

NEWSLETTER

December 1983



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.

That 'Silva' Lining's in Sight

No one will ever accuse Brian Silva of being a shrinking violet.

Let's see now. Wasn't it a nine-year-old Brian Silva who told noted golf course architect Geoffrey Cornish, "one of your greens is wrong?"

Silva fessed up to that one recently when trying to recall his first meeting with the man with whom he's formed a partnership. Yes siree, That's Cornish and Silva, Inc. painted onto the shingle of one of the game's most respected and renowned golf course design teams.

Brian Silva is worth a line or two for his presence, alone. He has been close to the golf course superintendent's profession, taught at two different turf schools, served the United States Golf Association as an agronomist and just plain loves to talk golf.

The 30-year-old Silva is right at the top of his dreams.

"I always wanted to get into golf course design," he disclosed. "My father (John Silva) built several courses. I've been around outstanding architects in my travels with the USGA. And I feel I have something to contribute to the game."

Silva knows what the game is all about from just about every angle.

He got his start, working for Norm Mucciarone at Woodland and for a while thought he might be tempted to go full time as a super. However, he drifted to the University of Massachusetts where he made his mark and piled up degrees as a student of turf and landscape design.

After stuffing himself with knowledge, the Framingham native went into the big, wide world to apply it. He taught for two years at Stockbridge, did the same for three years at Lake City Community College in Florida and then left teaching for a post with the USGA.

"I really enjoyed working that job," he told. "I had a chance to meet a lot of giants of the game and observe them at work. But my most memorable experiences came covering the New England courses. It was exciting, especially being part of the U.S. Amateur Championship last year at The Country Club."

Actually, Brian and Cornish came together in a unique way. Obviously, it wasn't staged.

"I was walking up the ninth fairway of the Springfield Country Club with Geoff when he shot something out of the blue," Silva recalled. "He just said, 'Brian, it's about time you got involved in golf course design.' When he asked how I felt about going into business together, I was stunned. And it's worked out real well."

Silva has been a busy young man as an associate of a golf course architect whose work is recognized around the world. It's virtually an around-the-clock involvement but Brian feels it's a learning experience beyond his wildest dreams.

Brian has no revolutionary ideas of his own but does admire the designs of such controversial monster-makers as Pete Dye and Jack Nicklaus.

"The things that Pete and Jack do are spectacular," he remarked. "They want to get inside Golf Digest or create something that brings a big tournament there or helps to sell real estate. In the end, it comes down to what the client wants."

Brian doesn't believe there is anything purely innovative about modern golf course architecture other than the ability of the designer to form a perfect blend of the old and new.

"Most of the courses nowadays - except for those big, man-eating layouts - constitute an attempt to gain the middle ground between the old Scottish type links and the traditional American type. However, there is an art and feeling for it. I just follow Geoff around and I can appreciate that fact."

Silva also emphasizes the consideration given maintenance in the setup of new courses. "There has been a concentration on enhancing the playing conditions in the last few years," he said. "It's all made with the superintendent in mind. Most clubs are coming to the point where playing conditions dictate their future. The needs of the golfer are paramount. Consequently, the needs of the superintendent follow suit."

Although he admits he's a rookie in the field of design, Brian has meaningful contributions in his immediate sights. "I have some ideas that I think will have an impact on golf," he told. "But I'm still in the learning process and they can wait for now. Whatever, I couldn't be happier at what I'm doing."

What the golf course superintendent's profession lost, the field of golf course design has gained. Brian Silva's name on a blueprint looks pretty impressive from here. Watch for it.

Gerry Finn

Next Meeting

December 5, 1983
Franklin Country Club
Franklin, Ma.

Directors Meeting - 10:30 am
Lunch - 12 noon
Membership Meeting - following
Lunch

Host - Gary Luccini

DIRECTIONS - From Rt. 495 take King St. exit in Franklin. Heads towards Franklin to Rt. 140 at light. Take a right on 140, Club will be on right approx. 1 mile.

Spiked Shoes Lose Shine

A couple of months back, golf course superintendents were weighing the effects of the latest, revolutionary product to hit the pro shop - the spikeless golf shoe. At the time, little did they know that the most damaging type of footwear had been staring them in the face - lo these many years.

Spikeless, of course, is only a matter of relativity in the true meaning of the term. There are three kinds of the species:

1. Composition sole with approximately 108 short, blunt studs which produce a medium surface contact area.
2. Composition sole with the same number and size of studs which produce a medium surface contact area.
3. Composition sole with 750, tiny round, hollow rubber cups which make for a high surface contact. Then, there is:
4. Conventional spiked with 11 or 12 per shoe and protruding shoulders influencing a low surface contact area.

Recently, the United States Golf Association conducted a series of tests in an attempt to discover the perfect golf shoe in regard to reducing the margin of physical error on greens for putting and minimizing damage to turf. It's still out there somewhere.

Strangely, the spikeless variety tested out more favorably than the full-spiked version on all counts.

Golfers, taking part in the experiment, found that spiked shoes left the line of their putts in a sad state which played havoc with their accuracy.

Furthermore, the spiked brogans were the most damaging of all tested. They also caused the most lasting damage with signs of it noticeable four weeks after its first stages.

Shoes Nos. 1 and 2 were superior to the spiked ones in both aspects. However, they, too, inflicted damage and caused a larger area of compaction than the spike shoes.

The champion was the No. 3 shoe. Since its protruding studs area almost impossible to detect, the design creates a virtually smooth area of contact with the putting surface.

The USGA, then, has submitted proof contrary to the original reaction of certain superintendents who were so dismayed with the spikeless shoe they suggested banning it from their courses.

In the same report, the USGA didn't go as far as a straight-out endorsement of the hollow cup shoes (No. 3). But its findings have to suggest that the old fashioned, long-spiked product could become an endangered species, cies.

In emphasizing the effects of the damage wrought by the conventional golf shoe, the USGA Journal recalled a study conducted by the Green Committee of the Irvine Country Club in Newport Beach, California. The comments are interesting and worth repeating:

"The average golf shoe has 12 spikes or 24 spikes per golfer. We have found that golfers take an average of 26 full steps or 52 paces per green. Therefore, each golfer leaves 624 spike marks on each green.

"On 18 greens, he leaves 11,232 spike marks. If 200 rounds of golf are played during a day, 2,246,400 spike marks are left behind. If the goes on for 30 days, you have 67,392,000 spike marks per month. And you wonder why you can't hole a putt?"

Never mind that, with that accumulation of wounds to a precious part of the golfing real estate, one has to wonder how the golf course superintendent faces up to the task of keeping his greens from transforming into a washboard overnight!

So, going spikeless may not be so bad after all, in light of the results of the USGA test. Yet, there are still some complaints heard from both the golfer and the superintendent concerning the waffle effect studded shoes leave on the putting surface. In isolated instances, superintendents seem to prefer spike marks over the matted-down deposits and have barred spikeless shoes.

Whatever the route the superintendent or green committee takes, it's apparent there is no such thing as the perfect golf shoe. In some way, every variety contributed damage to the green and had an adverse effect on putting accuracy.

Perhaps the only solution is a return to the dark ages and playing barefooted. Spiked, spikeless, studded, hollow-cupped shoes? Looks like it's dealer's choice unless something better comes along.

Gerry Finn



Divot Drift. . . . The '83 golfing meetings are now history. Out thanks to all who hosted a meeting. A reminder that anyone who would like to have a meeting in 1984 should contact Steve Murphy as soon as possible.... The Christmas party will be held at the Needham Golf Club on December 9th. Anyone who hasn't made a reservation should do so... I would like to thank our contributing editor, Gerry Finn, for his fine work again this year. I have received many positive comments on certain articles from all over the country. Gerry has a great talent.... Kevin Lyons is doing all he can to shake the snowman image. At Tatnuck he made a serious effort to get off the 8's. But come now, snowy, 9's and 10's are not the answer... Finally, Happy Holidays to everyone.

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Nominations For 1984 Officers

The GCSANE Nominating Committee has announced its nominations for 1984. The committee consisting of Ron Kirkman, Dave Barber, Bob Mucciarone, Ken Mooridian and Bert Frederick has nominated the following:

President - Don Hearn, CGCS
 1st VP - David Barber, CGCS
 2nd VP - Pete Coste, CGCS
 Treasurer - Tom Schofield, CGCS
 Secretary - Richard Zepp, CGCS
 Trustee - 3 yr. Mark Klim
 Finance Chairman - Robert Johnston, CGCS
 Golf Chairman - Stephen Murphy
 Educational Chairman - Edward Brearley
 Newsletter Chairman - Douglas Johnson, CGCS

A reminder that a person can be nominated from the floor at the time of the election.

November Meeting at Tatnuck

We had 37 for golf. The format was the best ball of 2 players per group. Our thanks to Steve Chiavoroli and the staff at Tatnuck for being our hosts.

The Winning team was - Ron Kirkman, Dave Barber, Don Levangie, Tom Schofield and Steve Butler.

Job Openings

Mt. Pleasant Golf Club - 9 Hole
 141 Staples St., Lowell, Ma. 01851
 Attn: Ray Silva

Belivue Golf Club
 Melrose, Ma.
 Contact: Jerry Kaestner
 30 Elmcrest Circle, Melrose, Ma. 02176
 Tel. 662-6367



"Can't you forget golf long enough to take him to the dentist?!"

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