

# Nothing ventured, nothing gained

*BASF's Elite Rejuvenation program convinces two superintendents to step outside their comfort zones in hopes of achieving better conditions.*

BY GRANT B. GANNON

**S**uperintendents who struggle with plant health on their courses can be wary of stepping out of their normal routines. Pressure to keep the course playable always is high. One wrong application could mean being out of a job.

BASF started its Elite Rejuvenation program in partnership with *Golfdom* as a way to get four courses to test old and new chemistries free of charge. As an added bonus, they do this under the watchful eye of an industry expert.

The four superintendents and their respective courses selected to participate in the program are:

- **Chris Ellsmore**, Mohegan Sun Golf Course, Baltic, Conn.
- **Shawn Gill**, Prince Williams Golf Course, Nokesville, Va.
- **Nick Janovich**, Oglebay Resort, Wheeling, W.Va.
- **Matthew Stout**, LuLu Country Club, Glenside, Pa.

As introduced in the May edition of *Golfdom*, Kyle Miller, senior market development specialist at BASF,

heads the program and is excited to have these superintendents see the benefits of the company's products on their courses.

"There are plenty of golf courses and superintendents that haven't used a bunch of BASF products in the past," Miller says. "We thought this

would be a great opportunity to share our new technology with these superintendents so they can really take advantage of some of the things that these products bring to them from a solutions standpoint."

## A FRIEND, INDEED

Miller will make an initial visit to each of the participating courses and walk through the fungicide and herbicide spray programs of each superintendent. (*Golfdom* will also visit the courses and report on the results each course sees as the season rolls along.)

Miller and the superintendents will discuss things like the products they have been using and where and when they apply these chemicals. Miller then will suggest which BASF products will work best on their specific courses and create a spray schedule for each superintendent.

Miller will check in at each of the courses throughout the summer and will keep in regular contact with the superintendents to make sure the applications are going smoothly.

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“We hope this shows the superintendents that there is technology out there that can give them a leg up from where they are at the beginning of the program,” Miller says.

## ANALYZING PERFORMANCE AND COST

The BASF team at the end of February reached out to Nick Janovich, superintendent at the Oglebay Resort, Wheeling, W.Va. Janovich oversees four courses on the resort’s property, but the Elite Rejuvenation effort has been focused on the premier golf course, the Jones Course.

Janovich exemplified what BASF was looking for in program participation because he was unhappy with the results when he tried to control dollar spot on his fairways while using two generic products on a 28-day schedule.

“While Kyle visited the course we took my current spray program and analyzed it,” Janovich says. “(We discussed) why we are doing it this way, and most of the time it came down (that it) was the most cost effective way to go about it.”



Nick Janovich

Miller and Janovich had a frank discussion about performance when it comes to cost efficiency.

“When we took a step back and analyzed it again for the same price or not a drastic increase, we could have a lot more effective control,” Janovich says. “(Miller) kind of opened my eyes up to their products.”

Miller suggested that Janovich start with BASF’s Emerald fungicide after analyzing Oglebay’s spray program. After 28 days the program told



Oglebay Resort’s Jones course and Palmer course sit in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains.

Janovich to apply Xzemplar and after another 28 days they recently completed a second spray of Xzemplar.

“Before the program I never would have considered stretching out my fungicides for 28 days but this opportunity has opened my eyes,” says Janovich. “BASF’s products cost a little bit more but I can really see the savings at the end of the month when I make one application instead of two.”

Although Oglebay started with Emerald for dollar spot control, Janovich is most excited about getting his hands on BASF’s Intrinsic brand of fungicides. These products are designed to control fungal diseases as well as improve stress tolerance and increase plant efficiency processes.

“I’m hoping that I see the benefits of the Intrinsic products. I’ve used them some in the past but I haven’t been able to analyze them,” Janovich says. “This is the perfect opportunity to see the results from those products.”

As part of the Elite Rejuvenation program, *Golfdom* will monitor the results that Janovich sees at Oglebay

Resort. To see a video of the BASF chemistry in action as of late June and to hear from Janovich, check out the video available on [Golfdom.com](http://Golfdom.com).

## NOT WITHOUT DRAMA

For Janovich and Oglebay Resort, the Elite Rejuvenation program is an opportunity to experiment and step out of their comfort zone. For LuLu Country Club on the outskirts of Philadelphia, it’s a chance to continue the club’s revitalization.

LuLu CC, a Donald Ross design established in 1912, recently has seen trouble, including poor turf conditions and a clubhouse that burned down. But its new ownership group and driven superintendent now are determined to return the club to its glory days.

“In the 1960s LuLu Country Club was the place to be,” says Matthew Stout, who spent a decade at Hopewell (N.J.) Valley Golf Club before being hired at LuLu CC last October. “Golf royalty like Sam Snead and Arnold Palmer used to come play the course.”

The course is proud of its history.

PHOTOS BY: GRANT B. GANNON

All anyone wanting to know who designed the more than century-old course has to do is look at the sign at the front, which reads “Donald J. Ross Design.”

According to Stout, Ross designed many unique features into the course, but time eroded its characteristics. More recently, course maintenance began to deteriorate.

Stout interviewed for the job in front of an ownership group that purchased the club last summer. While visiting the course during the final stages of the interview process, Stout discovered that the fairway on No. 1 had been neglected and was half dirt and half crabgrass.

“I decided to leave Hopewell because the course was listed for sale and coupled with budget cuts and low membership it made the decision to leave easier,” says Stout. “Although Lulu wasn’t in the best shape I felt it had tremendous potential. With Lulu being under new ownership and owners willing to do what it takes to bring the course back to a championship quality level I knew this was the

right move.”

Adversity struck the club again three weeks after Stout started at LuLu when the clubhouse burnt to the ground.

Despite the drama, Stout still believes he was fortunate because last fall was “really good” and he was able to get a quick stand of grass growing across the property before winter.

Perhaps LuLu’s luck is about to turn around. Stout was approached last winter about the Elite Rejuvenation program and he started in April with applications of Emerald.

“I’ve known about BASF’s products for a long time, but I thought the program was a great chance to continue to improve the course,” Stout says. “We had a very wet May, and it



LuLu CC’s superintendent Matthew Stout hand-watering one of the club’s greens.

has been nice having the products on hand. It’s a night-and-day difference compared to when I started.”

Stout adds that members, who are using double-wide trailers as a temporary clubhouse while a new one is being built, also are taking notice.

“Golfers who have been members of the club since the mid-80s have told me that the course has never looked so good,” Stout says.

With the height of summer stress here and a happy membership ready to take advantage of a playable golf course, Stout has made a short-term goal for the season and another long-term goal for the course.

“I know that BASF’s products can help keep the course healthy during the dog days of summer, but I want to utilize them to produce championship-quality conditions that members can be proud of,” Stout says. “Eventually I would like to host some kind of qualifying event on the course.” ©



The green of hole No. 6 at LuLu Country Club, Glenside, Pa.

PHOTOS COURTESY MATTHEW STOUT