

Board Outreach with the Mid-Atlantic's Virginia Chapter August 4-5th 2021

My first stop was at Kinloch Golf Club (#1 club in Virginia) in Richmond Virginia. Started the day out with the three assistant superintendents and had the opportunity to discuss the assistant certificate program with the three of them. I was able to attend their morning meeting with their crew. I then had a tour of the maintenance facility. During that time the Superintendent (Trevor) arrived and joined us. I had the opportunity then to tour the course with him and talk to him about facility BMP's and the First Green program.



Superintendent Trevor Hedgepeth, CGCS (center) and Assistant Superintendent Blake Heinz (right)

My second stop was at Hermitage Country Club and met with Superintendent Chris Harriman. We had a very good discussion on labor issues and stated he would like to see the GCSAA develop more Spanish education webinars to aid with training and advancing members of his crew. We then discussed the First Green program and the benefits of doing them. We then toured The Manakin course which they had just renovated the tees, fairways and roughs into Latitude Bermuda grass and greens to Triple Seven. They were going to do the other course next year and put in Latitude Bermuda on tees, fairways and roughs and Pure Eclipse on the greens.



Director of Agronomy Chris Harriman

My next stop was at the Independence Golf Club. They have an 18 hole “Champions” and a 9-hole course “The Bear”. There I had the opportunity to spend some time with Dr. McCall and Travis Roberson (Graduate Research Assoc.) from Virginia Tech where they do research for warm season grasses. During the tour of the research plot’s, we were able to discuss the challenges they have with getting turf students into the program at Virginia Tech as preferences are given to engineering students. Later we meet up with Dan Taylor (Superintendent) and had lunch. We discussed the unique “The Bear” course, 9 holes, which is set up for Golf, Disc golf and footgolf. The Bear has a course called the CANOPY which goes through the trees of the course which has different levels of rope courses to challenge you and zip lines.



Left Superintendent Dan Taylor CGCS, Dr. McCall and Travis Roberson (Graduate Research Associate) From Virginia Tech.

Next, I went to the Federal Golf Club and met with Matt Drayton. Matt is currently the treasure for the Virginia GCSAA Chapter. I had the opportunity to talk to him about the CGCS program, First Green Program and the Virginia GCSAA Chapter. I had the opportunity to talk with his Equipment manager and we talked about the EM certificate programs.



Superintendent Matt Drayton – Secretary/Treasurer of Virginia GCSAA Chapter

My next stop was at Belmont Golf Course. This is owned by the First Tee-Greater Richmond. They closed in May of 2020 to do a major renovation by the Davis Love Company maintaining the A.W.Tillinghast design. They have a 6-hole course a 12-hole course and 18 hole putting course. Superintendent Dan Sabina said that his BMP's where a big help during the construction of Belmont G.C. We talked about the CGCS program and the first green program and the benefits of them. I talk with his assistant Tyler and offer him a membership to the GCSAA, he is going to fill out the form and send it in. We also discussed the Assistant Superintendent certificate program.



Center Superintendent Dan Sabina and right Assistant Superintendent Tyler Edgar

The last stop of the day was at The Country Club of Virginia. There I met with Christian Sain. We had a discussion on labor issues he was facing and discussed how the First Green program could open up some potential employees. He stated the schools around his area he didn't think would work for the program. I pointed him in the direction of trying FFA, Boys and Girls Club and golf teams. He also stated that the BMP's have been helpful. He is a Grass roots Ambassador and appreciates all the hard work our staff does and the form letters that GCSAA puts out which he can simply sign and send.



Director of Agronomy Christian Sain

On the second day I went to Petersburg Virginia which I was able to attend the BOD business meeting at the Country Club of Petersburg. Katrin and I attend the meeting. Katrin gave some updates. I was able to share the importance of getting everyone to do individual golf course BMP's. They are currently finishing their 2nd addition of BMP's. I also had the opportunity to discuss the First Green program with them and encouraged them and their members to host an event. Talked about the upcoming GCSAA golf championship, unfortunately it is at the same time that they have a golf challenge event with the Carolina's. The Virginia Chapter BOD operates a little different than most BOD that I know of as the offices do not vote. Instead they have 5 External Vice-Presidents one from each region of the state that votes.



VGCSAA Jeff Whitmire, CGCS



Superintendent Vince Hankley - Plaque at first tee that names the course after Vince!