

# NEWSLETTER

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

JANUARY 1974



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

## IT'S NOT HOW BUT HOW MANY...GALLONS

The sports world... of which golf is an integral part... is looking at the energy crisis with added concern since it is a certainty any wholesale restrictions on the use of fuel will be felt hard by the games that men, women and children play.

The Motor Sports Marketing Corporation, obviously in an attempt to play down the role of auto racing as a fuel glutton, has prepared an interesting report on leisure time activities. It takes each sport and reviews its fuel consumption for the latest full season. And by some strange but legitimate turn of figures, auto racing turns out not to be the culprit many people label it.

The champion gulper happens to be football which should come as no shock because of its popularity. The tabulation of fuel burning takes in the three levels of the sport—professional, college and high school. And one side result is worth mentioning. In 1972, the total attendance at high school football games throughout the country was 299,740,000, almost 170 million higher than schoolboy basketball!

With the country club set wondering how any reduction in fuel allocation will affect it, there is a sprig of hope. It seems that golf is way down on the list of petroleum eaters and drinkers. Total consumption—based on servicing just over 10 million golfers—runs to 14,500,000 gallons. This is a drop in the bucket compared to some of the other games.

Football's total, for example, goes almost to the 600 million mark and is far and away the leader in burning petro. The next biggest user is basketball but its total is some 300 million gallons less than football.

It should be pointed out that spectator travel stands as the major determinant in the placing of the sports on a fuel consumption graph. This is why football is tagged as the largest gulper. Remember those near-300 million high school football viewers? Well, they accounted for a burning of 359,688,000 gallons of fuel. On the same breakdown some 60,000 high school night games used 15,987,200 gallons of fuel to light stadiums housing them.

For the record, this is how the sports studied lined up: Football, basketball, horse racing, motor racing, rodeos, bowling, major league baseball, professional wrestling and golf. It also is pertinent to note two discrepancies in the report. Major league baseball was treated separately as no figures on college and high school baseball were available. And... in the basketball grouping... there was no tabulation of team travel. This might have made some difference in the final standings since the NBA and ABA—basketball's professional loops—probably pull more travel time than the rest of the sports combined.

The report finders added some other figures to further emphasize the fact that sports in general were not the greatest users of fuel during the so called leisure time hours. That dubious honor was placed in the lap of vacation travel.

As a visible means of comparison, vacation travel fuel consumption figures appear incredible. People on the go used 5,416,140,827 gallons of petroleum last year... just a little short of five billion more gallons than football—the sports champion.

The intent of the report is honorable, not to mention being most timely. Restriction forces probably are at work right now. Sports are ready for them, too, and golf needn't hide its head in the sand when it comes time to battle for a fair share of petroleum.

Gerry Finn

## Next Meeting...

January 7, 1974

Holiday Inn, Newton, Mass.

Directors' Meeting ..... 10:45 A.M.  
Regular Meeting ..... 11:15 A.M.  
Luncheon ..... 12:15 P.M.  
Educational Program ..... 1:15 P.M.

# Golf Course Superintendents Association

## BEEFING UP THE BURDEN

While most people are writing off leisure time activities as the most likely victims of the current energy crisis, it becomes more apparent that the country club will take on a new dimension in responsibility and added burden in filling the recreational needs of the American family.

This all has to do with the limited form of gasoline rationing which the nation has incurred in an attempt to prevent the full scale regulated allocation of same. The ban on the sale of gasoline on Sundays certainly will hang heavy on the survival of certain so-called "non-essential" businesses like skiing and camping. But it will have a reverse effect on the country club.

If a family has been dividing its free weekends between the country club and other activities requiring use of the automobile in large portions of gasoline, it must reassess the schedule. Whatever the cutback in extensive travel, the leisure time that remains will be spent at the country club. After all, weekends are for fun and games.

Putting two and two together and assuming that most superintendents carry the burden of conditioning all the recreational facilities at the country club, his job will take him beyond the physical limits set by normal use of those facilities. In a word, his chores could be doubled and therefore he will be in search of additions to his labor force and other aids essential in his profession.

A few clubs . . . perhaps with some foresight the main form of initiative . . . are in the process of increasing the number of recreational outlets to their membership. Tennis courts are sprouting up, platform tennis stagings are rising, plans are in the works for staking out ski touring courses on the grounds. One club has even cleared brush and other obstacles for a cross country course.

In accepting the challenge of providing additional room and

service to its members, the country club will have to make some adjustments to keep in step with the financial and physical times. For one thing, budgets will have to be reviewed with an eye on increasing them so as to keep the club on solid fiscal ground.

Naturally, the member must be aware of this situation and be prepared to reassess the allocation of his recreational dollar. There probably will have to be an increase in dues or individual family assessments according to the facilities it uses. For example, in the heat of summer the club swimming pool will be overflowing. Trips to the beach, the weekend cottage and such will be things of the past. The added expense in upkeep on this one item could be staggering.

Even restrictions on playing time on the golf course are possible. At country clubs where play is heavy and condition of the course depends on an occasional respite, the situation might become acute. Seven-day golf courses grow tired of servicing the needs of thousands of golfers. In most cases, their plants will not be able to handle additional traffic.

As for the superintendent, his time allocation presents a problem. Does he spend more of it directing the upkeep of additional tennis courts. Does he hire more off-season help in order to keep the platform tennis courts free of ice and snow? Does he get along with what he has and share the burden of golf course conditioning with his green chairman or club president?

The energy crisis has slipped the country club a curve. Now is the time for the club to start taking its swings at the pitch. Next summer could be too late!

Gerry Finn

## New Hampshire Turf Seminar

January 17 and 18

SHERATON WAYFARER MOTOR INN  
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Registration Time 9:00 A.M.

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## SOUND OFF!!!!

(Here we go again. The reader is ready to let his views spill out and we are here to give him the opportunity. Sound Off is our special attraction, that space in the Newsletter reserved for opinions of, for and by our readership. There's nothing involved other than the planting of an eight-cent stamp on an envelope and watching it grow into inclusion here. Letters are welcome at Newsletter Mail Bag, 290 North Road, Sudbury, Mass. 01776. The Newsletter reserves the right to comment on all letters published.)

\* \* \*

"Now that I am not an official member of the Newsletter family I feel that I can let my hair down and contribute to this column without prejudicial waves being made. Incidentally, while I'm away from the intended subject, let me offer my congratulations to Tom Schofield and Roy MacIntosh who will be running the ship here for the next year or so. I'm sure they will be an asset to the publication.

"Back to the business at hand, I would like to offer a protest should any part of the Dickinson Scholarship Fund be used for anything other than what its contributors envisioned when they donated to this worthy cause. There has been some talk of transferring funds to a research project and I am writing to express my complete opposition to such attempt.

"Whatever the solution to taking advantage of tax laws, I feel we owe it to the fund and its subscribers to use its monies only for a scholarship purpose. Any other allocation of the monies would be in violation of the contributors' integrity."

LEON V. ST. PIERRE  
Longmeadow, Mass.

You have just lit the fuse under a smoldering subject, Leon. The membership should follow suit. We are inclined to agree with you. The Dickinson Fund is not a slush fund!

\* \* \*

"I'm writing to you about an old bugaboo which hits the super every now and then. I'm referring to the superintendent's puzzle on the use of golf carts.

"Personally, I have had my problems in the matter. First, my green chairman tells me I am the sole authority on when and under what conditions our golf carts can be used. Then, when I decide that carts will do more harm than good on certain days, it seems that a member of the board of governors or other official tries to overrule my decision.

"The whole mess has left me in the middle and without any come-back since my green chairman seems to waver according to the situation. If the president of the club wants to use a cart when I have ruled otherwise, I am told that carts are allowed. No one knows who has the final authority which I thought I had in the first place.

"Is this a national problem?"

NAME WITHHELD  
club withheld

Again, this is a problem of one's own making. A rule is a rule ...

in this case not something to be broken. You and your green chairman should clear the air once and for all ... and at the end of the agreement there should be noted, "and no exceptions!"

\* \* \*

"I think that there is a parallel between the present energy crisis and the present state of affairs in people trying to solve conditioning problems on a golf course. Where in the crisis there is a lack of energy, there seems to be an overabundance of ingredients in the attempt to solve the conditioning pains of the course.

"It seems to me many of the ailments of the golf course come because of over-feeding and over-watering. . . and, most of all, over-chemicalizing the turf. The superintendent has failed to adhere to common sense factors and succumbed to the theory that he can drown the plant injury with an excess of medicine. . . in the form of huge outlays of fertilizer and moisture.

"You people can do all the experimenting you want with the soil and its products. However, the one asset a super should seek is plain discipline in his treatment of turf and plant damage. To my way of thinking this is an over-reaction to a crisis of another sort--the assault of mother nature on her byproducts.

"Slow down, you guys, you're stuffing the soil out of existence."

P.J. STEMMINGS  
Haddam, Conn.

You may have a point, P.J. A little discipline never hurt anybody!

\* \* \*

"As I write this, it is December the 9th and there are still flags in the regular greens at my club. I consider this a rare opportunity for those of us in this part of the country. The overindulgent golfers at my club have been playing the game since the middle of last March to this very day.

"This has to have an effect on the conditioning process as planned by the golf course superintendent. In fact, I was appalled to hear that on a nearby course the super, himself, had to go out and cut greens for play three weeks deep into November. How can you people get ahead of the game under these astounding weather conditions?"

TERRY DRINKWATER  
Westfield, N.J.

We can't, Terry. It may sound unloyal to the golf cause but we actually pray for snow this time of year!

\* \* \*

(That wraps it up for this time. Remember, this is the place where you can pick up steam and blow it off at the same time. . . so keep those cards and letters coming.)

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