



The Mountain State Greenletter

Volume 14, Issue 7
July 2022

West Virginia Golf Course Superintendents Association

Board of Director's Message

June too dry and July too wet...I feel like that roughly sums up our summer season. The good news now is that only August remains. With the unpredictable weather of West Virginia, only the good Lord knows what we will have in store. As our summer seasonal help begins returning to school, the latter half of August is often a tough, but final stretch.

Our fall meeting will take place at The Pines Country Club in Morgantown. A date/time should be finalized in the very near future. Once again, the turf conference is finally back! We will be at Stonewall Resort on November 1st.

Hoping everyone's season is faring well and I look forward to seeing you all at these events.

Thank you,

Bobby Cline, CGCS
Guyan G&CC

Scholarship Recipients:

**Sierra Beaulieu
Philip Webb
Jarret Lambert
Mary Roush
Ethan Wilson**

Upcoming Events:

~Annual Meeting

The Pines CC

October 2022

Details to be released soon

~Turf Conference

Tuesday, November 1st

Stonewall Resort

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Superintendent Spotlight Q&A

Russell Stewart, Berry Hills Country Club

1. Tell us about yourself-

“I’m Russell Stewart, the superintendent at Berry Hills Country Club. I grew up and live in Danville, WV and attended the University of Kentucky getting a degree in Plant and Soil Science in Turfgrass Maintenance. I’m from a large family so holidays are crowded, lol. In my free time I like to fish, kayak and play golf, but I don’t get to do that as often as I’d like.”

2. Tell us about your past work experience and current work experience-

“When I was a kid, my dad never let me sit still during the summer breaks so I always had jobs. I started mowing lawns and roofing houses when I was 12, but didn’t get the urge to work on golf courses until I started playing golf in High School. I started my first golf course job after high school when I decided that’s what I wanted to do. While in KY getting my degree, I worked at various golf courses with different turf types learning as much as I could while in school. My first job as an Assistant Superintendent is where I learnt the meaning of hard work. Free time and days off were a luxury, but I love what I do. Since I’ve been back in WV, I worked at an engineering company doing inspections, and I’ve been at Berry Hills CC since 2017. I started out as the irrigation and spray tech, moved up to Assistant Superintendent, and now have been the Superintendent for the last 3 years.”

3. What do you like most about your job?

“I’m sure my reasons for liking most about my job are similar to everyone else that loves working on a golf course and that is revving up in the spring after a long cold winter, sunrises, how beautiful a golf course can be, and then fall when things start to slow down.”

4. Anything else you want us to know?

“ I don’t watch much tv, but love going to sporting events. College basketball and football, PGA Tour events, and horse races are my favorites. I also enjoy a cold beer or bourbon after a long week.”

37th Annual Scholarship & Research Fundraiser Golf Tournament

Results

- 1. Landscape Supply (56)*
- 2. Apex (59)*
- 3. Buckhannon CC (60)*
- 4. BASF (60)*
- 5. Berry Hills CC (61)*
- 6. Advanced Turf Solutions (62)*
- 7. Walker Supply (62)*
- 8. Best Sand (63)*
- 9. Mountain State Floratine (64)*
- 10. Harrell's (65)*
- 11. EH Griffith (65)*
- 12. Oglebay Resort (67)*
- 13. Bel Meadow GC (69)*
- 14. WVGA (70)*
- 15. Guyan G&CC (94)*

Long Drive Men's #6

** Zach Gillespie*

Long Drive Women's #6

** Katrin Wolfe*

Long Putt #9

**Mountain State Floratine*

Closest to the Hole #14

**Buzz Rhoden*

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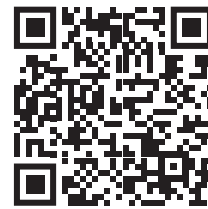
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Stop Wasting Sand

By John Daniels, agronomist, Northeast Region

Applying sand topdressing at regular intervals is a best management practice for producing healthy, well-performing putting greens. Having good quality sand makes the application process simpler and less disruptive to golfers. Therefore, many golf courses only purchase select sands that go through numerous screenings and washing processes. Some of these sands will even undergo a final kiln drying step.

The number of steps involved in preparing the sand along with the distance it must be transported impact the final cost. It is not unusual for a golf course to spend between \$50 to \$80 per ton for a topdressing sand. Bunker sands could be even more expensive. The premium angular sands that are being used in bunkers nowadays are around \$100 to \$120 per ton, or more.

When you consider a typical 18-hole golf course may purchase 150 to 200 tons of topdressing sand each year just for their putting greens and occasionally a similar amount of bunker sand, the total expenditure on these grains is not insignificant. Losing just 20% of the material due to poor storage can result in thousands of dollars of waste.

There are simple steps that can be taken to reduce such waste. At minimum, any sand that is purchased should be stored on a concrete slab. You don't want it mixing with the underlying ground and becoming contaminated with rocks, silt and clay. Avoid asphalt pads as the material can easily break under the down pressure of a scooping bucket. You don't want any chips of asphalt ending up on your greens and damaging a mower reel.

Ideally, you will want to have separate storage bins for each of your most used bulk materials. Many golf courses will have a distinct spot for topdressing sand, bunker sand, gravel and mulch. Reinforce the sides of the bins so that you can push against them to pack material and to assist with loading. Adjust the height of the walls so that you can fit a standard truckload of material

Adding a roof can help keep the bins free of leaf litter and keep the piles protected from a heavy downpour. You don't want to lose material to washouts or have to skip a topdressing event because your sand is too wet. There is no question that dry sand spreads more evenly and is less disruptive for golfers. It will also help keep your mechanic happier by not having to grind reels as frequently.

If your operation uses kiln-dried sand exclusively for topdressing, you might want to consider installing a metal sand silo. A silo will ensure your sand is completely protected from the elements while also making it easier to load the hopper of your topdressing unit. However, expect to pay around \$5 to \$10 more per ton in delivery as a specialized type of truck must be used to pump the sand into the silo. That is in addition to the cost of the silo which could run around \$35,000.

While building bulk material storage bins might sound expensive, when you calculate the numbers it becomes totally worth it. Reducing waste and having the ability to apply sand topdressing when needed, regardless of whether it rained the night before, makes sense. There is no reason you should accept losing sand or other important materials.

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Piles of sand sitting on the ground and left uncovered can become contaminated with debris and are prone to loss. Bulk materials like sand, mulch and gravel should be stored in a covered bin that has a concrete floor.



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