



No golf course in American golf history has hosted the U.S. Open more times than Oakmont Country Club. The storied course, located outside Pittsburgh, PA, is perhaps one of the toughest golf courses with some of the most challenging greens in the world. As a highly respected superintendent, John Zimmers is known for cultivating turf of the highest standards and playability and for his leadership in mentoring many of golf's future superintendents.

John Zimmers
Superintendent,
Oakmont Country Club

An Interview with

John Zimmers,

Oakmont Country Club's Superintendent

Oakmont Country Club and BASF collaborated to incorporate BASF chemistry into Oakmont's agronomic program, helping Oakmont become ready for tournament play.

BASF Senior Product Manager Jeff Vannoy spoke with John Zimmers and asked about his preparations for another major championship.

BASF: John, you're known for having some of the toughest, fastest greens each year. What's your secret in ensuring the greens are ready June 13th for the U.S. Open®?

JZ: Our secret is pretty simple – execute sound, fundamental agronomic practices to the best of our ability. This relies on agronomic testing, soil testing, fungicides, fertility, water management, aeration, etc.

Continually monitoring the health and performance of the turf helps guide us in closely managing the grass ensuring it is ready for the championship.

BASF: You're not new to hosting major championships at Oakmont and in your past career at Congressional Country Club. How do you motivate the staff so they see the same vision as you in getting the course ready for an event?

JZ: We strive every day to provide the best conditions for our membership. Therefore, we approach everything with that attitude, with the expectation that the same mindset will carry over

leading into the championship.

BASF: There are many agronomic aspects to preparing for a championship. One aspect is making sure your fungicide program is tight and well-planned out. What are you doing differently this year in your fungicide program?

JZ: One of the adjustments we have made this season is working with the BASF team. We have consulted with their researchers and representatives over the last several months to learn about their products and devise a plan that utilizes their plant health technology. A number of key applications will be made on the course.



BASF: In thinking back to the lessons learned early in your career from your mentor Paul R. Latshaw, what lessons have stuck with you all these years?

JZ: Mr. Latshaw stressed to me, and I carry this with me today, to execute the basic fundamentals correctly – mowing, applications, watering, staff management, etc. Control the things you can control and do your best to manage through other items out of your control.

BASF: What does it mean to you as a superintendent that over 150 colleagues donate a week of their time to help make the championship a success for Oakmont?

JZ: I am truly Honor(ed)! It is certainly one of the most gratifying experiences in my career to have my colleagues donate their time and expertise to ensure we have a world-class national championship.

BASF: We understand that you were able to bring back a key team member in order to help prepare for the U.S. Open - can you tell us about that?

David Delsandro
Director of U.S. Open Operations & Projects, Oakmont Country Club

JZ: One of my protégés, David Delsandro, left Oakmont in 2010 to pursue a superintendent's job in Long Island, NY. Upon completing a greens reconstruction project, regarded by many as one of the most successful putting green renovations in recent history, David returned to Oakmont as the Director of U.S. Open Operations & Projects in the fall of 2013. David worked with us for Oakmont's three previous major championships, providing valuable leadership, talent, and experience. In addition, David utilized BASF chemistry during his time in Long Island and has been instrumental in employing BASF's technology, research, and product line at Oakmont to maximize turf health and playability.

Oakmont Country Club has integrated BASF fungicides into the agronomic plan.

Below is a summary of the BASF fungicide portion of their agronomic program.

Lexicon® Intrinsic® and **Honor® Intrinsic®** brand fungicides were dispatched on various playing surfaces (greens, tees, fairways, etc.). Upon reviewing the research and efficacy of these products, their use enabled long lasting control of several disease pathogens in addition to the plant health benefits they provide. **Xzemplar®** fungicide was also applied as a solid rotational product to the **Intrinsic** brand fungicides and granted a different chemistry capable of withstanding the rigors of championship-driven maintenance. Lastly, all of the aforementioned BASF fungicides (**Lexicon Intrinsic** and **Honor Intrinsic** brand fungicides, and **Xzemplar** fungicide) were applied to turf maintained to championship specifications, including graduated rough, bunker banks, and low-mow areas around bunkers. The benefits of their application to these intensely managed, non-traditional areas confirmed the value of their technology, efficacy, and residual control.