



THE NEWSLETTER

Golf Course Superintendents Association OF NEW ENGLAND, INC.

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

September 1990

Supers Buck National Trend

According to Frank Hannigan, the golf course superintendent has gone his separate way. That is, where things in general are in a declining state with banks failing and other standards of life on a definite plunge, the condition of golf courses has never been better.

Why? Hannigan, former executive director of the United States Golf Association and now a television commentator and overseeing journalist, says it's because superintendents are on top of their profession and managing turf like it's never been managed before.

In his most recent treatment of the golf scene while writing his monthly critique for *Golf Magazine*, Hannigan views the golf course superintendent as the one component the structure of the country club could not be without.

"If somebody gave me a new golf course to manage along with a decent budget, the first thing I'd do would be to hire the best golf course superintendent money can buy," Hannigan said. "After that, I'd probably get a little cheap. But so what? The only part of the operation that matters—the course itself—would be in the best of hands."

Ah. Is Hannigan telling us something we already know? For years, the supporters of the golf course superintendents impact movement have been trying to get their message across to country club members and the like. Everything in the sphere of country club life springs from the foundation of

that organization—the golf course. And a country club is only as strong and influential as its foundation—again, the golf course.

Hannigan explains why the golf course and its maintenance factor once took a back seat to other country club perks like social offerings and spinoff activities.

"Golf course superintendents had been the game's forgotten servants because of their low profile status," he told. "They were viewed as hidden members of the country club service unit because their work places consisted of compost piles, irrigation signal stations, and maintenance shacks. They wore old clothes and were far removed from their colleagues, the clubhouse manager and the pro.

"But, let's be honest. If the clubhouse manager and the pro stopped showing up for work, the club members would be inconvenienced. But if the course superintendent and his staff go on strike, the game is over. In two weeks, you would have what's known as a 'passive recreational park' with a lot of tall weeds."

Hannigan comes to the defense of the superintendent in that never-ending controversy over responsibility for condition of the golf course when Mother Nature refuses to lend her very much needed helping hand to the process.

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NEXT MEETING

Monday, October 1, 1990
Rhode Island Country Club
Member and 3 Guests Tournament

Lunch
Golf
Dinner

Host Superintendent
Mel Wendall
Reservations Required
Mail In Application

Mel began his career in the golf business at Locust Valley in Attleboro, a 9-hole public course that his parents owned at the time.

From there it was on to Wannamoisett C.C. for ten years and the Highland C.C. for 16 years (ten of which he served as Pro-Superintendent). He is currently in his fourth season as head man at Rhode Island C.C.

Mel was educated at Brown University and Bryant College. He is a 30 year veteran of the National Rhode Island and New England Super's Associations. He served as Secretary of the Rhode Island GCSA in the early 1960s.

He and his wife Googie reside in Attleboro and have raised three children. Daughters Dee and Kim, and son Neil who has followed in Dad's footsteps and is presently the course Superintendent at the Point Judith Club.

Directions:

95 South through Providence to 195 East, approximately three miles to Route 114 (Barrington exit). Follow 6-7 miles to street lights and turn right. Follow 1/2 mile to Middle Highway and turn left. Follow to golf course.

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"Take the case of Fred Klauk, the man in charge of the TPC Stadium Course at Ponte Vedra, Florida," Frank noted. "There was monumental flap coming out of there earlier this year because the greens were not up to snuff during the Players Championship.

"Klauk was on the spot. However, when temperatures hit zero in the Jacksonville area last winter, it was understood the greens of the TPC wouldn't be dense and smooth for the tournament in March. But the media spotlight fell on him as the focus of that predicament.

"So, the greens were a little thin and bumpy. The world didn't come to an end. It just so happened that I once conducted a USGA national championship at another Florida course with Klauk as the superintendent. He was sensational and so was the golf course."

Hannigan, who has had integral roles in the staging of many USGA major events, often relates to his experience in that area in defining the role of the superintendent.



Our Association's new flag.

"At a U.S. Open, I was once asked to name the single most important person on the premises," Frank disclosed. "Without hesitation, I said it was the golf course superintendent. 'If he fails, we all fail', I commented."

Pressure comes from all directions where the golf course superintendent is concerned, whether it be from false accusations linking him or her with disregard for the environment or silly demands from members who think theirs should be courses groomed like those where the Open and Masters tournaments are played.

"This is one of the pitfalls of the profession," Hannigan remarked. "The superintendent tends to be invisible until something goes wrong. Sometimes his future depends on the whims of green committee chairmen, some of whom haven't the remotest idea of what they want or why. Yet, he remains at the trigger of the gun that shoots success into a successful country club operation—the golf course and its condition."

Case closed.

GERRY FINN

Town of Hingham South Shore Country Club

Country Club Development Committee will accept bids in October for proposals to:

1. Upkeep and maintain the Course - 3 year plus 2 year option.
2. Management and Pro Shop Operation - 3 year plus 2 year option.

Further information is available by writing:

Country Club Develop. Com.
7 East Street
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The Super Speaks Out

Welcome to the Super Speaks Out. This month's question: *With mounting attention surrounding bunkers and the way they are maintained, what's your approach to keeping them in line according to aesthetic and practical standards?*

Tom Flaherty, CGCS, Woods Hole Golf Club: "Make no mistake about it. Well defined and maintained bunkers make the aesthetic statement for a golf course.

"I'm very much aware of this and so, too, are my members. They appreciate bunkers that stand out because of top-notch maintenance, although some of them are more concerned with the expense that goes into any successful program keeping them in good condition.

"My program probably is the same as most superintendents. We have grass-faced bunkers that require regular mowing and pampered mowing at that. We use the fly-mow system but we also are into using string trimmers.

"Woods Hole is one of the oldest courses around, something like one hundred years old. Therefore, over the course of long periods of time the strain of too much edging causes the bunkers to grow larger.

"This results in the necessity to refurbish the bunkers on a regular basis. We re-do six to seven a year and in some cases we've gone to stripping, reshaping faces, and topping off the project with sod.

"Sand accumulation and relocation of it present another source of main-

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tenance responsibility. In that case, we use an air compressor to redistribute the sand. That happens twice a year.

"As the situation stands, I'm very happy with the way my bunker maintenance program has progressed. They look good and they play good. It just makes Woods Hole a better place to play golf and, after all, this is what my job's all about."



Mike Nagle, CGCS, Worcester Country Club: "We are another Donald Ross golf course, so the condition and appearance of the

bunkers are an important part of my overall maintenance program.

"I treat the bunker conditioning process with special care, meaning that I'm careful to make sure the faces (all grass) are included in my irrigation program. We tap off our lines going to the greens to get that water and do it on a regular basis.

"We re-did all of our bunkers in 1984 and 1985 and gave them the complete treatment, meaning new sand and sod on the facings.

"The mowing is done with fly-mowers even though they don't seem to hold up well for long periods of time. When they are down for repairs, we go to line trimmers. However, I've found they give an uneven cut, so I'm sold on the fly-mow system.

"Keeping the sand where it should be is another project and I usually rent a compressor for that job. There also are times when water is used to wash sand off bunker faces.

"Edging is a twice-a-year deal here and very important. My members and I agree that there's nothing like well-defined bunkers to bring out the best look in our course. It's an expensive situation, though...but really worth it."

Gary Mondor, Crestview Country Club: "Our course is heavy on bunkers, so I'm heavy into maintaining them. I think at last count we had something like 75 of them.

"Most of our bunkers have sand faces. Therefore, we have to make sure heavy rains don't wash them out or deteriorate their appearance and playability.

"We experimented with grass-faced bunkers last year when we put in a couple of new ones. We went for line-trimmers from the start and find them to be very effective. At least my guys tell me they'd rather use trimmers than fly-mowers.

"I think my members like the grass-faced bunkers because of the aesthetic factor. They really look good, though. Somehow, they seem to set themselves apart to give off a naturally defined effect.

"We cut new edges once a year and really get into it in terms of time and labor input. It's a big job, but my members seem to appreciate the result.

"Oh, we also have a sand replacement program. We use new sand in our greens bunkers and take the old sand from them to replace and replenish material in our fairway bunkers. It's sort of a recycling process and it works out well.

"As I said, we're really into bunker maintenance. They're in constant need of care and we give it to them."

GERRY FINN

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| Oct. 1 | Rhode Island C.C.
Member & 3 Club Officials |
| Oct. 15 | Brae Burn C.C.
Pro-Superintendent |
| Nov. 3 | Southeast Sportswriters
Assoc. Dinner |
| Nov. 6 | Tatnuck C.C.
Regular Meeting |
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President's Message



Enclosed in this month's newsletter you will find an article written at my request by Jim Connolly, Agronomist for the U.S. Golf

Association Green Section. The purpose of such an article is to familiarize those who do not subscribe to the U.S.G.A. Advisory Service with Jim and some of his observations. Due to his exposure to many clubs, Jim comes in contact with many different situations and conditions of which we all can benefit. I hope this article is beneficial and I also hope that Jim will continue to participate.

We are looking for clubs to host our winter meetings (December to March). Anyone interested should call Kevin Osgood ASAP!

PAUL MILLER

On Wintering . . .

Many golf courses in New England experienced varied damage on their greens as they emerged from the winter of 1989-90. The cause of most damage was easy to trace, but a new pattern of dead turf left many of us baffled. Everyone scurried to their favorite pathologist for an answer. Cool weather Pythium seemed to pop up as the culprit. But there were definitely some questions left unanswered.

Winter-related damage on the courses I visited can be classified as climatic, disease, chemical, and/or nasty *Poa annua* mortality. The climatic damage is easy to diagnose and related to one or more of the following: shade, contours that collect water, leaf or root desiccation or hydration (successive

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melting and freezing). This year, unlike most years, found many areas of bentgrass dead due to hydration. Direct kill from ice was not observed. The solution to these problems usually involves cutting trees, covers on greens for wind protection, rebuild the green with better contours, or a myriad of other prevention steps. I saw an increased use of sod cutting to create canals, dark colored topdressings, plus other methods used to minimize winter damage.

Deep tine aerification and dormant seeding were also used successfully in the prevention of winter kill and quick recovery in damaged areas. The deep aerification in October dramatically reduced winter hydration on poorly drained greens. Dormant overseeding was used with great success on courses in Vermont and New Hampshire. Seeding is done in November. The dormant seed germinated in the early spring months. Typhula and Fusarium continue to be the prominent winter diseases. I seldom see severe damage from these diseases because fungicide so easily controls them. Cold, or cool, weather Pythium has been identified in many samples of diseased turf over the last 2 to 3 years. Cool weather Pythium is relatively new and research on this disease is just beginning. Under cool, wet conditions, typical of early spring or late winter, symptoms may first appear as small yellow spots approximately 1-3 inches in diameter. Some severe cases have many spots that coalesce. I have heard of at least two cases where the symptom was more similar to gigantic brown patch. Some research states that control is based upon maintaining well-drained soil and a healthy root system. This did not seem to matter with many cases of cool weather Pythium that I observed.

The best way of sharing my thoughts on the subject is to list my observations. Here they are:

1. Six or more golf courses in Rhode Island had speckled brownspots on

the greens. All affected greens were fertilized with a mechanically blended product containing potassium. In most cases the product was applied in mid to late November. The higher rates of fertilizer correlated to more damage. Knolls and clean-up perimeters were affected the most. Patterns of overlap were visible.

2. Neighboring courses that used homogenous products or low analysis products had little or no damage.
3. In almost every case, Pythium was identified in the brown speckled areas.
4. The speckles, or damaged areas that coalesced, did not heal or respond to fertilizer in the spring months. Damage hung around a long time.

From the Editor:

Over the last couple years when our Association has a golf outing at a public course rather than a private club, it seems the attendance decreases from 80 to 40. Is it because we are aerating, constructing, syringing, or just too busy? Or is it because we can't waste our time playing a public golf course. Come on guys, you are the ones missing out. These courses close down to accommodate our Association and 45 people show up. They will think twice before offering again. Next time we play a public course, sign up and enjoy good golf, good food, and excellent playing conditions. If you doubt it, just ask the attendees about the superb conditions at Newton Commonwealth for our August meeting.

KIP TYLER, CGCS

CORRECTION

The last newsletter you received had the month September printed on it. It should have read August.

5. Other courses in MA, CT, ME, NH, and VT all had similar damage when observation #1 was true.
6. Bentgrass was affected as much or more than *Poa annua*. Drawing a conclusion from these observations would be presumptuous from a scientific standpoint. The observations must be tested and duplicated before factual statements could be made. Universities and pathologists need to duplicate conditions favoring the disease or damage.

The unique weather conditions may have played a role. It is possible that the fertilizer partially dissolved when applied in November. The partially melted nitrogen or salt of potassium sat on the turf going into the brutally cold December. The weakened turf may have become predisposed to Pythium infection. Dr. Noel Jackson from the University of Rhode Island believes that disease was the main agent of turf mortality.

I hope you can use this information to help plan your schedule for this coming winter. Wouldn't it be nice if this scenario was extremely rare and never to be seen again? It's possible. But, I am sure we will be challenged by a different set of situations in the year to come. Prevention of winter damage can be viewed as "preparation to minimize winter damage". You will never eliminate the chance of winter-related mortality—it is nature's way. You can only lower the percentage of kill.

The USGA Green Section is here for your service. Without the support of golf course superintendents and member clubs, we could not survive. I encourage you to subscribe to the Turf Advisory Service next year. The information that you share with us is freely given to others so that all may benefit. Our goal is to help you provide the best playing conditions with the resources at your disposal. Thank you.

Jim Connolly, Agronomist
USGA

Friends of the Month

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In 1949, Larchmont Farms, Inc. was formed by Philip and Joseph Tropeano. The company made special farm machinery and conveyors; and, as a dealer sold farm machinery. In 1950 irrigation was added to our line and ever since we have specialized in all types of irrigation systems and equipment. In 1951 we developed a snow-making nozzle and this became another market. Hence, Larchmont Engineering, Inc. was formed to sell to the ski areas and the name of Larchmont Farms, Inc. was changed to Larchmont Engineering and Irrigation, Inc.

From 1958 to 1976, Larchmont Engineering, Inc. was marketing, designing, and installing several hundred snowmaking systems throughout the world.

In 1978, Joseph Tropeano retired from this company and I, Philip Tropeano, became President and Treasurer of Larchmont Engineering and Irrigation, Inc.

From 1951 to the present time, Larchmont Engineering and Irrigation, Inc. (doing business as Larchmont) has manufactured special farm equipment, bedformers, fast aluminum irrigation couplings for portable aluminum pipe, Rain Kannons (a patented large trailable self-contained irrigation system), several types of snow nozzles (all patented), and high pressure self-draining hydrants for snowmaking systems. We have fabricated all types of pumps and pumping systems to engines and motors for all applications of water pumping.

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(603) 622-8825

Our second Friend for this month did not respond.

Divot Drift

Congratulations to Jack Cronin of R.F. Morse Co., on his marriage to Dr. Maria Driscoll on August 19th. They are residing in North Berwick, Maine.

Jack Hassett shot a blazing 67 at Newton Commonwealth to run away with the Gross prize. In the meantime, someone else was busy shooting out Jack's pick-up windshield with an errant stroke. And guess who canceled his glass insurance!

Dan Higgins received a compliment on course conditions after his first year at Winchester C.C. from the Sunday Boston Globe.

WINNERS

The winner of the John Deere Golf Tournament held at Thomson C.C. was the group from Norwood C.C. They advance to the November finals at Palm Springs, California.

Congratulations to Frank Simoni, Pete Cote, Mike Videtta, and Rick Finlayson.

AUGUST GOLF RESULTS NEWTON COMMONWEALTH Regular Meeting

1st Gross 65 — Paul Jamrog, Jack Hassett, Steve Murphy, and Kip Tyler

1st Net 51 - Kevin Osgood, Bill Spence, Brian Howard, and Neil Loomis

Closest to Pin	Long Drive
Bob Connolly	Paul Jamrog

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THE NEWSLETTER

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