

NEWSLETTER

APRIL 1971



Golf Course Superintendents Association OF NEW ENGLAND, INC.

Sponsors and administrators of the Lawrence S. Dickinson Scholarship Fund — Awarded yearly to deserving Turf Management Students.

WE'RE NUMBER ONE

Dick Blake refuses to bow to protocol.

Ordinarily when your man is number one in the national organization which makes your sectional organization number one, you gloat and rave about the fact that Dick Blake — the man who greens up the Mt. Pleasant Country Club — is president of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America.

"No sense resting on our laurels", Blake barked recently when cornered during the 1971 Turf Conference at the Highpoint Motor Inn in Chicopee. "I don't want any personality close-up about my being elected president. What I'm interested in is the future, not the past."

So, Dick Blake will go unheralded — so to speak. We all know him and of him. He started out as an ambassador of his profession. He's interested in upgrading every facet of it. He has no time to pass in review of what has been accomplished. He's today's man . . . today's president.

"Don't get me wrong", Dick interjected when it appeared that his election would be shoved into yesterday's news. "I'm grateful for the opportunity and grateful to the people who furthered my candidacy. I couldn't have gotten this far alone. I am a product of the New England Association. It brought me this far. It has to be congratulated."

So much for the accolades. But that is something to leave to the script writers. Blake has plans, big plans for the national. "I'm ready to make a big push to implement the certification program", he disclosed. "This is something very important. We can't go along a helter-skelter path. When a man reaches the position of superintendent, it must mean something. It must mean he has worked to attain the title."

Certification, then, is on Blake's list of things to do today. Also on the immediate agenda is to establish a working agreement with the other associations affiliated with golf. "There's no use in wasting our time fighting among one another", he said. "All of the pros, managers and superintendents are in

the business of golf to promote it to the hilt. We can do this best with an understanding among us."

The new GCSAA prexy also makes it known that he is thoroughly out of tune with the national membership. "I have't looked at the figures yet", he offered. "But I'm sure our membership could use a sprucing up in matter of numbers. Off hand, I'd say we have around 3,000 members. That's about half as much as our potential. I think we should aim to double our numbers. It's simply a question of exposure."

Blake also holds with the theory that perhaps the GCSAA's educational outlook is too confined. "I have no axe to grind with our purpose", he noted. "But we have to realize that our educational efforts should be directed in a multi-direction. I'm not for educating one another. I think we have to educate those persons outside the organization who are not aware of our aims and problems. We can talk to one another any time. What we should strive to do is get our club presidents and green chairmen in conversation."

Another topic fresh on the top of the new president is ecology and environment. "This is spreading to all walks of life", Dick delivered a message to the membership. "Our organization is at the heart of the problem. All superintendents should make a concentrated attempt to become part of the environmental setup. If need be, we'll establish an educational program along those lines, even a suggested library so we're able to know just what this thing's all about."

Those projections were only the openers. "That should keep us with enough meat to think about," Blake concluded. It's about time the golf course superintendent came out of his shell. He is close to almost every facet of our environment. Thus, he should get involved in it."

For openers, Blake apparently is becoming involved. Should things develop the way he envisions them, his reign as GCSAA president should be a notable one, indeed.

— Gerry Finn

"TROLLING WITH JOE"

As the snow recedes, much "grey snow mold" has been observed infecting turfgrasses. What can be done at this late date to improve these infected areas?

Brush these areas to break up the thread-like body of the causal organism and remove the resulting organic matter that has accumulated. If grass growth has started or is about to resume, stimulate by the addition of a small amount of a nitrogenous fertilizer. If damage is extensive and recovery is slow, then aerify, lime, fertilize and over seed.

When is it safe to open golf greens for play in the spring?

When all the frost is out of the soil and soil is not saturated with moisture from spring thaw.

Play on excessively wet greens can cause puddling of the soil (breakdown of soil structure), causing soil compaction and in turn, poor, thin turf. The superintendent is knowledgeable and keenly aware of all adverse growing conditions brought about by the environment, at any time of the year, and he and his Green Chairman should keep the course closed during stress times.

Dr. Joseph Troll
Professor of Agrostology
University of Massachusetts

Golf Course Superintendents Association



Left to right: Dick Blake, President of the GCSAA, and the GCSA of NE, Robert Grant, Supt. Brae Burn CC, Al Radko, National Director USGA Green Section, Eberhard Steiniger, Supt. Pine Valley Golf Club, Clementon, New Jersey, and Richard Crosby, of the MGA Executive Committee. The above mentioned were the speakers on the Turf Program at the recent MGA day 9th Annual Member Club Spring Conference.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

This should be the time to look ahead to not only 1971 but all the challenges and opportunities that the 70's will offer to our profession.

These days "Preventive Maintenance" is more important than ever before to get the most out of your investments.

Attendance at regional educational programs sponsored by your association, the USGA Green Section Conference and the International GCSAA Conference offer you the opportunity for preventive maintenance for your mind. A chance to keep informed — to know what's going on — to improve yourself and get recharged (MOTIVATED).

If one of your members invested \$10,000 in a Cadillac, I am sure \$1,000 would be an acceptable annual amount for preventative maintenance and depreciation on that purchase. So, too, the costs of GCSA of N. E. and America are the costs for maintaining that \$15,000 - \$20,000 annual purchase made by the club for management.

What Better Investment can a club make than in the education of its management!

Dick Blake



Sam Mitchell and Arthur Anderson were honored recently at the Annual Fine Turf Grass Conference at the Highpoint Motor Inn, in Chicopee, Massachusetts. They both received honorary Associate Degrees in Turf Management presented by Dr. Joseph Troll of Stockbridge School of Agriculture.

U. S. OPEN A SHUT CASE

Al Radko, the USGA's Green Section director with personality-plus, plowed through the snowy confines of the Highpoint Motor Inn during the 1971 Turf Conference and reported all conditions are go.

"Yes", Radko revealed. "Conditions for the USGA Open next June at Merion should be at their peak. It is one of the traditionally, fine-groomed layouts in the country. This job is a pleasure."

What constitutes Al's pleasure is the association with one of the respected names in golf course management. Richie Valentine is the top man at Merion, its golf course superintendent following in the footsteps of his father, Joe Valentine who dedicated more than 50 years of his life to the development of a superior layout.

Radko heads the team of USGA experts overseeing the maintenance of Merion for golf's most cherished tournament prize. "It is a gorgeous course", Al told. "There isn't too much we've had to offer in the way of change. We've added length to one hole — the 12th, but for the most part Merion is a course of distinction to begin with."

The Radko endorsement of Merion is a feather in the cap of Richie Valentine, to be passed on to the memory of his late father. "There have been 12 major tournaments played at Merion", Al said. "Many of its original grasses still dot the course. It is a monument to supreme maintenance."

Merion is a legend in itself . . . and a credit to its up-bringing. The course is relatively short — around 6,600 yards — but its architectural hand is such that it lends to being on the difficult side.

"There are 102 traps on the course", Radko revealed. "They call them the white faces of Merion. They're beautiful, but their placement also is strategic, as all traps should be. Many of them were designed by Joe Valentine. With his touch there, it has to be good."

Radko is almost unconcerned about the condition of Merion for the Open. "The last time we took a tour of the course it was in the best possible shape," he opined. "Richie Valentine has been concentrating on the fairways and I look for some good, dry, tight turf. That's how the players of today prefer their fairways. This will make for much better scoring and an exciting tournament."

Merion has been on a program of upgrading the turf there. Thus, the superintendent doesn't have to make many improvements . . . even though the USGA and Radko have been in constant touch with it for the past two years.

"Naturally, we can't guarantee a super-conditioned course", Radko spouted. "The weather always has something to say with the condition of a golf course. But, we're hoping for a dry spring to eliminate the possibility of soft spots and depressions. The drainage at Merion is excellent. I am very confident it will be playing at its best in June."

While the tradition is much to live up to, it appears that Merion stands ready to withstand such a challenge. With people like Radko, the memory of Joe Valentine and the now-positive attitude of Richie Valentine, the USGA will have a superb home for its championship.

— Gerry Finn

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SOUND OFF !!!!

(It's that time of the reading session to dive into the opinions and comments of our readers. Sound Off has been made a regular part of the Newsletter menu for that specific purpose. We are open for your words on golf, be they crisp or limp. The ground rules are simple. Just send your cards and letters to Mail Box, 24 Riverview Drive, Newbury, Mass. 01950 and include your full name and address. The rest, or the comment is up to us).

* * * *

"I am just an ordinary golfer but a country club member. As such, I think I qualify enough to comment on some of the comments which some golfers make after playing a strange course.

"Not too long ago I was invited to a course, together with a group of business associates. The tone of the other three gentlemen about the condition of the course was horrible. They seemed to take the stand that because the course held a considerable amount of water, the rest of the layout properties were also discreditable.

"The fact of the matter is that the overall condition of the course was almost super. But because some of the boys had to move their ball out of a little casual water, they figured the entire course was a curse.

"I am writing this only to make sure you people are aware of the golfer who appreciates the fine job the superintendent does. I, for one, do not judge the entire course by one little flaw or inconvenience. I hope my playing partners see this letter."

JUSTIN TOOHEY
Soonsday, Tenn.

We also hope your playing partners see your letter, Justin.

* * * *



March 22, 1971 — Removing snow from No. 8 green at the Chestnut Hill Country Club.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be April 12, 1971, at the Holiday Inn, Newton, Massachusetts, Grove Street exit from Route 128. The guest speaker will be Paul Hogencamp from Dupont. His topic will be "What's Ahead."

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|--------------------|-------------|
| Directors' Meeting | 10:45 a. m. |
| Regular Meeting | 11:15 a. m. |
| Break for Lunch | 12:15 p. m. |
| Education Program | 1:15 p. m. |

"There has been considerable talk given to the advancement of the theory that all country clubs should be placed in the hands of an overall manager, one who would take charge of every department.

"This would be sweet and lovely all right if there were enough people who took the time to learn every part of the country club or golf course operation. In that case, when such a person got around to traveling all avenues, he probably would be 100 years old!

"I think it's about time such plans be scuttled in favor of the more practical idea of having each outlet — pro shop — clubhouse — golf course, have its separate and proven leader. Maybe I'm all wet about this, but it seems foolish to me to place someone in charge who might turn out to be a person who knows only 'a little bit about a lot of things.' As far as I'm concerned, this is not enough."

CLAY HILL
(Club withheld)

We don't know who should take up the fight in this proposal — the super, the pro or the club manager. Whoever the advocates of this thing choose for the job have our sympathy.

* * * *

"I'm back again and with another gripe about salesmen.

"This time it concerns the motive of said salesmen. Very often I am approached by a man who offers himself as a consulting service for one or another problem on the conditioning of the golf course. More often than not he comes up with a solution which always includes the buying of his particular product.

"Is there anything I can do to discourage this culprit?"

JACKSON KRAMDEN
Atlantic City, N. J.

Just show him the door, Jackson.

* * * *

"This is written to congratulate the Massachusetts Golf Association for its wonderful presentation during the MGA spring meeting.

"Very often we superintendents are lured to such meetings under the pretense that the overall structure of golf will be covered. And too often it turns out that the superintendent's plight is ignored.

"However, this meeting was much more than that. All presentations were superb and in line with the problems that confront all the wings of golf course management — pros, supers, and managers.

"Once again a big thanks and a plea to keep up the good work to all members of the Massachusetts Golf Association, plus any other people who might have assisted in the venture."

GUY PAUL
Holden, Mass.

We were just about to give three tips of the cap to the MGA, and to Dr. Joe Troll for his fine 1971 Turf Conference, when your letter arrived. That makes it unanimous!

* * * *

(This puts the lid on another session with our readers, always an interesting session at that. You, too, can be part of the Sound Off scene. If you don't have an opinion, a comment or a complaint about golf, you're not human. Everyone has, especially at this time of year. Let's hear from you.)

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FIRST CLASS



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