

# TEE TO GREEN



The Official Publication of the South Texas Golf Course Superintendents Association



Brae Burn Country Club

## **Happy Thanksgiving and Merry Christmas!**

This years' Christmas Reception, hosted by Terry Gill at Brae Burn Country Club will be a special one. The reception is from 6-9 pm and you may come whenever is convenient for you. This is country club casual and will be a good time to just "catch up" with fellow members and their families.

The scholarship awards will be presented and those that are receiving scholarships should have already been notified by mail.

## **It's time to renew your dues!**

No need to fill out any paperwork unless you've changed jobs or mailing info. Just email the office to "charge" or send an invoice. Dues must be in by January 31st in order to be in the 2014 membership directory.

## **~Sponsors and Advertisers~**

Email the office and renew your sponsorships and advertising now! If you'd like the same as last year, just let Marian know. An invoice will be sent and you can then pick the date to "charge it" or send in a check. It's that easy!

## **Meeting Schedule**

December 15 (Sunday) - Holiday Reception and Scholarship Awards

Brae Burn Country Club

January 8, 2014—Pesticide  
Renewal Class at Bear Creek

January 21, 2014  
Stephen F Austin GC

February 3-6, 2014  
Golf Industry Show  
Wednesday February 5th—Lone  
Star Reception  
7-10 The Rosen Centre Hotel,  
Orlando, FL

March 25, 2014  
Tour 18

April 29, 2014  
Scholarship Tournament  
High Meadow Ranch GC

**Register Now for Any Meeting!**



The 2014 Dog Days of Golf calendar is sponsored by LebanonTurf in co-operation with GCSAA.

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2014 Dog Days  
Calendar Contest**

(Win \$3000 for your Chapter, \$500 for your local Humane Society and \$500 for the Superintendent : Ben Lauber)

Vote at the 2014 Golf Industry Show



LebanonTurf has been supporting golf course superintendents and their chapters through the Dog Days of Golf Calendar for more than a decade.

**Sweetwater Country Club —Photos**

*Thank you Michael Finke for a great meeting! We appreciate how you went above and beyond to host us!!*

The annual meeting was attended by over 70 members this year. Sean Wilson handed over the presidency to Blayne Sparks of The Wilderness Golf Club. Ben Fultz of Wildcat GC was voted in as Vice President and Chris Lineberger of Sugar Creek CC is the 2014 Sec/Treasurer. Kyle Brown of Bay Oaks CC was elected as new Director and Mark Baughman was re-elected as the affiliate Director. Historical Chairman, Cody Spivey handed out tenure pins and the Sonny DuBose Award was voted on and the winner will be announced at the January 21st meeting at Stephen F Austin. Nominees included: George Cincotta, Supt. at Riverbend CC, John Freeman (Brookside Equipment) and Carl Tolber (The Hurt Company).





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## The vital importance of understanding player attitudes

By Rod Burke | 24 October 2013

New research into golfers' attitudes towards courses, playing conditions and social enjoyment will help the game evolve and deliver long-term commercial success, says Rod Burke

The global economic downturn of the past five years has proved to be a pivotal period for the golf business – and perhaps a moment of enlightenment.

More than at any other time in the game's history, attention has been focused on the long-term business sustainability of individual golf courses. The result is that courses have become more aware of who their customers are and the importance of taking a customer-centric approach to their operations.

At Syngenta, we support this positive response and over the past two years, we have commissioned two market research studies – the Golf Player Survey (2011) and Growing Golf in the UK Survey (2013) – to help golf courses and the industry better understand what golfers want, what will attract more players to the game and develop future solutions for golf courses.

Both surveys, the most recent of which was presented at the KPMG Golf Business Forum in St Andrews in June 2013, underline how important golf course design and conditions are to golfers, and how players' wants and needs will help shape golf courses in the future.

### Design matters

According to the research, golf course design is the most important factor in attracting golfers to visit a new course. However, it is the condition of the playing surfaces that can give them the greatest satisfaction when they are there.

The most recent survey interviewed a variety of golfers, lapsed golfers and non-golfers of both sexes and a variety of ages. The research found golf course design tended to be more important to men than women, although women tended to put greater importance on environmental issues. Design is also a more important factor among younger golfers. Interestingly, on a regional basis within the UK, course design is most important to golfers in Scotland.

For low handicap players, it was evident that design of the golf course was of greater importance, even above the cost of play. When asked 'What factors most attract visiting players?', overall the design of the course came out top. In contrast, clubhouse factors, including ambience, food and drink service, shop merchandise and buggy availability, all fell in the lowest six ratings.

The implication is that if you have a capital sum to invest, redesigning holes, upgrading bunkers and investing in tools to improve turf quality is going to assist in attracting more players, and deliver a better return than spending money on improving clubhouse facilities.

Both surveys were consistent in spelling out the importance of a golf course's greens and the quality of the putting surfaces. In the most recent survey, smooth rolling greens was the number one 'on-course' demand of golfers (followed by course design and visual appeal), and is the definitive measure by which golfers judge a golf course.

Naturally, other factors come into play, including the cost of membership or play, but the important message is that the golf course is top priority, both in terms of design to attract golfers and the quality of the greens to create an enjoyable experience.

### Environmental attraction

While the quality of the golf course is of paramount importance, the environment in which golfers play is a key element of their enjoyment and overall experience. Around three-quarters of players say viewing birds and wildlife on the course during their round is of high importance. In addition, nearly 70 per cent of players indicated their desire to see more environmental initiatives instigated by golf courses. Participating in projects such as Operation Pollinator is an opportunity for courses to enhance their environmental attraction, engage players in a positive way and confidently communicate their ecological credentials to customers and local communities.

(continued on page 5)

# GOLF COURSE ARCHITECTURE



Detail from the latest survey has reinforced the importance of environmental features, alongside the provision of great golf. The research found that women and older golfers place the highest levels of importance on environmental factors. It is also of significant interest to non-golfers, who may be attracted by a greener, more natural perception of golf and a sport that offers more to the wider community through the environment. While it might be assumed low-handicap golfers focus on their play, the research shows that they, too, are interested in their surroundings and the environment.

It is apparent that as well as good golf, players prefer courses that incorporate environmental features and support ecological initiatives.

## Picture perfect

Our surveys have also looked at the channels that influence where golfers play. For the top courses, television and tournament coverage are the most influential factors, while reputation and history are also vital for the significant top tier. However, the internet – including golf course websites and golfers' forums – is having an increasing role in influencing where golfers play.

The studies indicate the many nomadic golfers, who are not members of a club and regularly play different courses, may spend more than 40 minutes online selecting their next round – reinforcing the need for an effective web presence. The research also reveals that golfers themselves are important advocates of golf courses. Nearly three-quarters (73 per cent) of golfers become aware of new courses through word of mouth, while 68 per cent of golfers recommend their course to others.

## Rough outline

While the rough on a golf course defines the shape and playing lines of holes, and adds to the visual appeal of a course, Syngenta's research shows that golfers are clear about what they want on-course – to find their golf balls in the rough in a reasonable time and avoid slow play.

The Player Survey revealed more than 70 per cent of players rated being able to easily find balls in the rough of high importance. Asked if they thought the in-play rough on their golf course was too thick, 56 per cent said it was.

The research showed clearly that slow play is a frustration for many players, with rounds of more than three-and-a-half-hours triggering discontent. Interestingly, the results reveal slow play is also an issue for younger players and new entrants to the sport, as well as low handicap players.

For club managers, slow play has a fundamental financial cost, when the number of rounds playable in a day is compromised.

On many courses where rough has become dominated by tangled thick course grasses, the response is often to hack back vegetation several times through the season, impacting on original course design and appearance. This practice carries a significant financial cost and can create risk of ecological damage.

However, innovative new turf management tools have been designed to help balance course and player needs. The selective herbicide, Rescue, for example, can remove ryegrass and coarse grass species while allowing attractive fine fescue grasses to flourish, opening rough that will quickly enhance player satisfaction in a cost-effective way.

## Understanding players' demands

Syngenta's golf surveys point unequivocally to players demanding high quality playing conditions and good golf course design above other factors. Individual golf courses, planning for the future, can be confident in making strategic decisions focused on these factors, enhancing the playing experience and satisfying customer expectation.

The research Syngenta has conducted is some of the most comprehensive undertaken in the UK golf market and, for the first time, includes lapsed golfers and non-golfers, as well as regular players.

Over the next six months, Syngenta will be sharing different aspects of the research focusing on a variety of themes and opportunities including friends and family participation, the accessibility and flexibility of courses, friendliness and customer service in golf, and returning to the theme of course conditions. By understanding what golfers and prospective golfers want, we believe golf courses will adapt appropriately and golf will continue to evolve as a successful, sustainable sport and business.

Rod Burke is Syngenta's business manager for Europe, Africa and Middle East. For more information on the Golf Player Surveys and the implications for the industry, contact him via e-mail: [rod.burke@syngenta.com](mailto:rod.burke@syngenta.com)





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**golf industry show**

Golf Industry Show Housing Now Open

February 1-3: GCSAA Golf Championship

February 3-6: Education Conference



Lone Star Reception

February 5th (Wednesday)

The Rosen Centre—Orlando, FL

7-9 pm

## **GCSAA<sup>®</sup>tv**

### Upcoming Events—Webinars

**December 04, 2013**

Noon, (Central)

Set Goals & Manage Time to Achieve Success

**December 12, 2013**

10 a.m. (Central)

Use Microsoft OneNote to Stay Organized

**January 09, 2014**

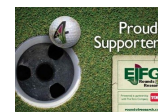
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## Sweetwater Country Club Golf Results

November 18, 2013 – Sweetwater Country Club

Host: Michael Finke

### GROSS

<b>First Place</b>	David Tennant/Ed Martinez	58
<b>Second Place</b>	(scorecard playoff) Chris Webster/Brian Johnson	63
<b>Third Place</b>	Kent Knowles/Doug Browne	63

### NET

<b>First Place</b>	(scorecard playoff) Ben Fultz/John Freeman	53
<b>Second Place</b>	Edward Guzman/Eric Vasquez	53
<b>Third Place</b>	Bill Taylor/Willy Plowman	53.5

### Proximity Contest

**Closest to the Pin #7 (0-12 hcp) –**

**Braeden Riley**

**Closest to the Pin #7 (13+ hcp) –**

**Ray McFarland**

**Closest to the Pine #16 (0-12)- Pat Johnston**

**Closest to the Pine #16 (13+)-John Freeman**

**Long Drive #6 (0-12 hcp) – Stan Ludwick**

**Long Drive #6 (13+ hcp) – Randy Samoff**

**Long Drive #15 (0-12.9)-Mark Baughman**

**Long Drive #15 (13+)-Jack Hargrove**



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Texas Turf Grass Association (Shirley Duble)-979.690.2201  
[www.texasturf.com](http://www.texasturf.com)

South Texas GCSA (Marian Takushi)- 281.494.0094 [www.stgcsa.org](http://www.stgcsa.org)

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Eric Vasquez, Asst. Supt. at Sterling CC

Edward Guzman, Asst. Supt. at Sterling CC

Rodney Crow, Supt. Battleground GC

Welcome back: Tom Werner, Luber Bros.



## IT'S TIME TO RENEW YOUR DUES FOR 2014

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Dues must be in by January 31st to be listed in the 2014 Membership Directory!

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## President's Message

**Thank You!**

As I'm writing this message, many of us are experiencing our first frost delay of this year and will most likely have another frost tomorrow on Thanksgiving Day. This holiday is a time to give thanks for all that we have in our lives. So that is what my last message is about, Thanks.



I have noticed many people on social media each day this month posting something they are thankful for. Saying thanks is an easy thing to do, but sometimes it seems it is easier to forget to say. A lot of the time our job as golf course superintendents is a thankless job. We hear more about the things people don't like than what they do. I'm not sure why it is easier to complain then it is to say thank you. But I guess it is.

The reasons people volunteer may vary, but for me serving on the Board is my way of saying Thanks! To an industry that has given me so much. Yes there have been ups and downs but that is just part of it, the good far out weigh the bad. To all the members of South Texas GCSA, **Thank you!** for giving me the opportunity to say Thanks and serve all these years on the board (especially this year as President) and give back to those who given so much to me.

Take the time today to let someone know you appreciate them and tell them Thanks. You may not get to see it, but a simple gesture such as this can mean the world to that person.

Be sure to come join our host Terry Gill our Scholarship recipients and everyone at our Christmas Reception at Braeburn on December 15<sup>th</sup>.

M. Sean Wilson, CGCS

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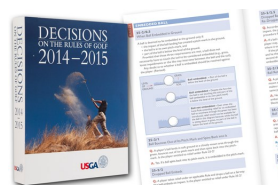
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Friday, May 16, 2014, at the Dallas Center.****Affiliates Take Note!!***

Lone Star GCSA now has new sponsor packages available for 2014. All include your 2014 dues which make you eligible to play in the Texas Cup and the Texas Trophy. Join early to get maximum benefits of your membership which include your logo and name on the LSGCA website with a link to your company website! Lone Star Links is going electronic, so check out the low priced advertising for 2014. Lone Star Links is **sent to over 600 golf industry people** 4 times a year!

Some added "extras" for those that join and sponsor early!

The Lone Star Reception is February 5th at the Rosen Centre in Orlando and The Texas Trophy will be hosted by South Texas GCSA this year (Location TBD).

Pick a sponsor package and/or reserve an ad in Lone Star Links now at: [www.lsgcsa.org](http://www.lsgcsa.org)

**New Decisions On Rules  
Of Golf Announced**By USGA and The R&A  
November 19, 2013

**A total of 87 changes have been made to the Decisions on the Rules of Golf that will go into effect for the 2014-15 cycle.**

Among the changes for 2014-2015, four decisions are particularly noteworthy:

New Decision 14-3/18 confirms that players can access reports on weather conditions on a smartphone during a round without breaching the Rules. Importantly, this new Decision also clarifies that players are permitted to access information on the threat of an impending storm in order to protect their own safety.

New Decision 18/4 provides that, where enhanced technological evidence (e.g. HDTV, digital recording or online visual media, etc.) shows that a ball has left its position and come to rest in another location, the ball will not be deemed to have moved if that movement was not reasonably discernible to the naked eye at the time.

Revised Decision 25-2/0.5 helps to clarify when a golf ball is considered to be embedded in the ground through the use of illustrations.

Revised Decision 27-2a/1.5 allows a player to go forward up to approximately 50 yards without forfeiting his or her right to go back and play a provisional ball.

Printed copies of "The Rules of Golf" and "Decisions on the Rules of Golf, 2014-2015" are available from the USGA and The R&A.

[Read the full article here](#)



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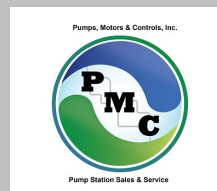
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#### **Example:**

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One eighth page 2 color ad in printed <i>Tee to Green</i>	\$ 95
Tournament Sponsorship	\$200

Already Committed Presidents Special 2014! Thank you!!  
 (Dale And Nancy Bowman)





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Individual and a guest at the Christmas Banquet with sponsorship of the Christmas Banquet (company recognition)

### GOLD PACKAGE SPONSOR\*

(Includes sponsorship for all meetings/tournaments Including Christmas Banquet)

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### CHRISTMAS BANQUET SPONSOR

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SIZE	RATE PER ISSUE
FULL PAGE	\$295.00
1/2 PAGE	\$165.00
1/4 PAGE	\$95.00
1/8 PAGE	\$55.00

### TEE TO GREEN PRINTED ISSUE (SEPTEMBER): (BLACK/WHITE)-Add 40% for 4 color

SIZE	RATE PER ISSUE
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1/2 PAGE	\$295.00(\$413 4 color)
1/4 PAGE	\$165.00(\$231 4 color)
1/8 PAGE	\$95.00(\$133 4 color)

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Already Committed Platinum 2014! Thank you!!

(Clint Neely and Stephen Dolen)

