

Sup's Scoop

Pali Golf Course is Back!

Golf Course Superintendent Sean Demello and Maintenance Supervisor, Scott Voeller, renovate one of Oahu's oldest courses. (Story on page 3.)



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Aloha fellow Superintendents and Members of the HGCSA,

We are now well into 2009 and wow! What a year this is turning out to be. Summer has hit us a little earlier than usual with some odd winds and unusually high temperatures. Speaking from my own personal experience, I have to say that I just can't seem to keep up with the watering demands that this blistering weather has brought upon us. I hope that the rest of you are having more success in this area than I am.

The Hawaii Golf Alliance (HGA) recently held its first official meeting as an organization, and the ball has officially started rolling on what is to be the ONE voice that will represent everyone in golf for all matters that have an impact on our industry. It is hoped that, through this Alliance, the golf industry will be able to achieve better control over the economic and political forces that affect our industry's sustinment and growth. The HGA has asked us to provide a member from our organization to serve on their newly appointed board, and I want to thank Russ Dooge for taking the lead by volunteering to be our liaison for this most important undertaking.

Now for the topic that no one wants to discuss – the economy. By now everyone knows just how bad things are. Several of our colleagues have already lost their jobs because of this lingering recession, and things appear to only be moving deeper in the wrong direction. While I can't say I have the magic answers to help solve all of the world's problems, I do ask that you keep those that have been harder hit than yourselves in your thoughts, and that if an opportunity does arise, please pass that information on to them so that they can get back on their feet and provide needed support for their loved ones. If you know of anything that's available but don't know how to get the word out, let anyone from the HGCSA Board know and we will get it out on the grapevine for all our members to hear. You can contact myself, Les Jeremiah, Chad Higaki, Rory Allison, Russ Dooge, Clarence Nakatsukasa, or Gerald Yoza and we'll make sure the word gets disseminated from the Board.

Anyway, I hope that you enjoy reading this month's newsletter. Les and his team have again produced a fine newsletter for you to enjoy. I just want to wish everyone the best of luck in the coming months, and hope that we start to see a turnaround in health of our ailing economy.

Bob.

Patty Keaweamahi

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The Zen of Grass By: Vernon Thompson

The Pali Golf Course has just gotten a face lift that has long-time duffers scratching their heads and singing the praises of the City and County municipal golf course maintenance staff. "I have been golfing on the Pali course for 15 years and have never seen the greens look so good," said Gordon Wong, as he wrapped up a day on the course. It's a Zen thing. When Sean De Mello, the Pali golf course superintendent, talks about grass, it sounds like he's talking about religion. "If we keep up our cultural practices, such as verti cutting, top dressing and aerating with scheduled fertility and fungicide applications; we will maintain a healthy stand of turf on our greens. In the world of golf courses, green is gold. That was not always the case at the Pali. Since it was designed in 1953 by Willard Wilkinson, this premier municipal course that lies in the bosom of the Koolau Mountains with a view of lush forests and the Pacific Ocean is plagued by inclement weather and lack of sun. Golfers learned to contend with weeds, barren patches, and clumps of grass. "If you are a bad golfer, it just didn't matter that much," said Wong, who is now worried word is spreading, and he will have to contend with more golfers dressed in funny pants and strange hats swarming the course.

The transformation of the Pali began six years ago with the asphalt cart paths being replaced with concrete then the irrigation system being replaced and finally broke ground last June when the City invested \$460,000. It received the expertise from Logan Hamocan of Sports Turf Hawaii who was responsible to remove the existing turf and replace with Seashore Paspalum. Hamocan, who played the course as a kid, is proud of the work his company has performed. "We really appreciate the work of the City golf course maintenance staff because they are so knowledgeable and organized."

Since the Pali course was developed back in the 1950s, new hybrid grasses have since been developed that tolerate the excessive conditions. Seashore Paspalum has become the miracle solution for golf courses in tough environmental locations that once used TifDwarf Bermuda turf. "We want to give our golfers a country club experience. This new grass is the first important step of making it a great experience for our golfers," said De Mello.

De Mello expects many more golfers to choose the Pali course in the future. "With the way the economy is going, people are flocking to municipal golf courses. We want to make sure they have the best experience possible."

Credit for this golf course transformation goes from top down. The Mayor even credits late Councilmember Barbara Marshall for keeping up the pressure to improve the course. Sidney Quintal, director of the Department of Enterprise Services, said this job could not have been done without the support of the Mayor and others who provided first rate equipment to get the job done.

"It is because of the dedication of these groundskeepers, starters, cart attendants and others who show up at 5 a.m. before T-time and make this place perfect," added Leighton Wong, assistant golf system administrator, who also said: "If other city departments had not chipped in, this would have taken a longer period of time to complete. If we needed Biosolids compost, Department of Environmental Services arranged the delivery and pot holes were repaired by the Division of Road Maintenance, the Department of Parks and Recreation and the Honolulu Zoo also provided support in our efforts.

Scott Voeller, maintenance supervisor known from his University of Hawaii days as a premier linebacker, said this new grass requires special care. "We have to stay on top of this new grass to make sure it stays healthy. In another year it will be stronger, but we have to maintain our cultural practices." He explained that Seashore Paspalum can adapt to close mowing for greens. The reason that this turf grass variety was selected is because of its adaptability to extreme environmental conditions and its low fertility and low water use requirements. It provides an excellent putting surface with proper care and maintenance.

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#5 on the Waikoloa Kings Course on the Big Island of Hawaii. Chief Superintendent Rory Allison and Superintendent Mark Weitz.

B. HAYMAN CO./CROP PRODUCTION SVCS FIELD DAY & SEMINARS *By: Al Kakazu*

Over 300 turf & equipment professionals participated in the annual field day, golf tournament, and seminar events held at Kapolei Golf Club on May 13 & at Honolulu Country Club on May 14. The events were great and the best part is the gathering of old friends again and meeting of new acquaintances.

For the equipment field day and golf tourney on the 13th, we were blessed with wonderful weather and terrific hosts - Andy Mickle and the entire staff at Kapolei Golf Course set up the equipment areas and golf course beautifully and their service was excellent.

Participants inspected the multitude of turf equipment up close. Jacobsen greens mowers, fairway mowers, and rotary units were available for in depth reviews. The power and superior after cut finish of the Jacobsen AR-3, Triplex Rotary Mower, and Jacobsen AR-522, 5-Gang Rotary Rough Unit, were presented. The uniqueness of the Jacobsen Eclipse hybrid walking mowers was demonstrated - using a prism, attendees were able to view the results of the exquisite quality of cut.

Many took the opportunity to run the new Tru-Turf 52" greens roller - the operational speed, quality results, and efficiency of the unit was experienced first hand. The Turfco TriWave Seeder drew a lot of interest; especially from those looking to reconstruct fairways or convert to seeded seashore Paspalum. The Atom cartpath and bunker edgers were popular also – great time savers with quality results. The PlanetAir aerator was run to showcase its efficiency and minimal disruption on the greens; however, the biggest benefit is the potential to eliminate at least one core aeration during the year!

The highlight of the golf tourney happened before the first tee shot was hit. Jay Shintaku, of Pioneer HI-Bred Kunia made a 50 foot putt to win **\$2500!!!** It was a perfectly stroked putt with a downhill hook that landed squarely in the hole – Congratulations Jay!



Jay Shintaku with Al Kakazu after making the winning putt for \$2500.

As usual, there were tons of prizes awarded. They varied from DVD players, golf shirts, Titleist Pro V1 golf balls, noise cancelling headphones and even Heineken Mini Kegs (I wonder how Jim Cashabeck from Wailea Gold brought his keg back to Maui?)

The team of Kekoa Willing, Rob Dunford, Matt Lochotzki, and Willie Suckoll shot an outstanding 34 under par to take first place (we hope they enjoyed their winnings – each got a case of saimin). The team of Ron Kauha'aha'a, Anthony Engelsgaard, Tony Sibert, and Jack Hardy shot an honest and respectable 7 under par to pull in last place. Closest to pin honors went to Russ Dooge, King Kamehameha Golf Club, and Andrew Kendell, HI Landscape Corp. There was much food and drinks consumed at the banquet and we understand that for some, post-banquet activities continued throughout the night!

The seminars hosted by CPS on the following day were packed as usual. A full slate of 24 different presentations was offered. In addition to the wealth of information provided, very valuable credits for RUP Applicators, GCSAA Certified Superintendents, Arborists, and Certified Landscape Technicians were awarded.

A warm mahalo goes to all those who attended and supported the events. We hope to see you next year!



Jacobsen training class held at Peal Country Club on Oahu.

B. Hayman Co. Technical Training Seminars By: Al Kakazu

Ongoing training is especially critical in the current day of constant change with relentless pressures to improve efficiencies and cut costs. Understanding this, B. Hayman Co. was pleased to offer FREE technical training seminars on May 19 and 20th. We were fortunate to have Fidel Baca, Jacobsen's National Product Support Manager, in town to present the seminars. Fidel is no stranger to the islands and is highly respected for his advanced technical knowledge and articulate, down to earth presentation style. General electrical, hydraulic, and mechanical issues were covered. In addition, several specific troubleshooting tips were offered. A sampling of various Jacobsen units were available for detailed review of components – the AR 522 five gang rotary mower, LF 3800 fairway unit, Eclipse hybrid walking greensmower, and Gplex III & Greensking IV triplex greensmowers were presented.

The seminar on May 19th was held at the Hualalai Resort Golf Maintenance Facility. With the assistance from the newly formed Big Island Equipment Technicians Association, led by Eric Ryan of Kukio Golf Club, we were pleased to bring together 23 Big Island participants for this event. The following day's seminar on May 20th had an overflow crowd of nearly 50 gathered at Pearl Country Club. Participants included technicians from Maui, Kauai, Lanai and Oahu.

Lively interaction amongst participants, and sharing of real life experiences from the seasoned professionals, added to the wealth of knowledge conveyed during these sessions. An important part of these seminars is the personal interaction and networking amongst the participants. There aren't enough of these opportunities for turf equipment technicians to gather and share experiences.

Based on the positive feedback from attendees, we're extremely pleased that participants gained valuable knowledge, renewed old friendships, and established new relationships that will benefit on the job duties and otherwise also.

Thank you to Hualalai Resort, Pearl Country Club, and the Big Island Equipment Technicians Association for their help in putting on these seminars.



#13 at the Old Wailea Blue Course in Kihei, Maui. Golf Course Superintendent Steve Olsen and Assistant Superintendent Marc Jaslow.



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On the Maintenance Trail... By: Les Jeremiah Jr.

Aloha Members, time to check on our fellow members around the state.

On Oahu, Russell Higa says it is business as usual for him at Mamala Bay golf course at Hickam. He mentioned that Hickam Air Force Base will soon be acquired by Pearl Harbor Naval Base. He is curious to see how the whole transition will unfold.

Over at Mid Pacific Country Club, Jason Amoy reports that the Mid-Pac Open and Jenny K. tournaments were a great success with Tad Fujimoto and Christina Maco taking home the first place trophies. Jason is also finalizing plans for a new maintenance facility.

Neil Nakagawa, Golf Course Superintendent for Barbers Point golf course says that they are expanding Salam Seashore Paspalum onto the tee boxes, selectively removing trees causing shade problems, and have begun planning for a possible bunker renovation project. Neil also mentioned that they are doing some experimentation with Sea Dwarf Paspalum.

Jordan Abe at Ala Wai golf course says he is settling in well into his new role as Golf Course Superintendent. He says that rounds have averaged anywhere from 600-700 rounds daily (YIKES!!!!) He reports that they are doing some tree removal along the #14 hole running along the Ala Wai canal, getting aggressive with weed control on and around greens, and installing Xeriscapes around the clubhouse. Jordan thanks Frank and his maintenance crew as well as Garrick and Leighton for making the transition into his new role comfortable and smooth.

Kekoa Willing has moved into the Golf Superintendent's position at Hoakalei with Kalani Voeller now as the Director of Grounds. Kekoa says the golf course had a soft opening in January, followed by a grand opening this past March. He says the course is about 75-80% mature and that the turf (SeaDwarf Paspalum) is really starting to take off and look good. He is focusing on weed control and adding more trees around the golf course to help with aesthetics. Kekoa reports that Hoakalei is no longer managed by Club Corp. and that they are now managed by the Arnold Palmer Management group.

On the island of Maui, Oswaldo (Ozzie) Hernandez has stepped into the role of Golf Course Superintendent for the Makena Resort Golf Courses. He mentioned that 49 positions have been furloughed from the hotel operations, but on the golf course, no positions have been reduced thus far. On the North course, Ozzie reports that they are dressing up along the perimeters of the golf course, cleaning up Kiawe, brush, and debris to enhance aesthetics. On the South course, the #15 & #16 holes are growing in and doing well with Sea Dwarf Paspalum. Ozzie mentioned that construction on the South course has slowed down and they are keeping a close eye on the economic situation before planning their next move. Planning has begun for a new driving range and pesticide storage room.

Over at Waiehu Municipal, Ron Kubo says that their #2 tee box has been seeded with SeaSpray Paspalum. Ron also mentioned that they will begin to renovate their greens with SeaDwarf Paspalum in the upcoming weeks. They will start with the front nine first, then the back nine. Restrooms on their golf course have been upgraded for their guests and to meet ADA requirements. Norman Nagata is also conducting Pre-emergent studies for Goosegrass control there. A field day is scheduled this Friday there if there is anyone interested. Contact Norman directly at 244-3242 ext. 230 for details.

Over on the Bay course at Kapalua, Derrick Watts reports he is focusing on completing his renovation with Tifeagle on the greens there. On the Plantation course, the PGA Championship once sponsored by Mercedes will now be sponsored by S.B.S. *(Continued on the next page)*

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Over on the Big Island of Hawaii, Clint Tolbert, Golf Course Superintendent for Nanea Golf Club is sitting pretty with his wall to wall SeaIsle 2000 variety of Paspalum. He says it's cultivation time throughout the whole course there involving aeration and verticutting. Clint and his crew have also renovated several stacked faced bunkers and a nursery green. He has also begun to change out his leased equipment to Toro. His Assistant Golf Course Superintendent, Matt is recovering from shoulder surgery and Clint wishes him a quick and speedy recovery. Clint's Foreman Chey has stepped up to the plate in his absence.

D.J. Pakkala reports that Mauna Kea opened this past December with the hotel re-opening this past March. They have planted TifEagle on the greens and 419 everywhere else.

Roland Doi reports that Hapuna is currently verti-cutting fairways and preparing for aeration.

Over at Hualalai, Earl Sanders reports that he has had to reduce 7 positions due to the current economic situation, but looks forward to the upcoming Big Island Superintendent's fishing tournament coming in August.

Over at Big Island Country Club, Mike Yukon says he is dealing with heat and vog issues. He has also assumed the roles of General Manager, Golf Course Superintendent, and Head Golf Professional. Wow! Go get um Mike!

Over on the island of Kauai, Craig Carney, Golf Course Superintendent for Wailua Golf Course says he has assumed more responsibility and is learning more about things outside of the maintenance realm. Craig says that he expanding Supreme Paspalum onto the greens by putting sprigs into aeration holes. He is hoping to have the conversion complete within the next two years. He will then concentrate on converting the tees into Paspalum. Craig says Supreme actually performs better than Sea Isle 2000 at his site. They also are finally getting a permanent maintenance facility being built right at this moment. As you may or may not remember, their maintenance facility burned down 5 years ago and they have been operating out of a temporary greenhouse style facility ever since. A three year plan is also in place to improve bunkers and level off tee boxes. Craig just hosted the Women's 36 hole Public Links Qualifier and says that it was a great success with everyone being extremely happy with its conditions and setup.

D.J. Pakkala, who also oversees Princeville courses, says that renovation has begun for the Makai course on the Lakes and Ocean nines with construction costs estimating 5.8 million. D.J. says that they have planted SeaDwarf Paspalum on the greens and SeaSpray everywhere else and reports that he is pleased with their results. The renovation includes adding tees and length to them, and bunkers being modified by designer Robert Trent Jones II. He says that they currently have 11 holes finished and nine holes recently grassed. They anticipate completion by November of this year. For the Prince course, he says that they are just focusing on weed control at this time.

At the Kauai Lagoons Golf Club, Dan Shea reports that construction has been put on hold for now pending improvement of the current economic situation. They currently have in play eighteen holes which are a mixture of the two courses combined. Dan also says that they have also had to take on some additional maintenance responsibilities involving the surrounding real estate developments. They recently hosted the Hawaiian Qualifier for the World Junior Championship Tournament.

On Lanai, we are just trying to rip pennies in half and synergize more between island operations to maximize inventory usage and minimize outside contract work. All of operations here are under careful scrutiny as occupancy drops and revenue is less than expected.



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#6 on the "C" course at the Hawaii Prince Golf Club in Ewa Beach on Oahu. Golf Course Superintendent Gerald Yoza and Assistant Cayetano Pasqua.



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Consistency – The Most Overused and Misunderstood Word in Golf

By: Larry Gilhuly, Northwest Director, USGA Green Section

During USGA Turf Advisory Service visits to golf courses over the past two and a half decades many words are used by those in attendance that describe the golf course being visited. Words like “fun, tough, difficult, demanding, and beautiful” show what each player thinks of their golf course as a whole. However, when asked about certain portions of a golf course, the word “consistency” continues to crop up as the most commonly used word with the primary focus of this word on two playing areas – bunkers and greens. Let’s take a look at both the perception and reality of how this simple word now dominates the way a golf course is maintained.

Let’s start with the word itself. “Consistency - steadfast adherence to the same principles, course, and form, etc.” or “marked by harmony, regularity, or steady continuity: free from variation or contradiction”. While it is agreed that this word has a place in the game, to assume that the sport of golf should be the same every day requires a very large dome over the golf course to eliminate all natural elements, a trained person following every group to properly rake out footprints in the bunkers, every bunker must be built with identical slopes, and greens must be prepared multiple times during the day if your tee time changes. Of course none of this will happen as the sport of golf is played in nature with ever-changing components that make it such a challenge. Good breaks, bad breaks or rub-of-the-green – call it what you will, but the undeniable truth is golf is unique with consistency a very difficult if not impossible goal to achieve. So where is the answer? Let’s Google it!

When one goes into this search engine and types in the words “golf and consistency, up pops over 800,000 hits. Of course, the first page is all about swing consistency as are the next 27 pages (10 articles/page) until the bottom of page 29 where there finally is a great article by Bud White (Consistency In Bunkers – What Does It Mean, March/April 2009 USGA Green Section Record) about this very issue – consistency in bunkers. Mr. White’s article goes into detail on this subject that needs no more commentary, other than read this article and send it to your players. It is dead on, but what about the greens and the consistency issue?

The misuse of the word consistency for greens is an entirely different issue. For many players there is a belief that the greens at their golf course should be nearly the same speed day-in and day-out during every day of the year depending upon their climate. To the extreme, there are those that think it should be the same year-round! Others believe the green speed should be identical if they play in the AM or PM with viable **reasons** given for why this is not possible looked upon as excuses. All of the above stances are incorrect as the true use of the word consistency for greens should apply to the day you play the golf course, not day-to-day unless it is a special championship where players are told and are expecting the same type of playing surface over 2-6 days including a practice round. And speaking of practice, let’s talk about the practice green!

The practice green is a putting surface that is meant to help players practice their putting skills at any time **and** for warm-up before a round of golf. It is at this time that players must be observant of the speed of this green as it should be very close to matching the speed of the remaining 18 greens on the golf course. If all 19 greens come close to matching (within 12” of each other) on that day they should be considered **consistent**. For example, if the practice green is measured at 10’ the day of your round of play, the remaining greens should be within 9’6” – 10’6” as most players cannot determine 12” differences and hole locations are a major factor in perceived green speed. If one green is 8’ or 12’ then players have a legitimate observation that the greens were not “consistent” when they played. Now comes the difference in the use of this word consistency!

(Continued on the next page)

2009

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Let's say the next week the greens are topdressed lightly and it rains after they are dragged. The light amount of sand is not completely removed for the next day mowing resulting in water and sand on the surface that greatly impacts green speed in the morning. The practice green slows to 9' from the normal 10' with all of the greens falling within 8'6" and 9'6". Are the greens consistent? **Absolutely!** Consistency of greens, day-in-and day-out should not be the goal of your golf course maintenance staff. Consistency of the greens on the day they are played is the goal and easily achievable. Also, there is another compelling reason that the word consistency should be applied for daily play rather than year-round.

Just as in all sports conducted in the out-of-doors, participants must adapt their game to the sport being played. The better you can adapt, the better you play. In golf, part of the intrinsic value of the game is how it changes every time you play. Those that can adapt their game to what they find on the course that day will generally find their handicaps drop while those that don't adapt will have higher scores. For this reason, those that adapt to greens on a daily basis will find themselves to be better players when they venture out to other golf courses while those that insist on the same green speeds at all times will struggle both on their own golf course and when visiting other sites.

In conclusion, the following actually occurred in a conversation with a scratch player that underscores the difficulty many have with understanding that consistency on greens applies to a daily philosophy and not year-round. This point was brought up in conversation with this player who immediately and with great emotion loudly proclaimed that "consistency must be maintained year-round". After calmly explaining the difference the next emotional outbreak included "you just like slow greens and have no clue about this subject". The following conversation took place after his tirade and truly puts this entire subject in perspective:

"May I ask you what you do for a living?"

"My father started car sales decades ago and I now operate the business."

"What kind of cars do you sell?"

"We sell X and Y and are the largest dealer in the state!"

"Sorry to tell you but the X and Y cars you sell are the worst cars ever made!"

"You know even less about cars than you do about green consistency!"

"No, my opinion is based on the fact that I know how to drive a car. Your opinion about the term green consistency comes from the fact that you know how to drive a golf ball. Both opinions are based on a lack of knowledge and both are wrong!"

So the next time the word consistency comes up at your golf course please remember that when this word is used for the greens it is the consistency of all 19 greens on the day you play. If it relates to the bunkers – good luck!

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