



DECEMBER, 1979



Golf Course Superintendents Association

OF NEW ENGLAND, INC.

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Swing Toward Sophistication

During a recent gathering of golf course superintendents and their friends, the subject of sophistication surfaced...more specifically the swing toward sophistication in the profession.

A green chairman, identified only as a member of "one of the area's more affluent clubs," triggered things when asked about a touchy situation - the firing of a veteran superintendent and the hiring of a younger and less field-experienced replacement. The chairman's explanation was quick and without fear of puncturing personalities.

"We had no fault with the know-how or the loyalty of the older fellow," he said. "But he was living in the dark ages of his profession. He didn't pay attention to his book work, he didn't know how or refused to delegate authority and he had no inkling of how to handle his labor force. We thought the job was simply too diversified for him."

And of the younger replacement? "He was assertive from the start," came the reply. "He arrived with a lot of confidence and the ability to get a clockwork plan of maintenance and improvements without disrupting the routine of his workers. And he did all this without getting a single finger dirty."

That last remark was a telling blow to many of the seasoned supers in this particular conversational circle...a telling and perhaps cruel blow.

What Mr. Chairman was trying to say, in a blunt way, was that his club required little or no physical work from its new superintendent. "We want him to come to work with a shirt and tie," he disclosed. "We also want him to come into the clubhouse and have lunch or dinner. We want him to be around when many of our members are there."

This sounds like the on-job habits of a golf professional rather than a superintendent.

"That's it," the chairman continued. "I think the image of the superintendent has reached that stage when he has to start acting and being treated like an executive. This is the approach we've taken at our club. And we're 100 percent satisfied with the results. Needless to say, the course is beautiful. But, in addition, the rapport between superintendent and members has never been better."

This poses a collective question for the rest of the superintendents who have to be wondering if they are going about their personal job in a manner indicative of their position.

Most definitely, the world of the golf course superintendent is changing...whether he likes it or not.

"Funny thing," our outspoken chairman remarked. "If you took a poll of the leading country clubs, I believe you'd find they are in complete agreement with our theory on what kind of superintendent is best for their needs and what kind of philosophy they should practice in regard to the way that superintendent does his job."

There is no argument in the assumption that the administrative duties of the superintendent have tripled in the last 10 years. No longer is he simply responsible for making

the grass green and putting a spit and polish on the course. With the expanding of recreational facilities at the country club and the increased demand on the superintendent's business and technical expertise, his job has become one engulfed in administrative chores instead of one laced with them.

Probably this new and curious form of respect for and extension of authority to the superintendent is inspired by the continuing surge of recognition he is enjoying. Club members have come to a justifiable awareness of the importance of the position and are gradually reacting to it through degrees of sophistication.

Obviously, every superintendent is not provided the luxury of enough help so that he can direct his daily operation from an ivory tower. However, the trend toward lightening his physical load and leaning more on his technical and practical expertise is showing up in more than one country club.

Whether there is a lesson to be learned from the experience of one superintendent losing his job because he turns his back on the subtleties of his duties is something the reader has to conclude for himself. And if this streamlining of the position comes up distasteful to certain club presidents and the like, again it falls into the category of personal prerogative.

Regardless, it is interesting to see such a different approach to the superintendent by one country club unwind. It could be isolated or at a point where it's about to become widespread. It does have to make you think...of the present and the future. It is, at least, stimulating and worthy of disclosure.

Gerry Finn

Next meeting Dec. 3, 1979 Franklin C.C.

Directors Meeting	10:00 a.m.
Regular Meeting	11:00 a.m.
Lunch	12:00 Noon

Don't Forget Christmas Party Dec. 7, 1979

Directions - Take exit 57 from 128 - Head towards Needham. Take 4th left. Green St. club is on right.

Selling of the Super

Come winter and the golf course superintendent often has time on his hands. Let's face it. There's no one at the maintenance building door looking for the go-ahead to play on a hairy weather day or seeking justification for a 5/16th cut on the greens. In a word, the time of year is not pressing.

So, why not take a course in salesmanship?

That's right, the time is ripe for the superintendent to invest a few dollars in his continuing education. And from the looks of his expanding world, some brush-up work on his sales pitch looms as the superintendent's most logical move.

Did you ever think of yourself as a salesman?

If not, consider this. The superintendent has to sell himself to his green committee and the rest of the membership as an expert in his field and a most integral part of the club's operation. He must sell his budget to his chairman, and - obviously - he must have some knowledge of salesmanship when he is approached by those people who provide him with the equipment and material for his maintenance program.

The budget situation could be the most vital in this need for a grasp of the sales' methods many of the super's members have familiarized themselves within their own professional pursuits.

How many superintendents walk into a budget meeting and find themselves being cut down to shocking size because they have no idea of what approach to take in getting what they need?

Preparation, in the form of a salesmanship course, can work wonders for the super. Armed with such knowledge, the superintendent finds himself on common ground with his committee members. Most of them either own businesses which are backboned by sales or have started out in their professions as salesmen. Thus, the sales knowledge-enforced super knows what to expect from those who would slice his budget into smithereens and how to counteract them. Now, he can play them at their own game and not be leery of breaking any rules.

Of course, familiarity with sales methods can be helpful to the superintendent in his dealings with those trying to apply the pitch to him. The axiom here is that the toughest person in the world to sell something to is a salesman.

Some of the spinoffs of a sales course serve as job aids in many areas of the superintendent's field.

The course is a confidence builder in that it encourages participation in one on one classroom exercises. Under these conditions, the super learns how to present his product without the strain of tentative speech or negative outlook. This could prove to be a shot in the arm around the course where the superintendent is continually quizzed by members on certain aspects of course maintenance and layout changes.

Most sales courses also make the student aware of the many forms of gimmickery employed as inducements to buy a product. This knowledge prevents a lot of embarrassment and perhaps testy reactions to those so-called "once-a-year" salesmen who come on strong with wordy presentations and fabricated endorsements in order to make a quick kill. Classroom exposure to these types can save a lot of headaches.

The appealing aside to this educational endeavor is that most courses are presented in short takes so that the superintendent can spend only a couple of hours a week for three or four weeks and come away with a pretty fair touch for the subject.

Because the venture is related to the superintendent's administrative duties at the club, many employers are willing to absorb the cost of such a course. Several supers report, too, that the GI Bill can be used in states which recognize the need for the super to have a solid understanding of salesmanship.

Whatever the route there, the fee is minimal and should not be considered a factor or determinant in the superintendent's decision to take advantage of the offering. What counts most is that the course often is presented by business leaders of the particular community and the knowledge gained through participation is guaranteed to be of some help in one walk or another in the super's professional life.

So, leave the hibernation of winter to the bears. Salesmanship is closely related to virtually every aspect of a golf course superintendent's association with his superiors and his peers. It should not be ignored or looked upon as another added chore. It could buy a rosy future for that next budget battle or encounter with peddlers of an obnoxious kind.

Gerry Finn

Tournament Results Brae Burn Pro-Supt.

Net

Wayne Zoppo - Agawam	63
Norm Mucciaroni - Woodland	64
Don Hearn - Weston	66
Chuck Lone - Framingham	67

Gross

Brian Cowan - Eastward Ho	68
Mel O'Kelly - Marshfield	72
Ted Ellis - Wanvmetonomy	73
Ken Mooradian - Hopedale	73

Whitinsville

Net

Paul Miller - 67	Wayne Zoppo - 70
Joe Rybka - 68	Paul Murphy - 72

Gross

Mel O'Kelly - 78	Ken Mooradian - 84
Jim Damian - 82	Pete Coste - 84
Len Blodgett - 84	

Nominating Committee for 1980

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Robert Grant	Larry Bunn
Anthony Caranci	

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Some Ideas About Roots

By Dr. W. H. Daniel
Purdue University

Roots - Turfwise

Our historical roots, as a family and individuals, have recently received special attention. However, the roots of concern in turf are those little white stringy things that supposedly are below the grass you see on the surface.

First, what is a root? Roots are initiated at the nodes occurring along stems. These may be concentrated in a crown or spread along a stolon. Portions of mature roots are mainly conductive tissue plus providing some storage of nutrients, especially starches.

The working part of any root is the soft adsorptive root tip and the root hairs near it. This is where the payload of water and elements are adsorbed for transfer to the crown, stems, and leaves known as the turf cover. And, woe is the plant which had lost its root tips! So, a living root is that plant tissue joined to the node and extending to and including a root cap. Although some branching is normal, when individual root tips die, the older root parts seldom initiate new root tips. Physiologically the plant's response is to initiate a new root at the node and just start again (provided extra energy is available and time is allowed). In other words, the energy path is to start a new root, which has least transfer distance for nutrients. So, keeping root tips alive and active is the first challenge of turf managers.

Bud Esterline at Muncie one time said, "Bill, on Monday I cut the cups and could see roots above five inches deep. It was dry, so Monday evening we made a big effort to water the greens real good. Tuesday morning early it rained and it was so cloudy and wet that we couldn't mow Tuesday. Although still raining, we finally mowed a little Wednesday afternoon, and the rain just set in there. Brown patch began to show. We finally got our greens mowed on Friday, and on Saturday the weather cleared up and all I had for roots were a few black strings! I lost my complete root system between Monday night and Saturday morning." Now what? Bud knew he had to lightly water those greens, to watch for wet wilt, to keep the leaves moist enough so they wouldn't wilt until new roots would generate. If he could get by for about seven days he'd have some new roots growing, and later some good roots working again, and back to normal. Five days of wet weather cost Bud his root system, and then it took him ten days to get partial replacement.

Where are the roots? Would you believe 90 percent of root length is in the upper two inches or 5 cm.

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Roots have been found over 100 inches long under Bermuda in California tests. However, roots of three feet for fescue and zoysia, 2 feet for bluegrass and bentgrass would be considered quite long. When trenches are made across roughs or tall grass areas the long root extension in the soil profile is usually impressive.

Roots are plant membranes. "Here, you root; do this! Absorb (take in) 5000 pounds of water plus one pound of elements the plant must have. By the way, **keep out the excessive and avoid the unneeded.** Meanwhile, let's hope nematodes make no holes, and rhizoctonia doesn't infect. And, while you're constantly expanding, we'll try to keep the leaves healthy, the mower sharp, the wear distributed, the drought averted, and we'll try to avoid scalping or other turf stress." After all, the top must send energy clear down to the root tip. When energy is short the number of root hairs diminishes, the diameter reduces, and the root initiation slows.

Roots are powerful adsorbers. Before the plant wilts roots will take water from soils down to 13.6 atmosphere, a pF of 4.5 or tension equivalent to 14 meters of water. The wise turf manager has every reason to utilize the reservoir of moisture within a rootzone between irrigations. In other words, it is foolish to ignore the rootzone moisture storage potential when managing the turf.

What is water-air balance for roots? Incidentally, that root tip must have some oxygen as it works. Waterlogged soils are hard on roots. Being waterlogged for more than 24 hours under stress weather is a cause for concern. Most turf managers have seen roots growing over the surface of the ground in an attempt to be where there is air. Roots may be deep or shallow just in response to air supply. We've seen roots grow in water when air is added, but remember, oxygen travels through water 1000 times faster than through wet compacted soils.

Roots are strong! When roots are numerous their combined strength is in athletic field, tees and traffic areas. New roots in new soils always look good. A measure of success is to have sufficient roots to hold the soil mass for their entire depth of penetration when held by the surface sod.

Research on rooting of sods has been conducted to determine resistance to an upward pull after one month of growth.

What would you do to favor roots?

1. Increase oxygen in rootzone
2. Avoid any overwatering or continued wetness
3. Vertically core, spike, slit open rootzone surface
4. Topdress to raise cutting height
5. Topdress to minimize surface compaction and effect of thatch
6. Increase leaf surface
7. Avoid or spread wear
8. Avoid disease or turf weakening
9. Lower the temperature - cooling when possible
10. Reduce shade or competition
11. Fertilize - low to medium nitrogen
12. Provide ample potassium and minor elements. Turf managers and their crews can't make a root! You can help; let the plants make them. You can kill the root or slow it down.

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**Contributors to the Lawrence S. Dickinson
Scholarship Fund*

NEWSLETTER

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