

# CONNECTICUT CLIPPINGS



AUGUST, 1988

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Connecticut Association of Golf Course Superintendents

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OF  
GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENTS**

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**Bruedan to Sponsor Second Annual  
John Deere Team Championship**

The Bruedan Corp., our local distributors of John Deere Turf Equipment, together with The Connecticut Section PGA will once again sponsor the section qualifying tournament for The John Deere Team Championship. This year's tourney will be held at Willimantic Country Club in Willimantic Ct. in September. A separate invitation will be sent to all Connecticut Golf Superintendents to help assure a strong turnout for this unique opportunity. For more information please contact Scott Lowe of Bruedan Corp., 647-1774.

From May 1 through September 30, 1988, hundreds of teams of amateur and professional golfers again will compete in PGA-sanctioned tournaments across the United States to determine qualifying teams for the Second Annual John Deere Team Championship Tournament to be held at PGA West, Palm Springs, California, in November.

"Last year's Team Championship was a huge success," said Gary Gottschalk, manager of golf and turf products for Deere & Company, "thanks to the hard work of people in the Golf Course Superintendents' Association of America and the Professional Golfers' Association of America, and many club managers and John Deere golf and turf distributors. Because of their efforts, more than 3,200 amateur and professional golfers from more than 800 golf courses were able to enjoy friendly competition for trophies and prizes." Thirty-four sectional teams qualified to compete in the 1987 national finals at PGA National in West Palm Beach, Florida.

The sectional tournaments are the only PGA-sanctioned events that provide an opportunity for a golfing facility to field a team of four golfers composed of a PGA professional, a GCSAA superintendent, a club manager and a club president (or two members from the board of directors). Teams in the national tournament include a fifth member from the sponsoring John Deere distributorship.

Plans call for a sectional qualifying tournament in each of the 41 PGA sections. The winning team from each sectional one-day tourney qualifies to play in a two-day, 36-hole national championship.

The format of sectional tournament play is a "modified scramble". The PGA professional team member plays his own ball. The rest of the scramble team players use the best of three shots until the ball is holed. The team score is the sum of the scores of the scramble team, minus 20 percent of the scramble team's handicap, plus the professional's score. All players must have an established USGA handicap; the maximum handicap an individual may use is 30. Handicaps used in the sectional events will be carried forward to the national tournament.

# CLIPPINGS BULLETIN BOARD

## "Rooms Available for Anaheim"

Once again, CAGCS has secured a block of rooms for the GCSAA International Turf Grass Conference and Show. We have rooms available at the Anaheim Hilton (Headquarters Hotel). The price of all rooms will be \$115 per night for a double, \$105 per night for a single.

Any CAGCS member interested in securing one of these rooms for the Convention, please call John Streeter (658-5796 or 651-8711) by September 9th with the following information:

Arrival & Departing Dates  
Credit Card Number  
Number of additional occupants

We only have ten rooms blocked at this time. We will hand out rooms on a first come, first-served basis.

## Equipment for Sale

The following used equipment is being offered for sale by Bob Viera of Watertown Golf Club. All interested parties may contact Bob (274-8488 or 274-3210) for prices and other details:

1974 Jacobsen F-10 Mower

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## "The Golf Scene"

The Golf Scene is a weekly television show which is aired on Saturday mornings at 9:30 a.m. on Channel 61, WTIC, Hartford. The show is produced by the Connecticut Section of the PGA with Bob Shea and Jack Burrill. "The Golf Scene" brings to its viewers an indepth look at golf and golf courses throughout Connecticut. Its main function is to cover the weekly Connecticut PGA events, but in recent weeks, thanks to Bob Shea and Jack Burrill, we have seen a trend toward devoting some air time to the golf course superintendent and some of the problems we face.

Interviewes have been aired, featuring Dave Vibber at Ellington Ridge, Jay Regan at TPC, and yours truly at Cliffside.

CAGCS has also purchased air time for the GCSAA commercial. We have secured five, 30-second spots on which we air the commercial with a "CAGCS Sponsored" plug.

Information has it that next season the producers plan to feature on a regular basis the golf course superintendent, and our vital roles to the game of golf. Needless to say, this is a golden opportunity for our profession. I hope you will all tune in on Saturday mornings, and also make yourself available when "The Golf Scene" comes to your club.

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## GCSAA Membership Tops 8,000

The Golf Course Superintendents Association of America's active and visible role in golf -- coupled with a vigorous and effective recruitment program -- is helping to pay dividends via a dramatic increase in membership. This month, GCSAA's rolls officially exceeded 8,000 for the first time in the Association's 62-year history. Timothy Robert Sever, golf course superintendent at Sugarmill Woods Country Club of Homosassa, Florida, became the 8,000th member.

"I believe the Association's high visibility within golf is one factor contributing to this growth," says John A. Segui, CGCS, President of GCSAA. "At the same time, our continued increase in membership has also allowed the Association to provide more benefits and services -- which in turn has steadily attracted still more members." In 1983, GCSAA had fewer than 5,000 members.

GCSAA is headquartered in Lawrence, Kansas, adjacent to Alvarmar Country Club. The Association annually hosts the International Golf Course Conference and Trade Show, one of the 200 largest trade shows in the United States, in various major cities across the nation. The organization also provides nearly 70 educational seminars and offers its members a variety of other services, including insurance programs, employment assistance and referral, an audio-visual lending library, and an extensive line of exclusive merchandise. In addition, GCSAA publishes *Golf Course Management* magazine, the leading monthly publication in its professional field.

Development of a five-year long range plan is the top priority of the Association's Board of Directors which met in a planning session during the week of August 8th in conjunction with the PGA Championship. "The extraordinary growth of membership,

(Continued on Page 4.)

## Designing Courses to Beat the Water Shortage

By Joseph S. Finger

With the predicted water shortages for the next ten years and beyond, plus escalating costs of golf course construction and maintenance, courses of the future must change drastically if they are to survive in the United States.

The game itself, as a result, will probably return to the old English-Scottish style of play -- or at least to a hybrid with the American style -- within the decade.

Today's courses average \$1 million to \$1.8 million to build, not counting costs for land, club houses, extra facilities and access to water supplies. We simply can't afford the present types of courses in the future, either financially or environmentally. If Americans still want courses to play in the 1980's and into the next century, we must change our mind's image of a golf course from "wall-to-wall" green carpet to the original, beautiful, natural settings of the old-style courses still found in England and Scotland and occasionally in the United States.

**Prediction:** As more water is needed for domestic and commercial use, and as fuel and electricity costs increase, more pressure will be put on golf clubs to reduce substantially the areas watered.

**Prediction:** Courses of the future will have only 8 to 20 sand bunkers, but an increase in strategically placed grass mounds, grass bunkers and tree traps (one tree or a group of trees of varying height and width).

**Prediction:** In the next few years, greens will become smaller until the optimum size is reached, probably in the neighborhood of 4,500 to 5,000 square feet, instead of 7,000 to 10,000 as is now popular.

How can initial costs and maintenance costs be reduced without sacrificing course character?

Until 20 or 30 years ago, many golf courses, especially in the East and North, watered tees and greens only. Today, the accent is on massive watering and manicured grass from tee to green.

Sixty acres of watered fairways and

roughs receiving 1.5 inches of water per week use up to 2,440,000 gallons per week. Watering 12 weeks per year will consume nearly 30 million gallons. In areas of low rainfall, seven times this amount might be consumed.

This watering area can be substantially reduced and actually make the course play better. Most single-row fairway watering systems have approximately 180 fairway sprinkler heads. It is possible, and even perhaps desirable, to design a challenging and beautiful golf course with only 54 fairway heads, fewer than one-third the normal, with corresponding savings in water, energy and installation costs.

Landing areas would be set up for the play of the hole; the distance required to reach these landing areas would be determined for various classes of golfers, from ladies to touring pros, by careful multiple-tee placement. In future courses, only these areas would be watered and intensively maintained to reward a good shot. Short of the landing areas, and beyond them to the green or to the next landing area, would be a low-mowed rough or infrequently mowed "fairway" grass, which would receive only natural rainfall and minimal maintenance. Tees and greens would continue to receive the same maintenance and watering as they do today.

The "near rough" contiguous to the fairways would be mowed 1 1/2 to two inches in height, depending on the grass. This would make it easier to find balls not hit to a landing area. The "far roughs," starting 10 to 15 yards beyond the normal fairway edge, might be mowed three to eight inches high. Deep rough, 8 to 24 inches in height, might be spotted here and there, out of the way of the high handicapper, but definitely awaiting the stray shot of the very long hitter.

Other benefits from using "landing areas" instead of total fairways include:

- Less area to fertilize, resulting in lower annual costs and less chance of

polluting streams with run-off.

- Less area requiring herbicides, fungicides and insecticides, benefiting both the budget and the environment.

- Less area to be mowed frequently to fairway heights, lowering maintenance costs and lengthening life of equipment.

Will a return to landing areas and somewhat more severe roughs slow down play, which is already too slow? It's doubtful. Slow play is caused more by poorly placed and excessive hazards.

Most greens today are over-trapped. How many times have we seen 400-yard par-4 holes with four and five bunkers around the greens, some extending back toward the tee for 35 or 40 yards? The toughest shot in golf is the long bunker shot. The low handicapper doesn't miss a green by 20 to 30 yards, so these long bunkers don't catch him. Such bunkers catch only the weekend golfer, contributing to slow play and lessening the pleasure of the very golfer who should be out having fun.

Courses with two and three fairway bunkers per hole, some of them 80 to 100 yards long, are on their way out. In a carefully designed course, the fairway bunkers rarely can be reached by the average player. But they should welcome the very long hitter who "strays". A flat bunker doesn't bother this good golfer unless he has an unfortunate lie. A penal bunker designed to make him recover with an 8-iron when a 5-iron is needed from that distance to the green is another story, and such traps used *sparingly* and *judiciously* will have their place on future courses.

Most courses overdo the fairway bunkers because many architects don't understand tree traps or trees. Well-placed tree traps, either natural or planted, can stop the very long hitters far more effectively and with far less maintenance expense than sand bunkers.

But why so many traps in the first place? A study of the old master golf course architects, like Donald Ross,

(Con't on Page 4.)

(Con't. from page 3) **Designing Courses**

Alister Mackenzie, and A. W. Tillinghast, shows that some of their greatest courses had few traps. In rebuilding the eighth green at Augusta National, I found that the original green of Mackenzie, which made the hole a magnificent test of golf, didn't have a single bunker. This was a superb example of subtle design that rewarded a bold, well-placed shot while making a very tough approach shot to the pin.

In a few years when the new courses materialize with definite landing areas, minimally maintained roughs and former fairway areas growing two-inch-high grasses, the accent will shift from pure length and strength to placement, finesse and judgment. To be sure, the good architects will provide some holes where pure length gives a definite advantage. But on many holes, the price of an error in trying to obtain an extra 25 yards off the tee might simply be too high.

With less maintenance of roughs, particularly 250 yards or more from the tees, tree traps and fewer but more-strategically placed fairway bunkers, the longer hitter will have to attain an even greater degree of accuracy to maintain his advantage over the shorter driver.

With smaller greens, the pitch-and-run shot will be more frequent. Strategically placed mounds, which prohibit flying the ball at the pin, will become more commonplace.

We are about to enter an exciting "new age" of golf and course architecture that goes back to the old days of the game, returns to the challenge of nature and to a far greater cooperation with the economy and the ecology. Reversing the trend toward higher initial and maintenance costs will help the continued growth of golf in the decades ahead.

*(Joseph S. Finger is President of a Houston firm specializing in golf course architecture and land planning. Finger has designed more than 50 courses in a career that spans 30 years. One of his most noted courses is the Concord Golf Club at Kiamesha Lake, N.Y.)*

(Con't. from Page 2.) **GCSAA**

has certainly created a need for continued long-range planning," said John Segui. Additional benefit services, resources needed to support further growth, and other topics were to be discussed by the organization's leaders during the three-day session. "It seemed appropriate to meet at this time, with the PGA Championship centrally located in the United States," noted Segui. "There are many of the industry's other leaders here to meet with, too." GCSAA's unprecedented growth in recent years is of major concern in a positive way. "In 1983, we had 16 staff members and fewer than 5,000 members," observed John M. Schilling, Executive Director. "Now, we have 35 full-time staffers providing services to nearly 8,000 members worldwide. In 1983, we had less than \$2 million in revenue, and this year, we'll probably exceed \$5 million.

In addition to the Association's Board of Directors, GCSAA's management staff is participating in the long-range planning session which is being formally facilitated by Michael T. Smith, of Denver, CO.

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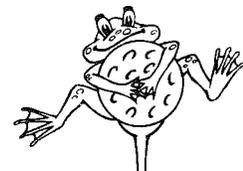
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## Long, hot summer rough on courses

By John Nowobilski

John Nowobilski is the PGA Professional at Tallwood Country Club. His column appears weekly in the *Journal Inquirer* during the golf season. Thanks to Tom Watroba and Dave Stimpson for bringing this timely article to our attention.

This week's golf column originally had a different topic, but a situation which occurred the other night prompted me to write on another matter.

The other evening, a golfer came in from playing and filed a complaint, "This is the worst conditioned course I've ever played," he said. He said he couldn't even hold the green using a balata (soft cover) ball. What a crime. I wonder if he had square grooves? It's true everyone has a right to an opinion, but I kept wondering if this individual really knew the situation at hand and why the course was not "up to par."

Mother Nature has been an evil lady to the golf course superintendents and to their pride and joy, the courses they labor at for all our enjoyment.

Since becoming a PGA Professional 11 years ago, I have always felt the superintendent deserves to stand at a higher plateau than any employee at the club, even the golf professional. Many people, the greater majority coming from municipal and public golfers, see the superintendent as nothing more than the inept caretaker from the movie "Caddyshack".

Many courses in the Greater Hartford area are presently suffering condition-wise, but not because of laziness and insensitivity of its caretakers. According to Dave Rule, Superintendent at the Hartford Golf Club (one of the best manicured layouts you can ever set foot on) the principals of grooming must be thrown out the window for the present time. "We were all faced with eight weeks of extremely dry weather, which was quickly followed by two weeks of humid, wet conditions and that saturated the grounds. Before the water could drain off the surfaces, the extreme dry, hot weather returned and serious problems occurred," Rule explained.

"Keeping the grass alive, regardless of what the course looks like, should be the No. 1 concern and be understood by our members. Golfers tend to forget that grass is a living organism; it grows, breathes, sweats and tires," Rule said. Rule also mentioned that in the 25 years in which he has been involved in turfgrass and golf courses, he has never seen so many problems faced by his fellow peers.

Area courses have lost fairways, some have lost greens, a few have lost both. Greens don't hold, tees are too wet, what an unfortunate mess. According to an article by Paul Harber of the Boston Globe, several courses around Boston had to be closed. One course, Weston Country Club, lost 17 of 18 fairways.

The problem is simple, the solution a bit harder. After the rains came, standing water was followed by the extreme heat wave, which caused puddles on greens, fairways and even tees to boil, taking oxygen out of the water and suffocating the grass.

In a similar predicament is Manchester Country Club superintendent, Gary Bryant. His course has suffered under the strain of the weather.

"How does a person feel playing in weather like this?," asked Bryant. "They are tired when they finish, they sweat, they need to cool off. Well, grass feels the same way, and the

conditions we're facing are not cooperative.

"I've seen more trouble this summer than in the past 20 years. We first needed to water due to the hot, dry weather, but the problems didn't occur until the wet weather came, followed by hot, humid conditions -- it's like sitting on a powder keg." Bryant further explained that northern grass, which is commonly a mixture of bent, rye and bluegrass, can't survive in tropical weather conditions, such as in South Florida.

Many courses are taking on the appearance of uncut fairways, patchy rough, spotty, yellowish fairways and dark, claylike putting surfaces, all characteristics of the forementioned problems. Knowing the personality of his course, and the topographics of the surrounding area, each superintendent must deal in a situation in a manner he sees fit to save the course from permanent damage.

Take the case of Tallwood Country Club. "Our golf course was in excellent shape during the dry spell, especially for Connecticut State Open qualifying July 18," Mike Ovia, co-owner and superintendent said. "But because of the heavy rains July 19, 20 and 24, when more than six inches of rain fell, the high temperatures and extreme humidity caused the greens and fairways to thin out from fungus disease, suffocating from too much water." His brother and co-owner superintendent, Kenny Ovia, said the following: "We decided to aerate greens to allow air and water to penetrate the roots. We feel this action saved us from permanently losing many greens. The greens have recovered and in a very short time will be in excellent condition as Tallwoods' greens are always noted for."

Pythium -- a word superintendents don't want to hear. It's like scratching your fingernails down a blackboard, though many superintendents would rather listen to that, given a choice. Pythium, or "root rot" is a cancer-like fungus which attacks everything. It's characterized by a yellowish brown circle of dying grass in no set pattern. "This disease thrives in low lying areas where accumulating water sits," Bryant explained. "It simply takes out all the grass in a specific area, but can quickly spread transported by your own golf shoes, onto tees and greens. Caught in its early stage, pythium can be controlled by chemical treatment."

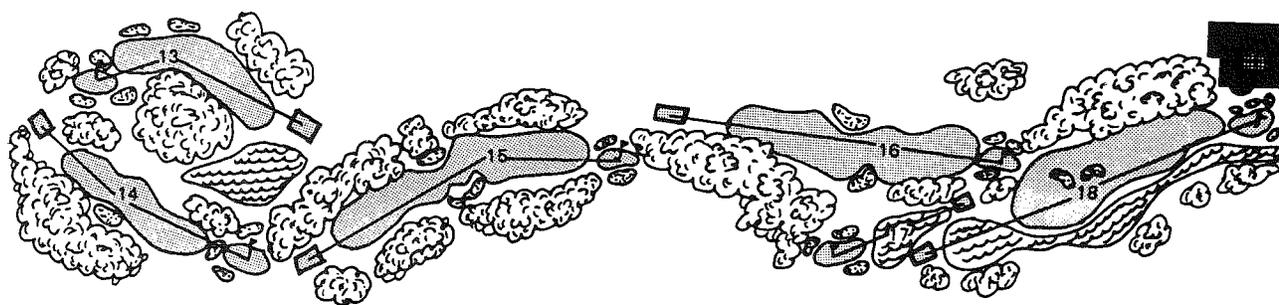
But every superintendent doesn't always have the budget to offset such a crisis. Tallwood, for example, is presently running at three times its normal budget for chemicals. They are lucky, but if a superintendent cannot fight a problem due to financial binds, the course suffers, and the superintendent is blamed or relieved of his duties. It doesn't seem fair, does it.

"Members just need to be patient for about three weeks," said Rule. "If we go on grooming just to please the golfers, we may not have any course to groom in the future."

So, to the gentleman whose round was spoiled by the conditions the other day, and to all golfers like him, whether they belong to a private club or play weekly in a league, the last person who wants to see you upset is the golf superintendent. Believe me, he is trying his hardest, using all his knowledge and resources.

Stay behind him and give him your support. He needs it -- especially now.

# The Clippings



## CALENDAR

Connecticut Association of Golf Course Superintendents

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	HOST
August 24	University of Rhode Island Annual Turf Grass Field Day	University of Rhode Island Turf Research Field Station	Dr. C. R. Skogley
September 13	Memorial Tournament Parson's Trophy - Gross McLaughlin Trophy - Net	Pequabuck Golf Club Pequabuck, CT	Peter Pierson
September 27	Scholarship & Research Scramble/Net	Glastonbury Hills Glastonbury, CT	Roger Barrett
October 5	Met Area Team Championship	Middle Bay Long Island, NY	John Carlone
October 18	Superintendent/Assistant	Tunxis Plantation Farmington, CT	Charles Babcock
October 24 & 25	GCSAA Seminar Golf Course Design Principles	Red Jacket Inn Bass River, Massachusetts	Cape Cod Turf Managers
November 8	Annual Meeting Nine Hole Scramble	Birchwood Country Club Westport, CT	Edward Consolati
November 10-11	GCSAA Seminar Plant Nutrition & Fertilizers	Natick, Massachusetts	New England Supt. Association
December 12-13	GCSAA Seminar Introduction to Soil Science	Newport, Rhode Island	R. I. Golf Course Supt. Association
February 6-13	International Golf Course Conference and Show	Anaheim, California	GCSAA

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