

Fall Issue 2020

GreenMaster

Official Publication of the CGSA



COVID-19



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Teams Come Together

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I hope all our members and families

have been able to stay safe during this pandemic thus far. With many courses open under new provincial health guidelines, it seems everyone is continually adapting to the ever-changing new "normal."

These past few months have really opened my eyes to all that is going on around the world including how resilient, not just our profession, but the entire golf industry has been during these unprecedented times. At a time of uncertainty, everyone rallied together to help each other out, whether it was GMs or golf professionals cutting fairways, or food and beverage managers and accountants removing tarps in the spring, it demonstrates how united our teams truly are and how much they want to see the golf course succeed. I am especially proud of our team at CGSA and all they have done through these difficult times with their continued support to our valued members and regional associations across the country.

Some changes have taken place within the CGSA, as both the staff and board have been continually re-evaluating and tweaking the current operations and future events for the remainder of the year. Realizing early on that many courses could be potentially facing financial difficulties,

CGSA decided it was in the best interest to postpone membership renewals from April to the beginning of June when most courses were open. Since then, we have seen a steady receipt of membership renewals, which in turn is helping with our overall operating budget. Should you have a concern with renewing at this time, please reach out to CGSA staff to discuss options. We thank all of you for the continued support and look forward to continuing our service to you!

Unfortunately, due to the many unknowns in the months leading up, we have also had to make some tough decisions by postponing the inaugural Canadian Golf Industry Show as well as the cancellation of the 2020 Fall Field Day at Beacon Hall Golf Club. With that being said, I am thrilled to say that the CGSA staff has been working diligently on some new and exciting opportunities for our future events. More details on these initiatives will be coming soon.

Lastly, on an encouraging note, we have seen the game of golf grow consistently across many provinces these past few months and that is helping several golf facilities make up for some of the lost revenues that they have incurred so far. Hopefully, that positive trend continues into the months and years ahead. **GM**

Nos équipes se serrent les coudes

J'espère que vous restez en sécurité, vous et votre famille, au cours de cette pandémie. Plusieurs terrains de golf sont maintenant ouverts, conformément aux nouvelles lignes directrices provinciales sur la santé. Tout le monde semble s'adapter à cette nouvelle situation toujours en constante évolution.

Ces derniers mois m'ont vraiment ouvert les yeux sur tout ce qui se passe dans le monde. Entre autres, j'ai remarqué jusqu'à quel point nous sommes résilients, non seulement dans notre profession, mais également dans l'ensemble de l'industrie du golf. En cette période exceptionnelle, tout le monde met l'épaule à la roue, que ce soit les directeurs ou les professionnels du golf pour couper le gazon des allées, ou les gestionnaires et comptables de la restauration et des boissons pour retirer les bâches de protection au printemps. Cela nous montre à quel point nos équipes partagent toutes un même objectif, à savoir notre succès à tous. Je suis particulièrement fier de ce que notre personnel de l'ACSG a accompli au cours de ces moments difficiles pour soutenir nos précieux membres et les associations régionales de tout le pays.

Étant donné que le personnel et le conseil d'administration réévaluent et ajustent constamment nos activités en fonction des événements actuels et des prévisions pour le reste de l'année, certains changements ont été apportés au sein de l'ACSG. Très tôt, nous avons réalisé que de

nombreux terrains de golf feraient face à des difficultés financières. L'ACSG a donc décidé qu'il était dans l'intérêt supérieur de tous de reporter le renouvellement des adhésions d'avril au début juin, lorsque la plupart des parcours seraient ouverts. Depuis lors, les renouvellements d'adhésion vont bon train, ce qui nous permet à notre tour de boucler notre budget de fonctionnement global. Si vous avez de la difficulté à renouveler votre adhésion en ce moment, veuillez communiquer avec le personnel de l'ACSG pour discuter des options possibles. Nous vous remercions tous pour votre fidèle soutien et nous sommes très heureux de pouvoir continuer à vous servir !

Malheureusement, en raison des nombreuses incertitudes qui planent à l'horizon, nous avons également été forcés de prendre des décisions difficiles en remettant le premier Salon canadien de l'industrie du golf et en annulant le Tournoi automnal 2020 qui devait avoir lieu au Beacon Hall Golf Club. Cela étant dit, je suis ravi de dire que le personnel de l'ACSG a travaillé avec diligence sur de nouveaux projets intéressants pour nos futurs événements. Nous vous donnerons bientôt de plus amples détails à ce sujet.

Pour terminer sur une note encourageante, nous avons constaté que le golf a repris du galon dans de nombreuses provinces au cours des derniers mois. Cela a permis à plusieurs terrains de golf de récupérer une partie des revenus perdus jusqu'à présent. Espérons que cette tendance positive se poursuivra au cours des mois et des années à venir. **GM**

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Onwards and Upwards

Looking ahead, the CGSA is proud to be a partner in a new global initiative called "Thank Your Superintendent Day" that will simultaneously occur in many countries. Sometimes, we are the unsung heroes of the golf industry, including the front-line commitments of supers during this COVID-19 crisis. It is great to be honouring our profession and the leaders within it during this inaugural event.

We will also be announcing plans for our 2021 Canadian Golf Course Management Conference which will be held in early March. Having had to postpone the combined CGSA-NGCOA Canada-PGA conference due to COVID-19, we will once again be presenting our annual conference solo. We have been researching several contingency plans for this event so that we are ready to offer whatever combination of virtual and in-person content is needed.

Additionally, we are about to release the latest Economic Impact Study in conjunction with our We Are Golf partners. This report is released every five years and provides important measurement of the financial scale of the Canadian golf industry, which then gets leveraged to support critical government advocacy and to evaluate trends in our industry.

In the meantime, this issue of GreenMaster brings you some great articles on Rethinking Innovation, Vermicomposting, Winter Greens Protection, Turfgrass Management Education, Profile of Morgan Creighton, our CGSA President's Message, in addition to the cover story.

So enjoy the read, stay healthy, and all the best for the rest of the golf season!

Respectfully,
*Jeff Calderwood, Executive Director
Canadian Golf Superintendents
Association*

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Our feature story in this edition of

GreenMaster highlights the impact that COVID-19 is having on superintendents and their teams across Canada. It has been a challenging year for most.

Similarly, the CGSA has had to manage through numerous unexpected circumstances that were beyond our full control.

With cancelled events and the risk of golf course operating budget cutbacks, we proactively crunched numerous contingency budgets to be ready for whatever financial realities may follow. Your board of directors then implemented a more conservative contingency budget mid-year, which was prudent. Our staff team had to make some compromises in order to manage this reduced budget and I would like to take this opportunity to thank each of them for such deep commitments to the best interests of the CGSA membership.

The good news is that our membership renewals are tracking better than anticipated and we are pleased to see so many new members joining this year. Hopefully, it helped that we delayed our invoicing out of respect for the uncertainty in the marketplace, and that the CGSA has been providing critical leadership throughout the pandemic.

We also entered the COVID-19 period in a relatively strong position, having just had the two best financial years at the CGSA since 2003. So, despite the challenges, your national association remains well positioned to serve your best interests through the current uncertainties and beyond.



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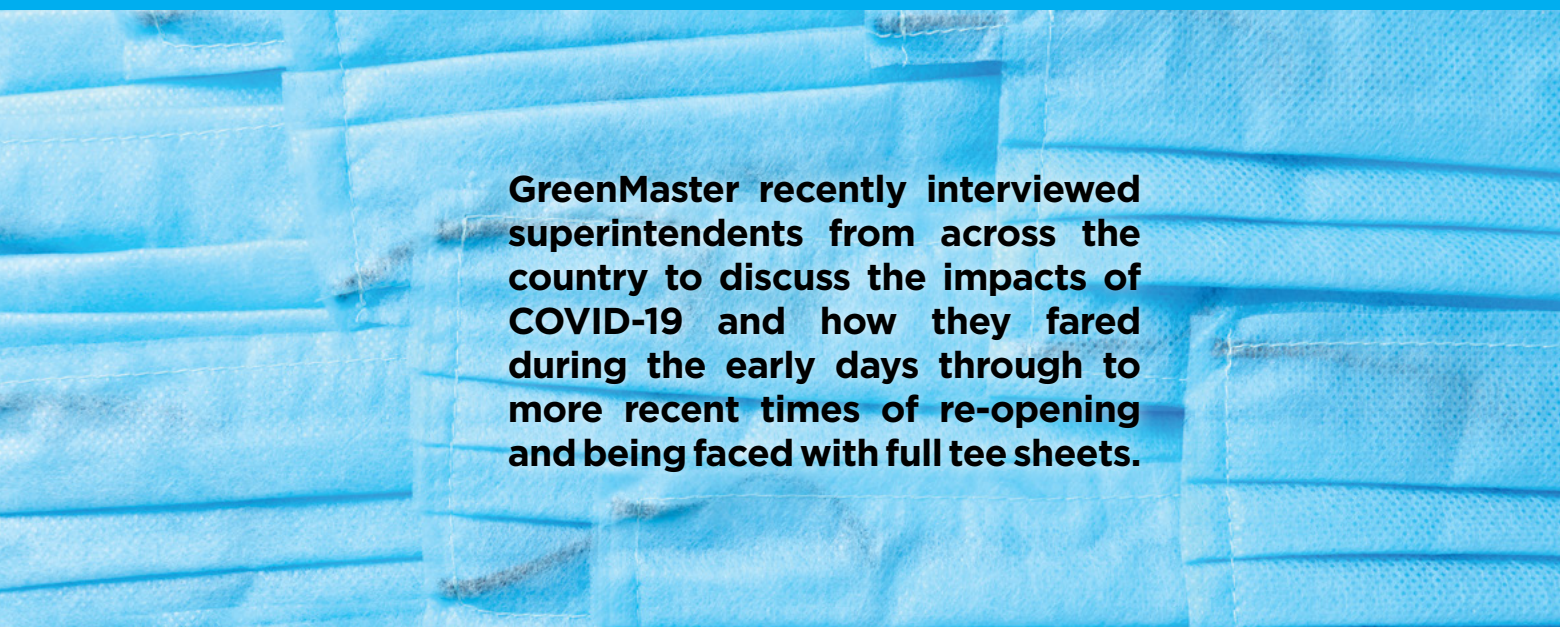
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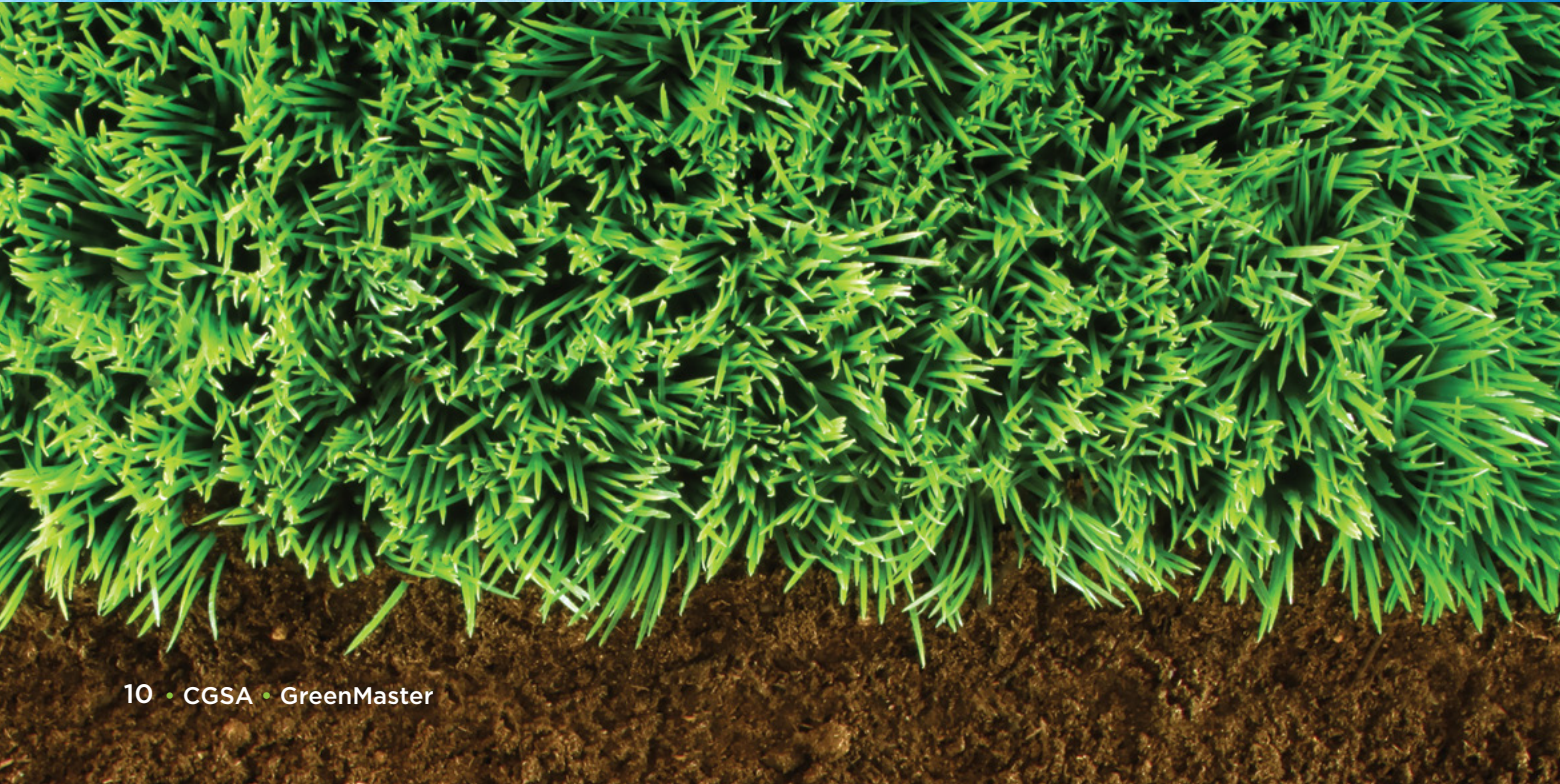
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A Season



GreenMaster recently interviewed superintendents from across the country to discuss the impacts of COVID-19 and how they fared during the early days through to more recent times of re-opening and being faced with full tee sheets.



Like No Other

UNPRECEDENTED TIMES

The spring of 2020 was like no other; and far from the norm. It was a challenge for many when faced with the COVID-19 pandemic and golf courses were not immune to the wrath of the virus. In mid to late March, nearly every province and territory had declared a state of emergency and shut down non-essential businesses to slow the spread or flatten the curve. The exception to that was British Columbia, who did not mandate business closures for all non-essential activities; but some jurisdictions did require closures.

Superintendents are accustomed to facing adversity, are pretty ingenious and with a bit of innovation, new practices were put in place. The timing of the closures during the early part of the spring allowed many courses to adhere to fairly regular activities since snow cover or frost was still prominent. However, in British Columbia most of the province was busy gearing up for the spring, as many courses don't fully close or were preparing to re-open. As the weeks moved along it became clear that

'We stressed within our team that we will make educated decisions based upon safety and facts however a decision today may not be the right one tomorrow.'

the shutdowns would be in place for longer than initially anticipated, and concern set in. The CGSA Board of Directors began meeting weekly to discuss the state of the industry and brainstorm ways to weather this storm and continue to service the members.

CGSA staff began calling superintendent members across the country to see if there was anything that the association could do to further support them during this time. Several guidelines and protocols were developed and sent to members. The golf community as a whole came together and worked cooperatively to bring the right messaging to the right people. During this time, more and more was coming to light about the virus and how to prevent the spread. For many, staying home was not an option.

Superintendents began to re-imagine their daily work and created protocols to protect their staff and themselves from falling ill to the virus. The way staff came to work everyday and were on site performing their daily activities had to be re-imagined; everything from how to maintain the turf, staff meetings and interaction as well as how to service equipment had to be discussed.

Since British Columbia had numerous golf courses that stayed open, these superintendents became the beta test to see how the safety protocols were feasible and would work in the turf department. Many of them did work; and were tested by various health departments in the province. These safety measures were able to be transported across provincial borders and allowed other provincial officials to recognize that golf was a safe option to allow when so many others were not. If speaking generally, golf is not much more than a long walk in an open space – a golf course covers numerous acres and allows plenty of space for safe physical distancing.



Safety kits are organized for each team member at RiverBend Golf Community in London, Ontario.



Karen Buchanan, RiverBend Golf Community's gardener, enjoying a tailgate lunch.

GreenMaster (GM) spoke with the following superintendents:

Matt Mamone (MM) is the Superintendent at Bear Mountain Golf Course in Victoria, BC. As part of his role he manages two 18-hole courses as part of a resort. Bear Mountain is a semi-private facility with member, public, resort and event play.

Scott MacArthur (SM) is the Superintendent at Country Hills Golf Club in Calgary, Alberta. Country Hills is a private golf club.

Kevin Collier (KC) is the Superintendent at RiverBend Golf Community in London, Ontario; a private gated golf course community.

Merlin Affleck (MA) is Superintendent at Stanhope Golf & Country Club in Stanhope, PEI. The course is a public golf course with some members.

Most of these professionals were faced with the uncertainty of COVID-19. Although Mamone did not close the doors to the entire facility and Bear Mountain kept one course open for the members to play, the others were all shut down due to government order. The official re-opening announcements came from the government (April 28 for Affleck, May 4 for MacArthur) and within days the courses were welcoming members and guests. The last to receive word to open was Collier

in Ontario; with a notice on May 14th, the government lifted the closed orders and golf courses in Ontario could officially open on May 16th.

GM: What was the greatest challenge you faced as Superintendent during the pandemic?

MM: The uncertainty. Generally, our job involves making changes and adjustments due to weather or tournament demands, but the unknown of the situation was difficult to navigate. In BC, we were not 'shut down' like other provinces. But, we had to adjust daily to government recommendations and treat every day as we may not be back on site the following day.

SM: Reduced staffing levels due to financial concerns at the club. This makes it harder to maintain the course standards our members are accustomed to.

KC: The unknowns when the environment was changing so rapidly. We stressed within our team that we will make educated decisions based upon safety and facts however a decision today may not be the right one tomorrow. It got us out of our comfort zone and routine as being proactive was becoming more challenging, especially



Merlin Affleck, with safety protocols in place at Stanhope Golf & Country Club, PEI.

transitioning out of the essential maintenance into a functioning open golf course.

MA: The unknown. PEI was the cleanest province with very low numbers of cases and all were directly related to travel. The constant worry that even with strict sanitizing and physical distancing something could change was stressful.

GM: How have operations changed since the start of COVID-19?

MM: Operations have been reduced in terms of staff numbers and daily maintenance. The current mindset is to maintain. The monthly cultural schedule has been put on hold and the team does what they can when the opportunity presents itself. The focus at Bear Mountain is to continue the fertility plan with some adjustments to keep up with the non-negotiable maintenance practices. Maintenance mornings have been reduced to increase revenue.

SM: Implementation of safety protocols have been working well, the golf services staff have been great.

KC: Safety has always been the number one priority. Numerous items were implemented at the start going to more virtual orientation and training. Staff were given varied start times to avoid

congregation. Intensified cleaning protocols were implemented with all staff required to abide by them.

MA: Safety protocols have been working well, although reminders are needed frequently as the course has been opened. Physical distancing has been pretty wide-spread as it was drilled into people before opening.

GM: How are golfers managing with the adjustment of safety protocols?

All superintendents agree; the learning curve for golfers was steep; but overall the protocols have been accepted and respected. Signage has been a requirement for all courses in every province. It was noted that reminders are required as it is easy to fall into an old routine. The government orders for re-opening and in the case of BC staying open; required all touch points be removed or limited. Bunker rakes, ball washers and water coolers were removed; and golf carts were mandated single riders only, unless two were from the same household.

With the continued uncertainty regarding restrictions, many clubs have had to cancel events; tournaments, weddings, banquets that typically bring in significant revenues. Knowing that

those revenues will not be available over the summer months for nearly every province has been a challenge to remain optimistic about operating budgets. Some clubs put aside their approved budget and accepted a contingency budget, putting projects on hold and implementing policies of essential expenditures only. The question remains about the extent of any revenue shortfall due to COVID-19, and that won't fully be answered until year end.

Some of the silver linings of the pandemic can be seen at many facilities. The ability to work together and form relationships between departments would never have happened. At RiverBend for example Collier notes, "Relationships continued to be built during that period (of closure) as the respect for what each person does within the club environment and to understand the struggles we may have during a normal season."

The ability to work together to get things done has been the biggest change. Affleck notes, "The courses on PEI learned that they had to work together when working with the government; it could no longer be competition for the best course conditions or marketing plans. It was all hands-on deck to help each other succeed."

MOVING FORWARD

Will things ever return to pre-COVID practices? While no one has a crystal ball to predict what the future holds, it would seem that the pandemic has changed so many things about our everyday lives.

It has taught patience and kindness along with optimism and determination. While the freedom to do what we want whenever we want may be some time in coming, at least the common ground and relationships built during this time will remain in place. Along with some amazing stories to tell future generations! **GM**

Rethinking and

I was out for a fantastic solo round of

golf at 8 a.m. at my home club, Credit Valley Golf & Country Club, in Mississauga, Ontario. I love early morning rounds, not just because it's the best time of the day for golf, but also because it gives me a chance to think about what I think about. I'm a 'futurist' who focuses on innovation and creativity, and when I'm on the course I'm not just golfing, I'm also busy inside my head.

I'm pondering questions such as, what's the future of agriculture? How does the science of turf health impact my speech to farmers at an upcoming agricultural science gathering? Where are we at with Internet-linked irrigation heads throughout the course, and how might this impact a talk I'll give later to a global environmental conference?

The work that golf course supers do is directly related to so many other trends that redefine our world. During these early rounds, I've often stopped to talk with the grounds crew because as a futurist, it's an opportunity for me to learn about the science of golf, including trends involving agriculture, irrigation, horticulture and more. Somewhere along the way, this insight feeds into some talk I'm doing for an unrelated industry in a far-away place.

In effect, one way I learn about trends and leadership is by talking with people.



The staff at Credit Valley Golf & Country Club taking time out to participate in a physical distancing photo op.

THE PANDEMIC, THE LOCKDOWN AND INNOVATION

In preparation for this article, I caught up with our new assistant superintendent, Steve Dampousse, at our 11th hole and asked him, "What one big thing did you learn as a golf superintendent from the pandemic and subsequent lockdown?"

Without missing a beat he said, "What it takes to be operating at minimums." I asked him what he meant; he clarified, "Essentially, the team had to learn how to operate with minimum staff, budget, time availability, and the usual inputs (fertilizer, etc.) related to turf and course management. Like many courses, we had to move to a 'worst case' budget scenario to get through. There was so much that was unknown. The thought of greens 'going bad' was terrifying to everyone."

Innovation Golf



If you think about it, this reality rocketed across the Canadian golf course industry at a speed that was simply staggering.

The primary lesson? You learned how to innovate at speed - doing things you never thought you might have to do, and do it at a blazing pace that you never, ever expected in your wildest imagination.

One of my taglines on stage is “the future belongs to those who are fast.” That was probably the mantra that drove you through the early stages of the lockdown - and from the look of my home course, you did it with stunning success.

So, how did you do it? After my round, I spoke to Chris Bouwers, our course and property manager. He

echoed Steve’s comments. Evidently, operating at minimums was lesson one. I bet the same happened at your facility. “Give me something else,” I said.

Chris immediately told me that they managed to get through with ‘operating at minimums’ by drawing on the combined skill and drive of the best staff. “If you are going to go into this type of thing and you can only do



Early morning maintenance at Credit Valley Golf & Country Club.



From left to right: Chris Bouwers, Course and Property Manager, Jason Hanna, Chief Operating Officer, Jim Carroll, Futurist, Steve Dampousse, 1st Assistant Superintendent, Donovan Fraser, Director of Golf.

it with 75% or less of your usual complement, you'd better make sure you have the right people."

Chris also explained that there was a lot of new, detailed insight on what 'operating at minimums' meant and found appreciation for the 'numbers' involved in course maintenance. The number of hours required for bunker maintenance, path trimming, and all the minor things that help a course look great, but that might have to be sacrificed in order to go to a base budget. The number of hours for cutting were known - but never analyzed and reanalyzed in such depth.

"We knew the numbers - we live and die by them; we schedule by them. But we now have a new appreciation for them and understand them in greater depth than ever before," said Chris.

EMBRACE CREATIVITY AT YOUR FACILITY

Chasing innovation out of necessity is one thing. There is no doubt the pandemic and lockdown drove creative and innovative thinking in the Canadian golf course superintendent industry to new heights. Innovative thinking driven by crisis is one thing; learning to sustain this type of creative thinking on a regular basis is another.

Hopefully, the powerful lessons that Canadian golf superintendents learned throughout the crisis will sustain them with the energy of creative lightning on a regular basis - just not as sustained and instant as was required with the pandemic.

With that in mind, let's go to the closing comments I offered up in March at your annual conference, just before our world came crashing down. I presented a list of 10 innovative ideas for doing something different on a golf course. To generate some buzz. Get people talking. Accelerate marketing. Get some social media viral sharing happening.

Here's what I came up with and many of them are ideas that run through my head during my regular rounds of golf.

- Continuous webcams on par 3s for a hole in one. Stick a few on some trees, let them film nonstop, and you are bound to grab some epic lifetime moments; the member or guest will thank you for it.
- Instagram frames. I would love to have a frame that a visitor could use to get the perfect selfie on our signature 6th hole, with #CreditValleyGolfClub displayed on the frame.
- A Masters style "Grandparent & Grandkid" par-3 tournament. Sadly, we lost our COO Ian Webb last year to an aggressive form of brain cancer. I was thinking about him in the early stages of his battle while at the gym, watching the Masters, and thought - why not host a tournament in his honour. Why not host a tournament like this at many courses? We're trying to reinvent golf as a family sport, so why not reach across the generations?
- A GO Train Shuttle! We're getting a lot of young financial executives from the downtown core trying out our club as Intermediates. They take a train out, play some golf, have some drinks, and pre-COVID: Uber-home. Why not try to expand our potential membership base by offering a free pickup with their trial membership?



Ideas like this are energy - we need innovative ideas to encourage the growth of the sport. As a golf superintendent, you should be aware that 'crazy' ideas like this are floating around, all over the golf universe.

ROADBLOCKS TO INNOVATION

As you know, golf is steeped in tradition and is structured to shut down these and any new ideas. Why? Because many of our golf clubs and the industry itself are structured with organizational sclerosis, closed minds, and initiative molasses.

I call it the 'innovation killer' attitudes, and you can identify this culture by the responses to new ideas, like the ones mentioned above. Responses that you will hear at your executive and board meetings include:

- Glow in the Dark Driving Range Nights! Family fun! Beverage sales! A Topgolf type of appeal, home on the range!
- Mandated Board of Director diversity. Lots of private courses are dominated by the same members - shake it up. I dare say I'm thrilled with the progress at Credit Valley - check out our Board!
- Ban any low-signup events for which we say, "But we hold it every year!" We seem to have a lot of dying events with declining numbers that block off the tee-sheet needlessly. Eliminate them.
- Reach them where they live - advertise on social media! It seemed in January, every time I was on Facebook, I would see an ad for a competing private club, Markland Woods. Why aren't we there?
- End of season buggy race. Lots of us are buying these wonderful devices. Why not have a special event at the end of the year before they go off to storage?
- Drone food and beverage delivery! There are courses in the US experimenting with this new and innovative technology. Why not try it here and get some buzz going.

- "You can't do that! It won't work because we have always done it this way..."
- "That's the dumbest thing I ever heard."
- "That's not my problem."
- "It's against tradition."
- "It's too risky." (3 bonus points)
- "I don't know how."
- "I don't think I can."
- "I didn't know that."
- "The boss won't go for it." (5 bonus points)
- "Why should I care?"
- "Rules won't allow it."
- "Don't rock the boat."

YOU ARE A PART OF THE PROGRESS

With the pandemic and lockdown, you have just been through the most dramatic period of intense innovation.

So, what role will you play to sustain and nurture that creative thinking as we all work together to grow interest in this sport, attract people to our courses, and help them discover the magic of the work that you do? You are an integral part of the progress and I challenge you to rethink innovation and golf at your facility. You never know what you might come up with. **GM**

10 SIGNS YOU'VE GOT AN INNOVATION DYSFUNCTION

Read this list. Is this your organization?

1. People laugh at new ideas.
2. Someone who identifies a problem is shunned.
3. Innovation is the privileged practice of a special group.
4. The phrase, "you can't do that because we've always done it this way" is used for every new idea.
5. No one can remember the last time anyone did anything really cool.
6. People think innovation is about R&D.
7. People have convinced themselves that competing on price is normal.
8. The organization is focused more on process than success.
9. There are lots of baby boomers about, and few people younger than 25.
10. After any type of surprise - product, market, industry or organizational change, everyone sits back and asks, "wow, where did that come from?"

The Decision

Growing up, I always struggled to settle on an idea of what I wanted to be. The concept of an interesting career or pursuit of passion just seemed to evade me. I attempted my hand at retail, I dabbled in hockey refereeing, and sweated out a number of other summer jobs, yet none filled me with the sense of pride or reward I was in search of. And then, one day in the summer of 2019 it all changed. That was the summer I decided to start working on a golf course.

The pursuit of turf management as a career path intrigued me almost immediately. It was like a light switch had flicked on in my brain. That first season I worked at Weston Golf and Country Club in Toronto. Under the guidance and support of Rob Ackermann, Matthew Legg and Steve Damphousse, I began to see myself growing, developing and thriving as an aspiring turf. I was learning new skills and gaining experience on a broad range of jobs, tasks, and operating equipment. I also began to realize that when you love what you do, work can be fun.

The summer of 2019 was the most important summer of my life. Prior to getting the job at Weston I had been accepted to the University of Guelph, for the Diploma in Turfgrass Management (DTM). However, it was my experience at Weston that solidified I had made the right decision to pursue a post-secondary education in the field.

Fast forward to current day, my classmates and I have just completed our first year and we are now staring down the barrel of our highly anticipated internships. I thought it would be a good exercise in reflection to share some of my experiences in the U of G DTM program so far.

The first day of class in the DTM program was a nerve-racking experience. I was about to meet the people that I would be spending the next two years with. Our class had a wide range of age groups and levels of experience, so it was especially intimidating since I only had the one summer on a golf course. Fortunately, my apprehensiveness immediately evolved into respect and admiration for my colleagues. Through class discussion and social activities, I quickly realized that we were learning as much from each other as we were from our instructors.

The DTM program makes it easy to build meaningful friendships along the way because we share all the same classes. We often move about campus as a single unit. Turf at Guelph is a force to be reckoned with. One of the things I really like about this program is that it is not all classroom-based learning. We do campus walks to learn how to identify tree species, and there is a course that is entirely field trips where we have the opportunity to visit various operations within the turf industry to meet their management teams and learn the different career paths that an education in turf has to offer.



Kevin Alder, high school graduation.

Some of those field trip destinations included Greenhorizons Sod Farms, BMO Field in Toronto, and several immaculate private golf courses such as Westmount Golf & Country Club in Kitchener, St. George's Golf and Country Club in Toronto and Beacon Hall Golf Club in Aurora (all in Ontario). Taking these trips really demonstrated the hard work and pride necessary to make it in this industry. It also gave us the chance to meet experienced and seasoned professionals which helps us start learning how to effectively build and utilize a professional network.

Greatest I Ever Made

This is the first of a two-part segment on turf industry student perspectives on turfgrass management in Canada.



University of Guelph Turf Management class visits the Greenhorizons Sod Farms.

When the DTM program affords us the chance to slow down and relax, which is not often, my classmates and I like to discuss our highlights so far in the program. The Aggie pub nights have been lots of fun and have helped us raise money for Turf Club. One particular event that stands out is the Alumni Golf tournament held every fall where instructors, alumni, and students across both years come together to network, tell stories, and play some golf at a local club. This past year was hosted by the DeCorso family at Victoria Park East in Guelph, Ontario.

I received lots of good advice that day and many of the connections I made have helped me grow more as a young professional. Reflecting on it now, I find it hard to believe how much has happened in those eight months. It makes me very optimistic for my growth this summer and returning to my studies this fall – whatever that may look like amid this pandemic.

I want to end this by saying if anybody is thinking about pursuing a career in turf management - JUST DO IT! You won't regret it. The opportunities in this industry for those with a formal education are tremendous. I still can't believe the number of high-quality postings and career positions that were posted on the

CGSA's and other provincial association job boards. I admit, post-secondary education is not without its financial hardships or personal challenges, but despite the ups and downs I have never enjoyed learning so much as I do in the DTM program. These past 8 months have been the most enjoyable time of my life and I still have part of the summer and my 2nd year left in the program.

I hope everyone is staying safe and I look forward to meeting you at various events in person when it is acceptable to get together once again. **GM**

► **FEATURE** ► REID SOLODAN, AGS, SUPERINTENDENT
CANMORE GOLF & CURLING CLUB



Vermico



Compost Bin Construction



Unit in Seacan



mposting 101



Compost Pile



Food scraps spread over compost product

In 2017, the Canmore Golf & Curling Club was approached by community gardener and farmer, Christian Wright, who is passionate about sustainability and founder of the pilot project, Sweet Earth. He presented me with a hand sketched drawing of a vermicomposting unit. At first, I was hesitant but after he brought me a small sample of his vermicomposting unit, I was sold on it. He convinced me that we could use grass clippings mixed with wood chips and food scraps to reduce our carbon footprint. The plan was to do the following:

1. Eliminate noxious odours.
2. Eliminate the release of methane into our atmosphere from anaerobic piles of decomposing grass clippings.
3. Prevent the leaching of harmful and toxic substances into the soils, which are created when piles of grass clippings are left to decompose in anaerobic piles.
4. Allow us to close the nutrient loop by converting a waste product into a value added resource.
5. By composting the grass clippings/prep kitchen scraps on site and recycling their nutrients back onto the golf course, we are turning waste into soil wealth.



Worms breaking down the vegetation



Worms breaking down the vegetation



Worm Casting Screening

In 2018, we built a vermicomposting unit and the process started!

VERMICOMPOSTING 101

Vermicomposting involves the biodegradation of organic matter by the joint action of special composting worms and microorganisms. Through this process the organic matter is stabilized into soil enhancing product that is rich in nutrients and beneficial microbes.

Vermicomposting improves soil porosity, water and nutrient holding capacity, and contains many nutrients

in a form that is readily absorbed by plant roots. With so much beneficial microbiology, it's like probiotic yogurt for the soil, stimulating vibrant plant growth and suppressing diseases.

I know there might be some concern about the smell associated with vermicomposting, but a well-managed vermicomposting system does not smell bad, rather it smells like fresh healthy earth. The worms are attracted to and feed on decomposing microbiology that would cause unpleasant odours.

THE PROCESS

We started with our compost pile from 2017, which consisted of grass clippings and wood chips that were constantly aerated through the summer months. The process starts by combining the correct ratio of high carbon materials (wood chips) with the grass clippings. They are then pre-composted for several days, periodically being actively aerated or stirred up. After the pre-composting phase



Screened Harvested Product



Worm Casting Screening



Product Mixed With Divot Mix

(when aerobic saprophytic bacteria and fungi have grown over all the surfaces of the organic materials) it is ready to feed to the composting worms.

The composting worms are attracted to and consume the organic materials that are covered with aerobic saprophytic microbiology so when the organic waste is consumed by the composting worms it is converted into nutrient dense, high quality soil amendment. The red wigglers are among the finest composters in the world. They are able to devour half their body weight a day.

After the vermicomposting product is harvested, it is screened to separate any wood chips and the vermicomposting is left to cure for a couple weeks before being applied to the golf course in divot mix, flower gardens, topdressing for rough, tees and fairways. In 2020, we will start to produce compost tees.

A YEAR LATER!

It has been a year since we started with 4lbs of red wigglers. We estimate that we now have over 50lbs of worms, which equates to 50,000 worms! This process is proven to reduce our costs on hauling product off site and to reduce and reuse. It checks all the boxes from a social point of view, an environmental point of view and an economic point of view. I would like to thank Peter Dall, Second Assistant Superintendent for all his assistance on this project! **GM**



Forward greens pro

Muskoka Lakes Golf & Country Club is

a classic Stanley Thompson designed course in the heart of Muskoka, Ontario. Originally built in 1919, it has its share of challenges, one of them being winter greens injury.

There are six greens on the property that are particularly susceptible to winter damage: be it hydration injury or anoxia due to extended ice cover. The winter of 2018/19 was particularly harsh due to multiple freezes and thaws throughout the winter in combination with extreme low temperatures and extended ice cover. A cold, wet spring did not assist us in re-seeding the damaged areas. We were left in a position of opening the course with temporary greens. The evidence of winter damage lasted well into June 2019.

So, it was time to make a change. We researched options and ultimately turned to Steve Hewgill, Regional Account Manager for BrettYoung. BrettYoung has a long history in Turfgrass Management in Western Canada and expanded into the Ontario market in 2015. BrettYoung's experience with harsh Prairie winters and seeing many customers transition to using GreenJacket impermeable



Hole # 13 green with ice damage, spring 2019.

cover system in conjunction with Futerra 7020 matting from Profile provided a proven option. The positive experiences at golf courses in Alberta and Saskatchewan using this process really helped in the decision-making process. We did not reinvent the wheel; we just used the best materials available to increase our success of overwintering these six greens.

Impermeable covers are not new to the golf business; neither is using a material to protect the green under the covers and allow the greens to breathe throughout the winter. Choosing GreenJacket impermeable covers and Futerra 7020 matting under the covers made sense. We used Nilex Multi-Flow flat piping to complete the project allowing us to use a backpack blower to blow fresh air under the covers.

thinking: **winter** tection **redefined**



Hole # 10 green with ice damage, spring 2019.

Sizing the covers was particularly important to make sure they were large enough to have the water move away from the green instead of getting under the cover. The Futerra matting is three-dimensional turf reinforcement mat; light and easy to position on the green but exceptionally durable and would not compress even with the weight of snow and ice bearing down on it. This was key to keep the air fresh

under the covers throughout the winter. The addition of Futerra matting and the venting system was the difference from previous attempts at protecting these greens.

Cost is always important when looking at a project and the Futerra matting has a long life lasting well beyond the life of the covers. GreenJacket covers come with a seven-year warranty so we used 7

years to amortize the cost per green of this project. We kept track of the cost of materials and labour to bring the six greens back in the spring of 2019 and compared it to the cost of this system over 7 years.

There was no comparison as the cost to repair outweighed the price of protecting them. Considering the disruption of play and the time our turf maintenance crew could have spent on other necessary duties; the board approved the expenditure to move forward with this new winter protection plan.

Setting up the system is pretty straightforward. The Futerra matting comes in 900 square foot rolls and is lightweight at only 75 pounds per roll. Make sure the entire green is covered with the matting. Once the matting is rolled out, you lay the vent out on top. The vent is flat and has a 90-degree coupler to four-inch drainage tile. We used an eight-foot length of drainage tile attached to a "T" stake to keep it upright. This is used to vent fresh air under the cover with a backpack blower in the winter. Next comes the cover. The GreenJacket cover comes with a kit that includes everything you need to install them properly. We



Close up of Futerra matting.

ordered the covers big enough to cover mounds around the green so water can't find its way under the cover.

The winter of 2019/20 was the typical "new normal" with plenty of snow combined with multiple thaws and extreme low temperatures. We vented the greens every 7-10 days beginning in January. We removed the covers April 1st and the pictures tell the story; they were flawless.

We had plenty of ice damage on the fairways indicating that if we didn't use this new cover system the greens would have come out of the winter looking like they did in 2018/19. Assistant Superintendent, Tyler Minogue, likes the ease of disassembling and storing the covers and matting. Tyler comments, "It took about 45 minutes per green with a staff of 4 to fold up the cover and roll up the Futerra matting. We also marked the matting to ensure they are used on the same green and same position next year."

We were very happy with the results. The membership was also pleased with the quality of the putting surface on these six greens especially compared to last year. Like many courses, COVID-19 has meant reduced staff and productivity. We can't imagine having to bring these greens back in these challenging times. **GM**



Installing GreenJacket cover over Futerra matting.



Hole # 13 green, spring 2020 with NO ice damage!



Hole # 5 fairway with ice damage, spring 2020.

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Breaking

I think it is safe to say that all of us have a strong passion for what we do, day in and day out no matter the challenges we are faced with. This resonates with the next person whom I would like to introduce you to. She is breaking down the barriers in this male dominated industry and is uniting women in turfgrass management across Canada. Allow me to introduce you to Morgan Creighton, Assistant Superintendent at The Glencoe Golf & Country Club in Calgary, Alberta.

Morgan started working in the golf turf industry at the young age of 16 while still in high school. "My sister, Dani, was working at Edmonton Petroleum Golf & Country Club and helped get me a job for the first month before summer school started." She mentioned, "Even though it was only a month, that is where I fell in love with the job."

The following year, Morgan accepted a position at the Edmonton Country Club, spending 4 years there while moving up the ranks and officially starting her amazing journey in the golf industry. Creighton knew she had the passion for this kind of work, however needed some formal education to advance her career. "I attended Olds College in Alberta in 2012, receiving my Turfgrass Management Diploma in 2014, and my degree in 2016."

Along her journey, Morgan continued to work and build up her repertoire at some incredible courses in Alberta and even took a little hiatus from the golf industry before returning to her roots. There have been many great people



Social distancing fertilization.

who have inspired Creighton throughout her career and helped propel her to where she is today.

One person in particular stood out when asked who influenced her the most in her career, "Without a doubt, my sister Dani!" Dani is currently the Landscape Manager at The Glencoe Golf & Country Club. "She is a brilliant woman who excels in everything that she does. Following in her footsteps has been a daunting task, but it has kept me focused and driven."

I'm sure her sister Dani would say the same about Morgan who has been an inspiration to many in this industry and has had her share of accomplishments including the creation of "Women in Turfgrass Management"



Morgan Creighton irrigating the course.

mentorship program for women enrolled in a Turfgrass related post-secondary institution in Canada. "This program has consumed every spare moment of my time since November 2019." She continued, "I have 8 students matched up with 4-6 established female mentors in the turf industry with the hope of seeing this grow in the future."

When she does have time to relax away from the golf course, she heads up to her family cottage in Northern

Barriers



Morgan attends Women in Golf presentation.



Cocoa helps with irrigation.

Alberta. "I love going up there. The cabin is the place where I can center myself; it is home. We fish, quad, hunt, and are together as our full family unit."

When not at the cabin or work, Morgan enjoys spending her time with her right-hand gal, Cocoa. "I adopted her 9 years ago from the Edmonton Humane Society and she has been with me ever since." Cocoa has previously been a course dog at two different courses, Edmonton Springs and LivingStone Golf Course. "Her favourite things to do are chase the geese and deer, go for a morning run, nap in the office, or visit the mechanic for cookies he has stored in his desk."

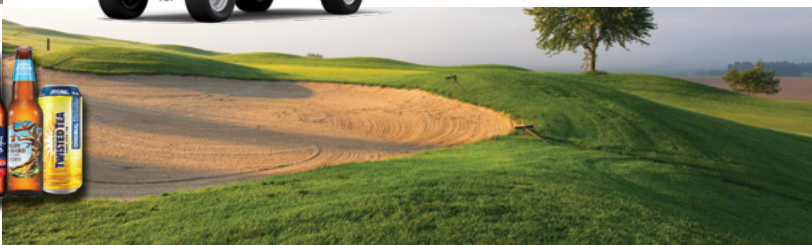
This industry is ever changing with new technologies that are instrumental in helping Assistants and

Superintendents save time and money with the regular daily operation at their courses. When asked what she felt was the biggest change since coming into the industry, she said "The use of autonomous mowers and GPS sprayers." She continued, "Last year, at The Glencoe, 10% of the budget was saved on our greens applications alone with the use of GPS sprayer technology."

Besides change, there are always challenges that we face at some point in our careers. The most challenging part for Morgan was finding a course that she wanted to settle down at. "Edmonton Country Club will always be my favourite as it is the course where I fell in love with turf. Since working there, I haven't seen a course

in my future, past my 'five-year plan'." She continued, "Coming to The Glencoe has changed that. This property is phenomenal. The vast difference in microclimates and management styles for different turf types allows for a steep learning curve for people coming to the property."

Lastly, I asked Morgan what she enjoyed most about working on a golf course and she said, "I find it very difficult to choose one thing that stands out to me about being on a golf course. I chose this job because it was outdoor work. I chose this as a career because of the environment and the tasks. If I had to choose one thing it would probably be seeing the sunrise every morning." **GM**



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