

**Innovative
Superintendent
Sessions:
Part I**

Golf Course Maintenance Center at Prestonwood

*John D. Hilton
Prestonwood Country Club
Cary, N.C.*

Prestonwood Country Club is a private golf club with three eighteen hole golf courses within a 2,000 acre residential development. There are nine tennis courts and three swimming pools. The club contains a 36,000-square-foot club house, a fitness center, and a quality golf practice facility with three practice putting greens ranging in size from 23,000 square feet to 9,500 square feet. The practice tee covers 44,000 square feet.

The original maintenance facility was constructed by the first developer in 1986 and was actually inadequate when completed. With a square footage of only 3,000 and having 8-foot ceilings, it was not acceptable for equipment storage. Most of the maintenance equipment was stored in a fenced area and exposed to adverse weather conditions. There was no pesticide storage structure so it was necessary to use a rented trailer for this purpose. For two and a half years there was no telephone service to the maintenance office.

In 1991, Prestonwood was bought by an individual and plans were begun for additions to the golf courses as well as other improvements. Finally, in 1994, construction was started on a new maintenance building. The owner and general manager of Prestonwood Country Club issued three requirements that the building had to meet:

- There was to be only one structure.
- It had to be a low profile building because of its proximity to the residential community.
- The building had to house every piece of equipment that was owned by Prestonwood Country Club.

With these things in mind, a development plan was started. There were many things to consider, such as site work, pesticide storage, access, mechanical area, office space, parking, security and wash pads.

Cities and counties have a set of building codes with which builders must comply. Use of the building will control how the codes are applied. Such things as load limits, restroom requirements, types of construction materials, parking spaces required, fire protection, water requirements, access to streets and driveways, and plumbing and electrical work are among the items that will be effected by various codes.

After we developed our plan, it was given to a team of engineers and an architect to build plans that would be presented to the city of Cary for permitting. A submitted plan must bear the seal of a licensed engineer and architect. Once these plans have been accepted by the proper permitting agencies, they can not be altered in the field without written approval from the permitter in form of a variance or change order. Site work was the first thing done after the area was properly surveyed and the project started. After completion of the site work and storm drainage, the building pad area was prepared. Final floor grade was determined and all plumbing and electrical work that was to be under the floor was installed. Foundations were prepared and a concrete floor poured. Our building pad is 5 inches of 4,000 psi concrete with a vapor barrier and re-enforcing wire underneath. After the pad was completed, the steel work began. Our building is a steel frame and roof with an architectural decorative block siding. All outside block walls are foam insulated and all inside block fire walls are mortar filled.

Each bay within the storage area has an electrically controlled 24-foot-wide overhead door on either side. The fertilizer storage room has a 16-foot-wide overhead door on either side for drive through purposes. The chemical storage room has a 6-inch recessed, treated concrete door with no floor drain; therefore, it will contain any spill within the confines. All lighting fixtures in this room meet explosion proof standards. The shelving is metal, and the room has its own air circulation and ventilation system. The unit installed for heating this room also has the capacity to air-condition for cooling purposes. The chemical-mixing and wash-down room is adjacent to, but separate from, the chemical storage area. This room has a 16-foot-wide overhead door, fill and wash-down facilities, eye wash, mixing basin, emergency shower and a self-help alarm system. Only chemical spray equipment enters this room.

Office spaces are provided for a receptionist, a golf course superintendent, three assistant superintendents, a landscape superintendent, an irrigation superintendent and a construction superintendent. There is a staff room for 50 full-time employees with handicap accessible bathrooms for male and female employees. Each bathroom contains a locker for each employee and a shower. The staff room has a TV for use in Video/Safety Training, a microwave oven, an electric range, a refrigerator, a dishwasher, snack machines, a drink machine and a coffee maker. There is also cabinet space for storage of silverware and other items.

There is a room in the building that we refer to as the "set-up room." It has an ice machine, storage for coolers and cups used on the golf course, and a clothes washer and dryer. The building is equipped with a fire-alarm system tied to strobe lighting which meets the requirements for the Americans with Disabilities Act. Because of the size of our building, a paging system was made a part of our telephone system. All ventilation systems were planned considering the cubic feet of air that is needed to be replaced on an hourly basis. The equipment wash pad has eight stations with overhead retractable hose reels. There are four air hose stations for blowing off the machinery before washing. The entire wash pad is under the roof. Our waste water passes through six screening baffles then into a 4-by-4-foot collection basket which is also lined with a screening material. The water continues to flow to a

separator/settling tank and finally into the sanitary sewer. All hose reels have a drain valve leading to an air blow-out valve which completely voids the system of water in cold weather and prevents frozen or broken water lines and hoses. The 4-by-4-foot collection basket is lifted by an electric hoist for disposal of contents.

The fueling system is computerized with an emergency cut-off. The computer will red flag preventive maintenance schedules based on odometer and hour meter readings. Our site is landscaped, fenced, and all parking areas are concrete.

Facility Size in Square Feet

• Offices and staff areas	2,250
• Mechanical	4,500
• Equipment storage	11,250
• Chemical storage	925
• Chemical mixing and wash down	950
• Fertilizer storage	1,500
• Equipment wash down	1,875
	<hr/>
	23,250 square feet

Employee Recognition Programs for Reward and Motivation

*Carol Thomas, CGCS
Dodgertown & Conference Center
Vero Beach, Fla.*

The popularity of golf has spurred the development of many new golf courses. In some geographical areas, the job pool is limited and courses compete for employees to work at their facilities. Hiring new employees is costly when one considers the time and money that may be spent advertising a position, interviewing, drug-testing, orienting, outfitting and training a new staff member.

Thus, it is becoming more important to retain the employees that have been trained to a specific set of standards used at a facility. It is also apparent that the amount of money that an employee is paid is not going to be the sole factor that the employee uses in deciding to remain at a specific location. Employee benefits, the desire for a pleasant work environment, and company stability have taken upper importance with many employees. Trying to retain employees by using only salary as a leverage point can diminish work performance and negatively affect attitude toward work. "Cracking the whip" to try to get employees to perform over the long term is, for the most part, a management tool of the past. Strictness and discipline must still exist for optimum work efficiency, but they must be carefully blended with things that appeal to the employee's sense of individualism and self-worth so the employee will be motivated to work productively.

Employees will be motivated when they are recognized for their accomplishments. Recognition for both performance and personal achievements helps elevate individual self-esteem and promote camaraderie in the work group as a whole.

To be most effective, the employee recognition should be made in as many public forms as possible and be supported with something tangible. Decide what situation warrants what form of announcement, but consider using one or more of the following: photographs, certificates, letters that become part of the personnel file, printed flyers posted in prominent locations such as employee bulletin boards, a write-up in an employee newsletter or local newspaper, and public congratulations at an employee meeting or outing.

Dodgertown uses the following programs and rewards to recognize employees for performance achievements:

Employee of the Month: All employees are eligible to be nominated by a department head for outstanding work performance. Department heads vote. The winner gets a \$50 gift certificate to use for merchandise or food at the Country Club, a framed certificate, an Employee of the Month name pin, a baseball cap, an autographed baseball, and the chance to be Employee of the Year.

Employee of the Year: All Employees of the Month are eligible. Department heads vote. The winner gets two round trip airline tickets to a destination of their choice and \$200 cash spending money.

Fielder's Choice Award: Anyone can nominate anyone for recognition of an employee doing something outstanding--something above and beyond what would normally be expected to help a client, the company, or another employee. Supervisors vote on a quarterly basis. The top three vote getters receive \$50 cash and a framed certificate.

Grounds Maintenance Employee Recognition Award: Employees are nominated by supervisors for exceptional work performance. Employees vote. The winner gets a framed certificate, a letter for their personnel file posted with their photo on the employee bulletin board, and \$10 cash.

Dodgertown uses the following programs and rewards to recognize employees for personal achievements:

Annual service anniversary: Employees receive a letter from the Director of Dodgertown thanking them for another year of service. The letter can be used to have dinner for two at the Country Club.

Recognition of long-term service: Jeweled service pins are awarded for one, three, and five years of service. A watch is given for 10 years of service, and a mantle clock for 20 years. Presentations are made publicly at employee company outings.

Birthday recognition: Employee birthdays are recognized monthly at Grounds Maintenance employee meetings. Beverages and cupcakes are served.

Paycheck lotto: To encourage employees to read the notices in their paychecks, once a month an employee ID number is picked at random and printed on the paychecks. If the employee recognizes his number, he wins \$25 cash.

Employee thank you parties and golf outings: Employees compete for prizes and are recognized for accomplishments.

Aluminum-can recycling program: Grounds maintenance employees save drink cans. Random drawings of employee names are made at monthly employee meetings with \$10 cash awarded for each name drawn.

Employee newsletter: Employees submit information to be published on a quarterly basis. It is a good way to publish personal achievements employees make outside work, highlight work awards, express a view, or share interesting information.

Is the Grass Telling You What to Do?

*Palmer Maples Jr., CGCS
Summit Chase Country Club
Snellville, Ga.*

Everybody feels they have the worst conditions to work with to produce a good turf, no matter their location. In Atlanta and the Southeast we have our own challenge. How should we respond? Life is a series of actions and reactions and we can frequently do well if we can cause the action rather than always having to react. As we plan for any occasion, such as a vacation, a fishing trip, buying a house, and growing grass, the more variables we address and use in our plans, the better chance we have to survive the occasion for which we are planning. It is those unplanned for “things that happen” that may cause us to have some stress at one time or another.

In the dictionary, stress is found between strength and stretch. If we use our strength to plan, and stretch our imaginations as we get ready, we can be ready for each day. Not only do we have our bodies to take care of, we have the grass plants to take care of as well. For our bodies we can eat the right foods, get enough rest, get exercise, and plan our work. For the grass, we can soil test, fertilize, mow, aerify, water, apply pesticides, and adjust for weather conditions. As we plan our work and work our plan, we can tell the grass what to do.

Flooded! Putting Your Course Back Together

*J.D. Clarizio
Arrowhead Golf Club
Molalla, Ore.*

One of the most difficult aspects of being a golf course superintendent is dealing with unexpected natural disasters. Courses which are located near creeks or rivers face the potential danger of flooding every year. To deal with these situations, a superintendent should have a plan of action to respond quickly and effectively.

The central goal after a flood is to put the golf course back in play as quickly as possible. Determining where to start is of the utmost importance. Three key factors should be considered to help in this process:

1. damage to finer turf areas that need immediate attention;
2. repair to main routes of transportation;
3. evaluation of playability and opening of other holes. While these vary to some degree they are crucial to determine before getting started.

When a plan of attack is agreed upon, the clean up process may begin. Clean up methods will vary. However with any flood, silt, rocks and debris must be cleaned up. Silt must be removed from turf areas as soon as possible to prevent desiccation. Locations should be designated that offer easy access for dumping of silt and other debris for future removal. Rocks and debris will need to be hand picked and raked ensuring that all are removed to prevent any damage to equipment when mowing takes place. The use of volunteers, such as members, clubs and youth or church groups is very beneficial not only for speeding up the clean up process but also for the sense of camaraderie and community involvement.

As the clean up process continues, repair work is soon to follow. Because large amounts of silt often accompany floods, it may be impossible to remove it or to prevent desiccation to turf. Seeding these areas as soon as weather conditions permit is a must. Aerifying plugs are a great source for filling in minor rips or holes in fairways and rough. Greens and tees may have to be completely rebuilt depending upon the extent of damage. Lesser damage on greens and tees may be repaired with the proper root zone mixtures and seed, sod, or plugs. Cart paths may be temporarily graveled until asphaltting can take place later. Irrigation repairs may be done in house, however outside consultation or help may be needed for more serious repairs.

No matter how much planning takes place, it is very difficult to prepare for the damage that floods can bring. Superintendents can only do what is humanly possible to bring golf holes back into play as soon as possible. The Northwest flood of 1996 left many courses severely damaged along with whole communities. We are thankful that with time and a lot of effort the damage can be repaired.

Night Management Practices: Headache or Opportunity?

Mike Kitchen

The Coeur d'Alene Resort Golf Course

Coeur d'Alene, Idaho

Things are done differently at the Coeur d'Alene Resort Golf Course. One obvious example of this is the floating green. Another example is the night maintenance program. All routine maintenance, with the exception of greens mowing and hand watering, is performed after the last round.

This innovative approach to maintenance is the brainstorm of resort owners Duane Hagadone and Jerry Jaeger. Their intention is to provide the most peaceful and relaxing round of golf possible so as not to distract from the incredible beauty of the surrounding area.

There are several problems associated with mowing after the last round of golf. The most obvious is light. Nearly all of the equipment has to be modified by installing lights and in some cases additional batteries and alternators to power the lights.

Another problem we face is trying to water the golf course. The system was not designed with night mowing in mind and is therefore undersized given the "water window" that we have. The problem is that on most golf courses you could begin watering the entire course at nine o'clock. Because we are mowing at this time, we have to program the system to follow us around the course. As a result, the system is not allowed to work at its peak efficiency until midnight when we have finished mowing.

Another significant disadvantage of night maintenance is keeping track of employees. Personnel management becomes much more difficult when you are unable to see your employees.

Every situation has both advantages and disadvantages. The primary benefit to night maintenance, besides providing an undisturbed round of golf, is the flexibility it gives the superintendent in instituting agronomic practices. For example, topdressing greens becomes easier when you don't have to race to stay in front of play. This same flexibility aids in aerification as well as fertilizer and pesticide applications. Furthermore, special projects can be accomplished without a guest ever being disturbed.

In addition to management benefits, there are also agronomic benefits to night maintenance. The primary benefit is that mowing dry grass greatly reduces the chances for skid marks and reduces compaction.

Night maintenance works well at the Coeur d'Alene because of a unique situation. There are no houses intermingled throughout the layout. Obviously, when there are houses spread through the course, noise at midnight is not a viable option.

Learning From Experienced Superintendents

*Michael R. Bavier Jr.
Ivanhoe Country Club
Ivanhoe, Ill.*

Today, golf course superintendents are as cautious as ever when hiring an individual for a particular grounds maintenance position. With many changing environmental issues, technological advances and golf course maintenance techniques affecting an employer's management style, a superintendent must be aware of an individual's potential and knowledge toward these and other issues.

How is this knowledge gained? It begins with an ambitious individual who has a desire to learn the trade. Proper educational training is a start. Most importantly, however, the individual must collect various tips or suggestions from his or her existing employer and other golf course superintendents. Every superintendent has a procedure for obtaining similar goals. Getting to know other superintendents in the field and learning their different agronomic practices and management philosophies will establish a foundation from which the individual can grow.

Once a commitment has been made toward furthering the individual's career in the golf course management field, it is important for the eager superintendent to show the aspiring individual the ropes. Hands-on experience in the workplace, including daily agronomic practices, budgeting and inventory, along with attending meetings, local seminars and national conventions should all be encouraged by the superintendent to help the individual succeed at a top technical level and establish necessary social contacts with experienced superintendents.