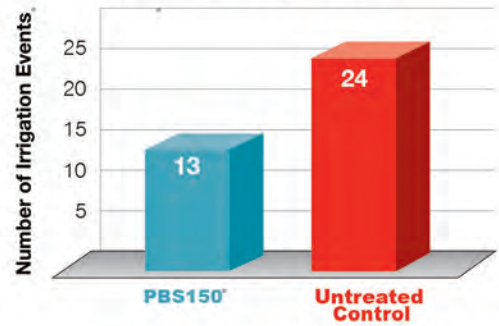
MATTHEW WHARTON, CGCS, MG, is the superintendent at Idle Hour Country Club in Lexington, Kentucky, and past president of the Carolinas GCSA. Follow him on X at @IHCCGreenkeeper.



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Nolan, G. and M. Fidanza. 2016. Penn State University

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