



# CHIPS & PUTTS

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## Golf Rules Trivia:



Bob shanks a shot underneath a bush and is left with a impossible next shot. Upon closer examination, he discovers that his ball is located in casual water under the bush. Is Bob entitled to relief from the casual water without penalty?

Answer located  
on Page 8.



## Mark Eisele, CGCS, Superintendent Country Club at Woodloch Springs

The June meetings will be held at The Country Club at Woodloch Springs. Mark Eisele, CGCS, has been the superintendent there during the construction and opening in 1992. The 18 hole layout is a Rocky Roquemore design and sits on 402 acres. The all bentgrass course consists of Pennlinks greens, Penncross tees, and Penneagle fairways. It averages approximately 21,000 rounds a year, and Mark hires up to 24 employees during the peak of the summer. They are currently planning a new state of the art driving range to be developed on 13 acres.

On a more personal note, Mark is a SUNY Delhi graduate and was the assistant prior to taking the bull by the horns at Woodloch. Mark has been married to Nancy for three years and some of his hobbies include fishing and Civil War history.



## President's Message.....

It was a beautiful day at Olde Homestead! We all appreciate how Todd Ahner was able to have the sun shining and the course in great shape. Thanks go to Todd and his staff for the great hospitality. Thanks also to Charlie McGill and Ed Shearon for providing the educational portion of this meeting. Quite an extensive presentation!

The next scheduled meeting site is at Woodloch Springs. Mark Eisele and his staff always have the course in great shape. Hope to see you.

I know some of you have asked why the meeting dates are set too close or too far apart. We are fortunate to have hosts and the dates they give us we must adjust our schedules to accordingly. We are trying to get the meeting notices out at least four weeks prior to the event.

The raffle ticket sales were a little slower than we had hoped. Some people did return these tickets stating that it was a bad idea or they didn't have the time to sell them. Hopefully, more and more will come to realize it is a great giveaway gift and/or something to hand out to our hardworking staff members. Thanks to all those who participated in this fundraiser and to the host courses.

The July meeting will be held at Fox Hill Country Club. I hope we will continue to have the course in great shape. By then the weather should have settled and achieved some sort of consistency. At this meeting we will be inviting Grounds Chairmen and General Managers. We hope to have an open forum roundtable discussion. On the meeting notice you will have an opportunity to request a topic for discussion or question to be answered.

See you at the meetings!

*Ron Garrison, CGCS*

## From the Editor's Desk.....

Spring greetings to all. I don't know what April in Paris is like, but I got a good taste of what April in May is like. After last year, I vowed to never complain about a rainy day again, so that is all I will say.

Our first two meetings have gone well, and our hosts have given us very enjoyable days. While attendance has been consistent, everyone agrees that we need more superintendents to attend these meetings. The opportunity to see how your peers manage their courses, as well as the chance to exchange information with other industry professionals, is priceless. Everyone has something to gain at these meetings. Since we are attempting to run these meetings on a breakeven policy, there is a greater importance placed on your commitment when you sign up to attend. If you decide to cancel your reservation, please do so in a timely manner so we can relay an accurate number of attendees to the host club. Remember that they must schedule their preparation and staff beforehand. If we can refund your cancellation, we shall do so, but if we are charged by the host club for "no-shows", then you will not be refunded.

*Eric Reed*



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## TO TREE OR NOT TO TREE

By Ron Forse

*A Guide to the proper use of trees on golf courses.*



There are few things in nature which give us as much enjoyment as a beautiful, mature tree. Who is not awestruck by a giant, gnarly White Oak? And who can pass a huge multi-trunk Banyan Ficus tree without stopping to take in the sight? Trees are one of God's marvelous creations. They are also an integral part of the American landscape and thus an ingredient in our golf course settings.

George C. Thomas, Jr., who gave us several fine courses in the Los Angeles area, succinctly described the importance of proper tree planting: "Trees and shrubbery beautify the course, and natural growth should never be cut down if it is possible to save it; but he who insists on preserving a tree where it spoils a shot should have nothing to say about golf course construction."

The courses are legion where the original design intent and strategies have been altered or nullified by trees. Often these are called "course beautification" programs but often they end up ruining the charm of the original design. Master architects like Mr. Thomas or Alister MacKenzie would have much to say to the green committees who have blanketed their original designs with tall woody plants of all sorts. And rightly so, because the single greatest factor in altering the character of their masterpieces has been what the Scots call "bunkers in the sky."

Golf courses should predominantly be designed and built around *ground features*, whether they be existing natural topography or man-made features such as bunkers and swales. But golf courses should not be designed around trees. Ben Crenshaw once said that what he loves most about Augusta National is that it allows "full expression of recovery." The wide corridors between the tree-lined fairways enable stray shots to still be played off turf instead of punched sideways out of trees.

Dr. MacKenzie's wonderful design at Augusta National, though extensively altered, still remains in spirit because Augusta places such a premium on strategic play by creating preferred and not-so-preferred sides of the fairway from which to approach the putting surface. If trees were planted directly on the sides of the fairway, it would cut off the various strategic routes from the tee to green. One could name a multitude of real life examples to show this, and suffice to

say that almost every classic course in America has suffered this malady to one degree or another.

One of the principle aspects of a good golf course is that it is strategic. Without alternate routes to the green, a golf hole becomes one-dimensional and takes on the characteristics of just one repetitive avenue of playing the hole. And once our golf holes lose their interest and only reward the physically superior, the true thrill of the game is lost.

Trees and new "forward" tees are the two most controversial topics when planning improvements for existing courses, with trees being the hot button issue at virtually every course I visit. When it is recommended to remove a tree because of its interference on the play of a hole, or its root competition with the surrounding turf, or with its casting too much shade on the grass beneath, one would think that you were trying to kill someone's Aunt Millie! Matters get really sticky when the club in contention has implemented a memorial tree program over the years. One can barely trim trees planted under these auspices, let alone cut one down!

It is a common misconception that one should not see another golf hole from the one which you are playing. Cutting off a vista violates the enjoyment of views across the golf property. Aren't golf courses supposed to be beautiful places? Why should tree lines choke every vista and close them off? Anyone who has visited Augusta National, Baltusrol, or Riviera will tell you that the wonderful open sections in front of the clubhouses not only create a wonderful view of the approaching fairways, but also lends variety to what are otherwise tree-lined courses.

Well-designed tree planting programs, a most rare breed, appear indigenous. Trees must be arranged in such a way that they do not portray man's hand in their arrangement. Every feature of a golf course should be entirely natural and fit with the existing topography of the property. Most of all, if you are going to plant trees, place them in groves and always avoid the "row" effect, for there is nothing less natural than a straight line of pines you could tie a line to and hang laundry from!

H.S. Colt, the British architect who gave Alister MacKenzie his start in the architecture business, once stated that trees "are a fluky and obnoxious

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hazard." Colt's description is most appropriate when trees have been used for the purpose of making golf holes more difficult. A fine example of how not to plant a tree can be seen at the corner of many once classic dogleg holes. Where the bunkering on the inside of the turn has become too easy to carry for the tee shot, the inexpensive "remedy" quite often is seen to be tree planting. And usually the fast growing type is picked, producing an inferior focal point for the hole.

Bunkering the inside of a dogleg creates strategic playing options. One can carry or play around the bunker to try to run the ball along the edge. Trees in lieu of bunkering or other such ground features force the hole to be played essentially in one way: away from the corner of the dogleg. This is a common mistake and a classic example of how strategy is snatched from a hole with the planting of just a few trees. The real solution to accommodate new equipment and longer-hitting is to extend the tee or continue the bunkering or other topographic features further from the tree, thus maintaining the original strategy and shot value.

All this is not to say that one should never use a tree as part of a hole design. There are many beautiful examples where trees are an integral part of the strategy, such as at the famed 17<sup>th</sup> at Cypress Point. These strategically placed trees must be long-lasting and beautiful in their own right, otherwise, they are useless and at some point the hole becomes susceptible to drastic changes should lightning or disease strike them dead.

Trees are also very useful in framing views across a landscape. They are advantageous as backdrops

for green sites, but this has also been sadly overdone in modern times. The putting surface, its contrasting bunkers, and the surrounding topography are almost always enough to give "definition." The idea of using trees to add depth perception is fine from time to time, but how often we see it grossly over-worked to the point where committees, or even architects, forget the agronomic headaches created when the trees become fully grown.

On this agronomic side, trees should never be planted so that important parts of the east and southeast sides on the golf course are severely shaded. It's vital that the morning sun be allowed to reach the ground so the soil can warm up. This allows the turf to grow throughout the day, thereby helping it recover from stress and damage. Our tall wooded friends should also never be planted too close to greens, and shallow rooted trees, which bring so many safety problems with them, simply have no place on a golf course. Green committees are often absent-minded to sunlight issues and this is where a qualified superintendent or golf architect is vital in directing a tree planting program.

With trees often less is more. It's better to have a few well-spaced and developed trees planted with room to mature, than a multitude of spindly trunks crowding themselves out for sunlight. Too often, short-sided tree planting programs want quick results with weaker, faster growing trees instead of purchasing hardier specimens that will last for generations.

We must also remember that trees simply are not necessary in the design of a golf course. Many of the best layouts in the world do not rely on trees in their design scheme and some such as the Old Course at St. Andrews, or Shinnecock Hills and Sand Hills Golf Club here

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in America, do not rely on them at all. Many American country clubs are beginning to see the benefits of eliminating hundreds of trees, not only for the maintenance budget, but also in improving the enjoyment of their golf course.

One of our truly classic tournament venues, Oakmont Country Club outside of Pittsburgh, PA, has removed nearly fifteen hundred trees in the last five years. The original "rugged" look of Oakmont had been preserved until the death of the course's co-architect W.C. Fownes. Sometimes after he passed away in 1949, the roughs were planted with thousands of trees. The current committees at Oakmont discovered three key features of the course were enhanced by the removal of trees: (1) the return of some freedom to recover from poor shots and hazards, (2) improved agronomic conditions, and (3) restoration of the original, superior design.

Oakmont's bold tree removal program is a good model in recognizing that we do not need thousands of trees on our American courses to make them more interesting. On the contrary, fewer trees only ease the burden placed on the club's maintenance budget, enhance the strategy of a well designed hole, and reward the expert player who can create skillful recovery shots.

### Turf & Agricultural Equipment Program

For the past couple of years Penn State's Agricultural & Biological engineering Department has talked about a Turfgrass & Agricultural Equipment (TAE) Service Technicians Certificate program. A class of ten students started this program in late October 2002, and continued on through a spring session that ended in early March 2003. These students will return in the fall of 2003 for an additional 16 weeks of classes that will prepare them for a career in servicing turf or agricultural equipment.

For the period from March to October 2003, these students are interning in some aspect of the equipment service industry. Some are working as mechanics at golf courses, while others have returned to the family farm for the summer. Either way, a documented internship is part of the certificate program.

Following this successful introduction of the program, we are asking the Pennsylvania chapters of the GCSAA to help in ensuring the con-

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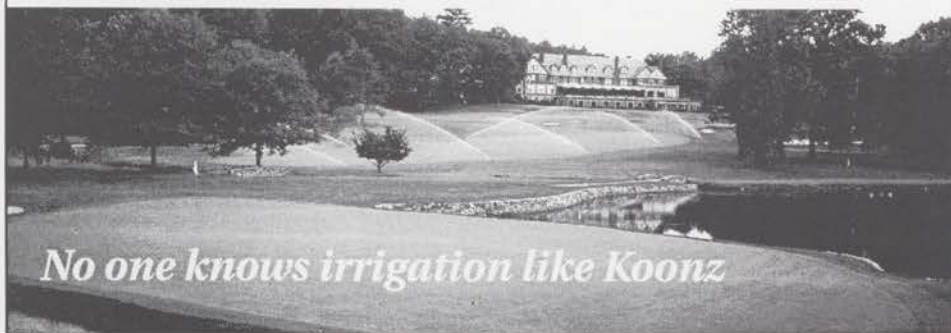
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### 2003 Northeast News Update

By David Oatis, Director, and Jim Skorulski and Jim Baird, Agronomists

## Spring has Sprung!!!

I've mowed the lawn twice now, the tulips and jonquils are blooming, and my allergies are in full swing, so I guess that means spring is really here! Many areas of the Northeast have experienced some better growing weather, so recovery of damaged or recently planted turf is underway. Unfortunately, temperatures have been fluctuating wildly, as they often do this time of year, and consistent growth has not yet been achieved. Courses that sustained significant winter injury to putting greens still have quite a way to go before the damaged greens can be opened.

Plan on putting greens being a bit bumpy for a few more weeks, as turfgrass growth evens out and cultivation scars heal. The golf season has gotten off to a late start, and it will take a bit longer than normal for the courses to produce topnotch playing conditions.

*Poa annua* seed heads are popping up at area golf courses, and we observed our first hyperodes weevils of the season. This pest has been consistently on the rise for the last 6-8 years, and there is every reason to believe that will continue to be the case. Remember, cases of weevil damage to creeping bentgrass also seem to be on the rise. The weevils always take the annual bluegrass first, but bentgrass still can sustain significant damage. If you've had a history of weevil activity, the sprayer should be out there. If you haven't ever experienced this pest, don't assume that you won't! Numerous courses experienced weevil activity for the first time last year, so get out and start looking for them.

#### Upcoming Events

Turf and Landscape Field Day at Cornell University is scheduled for June 17 at the Turf and Landscape Research Center on Bluegrass Lane, in Ithaca NY. Visit <http://www.hort.cornell.edu/instruction/turf/fieldday.htm> for more information.

#### Advisory Service Subscription

The deadline is just about here, so don't forget to submit your payment for a Turf Advisory Service (TAS) visit by May 15. Doing so will guarantee you a **\$300 discount** off of the regular cost of a ½ day (\$1,500) or full-day (\$2,000) visit. Payment for at least one visit by May 15 ensures the same discount for subsequent visits requested throughout the 2003 season. If you would like more information on the TAS in the Northeast, contact us at 610-515-1660.

Source: Northeast Region Green Section- Dave Oatis, Director [doatis@usga.org](mailto:doatis@usga.org), Jim Baird, Agronomist [jbaird@usga.org](mailto:jbaird@usga.org), Jim Skorulski, Agronomist [jskorulski@usga.org](mailto:jskorulski@usga.org).

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*A message from your golf course superintendent and GCSAA*



Continued from Page 5

2003. Currently, we have only four applications for the Fall 2003 class. We need additional students if this effort is to continue.

How can your chapter help? Does your golf course have someone currently working summers that will benefit from a certificate program of this type? If so, let them know about this program! We will be pleased to send them additional information, and meet with them here at Penn State University Park if they would like to tour our facilities. Also, our first year students are willing to talk with prospective students.

Talk to guidance counselors at high schools in your area. As you now, most graduating high school students have never considered a career as a service technician or golf course equipment maintenance technician. Jobs exist, but students and guidance counselors have not been exposed to this career path. If you need Turf and Ag Equipment brochures to pass along to guidance counselors or students in

your area, let us know and we will gladly send you what you need.

Please contact Program Director Dr. Jim Hilton at 814-863-1817, or by email at [jwh2@psu.edu](mailto:jwh2@psu.edu). Visit the TAE website at [abe.psu.edu/TAE](http://abe.psu.edu/TAE) for additional information and a listing of courses.

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# POCONO ROUNDUP

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE POCONO  
TURFGRASS ASSOCIATION

## May Meeting Results At Olde Homestead Golf Club

*From the Green Box Trivia Question:*

### Golf Rules Trivia Answer:

If it is clearly unreasonable for Bob to play a stroke at his ball because of the bush, then he is not entitled to a free drop from the casual water. If Bob's ball was in a playable position, then he would be entitled to a free drop, and the improvement of his line of play would be considered his good fortune.

1st Place Low Gross—Mark Fine 73  
2nd Place Low Gross—Ed Shearon 77

1st Place Low Net—Charlie McGill 65  
2nd Place Low Net—Duane Schell 65

### Did You Know....

It actually rained more and was cooler  
in May 2002 than in May 2003!  
HARD TO BELIEVE!!



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