

NEWSLETTER

March, 1980



Golf Course Superintendents Association
OF NEW ENGLAND, INC.

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Lingering on the Links

They moved New England to the Carolinas...at least for the first two months of winter as Mother Nature got her signals mixed and sent in sun instead of snow to the usually socked-in section.

"This is just about the same weather they get in Pinehurst," one avid golfer exclaimed as he took a January stroll around his favorite links. "In fact, I've been to Pinehurst just after Christmas and got snowed out. This is just great."

So, while ski resort owners were about to tear their hair out in cursing the lack of snow, certain golf course owners had dollar-sign smiles on their faces.

One owner realized a windfall in the unexpected extension of summer. "We were really jammed with golfers between the first of December and the middle of January," Ted Perez of the East Mountain Country Club disclosed. "I was getting ready to take out a bank loan to get me over the winter expense hump. But we've had so much play that I don't need it. To people like me, this has been a blessing. But I feel sorry for the ski operators, too. It would be just like me getting rain every weekend in the middle of summer. I'd get killed!"

Actually, the playable golf weather of winter did nothing financially for a course unless it was a public layout whose revenue depends largely on green fees. Perez operates such a course, so he took advantage of the situation by avoiding a big bank loan interest bite.

The weather turnaround had little effect on golf course superintendents at most private clubs. There, the regular rule of playing on temporary greens in winter held force. In places, where regular greens remained open, the super was crossing his fingers and keeping them there until an appreciable snowfall.

Doug Stachura, who recently took over as superintendent

at the Springfield Country Club, paid little attention to the fact that golfers were turning into a December-January cult.

"We don't have that many members who are serious about playing golf when the temperature is just over 40," he told. "As far as I can see, the only reason people are out on the course is just to be able to say that they played golf in January. Otherwise, with the frost-defrost process going on, our course is very muddy and uncomfortable. But I have the temporary greens there if members want to play."

This seemed to be the popular superintendent reaction in those sections of New England which ordinarily are thinking more than snow and probably shovelling it when the calendar is zeroed into the dead of winter.

Strangely, some courses were wishing for snow...almost as much as the snow-starved ski resorts. With the influx of the trend to provide year-round recreational activity for their members, certain clubs had envisioned profitable cross country ski seasons while their golf courses slept.

"I have \$10,000 worth of skis that are still in the box," reported Tony Strycharz who owns the semi-private Oak Ridge Country Club. "In fact, I bought them last year. We never did get enough snow for cross country skiing then, even though there was just enough to keep the golfers from playing."

Strycharz, who said he wasn't turning enough full green fees to make prolonged summer worthwhile, would just as soon see it snow.

"For a couple of reasons," he explained. "I know just enough about golf course conditioning to realize that we need a good snow cover before we get severe freeze-ups and coatings of ice on the turf. My super has to live with this thing...long after winter finally arrives. I can appreciate golfers getting a bonus, but in the long run it won't be worth it."

Longmeadow Country Club veteran superintendent Leon St. Pierre wasn't too excited about looking out his maintenance building window and seeing green and brown instead of white.

"I know we haven't had snow yet," he remarked. "But I don't see where it's any fun playing golf when the temperature's around 40. We have a few diehards here and we accommodate them with temporary greens. There's no flocking to the course. After all, there's a time and place for everything and our members live by that rule."

Some of the winter golf tales already were taking hold. At the Suffield Country Club, where no one is around to check member identity or collect green fees, an amusing incident occurred. One golfer was complaining about slow play on the nine-hole layout. "Funny thing," a Suffield regular noted. "The guy was a stranger. He wasn't a member and he hadn't paid a green fee. That's rich."

That's golf in January...in New England, yet.

Gerry Finn

NEXT MEETINGS

April - New Seabury

May - Westover

June - Cohasset

July - Mt. Pleasant
(Boylston)

No meeting in March.

Be sure to attend

Mass. Turf Conference

March 4, 5 and 6.

See details inside newsletter.

USGA Makes its Rules Mark

Every now and then the United States Golf Association (USGA) takes a look at the rules of the game and makes fitting alterations. Usually, one rule change comes about so as to make it consistent with the definition found in another rule...sort of the left hand knowing what the right hand is doing.

The governing body of golf has made a couple of changes in the Rules of Golf for 1980 which should be noted by the golf course superintendent. In fact, there is one that could result in making his job a little easier--if that is possible.

Anyway, the superintendent should be aware that the definition of "ground under repair" has been amended to provide that stakes and lines defining such area are considered part of the area.

In other words, the superintendent should take into consideration the plight of the golfer landing in or near "ground under repair." If the stakes or lines are placed within the confines of the affected area, the golfer receives legal relief. However, if they are set in places so as to question the true "repair" area, the golfer is allowed relief not in the true spirit of the game.

A note to the superintendent, regarding this rule, also should be helpful in staking out the golf course. "Ground under repair" includes material piled for removal and any holes made by a superintendent or course worker...that is, in addition to the normal conditioning or improving factors which made an area unplayable in the first place.

Both superintendent and golfer should be aware of another aspect of the "ground under repair" protection. Although it is generally assumed that grass cuttings and other materials left on the course come under the "relief" clause, they do not...unless they are marked as "ground under repair." This is particularly essential in tournament play setup where arguments could arise in situations where clear markings have not been made.

Another change in definition pertains to hazards. Again, under the new standard, all stakes and lines defining hazards are now considered to be part of the hazard. This should eliminate any question as to a ball being within or outside the hazard should it lie in line with the markers.

In the same rule, superintendents also are reminded that specific colors have been recommended by the USGA to be used in painting hazard markers and lines. This is to avoid confusion and bring some consistency into marking throughout the country.

Perhaps the most important change in the 1980 rules, one which the superintendent surely will support is a broadening of Rule 35-1c--Damage to the Putting Green.

The rule has been expanded to permit the player to repair old ball marks or hole plugs as well as damage caused by the impact of his own shot. Of course, this will take some of the element of luck out of putting in that it assures the player of not having to roll his ball through someone else's ball mark or other damaging residue.

More vital to the superintendent is the fact that the rule change invites the player to do something more than just repair his own impact mark. It should encourage the player

to tidy up the green after others have played it.

Ball marks have been a particular source of conditioning headache to the superintendent ever since the start of golf. Marks, left unrepaired, leave scars that often take months to grow over. In fact, the country club member has been taken to task--almost to the point of being threatened by fine or suspension--for ignoring the unwritten law that he repair his ball mark.

One other minor change should interest the superintendent, even though it comes under the heading of common sense recovery. Regardless, there always lives the golfer who doesn't practice common sense and often makes others suffer because of it.

This change involves re-dropping the golf ball. In rare instances, re-dropping could find the ball coming to rest on a green other than the immediate goal of the golfer. The rule now states that the ball must be re-dropped, if it does wind up on the green. This eliminates, of course, the lightweight who might think that he is required to play the re-drop wherever it lands.

So, the rules have been arranged to give the superintendent some aid and comfort. Intended or not, the ball mark repair change certainly will help in keeping the putting surface from resembling a battlefield. And, for that, the superintendent applauds the USGA.

Gerry Finn



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To be voted on next month
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**University of Massachusetts
Turf Conference and Industrial Show
March 4, 5, and 6, 1980
Civic Center, Springfield, Massachusetts
(I-91 Exit 6 from South / Columbus Avenue Exit from North)**

REGISTRATION

Lobby - Plaza Entrance
8:30 AM - 4:00 PM Tuesday, March 4, 1980
8:00 AM - 4:00 PM Wednesday, March 5, 1980

TUESDAY, MARCH 4

-Morning-

9:00 AM - 12:45 PM Industrial Show Open
Exhibition Hall
Snack Bar Available

-Afternoon-
GENERAL SESSION
Banquet Room

Chairman: Dr. Joseph Troil
University of Massachusetts

- 1:00 WELCOME
-Dr. James B. Kring, Acting Dean
College of Food and Natural Resources
University of Massachusetts
- 1:15 EFFECTIVE LISTENING: DEVELOPING YOUR EAR-Q
-Dr. Lyman Steil
Communications Cons. Association
St. Paul, MN
- 2:45 BREAK
- 3:00 MAINTENANCE AT THE GOLDEN HORSESHOE COUNTRY CLUB
-Mr. David C. Harmon
Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Golf Course
Williamsburg, VA
- 3:45 12,000 YEARS OF FOREST HISTORY IN NEW ENGLAND
-Dr. Robinson J. Hindle
University of Rhode Island
Kingston, RI

4:30 - 6:30 Industrial Show Open
Exhibition Hall
Cocktails Available

4:45 ANNUAL MEETING
-Massachusetts Turf and Lawn Grass Council
Banquet Hall

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 5

GOLF COURSE SESSION
Banquet Room

Chairman: Prof. John M. Zak
University of Massachusetts

-Morning-

- 9:00 FAIRWAY RENOVATION
-Mr. David Portz
Brookside Country Club
Allentown, PA
- 9:30 ROOT PRUNING AROUND GREENS
-Mr. Larry Bunn
R. F. Morse and Co.
Wareham, MA
- 10:00 TREES, AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE GOLF COURSE SCENE
-Mr. James Snow, Agronomist
USGA Green Section
Far Hills, NJ
- 10:30 COMMUNICATION - IN ORBIT!
-Mr. Francis Callagher
Wilmington, DE

11:00 - 2:00 Industrial Show Open

-Afternoon-

- 2:00 FINE POINTS OF UNION CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS
-Mr. Edward Horton, CGCS
Westchester Country Club
Rye, NY
- 2:45 IMPLEMENTING LONG RANGE PLANNING
-Mr. Stephen G. Cadenelli, CGCS
The Country Club of New Canaan
New Canaan, CT
- 3:15 PERENNIAL RYEGRASS: A CULTURAL PRACTICE ON NEW ENGLAND GOLF COURSES
-Dr. Kirk Hurto
University of Massachusetts
- 3:45 BENTGRASSES
-Dr. Joseph Hinch
Pennsylvania State University
University Park, PA

4:30 - 6:30 Industrial Show Open

-Evening-

7:00 BANQUET AND WINTER SCHOOL GRADUATION
Banquet Room
THE LIGHTER SIDE
-Dr. John Denison, Director - Stockbridge School
University of Massachusetts

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 5

ALTERNATE SESSION
College Room

Chairman - Mr. Charles Mruk
Boots Hercules Agrochemicals Co.
Providence, RI

-Morning-

- 9:00 TURFGRASS CULTIVARS AND SEED
-Mr. Eugene W. Mayer
O. M. Scott and Sons
Marysville, OH
- 9:45 LAWN BROWN SPOTS - DISEASE, STRESS OR INSECTS?
-Dr. James Fenstermacher
ChemLawn Corp.
Wickford, RI
- 10:30 LANDSCAPE DEVELOPMENT IN LARGE RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITIES
-Mr. W. Chuck Wilson, Manager
Landscape Service
Leisure Technology Corp.
Los Angeles, CA

11:00 - 2:00 Industrial Show Open

-Afternoon-

- 2:00 MAINTENANCE PRACTICES AT HERSHEY GARDENS
-Mr. William Bowman, General Manager
 Hershey Gardens
 Hershey, PA
- 2:45 PAINTING ATHLETIC FIELDS FOR SPECIAL EVENTS
-Mr. George P. Toma, Stadium Supt.
Kansas City Royals Baseball Club
Kansas City, MO
- 3:30 RIDING ALONG THE NEW JERSEY TURNPIKE
-Mr. David Grimm
New Jersey Turnpike Commission
Hightstown, NJ

4:30 - 6:30 Industrial Show Open

THURSDAY, MARCH 6

8:30 - 10:00 AM Industrial Show Open

GOLF COURSE SESSION
Banquet Room

Chairman - Dr. Kirk Hurto
University of Massachusetts

- 10:00 EFFECTS OF PHOSPHATE PLACEMENT ON ESTABLISHMENT OF ANNUAL
BLUEGRASS AND PENNCROSS CREEPING BENTGRASS
-Prof. John M. Zak
University of Massachusetts
- 10:20 RESEARCH AND OBSERVATIONS ON WATERING AND FERTILIZATION FOR
BENTGRASS SURVIVAL
-Dr. Ralph E. Engel
Rutgers University
New Brunswick, NJ
- 11:00 DISEASE IS ABSOLUTE - HEALTH IS RELATIVE
-Dr. Houston B. Couch
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
Blacksburg, VA
- 11:45 LESSONS FROM 1979 - APPLICATIONS IN 1980
-Dr. Stanley J. Zontek, Northeastern Director
USGA Green Section
Far Hills, NJ

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