



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.

June 1996

John Lenhart had plenty of support in successful Boston Marathon run

John Lenhart admits he was just a face in the crowd that day . . . day of all days of his life . . . when he ran and (phew) finished the Boston Marathon.

"It was a dream come true," chirped Lenhart, who lends golf course superintendents his expertise as salesman for Sawtelle Brothers. That's when he isn't pounding the pavement on those 26-mile-plus long hauls.

Lenhart is a middle-of-the-pack runner when such awe-inspiring events as the 100th Boston Marathon are the topic of conversation. His time April 15 was three hours and 41 minutes. He described his place in the results as just about the same as his starting number: 18,379. "There were 18,000 runners ahead of me when we started and I can't remember passing one of them," he leveled. "But where you

finish isn't what marathons are all about. To finish is everyone's number one goal. The rest – times and placings – is secondary, at least with the majority of the field.

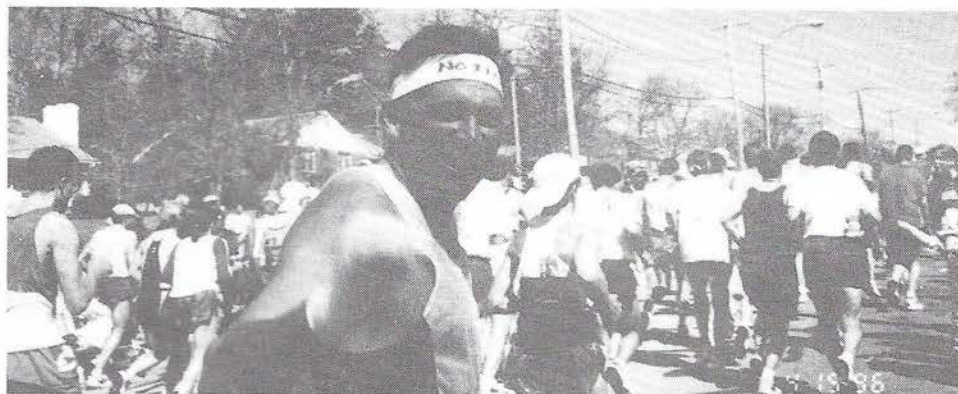
Just getting to the the Hopkinton starting line was somewhat of a feat in itself. Lenhart had run a 3:20 in a qualifying race at the Ocean State Marathon in Rhode Island. That time was 54 seconds over the qualifying limit, and he figured he'd have to sit out the Boston race.

However, after much urging from running friends, he sent in an application to race officials anyway. It remained for January 2 to emerge as a memorable day for John. In that day's mail was an acceptance from the sponsors and he was assigned his 18,379 starting number.

But why all the fuss to begin with? Lenhart was just a typical recreational runner, dabbling in such athletic-social whirls as the Falmouth race and only dreaming of such storied challenges as the Boston Marathon. However, his interest and competitive spirit were aroused by his 12-year-old son, Patrick, who bet Dad he didn't have a chance to finish a Boston Marathon, even if he could manage to qualify.

"That kind of got me going," Lenhart explained. "We're a close family and we're always kidding one another. But suddenly the idea of running in a Boston Marathon wasn't all that far-fetched. So, I started training and pretty soon I was putting in 40 to 50 miles a week of training. That's when this whole thing got serious."

continued on page 2



In this issue . . .

	Page
Calendar of Events	2
The Super Speaks Out	3
From the Editor	4
Tournament Photos	5
GCSANE News Notes	5
Host Superintendent Profile	5
A Green Belt Asset	6
Divot Drift	6

Family support was a big lift to Lenhart's marathon aspirations. There also was plenty of support from many of his friends in the superintendent profession.



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continued from page 1

The family tie-in went beyond the bet. John's wife, Nancy, also happens to be a runner and competes in local events. So, she joined John on his early morning runs to get him in shape for the qualifying race, and eventually the main event.

Trying to work training around his job wasn't easy. However, as an old almost-golf superintendent, Lenhart was used to waking up in the dark and heading for a 5 a.m. green-cutting assignment. Only this time he put on his running shoes and piled up the conditioning mileage.

Family support was a big lift to Lenhart's marathon aspirations. There also was plenty of support from many of his friends in the superintendents' profession. After all, his classmates at the Stockbridge School included such super stalwarts as Bill Spence, Doug Johnson, and Steve Murphy. Attached to his resume, too, was a four-year hitch with John Paul Jones in the construction of Walpole Country Club.

"That's where support for my running in Boston crossed all borders," Lenhart disclosed. "All through the weeks leading up to the race I received calls from supers all over the place. There even were some names that weren't familiar to me. Believe me, every bit helped. I almost thought I was running for the Association."

John's training period was one of constant concern for honing his body to complete the grind through Hopkinton, Wellesley, Newton, and on into Boston. His diet called for concentration on pasta and fruits and his actual physical input peaked when he ran a 20-mile training race by himself a couple of weeks before his tee-off time.

"Well, that's how I looked at it," John told. "I was an 18-handicapper teeing it up in the U.S. Open. It called for a lot of discipline (diet) and hard work (pre-race training), but I was determined to win that bet."

The golf connection even dripped over to Lenhart's countdown training period. "Right," he said. "I got together with Dave Barber, Ron Kirkman, and Arthur Silva (all superintendent friends) and we headed for Augusta National to take in the Masters. I was tapering off then, so it gave me a chance to relax. We stayed in Aiken, South Carolina. That's good thoroughbred country, so I figured some racing strategy would rub off on me."

Lenhart still marvels at the marathon he ran, mostly because of the other run-

ners he met and talked with while all were engaged in the race of their lives. There also were anxious moments.

"Like when I hit Heartbreak Hill," John recalled. "Up to that point I had been averaging about 7:15 per mile, really cruising and feeling great. But then I felt a strain in my right hamstring. It was very painful and there were still five miles to go. I felt I had to finish. My daughters (Colleen, 11, and Kerrie, 14) were in the crowd somewhere, waving a golf hole flagstick so I could spot them. As it turned out, I never saw them. I just looked ahead, slogged those final miles, and hit the finish line like a wounded duck."

Only one member of the support team actually caught Lenhart in action, Brae Burn super and GCSANE president Bob DiRico, who snapped the hero's picture.

The after-effects and their highlights were restricted to one vow, taken by Lenhart, who revealed, "I'm waiting until Patrick's 21. That's the day I plan to collect the fifty bucks he owes me. Otherwise, the experience remains as a once-in-a-lifetime venture . . . especially all the support I got."

GERRY FINN

Calendar

June 10	GCSANE Monthly Meeting Larry Gannon Golf Course Lynn, Mass.
July 16	GCSANE Joint Meeting with RIGCSA Agawam Hunt Club West Barrington, R.I.
August 12	Superintendent / Green Chairman Tournament Oak Hill C.C. Fitchburg, Mass.
September 23	GCSANE Monthly Meeting Twin Hills Country Club Longmeadow, Mass.
October 1	GCSANE Monthly Meeting Stow Acres Country Club Stow, Mass.
October 23	NEPGA/GCSANE Shanahan Memorial Pro-Supt. Tournament Willowbend Club Cotuit, Mass.
November 4	GCSANE Monthly Meeting Nabnasset Lake Country Club Westford, Mass.
Jan. 13-15, 1997	Mass. Turf Conference Hynes Convention Center Boston, Mass.

The Super Speaks Out

This month's question:

Faced with the rough conditioning weather of this spring, how did you work around it while testing the patience and understanding of your playing members?

Rich Derby, Longmeadow Country Club:

"There are two factors that work in my favor when we have springs like this one. First, my membership is top-notch in understanding the weather/conditioning connection. Second, our aggressive turf program year-round and the way we put the course to bed in late fall give me an edge getting it up to standards as soon in the season as possible.

"My members have taught themselves to be patient about early-spring golf. In a word, they won't play unless its under reasonable weather conditions. And in those times or in-between their play we do what we have to do.

"As for early-season upgrading, we use only lightweight equipment at this time of year, which means all tees, greens, and approaches are mowed by hand. It's usually a later start for us, as far as reaching near-perfect playing conditions go, but the combination of our knowledgeable members and hand-delivered maintenance get us through things like a May 2 frost."

David Heroian, Myopia Hunt Club:

"One thing you must remember about Myopia Hunt and its members: There's no such thing as a preferred lie here, even when early spring conditions aren't up to snuff.

"Therefore, we have a membership that understands the unpredictable ways of Mother Nature and how she can slow down normal conditioning procedures. In fact, when I say no carts or restrict carts on certain holes, they comply without a whimper. They know what's going on.

"In respect to the bad spring we had this, year, I chose to use growth regulators on certain (trouble) fairways and kept carts off areas that were susceptible to

damage because of soggy underfooting. At this time (early May) I'm shooting for Memorial Day as a top conditioning deadline, but with my members' realization that nothing is guaranteed in this business."

Wayne Zoppo, Agawam Hunt Club:

"One thing I'm thankful for as the wet, wet days of spring continue: A few years ago we had a lot of drainage work done here, and now it's paying off. Without that improvement, we'd really be in the soup."



"One of the guidelines to having the course brought up to maximum playing condition is for the members to realize that for all this to happen there must be time and money. And in that way, my members are very understanding. I just tell them the truth. We're able to do what they want if we have the time and money.

"Because of our superior drainage system, we're pretty well caught up on maintenance projects. However, other little construction projects have been a drain on our time. But somehow it all gets done in the end.

"Aside from the slower turn around the corner to top conditions (my goal or that is May 20 or shortly thereafter), my concentration is on speed of our greens. That's a must with our members. They want them super-fast, which means mowing seven times a week. And, strangely, the grass is growing. Fast greens, then, can't be far behind."

Richard Drew, Salem Municipal Golf Course:

"This was the kind of spring when we had two openings, one the second week in April and the other after a couple of snowstorms closed us down for three days.

"Right now, or early May, we're at a wet, swampy level. But golfers come out anyway. Today, for example, we're aerifying greens and working around players who in turn are playing around my crew, since we use alternating temporary greens while the work is being completed.

"This time of year we realize we have to keep ahead of the golfers during our mowing even if it means working in the dark. That's what it amounts to, too. It's common for our guys to start their chores at 5:30 so players won't catch up to them.

"I figure we're probably about three weeks behind schedule getting the course to the point where it's proclaimed in good shape. What hinders my program most is the that there's never a letup in play. There are no drying out days on a city course. Golfers come out early and play is steady throughout the day, every day. They accept the inconvenience of maintenance projects, but they have no choice. That's the way it is at a municipal course."

Pat Kriksceonaitis, Essex Country Club:

"The question of getting the course in top shape boils down to an adjustment by our members. They have to share the course with the maintenance crew.

"Our members also seem to have an unwritten understanding about the course conditions in that they know things are not going to be at top level when they play in sweaters. We have that kind of climate, so they know that sweater time means slow growth time on the course. However, when they take those sweaters off, the greens had better be quick and smooth . . . and they usually are.

"Right now (early May) we're an easy 10 days behind in the weather. We're close to the water, so it's cool all the time, even in summer. Regardless, we do have a good communication mentality among members, the pro (Tom Waters), and me. We feed off that. It's probably the key to the way the golf course shapes up once the weather works into a normal curve.

"The fact that the club owns only 15 golf carts (and doesn't depend on them for revenue) also contributes to the overall effectiveness of our maintenance program. But on days like this you can only do your best — ride the tide. Hey, this place is 103 years old. They've been riding those waves a long time."

GERRY FINN

From the Editor

Setting the record straight on going "spikeless": Change will improve greens - and golf game

This association's decision to ban metal spikes at all of our sponsored golf events this year has drawn attention: immediate attention. Newspaper golf writers, golf professionals, club officials have all commented, pro and con, about our move to go metal-spikeless.

When one of them states an opinion about this rather controversial subject, we would hope that they have worn Softspikes or given them an honest chance. This means wearing them for a round or two of golf, not simply waddling around the pro shop staring at their shoes, flexing them and observing they don't feel like their old metal spikes - or taking another person's word for it. We would also hope that if a reporter wants to do more than reinforce his or her opinion about this subject, that they would actually interview a real golf course superintendent along with golf pros, MGA officials, etc.

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This means wearing them for a round or two of golf, not simply waddling around the pro shop staring at their shoes, flexing them and observing they don't feel like their old metal spikes ... or taking another person's word for it.

Kudos to Frank Stoddard. In his April 21 piece in the Brockton Sunday Enterprise, he interviewed superintendents and pros alike on their opinions about the use of non-metallic spikes. Sadly, one of his counterparts did not. In the May 16, 1996 issue of the Boston Globe, Paul Harber wrote a rather convoluted article about Softspikes, and our decision to go metal-spikeless. He interviewed golf pros Les Bond of Wellesley, David O'Kelly of Willowbend, assistant Jim Melville of Weston, and amateur player Steve Tasho of Thorny Lea. How's this for irresponsibility: Nowhere in the article was a quote from any golf course superintendent or board member of the GCSANE. Nowhere in his piece did Mr. Harber allow our association to explain why we chose to initiate a ban on metal spikes for our tournaments. What this article did contain was half-truths and strong opinions a couple of individuals had about going metal-spikeless.

"Right over there the ambulance stopped and took her away," Les Bond said, describing how a woman allegedly got injured while not wearing golf shoes. "She swung the club, fell and dislocated her knee. I think our course is too hilly. Someone is certainly going to take a tumble if they are not wearing metal spikes." (If golfers wanted to be held that securely to the ground, they'd wear crampons or ice creepers!) What Mr. Bond failed to inform us was the woman's age, her physical condition, or her approximate blood alcohol level. I wonder if either Bond or Harber have ever slipped on concrete or tripped on carpeting while wearing metal spiked shoes. If they did, where was the outcry to eliminate this hazard?

Mr. Harber fails to realize *THE* reason the GCSANE voted to use non-metallic spikes in 1996 was improved putting quality through the elimination of spike marks. Period. Softspikes won't correct sloppy management practices, cure bacterial wilt on greens, or help us get along better with unrealistic club officials.

To my knowledge, no golf course superin-

tendent has lost their job because of spiked-up greens or kept their job solely based on spike mark elimination. But Paul Harber believes it. The last two paragraphs of his article read this way: "There is one good reason for the superintendents to fully support the switch from metal spikes: Many have been fired because members are unhappy with the putting surfaces. If the spikeless shoes accomplish anything, they might save a few superintendents' jobs."

... THE reason the GCSANE voted to use non-metallic spikes in 1996 was improved putting quality through the elimination of spike marks. Period.

Is this guy for real? That's like saying better newspaper vending machines will save his job. It is this irresponsible, lazy reporting that does no one any favors. Although this is a subject where Harber has no experience or background, he has a forum in the Globe and readers still accept his views as truth.

Change is something we Yankees have great difficulty with. It sounds like all of the naysayers that were mentioned in the Globe article have trouble accepting this type of change. Accept this: When the GCSANE played its Scholarship and Benevolence tournament at Green Harbor on May 28, all competitors' golf shoes were fitted with Softspikes. The last green we played on was as smooth, unmarked and perfect as the first green we putted. And, no one was placed in traction, suffered torn ACL's, or required chiropractic care.

In this case, change *is* good.

**MIKE NAGLE, CGCS,
Editor, GCSANE Newsletter**



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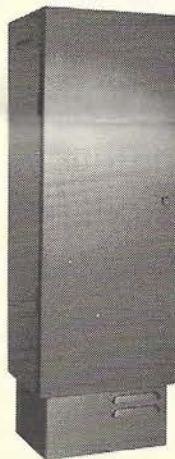
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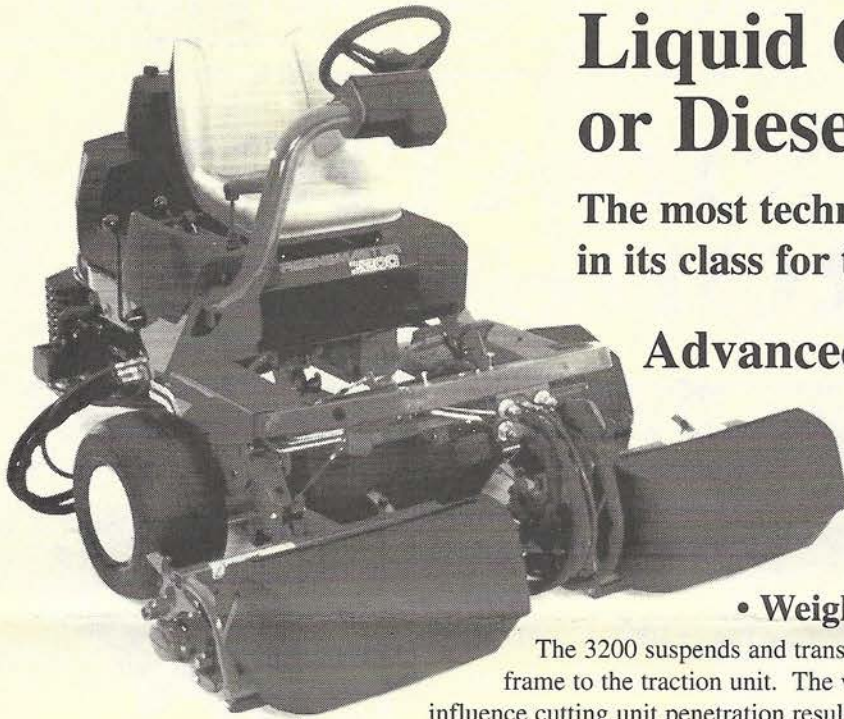
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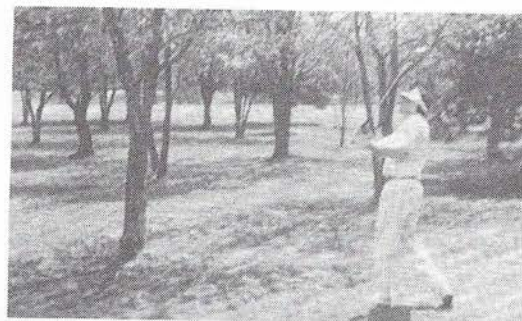


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Scenes from the GCSANE Scholarship & Benevolence Tournament May 21 at Green Harbor Golf Club, Marshfield, Mass.



At right, GCSANE president **Bob DiRico** accepts the WGAM donation. The speck in the distance at left is also **Bob DiRico**. Below, center, are (l. to r.) **Wayne Lacroix, Manny Francis, Jr., Mel O'Kelly, and Charlie Lanzetta**. The photo at lower right shows one participant trying to make it back to civilization. Above right shows a good time being had by all.



GCSANE News Notes

Thanks to '96 Scholarship & Benevolence sponsors

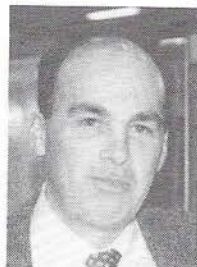
The GCSANE Scholarship & Benevolence Tournament Committee thanks the sponsors of the 1996 event, held May 21 at Green Harbor G.C. in Marshfield, Mass.:

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Host Superintendent Profile

Meet host superintendent Steve Murphy

Our host for the June meeting of the GCSANE is Steve Murphy. Steve has been the golf course superintendent at the Larry Gannon Golf Course for 21 years. He is also in his second year as parks superintendent for the City of Lynn.



Steve is a 1971 graduate of the Stockbridge School of Agriculture. He is also president and owner of Golf Facilities Management, which operates Hillview Golf Course in North Reading and Mount Hood in Melrose. Steve's brother, John, is a GCSANE member and the golf course superintendent at Hillview. Steve and his wife, Carolyn, reside in Lynn.

We all look forward to playing Gannon again on June 10.

A few reasons why a golf course is a green belt asset

by **Ralph D. Haskell,**
Executive Director,
Massachusetts Golf Association

- Golf courses play a significant role in creating a desirable community atmosphere. They are representative of the recreational services available within the town.
- Golf courses characteristically attract desirable business and professional people to a community, and are often a major draw for new business and industry.
- Golf courses are quiet neighbors, built to be enjoyed by people of all ages, and are a plus for any community, whether the course is private, public, or municipal.
- It has been recognized that a regulation 18-hole course can remove carbon dioxide and produce enough pure oxygen through photosynthesis for at least 100,000 people for an entire year. A plot the size of a football field has the cooling capacity of a 70-ton air conditioner.
- Golf courses in the private and semi-private categories have paid and will pay real estate taxes to the community. Although some have felt that golf courses enjoy the same tax status as schools and churches, the fact is that the aggregate tax contribution of a golf club is often substantially more than generally recognized.
- Golf courses can provide a significant local year-round employment as well as providing summer employment for high school and college students.
- Golf course activities generate additional tax revenues from food and beverage service as well as in employment.
- Golf courses can be major buyers of goods and services from local suppliers.
- Golf courses require minimum installation, attention, and cost in terms of community services - police, fire, forestry work, road repair, sewerage, etc.

- Golf courses afford an important scenic contribution to the community. The landscaping and maintenance of a golf course benefits the whole community at no cost to the general citizenry.
- Golf courses are increasingly in the forefront of green belt planning. Conservation groups and ecology groups are giving greater recognition to the importance of golf course acreage.
- Golf courses provide sanctuary for birds and smaller animals. A course is often the only place for such wildlife to go.
- Golf courses reduce pollution and help cleanse the air. Turf and other vegetation help prevent soil erosion. The natural filtration properties of turfgrass make courses ideal sites for disposing of treated sewage effluent, not only saving communities the expense of costly tertiary treatment, but also helping recharge aquifers.

continued on page 8

DIVOT DRIFT...announcements...educational seminars...job opportunities ...tournament results...and miscellaneous items of interest to the membership.

MEMBERSHIP

Proposed for Membership: David Laffey, Assistant, Newton Commonwealth Golf Course, Newton, Mass.; Conor Fitzgerald, Regular, Chelmsford Country Club, Chelmsford, Mass.; Douglas Hopper, Affiliate, Bruedan Corp., Swansea, Mass.; Jeffery Oteri, Assistant, Woodland Golf Club, Auburndale, Mass.; William Thompson, Affiliate, Gold Star Sod Farm & Nursery, Concord, N.H.; Malcolm McPhail, Affiliate, Gold Star Sod Farm & Nursery, Hanover, Mass.

Welcome New Members: Robert Larson, Regular, Green Hill Golf Course, Worcester, Mass.; Frank Bava, Affiliate, Sawtelle Bros., Lawrence, Mass.; Michael Johnson, Assistant, Tara Colonial Country Club, Wakefield, Mass.; John Neville, Regular, Leo J. Martin Golf Course, Weston, Mass.; Christopher Weiman, Affiliate, P.I.E. Supply, Milford, Conn.; Kenneth Brown, Affiliate, Sawtelle Bros., Lawrence, Mass.; Mark Richard, CGCS, Kirkbrae Country Club, West Warwick, R.I.; Kenneth Cummings, Assistant, Marlboro Country Club, Marlboro, Mass.; Ernest Bernard, Affiliate, Turf Enhancement Enterprises, Millbury, Mass.

INFORMATION

By a unanimous vote of the GCSANE Board of Directors, all delinquent members of our association have been dropped from our roster and newsletter mailing list.

Meeting sites for 1997 are being booked now. If you can host a meeting or tournament, please call Mike Hermanson at (508) 632-2713.

Congratulations to Doug Statura of Springfield Country Club on becoming a Certified Golf Course Superintendent.

A "Thank You" to **Weston Golf Club** for its annual donation to the Lonnie Troll/GCSANE Turf Research Fund.

Congratulations to Robin Hayes, who set a new course record of 72 for women at the Miacomet Golf Club on Nantucket.

What a "Spring"! First 20+ inches of snow, then rain that wouldn't stop, then we couldn't get it to rain and temperatures that ran the entire spectrum. I wonder what the Summer holds for us?

Congratulations to Phil and Deborah Schultz on the birth of 8 pound, 9 ounce Philip Richard on May 4.

MEETING NOTES

A "thank you" to the **Francis Family** and the **entire staff at Green Harbor G.C.** for hosting our 4th Annual Scholarship and Benevolence Tournament, and for helping to make it such a success.

TOURNAMENT RESULTS

**4th Annual
Scholarship & Benevolence Tournament**
May 21, 1996
at Green Harbor Golf Club,
Marshfield, Mass.

1st Gross - 71, Frank & Kevin Murphy
2nd Gross - 72, Dick Duggan & Palmer Whitney
1st Net - 63, Steve Butler & Dan Lehan
2nd Net - 64, Greg Misodoulakis & Paul Skafas
3rd Net - 64, Jim Fitzroy & Ron Dobosz
4th Net - 65, Rich Tworog & John Lenhart
5th Net - 66, Bob DiRico & Mark Trachey
6th Net - 66, Eric Newell & R. Oatway
7th Net - 66, Mr. Jackson & Mr. Leone
Closest to Pin #17 - Art Silva
Closest to Pin #8 - Jack Neville
Long drive - Rich Tworog

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Courses are a green belt asset

continued from page 6

- Golf courses offer an increasingly popular recreational outlet for senior citizens.
- Golf courses are significant components of current soil and water conservation programs.
- Golf courses offer young people the opportunity to caddy and to be exposed to beneficial work and social environments.
- Golf courses can be a primary factor in the decision to buy a home or locate in a given community. The local real estate salespeople will agree that the golf course is one of their best selling aids.
- Golf courses can be a determining factor in a company's decision to move in or out of a particular community.
- Golf courses influence builders and developers in creative design plans and compatible layouts for communities.
- Golf courses are unique as a recreational facility and conservation land bank with no acquisition cost to the community.
- Golf course members often represent individual tax levels that are particularly meaningful to the local tax rolls.
- Golf courses normally operate on limited club liquor licenses, thus providing neighborhoods with a self-controlled and restrained atmosphere.
- Golf courses in many communities allow high school and college golf teams - as well as service clubs, policemen and firemen, and local public officials - to use their facilities at minimal or no charge.
- Golf courses often make their facilities available to non-member guests for civic and social affairs, thus acting as a public relations element for the community.
- Golf courses can be an important buffer zone to real estate development and therefore a cushion for potential open-space concerns that might arise.
- Golf courses often have members who contribute regularly to the scholarship aid of deserving caddies in many areas of the country.
- Golf courses are an influencing factor in the overall tax base of a community. Those properties that are adjacent or within a particular radius of a course will consistently reflect a higher appraisal - additional revenues at no added cost to the community.
- Golf courses in a community are often open to bird watchers, strollers, joggers, cyclists, and other nature lovers.
- Golf courses, whether public or private, share in providing recreation to the total community. While private facilities relieve, in part, the municipal responsibility to build additional public courses, they also act as a strong support group for golf development in the community.

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