

NEWSLETTER

JULY 1973



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.

CURING THE CART HEADACHE

It seems that the golf course superintendent and the country club member have been at odds over the "when and where" syndromes that have accompanied the establishment of the golf cart as a permanent resident of the course. The battle has been incessant, the super fiarping on the ill effects of the four-wheeled monster and the member determined to ride it in all kinds of weather and course condition.

For one thing, the superintendent has accepted the golf cart as a necessary evil, if you will. The revenue alone makes it almost criminal to keep it off the course. Some country clubs claim that profit on the golf cart for the season has climbed close to the \$50,000 mark. This is something unheard of when you realize the mechanized mover of man and his clubs was introduced only 20 or so years ago.

Anyway, the theme today is the necessity for building golf cart paths (not home-made dirt ones but the real McCoy — blacktop, cement or whatever you choose for a hardened surface). They are a necessity because of the times. Most golf courses are going full swing in the use of the golf cart, so they must build a track on which it can maneuver in all kinds of weather.

Many clubs are meeting the assignment of permanent golf cart paths on a piece-meal basis, over a three or four year period so as to spread out the cost. The best installation times, of course, are spring and fall. However, the job does not entail too much spillover in matter of equipment and work area, thus making it possible to build them during the summer.

The superintendent and the member will benefit from the hardened golf cart path. Many a super has been engaged in yearly verbal scuffles when inclement weather turns his course mushy and makes a monster out of the golf cart. In most cases, his word is the last in the use of the cart on rainy

days. But with no damage to be done while traversing the course on cart paths, this problem is eliminated.

The cart path also takes the green chairman off the hook. As the immediate superior of the superintendent, the chairman often is torn between friendship of fellow members and devotion to the duty of giving those same members the best-conditioned playing grounds possible. With the path, there is no decision as to use of the cart. It goes in rain, hail or snow . . . just as long as the driver sticks to the road.

The weather plays a big factor in the revenue end of the golf cart business (and truly it has become a major source of income for many country clubs). Estimates on day losses of cart use range from two or three a month to as high as the complete month. Remember the spring of '72? There was a reported example from the Connecticut area that told of a club not being able to employ its golf carts until mid-July. The loss in returns was so great (the professional also was involved) that the pro eventually was forced to seek a job elsewhere to make ends meet.

Under such severe weather patterns, which hit the Northeast last year, the course without hardened golf cart paths could very well make or break its financial statement for the season (in this case the red ink would surely flow). A quick example is sufficient here. Take a course with 50 golf carts and take away 15 of their running days. In rough figures the loss runs around \$7,500.

More important, possibly, is the savings in maintenance costs and headaches for fairways damaged when golf carts are allowed on the course in soggy conditions. And, then, there is the peace and quietness of a rainy day around the super's office . . . no phone call from an irate member who has to walk instead of ride. The hardened golf cart path is better than aspirin. It cures many ills.

— Gerry Finn

Urban Forests

William D. Ruckelhaus, administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, in September last year addressed the Society of American Foresters and called for the development of "urban forests" in these words: "although we are stuck with environs that are far from ideal, we can certainly make them more livable and satisfying. The urban forest will become an essential weapon in the coming effort to get metropolitan environments under positive control. Trees not only beautify their surroundings, they also cut noise, stop soil erosion, trap dust, cool ambient air, absorb carbon dioxide, produce oxygen, raise property values and provide sanctuary for birds, squirrels and other wildlife.

"Why have we squandered this urban resource by eliminating trees in preparing suburban residential developments? The answer is *ignorance*, combined with a very short term calculation of costs and benefits."

— *News and Views*

International Results for June Meeting

These are the results for the Super-Chairmen meeting at the International Golf Club.

1st Low Gross	158
William Rogers, F. Lotthridge, Bellevue Golf Club	
2nd Low Gross	165
John Jones, D. Callahan, Walpole Golf Club	
1st Low Net	141
Brian Cowan, H. Eldridge, Eastward Ho!	
2nd Low Net	146
Bob St. Thomas, B. Dowling, Hyannisport	

"Finish each day and be done with it. You have done what you could. Some blunders and absurdities no doubt crept in. Forget them as soon as you can. Tomorrow is a new day."

Golf Course Superintendents Association

GOING TO THE DOGS

On a light note this month we decided to sweep the fairways for unusual stories (maybe humorous ones) to point out that life among the sprinkler heads and gang mowers isn't all blood, sweat and tears for the golf course superintendent at this time of year.

Most of the yarns center on the unholy ability of certain four-legged creatures to steal golf balls . . . some even before they come to a halt! And examples of this lowest form of robbery are presented here in order to emphasize the fact that you might think you've seen and heard of everything until you read of this:

It happened at dusk one night on a public course. A foursome was teeing off on a par three hole and for some strange reason no one could find his ball when the group reached the green. All four shots were on target, so the first thought was to look in the cup. No luck there and the golfers wrote it off as rub of the green.

A few weeks later two of the players from that original group were on the same par-three hole. It was the same time of evening but somewhat brighter. One of the originals hit his ball and it was a perfect shot headed toward the green. It landed and came to a stop, some 15 feet from the hole. But all of a sudden the player went into a frenzy.

Running across the green was a fox. He didn't wait for an introduction to the ball. He just swooped it up and kept going to a hiding place in the adjacent woods. Player Two finally got settled down enough to hit his shot . . . and the same action occurred. The next day the course superintendent, as head of a searching party, discovered the hiding place and turned up 26 balls — the only marks on them, tooth marks!

Then, there was the plight of the two elderly ladies who

spotted a dog stealing their golf balls in the middle of the fairway. The theft happened once too often and the ladies sought the aid of the super who quickly remembered to whom the dog belonged.

The super, with a little help from his work crew, finally caught the dog . . . a golden-haired retriever who, after all, was only doing what comes naturally to the breed. Anyway, the super piled the thief into the back of a pickup and returned to his office.

The owner of the dog happened to be a very wealthy member of the community who had built a home off the course's eighth fairway. The super made a telephone call to the owner, explaining that the dog had upset two of his members by stealing their golf balls. The owner was full of apologies and promised to come right over for the dog.

It was only a matter of minutes before a Rolls Royce rolled into the driveway, a chauffeur stepped out and asked the superintendent where the master's dog could be found. The super was all wide eyes at the sight that followed.

The dog, who apparently had spent the better part of the day running through swamps, looked as though he'd need three baths to even recognize him. He was, indeed, a mess. But, no matter his appearance, the chauffeur calmly hung a leash on him, directed him to the Rolls Royce and ushered the creature into the back seat for the ride home.

It just so happened that the same super also owned a golden-haired whatchamacallit. And that night, when the dog came by for his regular visit to the club barn, our super hero picked him up and threw him in the back of the pickup . . . for his ride home. To each his own!

— Gerry Finn

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Association will be July 2, 1973 at Ferncroft Village in Topsfield, Massachusetts. This is the Super Championship. Paul Johnson is the superintendent in charge of this fine layout by Robert Trent Jones. Paul has been here for three years, and during that time he has done extensive construction to this new course — they have built six new tees, thus extending the course to 6,900 yards. Prior to accepting the position at Ferncroft he was at White Cliffs for five years and before that he started in the business at Whaling City in New Bedford where he grew up.

Golf can be played anytime after 10 A. M. and there will be a snack bar open at noon. The club will serve a buffet at 5:30 P. M. in the dining room.

Directions: From Rt. 128 north take Rt. 1 north and follow to the north to Topsfield exit. This is a fork road and you bear right. Then take left at next exit which reads Rt. 1 South Danvers and Ferncroft Village Rd. You will see sign for course. Ferncroft Village is on exit ramp about 3/4 of a mile on your right.

From Rt. 495 north go south on 95 in Salisbury to Topsfield exit at Rt. 1. Ferncroft Rd. is 1/2 mile on exit ramp on your right. Follow signs to club.



Paul Johnson, Super in charge of Ferncroft

DON'T FORGET THAT THE AUGUST MEETING IS THE SUPER-CELEBRITY TOURNAMENT

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SOUND OFF !!!!

(Here we are at that time of the reading when the reader rolls up his sleeves and pitches in to keep the Newsletter from becoming one-sided. This is Sound Off and we're always ready to let the chips fall where they may as you, the people, speak out on, for or against anything pertaining to golf. We do ask that each letter be signed with the address of the contributor also included. Upon request, we will withhold either or both. Letters should be sent to Newsletter Mail Bag, 24 Riverside Drive, Newbury, Mass. 01950. The Newsletter reserves the right to comment on all published letters).

"Although there hasn't been any official announcement (at least none that I've come across), I have heard that a big International Turfgrass Conference is being lined up in Switzerland. Since I don't know any of the particulars, I was wondering if you people have been approached on the possibility of lining up a group charter to the event.

"I think the idea of a world-wide conference is an excellent one, so I am hoping you can come up with some plan to make it that more convenient for superintendents to make the trip. Is this the right channel or should I try the National?"

KEN SPELLING
Cannon, Me.

We've heard rumors of same, Ken. Supposedly the conference will take place in the fall. No charter talk at the present time, at least not until we hear from the National on the matter.

"I realize you've heard it before and probably are wondering why the ladies of the club always are harping on it. However, I just think that it's about time (again) that somebody tell those dreadful cigaret smokers that the green is no place to leave their butts laying around to turn the place into one giant ash tray.

"It just seems a case of bad manners to me when I see a half-smoked cigaret on the green. Not only does it do damage to the green but it gives the membership a black eye for its lack of common decency and regard for property and others.

"The most disgusting thing of all, though, has been evident at my club of late. Because many of our male members have given up smoking, some of them now are 'chewing.' Now, in addition to the 'butts', we often find a blotch of chew residue confronting the line of our putts and our ability to keep our breakfasts down. Isn't there something we can do to stop this uncouth condition?"

LUCILLE PLIMPTON
Phillip, Neb.

There's nothing we can suggest at the moment, Ms Plimpton, other than to say you might change the name of your course from a country club to an animal farm!

"Being a recent visitor to one of your functions, I felt obligated to send on my deepest thanks and salutations to the Golf Course Superintendents Association of New England for its green chairman day at the International Golf Club.

"This was my first venture of this kind and felt that it was most worthwhile. I met many of my fellow green chairmen and I'm sure the swap of ideas and operations will help make a better club of ours when we start thinking of the future.

"I would also like to compliment your tournament committee for having the International as our host. I know that such an invasion of outsiders often constitutes an imposition on most clubs, but International was most gracious in accepting this situation.

"I found every member of the club staff to be accommodating and helpful in every way. The International also gave us a golf course which was challenging, interesting and enjoyable. The chap who is responsible for keeping the greens there is to be congratulated for a job well done. In fact, I think that everyone involved deserves a round of applause.

"The day was most satisfactory and rewarding. I shall make it a point to suggest to our board that our club act as host for one of your future events."

WALDO CHANNING
Lincoln, Mass.

We echo your sentiments on International and the green chairman day, Waldo. It was a good one-two punch.

"You guys are supposed to know everything about the greens and all that. I got a real stickler for you.

"I play on a munny course and the conditions of the greens are one of the freaks of the season. The greens on the front side are perfect, no bumps, true line and all that.

"The greens on the back side are putrid. And here we're are playing the same course and me writing about the same course, too. Since you guys know all the little things that decide whether or not the greens are going to be tip-top or putrid, I was wondering if you could give our man some advice to spruce up that back side. Thanks."

CHUCK CARUTHERS
(Address Withheld)

Chuck, "we guys" don't know everything. There must be a reason for the situation at your course. Maybe Mother Nature is involved here. "Your man" will straighten it out. Stick by him.

(And that's where we stick a final sentence to this session. Keep those cards and letters coming. You make this column what it is. You are in its driver's seat).

The nostalgic notion of turning the clock back to a simpler time may be appealing but is neither practical nor desirable.

We are not going to abandon the automobile, but we are going to have a clean-burning engine.

We are not going to give up electric lighting and modern industry, but we do expect cleanly produced electric power to run them.

We are not going to be able to do without containers for our foods and materials, but we can improve them and make them reusable or biodegradable.

We pledge a workable balance between a growing economy and environmental protection. We will resolve the conflicts sensibly within that framework.

We commit ourselves to comprehensive pollution control laws, vigorous implementation of those laws, and rigorous research into the technological problems of pollution control.

— Republican Platform

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