

# NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 1974



*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.

## Remember The Members

Someone mentioned recently that we here at the Newsletter are the natural enemy of the country club member. In all issues, 'tis said, we automatically line the members up against the wall and shoot them down with verbal dum-dum bullets.

This charge is ridiculous. Case in point: The current up-in-arms condition of the national club membership over the method of handicapping stroke holes on the scorecard. The popular means is to have a sectional or state golfing organization (the Massachusetts Golf Association, for example) rate the course by sending out representatives to play it. After the round, those heads get together and the handicap numbers are made ready for those old Nassau matches.

Somehow this method seems ridiculous. Why? Because the players who rate the golf course (this is only for handicapping stroke holes, not for overall par rating purposes) are not the players who play it every day. In other words, it's a one-shot deal. For the most part, too, that rating of each hole is based on speculation and past reputation. There is word making the rounds that the No. 5 hole at Deep Roots Country Club is that course's toughest. Thus, it usually winds up as the No. 1 stroke hole when it comes time to establishing the scorecard.

Certain country clubs have taken it upon themselves to set up a rating system of their own. They take the logical stand that handicap strokes should be determined on the basis of past performance of the hole... and a complete past performance is necessary in order to get a clearer picture of the situation.

The only way to obtain this picture is to collect scorecards of members and computerize the results on individual holes. This does take much time and effort. However, it is the only true story of each hole and the way it reacts to a golfer's ability on a day-to-day basis. The old rating system uses a one-round tour as the foundation. This is akin to ordering a steak, getting a bad piece of beef and vowing never to order steak again.

Invariably, scorecards tend to emphasize the par-fives when they zero in on the No. 1 handicap hole. This is an offshoot from the antiquated system of rating holes on the basis of length. Under such a silly arrangement, the par-fives (usually the easiest holes on the average course) draw the low handicap numbers and par-threes (often the most difficult holes, especially on courses of great overall length) are designated the high handicap holes.

One collection of member scores and computerization of same had a startling result. The No. 1 handicap hole, according to the card was the longest (507 yards) on the course. According to the play of members over a stretch of 2,500 rounds, this same hole turned out to be the No. 13 handicap hole. That's a spread of 12 shots between the old setup and the new.

Other examples proved the performance charts of members to outweigh the established handicap-stroke method by a wide margin. Differences in handicap figures ran anywhere from six to the above-mentioned 12. Only on rare occasion did the card rank turn out the same as the member rank, and this happened on par threes where the green was within spitting distance of the driving area.

What the members are getting at is obvious. They contend, and rightfully so, that in 90 percent of handicap stroke use they are involved. So, they should have at least 90 percent involvement i.e. the establishment of the handicap stroke system. And what better method is there other than to compile it from the results of member play?

The members have every right to demand a change here. We are behind them...not that 90 percent...but a full one hundred. They have a just cause, well worth fighting for.

Gerry Finn



## Next Meeting...

SUPER PRESS TOURNAMENT

September 9, 1974

Spring Valley Country Club

Shotgun Start 1:00 P.M.

Directions from Route 128. Take 95 south to Sharon, Walpole exit. Go left on Coney Street. 500 yards down Coney Street. Go left on Edgehill Road. Club is just down the street.

# Golf Course Superintendents Association

## Now, The Year 2001

Last month you were exposed to tramlines and the like. We talked of playing golf in robot-like fashion. We were very much aware of the automatic facets of conditioning...the trap raker who works upon the push of a button etc, etc, etc.

But certain factors were left for the imagination. Perhaps, we strayed too much beyond the projected future. We talked about breaks in the irrigation line and immediate repair. We foresaw the coming of the automatic tee-stop, a device which stops all first-tee action until it is feasible to envision a normal flow of traffic over the course.

There were probabilities forgotten. There were certainties left for the sooths. But the superintendent was not neglected. What was said was in his favor, in his best interests. But....

Failure was evident in the overall physical worth of the golf course. Never did we realize that in the year 2,001 the golf course would be a rare piece of property in the community. Lest we forget, land is a diminishing commodity among us. Golf courses are in that category where they challenge for reputation as another Vanishing American. The law of economics shadows the golf course. This is vital.

For instance, in the Year 2,001 the golf course could be regarded as one of nature's freaks. As the industrial giant continues his unchecked march across nature's stretch of wonder land, the golf course will become a rarity, a piece of serenity in itself.

So, where does this leave the golf course superintendent? After all, he is an environmentalist in his own right. By nature of his profession he fondles the wide open spaces and makes every effort to see that they are not abused and scarred for life.

The superintendent...50 years from now... will be of a different nature but not necessarily of a different breed. He will be a scientist, a man plunged into the very heart and soul of nature and her offspring. He will make his decisions off the results of experience and the past. He will not put his finger in the air and pray for rain!

Then, too, the superintendent will be a community leader. He will be the fact-finder and the determinant factor in the community's decisive moves toward preservation of open space or its demise. He will be a leader. His knowledge will be sought in all matters of this ilk.

Nature, too, will have a say in the 2,001 picture. The superintendent will be in action again. He has dealt with nature all these years and he will know how to deal with her in the future. The creed of the golf course super is simple, yet logical: He utilizes all the facets of nature while never attempting to control it.

Of course, automation will take an upswing in the year 2,001. The irrigation systems of that area are indescribable and unfathomable. They could turn a course around the corner in a matter of touching one or two dials. They could be the weapons of excellence for the superintendent who has learned to accept an automated world... even back here in 1974.

Even more important, with the passing of time and the introduction of the newer things in the business, the superintendent will have the opportunity to excel as he has never done before. His technical aids will advance with his own technical knowledge and his spirit will coincide with the potential of his mechanical helpers.

So, the year 2,001 has to be considered promising. It will herald a new era for golf and the superintendent. It will present a situation where no one will dare offer the expression, "remember when". It will guide golf to unscaled heights.

Gerry Finn

### August

### Tournament Results

Seniors Champ.	<b>PHIL CASSIDY</b>
Super Champ.	<b>BRIAN COWAN</b>
1st net	<b>MARK TAYLOR</b>
2nd net	<b>BRUCE PETRELLI</b>
3rd net	<b>DAVE BARBER</b>



### Congratulations to

**ERIC H. BROWN**  
**RONALD E. HANSON**  
**ALLEN DEBLASIO**  
**MICHAEL J. HERMANJON**  
 Voted in as Associate Members

### Special Welcome to

**DR. ELIOT C. ROBERTS**  
**DR. RICHARD SKEGLEY**  
 Voted in as Honorary Members

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# SOUND OFF

*(Here we go again. The reader thinks he's right and writes about it. And this is where he makes contact with the public. Sound Off is all for golfers and those interested in the game in any manner, shape or form. The ground rules are simple. All letters should be as brief as possible and accompanied by the name and address of the author. They should be sent to Newsletter Mail Bag, 290 North Road, Sudbury, Mass. 01776. The Newsletter reserves the right to comment on all letters published.)*

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"I have discovered something that you superintendents surely will be interested in and probably thank me for the tip.

"There are on the market special tees which are made of fertilizing material. The idea is to tee up your ball, give it a swat and the resulting explosion spreads fertilizer on the teeing area.

"The thought that I'm trying to groom the course while I'm playing is a pleasant one to me, since I am one of those players who takes a big divot with irons. The fertilizer tees may be a gimmick to some but I really think they have merit.

"Would it be possible for superintendents to include the purchase of these tees in their budgets and make them available to members on those areas where the grass takes a bad beating? I would think it would save you money in the end because this would eliminate any and all of tee grounds fertilizing. What do you think?"

Jerome Benton  
Kingsford, Me.

**No sale here, Jerry. The teeing area would look like it had chicken pox after those fertilizing jobs. There is no uniformity here. And, yes, the tees are a gimmick!**

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"The daily trips to my golf course have always been pleasurable for me, except the days when I know that the cups in the green are going to be reset.

"I find that whoever is doing the job is creating an uphill putt for me at the moment the ball reaches the cup. This is very exasperating for a putter of my quality and experience. I use a stroke that allows the ball only that amount of time to reach the hole and 'die'.

"When the new cup positions are in, I find my scores going up and my wallet being thinned out because of nassau losses. Isn't there some way that the cups could be set so that the putt will become downhill at the moment it reaches the opening?"

Perry Bosworth  
Blandford, Mass.

**How would you like us to put a funnel where the cup is, Perry. That way you'll never miss a putt!**

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"I'm just dropping you a line to give notice that I think the overall condition of the golf courses in the Northeast is as good as I've seen in a long time.

"There has to be a reason for it. Of course, I know you fellows

are always the fall guys when a course comes apart with damage to the greens and other areas. I follow this up, then, with the proposal that you should be patted on the back when the greens come up nice and smooth and those fairway lies are like a crew-cut haircut.

"Too often we don't give credit where credit is due. And too often we are too quick to criticize when the criticism has no basis. I just hope other golfers remember how the summer of 1974 was for golfers if and when (and I pray it never happens again . . . but I'm afraid it will) conditions are not up to expected par."

James Baldwin  
Turners Falls, Mass.

**Thanks for the plug, Jim. Weather conditions have helped us this golfing season. We're just hoping to get by the high humidity, high temperature days. They can make or break a course . . . and its super.**

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"The golf-tennis craze has me climbing up a tree. I can't believe that so many people are giving up trips to the beaches and other summer sports to indulge themselves in the mental-tugging games of golf and tennis.

"I remember when the first signs of the energy crisis were made known to the general public. One of the eye-opening effects of a no-gasoline summer was the possibility that people would not be able to trek to the shore and other recreational areas to take advantage of the vacation time they work for all year.

"Now I see that most local resorts are in full swing. And the action closer to home is busier than ever. What I'm trying to say is that people, who ordinarily went to the mountains or the shore for their summer vacation, are now staying closer to home and the country club. This means that they are relaxing on the home grounds (the golf course) instead of far-away-places where the grass supposedly is greener.

"What I am concerned about is the condition of our courses, now that the letdown in play of the past no longer is evident what with the typical country club member spending more time on his home course. Is there not a reason to think that the courses and tennis courts won't become overpopulated and, therefore, become possibilities for poor grooming because of the saturated circumstances?"

"At one time all of us were led to believe that the golf course, the private one, would be the answer to the free-space man's prayer. But the situation has changed. Right now I think the golf and tennis course are man's prime answer to his recreational wants. Maybe we need more golf courses to meet such a demand."

Whitney John  
Portland, Conn.

**Your observation is on the ball, Whit. The golf course is the answer to the energy crisis. It never has been busier.**

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*(So ends another Sound Off session. The topics have been right on the button. Our readers know what they're writing about.)*

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\* Contributors to the Lawrence S. Dickinson Scholarship Fund

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