

# TEE TO GREEN



The Official Publication of the South Texas Golf Course Superintendents Association



TOUR 18



**Spring is Almost Here!**



*Spring at South Texas GCSA is as busy as your golf course! We are gearing up for the annual Scholarship Tournament and Live Auction. Please get your donations in as soon as possible so your company can get as much exposure from the donation as possible! Items will be listed on the website with your company logo and people are welcome to bid by emailing the office in advance. Donations from friends and families' companies are also welcome!*

*We will again have rounds of golf at the scholarship tournament as well. Superintendents, please donate a round to the scholarship tournament and if possible donate to the Rounds 4 Research program at the same time. Just email [stgcsa@stgcsa.org](mailto:stgcsa@stgcsa.org).*

*The first auction for Rounds 4 Research is June 9—22 and your friends and family can bid at [www.biddingforgoods.com](http://www.biddingforgoods.com). This is a great way to get golf rounds for a great price! There are rounds from all over the country for those traveling this summer. Help raise money to better our industry!*

**Meeting Schedule**

March 25, 2014

Tour 18

**DIRECTIONS**

April 29, 2014

Scholarship Tournament  
High Meadow Ranch GC

May

Lone Star GCSA Texas Cup

June 24, 2014

Canongate at Magnolia Creek

Send in your donation for the Scholarship Auction

**Click here**

**Register Now for Any Meeting!**

**Donations being accepted at this time for the Annual STGCSA Scholarship Tournament!**

Companies who donated last year: Thank you!

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**Tour 18 March 25—Host Superintendent, Todd Stephens, CGCS**

Growing up in Oklahoma, I was introduced to golf from a friend when I was around 14. I was hooked from then on, playing in junior tournaments and was even MVP of my Rockwall High School golf team...yes, I know hard to believe now.. It's my short game that makes me the best "C" player you could have. As a senior I even represented Texas in the finals, jr division, of the National Open Putting Championships in Disney, and it was televised on the very young ESPN network.



When I started out at A&M, I was majoring in Landscape Architecture. Soon after beginning I learned about the turf program and the occupation of a Golf Course Superintendent. I immediately changed majors and graduated in 1987 with a BS in Agronomy.



My first assistant's job was at Sweetwater CC in Sugar Land in 1987, then became Superintendent there in 1989. I guess my first real mentor was George B...enough said. Since then have been Superintendent at Bayou Golf Club, Weston Lakes CC, Bear Creek, and for the last 14 wonderful years have been here facing the many challenges of Tour 18. I received my GCSAA certification back in 1997. My biggest challenge here was back in 2011, where we lost a large percentage of our fairway turf due to the drought and lack of water. Tough year, but we managed to grow back to nearly 100% by the end of 2012.

I love the daily challenges of my profession. More than anything, I love watching the sun rise and observing nature every day – best office ever. Recently got married to my amazing wife Breanna. This past summer we got to experience a wonderful, crazy trip to Italy - where I drove nearly a thousand miles from Rome to Tuscany to Venice- lots of stories there...

Todd Stephens, CGCS



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# How to make the most of chapter meetings

By Brian Cloud, GCSAA Field Staff – South Central Regional Representative



Seems like an easy deal: sign up, show up, hang out, tee it up and head home. But if that is your game plan for attending your local GCSAA-affiliated chapter event, you are really missing out on great opportunities to broaden your horizons. Think about it, a full day to interact with your peers in a relaxed atmosphere that typically includes a great educational program, a nice meal and an opportunity to experience golf at one of the finest facilities in your area. You can probably increase your value to your employer more in a single day than you can in months by making the most of your opportunity.

Following are a list of what to do, and what not to do to maximize your chapter meeting experience. The most common reasons chapter members say they don't attend meetings are cost, travel distance, and time away from the job. This article addresses some of these concerns and offers tips to reduce these hurdles, whether you are a superintendent, assistant, affiliate member or any other member who wants to attend meetings and make the most of your time, effort and money.

**Do: Register early.** Your board of directors and chapter executive work very hard to make sure all of the details for each meeting are organized and first-class. Knowing how many people are going to attend is always a mystery and makes arranging menus, room setup and golf format a challenge. When you see a meeting announcement you know you want to attend, sign up early. Don't put that meeting announcement in a pile on your desk or in a folder in your email. If something comes up and you have to cancel your registration, it is no big deal. Just let chapter leaders know as soon as you can.

**Don't: Wait until the last minute to cancel your registration.** If something comes up and you have to cancel your registration, let chapter leaders know as soon as you can. A last-minute cancellation can really throw a wrench into best laid plans. If you have ever had to rearrange a four-person handicapped scramble tournament at the last minute with four last-minute cancellations, two no-shows and three new players, you'll know exactly why this is important. It's the nature of the industry to have last-minute things come up, so sometimes it impossible to avoid, but please be courteous to your chapter leaders who are working hard to make the events run smoothly.

**Do: Support your organization.** Part of your association's commitment to providing great education and member services depends on good meeting attendance. At most courses, the financial liability and risk for securing a meeting site are significant. Your attendance and registrations fees help cover the costs of speakers, refreshments and more. The better the attendance, the more easily your association can provide exceptional member services and programs. Many members find a way for at least one person from their operation to attend each event. Chapter benefit greatly when courses and companies adopt that goal.

**Do: Bring a guest to a meeting.** Most chapter meetings have room for members to bring guests. That is a great opportunity to demonstrate the professional nature of your group and to show a general manager, golf professional, or club official how important it is to attend meetings. Meetings are also a great incentive or reward for assistants or crew members for a job well done. This can be a great way to do some team-building in a productive way. Don't forget non-members. Inviting them as guests is a great way to show them the benefits of belonging to the association and helping your chapter grow. Make sure to check with your chapter for their guest policy ahead of time.

**Do: Invite a fellow member to a meeting.** Pick up the phone, send a text or email and invite a fellow member to a meeting. Think what it would mean to a new member to be personally invited to be a part of the group. And it doesn't have to be a newcomer, some members just get out of the habit of attending meetings and invitation to attend may be just the nudge needed to get them back in the swing of things. Most members work within a few miles of several other courses or members while some meetings could be more than 100 miles round trip depending on your location. Sharing a ride is a great way to reduce expenses and spend extra time with your local peers. For vendors, inviting customers (or potential customers) to meetings is a great way to show your appreciation for their business and to build relationships. Inviting a member and offering to cover his or her entry fee is as good or better an investment of your company's money than taking someone to lunch or the ballgame, and it's a much more productive and industry-related method.

**Do: Prepare to be gone for the day.** Anyone can always come up with a hundred reasons why they can't be away from the job for even a day. But the truth is most operations can survive just fine even with the superintendent gone provided everyone is prepared. Make sure the right people at your course know where you are going and exactly what is expected to be accomplished while you are gone. Plan for these days well in advance and things will go smoothly. You will only be a phone call away, and most issues can wait until you return the next day.

**Do: Arrive early.** Some of the best opportunities to meet people and network come before the actual agenda starts, when the crowd is smaller and people are relaxed. Usually, meetings are packed with activity, and it helps when everyone arrives a little early so everyone can get registered and the event can start on time. Make sure you have clear directions especially in an area you are not familiar with. And if you haven't noticed, traffic is more unpredictable than Mother Nature, so plan ahead.

**Don't: Skip the education and lunch.** Most chapters offer members the option to participate in only the education and meeting portion. It is a great option if it is not possible to be away from the course all day or other commitments prevent you from playing golf into the afternoon. However, if you skip the education and only make the golf, you are definitely missing the best opportunity to gain important knowledge from the program. If the education doesn't pertain to your current situation, it is very likely that it may someday.

**Do: Meet new people.** Just look around and you are sure to find someone new to introduce yourself to at a meeting. Most of people gravitate to those they already know, but everyone benefits from meeting new members in this setting. Set a goal for each meeting to shake three to five new hands. It is always amusing to hear longtime members say they don't recognize all the new people. Well, there is an easy remedy for that. Golf tends to mix members up so you will always meet someone new or get to others better. Make sure you take the time during your round to really get to know your playing partners.

(continued on page 5)

**Do: Provide feedback to your chapter.** Your chapter leaders are always working to make your meetings enjoyable and productive. In order to accomplish this, feedback from the membership is necessary and important. Take the time to let them know what you enjoyed or appreciated, and also let them know if you have any suggestions or constructive criticism about how the meetings can be made better.

Hopefully, these suggestions will give you a few things to think about when it comes to chapter meeting attendance. So, make plans today to attend an upcoming event and make the most of your experience.

**Don't: Worry about your golf game.** There are many really good golfers in golf course management. But the majority of members are just out for a good time and have a golf game that leaves a lot to be desired. Most members have a handicap closer to 18 than single digits. So don't worry about your ability or how you stack up with the rest of the group. Most golf formats take handicap into consideration, so you won't be at a disadvantage if breaking 90 for you is rarer than a Tiger Woods 3 putt. All members of all abilities are welcome and encouraged to participate in all golf events. Besides, if your score is high enough, you will probably get the ultimate compliment about your golf game -- "You're working too hard."

**Do: Share with your peers.** Please come to the meetings ready to share your troubles, your successes and even your failures. Chapter members have always been supportive of each other, are always ready to share information and are prepared extend a helping hand. Nine times out of 10 you will find someone who has faced the same issues you are battling and is willing to share their experience. Participate in meetings by asking questions or providing insight. Chapters have a priceless database of a massive amount of information that is very useful if everyone is willing to participate by contributing.

**Don't: Only talk about business.** Believe it or not, there is more to life than the weather, growing grass and golfers who are driving you crazy. Get to know some of your fellow members on a different level by talking about their families, hobbies, sports or anything other than golf and growing grass. You'll find out that they are a pretty interesting bunch, and it helps to find common ground with your peers.

**Do: Welcome affiliate members who participate.** Affiliate members make up about half of most chapters' total membership and contribute very generously with their membership, participation at meetings, and sponsorships. Affiliates are a very valuable component to the success of chapters and deserve the right to participate. Just like superintendents, they have a job to do, and building relationships with their customers is a very important part of their jobs. So don't be offended if an affiliate member introduces themselves and leaves you with a business card. Associations recognize the value of all of their members, and all members should share in that spirit.

**Don't: Hesitate to pat the host superintendent on the back.** Hosting a meeting is a very stressful endeavor, and superintendents should be praised for inviting their peers to inspect their work with a fine tooth comb. A thoughtful comment or compliment to the host can go a long way to relieve that stress. Not everyone works with the same budget or under the same circumstances, so it helps to let the host know that you recognize the job they are doing with the resources they manage.

**Do: Enjoy yourself in a responsible manner.** You are representing your place of employment, your association, and your profession when you are in public at chapter functions. Your reputation depends on the way you dress, your language, and above all, your actions. Superintendents are now considered a leading professional in the golf industry and should be aware of that when visiting host clubs. Don't you want the host club personnel and members to have a great impression of your group?

**Do: Follow up.** With email and text messaging, it couldn't take a whole minute to write a quick thank you to the host superintendent or a greeting to playing partners or someone new you met. If you have more time, pick up the phone or leave a message. Those kinds of efforts are really appreciated by the recipient and will help you build that all-important network that will benefit you and your career in the future.

## HOUSTON SERVICE SCHOOL

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**WHO:** Instructed by Brian Nash, Jacobsen Product Support Manager

**WHAT:** Preventative Maintenance Techniques for Golf, Sports, & Municipality Service Professionals

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9AM - 3PM

**WHERE:**



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Please R.S.V.P. by March 14th.  
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“See Who’s New and See Who’s Moved”

Welcome New Members:

Bentwater Yacht & CC—Tim Nunley: Asst. Supt., Alan Murray: Supt., Corey Tarver: Landscape/Supt.

Joshua Smith, Supt at Kingwood CC

Dillon Orsag, Asst. Supt. at The Campus Course at Texas A&M

Mike Estlinbaum is the Sales Rep for Ewing Irrigation

On the move:

Zach Rosado: Supt Bentwater Yacht & CC

Thomas Brown is now the Asst. Supt. at Lochinvar

Name Change:

Daniel Faltysek has sent notice that Emerald Greens Aerification is now **Aerification.com** (Contact info remains the same)

If you are new to the area or have moved, email the office for the next issue.

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### Lone Star GCSA Reception at Rosen Centre Photos



A Big Thank you to Terry and Beth Gill and Ken and Kathy Gorzycki for all their help with the reception!



South Texas Past President, Johnny Walker of Bentwater Yacht & Country Club came up short of votes in a close run for 2014 GCSAA Board of Director Position.



### South Texas Vendors Represent the Lone Star Reception



If you would like to be featured in Tee To Green, please email a short biography along with 3-4 photos for our section, "Member Profiles"

## World renowned author and lecturer, Dave Doherty, speaker at the March 25th meeting at Tour18

David Doherty is the CEO and Founder of the "International Sports Turf Research Center, Inc." (ISTRC). and holds three patents on the ISTRC System which was developed to monitor the ageing process of both sand and soil based golf greens. Mr. Doherty is recognized by most in the industry to be the world's foremost authority on the Physical Properties of golf greens and athletic fields. The majority of the top 100 courses in all categories use the ISTRC System to monitor the effectiveness of their agronomic programs from year to year or from season to season. ISTRC has monitored the effects of aerification and other cultural practices of over 2,000 different golf courses and thousands of greens in less than 10 years. The patented ISTRC System of undisturbed core testing was developed by Mr. Doherty to provide turf grass professionals with: (a) accurate, cost effective data about root zone conditions as they exist in the field, and (b) the effects of those conditions on turf quality and plant health. ISTRC's unique and proprietary data base contains thousands of test results. The knowledge derived from the database allows ISTRC to not only report the test data, but also interpret the data in "layman's language".



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In maintaining turf we deal with three identities [1].

Physical, [2]. Chemical & [3]. Biological. If the PHYSICAL PROPERTIES are not in balance the Chemical & Biological factors cannot function, resulting in increased disease pressures, weaker turf and increased use of chemicals and water.

**TO BE ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND WE MUST KNOW AND UNDERSTAND THE PHYSICAL PROPERTIES WE ARE WORKING WITH.**

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### President's Message: Blayne Sparks

Well here we go again, it appears that the weather can't seem to make up its' mind. Warm, cool, warm, cool and so it goes.

For those of us in the green industry, this time of year tends to make for some very unsettling days. I'm sure by now, everyone is ready to complete those last few lingering winter projects and begin the migration back to greening up and mowing grass. Surely, the weather patterns should begin to stabilize over the next month and that will be a welcomed sight.

With the approach of March, golfers and the like begin to think of the Masters' Tournament. Flowering Dogwoods, Redbuds and Azaleas in full bloom... showcasing the incredible display that Mother Nature allows us only but once a year.

This year, we are fortunate enough to once again have some of the most talented golfer's in the world step up to the first tee only one week prior to Augusta National; each with the hopes of honing their game and ultimately to be donned with a green jacket come Sunday afternoon under the towering Georgia pines.

With that being said, the Shell Houston Open is continuing its support of the local area charities and is in need of volunteers. As has been our commitment in the past, the South Texas Chapter will continue to offset half of the uniform cost for all that support the tournament. Not only is this a great way to get inside the ropes and stand shoulder to shoulder with some of the world's best, but it also serves to perpetuate and introduce the game that we all love so much to the next generation.

In closing, it is always hard to say goodbye to a fellow colleague, but unfortunately Darrell Ocker passed away on February 24<sup>th</sup> at the age of 74. Darrell was a great asset to the turf industry for over 25 years of dedicated service to our field. He worked closely with superintendents and turf managers during his tenure and will be greatly missed. Darrell's funeral will be Thursday, February 27<sup>th</sup> at 12:30 PM at Cashner Funeral Home located in Conroe with visitations beginning at 11:30 AM.



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