

# TEE TO GREEN

May 2013

The Official Publication of the South Texas Golf Course Superintendents Association



## Summer is here!

It's hard to believe spring is almost over and summer is here already! We have a lot of great meetings planned for you in the next few months and a new function for July is in the works! But of course, the popular Supt/Pro-Member/Member Tournament is right around the corner and we are excited to be going to Miramont Country Club in College Station. Jon Snider will be hosting the tournament. Get your RSVP in early! Make a note of the new date, June 11th and sign up on the website. The rules and regulations for this tournament are also posted on the registration page. To start off the summer, however, we have our Chapter Championship at Bay Oaks this month. Get your reservation in early and make sure you notice that the golf tournament will take place before the educational meeting. Randy Samoff will be the speaker/educator at Bay Oaks. He will be talking on the topic of "Technology Tools".

~July will be an exciting golf outing for all. We are calling this the member/guest/guest/guest and as a STGCSA member, you can bring 3 friends, family members or coworkers to this event. We are accepting rounds of golf to auction off at this meeting. It will be a great opportunity for your guests to buy rounds at a great price while helping your local chapter raise money. Sign up early for this event, it will be a sell out!

~More information to come on the August family Skeeter's night at Constellation Field in Sugar Land. If you haven't been to this new stadium, you will love it. It is a great place for the whole family.

## Meeting Schedule

May 13, 2013—Chapter Championship

Bay Oaks Country Club

**Golf Before the meeting!**

Map to Bay Oaks CC

May 14—Lone Star Texas Cup

The Golf Club at Star Ranch

Hutto, TX

June 11, 2013—Supt/Pro, Member/  
Member Tournament

Miramont Country Club

Map to Miramont CC

July 28 (Sunday) - Redstone GC-  
Tournament Course /12 pm Shotgun

Member/Guest/Guest/Guest

August—Sugar Land Skeeter's Family  
Night (More information to come)

September—No Meeting

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## STGCSA Annual Scholarship Tournament and Auction

raises over \$18,000, and once again Cody Spivey and all the crew at **High Meadow Ranch** were as gracious as always for hosting this event.

Thank you to everyone who donated to the auction as well as to all those who purchased items.

(See Page 14 for photos and golf results)



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## President's Message By: Sean Wilson, CGCS



Well so far, this year has certainly been different. From the winter that seems like it won't end to some very strange and unexpected events happening within our association. When the unexpected happens, we band together and offer support like only superintendents can. If there is one thing we can be sure of it is "Change". As much as we may not like it, change happens. It could be new standards, new policies, equipment, products or any variety of new things. How we react to change however, is the most important thing. It reminds me of a line from the movie Tin Cup, "When a defining moment comes along, you either define the moment or the moment defines you". Probably not a bad way to look at the ever changing environment we work in.

The STGCSA scholarship program is one of the biggest things our association does. We put a lot of effort into maintaining the fund to be able to award deserving individuals with a scholarship to help further their education. Thank You! To all who donated, bought items or participated and especially to those who put on such a great event. We had a great turn out and great weather and were able to raise over \$18,000 in the auction. Our highest total since 2009.

I know it's only May, but we need to start planning the Christmas party/Awards banquet. This is your party members, so what would you like to do? Country/Western band? casino night? Or a Formal dinner at a Country Club? Contact anyone on the board and let us know your suggestions.

The Chapter Championship is our next event, so everyone get your game ready and come to Bay Oaks, I'm sure Kyle will have the course in great shape!

M. Sean Wilson, CGCS



# Bay Oaks Country Club—May 13, 2013

STGCSA Chapter Championship!

Host: Kyle Brown

Bay Oaks Country Club is proud to host the May South Texas Golf Course Superintendents Association meeting. Bay Oaks is an Arthur Hills design

which opened in 1988, featuring heavily slopped elevated Tif Eagle greens. By todays standards the golf course does not have a lot of bunkers but does have 14 holes where water comes into play. Keep your eyes open around the water features on the golf course as you are likely to see one of our local alligators.

The Bermuda plantation-style clubhouse of Bay Oaks Country Club sits among moss-draped oaks and natural woodlands, creating a tranquil environment away from the metropolitan bustle. The 18-hole Arthur Hills championship course provides challenging play and an unforgettable trek into the native Texas landscape.



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**9:30 Shotgun Start**  
**Meeting to follow golf**  
**Speaker: Randy Samoff**



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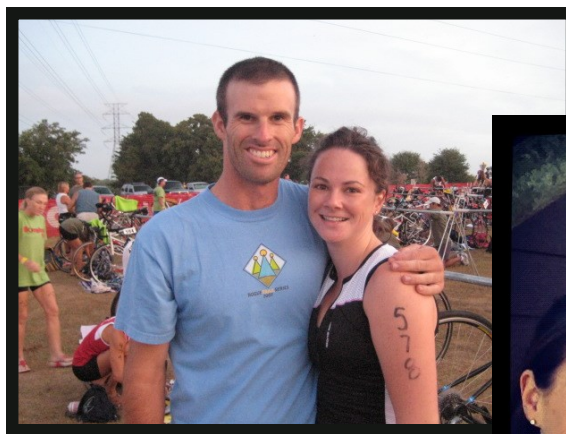
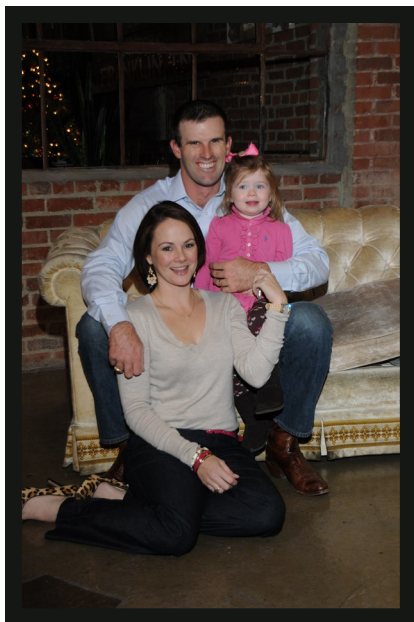
## Host of the Chapter Championship on May 13th at Bay Oaks, Superintendent Kyle Brown

Most important in my life are God and family. I am blessed with a wonderful wife, Meredith, and daughter, Brienn. Meredith and I met in college at Texas A&M University where she worked in the campus golf course pro-shop and myself in golf course maintenance. Somehow the dirty grass guy ended up with the pretty pro-shop girl. We will celebrate our ninth anniversary this May. Our daughter Brienn is three and is the light of our lives. To round off our family we have two dogs, Henly and Porter.

After graduating college in May 2002 I went to work for the next nine years at Barton Creek Resort and Club where I started as an Assistant Superintendent and worked my way into a Superintendent job. We moved from Austin to Houston in May 2011, when I accepted the Superintendent job at Bay Oaks Country Club. We have really started to settle in here and are happy to call Houston our home. Over the summer Meredith accepted a job with the American Cancer Society.

When not working, I enjoy cycling and running. I got started doing both in 2006 when Meredith talked me into going to a Team in Training informational meeting. Team in Training is a fundraising arm of the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, which trains participants for endurance events such as marathons, triathlons and century rides (100 miles cycling events). In return the participants raise funds for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society. Both Meredith and I have completed multiple events fundraising for LLS starting with the 2007 Austin Marathon. I have completed many events on my own as well and am grateful I have the ability to get outside and run.

Kyle Brown





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## Course Care: Irrigate For Playability, Turf Health, Not Color

By Adam Moeller

Golf was born in the British Isles, where courses evolved centuries ago from windswept, sandy sites adjacent to the sea. The game has changed since its beginning, but traditions and challenges remain the same – turf terrain, and weather. Firm conditions and fine-textured turf have long been the foundation for ideal playability. Over time, many golfers have forgotten the value of firmness and replaced it with the desire to have a visually appealing golf course. The ability to irrigate has enabled golf course superintendents to produce amazingly resilient, uniform turf despite low mowing heights, extreme heat, drought, undulating terrain, variable soils, traffic, etc.

However, golfer expectations and irrigation advancements have also contributed to the idea that aesthetics, particularly lush green grass, are greatly important to the enjoyment of the game and even define good conditions. The genesis of cosmetic irrigation, which involves irrigating the golf course to keep all turf areas an attractive green color, began as irrigation systems were installed at golf courses throughout the country. Cosmetic irrigation is not a problem at every golf course, but far too many facilities still place the highest priority on lush green conditions at the expense of playing quality. This fact was alarmingly evident in recent years when record droughts hit, and many golfers simply could not understand why all of the turf was not consistently dark green.

There are many factors that influence green color on golf courses, including fertilizer, pigments, and overseeding, but for the purposes of this article irrigation will be the sole focus. Cosmetic irrigation has many consequences, and it often comes at the expense of firm conditions. Increased irrigation for cosmetic purposes has also resulted in irresponsible water usage, higher golf course expenses (from more mowing and the need for additional disease control), and the proliferation of failure-prone grasses like annual bluegrass, i.e., *Poa annua*.

These issues are discussed in depth below. Golf purists might argue that automatic irrigation has been one of the most detrimental advancements introduced to the game of golf. The answer is not to eliminate golf course irrigation, however, because it is essential to keeping grass alive in most situations. Instead, the focus of irrigation should be shifted entirely to playability and turf health, discounting color as the primary criterion for course quality.

There are several benefits to using less water and promoting drier, firmer playing conditions. This article will discuss these benefits along with specific steps for moving away from cosmetic irrigation while improving the playing quality of golf facilities.

### Benefits Of Firm, Dry Golf Courses: Environmental And Economic Factors

Water is the most valuable natural resource used by golf facilities worldwide. The USGA Green Section has invested millions of dollars toward water conservation research and the development of drought-tolerant turfgrasses to address these challenges so that golf facilities may use less water. However, many positive outcomes from years of research have yet to be adopted at golf facilities, particularly because the cost and availability of water can vary widely from one course to the next and are regionally specific throughout the U.S. For instance, the same amount of water may be more than enough for one golf facility, depending on site conditions, acreage, turfgrass selection and water storage capacity, whereas it would be barely enough for a neighboring facility to make it through the growing season.

A golf course in the Southwest could pay as much as a million dollars a year for water, while a facility in the Northeast might only pay for irrigation system operating and maintenance costs. Water restrictions can also vary greatly, with some facilities experiencing more stringent restrictions than others. These variations have huge environmental and economic implications. Golf course water use can often be separated into the haves and have-nots. However, the pressure to reduce cosmetic irrigation will eventually be felt by all facilities and superintendents. In response, golfers must adjust their expectations.

Golfers who play at facilities with a large source of water and/or ample resources to buy whatever quantity they desire may be even less understanding of occasional off-color brown spots on the golf course. Golfers who play at facilities that have little water available and are unable to buy more are likely to be more understanding of off-color turf. One could argue that green fees and the acceptance of off-color turf might parallel one another.

Paying more for your golf experience does not justify using water for cosmetic purposes. Having the resources to purchase more water during a drought also does not justify cosmetic irrigation. Regardless of the costs, availability of water, or restrictions at your course, irrigating based solely on playability and turf health will save money and reduce the environmental footprint of your golf course. Irrigation pumping expenses and costs for purchasing water from outside sources like municipalities add up quickly. Less water also translates into less turfgrass growth, which equates to less mowing. In turn, cost savings can be realized with less labor, fuel, and equipment maintenance. These costs may need to be reallocated to other areas, such as hand watering or improving the soil system to support reduced water use, but these programs are more beneficial for long-term playing characteristics and management inputs compared to paying for water.

#### Playability

Cart Traffic

Golfer Education

Automatic Irrigation System Performance

Consider Weather And Time Of Year

Steps To Using Less Water And Promoting Drier, Firmer Conditions: Soil System

#### Less Disease And Fungicide Cost

Stronger Grasses Develop

Maintenance Guidelines And Support

Establish Grasses That Use Less Water

Hand Watering

### Conclusion

Changing irrigation practices to promote turf health and playability is much more than simply cutting back on water. It requires a carefully coordinated approach that involves managing the soil system, detailed programming of the irrigation system, promoting grasses that naturally use less water, and a talented maintenance staff that understands the nuances of weather and the basic inputs required to keep turf healthy. The most critical aspects of the process are golfer education and supporting maintenance guidelines that place the focus on playability rather than cosmetics.

This is easier said than done. Moving away from cosmetic irrigation requires a cultural attitude adjustment that appreciates playability more than cosmetics. While golfer education will present some challenges, there are many benefits in promoting firmer conditions and moving away from cosmetic irrigation. Benefits include water conservation and economic savings, improved playability and firmness, less disease and subsequent fungicide use, and the development of stronger turfgrasses over time.

The many benefits make a strong case that using less water and irrigating for turf health and playability is better for the turf, better for the environment, and ultimately better for the game. [Read Adam's Full Article on Each topic above here.](#)

Adam Moeller is a USGA Green Section agronomist in the Northeast Region. Email him at [amoeller@usga.org](mailto:amoeller@usga.org).



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### Attention all Members!

To all of you who golf at the monthly meetings and tournaments.....  
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Starting in 2013, if you win money at a golf event, the money must be picked up within two meetings after the prize was won or the money will be donated to the scholarship fund. This change is due to the tournament committee having to keep up with winnings for extended periods of time, sometimes over a year. Winners are posted online within a few days of the event so you can determine if you have prizes waiting for you well before the next event.

Prize and skin money will not be mailed.

Thank you for your understanding!

Reminder: Guests are not eligible for prize money

# The consequences of high temperatures on golf courses

Here's what superintendents are doing to manage turf in extreme heat conditions.

Prolonged periods of high temperatures – and in some cases excessive rainfall – and high humidity have made life uncomfortable for golfers and golf courses alike, with Mother Nature holding all the cards for true relief.

It is beginning to look like 2011 could be a repeat of 2010 when conditions for managing golf courses were extreme.

"The simple fact is the cool-season turfgrasses such as bentgrass, fescue, bluegrass, annual bluegrass (*Poa annua*) and others are stressed when temperatures climb and humidity is high," Bob Randquist, CGCS, and president of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, said. "Golf courses in many parts of the country experience this every year, however what made the situation so dire last year were the high levels of extended heat and humidity, and the sizeable part of the country affected (Midwest, Mideast, Northeast and Mid-Atlantic). We are already seeing this is an issue that could potentially match the conditions of last year."

## Why heat stress is so difficult on golf course turf

According to Randquist, golf facilities and those entrusted with managing the golf course – golf course superintendents – are not alone in this battle with the elements. However, the nature of their product makes their challenge greater.

"Certainly homeowners, athletic fields and businesses suffer turfgrass damage brought on by these kinds of conditions," Randquist said. "What makes it more difficult for golf facilities are the mowing heights are much lower and traffic is much heavier. That just adds to the stress on the turfgrass."

Randquist indicates that golf course superintendents are addressing the issue with a variety of management practices to make sure turfgrass survives. While there may be some short-term impact on playability of the course, the alternative is the loss of grass, the closure of the course and the additional costs of re-establishing playing surfaces (primarily putting greens).

He also cautioned golfers from thinking that water, whether from rain or irrigation, is the answer to the ills. There is a difference between heat stress and drought stress. Adequate irrigation will alleviate drought stress. Adequate irrigation will not alleviate heat stress. It is not only possible, but likely, for a turfgrass plant to be adequately watered and still suffer from heat stress under extended periods of high temperatures.

## Managing turf under heat stress

Randquist indicated that during periods such as this, it becomes easy to compare golf course conditions and pressure decision makers into actions that might prove detrimental to the long term health of the playing surface. "We know the weather conditions will become more agreeable. What is important right now is to manage the golf course in a manner so that turf can be kept alive until that point. Relying on the expertise of the golf course superintendent and understanding the focus in on the long term is the best guide for facilities."

Among the practices that superintendents are implementing to manage golf courses include:

Raising the mowing heights of playing areas, most notably putting greens.

Alternating daily practices of mowing and rolling putting greens, with consideration to skipping a day if the schedule of play allows.

Forgoing double mowing, topdressing, verticutting or grooming greens.

Watering to provide adequate soil moisture, but not over watering as saturated soil will cause the turfgrass to decline rapidly.

Hand watering as much as feasible. If a green has a dry spot or two, superintendents will hand water the dry spots only and will not water the entire green. When the entire green shows stress from a lack of water, superintendents use the overhead sprinklers and water the entire green.

Avoid aerifying using large diameter tines that penetrate deeply into soil and remove a core of soil. If a superintendent feels the putting surface is sealed, venting using small diameter solid tines or other similar technique is employed.

If fertilizer is required, small amounts of fertilizer are applied via a sprayer and observation of the response occurs before fertilizing again.

Monitoring and adjusting golf car traffic patterns to minimize stress to turf.



~Quote of the Month~

The number of shots taken by an opponent who is out of sight is equal to the square root of the sum of the number of curses heard plus the number of swishes. ~Michael Green, The Art of Coarse Golf, 1975

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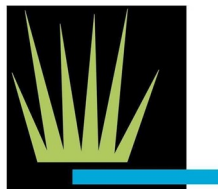


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**Lone Star Raffle 4 Research 2013**

Once again, South Texas GCSA has kicked off Lone Star GCSA’s Raffle 4 Research. Twenty Houston area courses have donated 4 fees and 2 carts each to support our ongoing research project at Texas A&M with Dr. Ben Wherley. STGCSA hopes to raise \$4,000 from the \$20 tickets. The drawing was held on Wednesday April 24, and raised over \$2500.00. Last years’ raffle raised close to \$9000 statewide.

Central Texas GCSA and Texas Gulf Coast Superintendents Association are on board as well and are gathering their rounds now. The drawing for these rounds will be held in July. We should raise an additional \$5,000 from these two chapters. If you would like to donate to Rounds 4 Research, or help sell raffle tickets, please contact your local LSGCSA board members.

Again, “Thank You” to those who have already made this a success!

Walden on Lake Houston – Bob Cook	Tour 18-Todd Stephens, CGCS
Redstone GC-Randy Samoff	Houston National-Steven Chernosky
Kingwood CC-Kevin Lyles	Blackhorse GC-Johnny Walker
Traditions Club-Jesse Shulse	Sterling CC-Steven Chernosky
Willow Creek CC-Mike Rhoden	High Meadow Ranch GC-Cody Spivey
River Ridge GC-Bret Barclay	River Bend CC-George Cincotta
The Club at Falcon Point-Sean Wilson, CGCS	The Wilderness GC-Blayne Sparks
Galveston CC-Jeff Smelser	Sandhill Farms GC-Brian Johnson
Memorial GC-Jason Harsh	Meadow Brook Farms GC-Brian Buckner, CGCS
Brae Burn CC-Terry Gill	Westwood GC-Jerry Takushi

**Meet Board Member Brandon Cole: Professional Turf Products**



I have been in Turf and Agriculture my whole life and I have loved every minute of it. Born in Ennis, Tx in 1973 (Yes I just turned the big 40), I spent the summers bailing hay and working on my grandfathers farm in Kuafman, TX. We had a one acre garden and as a young kid, that was my introduction and now obsession to the outdoors. We moved to Houston area in 1989 and I graduated from Cy-Fair HS in 1991.

After High School I started working for Barefoot Grass Co. fertilizing yards, while going to The University of Houston and graduated in 1996. I worked for Lesco as a Facility Manger and helped open a few local stores. In 1998, I went to work for Watson Distributing Co. selling Golf Course Equipment and continue enjoying it today. After 15 years, I’m forever grateful of the opportunity this has giving me to meet some of the greatest people and build lifelong friendships.

I’m married to my beautiful wife Carrie and have two great kids: Ashlyn, 13 and Preston is 2.

We spend the majority of our time outdoors camping, fishing, BBQ, and watching the Texans play. Go Texans!!



# High Meadow Ranch Scholarship Tournament Golf Results [\(Click Here for All Golf Results\)](#)

### First Flight First Place

#### **High Meadow Ranch 57**

Steven Flor  
Kody Key  
Danny Vaughn  
Jerret Wilbourn

### Second Flight, First Place

#### **Falcon Point 60**

Sean Wilson  
Joe Gerik  
Josh Stanka  
Josh Clark

### Third Flight, First Place

#### **Briarcrest CC 63**

Bobby Holt  
Mark Haven  
Joseph Haven  
Stan Ludwick

### Fourth Flight, First Place

#### **Resource Labs 66**

Lee Gravett  
Willy Plowman  
Phillip Littlefield  
Ed Schultheis

### First Flight Second Place

#### **Willow Creek 57**

Mike Rhoden  
Robert Hill  
Troy Schleicher  
Stacy Adair

### Second Flight Second Place

#### **Bryan Municipal GC 60**

Dennis Wilganowski  
Ben Dickerson  
Tommy Homemeyer  
Jacob Seiter

### Third Flight, Second Place

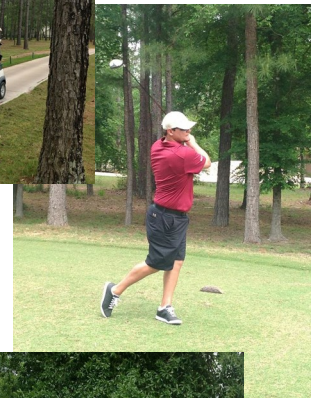
#### **Turfsmith 63**

Jeff Smith  
Casey Smith  
Jose Moran  
Wade Warms

### Fourth Flight, Second Place

#### **Westwood GC 66**

Jerry Takushi  
Richard Kane  
Clark Webb  
Pat Johnston





Syngenta is excited to announce for the fifth year, we are inviting golf course superintendents across the United States to apply for the Syngenta Business Institute™, an innovative professional business development program developed specifically for the industry in partnership with Wake Forest University Schools of Business.

The unique, four-day program focuses on financial and human resource management, delegation skills, effective communications and negotiation skills, managing general differences and more. The program will supplement and complement superintendents' existing knowledge base, allowing more productive and efficient golf course management.

Syngenta is eager to provide a learning experience that goes well beyond the agronomic requirements of a superintendent's job. The Syngenta Business Institute will be held **Dec. 9-12, 2013**, at Graylyn International Conference Center on the campus of Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, N.C.

Superintendents must fill out an application, which includes an essay on why they believe they should be selected to attend. The application is due by Tuesday, Aug. 20 and can be found at [www.greencastonline.com/SBI](http://www.greencastonline.com/SBI). Only 25 superintendents will be selected to participate.



### Scholarships in Turf Management

Jacobsen, a manufacturer of high-quality turf equipment, recently awarded over 30 college students in turfgrass management programs with \$500 scholarships. Recipients were notified by Jacobsen on July 1, 2012.

Candidates from across the United States and Canada submitted essays and professor recommendations for consideration. The final list included students from 23 different schools, including large universities like The Ohio State University, Colorado State University and Kansas State University to smaller schools like Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College in Georgia and Kwantlen Polytechnic University in British Columbia, Canada.

The scholarships are just one of the many ways Jacobsen supports industry education. Since the 1980s, Jacobsen has been hosting the Future Turf Managers' program, an annual educational event for newly-graduated college seniors in several of the world's top turfgrass programs.

Jacobsen also supports continuing turfgrass education through Jacobsen University, an in-house educational facility that provides hands-on training for turf students, superintendents, technicians and sales representatives. Nearly 150 attendees will train at Jacobsen University in 2012.

To find out how to apply for the 2013 Jacobsen scholarships, go to: [www.jacobsen.com](http://www.jacobsen.com)

Send ideas, comments or press releases for this newsletter to: [stgcsa@stgcsa.org](mailto:stgcsa@stgcsa.org)

