



The BONNIE GREENSWARD

OUR 96TH YEAR

2021 VOL. V

ASSOCIATION HONORS LONG SERVING BOARD MEMBER DOUG RAE

On Wednesday, Jan. 26, at the PAGCS Winter Education event, newly elected President Greg D'Antonio paid tribute to Doug Rae's nearly two decades of service to the PAGCS.

Doug was elected to the Board in November of 2003, persuaded to take the leap by then Past President Don Brown, CGCS. Doug's continuous service included multiple terms as Director, many years as Website Committee Chairman, four years as Treasurer, two as VP, and finally leading the Association through the pandemic as President. He continues to serve as President Emeritus through 2023, chairing the nominating and scholarship committees.

Among Doug's many achievements are successful launches and continued

modernization of the PAGCS website. Leading the charge, his passion and tech savvy approaches have kept the Association moving in the right direction year after year.

Rare is there an Association Board member who can say he served during the tenures of eight presidents: Warren Savini, Jeff Edwards, Sean Remington, John Gosselin, Jay Parisien, Jon Urbanski, Rob Nolek, Derrick Wozniak.

Doug's career includes a Penn State education, stops at Whitford, French Creek [as the grow-in Superintendent circa 2002], Downingtown CC, finally landing at Applecross Country Club in Spring of 2010. Personally, Doug was recently remarried, loves to fish, and has a son who is a sophomore in high school.

As I said in the letter that went out, Doug navigated us through a pandemic ... As a result of Doug's leadership, our financials as an Association have never been stronger and we continue to be extremely innovative. The First Green program continues to expand, he introduced new partnerships both for member career growth and public relations. He even won Winning Golf on NBCS! When he steps off the Board at the end of 2023, he leaves us in great hands. On behalf of everyone in the room and all members of the Association and golfers in Philadelphia, thank you, Doug. –Greg D'Antonio



Doug Rae, middle, flanked by former PAGCS presidents:
L to R are Jeff Edwards, Derrick Wozniak, Jon Urbanski, Tony Gustaitis

HEADING TO 100!

see page 5 for fun photos of then and now.

>>EVENTS

PAGCS ZOOM EDUCATION: STATE OF THE INDUSTRY

Wednesday, February 23
12:30 p.m.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84267808435>

Meeting ID: 842 6780 8435

WAR AT THE SHORE

Monday, April 11, 2022

BMW VOLUNTEER

REGISTRATION DEADLINE

Sunday, May 15, 2022

SCHOLARSHIP OUTING AND BENEFIT

Monday, June 6, 2022

Sandy Run Country Club

MEMBER-GUEST

Monday, June 27, 2022

Green Valley Country Club

[Visit the website events tab for more!](#)

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Doug Rae
Applecross Country Club
doug@applecrosscc.com

PRESIDENT

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Concord Country Club
gdantonio@concordclub.org

VICE PRESIDENT

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Old York Road Country Club
dfarrar@oyrcc.com

TREASURER

Patrick Michener
Bidermann Golf Club
pmichener@vicmead.com

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Spring Ford Country Club
markrubbo@comcast.net

>> BOARD MEMBERS

Tim Edwards, Director
Rivercrest Golf Club
tge@rivercrestgolfclub.com

Greg Eisner, Director
Fieldstone Golf Club
eisner128@gmail.com

Chris Toporski, Director
LuLu Country Club
christoporski@gmail.com

Bill Corcoran, Industry Representative
VENTRAC
BCorcoran@VENTRAC.com

Michael Kachurak, Industry Representative
Shreiner Tree Care
mikek@shreinertreecare.com

Nick Sujkowski, Assistant Outreach
Concord Country Club
nicksuj@gmail.com

Jeff Haas, Golf Chairman
Golf Cart Services
jhaas@golfcartservices.com

>> PAGCS OFFICE

Kristen Liebsch
Executive Director
Newsletter Editor
484-467-5298
kliebsch@pagcs.org

>> THE PM

#GOALS

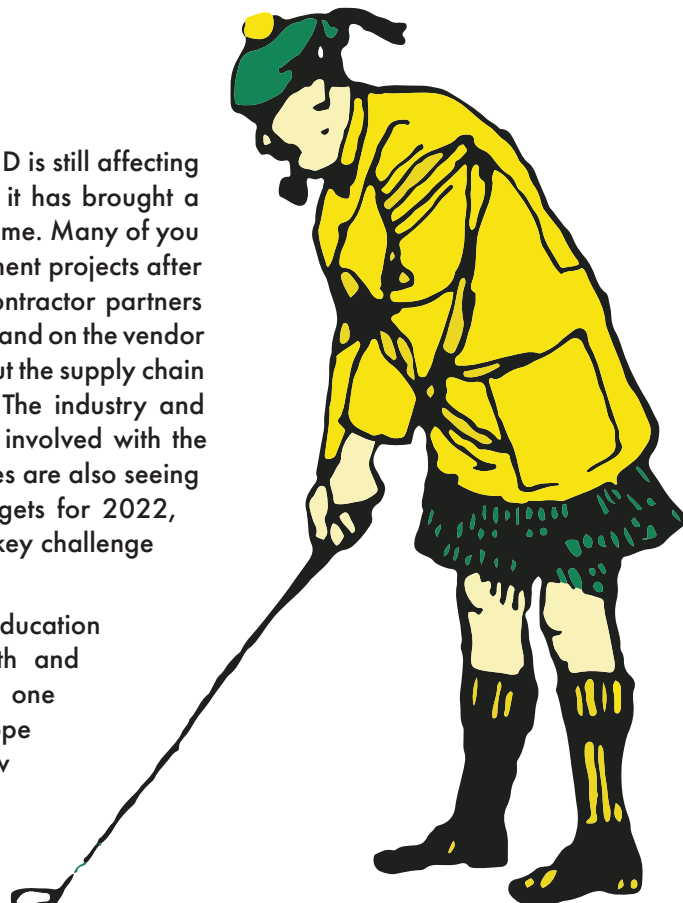
As we enter a new year, COVID is still affecting our lives. On a positive note, it has brought a resurgence of interest to the game. Many of you are busy with course improvement projects after a good financial year. Our contractor partners are getting booked in advance and on the vendor side, equipment sales are up but the supply chain and prices remain uncertain. The industry and this area are booming for all involved with the PAGCS. Hopefully most courses are also seeing an increase in operating budgets for 2022, especially as labor remains a key challenge for everyone.

Our first PAGCS half-day education event was held January 26th and the next education event is a one hour Zoom on 2/23. We hope our members enjoy these new opportunities. The Board of Directors has put an emphasis on increased education, and events like these cannot be successful without participation.

The membership renewal process for 2022 has begun. As event costs continue to rise, specifically food costs, your dues help to keep these event prices in check. We are hoping to utilize sponsorship and dues revenue to keep meeting attendance costs down for our members this year. Darren Farrar and Jeff Haas are finalizing a fantastic meeting schedule for 2022 – check out what we know on the front page of this issue or on our website.

Finally, our partnership with Inside Golf is off to a great start. The initiative to communicate a Superintendent's value has seen great initial exposure in working with this show. Pat Michener of Bidermann presented a fantastic episode talking about the environmental impact of course maintenance [[CLICK HERE TO WATCH](#)]. If you have any ideas for future segments or would like your course included, please reach out. ♦

Respectfully,



2022 MEMBERSHIP AND SPONSORSHIP RENEWAL PROCESS
IS GETTING UNDERWAY--WATCH YOUR INBOXES FOR DETAILS
OR REACH OUT TO THE OFFICE FOR MORE INFORMATION:
KLIEBSCH@PAGCS.ORG/484-467-5298



NOR_EASTER SKI UPDATE

We wanted to get word out that we will be having a "ski day" this year, but it will be different than years past, due to Covid in Vermont.

We won't be able to use the Wobbly, so instead of a formal event and race this year we will just organize to ski on February 15th with no race or Apres Ski.

We will have tickets available and you can order and pay for them on the Vermont website later this week at [Vermont Golf Course Superintendents Association | VTGCSA](#) and then hand them out the night of the 14th at the Killington Lodge restaurant/bar area hopefully. Then at the Snow Shed lodge in our normal Highlander Room area from 8:30 to 11 AM. Gatherings will be at your own discretion, but we fully expect to have a lot of regulars show up.

We apologize for one more abnormal year, but hopefully the world gets back to normal by next winter! Please join us for a break from your regular routines!

Please drop a note with any questions.

Andy Drohen
31 Jensen Lane
Granville, MA 01034
C: 413-685-5469
adrohen@alliednutrients.com

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PAGCS ASSISTANT'S CORNER - ROBERT SEFTON

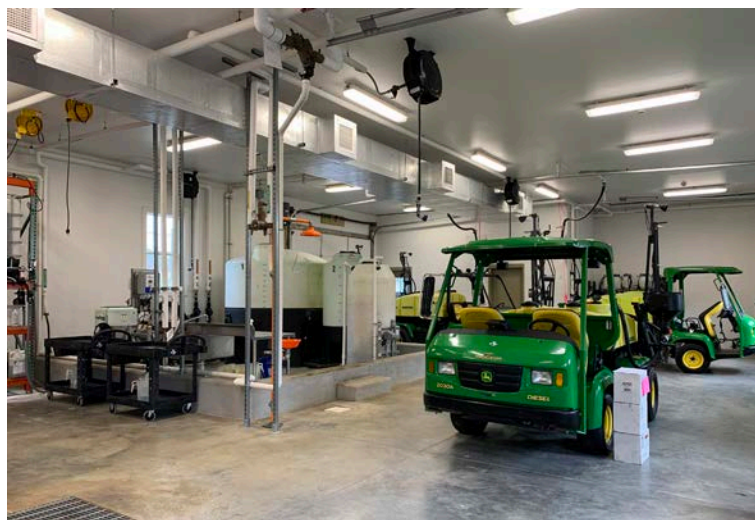
by Nick Sujkowski, PAGCS Assistant Representative to the Board

I recently had the pleasure of visiting Robert Sefton and the team at Bidermann Golf Club in Wilmington, Delaware. The Agronomy team at Bidermann has recently undergone some major improvements in their maintenance facilities, as well as achieved Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary status. I spent some time getting to know Robert and find out what the certified achievement meant for him and the team.

Please describe your background in turf and how you came to this industry.

I found the turfgrass management industry as a second career. I previously worked in dental prosthetics as a marketing product manager. I played a lot of golf during that period of my life. As I got more into the game, I found myself gravitating towards interests in the architecture of each course I played. I reached a crossroad in my life, where I knew I wanted to do something different with my career. I originally wanted to go back to school and get a second degree in landscape architecture (for golf), but felt the job market wasn't ideal to pursue. Further research led me to turfgrass management.

I got my foot in the door at the Country Club of York (2014). Under the mentoring wings of Pat Michener (Superintendent) and Aaron Giordano (Lead Assistant) I built the skill set required to be successful in the industry. I paired that with a degree from the two-year program at Penn State. In addition to working at the Country Club of York, I spent some time in North Carolina (Bald Head Island Club) and most recently, followed Pat Michener to Bidermann (2019 to present) as the Lead Assistant.



load station

Please describe some of the upgrades to the maintenance facility and general timeline for completion.

January 2019 we broke ground. Two new buildings were constructed. The first was an equipment storage building where all of our riding mowers and course transportation vehicles reside.

The second was the plant management building which houses all of our chemicals, fertilizers, seed, and mix & load station. On the backside of the plant management building is our newly added recycled water wash station. Finally, on the northern perimeter of the maintenance campus, we added bulk storage bays and a sand silo. Certificate of occupancy was granted to us in October 2019.

How have these upgrades improved the team's efficiency?

These facility upgrades have provided us with the ability to maximize our productivity. The four-station wash pad provides our staff with a facility that expedites cleanup time without compromising quality. Most importantly, the recycled system conserves water, allowing for environmental sustainability. The mix & load station in our plant management building permits applicators to load product(s) quickly and safely, assisting to complete time-sensitive applications without delay.



Recycled Water wash pad

Talk to me about the Audubon Certification. What did it require of the team and how important is it to them and also the membership that this was accomplished?

The completion of the certification was a collaborative effort. There was quite a lot of documentation that needed to be developed for Audubon review and approval. The list included an environmental plan for the property, environmental case study, various lists of existing wildlife and habitats, water conservation files, chemical input and reduction files, water quality testing, and community outreach & communication efforts. In the end, it was very satisfying to obtain the certification. It allowed us to show our membership, surrounding community, and our staff that the maintenance practices and environmental stewardship we were already engaged in now had a formal title and greater cause to rally around.

Continued from previous page

How did the upgraded maintenance infrastructure help accomplish what was needed for Audubon from a facilities standpoint?

The recycled water wash station provides improved water conservation. The knee wall around the mix and load station delivers the proper safety requirements for chemical loading. Both were substantial pieces of the process to Audubon certification approval.

What have you learned from these projects that will help you in your future career?

Golf course agronomy teams and their memberships often hyper-focus on on-course projects. While those projects have direct impacts on the golfer, going through these experiences have helped me better understand that improvements off the course can have just as much of a positive result for the membership, agronomy operation, and surrounding ecosystem. As leadership team members, it is our responsibility to never lose sight of this.

I would like to acknowledge the work of the entire Bidermann staff including but not limited to:

Pat Michener - Golf Course Superintendent
Dave Ward - Assistant Superintendent
Dave Ponzurick - AIT / Spray Technician
Rob Sefton - Lead Assistant Superintendent



Equipment Storage

The Agronomy team at Bidermann was recently featured on an episode of Inside Golf TV describing some of these changes we mentioned. [You can find that episode here.](#)

–Nick Sujkowski
nicksuj@gmail.com
@nick_sujkowski

ASSISTANT'S CORNER

Anyone who would like to be featured in the next edition of the Assistant's Corner, please contact Nick at nicksuj@gmail.com

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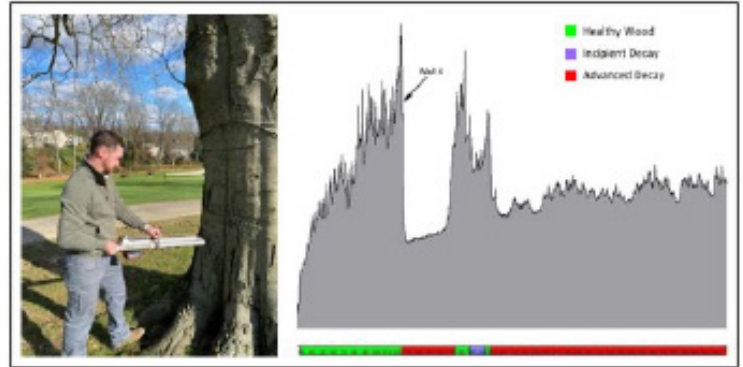
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GREETINGS FROM YOUR GOLF COURSE ARBORIST AT SHREINER TREE CARE!

Mowing has paused, leaf removal is wrapped up, and the winter projects are underway; Now is a great time to assess the trees on your property. When deciduous trees lose their leaves, a clear assessment of the tree's structure can be evaluated. During this dormant period, canopy assessments can identify hazardous deadwood removal or necessary structural pruning. Hazardous deadwood removal helps to maintain safety, especially in high traffic areas such as around greens, tees, or clubhouse areas. Structural pruning helps improve the stability of the tree to help prevent storm damage throughout the year. Structural pruning also targets limb removal that will assist with light penetration to your turf. Thicker canopies cast high amounts of shade on important surfaces making it more difficult to produce healthy turf and optimal playing conditions.

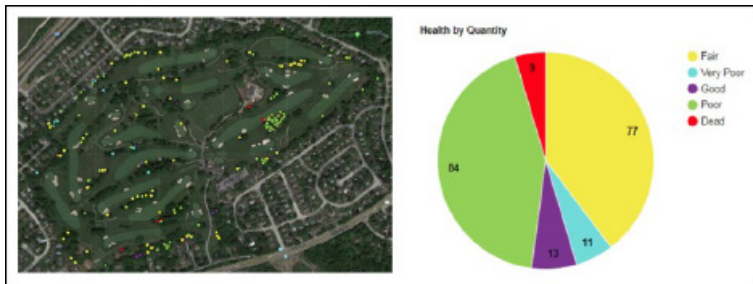


Resistograph Assessment: shows decay and structural defects to help identify hazardous trees.

Along with visual assessments, I utilize the following: local knowledge from the golf course superintendent and data driven agronomic tools and software (as pictured). These tools allow me to produce recommendations and solutions specific to each property. Implementing site specific plans through quality and professional tree care, can go a long way in preserving the turf health and providing quality playing conditions during the season.

Let's get a head start on SPRING 2022
with a tree assessment today!

Mike Kachurak
ISA Certified Arborist PD-2739A
ISA Tree Risk Assessment Qualified



Tree Canopy Inventory and Assessment: a great tool for planning, budgeting, and presentation.



Nicholas Sujkowski
@Nick_Sujkowski

Thanks to @ShreinerTree for coming out today to teach the crew valuable lessons in chainsaw safety!



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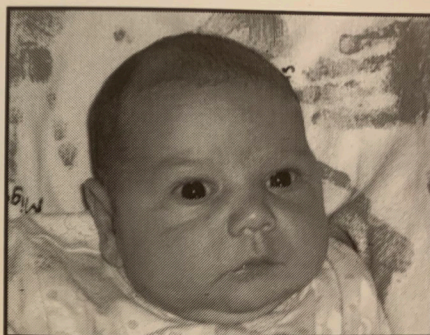
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NEW ARRIVALS

Congratulations to Rich Sweeney, CGCS, at Mount Vernon Country Club (Alexandria, VA) and his wife, Jamie, on the birth of their first son and third child Logan. Logan was born on February 15th, and joins big sisters Taylor, age seven, and Kelly, age six.



Logan is now a 6'2", 245LB football standout for his high school team.

If you have not added your name to the #Headingto100 committee and would like to be a part, please reach out: kliebsch@pagcs.org



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Brian Gjelsvik
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briang@nobleturf.com

Michael Linkenich
(267) 688-8900
link@nobleturf.com

Stephen J. Rudich
(610) 349-9519
steve@nobleturf.com

Bill Cimochowski
(609) 923-4045
bills@nobleturf.com

Brian Bontemps
(845) 239-7959
brianbontemps@nobleturf.com

Zach Brooks
(914) 309-2373
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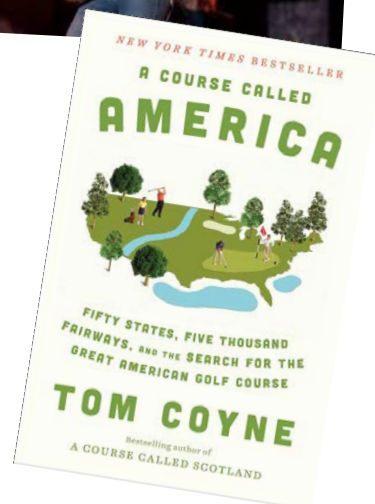
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200 - Game Changers

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400 - Coast to Coast Golf

500 - Pennsylvania Golf

600 - Golf Lessons

700 - Non-Golf Experiences and Items

[CLICK HERE](#) to see all items

**The Auction for Game Changers will run through
Sunday, February 13 at 5pm EST.**



1862



PAGCS WINTER EDUCATION INITIATIVE PROVES OVERWHELMING SUCCESS

With about 100 in attendance, the Association kicked off its 2022 calendar of events with new initiatives in place. First up: the half-day winter education event at Concord Country Club, earning attendees .3 CEUs from GCSAA.

PAGCS President Greg D'Antonio, also the event host, started the morning off with some opening remarks. "As a board of directors, we have many new initiatives planned to improve the value of a membership and we hope today is a start of an annual event. I'd like to thank Jon Urbanski of Wilmington Country Club and Bill Corcoran of Ventrac for their help with planning today..."

Greg pointed out that the value of a Superintendent has never been more important while the job has never been more difficult given the state of golf and the industry. "For those General Managers, Greens Chairs, and Presidents in the room today supporting your Superintendent, thank you for giving your time."

Honored guests included: Darin Bevard, USGA Director of Championship Agronomy, Elliot Dowling USGA Agronomist, Steve McDonald of Turfgrass Disease Solutions, Katrin Wolfe, GCSAA Mid Atlantic Rep, as well as past presidents of the association, Doug Rae, Jeff Edwards, Jon Urbanski, Derrick Wozniak.

In case you missed it, here is some bio information on the day's presenters.



JOHN TYRRELL, MANAGING PARTNER, RTJG LAW

Topic: Golf Course Liability

- Founding member of Ricci, Tyrrell, Johnson, and Grey with three areas of expertise related to the agenda: decades of experience in representing managers and operators of sports stadiums, arenas, and recreational facilities including golf courses
- Clients include Tony Leonard and the Philadelphia Eagles

- Has, in decades of work, secured defense verdicts in the tens of millions of dollars
- Graduated from Colombia University, where he played football, and Villanova Law

PAUL ROCHE, FOUNDER, GOLF WATER

Topic: How to sell a new irrigation system

- 30 years of golf course irrigation leadership
- Graduated from the University of Massachusetts (1985) with a degree in Turfgrass Science
- Interest in golf course irrigation grew as he held positions as Assistant Superintendent at Redding CC, in Redding CT, Fairview CC in Greenwich, CT and at Heritage Village in Southbury CC: At Heritage Village, Paul was responsible for the rehabilitation of the irrigation system on 27 holes including three pump stations
- Passion for golf course irrigation led him to 20 years in various key positions in irrigation distribution and became involved with the design and management of over 300 golf course irrigation systems throughout New York and New England.
- Locally: has been the irrigation consultant at Whitford, Gulph Mills, Baltusrol, Merion, with future work at Applebrook and more to come



BILL HYNDMAN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, FIRST TEE GREATER PHILADELPHIA

Topic: Update on First Tee

- FTGP is an Association partner: together organizing volunteer day to help with projects and growing the First Green program, it's a win-win
- Two PAGCS board members serve on the FTGP board; multiple PAGCS members serve on the greens committee
- Multiple PAGCS facilities and sponsors, includinglist all... have and continue to donate time, resources and expertise
- A 12-year Army veteran who served as a Blackhawk helicopter pilot, company commander, and personnel officer in the 82nd Airborne Division. He received three Meritorious Service Medals during his service in the Army



PETE WENDT, DIRECTOR OF GOLF COURSES, CONGRESSIONAL COUNTRY CLUB

Topic: Transformation of Congressional

- An extensive renovation of the Blue Course is a home run and earns Congressional a litany of stellar events for the next decade
- Navigating a renovation in the Baltimore/DC area, surrounded by thousand of politicians and permitting is an extra feather in his cap
- Prior to Congressional: Director at Woodmont Country Club, Kinloch Golf Club, Assistant at Robert Trent Jones Golf Club
- One of the greatest mentors in the industry, producing dozens of great Superintendents, including two in attendance: PAGCS members Josh Saunders, Lancaster Country Club, and Brandon Collins of Overbrook Golf Club

JIM NAGLE, GOLF COURSE ARCHITECT, FORSE DESIGN

Topic: Golf Architecture/Role of Superintendent in Renovation

- A partner with the firm for over 20 years, with renovation and restoration successes all over the country

- Local achievements include work at Lancaster, Whitford, Philadelphia CC, Tavistock. McCall, Manufacturers, Berkshire, Spring Haven, Coatesville, West Chester, and host facility Concord
- Respected for his depth of design and architectural history knowledge and experience, as well as being an architect who listens to the Superintendent and understands the maintenance and labor challenges the industry faces



JON URBANSKI, DIRECTOR OF GROUNDS, WILMINGTON COUNTRY CLUB

Topic: BMW Championship Preview

- President of the Association, 2014-2015
- 2022 BMW Championship [August] serves as the 2nd leg of the Fed Ex Cup, featuring the top 70 players

Save the date for the next event: PAGCS Zoom Webinar with Pat Jones, discussing the state of the industry: 2/23/2022



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Dear Volunteer,

Saucon Valley Country Club will be hosting the 42nd United States Senior Open Championship June 19-26, 2022. Saucon Valley Country Club sits in Pennsylvania's Lehigh Valley on over 850 sprawling acres. The club boasts three outstanding championship golf courses, a 6-hole junior course, tennis, squash, platform tennis, swimming pools, ten fine dining facilities, and an 18th century guesthouse. We realize that volunteering a week's worth of your time in June is a huge commitment, but without your help, a successful championship would not be possible.

We are currently requesting volunteers to join the SVCC Grounds Staff from June 19th-26th. We will begin with a mandatory orientation meeting at 4:30 pm on Sunday, June 19, at the Saucon Shop maintenance building at 2606 Saucon Valley Road, Bethlehem, Pa 18015. We ask that volunteers wear a collared golf shirt with their club's logo for the June 19 orientation meeting. We will provide shirts for the rest of the championship. Please bring khaki pants or shorts, no cargo pants. Also, please be prepared for inclement weather, ex: rain gear and proper footwear.

If you are interested in volunteering for the 42nd Senior United States Open Championship, please fill out the forms below and email them to cciccotti@sauconvalleycc.org by March 1, 2022. For your convenience, please fill out the forms electronically. Additional championship information, including accommodations and transportation, will be addressed in future email correspondence. Please ensure your correct email address is provided on your form. Thank you so much for your attention and participation.

We look forward to having you volunteer for the 42nd United States Senior Open Championship.

Sincerely,

James J. Roney, Jr.

Director of Golf Courses and Grounds

Gavin Johnson
Old Course Superintendent

Colin Ciccotti
Old Course Asst. Superintendent

Gannon Goff
Old Course Asst. Superintendent

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DEADLINE MAY 15



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Hosted by The Union League of Philadelphia at The Union League Golf Club at Torresdale and Union League Liberty Hill

Saturday, April 30 through Wednesday, May 4.

We are eager and cherish the opportunity to support the PGA in hosting the 2022 PGA Works Collegiate Championship. Furthermore, we would like to extend our greatest appreciation in your interest in volunteering for this special event.

Please read carefully and complete the application [Linked Above and [HERE](#)] as soon as possible. The deadline for this application is Tuesday, February 1. All fields are required. If there are any questions about this form please email

Max Lyons at The Union League Golf Club at Torresdale [LyonsM@unionleague.org] or

Anthony Heath at Union League Liberty Hill [HeathA@unionleague.org]

To ensure the form is received, please FILL OUT and CLICK SUBMIT SURVEY.

DEADLINE MARCH 1

ICED! CHALLENGE ACROSS THE RIVER ENDS IN SUDDEN DEATH



On a blustery Saturday afternoon in January, cross river colleagues took to the ice for some family fun and to raise money for charity. The format was a period of hockey followed by a family skate and finished with another period of PAGCS vs GCSANJ. The game was an instant classic that ended in sudden death over time.

During the first period, team PAGCS took the early lead with a quick goal by Chuck Zaranec. A couple of shifts later, Chuck Zaranec scored again, which was then later matched by the GCSANJ. That then ended the period with a 2-1 score before the family skate.

During the break, the players socialized with the other team. We were all discussing familiar topics such as the weather, the GCSAA National conference, equipment supply chain woes and various renovation projects. At this time others were on the ice teaching their families and kids how to skate--while others were enjoying a craft beer or two and getting ready for the final period of what was already an intense hockey game.

Out of the break Roger Smith from team PAGCS scored a goal, which was soon equalized by GCSANJ bringing the score to 3-2 with 12 minutes left in the final period. Alex Lennertz from PAGCS added another goal right off a face off to increase the lead to 4-2. With only 3 minutes left in play, New Jersey puts another one in the net to bring the score up to 4-3. Then in one final effort to tie the game, New Jersey pulls their goalie with 40 seconds remaining. This paid off dividends when they scored with only 0.9 seconds left on the clock, sending the game into sudden death OT.

Now that the next goal wins the game and the bragging rights that come with it, the intensity was taken up a notch. This intensity cost



Event Sponsor Al Phillips and his daughter stopped by to check out the competition

team New Jersey to take two separate penalties. This created the opportunity that team PAGCS needed. Shortly after an offensive zone faceoff, Roger Smith scored the game winning goal for PAGCS, ending it 5-4.

Afterwards, we all shook hands and then got pictures taken with both teams. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves and all felt like it is something that we should definitely do again and hopefully make it an annual event. While both teams were enjoying the pizza and beer trucks, we started talking about joining forces and making a regional team that would compete in the golf course hockey challenge.



The golf course hockey challenge is a National event that is held in Ontario, Canada each year and has been going on for about 20 years. Each team is comprised of hockey players in the turf industry which then play other regional teams just like theirs. There are perennial powerhouses such as team Michigan or any of the Canadian teams. It is our hope through a collaborative effort that we would be able to put together a team that can compete and possibly win this event in the future.

--Alex Lennertz, GCS, Sandy Run Country Club

[srcc.gcsupt@gmail.com]

Keep an eye on the PAGCS calendar for more information on the 2023 event to be hosted this side of the river!

PAGCS TEAM

Andrew Lyngarkos	14	goalie	Non Industry
Alex Lennertz	25	center	Sandy Run
Steve Bigelow	4	defense	Rolling Green
Joe Agnew	7	wing	Bucks Club
Chris Freeman	3	wing	Merion Cricket
Scott Musser	29	defense	Kennett Square
Brendon Rodgers	33	wing	Non Industry
John Gilinger		wing	Non Industry
Roger Smith	8	Defense	Bensalem CC
Chuck Zaranec	9	center	Country Club of York
Steve Carpenter	82	defense	Turf Equipment & Supply



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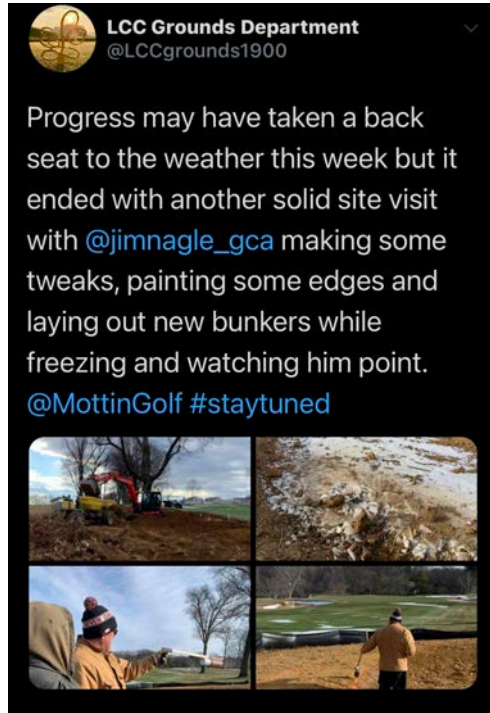
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>> LABOR/CAREER SERVICES

NO TIME OFF FOR LABOR

As winter progresses and superintendents recharge the batteries, workforce development has continued to be a hot topic in the industry. Whether recruiting entry level employees, finding qualified assistants or retaining key employees, labor pains haven't eased this off-season.

Consistently, finding industry trained and educated assistants has been a major hurdle for most facilities across the region and throughout the country. While there is some evidence university enrollments have seen some progress, waiting for the next generation of individuals is probably going to leave many even more frustrated and overworked in the short-term.

The PAGCS has taken some steps to assist employers with the recent Assistant Superintendent Compensation and Benefits survey. If you haven't completed, please fill out the form, <https://forms.gle/1r1HjuG2uzEnYQjC8>

The goal is to provide you with a resource to find answers to commonly asked questions about the local labor market, including information about advertised jobs, benefits, education levels, and compensation from other competitive industries in the local region. I encourage you to utilize the report in your budget planning efforts and advocacy for your team members. We plan to have the report completed by mid-March.

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UP TO \$500,000 TO OFFSET
CONTINUED EDUCATION FUNDING
TOWARDS INDUSTRY TRAINING,
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One of the key themes from my travels across the region is how facilities are retaining employees. There's no silver bullet answer. Employees and job seekers have every option at their fingertip. Many companies, not just in turf or golf, are offering continued education reimbursement, flexible scheduling, advanced retirement savings programs, retention bonuses up to \$2,500 to \$5,000 a year. Yesterday's crazy is today's normal!

Instituting formalized on-the-job training is an absolute must in today's environment, not only to develop employees, but also to introduce job seekers into the field.

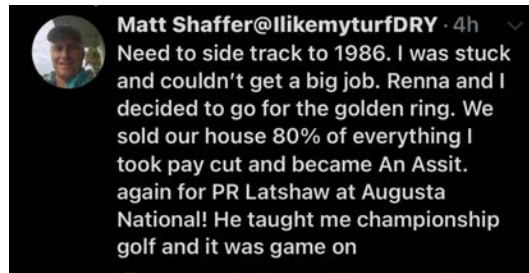
We have great examples of members in the PAGCS who instituted formalized Apprenticeships with great success in the first year; including Overbrook Golf Club, Waynesborough Country Club, LedgeRock Golf Club and Gulph Mills Golf Club. Don't know the difference between apprenticeship and internship? Here is a great educational resource from the Pennsylvania Department of Labor: <https://www.dli.pa.gov/Individuals/Workforce-Development/apprenticeship/Pages/default.aspx>

Recently, I submitted a grant proposal with the endorsement of the PAGCS for "Growing Registered Apprenticeship and Pre-Apprenticeship Programs in Pennsylvania"

The potential grant is for up to \$500,000 to offset continued education funding towards industry training, continued education, marketing and outreach. My anticipation is the grant will be announced within the next 60-days, so keep your ears to the ground.

I would encourage you to utilize the PAGCS Member Benefit program to learn more about apprenticeships, recruitment or retention practices going into 2022.

There are many strategies you can put in place to improve your workforce programs. The PAGCS recognizes this, and offers one-hour consultation services. We encourage you to sign up at tylerbloom.online for a personalized session. ♦



PETS OF THE PAGCS

OWNER: Ben Kovacs, 2002 Del Val Graduate, Director of Golf Course and Grounds Maintenance at Waynesborough Country Club. Hobbies are hunting and fishing and Norm goes with on a regular basis to both.

NAME: Norman

BREED: Golden Retriever

AGE: 4 years old

ABOUT NORM: At the golf course more days than not since he was eight weeks. Still acts like a puppy and loves playing with my kids, Evan and Quinn. He loves being around people in general and often hangs out in the break room to get extra "pets." Better off leash than on, but likes to go for walks at home. Chases geese when he feels like it...chases squirrels like a maniac. Favorite food: pizza crust and milk bones.

How Norm got his name: "That was his name when we picked him up and we loved it so it stuck! The reason they named him Norm was [that] the lady who had the litter's dad's name was Norm. She was super excited we kept the name.



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GAP (Golf Association of Philadelphia) will continue to be featured on "Inside Golf," a weekly television program. Martin D. Emeno, Jr., the organization's Director of Operations will host all GAP segments that appear on the program. "Inside Golf" airs on NBC Sports Philadelphia on Sundays at 5:30 a.m. and 10 a.m., Mondays at 4:30 p.m. and Wednesdays at 4 p.m. It airs on the

Comcast Network on Sundays at 7 p.m. All episodes featuring GAP can be found on the GAP website, www.gapgolf.org, under the "News" section.

Registration for the spring slate of the 2021-22 GAP Winter Series opens Feb. 1. Venues include Hartefeld National in Avondale, Pa. (Tuesday, March 8); The Legacy Club at Woodcrest in Cherry Hill, N.J. (Tuesday, March 15); Deerfield Golf Club in Newark, Del. (Tuesday, March 22) and Berkshire Country Club in Reading, Pa. (Monday, April 4). Cost is \$40 per person per event, plus a \$35 cart fee per event. Entrants are accepted on a first-come, first-serve basis. The Winter Series is open to all GAP members (18 years of age or older), Philadelphia PGA Section members and golf professionals of GAP Member Clubs. Registration is available exclusively on the GAP website, www.gapgolf.org. ♦



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January 27, 2022 | Darrick Robbins

Getting ready to volunteer locally at one of our area's three events? Check out these tips below and see the calendar for key tournament dates.

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Editor's note: A version of this article was originally published in the July 2021 issue of On Course, the monthly publication of the [Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents](#).

The atmosphere of a professional golf tournament is hard to beat. There is an energy and excitement inherent to these events. People you see on TV are there — the players and their caddies, the announcers. There are fancy cars, entourages, the rich and famous, and plenty of regular people too. At least once in your life, you should attend a professional golf tournament, and there may be no better way to do so than as a tournament grounds volunteer.

Professional golf tournaments are a different world in many ways, no more so than for the golf course maintenance staff. As much as anything, tournaments are a logistical exercise. The typical daily tasks still need to be accomplished — the grass



A flurry of volunteers on the 13th hole at Medinah (Ill.) Country Club during preparations for the 39th Ryder Cup, held Sept. 28-30, 2012. Photos courtesy of Darrick Robbins

still needs to be cut, the bunkers raked, the holes moved. The difference is that this work often needs to happen in a very short period of time. Weather, daylight, large fields and other factors, such as the presence of TV crews, often conspire to make it necessary to pull off a full day's work in just a few hours.

When you need to get course maintenance done in a three- to four-hour span, having a lot of bodies to throw at all the tasks is vital. This is where tournament volunteers come in. And it's also where one of the best characteristics of people in the golf industry comes to the fore: When someone needs a hand, we help each other another out.

I've been pitching in at professional events in the Chicago area for the past 10 years, and whether volunteering is in your plans in 2022 or further down the road, the following insights, do's and don'ts can help you get the most out of the experience.

TOURNAMENT HOSTING 101

How does a golf course coordinate tournament volunteer efforts? It can differ quite a bit from place to place. I have witnessed it from the outside on

numerous occasions, and in general, it goes something like this: Several months before the event, the host superintendent and their leadership team, with assistance from the PGA Tour agronomist, begin to put together assignments and schedules for the tournament. They try to consider every job that will need doing, including every eventuality. Other matters that need consideration early on include arranging lodging for some of the volunteers and occasionally for staff, as long hours are the norm; arranging transportation between lodging venues and the golf course; and arranging volunteer parking.

Eventually, a schedule (or several schedules) is produced that lays out how everything will go if the weather is perfect, and every superintendent hopes this schedule is the one they'll end up using. A great deal of effort goes into planning for contingencies such as weather impacts, equipment failures and volunteer no-shows. And even if all goes perfectly, there will always be some items that need last-minute tweaking.

The schedule will have each worker, each machine and each task set for the week. Later on, after the list of volunteers has been compiled, the leadership will pair the tasks

Continued on next page



Author Darrick Robbins changing cups at the Encompass Championship, a Senior PGA Tour event held at North Shore Country Club in Glenview, Ill., from 2013 through 2015. Robbins has changed holes at several PGA, LPGA and Senior PGA Tour events.

with the people who will be on hand. Some volunteers work only mornings, others only evenings, and some are there the entire time. Each person will be matched with the available equipment. Equipment vendors often loan sizable amounts of equipment to the golf course to facilitate this condensed course-preparation schedule.

When a course hosts a professional tournament, a number of roles on the maintenance staff need to be filled. The superintendent is often left as a free agent without much scheduled involvement, as the demand on their time will be heavy all week. The superintendent needs to be able to react to sudden developments and make last-minute changes as necessary, and the superintendent also deals with all the people outside the agronomy department. If it's a "good" year, the superintendent might be pitching in wherever there's a need, but if it's a "bad" year, they could be spending all of their time reconfiguring the schedule and making decisions about when and how the course can be made playable; what resources need to be where; and how in the world the staff is going to get everything done in time for that opening tee ball each morning.

One of the senior assistant superintendents is usually responsible for the course staff and volunteers during a tournament. The whole operation relies heavily on the full-time crew, as they know their

way around the course and equipment and can help those who don't. Often one of the other assistants is in charge of dealing with the infrastructure build during the lead-up to the tournament, making sure the course remains as intact as possible while everything gets moved in. Contractors often pull from local labor or subcontractors who know nothing about golf, so it's always a challenge to get them in and out while inflicting as little damage as possible.

Things pick up a bit during "advance week," the week prior to tournament week. The PGA Tour agronomist shows up, and any last-minute details on the course are addressed.



Even superintendent Scott Bordner's dog Wrigley lent a paw when Chicago Golf Club hosted the U.S. Senior Women's Open in July 2018.

VOLUNTEERS ENTER THE PICTURE

The Monday of tournament week is when things really start ramping up. Pro-ams are held, practice rounds begin for the players, and spectators and volunteers begin to arrive. This is practice time for the maintenance staff too, and the time when the big, looming question will be answered: Is the plan for moving everyone around and getting things done viable?

The crew often stages a practice session or two of equipment mobilization, and any problems that arise are tackled. What adjustments need to be made because of changes to anticipated manpower or equipment or other factors? How has the infrastructure build impacted traffic flow? How is the weather shaping up? There really is no perfect plan, because every plan will have to be modified at some point. The key is having smart, flexible people working as a team. The one overriding feeling at these events is that the show must go on. One way or another, the tournament will be played.

Early in advance week or the weekend before the tournament starts is when grounds volunteers come on board. There will be someone on hand who is responsible for checking in volunteers and getting them the gear they need. Generally, volunteers are asked to check in and get their gear during advance week, but many of those coming in from out of town don't have that option.

There will usually be a swag bag awaiting you with some shirts, a hat, a badge

that gets you where you need to go, and several other goodies (water bottles, backpacks, knives, bottle openers, etc.). Sometimes there's also a rain suit. I've found the best "badge" that you can have at these tournaments is some piece of golf equipment. If you were to drive an old triplex down the street to the front gate of almost any tournament, chances are they'd let you in. But it's still important to keep your real badge handy.

Few maintenance structures are large enough to accommodate a crew much larger than the course's normal crew, so often there will be an additional structure installed for the grounds crew to hang out in. It's usually a tent, and it can house food, couches, games and other diversions. Of course, a TV is a must — one truly surreal experience is watching something happen on TV moments after you hear the roar from out on the course. There's always a lot of coffee and food, and typically a cooler stocked with a variety of nonalcoholic beverages. And, on occasion, usually in the evening after the late shift is over, it's not unheard of for kegs to be wheeled out and for everyone to enjoy a beer or two.

The excitement builds as the week goes by, until finally the tournament begins. It's rewarding to be part of a well-coordinated group intent on accomplishing a task, and it's especially gratifying seeing a professional on TV playing out of a bunker you've raked or hitting off a fairway you've cut.

If a PGA event seems a little intimidating, consider volunteering at a smaller event. There are USGA qualifiers, Senior PGA and LPGA events, and other events running all the time.

GOLF TOURNAMENT VOLUNTEERING DO'S AND DON'TS

As a tournament volunteer, you'll get to see golf from an exclusive angle and be part of something relatively few people ever do. If you're fortunate enough to get to work at one of these events, the following pointers will help ensure you're an asset — not a hindrance — to the maintenance team while also ensuring you get to experience everything a professional golf tournament has to offer.

DO:

30 The Bonnie Greensward | 2021 Issue V



Morning work on the first hole at Medinah Country Club during the 2012 Ryder Cup.

Express interest early

The bigger the event, the larger the number of people who will be interested in volunteering. Send an email, make a call, or use your contacts to get in touch with the person at the course who is in charge of organizing the grounds volunteer effort. The more flexible and available you can be, the better chance you'll have of getting on the crew.

Editor's note: Twenty-nine women lent their skills on The Olympic Club's grounds crew for the 2021 U.S. Women's Open. Get a look at course prep and the unique initiative to assemble a women-in-turf volunteer corps in [Women in turf shine at 2021 U.S. Women's Open](#).

Be on time

A continental breakfast is usually served before everyone heads out for morning jobs. The morning gathering is when the teams are set, the jobs explained and any contingencies dealt with. If you're missing, the whole thing goes on without you, and someone else has to pick up the slack.

Show up prepared for weather

I think most golf course maintenance folks get this, but just in case it doesn't come to mind: Be ready for anything weather-wise. The vast majority of the time, the tournament is going to be played regardless of the weather, so be ready to work in any conditions.

Ask how you can help

Now and then, when you're hanging around, you'll see someone grab some tools, a cart and a couple of crew members. In such instances, don't be afraid to offer your assistance. This is how great adventures can happen. One of the most singular experiences of my time working at golf tournaments came at the 2013 BMW Championship at Conway Farms Golf Club in Lake Forest, Ill., when they asked for

volunteers to squeegee. I know — doesn't sound like much fun, but this was while the tournament was going on. I spent the next 90 minutes squeegeeing the third green at Conway Farms as groups played through. It was amazing being on the green just off the line of play, in the rain, as the balls came into the green, sometimes directly overhead. We'd then walk onto the green and ask the players whether they wanted the line cleared of water. I was part of the action — something that wouldn't have happened if I hadn't raised my hand.

Meet people

People from literally all over the world come to these events, and most of them have free time on their hands between their shifts. There may even be someone who is "turf famous" in the group. Introduce yourself. Sidle up to folks at lunch and just say hello. I have yet to encounter someone in this business who won't say hello when you greet them. (Just be mindful to do your networking during a downtime — early mornings are definitely not a downtime!)

Watch golf

Most of us don't need another reason to feel bad about our golf games, but you should definitely watch professionals play golf. It's impressive on TV, but seeing them in person is a whole different feeling. It may seem counterintuitive, but watching pros play actually makes me feel better about my game. In any case, you should watch a little bit. And you never know —



you may witness something noteworthy (like the fastest round in PGA Tour history — more on that later).

Enjoy your status

Grounds badges can get you places on the golf course that most folks can't access. One of the most important rules of any tournament is not to bother the players (more on this in a bit), but if you want to check out the back chipping green from

Continued on next page



Pitching in at a pro golf tournament is an opportunity to gain exclusive on-course experience plus meet and work with turf industry professionals from near and far.

afar or the back putting green that isn't accessible by the public, ask someone from the course maintenance staff to give you a ride out and find a discreet place to sit and watch. Volunteers can usually come and go from the tournament as they please, so if you want to visit another local course or superintendent, this is a great time to do that as well.

Be thankful

Being part of a tournament can be a fantastic experience, and I know some people even drop the host superintendent

a thank-you note after it's all over. Free food, cool people, once-in-a-lifetime experiences — it's all there. There's hard work, sometimes boredom and a lack of sleep, but in the end, it's something that'll be memorable. Go in with an attitude of gratitude and you will enjoy it even more.

DON'T:

Show up late or skip it altogether

If you're this far along in the article, then you've already read about the amount of time and effort it takes to assemble a volunteer list and get a schedule put

together. Don't be the reason that schedule gets blown up. The golf business is a pretty small group of people — you don't want to establish a reputation as someone who can't be relied on.

Editor's note: Tiburón Golf Club in Naples, Fla., hosted three professional events in just five months' time in 2020-2021. The agronomy team discusses how they planned for and pulled off the feat in [Tiburón Golf Club's tournament trifecta](#).

Get in the way

Sometimes the hardest thing to do as a volunteer is just stay out of the way. When things start heating up and plans aren't working, the weather isn't cooperating, or a fitting cuts loose and part of the eighth green and a bunker get washed away overnight (this happened during the 2018 Senior Players Championship at Exmoor Country Club in Highland Park, Ill.), it's not the time to be asking about lunch or getting an extra hat. Jump in and lend a hand if needed, but don't get in the way.

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Count on it.

Over the past year or so we've talked about the improving supply/demand balance for golf in the U.S.

We continue to see indications of this move toward equilibrium in the year-end 2021 data, from a drop in course closures and improved overall facility health to an increase (however slight) ... yes, an increase... in not one, but two facility types.

Golf courses are always going to close, such is the nature of any business. And when you have a business with an average footprint of about 150 acres, that's going to hold particular interest for developers. So, it's notable that the number of golf course closures in 2021 – 130.5 as measured in 18-hole equivalents – is down 53% from its peak two years ago, prior to the pandemic.

That's less than a 1% decline in the overall U.S. supply, which totals 16,035 golf courses across 14,033 facilities nationwide.

[MEMBERS CAN CLICK HERE TO GET THE FULL 2022 U.S. FACILITIES REPORT](#)

So, how big is the U.S. market really?

Consider that if you combined all the courses in golf-rich countries like Australia, Canada, England, France, Germany, Ireland, Japan, New Zealand, Scotland, South Africa, South Korea, Sweden and Thailand, the U.S. still has over 400 more.

This despite the number of U.S. courses (measured in 18-HEQ) having dipped about 11% from its peak as the market continues to right-size. During the ongoing correction, more courses have closed than opened every year since 2006.

The impetus for this shift – beyond the unsustainable building boom that saw over 4,000 courses open in the two-decade span up to that point – was the burst of the housing bubble that precipitated the Great Recession.

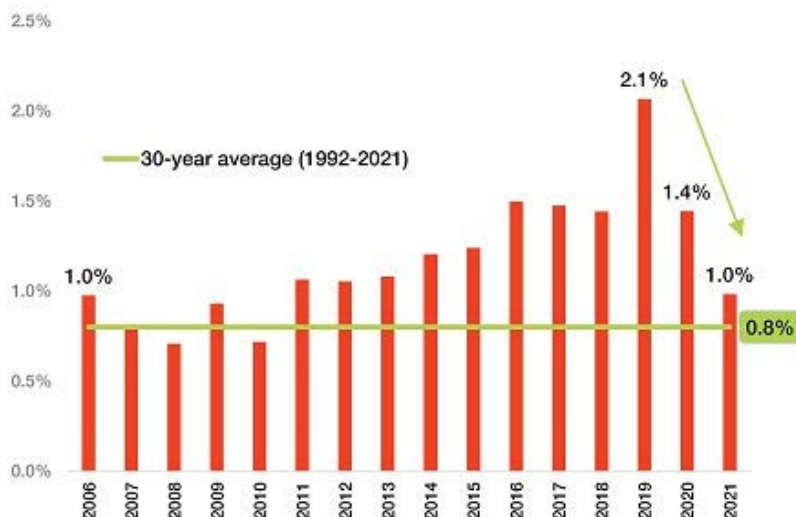
This continued correction makes it noteworthy that the number of municipal and private courses increased in 2021.

The number of munis has actually risen by 4% over the past decade, mainly boosted by municipalities acquiring financially-challenged daily fee or private clubs and offering them as a community amenity and preserved green space.

Perhaps more surprising is that the private course total increased in 2021 for the first time since 2007. In recent years, private supply had experienced a slight downturn, mostly because of financially-strapped midlevel clubs closing or converting to public facilities. The net rise of 12 courses isn't dramatic, but it's another indicator of the movement toward a better balance of supply and demand. ♦

Joseph F Beditz, Ph.D.
President and Chief Executive Officer
National Golf Foundation
Joe_Beditz@ngf.org
o: 561-743-1625
501 N Hwy A1A, Jupiter FL 33477
www.ngf.org

U.S. Golf Course Closures (as % of Total Supply) Measured in 18-Hole Equivalents†



Source: National Golf Foundation

† 18-hole equivalent (18-HEQ) is a measure of golf supply calculated by taking the total number of golf holes and dividing by 18 (e.g., one 18-hole golf course equals one 18-hole equivalent, two 9-hole golf courses equal one 18-hole equivalent). This graphic can only be republished in its original form. Data herein cannot be visually repurposed without permission from NGF.

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PLAYING THE MIDWINTER YO-YO

by Elliott Dowling, agronomist, Northeast Region • February 04, 2022



Snow-free courses look open for play, but there can be good reasons why the course or greens are closed temporarily to prevent damage.

The uptick in rounds played since the start of the pandemic has continued through 2021 and into this winter. Reports from courses in Maryland and Virginia show upward of 900-1,000 rounds in December and the trend continued in January. If the weather cooperates, indications are that February won't be any different.

This time of year always brings the question, [what is the purpose of winter play](#)? In other words, what are the goals for the course and what risk(s) are you willing to take? In the southern part of the region, there is usually an expectation of playing golf throughout the winter. This doesn't mean the weather is warm or course conditions are in peak shape, but courses are snow-free and open.

Just because a course is free of snow though doesn't mean there isn't risk in playing. Playing on totally frozen soil carries less risk of damaging turf because the ground is solid, so injury from [root shear](#) is not a major concern. However, many courses from Philadelphia to Virginia Beach will find themselves with partially frozen soils at this time of year. Under these conditions, footsteps or vehicle traffic can cause the turf to shear away from its roots – resulting in damage that can take a significant amount of time to heal. If you have concerns about root shear, implementing [temporary greens](#) can prevent damage.

Courses farther north might be covered in snow and ice, which means they will be less focused on winter play and more concerned

with plant health. With plenty of winter weather still ahead of us, superintendents may be wondering how the grass is holding up. If ice and/or snow cover has persisted for a few weeks, now is the time to [sample for winter injury](#).

Winter golf is bonus golf. Scores cannot be posted for handicap purposes in most parts of the Northeast and courses are not groomed like they would be in summer. With that said, when the sun is shining and courses are open, golfers have certainly proved that they love the game and are willing to wear a few extra layers and get on the links. Superintendents need to be prepared to manage the impact of winter play so there aren't lingering effects in the spring. ♦

Northeast Region Agronomists:

Adam Moeller,
director, Green Section Education – amoeller@usga.org

Darin Bevard,
director, Championship Agronomy – dbevard@usga.org

Elliott Dowling, agronomist – edowling@usga.org

John Daniels, agronomist – jdaniels@usga.org

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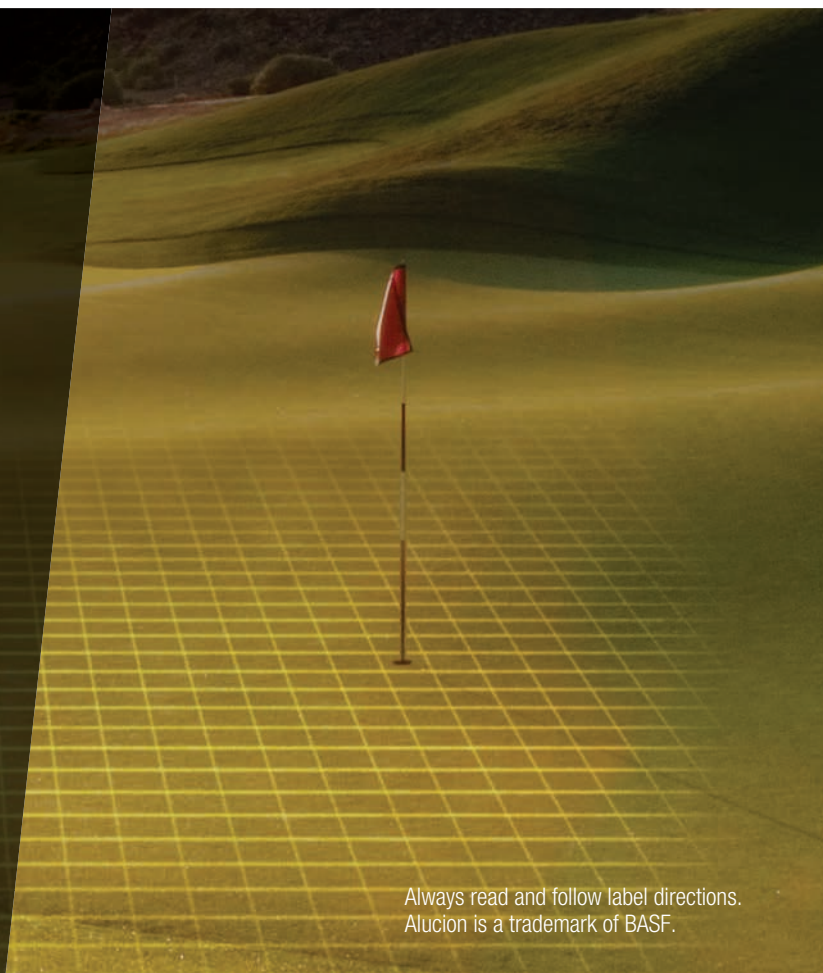
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