

Tee To Green

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President's Message

Reflecting on a Season's End—and My Final Days as President

As we wind down another season and shift our focus to off-season projects, early-order planning, fall cleanup—and hopefully some much-needed family time—I encourage everyone to also carve out a little time for yourselves. It's been a challenging and exhausting season for many, and we can't perform at our best—in any area of life—without taking care of our own well-being first.

For those who attended—or tuned in from home—the Ryder Cup was truly something special this year right down to the final stretch on Sunday. It was a pleasure to organize a bus trip for our members to attend Wednesday's practice rounds. The camaraderie, laughter, and meaningful conversations shared that day were highlights for many—and even sparked a few new friendships. We look forward to offering more opportunities like this in the future.

While at the Ryder Cup, the Empire State Golf Alliance released the New York Golf Economic & Environmental Impact Executive Summary Report. This report provides compelling data that reinforces just how vital our industry is—to our communities, local economies, and the environment. The numbers are eye-opening, and they reaffirm that we, as turf professionals, are making a real impact.

A Memorable Season of Events—and More to Come!

A special thank you is due to the clubs and individuals who hosted this year's events. First, I'd like to thank my team at Upper Montclair Country Club for their contributions in hosting the Invitational.

Thank you to Superintendent Dave Peterson and Silvermine for the Parent-Child Scholarship event and Super Jeff Scott and Tamarack for hosting the Met Area Team Championship.

Many thanks to Sleepy Hollow's Super Jon Heywood and assistants Matt Crawford and David Serafin for hosting the Assistants Championship, and last but certainly not least, special thanks to John Carlone, "The Colonel," for hosting the Poa Annual, Met



*Michael J. Brunelle, CGCSA
MetGCSA President*

Area Team Qualifier, and the Met Championship—his final hosted event at the Meadow Brook Club. What a fitting sendoff for an industry icon. John, thank you for setting the bar high and exemplifying what it means to be a true professional in our field. Wishing you all the best in the next chapter.

Looking ahead, we have several key events on the horizon:

- **Annual Meeting, Elections, and Fall Seminar on November 13** at **Fenway Golf Club**
- **Equipment Managers Fall Education Seminar on November 18** at **Silver Spring Country Club**
- **MetGCSA Holiday Party on December 10** at the **Beechmont Tavern** in **New Rochelle, NY**

Signing Off With Gratitude

As this is my final message as president, I want to express my sincere gratitude to:

- The **MetGCSA Board . . .** Thank you for your commitment and the time you've devoted to leading our association.
- All **past presidents and board members . . .** Your efforts laid the foundation we continue to build on.
- **Mike McCall and Susan O'Dowd . . .** Your dedication and support are invaluable.

Serving as president has been an honor. My time on the board has shaped me in many ways, both professionally and personally, and I'm deeply grateful for the experience.

I look forward to seeing many of you at Fenway for our Annual Meeting.

Warm regards,

Mike Brunelle
President

Taking the Guesswork Out of Building a Winning Budget

Budgeting Best Practices for Golf Course Superintendents

by Jim Pavonetti, CGCS



Whether you're preparing your 25th budget or stepping into your first season as head superintendent, budget time on a golf course is always a high-stakes balancing act. You're expected to maintain pristine playing conditions while navigating rising costs, unpredictable weather, and shifting golfer expectations—all without breaking the bank.

Yup . . . budgeting isn't just about crunching numbers; it's a strategic tool that directly impacts the golfer experience, course reputation, and long-term financial health of your facility. Over the years, I've developed a set of best practices that help take the guesswork out of budget planning. Whether this is all new to you or simply a timely refresher, here's how to approach operational and capital budgets with clarity and confidence.

1. Understand Where the Money Comes From

Golf courses generate revenue from a wide variety of sources: greens fees, memberships, tournaments, cart rentals—the list goes on. Superintendents don't always control these streams, but understanding them is essential to aligning maintenance priorities with financial goals.

- **Collaborate early** with the general manager or finance committee to review revenue trends and income projections for the coming season.

- **Connect the dots** between course investments and revenue. Did last year's bunker renovation lead to higher guest rounds or membership renewals? Would upgrading drainage increase cart revenue and course availability after storms? And would an enhanced practice facility or other renovation provide an ample return on investment.

A well-maintained course isn't just nice to have—it's a revenue driver. Make that connection clear in your budget proposals.

2. Rank Maintenance by Impact

Not all maintenance tasks are created equal. When budgets are tight—and they often are—focus your spending where it will matter most to playability and perception: greens, tees, fairways, and bunkers.

- **Develop a tiered priority list** of maintenance needs:

- **Critical:** Irrigation failures, safety issues
- **Important:** Preventive turf care, pest control
- **Discretionary:** Cosmetic landscaping, nonessential amenities

- Use turf management software (ASB TaskTracker, SPARKS, Turf Cloud) to **target high-impact areas needing investment** based on usage, conditions, and historical data.

3. Plan for Capital Expenditures

Capital expenses—equipment fleets, infrastructure upgrades, course renovations—are the big-ticket items that can sink or save a budget. Planning for these proactively keeps you from scrambling when that rough mower finally dies mid-season or the irrigation system gives up in July.

- **Build a 5- to 10-year capital expenditure plan** outlining when major equipment and systems will need to be replaced. Your equipment manager is your MVP here. This is the staff member who knows what's nearing the end of its useful life. Don't wait until something breaks to make a case.

- **Leasing can smooth out cash flow**, especially for high-turnover items like reel mowers and utility vehicles. For longer-life equipment like tractors, a lease-to-own approach can work well.

- **Course renovation? Phase it smart.** Work with a golf course architect and your green and golf committees to map out phased improvements that align with available funds. Gather feedback from a wide range of players—from scratch golfers to high handicappers, from long-time members to younger and newer players. The work should serve everyone who uses the course, not just the loudest voices.

Big spending doesn't have to mean big surprises. The better your roadmap, the smoother the ride.

4. Manage Your Labor Costs

Labor is often your largest single expense—and one of your most valuable resources. How you manage your team can make or break both your budget and your day-to-day operations.

- **Track labor hours by task** using software like ASB TaskTracker or Turf Cloud. The goal is to identify inefficiencies and adjust schedules.

- **Cross-train your crew** so they can handle multiple roles. This gives you more flexibility during unpredictable conditions and reduces downtime or reliance on external contractors.

- **Have a plan for the unplannable.** Frost delays, rain events, and mid-day tournaments shouldn't leave your crew idle. Keep preplanned task lists for these situations so productivity doesn't stall.

Think about it: Twenty staff members standing around for 20 minutes = *400 minutes lost*. That's 6.6 hours—over 80 percent of one employee's entire eight-hour workday.

Efficiency isn't just about speed—it's about being ready to adapt.

5. Technology & Sustainable Practices Give Your Budget a Boost

The tools you invest in today can save serious money tomorrow. Technology isn't just

about looking high-tech—it's about making better decisions, using fewer resources, and reducing long-term costs.

- **Run the ROI** on upgrades like soil moisture sensors, GPS-guided sprayers, or hybrid mowers. These tools reduce waste, lower chemical and fuel use, and often pay for themselves faster than you'd expect.

- **Look for rebates and grants.** Many utility companies and environmental groups offer incentives for water-saving tech, solar panels, and other sustainable upgrades. Don't leave free money on the table.

- **Reinvest savings into improvements.** If your new irrigation controls save thousands annually, use that money to enhance playability or boost your crew's efficiency. Technology and sustainability aren't just buzzwords—they're budget tools.

Adopting smarter systems doesn't just protect the environment—it helps your budget breathe easier.

6. Tap Into the Internet

If your equipment manager doesn't have a laptop—buy one now. The savings you'll unlock by sourcing parts, tools, and supplies online will pay for the device in no time.

- **Amazon, eBay, Facebook Marketplace**, and other platforms are full of discounted parts, tools, and miscellaneous other items that you'd pay double for through traditional suppliers.

- **Used turf equipment dealers** often carry hard-to-find parts at a fraction of the cost of a new part. Need a wheel hub for an older rough mower? Check these sites before buying new.

Online parts shopping doesn't mean sacrificing quality—it just means being resourceful. Your bottom line will thank you.

7. Making the Most of EOPs

Early Order Programs (EOPs) may be tedious, but if used strategically, they can unlock serious value for your operation.

- **Start planning next year's agronomic program now.** Keep notes throughout the season on what's working, what rates you'd

tweak, and what new products you want to try.

- **Use EOPs that offer real savings**—season-long discounts, rebates, or bonus product for committed volume. Don't waste money chasing tiny rebates on products you wouldn't normally use.

- **Be selective and smart.** Commit to what you're certain you'll use, and wait on the rest. Many EOPs still honor the discount in-season if you've committed during the early order window.

Proof the system can work: I've reinvested over \$20,000 per year back into our agromonic program using rebates from Early Order Programs. They're worth the effort—if you approach them strategically.

8. Keep Tabs on Your Budget

A budget isn't set in stone. Regular review and adjustment are key to staying on track and proving your value to club officials.

- **Schedule quarterly reviews** to compare projections against actual spending. Factor in weather events, labor changes, or equipment breakdowns that might affect your numbers.

- **Take notes throughout the season** on tools, techniques, or projects you want to add next year. That new tool or piece of equipment you saw at a trade show? Write it down so it's not forgotten during budget season, and be sure to prepare a good presentation to ensure whatever you propose gets approved.

- **Use software you trust**, like QuickBooks or similar tools, to keep real-time tabs on expenses, generate reports, and justify future spending. Choose a system you're comfortable with—and stick to it.

Come budget approval time, being able to show your homework—clearly and confidently—can make the difference between getting what you need or getting passed over.

9. Communicate with Stakeholders: Speak Their Language

You manage one of the largest budgets at your facility; *own that responsibility* by

becoming the most well-prepared presenter in the room. Clear, confident communication with owners, boards, or members builds trust and increases the odds that your budget gets approved.

- **Present with clarity.** Use concise reports and bulletproof logic to justify budget increases. Tie every ask back to course quality, player satisfaction, or revenue generation.

- **Visuals matter.** Before-and-after photos, charts, and graphs can make your points instantly clear—especially to your finance committee whose members are likely used to seeing data this way in their own occupations.

- **Offer on-course tours.** Sometimes walking a fairway says more than a spreadsheet ever could. Show them where the dollars will go. Better yet, arrange a visit to another course that has completed similar projects.

- **Define maintenance standards.** If you haven't already, build a Maintenance Standards Manual. (I covered this topic in a feature I wrote for the *Tee to Green* in 2021.) This tool—developed with your committee members—can spell out current expectations, future goals, and the budget needed to

get there. It's one of the most powerful ways to defend your current budget and clearly define and justify increases necessary to fulfill agreed on future improvements.

- **Bring in outside expertise.** Agonomists, arborists, irrigation consultants, hydrologists, golf course architects—credible third-party experts can help validate your proposals. Sometimes, hearing it from someone else gets the deal done.

- **Use local benchmarking.** Survey peer superintendents at comparable courses to gather salary, staffing, or budget figures. These informal polls can be surprisingly persuasive, whether it's to secure your equipment manager a raise, add staff, or increase a line item in your budget. Most boards don't want to be outdone by their sister clubs.

Budget season isn't just about numbers—it's about storytelling. Make yours compelling.

10. Build a Contingency Fund: Plan for the Unexpected

Every superintendent knows the budget-busting power of a surprise. Whether it's a



Upcoming Events

Check Out What's Ahead!

major storm, an equipment failure, or a sudden pest outbreak, *having a contingency reserve is essential.*

- **Set aside 5- to 10-percent of your annual budget** for unplanned emergencies. It's not wasted money; it's insurance for uninterrupted operations.
- **If you don't use it, reinvest it.** End-of-year funds can go toward pre-purchases, equipment upgrades, or deferred maintenance.
- **Replenish annually.** Something always comes up—and being financially prepared shows true professionalism. Being reactive costs more. Being proactive earns trust.

Budgeting Is More Than Math—It's Leadership

Budgeting for a golf course isn't just about cutting costs or filling in spreadsheets. It's about vision, strategy, and delivering a world-class experience while staying financially responsible.

You're competing for funds alongside every department at your facility by:

- Understanding where revenue comes from
- Prioritizing what matters most
- Using technology and sustainability to stretch dollars
- Communicating like a leader
- Staying flexible when things change

In the end, you position yourself—and your course—for long-term success.

Budget season is coming. Be ready—and be the best-prepared manager in the room!

Jim Pavonetti, a member of the Tee to Green Editorial Committee, is superintendent at Fairview Country Club in Greenwich, CT.

Met Events

Fall Education Seminar/Annual Meeting

Thursday, November 13
Fenway Golf Club
Scarsdale, NY
Host: Rob Alonzi

Equipment Managers Fall Education Seminar

Tuesday, November 18
Silver Spring Country Club
Ridgefield, CT
Host: Bill Cygan

MetGCSA Holiday Party

Wednesday, December 10
Beechmont Tavern
New Rochelle, NY

MetGCSA Winter Seminar

Wednesday, January 14, 2026
Westchester Country Club
Rye, NY
Host: David Dudones

Industry Events

Green Expo Turf & Landscape Conference

Tuesday–Thursday, December 9–11
Borgata Hotel
Atlantic City, NJ

Nor'easter Ski Day

Wednesday, February 11, 2026
Pico Mountain
Mendon, VT

A Rainy Evening Couldn't Wash Away the Fun at This Year's Summer Social

Even a surprise downpour couldn't dampen the spirits at this year's Annual Summer Social, held once again at the stunning Orienta Beach Club overlooking the Long Island Sound.

While July 13 brought more rain than the rest of the summer combined, our members didn't let it spoil the fun. The cocktail hour carried on smoothly under the club's tented

area, and the festivities seamlessly moved inside to Orienta's beautiful, classic clubhouse—where a fresh lobster buffet awaited and the good times kept rolling.

This annual event is always a welcome break from the challenges of summer on the course, offering a chance to relax, reconnect with colleagues, and share the evening with our better halves—who certainly understand the demands of our industry.

Thank you to LaBar Golf Renovations, our generous title sponsor, and to the exceptional team at Orienta Beach Club for once again helping to make this a memorable night.

If you couldn't join us this year, mark your calendar for next summer. We'll be ready rain or shine!

—Jim Pavonetti, CGCS





New Members

Please join us in welcoming the following new MetGCSA members:

- **Mike Marino**, Class AF, ENVU, Cary, NC.
- **Sean Murphy**, Class AF, MTE Equipment Solutions, West Henrietta, NY.

Member on the Move

Jake Gibson is now at MTE Equipment Solutions, Milford, CT. Previous position: Assistant superintendent at Burning Tree Country Club in Greenwich, CT.

In Sympathy

We extend our heartfelt condolences to Wintonbury Hills Golf Club Superintendent Dennis Petruzzelli and his family on the loss of his beloved wife, **Pamela Petruzzelli**, who passed away on October 6.

Pamela will be deeply missed by all who knew her. May you find comfort in the love and support of those around you during this difficult time.

Memorial contributions may be made to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in her honor.

Silvermine Shines for the 2025 Parent/Child Tournament and Scholarship Awards

by Mike McCall, MetGCSA Executive Director

The spirit of family and fun took center stage on August 5 at the picturesque Silvermine Golf Club in Norwalk, CT, as the club and Superintendent Dave Peterson welcomed the 2025 Parent/Child Tournament and Scholarship Awards Ceremony. With its beautifully maintained 27-hole layout—featuring both an 18-hole championship course and a 9-hole executive course—Silvermine proved to be the perfect venue for this annual MetGCSA tradition.

A Course for Every Generation

The event's centerpiece, the Parent/Child Tournament, was held on the Executive 9—a course ideally suited for golfers of all ages and abilities. The largest turnout in recent memory brought over 50 enthusiastic participants, all eager to enjoy a day of friendly competition in a truly inclusive format.

PGA Head Professional Stuart Waack organized the golfers into threesomes and foursomes for a lively scramble format. At 4 p.m., under clear skies and in perfect playing conditions, teams set out to conquer a layout of four par 4s and five par 3s, playing to a par of 31.

Like much of the Metropolitan area this season, Silvermine was playing fast and firm, rewarding precision over power. Strategic shot-making, chips, and top putting skills proved the key to success in a round filled with plenty of cheers, laughter, and excitement.

Dinner, Recognition, and a Bright Future

After two hours of spirited play, participants gathered for a delicious buffet dinner while scores were tallied. The atmosphere buzzed with camaraderie and anticipation—not just for the results, but for the evening's main event.

The Scholarship Awards Ceremony capped off the day, recognizing the out-

standing recipients whose hard work, character, and dedication stood out among a talented group of applicants. (See page 9 for the winners.) Their achievements remind us of the continued commitment of the MetGCSA community to supporting the next generation of leaders in turf management and beyond.

A Grateful Acknowledgment

A special thank you to George E. Ley Co. for their generous sponsorship, helping make this day of family, friendship, and future-building so memorable. Their continued commitment echoes the values at the core of the MetGCSA mission.

Parent/Child Team Wins of the Day

First Place – Flight A

Score: 27

Kyle Ott & Tyler Ott, *Wee Burn CC*
Ed Grant & Ed Grant V, *K&J Tree Service*



From left to right: First Place Flight A winners Kyle Ott from *Wee Burn* and his son, Tyler, and Ed Grant from *K&J Trees* and his son, Ed Jr.

First Place – Flight B

Score: 35

Scott Olson, Grant Olson Hanna, Blake Olson Hanna, & Sloan Olson Hanna, *Knollwood CC*

Closest to the Pin

Hole #1 (Men): Cooper Whipple, *West Point GC* – 3' 6"

Hole #7 (Women): Dana Dudones, *Westchester CC* – 5' 8"

Longest Drive

Hole #4 (Men): Steve Wickstrom, *Burning Tree CC*

Hole #4 (Women): Bailey Doyle, *GCSAA NE Regional Rep*

Mike McCall is the executive director of the MetGCSA and Managing member of the McCall Management Group, LLC.



From left to right: First Place Flight B winners Knollwood Country Club's Scott Olson with sons Blake and Grant and his daughter Sloan.

Congratulations to Our 2025 Scholarship Recipients!

by Mike McCall, MetGCSA Executive Director

This year, the Scholarship Committee had the pleasure of awarding scholarships to 16 members' children. As always, the winning candidates were selected based on maturity, academic history, ambition, extracurricular activities, and effort exhibited in completing their application.

The Scholarship Award Winners

In addition to maintaining excellent GPAs, these students are all very involved in their communities and in numerous extracurricular activities. The depth of talent possessed by the applicants for the MetGCSA scholarships this year is truly inspiring. The Scholarship Committee and board are very pleased to recognize these deserving applicants with scholarship awards.

Please join me in congratulating our scholarship recipients—and their proud parents:

Spencer Caporicci, son of Dana and Chris Caporicci of Cherry Valley Club, is attending Clemson University where he is majoring in Business.

David Carlone, son of Leslie and John Carlone of the Meadow Brook Club, is attending Northeastern University and pursuing his MBA.

Kylie Dudones, daughter of Dana and David Dudones of Westchester Country Club, is attending Suny Cortland where she is majoring in Education.

Taylor Dudones, daughter of Dana and David Dudones of Westchester Country Club, is attending New York University where she is majoring in Environmental Studies and minoring in Business.

Avery Gabrenas, daughter of Erica and Justin Gabrenas of Birchwood Country Club, is attending Central Connecticut State University where she is enrolled in the Master of Science program in Athletic Training.

John T. Genovesi, son of Elizabeth and John Genovesi, is attending St. Bonaventure University where he is majoring in Management and studying to become an athletic director.

Payton Gurney, daughter of Sheri and Guy Gurney of Storr Tractor Company, is



Congratulations to our scholarship winners and their families. From left to right: Jim & Vincent Pavonetti; Kristin, Matt, & Melissa Severino; Josie, Darrell, & Claire Marcinek; Kim, Kristina, & Gil Perez; Kylie, Dana, Taylor & Dave Dudones; and Bea Halderman.

attending St. Joseph's University in Pennsylvania, where she is majoring in Criminal Justice and Sociology.

Bea Halderman, daughter of Kristen and Blake Halderman of Brae Burn Country Club, is attending the University of Vermont where she is majoring in Jazz Studies.

Sean Kaufmann, son of Jennifer and Edward Kaufmann, is attending Ithaca College where he is majoring in Television and Digital Media Productions.

Julia Lippman, daughter of Laura and Robert Lippman of Westchester Turf Supply, is attending Fordham University where she is majoring in Marketing.

Sarah Lippman, daughter of Laura and Robert Lippman of Westchester Turf Supply, is attending Central Connecticut State University where she is majoring in Education.

Claire Marcinek, daughter of Gretchen and Darrell Marcinek of Somerset County Park Commission, is attending Temple University College where she is majoring in Nursing.

Josephine Marcinek, daughter of Gretchen and Darrell Marcinek of Somerset County Park Commission, is attending St. Thomas Aquinas College where she is majoring in Exercise Science.

Vincent Pavonetti, son of Renee and Jim Pavonetti of Fairview Country Club, is attending Thomas College and majoring in Psychology.

Kristina Hoyos Perez, daughter of Kimberly and Gil Perez of Dunning Industries, is attending Rollins College where she

is pursuing a bachelor's in International Relations, a minor in Spanish, and a master's in Business Administration.

Melissa Severino, daughter of Kristin and Matt Severino of Scarsdale Golf Club, is attending Skidmore College where she is majoring in Health & Human Physiological Sciences with a minor in Honors Forum.

A Thank You Is in Order

In addition to congratulating our 16 scholarship recipients, I'd like to recognize the Met Board—both past and present—for establishing the scholarship fund and continually striving to increase the award amounts whenever possible. This year, the board awarded a total of \$31,000 to deserving recipients, made possible through the Annual Bill Caputi Scholarship Raffle, the 50/50 raffles at our monthly meetings, the Foursomes 4 the Foundation program, and a portion of our member dues.

A special thank you also goes to the Scholarship Committee for their dedication and thoughtful evaluation of each application. Many thanks to Mike Cook, Mike Maffei, Chip Lafferty, Steve Wickstrom, Rob Alonzi, Glen Dube, and Mike Brunelle.

Please remember to support our scholarship raffle. It is the major income-generator for our Scholarship Fund! And be sure to take advantage of this must-attend family event next year!

Mike McCall is the executive director of the MetGCSA and Managing member of the McCall Management Group, LLC.

Fenway Brings Home Title at MetGCSA Invitational

by Blake Halderman, CGCS

August 18 was a perfect day for the annual MetGCSA Invitational Tournament held this year at the beautiful Upper Montclair Country Club in Clifton, NJ. Claiming this year's trophy was the team from Fenway Golf Club, led by Superintendent Rob Alonzi (see scores at right). Director of Grounds and MetGCSA President Mike Brunelle was proud to showcase the club's newly renovated course to our association and guests.

Following several successful years hosting the LPGA Cognizant Founders Cup, the club embarked on a major renovation last fall under the direction of architect A. John Harvey and LaBar Golf Renovations. The results were nothing short of spectacular; the course was in pristine condition, and we are incredibly grateful to Mike and his team for hosting us so soon after such an extensive project.

So Many to Thank

In addition to Mike, kudos go out to Chad Botos, course superintendent; Michael Ballew, West Course assistant; Ryan Gallaher, East Course assistant; Michael McKenna, South Course assistant; Egie Pagan, equipment manager; Brian Kulesa, pesticide & irrigation manager. Their hard work and dedication were on full display throughout the day.

We also wish to recognize Golf Professional Mike Holiday and his staff, GM/COO Charlie Dimpfl, and the entire Upper Montclair Country Club membership for their hospitality and support. Not only did they deliver a top-tier experience, but they also added a few special touches that made the event even more memorable.

The day began with the National Anthem and a ceremonial American flag at the first tee. It concluded with a touching surprise: the UMCC membership presented a \$5,000 donation to the MetGCSA Foundation, which supports education, scholarships, and research. This incredibly generous gesture was deeply appreciated by all MetGCSA members.

Tournament Results

As for the golf, it was just as remarkable as the setting. Many professionals posted strong rounds, but one stood above the rest:

Low Pro – Score: (-5) 67

Kyle Baehler, *Rye Golf Club*

Other notables:

1st Place Gross – Score: (-7) 65

Steve Rabideau, Nick Beni, Bart McDade, Dave Staudinger
Winged Foot Golf Club

2nd Place Net – Score: (-12) 60

Chip Lafferty, Kyle Baehler, Chris Correale, Stef Ferrara
Rye Golf Club

2025 MetGCSA Invitational Low Net Champions – Score: (-13) 59:

Rob Alonzi, Tyler Jaramillo, Garrett Miller, Marc Karetsky
Fenway Golf Club

Closest to the Pin

6 South	Mike Brunelle	39'
	<i>Upper Montclair CC</i>	
8 South	Kevin Hyman	12'11"
	<i>Century CC</i>	
3 West	Ken Anson, <i>Paramount CC</i>	5'6"
8 West	David Dudones	4'
	<i>Westchester CC</i>	

Longest Drive

9 South	Austin Rentz, <i>Paramount CC</i>
9 West	Justin Pavlik, <i>Upper Montclair CC</i>

Many thanks once again to Mike Brunelle, the entire Upper Montclair Country Club team, and the membership for hosting such a special day and for their incredible support of the MetGCSA Foundation.

If you missed this year's event, make sure to make the next one. The MetGCSA Invitational is a can't-miss opportunity to compete, connect, and maybe even take home the trophy. We hope to see you there in 2026!

Blake Halderman, a member of the Tournament Committee, is the golf course superintendent at Brae Burn Country Club in Purchase, NY.



Fenway team takes home Invitational trophy. From left to right: Greens Chair Marc Karetsky, Head Golf Pro Tyler Jaramillo, Superintendent Rob Alonzi, & Assistant Starter Garrett Miller.

Perfect Weather, Great Food, and Friendly Competition at the MetGCSA Nine & Dine

by Brian Bontemps

On August 25, MetGCSA board member Chip Lafferty welcomed members and their guests to Rye Golf Club for this year's Nine & Dine event. The original date—one of the hottest days of the season—was wisely rescheduled, and the new date brought perfect golf weather. Players were treated to a firm, fast course that was enjoyed by all. A big thank you goes to Chip and his team for preparing such superb playing conditions.

After golf, participants gathered for a relaxed, post-round meal courtesy of two local favorites. Pizza from Colony Grill and BBQ from The Wooden Spoon made for a memorable dining experience on and off the course.

Congratulations to the winners of this year's Nine & Dine Scramble:

Front Nine Winners

1st Place – Score: 29

Andrew Jacobs, Tyler Sandefur, Austin Sevcik, Jack Dempsey
Westchester CC

2nd Place – Score: 31 (Match of Cards)

Scott Niven, Bradley Green, Daniel Murphy, Anthony Roach
The Stanwich Club

Back Nine Winners

1st Place – Score: 30

Derek Dutille, Pat Callahan, Sean Kelly
Fenway GC
Keith Angilly, *Hart's Turf Pro*

2nd Place – Score: 31 (Match of Cards)

Gilberto Perez, *Dunning Industries*, Matt Topazio, *Metro Turf*, Robert Dorsch, *Back O'Beyond*, Nick Baczkowski, *Ridgefield GC*

Special thanks to General Manager Chris Correale and PGA Professional Kyle Baehler and their teams for ensuring a smooth and welcoming experience for all who attended.

Brian Bontemps, a member of the Tournament Committee, is a sales representative for Noble Turf.



From left to right: Fenway's Derek Dutille, Patrick Callahan, & Sean Kelly and Hart's Turf Pro's Keith Angilly



From left to right: Finch Turf's Cody Scott, Burning Tree's Steve Wickstrom, MTE Equipment Solutions' Jake Gibson, and Noble Turf's son-father duo, Cody & Brian Bontemps



From left to right: Winged Foot's Angelo Passialis, Will Good, Ronan Quinn, and Ben Hammond

John Carlone Hosts Tripleheader Golf Event

by Stephen Rabideau, CGCS

On October 14, Superintendent John Carlone and the Meadow Brook Club hosted the annual joint meeting of NYSTA and the Metropolitan and Long Island Golf Course Superintendent Associations. With three events taking place at once—the NYSTA Poa Annual, the Met Area Team Championship Qualifier, and the annual Superintendent Championship—it was a busy day on the Par 72, 7,475-yard layout.

Topping off a super day of golf was a celebration of John Carlone's upcoming retirement and 40-plus-year career in the industry. (See golf results and tribute to John on page 13.)

Unique Beginnings

Meadow Brook Golf Club, officially the Meadow Brook Hunt Club, has a storied past dating back to 1881 when it was founded in Westbury, NY, as a polo and fox-hunting club. A nine-hole golf course was added in 1894 but was abandoned by 1905 for polo. Golf returned in 1916 with a new 18-hole course designed by Devereux Emmet, featuring 10 greens along the namesake brook.

In the early 1950s, the original course was lost to the construction of the Meadow Brook Parkway. The club began a new chapter in 1953, relocating to a 450-acre site in Jericho, NY, with an 18-hole championship course by Dick Wilson and six polo fields. After selling 180 acres in 1967, Dick Wilson's protégé, Joe Lee, redesigned the course on the club's current 270-acre site.

A major renovation in 2016 by Brian Silva modernized the course with four new USGA greens, nine holes with new tees, all 88 bunkers rebuilt with Better Billy Bunker technology, and 12 acres of trees removed. The Poa/bent sod was harvested off the old greens and reinstalled on the new USGA greens. A new short-game facility was also constructed, with a new USGA green grown in to Pure Distinction bentgrass. Target greens with bunkers were added to the driving range. All told, it was a \$2.9-million renovation.

Meadow Brook has hosted numerous major events, including three Met Opens, two Met Amateurs, three Ikes, a Long Island

Amateur, and several Met PGA, LIPGA, and LPGA tournaments. From 1987 to 2002, it was home to a Champions TOUR event with winners like Lee Trevino, Gary Player, and Raymond Floyd.

Renowned for its large greens—averaging over 7,500 square feet—the club also holds historical significance as the 37th USGA member and a founding member of the MGA in 1897.

From Golf Kid to Turfgrass Manager

John's path to Meadow Brook started, naturally, on a golf course. He picked up the game at 11 in his hometown of Portsmouth, RI, and by high school was part of a dominant team that went undefeated in regular-season play for four years. They fell short of the state title each year to a team led by a young Brad Faxon, but John stayed competitive, going on to play three seasons—from 1981–1983—for the University of Rhode Island golf team. John found his way into turf management with the help of the late Dr. C.R. Skogley, then a professor in URI's Plant Science Department.

While earning his B.S., John did his placement training at Westchester Country Club in Rye, NY, working for then superintendent Ted Horton. After graduating in 1983, John joined Scott Niven at The Stanwich Club before accepting his first superintendent position at Middle Bay Country Club in 1985. Eleven years later, in December 1996, John took the job at Meadow Brook.

Not long after, he was managing the course for a Champions TOUR event—the Long Island Classic—from 1997 through 2002. "I loved the challenge of preparing for those events," says John. "It was stressful at times, especially hosting in late July and early August, but incredibly rewarding."

Golf First

Unlike most clubs in the region, Meadow Brook is all-in on golf: no pool, no tennis, and just one member dinner a month. "It's a pure golf club," John says. "The members are serious players, and many are low-handicappers."

That commitment to golf helped shape the club's ambitious 2016 renovation with



John Carlone, CGCS

architect Brian Silva. "That \$2.9-million renovation was one of the high points of my time here," says John.

In the years since, John continued making improvements—installing XGD drainage on 14 non-USGA greens, building new tees, and, thanks in part to three hurricanes, removing around 3,000 trees.

Giving Back to the Industry

Beyond course work, John has made a long-term commitment to service within the profession. He held leadership roles in nearly every major turf organization in the region—serving as president of the MetGCSA (2000–01), LIGCSA (2006–08), the Tri-State Turfgrass Research Foundation (2011–12), and NYSTA (2020–21). He's also wrapping up 13 years on the NYSTA board and has served on multiple GCSAA committees since 1991, including Election, Education, Tournament, Membership, Communications, and Chapter Relations. John also served as chapter delegate for both the MetGCSA and LIGCSA.

"I've always believed in giving back," says John. "The people I've met, the courses I've toured, the conversations I've had—it all made me a better superintendent. I would 100 percent recommend board service to anyone. It'll make you better at your job and a better person overall."

A Winning Day at Meadow Brook

by Stephen Rabideau, CGCS

Another key focus for John has been mentoring the next generation. Over the years, eight of his assistants have gone on to become superintendents. “They were a big part of the success we had here,” he says. “I felt a real responsibility to help them move forward.”

Life Beyond Turf

For nearly three decades, John and his wife, Leslie, lived on club grounds at Meadow Brook. Married 38 years, they have three adult children and three grandchildren.

Their daughter, Emily, lives in Johnston, RI, with her husband, Lucas, and their children Savannah (7), Cassidy (5), and Tyler John (3). The couple owns and operates Coastline Electric in Rhode Island.

Their son David, 33, a former Army First Lieutenant, is pursuing an MBA at Northeastern while also performing stand-up comedy at clubs in New York City, Long Island, and Rhode Island.

Their youngest, Daniel, 30, a West Point grad and former Army Captain, lives in Lisle, IL, with his wife, Sydney, who is an assistant women’s volleyball coach at Loyola Chicago.


Looking Ahead

At the end of 2025, John and Leslie plan to move back to Portsmouth, RI. He doesn’t plan on retiring completely. He hopes to stay connected to the turf industry in some way—but the day-to-day demands of course management will be behind him.

“I’m ready to walk away from the full-time grind,” John says. “Forty years as a superintendent at two high-end private clubs on Long Island—that’s a good run. I’m proud of what I’ve done, but it’s time to do something else.”

That “something else” might include helping out with Coastline Electric—or more likely, chasing grandkids around a yard instead of geese off a green. Either way, after a career spent building and maintaining courses at the highest level, John Carlone has earned the right to enjoy the next round—whatever form it takes.

Stephen Rabideau, co-chair of the Tournament Committee, is director of golf courses at Winged Foot Golf Club in Mamaroneck, NY.



In October 14, members of the NYSTA, MetGCSA, and LIGCSA gathered at Meadow Brook for a day that combined great golf, generous giving, and heartfelt recognition of one of our industry’s finest—our host superintendent, John Carlone.

At the close of play, NYSTA presented John with its Citation of Merit Award, while the MetGCSA and LIGCSA honored him with a plaque celebrating his outstanding career and contributions to the profession.

Just one day after a Nor’easter, John and his team faced an unexpected challenge: getting the course tournament-ready under tough conditions. True to form, they delivered. The course was in superb condition, earning universal praise from the field. The Poa Annual event raised several thousand dollars in support of NYSTA’s turfgrass research and regional initiatives—a fitting tribute to John’s dedication to the science and community of turf management.

Superintendent Championship — Individual Winners

Top performers in the Gross and Net divisions took home well-earned honors.

First Place Gross

77 Dave McCaffrey, *Metropolis CC*
Congratulations to Dave on capturing the Superintendent Championship for the second consecutive year.

First Place Net

70 Dave Moffett, *Mosholu GC*

Poa Annual Event — Team Winners

This year’s team format featured One Best Ball of the foursome, Gross and Net. Payouts went to the top two teams in each division.

First Place Gross

69 John Bresnahan, *Syngenta*, Nick Venterino, *Discovery Land - The Hills Quogue*, Andy Drohen, *Allied Nutrients*, and Jay Popko, *Heritage PPG*

Second Place Gross

69 Andy Taylor and Randy Feidler, *Storr Tractor*; Jake Reeves, *North Hempstead CC*; and Tim Falvey,

First Place Net

60 Dave Moffett, *Mosholu GC*, Blake Halderman, *Brae Burn CC*, Joe Gikis, *Glen Arbor GC*, and Mike Brunelle, *Upper Montclair CC*

Second Place Net

62 Bill Bartels, Chase Cameron, Paul Guillaro, and Tim Clarke, *Tanto Irrigation*

Special Thanks

Many, many thanks to our Title Sponsor, Tanto Irrigation. Their generous support goes a long way in making our event extra-special. We would also like to thank John Carlone and the entire Meadow Brook staff for hosting and preparing the course so beautifully.

Stephen Rabideau, co-chair of the Tournament Committee, is director of golf courses at Winged Foot Golf Club in Mamaroneck, NY.

Tamarack Shines as Host of the Met Area Team Championship

by Kevin Collins

In October 20, the historic Tamarack Country Club and Superintendent Jeff Scott hosted this year's Met Area Team Championship, which drew 13 teams from the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic. Each team comprised eight players, with four playing in the Net Division and four in the Gross. At the end of the competition, the team with the lowest combined stroke score took home the title. (Watch for the winning scores in the next issue of *Tee to Green*!)

A Bit About the Tournament

The Met Area Team Championship began in 1980, originally featuring six local associations. The winning team each year was responsible for organizing the next event. After a 24-year hiatus due to a lack of volunteers, Andy Drohen of Allied Nutrients and Blake Halderman of Brae Burn Country Club revived the tournament in 2004. With support from sponsors, they expanded the field to 13 teams and elevated the overall experience.

Beyond offering a fun, year-end break from the golf season and building camaraderie among participants, the tournament also supports industry professionals in need. Andy and Blake are especially proud of this charitable mission.

Since its revival at Aronimink Golf Club in 2005, the championship has continued to grow. Now in its 21st year at Tamarack Country Club, the Met Area Team Championship is one of the largest regional industry golf events in the country—second only to the GIS tournament.

Tamarack Then and Now

Tamarack Country Club, originally founded as the Port Chester Country Club in 1909, began as a nine-hole course with sheep, rather than equipment, maintaining the fairways and \$25 annual dues.

In 1928, the club relocated to Greenwich, CT, when its original site was acquired for a new high school. Architect Charles Banks was hired to design the new 18-hole course, which opened in 1929 and was named after the area's native tamarack pine trees.

Banks, a protégé of Seth Raynor and influenced by C.B. Macdonald, was known for using template holes modeled after iconic European designs—such as Biarritz, Redan, and Eden—which became a hallmark of Tamarack's layout. Though his career was cut short by a heart attack in 1931, Banks left a lasting legacy with over 30 courses designed or renovated.

In recent years, under architect Brian Schneider and LaBar Golf, Tamarack has undergone significant change. "This has been a true renovation and restoration to return the course to Banks's original vision while modernizing key elements, explains Jeff, noting the updates, which include:

- Full bunker restoration using the "Better Billy Bunker" system
- Five additional acres of fairways (36 total)
- Squared-off greens for a classic look
- Expanded native fescue areas
- Five tee boxes per hole for all skill levels
- Rebuilt cart paths and enhanced drainage

Future upgrades include a new irrigation system and pond excavation.

Jeff's Circuitous Career Path

Jeff was born and raised in Pawling, NY, and attended the prestigious Trinity-Pawling School. When it came time for college, turfgrass management wasn't on his radar. "I started out at Southampton College on Long Island as a Marine Biology major," Jeff recalls. "But after a few semesters, I made a change I'll never regret."

Taking time off from school, Jeff spent a few winters skiing in Vermont and Colorado before returning home to Pawling, where he took a job with a local landscaper. It was through friends working at Fairview Country Club that Jeff met Bob Alonzi, the club's superintendent at the time—and the connection that would launch his career in turf.

From 1978 to 1981, Jeff worked under Bob at Fairview, then enrolled in the UMass Turf School. While completing his two-year degree, he interned at Baltimore Country Club and returned to Fairview in 1984. A year later, he expanded his experience by working briefly with Bob's brother, Joe Alonzi, then the superintendent at Fenway Golf Club.



Jeff Scott, CGCS

In November 1985, Jeff landed his first superintendent role at Knickerbocker Country Club in Tenafly, NJ. Three years later, he returned to New York as superintendent at The Apawamis Club, where his lightning-fast greens became the stuff of legend—and a source of putting anxiety for many members. In February 1997, Jeff accepted his current role at Tamarack Country Club.

"With the membership's commitment to ongoing improvement, my work at Tamarack has been both interesting and challenging," says Jeff. "The support I've received through more projects than I can count has been incredible."

Reflecting on his journey, Jeff credits Bob Alonzi as a pivotal mentor. "He played a role in almost every step of my career, and I'm grateful for that," Jeff says. "I'd like to think I've had a positive influence on the assistants and team members who've worked with me over the years."

That list includes many now-leading figures in the industry: Rob Alonzi, now at Fenway, spent nearly five years at Tamarack with Jeff. Sean Cain, now at Sunningdale, Chris Burnett, whose career took him to Michigan, and even Winged Foot's Steve Rabideau, who interned under Jeff. "Look at Steve now," Jeff says with pride. "The student has become the teacher."

Life Beyond the Course

An avid skier, Jeff still enjoys time on the slopes and quiet winters with his wife, Maggie, and their children, whenever everyone can find time to be together.

When all was said and done, Tamarack, with its fast, expansive greens, deep bunkering, and elevated complexes, offered a true test of golf for every team in the field.

Kevin Collins, a member of the Tee to Green Editorial Committee, is NE/Mid-Atlantic Territory Manager for Ocean Organics.

Sleepy Hollow Country Club Hosts 2025 Battle of the Bridges

by Greg Patti

On October 27, Sleepy Hollow Country Club and assistant superintendents Max Serafin and Matt Crawford hosted this year's Battle of the Bridges tournament. Once known as the Assistants Championship, Battle of the Bridges is an annual showdown between assistant supers from the MetGCSA and the GCSA of New Jersey. Held when assistants are finally done dragging their hoses, this event is a much-anticipated day of competition and camaraderie, giving assistants a well-earned break from the daily golf course grind.

The format this year, as always, was a two-man best ball, with the winner taking home bragging rights—and the trophy. Last year, the GCSA of New Jersey claimed the win for the first time in years. This year was a different story. (See page 16 for the day's golf results!)

About the Venue: Sleepy Hollow Country Club

Sleepy Hollow Country Club in Scarborough, NY, is one of the most celebrated courses not only in Westchester County, but also across the country. Currently ranked 52 on Golf Digest's Top 100 Courses in America, Sleepy Hollow offered a world-class venue for our friendly rivalry.

Perched high above the Hudson River, the course was originally designed in 1911 by C.B. Macdonald and Seth Raynor, with enhancements by A.W. Tillinghast. More recently, Gil Hanse and George Bahto led a meticulous restoration, reviving its bold greens, signature bunkers, and timeless character.

Meet the Hosts: The Sleepy Hollow Turf Team

Matt Crawford, Upper Course Superintendent

In his fourth season at Sleepy Hollow, Matt Crawford brings a wealth of experience and



Your Battle of the Bridges Hosts (from left to right): Max Serafin, Jonathan Heywood, and Matt Crawford.

a deep-rooted love for the game. A Michigan native, Matt earned his degree from Michigan State University in 2014 and began his turf career at Baltimore Country Club, where he spent over seven years as an assistant superintendent.

He joined Sleepy Hollow in 2022 and now lives in Westwood, NJ, with his wife, Andrea, and their two children, Sophia and Mason.

Max Serafin, Senior Assistant Superintendent

Also in his fourth season at Sleepy Hollow, Max Serafin has become a cornerstone of the agronomy team. He began in 2022 as an AIT and has steadily advanced to his current role as senior assistant superintendent.

Originally from Bozeman, MT, Max holds a degree in Aerospace Engineering from the University of Notre Dame, but later pursued his true passion in turf management. He completed the two-year turf program at Rutgers University and gained valuable hands-on experience through internships at Augusta National and Winged Foot.

Max is accompanied every day by his 3-year-old golden retriever, Nashville, who's become a favorite among the team.

Jonathan Heywood, Director of Agronomy

Sleepy Hollow's superintendent since 2022, Jonathan Heywood brings an impressive resume of leadership roles at elite clubs. Prior to this role, he served as head superintendent at Morris County Golf Club, East Course superintendent at Winged Foot, and assistant superintendent at Cape Cod National.

A graduate of UMass Amherst with a degree in Plant and Soil Science, Jonathan was born and raised on Cape Cod. He and his wife, Erika, have two daughters, Hunter and Greer, and two dogs, Brody and Atlas.

This year's spectacular venue for the 2025 Battle of the Bridges, went a long way in making it a winning event!

Greg Patti, a member of the Class C Committee, is an assistant superintendent at Glen Arbor Golf Club in Bedford Hills, NY.

MetGCSA Assistants Triumph in the 2025 Battle of the Bridges

by Greg Patti

The 2025 Battle of the Bridges, hosted at the iconic Sleepy Hollow Country Club, was a day to remember for the assistant superintendents of both MetGCSA and the GCSANJ. Despite a brief frost delay in the morning, the weather cleared, and the course conditions were nothing short of spectacular.

The course itself was in phenomenal shape, with pure greens, tight fairways, and immaculate green complexes and bunkers. It was a true test of skill, with some players even contemplating four-putts on the slick, challenging greens. It was clear that the maintenance staff at Sleepy Hollow had done an outstanding job, and the assistants could only appreciate the opportunity to compete on such a pristine course.

A Hard-Fought Victory for MetGCSA

Last year, the GCSANJ assistants claimed the trophy, but this year, the MetGCSA assistants fought hard and reclaimed the title with a 15-stroke victory. With a full field of competitors, the contest remained tight throughout the day, but ultimately, the MetGCSA team triumphed, securing the trophy and bringing it back to their section.

Final Scores

MetGCSA: 765
GCSANJ: 780

Individual and Team Highlights

Longest Drive

- #15 Nick Cappetti, GCSANJ, *Essex Falls Country Club*
- #15 Dan Murphy, MetGCSA, *The Stanwich Club*

Closest to the Pin

- #3 Eric Tragnitz, GCSANJ, *Ridgewood Country Club* – 20"
- #3 Lucas Baldinger, MetGCSA, *Wee Burn Country Club* – 4'8"
- #16 Dean Tempsick, GCSANJ, *Trump National, Colts Neck* – 9'10"
- #16 Dan Murphy, MetGCSA, *The Stanwich Club* – 15'



MetGCSA team reclaims the Battle of the Bridges Trophy.

Low Net Individual

- 60 Cody May, MetGCSA, *Wykagyl Country Club*

Low Gross Individual

- 73 Dan Murphy, MetGCSA, *The Stanwich Club*

Team Standouts

1st Place Gross Team

- 70 Dan Murphy, MetGCSA, *The Stanwich Club*
- 70 Anthony Roach, MetGCSA, *The Stanwich Club*

1st Place Net Team

- 58 Hunter Coulthard, MetGCSA, *Wykagyl CC*
- 58 Cody May, MetGCSA, *Wykagyl Country Club*

A Special Thank You

A big shout-out goes to the talented turf team at Sleepy Hollow. Their dedication to the course's upkeep was evident in every aspect of the competition. Matt Crawford,

Max Serafin, and Jonathan Heywood were instrumental in making this event a memorable one. Their hard work ensured that the course was in unbelievable shape, setting the stage for an unforgettable day.

Also, a heartfelt thank you to the inside staff and golf staff at Sleepy Hollow. Their impeccable organization and support made the event run smoothly from start to finish, and it wouldn't have been the same without them. From the stunning views to the top-tier food and, of course, the incredible golf, the Battle of the Bridges was an experience beyond expectations.

Looking Ahead

With the trophy back in the hands of the MetGCSA, the excitement is already building for next year's competition. But for now, the assistants can bask in the glory of their hard-earned victory and reflect on a fantastic day of golf, camaraderie, and mutual appreciation for the craft of golf course management. Where to next year?!

Greg Patti, a member of the Class C Committee, is an assistant superintendent at GlenArbor Golf Club in Bedford Hills, NY.

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