

# NEWSLETTER

*Golf Course Superintendents Association*  
OF NEW ENGLAND, INC.

APRIL 1973



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

## SLOW PLAY... WHO'S TO BLAME?

The golf architects of the United States have gone on record as being participants in the drive to stamp out slow golf play. In effect, they are saying that future design will lend itself to directing a foursome around a course in a reasonable length of time.

F. W. Hawtree, Great Britain's gift to the profession, concurs with the American pledge. But he also reminds one and all that the architect . . . and the golf course superintendent . . . is not to blame for the tortoise-like pace of a weekend Nassau match.

"I think we all know who started the whole thing of taking all day to play a round", F. W. (Fred) stated last month while in this country to take part in the Massachusetts Turf Conference. "The professionals began it all and it transferred into the play of the amateur. Now everyone's doing it."

Hawtree appreciates the fact that professionals are making a livelihood from playing golf and that extended concentration is necessary to achieving an end. However, he believes they are overdoing it. "There is far too much value placed on the golf shot these days", he remarked. "Naturally, the professional's values are greater in that the tournament purses have grown far out of proportion. They have so much to lose if they are too hasty."

The amateur contribution, though, irks Hawtree. "They seem to be affected by this same frightful disease", he offered, "and I don't see any reason why. What has happened here is a mimic situation. The amateurs watch the pros on the television, taking their time and shooting fantastic scores. They put two and two together and figure that the longer time they take the better the shot turns out."

Hawtree explains that the "blind shot" in golf architect is a fading phenomenon. "It is going out in popularity", he told. "It only serves as a conversation piece for the club member anyway."

The affable Hawtree, who has been 35 years in the business of creating playgrounds for golfers and who just passed his 1000th hole in design, is dead set against the long course theory. "Length is only of publicity value", he said. "In most cases the designing of a long course is not practical. Architects sometimes feel that they are building a monument to themselves and that the longer the course they design, the more chance of immortality for them. This is rot."

Hawtree claims that the lengthy course was something that the architects of the world had to get out of their systems. "I think we have realized that we can create something more interesting within a reasonable amount of playing distance", he added. "My longest course runs around 6800 yards. And I wouldn't consider it one of my best."

Size of greens is another item which turns Hawtree on. "I always like to see a large 18th green", he explained. "But it's not a sign of successful architect to find 18 greens so large that players take countless minutes trying to find the hole."

Here, too, Hawtree comes to the defense of the superintendent. Some slow play critics have the idea that the superintendent puts the holes in treacherous places, thus adding more time to the putting game. "That is untrue", Fred snapped. "The superintendent wants to get the players off the greens as quickly as possible. The longer they stay and tramp on them the more damage they do, so it's ridiculous to chide the superintendent."

Hawtree, whose father (another F. W., by the way) founded the British Greenkeepers' Association in 1912, thinks the golfing public has to be re-educated in the matter of slow play. "They must bring golf back to the level of it being a game", he concluded. "We (the architects and supers) will do our part to speed it up. But it's up to the player to make it effective."

— Gerry Finn



Left to right: Leon V. St. Pierre, Bob Grant, F. W. Hawtree and Joseph Troll are discussing the recent turf conference program at Springfield. All reports show this conference to be the best one of all.

### PARDON THE INCONVENIENCE!

The reason your Newsletter is late this month is that the editor and his family just returned from a trip to the west coast. While there we visited Disneyland and the Anaheim Convention Center. The facilities look to be excellent for next year's conference. Remember the dates are February 17-22, 1974. There are ample places to stay in the area and the rates are reasonable.

# Golf Course Superintendents Association

## NO CHANGE... THE BEST CHANGE

F. W. (Call me Fred) Hawtree slipped across the Atlantic recently for Dr. Troll's Massachusetts Turf Conference and reports that the European market for golf architects is thriving.

Hawtree spreads his wealth of talent. In addition to his many successful golfing swarths through the English countryside, Hawtree has these credits in which low handicappers and hackers can indulge: One course in Holland, two in Germany, two in Belgium, four in Spain and eight in France.

"We have some million pounds of work on hand back home" Fred revealed during an exclusive interview with the NEGCSA Newsletter. "We have four on our staff and they are kept quite busy. I really would rather that we could give our endeavors much more personal attention."

That would seem to be the key difference between the architectural outlooks on either side of the ocean. "Sometimes progress is a damaging thing", Hawtree mused. "Everything is done too fast these days. We really can't blame the architects, though. When golfers get together to think of building a course, they want to put the show on the road, so to speak. The faster it's built the better. However, a lot of thought and preparation has to go into the design of a golf course. We (the architects) thus find ourselves in a peculiar position of having to do a rush job . . . but that's the way it is."

Hawtree doesn't plan to expand his company, although he has enough potential contracts to double his staff. "I think you'll find that the bigger the company, the more impersonal

the job", Fred continued. "That goes for any business. In golf architecture, this is virtually criminal. A golf course reflects the designer's personality and he should have enough time to express that personality."

Another difference between the two schools of architectural thought, according to Hawtree, is the amount of money available in the makeup of the designer's plans. "You Americans seem to pour enough funds to create your own topography", he suggested. "We don't have the means for such an approach. Thus, you'll find that British courses lend themselves more to the existing terrain than do those in the United States."

Hawtree warns against the dangers of architects designing what he calls the "standard article." He has noted in his travels that the assembly-line type of architecture has brought about many courses lacking in individual character. "Once again the time element probably affects this growing malady", Fred explained. "When you're working against deadlines, you don't get much opportunity to concentrate on originality. So, the result is rubber-stamp courses."

The veteran architect's fame has reached the United States where he is currently involved in two courses. One is called "Mount Mitchell Lands" in Burnsville, North Carolina where his brainchild will be surrounded by hunting lodges and the like. It really is a piece of wilderness development with the nearest metropolitan city, Charlotte, located 110 miles away.

The other U. S. venture is the Kings Grant Country Club in New Jersey. Hawtree describes his involvement as a nationalistic inspiration. "The name of the course comes from King James, II and the land is a plot granted by him many, many years ago", Fred told. "I suppose they wanted to get more authenticity into the project by enlisting a British architect. But I'm very interested in it."

Oddly enough, Hawtree sees the face of golf architecture having very little lifting over the years. "I think the biggest change in the profession is the fact there haven't been that many changes", he concluded. "Courses built 40 years ago still look as beautiful as ever. No change often is the best change."

— Gerry Finn

### Midwest Regional Turf Foundation

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Mr. Gerry Finn, Contributing Editor  
Newsletter G. C. S. A.  
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Dear Gerry:

Your "Saturation - Not an Unreachable Point" article is excellent reading. We can over-train in numbers - for example, school teachers - for many things including golf course superintendents.

Now, those already in the trade can restrict the entrance into the professional field by quotas (in M.D., Vet Science, law and others). However, such has often been accompanied by regulatory licensing and practice regulation (Bar exam, M.D. exam).

So far the turf field has been open to many, and attractive in its diversity. Remember, young people come to us for training, and our job includes accepting them. Where Purdue had just 1 in '52, then 10 in '65, we have 38 turf majors in '73. They came to us. Our ten graduates for this year are among the best yet. We encourage sales, service, sod, business, as well as golf course supervision. About one-third of our grads are on golf courses.

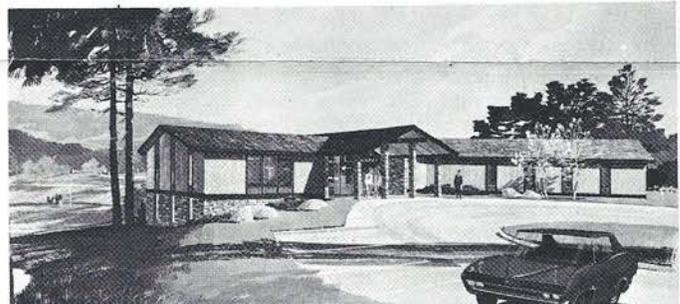
Sure, the adult programs of education must continue. Sure, the certification and special seminars must continue. But, the free American system has been that all can try and take their chances. It has brought turf a long way in a hurry.

Those who care most can help by favoring high standards and supporting the best training programs possible. Remember, the youth came to the university on their choice.

Cordially  
Yours for Better Turf,

*W. H. Daniel*  
William H. Daniel  
Turf Research & Extension

WHD:kh A non-profit organization supporting turf research and education.



Artist's rendering depicts GCSAA's new Headquarters Building in Lawrence, Kansas. Architect's working drawings and specifications have already been approved.

### CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE COMPARISON

1973	1972	1971	1970
Boston	Cincinnati	Denver	Houston
4,214	4,053	3,480	3,620

- |   |   |   |   |   |  |   |  |  |
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**SOUND OFF !!!!**

*(Once again the Newsletter opens its eyes and ears to the reader for Sound Off. This is the section of our publication by the reader. It gives everyone the opportunity to give his views on any golf subject, whether it pertain to the superintendent's part in the sport or not. The only rule governing play is that contributors sign their letters, including address. Names and addresses will be withheld upon request. Comments are always welcome at Newsletter Mail Bag, 24 Riverview Drive, Newbury, Mass. 01950. The Newsletter reserves the right to comment on all letters published).*

\* \* \* \*

"I have been out of it as far as the progress of the superintendent's certification program is concerned. All of a sudden, it seems that the program is not receiving the amount of publicity it got when the first supers started to earn their certificates.

"Somehow, I can see the trend forming that certification is only a fad and that its long range value is diminishing. Most of the other supers in my area agree with me. The occasion of a superintendent getting his 'degree' appears to have met an 'I don't care . . . and so what' level.

"When the national first instituted the program, I was under the impression that certification eventually would be a must for all or most of the country's superintendents. In effect, it was the one single measuring stick anyone had to determine whether or not a superintendent was qualified for a certain job.

"Please tell me I'm wrong in assuming that the certification program has gone the way of most 'new' ideas. I am planning to take the test in the near future, but I want to be sure that gaining my little piece of paper will be worth the effort."

NAME WITHHELD  
Club Withheld

Don't throw in the sponge yet. Certification is both meaningful and worthwhile. With the superintendent's market in the position where it might become flooded, certification remains one form of assuring a qualified super he has a strong shot at any job.

\* \* \* \*

"My friend and I have been engaged in an argument during these long, dull nights of winter. The issue centers around the responsibility of placing the pins during a local golf tournament. He claims that the particular superintendent is the one to blame when a player comes to the green and finds that the hole is cut in an impossible position.

"Evidently, he doesn't follow the game that closely. As long as I can remember, in tournament play the superintendent only follows the wishes of the tournament committee or chairman who determines just how difficult the course will play by setting the pins, himself.

"One of us is wrong . . . but who?"

CRAIG NEVERS  
Thompson, Conn.

Usually, in tournaments of stature, the superintendent only follows the orders of those in charge. For instance, the Massachusetts Golf Association oversees the pin placement in its events. In bigger golf tourneys, the PGA, USGA or whoever also take the responsibility for determining where the hole will be cut.

\* \* \* \*

"It seems to me that the fairways at my club have shrunk in width during the past few years. There was a time, on certain holes, that I could tee my ball up and not worry about carrying into the rough. But times have changed.

"On several of our 'easier' driving holes, the fairway now takes the appearance of a bowling alley and I'm forced to take it easy off the tee. This does much to unsettle my game because the drive always has been the best part of my game.

"My question concerning this sudden turn of course layout is, 'who is to blame?' I have talked to several members of my club and no one seems to know who authorized the slimming down of the fairways and for what reason anyone would want to do it in the first place. Is this the fault of our superintendent or is it a matter of changing club policy?"

TED THURSTON  
Canton, S. D.

This is not the single act of your super, Ted. Either your green committee wants to beef up the course or cut down in maintenance of fairways. See your green chairman for the answer.

\* \* \* \*

"Every time I pick up your Newsletter it has some opposing views as to the use of golf carts. I, for one, am sick and tired of all this fuss over a machine which has prolonged the golfing life of many a country club member.

"Why can't you people (the superintendent) realize that the golf cart is now an integral part of the country club scene and that it is here to stay? There is no sense grumbling about something that has been accepted by virtually every golfing club in the world.

"What I'm trying to tell you people is that you're kicking a dead horse. The idea of doing away with the golf cart is ridiculous. Why don't you just accept them and learn to live with them?"

C. B. Brooks  
Purchase, Ariz

Some things in life are just a sore spot forever, C. B. Golf carts are the super's natural enemy. He's living with them . . . but just like a dog lives with a cat!

\* \* \* \*

*(That puts the finishing touches on another session with our readers. Remember, that this is your space in the Newsletter. It's open to any and all comments, so sit down today and let us have them. Right or wrong, they will be printed.)*

\* \* \* \*

**To the TV Weather Man**

Don't show me all your graphs and charts,  
The highs and lows and pressure belts,  
Those marks I see are Greek to me,  
Though they make sense to someone else.  
Your hieroglyphics, I'll confess,  
Confuse and nettles me a lot —  
Just tell me this — no more, no less:  
It is going to rain or not?

— Stephen Schlitzer

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