



CHIPS & PUTTS

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE
POCONO TURFGRASS ASSOCIATION

Founded in
1936

VOL. 3, NO. 5

JULY 1997

BEHIND THE SCENES AT THE U.S. OPEN.....

By Tom Weinert, Jr.

The entire course was close enough to perfection to satisfy even the most discriminating of the USGA officials. Only by being there, however, could one appreciate the beauty of this exceptionally manicured property known as the Congressional Country Club, and home for several days to the 1997 U.S. Open.

And there I was, moving from tee to fairway to green with the best of the best, those special people that help make golf what it is today. Oh sure, the Tiger, the Shark, the Bear, and all the other greats were awesome, but they are not who I am speaking about. These behind the scenes "heroes" of the week were the guys who helped prepare and maintain what would be one of the toughest playing courses in U.S. Open history. One hundred and fifty-six players with only three finishing under par certainly shows that some of the honors should go to the course and the best grounds crew ever assembled.

The electricity and camaraderie of the group was overwhelming, certainly a tribute to our leader of the week, Paul Latshaw, Superintendent of Congressional. Many months and years of effort were contributed by Paul, his assistant Sam Green, and their approximately fifty member crew who brought the course to the point of readiness. Our job for the week was to add the final touches and stay in a heavy and consistent maintenance mode.

Paul's auxiliary crew, of which I was honored to be a member, consisted of more than seventy-five volunteers from all over the U.S. and from as far away as Australia and Thailand. They were, for the most part, superintendents of their own magnificent

courses who knew the business as well as anyone. The really amazing thing about them was they had come to be part of this moment, to help their good friend and mentor, Paul Latshaw. They, as much as anyone, wanted this to be the most meticulously manicured and hard playing course in golf history. You be the judge as to whether we measured up to the task.

"And there I was, moving...with the best of the best, those special people that help make golf what it is today."

Preparations began Sunday afternoon, June 8, with a general meeting in the tent of all the regular and volunteer crew members. Assignments were given out and everyone was up to the challenge. Monday

morning came earlier than most of us would like, starting with a light breakfast at about 5:00 A.M. The crews fanned out across Congressional as ten greens cutters and five tee cutters were followed by the three team members doing the clean-up. The twenty fairway mowers worked hand-in-hand with the "manure" crew (clipping pickup) and the six fairway whippers. There were 125 in all, working as a team and with an enthusiasm that is rarely found.

My assignment was to be one of the fairway cutters, moving along fairway after fairway, assuring that our mowers were accurately set to assure both a fair and challenging play. The work didn't seem hard at first because of the exuberance

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From the Editor's Desk.....

Here it is!! A few thoughts as I sit here at my word processor with the third or fourth consecutive 90 degree day with much needed precipitation now taken out of the forecast. I can't even remember one 90 degree day all last year. I suppose that is one of the ever elusive, but irresistible enticements that draws us all to this profession. The CHALLENGE. No two years are the same. With the stress of the summer upon many of us, it is also a time to take a good hard look at ourselves and the life we are living. Of late, it seems like the reminders to take care of the things that matter most are everywhere - on Turfnet, in other chapter newsletters, in the local papers, and in countless books written on the subject.



Following is some sage advice from a man named Jim Rohn reprinted from an article by Dick Matthews in the Summer 1997 issue of *A Patch of Green*, the official publication of the Greater Detroit Golf Course Superintendents Association.

- What you become is what makes you valuable. Improving upon yourself can only make you more valuable.
- Work harder on yourself than you do on your job. In the process you become much better at what you do at work without even trying to improve on that part of your life.
- Develop a philosophy for everything you do. If you don't, you will be at the mercy of all the other people who have developed their own philosophies and in many cases will influence others around you solely on their will to control you and not necessarily on their knowledge of what you deal with on a daily basis.
- Take better care of yourself. Eat better, exercise, and take time away from work to make yourself more productive at work. Vitality is a major part of success. People judge you by your appearance. That's human nature.
- Discipline yourself to finish what you start. Discipline is the biggest step toward change.
- Stop procrastinating. Let go of this self-imposed limitation. Putting off leads to disaster.
- Success is 10% inspiration and 90% perspiration. Anyone who has tried to improve upon themselves realizes that personal change is very difficult. Mr. Rohn suggests trying to change only one or two habits at a time. The major step to achieve personal change is discipline; simply finishing what we start.
- Discover other interests away from work.
- Don't try to understand everything people do. The only one you can change is you.
- Never stop educating yourself. You're dealing with mother nature and who knows what she has in mind. The most successful superintendents succeed by keeping themselves current with the industry through education.

I read the article with much interest. A lot of the points really hit home. Hang in there. Cooler temperatures and more precipitation is just around the corner.

Scott A. Schukraft, Editor



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of the moment. I will confess, however, that by Thursday, my aching feet were relieved to be transferred to the greens rolling gang.

The mornings, which always began before sunrise, would see a coffee break at 9:30 A.M. with work resuming once again until about 11:00 A.M. Following the practice rounds and the actual tournament, which was underway on Thursday, we were always back at the course in the late afternoon for clean-up, often working until dark.

The golfers, those guys we had come to see, began their practice rounds Monday morning. It was quite an experience being on the same course with the likes of Jack Nicklaus, Greg Norman, Tiger Woods, Fred Couples, and a list of just about everyone in the "Who's Who" of golf. The players were very focused for this tournament and, for the most part, not open to a lot of distractions of any kind. They were friendly enough, but we knew they had come with a job to do.

Some of the great moments, and there were many, come readily to mind. Watching the foursome of Greg Norman, Jack and Greg Nicklaus, and John Daly approach the green on which I was working was more than memorable; or on the 9th during practice rounds, when Tiger laid up short and the crowd egged him to go for it. As most of us know, it doesn't take much to get aggressive, and Tiger dropped another ball at 280 yards out, coming up pin high to the left of the green. The spectators will relive that moment more than once.

A truly exciting behind the scenes event, which I am sure you didn't catch on camera, occurred on Sunday. The field had narrowed, the course was playing tough at slightly over par, and Ernie Els would emerge several hours later as the tournament winner at three under par. We wanted this last day to be

the best and the extra effort from our tired bones was worth every minute of it. We had started at 4:45 A.M. because of previous rain delays and converged on the 17th fairway with 30 greens mowers moving in unison, marching as a single team that epitomized the activities that occurred over the course of the week. This was a tribute to the "golf greats", the best in the business and their leader who brought all of this together.

All in all, the golfers were impressed, the USGA was impressed, and we were delighted. Not only because we were given the opportunity to participate in this great event, but because we were there to assist our friend Paul Latshaw. This champion in his own right, having hosted four Masters, two U.S. Opens, a U.S. Senior Open, and a PGA, has done as much for the game of golf as any individual. The week of June 9, 1997 will be long remembered in that scrapbook imprinted on my mind.

Tom Weinert, Jr. is a Technical Sales Representative for Growth Products, Ltd. and resides in Swiftwater, PA.



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the Penn State Golf Turf Conference at the Nittany Lion Inn in State College on November 4-6, 1997. The event is attended by golf course superintendents and chemical company representatives. It is co-sponsored by The Pennsylvania State University and The Pennsylvania Turfgrass Council. For more information you can contact Peter Landschoot, Dept. of Agronomy, 116 ASI Building, University Park, PA, 16802, 814-863-1017 OR P.T.C., P. O. Box 1078, Lemont, PA 16851-1078, 814-863-3475 or Fax 814-863-3479.



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HOW WELL DO YOU MANAGE TIME?.....

From: *Turf & Landscape Press* -
December 1995

Time Management experts say we can never really save time. We can only spend it. How effectively do you spend time? Do you plan your time carefully, treating minutes and hours as precious resources? Do you spend hour achieving personal and professional goals most important to you?

How well do you manage time? Grab a pencil and take this brief "time test."

Give yourself 3, 2, 1 or no points, according to the following scoring key, as you answer each question:

- If your answer is **always**, give yourself 3 points.
- If **usually**, 2 points
- If **occasionally/sometimes**, 1 point
- If **never or rarely**, 0 Points

1. Do you regularly review long-range goals for personal and professional life?
2. Do you spend a few minutes thinking about and planning your day before you start it?
3. Do you outline each day's appointments and key tasks in your calendar?
4. Do you list your tasks and activities in priority order and concentrate on the top priorities?
5. Do you keep and use an ongoing "to do" list, consisting of things you'd like to do in the future?
6. Do you handle most important tasks of day when you feel most alert?
7. Do you group similar tasks and do them all at the same time?
8. When you enter office or pick up mail, do you immediately discard messages and items you don't need?
9. When working on large project, do you break the task down into small chunks and work on one piece of the project at a time?
10. Do you shut your door or engage in "quiet time" when you must handle "detail work"?
11. Do you keep reference materials,

like telephone books, rolodexes and important manuals within arm's reach of your primary work area?

12. Do you organize your working tools, like pens, rulers, telephones and equipment, so they're ready to use the minute you want them?
13. Do you maintain a simple, but well-defined filing system into which you place all loose papers and materials?
14. In completing paperwork, do you handle each piece of paper only once?
15. Do you use dictating machine for memos, messages and correspondence?
16. Do you skim magazines, journals and reports to learn key information?
17. Do you use waiting time and travel time to handle small tasks or catch up on reading?
18. Do you make decisions and embark on courses of action quickly?
19. When you start a project or task, do you have "backup" plans which can be quickly and easily implemented if your original plans don't work out?
20. Do you keep your secretary, assistant or colleagues informed about your work so they can handle minor tasks without interrupting you?
21. Do you give clear instructions to subordinates and colleagues - clear enough so they don't have to come back to you with ongoing questions?
22. Do you set clear agendas for meetings - and stick to them?
23. Do you stop working on a task when you begin to feel stress or a loss of energy?
24. Do you keep a simple time log to assess systematically where and how you spend your time?
25. Do you take time each week to appraise your productivity and determine whether you've completed the goals you set out to accomplish?

SCORE YOURSELF

To determine your "time management quotient", total the number of points you received. If your score ranges between 65 and 75, congratulations! You're a fine time manager.

If your score ranges between 45 and 64 - not bad. But with some modest

improvements in your time management habits, you can probably become more productive.

If your score ranges between 25 and 44, you've got the right idea, but you'll have to work hard to begin using key time management principles in your life.

If your score is below 25, you've got a lot of work to do. With some intensive reading - or even a time management course - you can dramatically improve your work habits and achieve far more than you ever thought possible.

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Possible El Nino Brews in Pacific Ocean! Warm Seas Portend of Disruptive Weather....

The potent weather disrupter known as El Nino is returning, and government scientists say it is shaping up as one of the strongest climatic events of its kind on record.

An El Nino occurs when westward-blowing trade winds weaken, allowing a mass of warm water normally situated off Australia to drive eastward to western South America. The phenomenon got its name from the Spanish words for Baby Jesus because the huge, warm pool usually arrives around Christmas.

An El Nino can effect the weather in the United States in a variety of ways. For example, while it has often brought torrential rains to California, it

sometimes causes drought there. It can have a number of effects on the Northeast. In one mode, El Nino sends strong winter storms churning up the East Coast - and if they encounter cold Canadian air, blizzards can result. In another mode, it can block the cold air and make for a balmy winter. The Southeast could see a decline in hurricanes, and Australia, Africa and Indonesia could suffer severe droughts. While it is too early to know for sure, the scientists say, this latest resurgence of abnormally high ocean temperatures in the eastern Pacific, which cause atmospheric chain reactions around the world, could equal the 1982-83 El Nino, the most disruptive in this century.

The Climate Prediction Center of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Camp Spring, MD, said the warming should continue in the months ahead, bringing peak El Nino conditions next winter. The main

impact should be felt from November through March.

By the fall, according to the Climate Prediction Center, the evolving El Nino weather pattern may give some indication of what winter will have in store for us.

Forecasters have developed great skill in predicting El Nino's comings and goings, but their track record is not perfect. One of the first scientists to forecast El Nino successfully, Dr. Mark Cane of the Lamont Doherty Earth Observatory at Columbia University, said the computer model on which his predictions were based "is not coming up" with El Nino this year.

Other models have predicted it, he said, adding that the warming tropical seas and other signs make it look "almost unavoidable." But he added that "nature has a way of fooling us, so we'll see what happens."



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MEDIA CONFERENCE with Ben Crenshaw & Judy Bell

The following comments are excerpts from a media conference featuring Ben Crenshaw conducted Feb. 11 at GCSAA's 68th International Golf Course Conference and Show in Las Vegas:

Q: What importance does the golf course superintendent have to the game?: "Without a doubt, the most important person on the golf course is the man who takes care of it. It's backwards (the recognition). Those men and women are far more important than we give them credit for. They do a wonderful, incredible job, under some tough scrutiny, often times by people who do not know anything about the job. They are amazing."

Q: On his tourney play: "I still enjoy competitive golf, and I feel like I've got a lot left to play."

Q: On current golf course architecture: "Designers are doing incredible creations on what can be called throw-away properties. We are returning to a more classic design, which I like. I feel the timeless architectural designs are the best."

Q: The basis for his love of golf course architecture and history: "What started it was my first USGA Junior at the Country Club of Brookline. It was the first time I had left the state of

Texas. I was so scared to take a divot. I think I was there two days before I finally took a divot. It was so beautiful. I really fell in love with the game, the architecture and history, so it really started right there."



The following comments are excerpts from a media conference featuring Judy Bell, USGA president, conducted Feb. 10 at the GCSAA's 68th International Golf Course Conference and Show in Las Vegas:

Q: Role of the golf course superintendent in the game: "We have a wonderful relationship with GCSAA. I believe we are on the same page as to what we can do to improve the game of golf. We have one mind in the direction we want to go. I can't tell you how important the golf course superintendents are to the game of golf. We need to preach that, not to the choir, but to the world. I don't think there is anything more beautiful than a golf course. We need to portray our work with the environment in a positive and beautiful way."

Q: Technological advances in the game: "Technology can get in the way of how golf should be played. We are so

focused on the latest gadget. Courses can remain pristine and natural; they do not need to be perfect. One of the charms of our game is it isn't like basketball or football where the field is the same. Our playing field is different every time we play. Golf courses are natural, not contrived." **(On green speed):** "Who says that the challenge is greater for speed than it is weight and line? As golfers, we blame everything except where the blame should go - us."

Q: On the golf course superintendent: "I don't think they have a great enough identity today. I don't think the public knows how unusual and creative their job is. I'd like to see that message get out."

Q: On USGA green construction specifications: "We have 15 greens constructed around the country to do research. Real-world testing is important. We want to take our testing to the playing field. Sometimes our specifications have taken some heat, but we strive to be good listeners. If there are concerns of questions we will always listen. We are hoping that this variety testing of grasses will be the proof of the pudding."



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A message from your golf course superintendent and GCSAA

MEETING NOTES

COUNTRY CLUB AT WOODLOCH SPRINGS

Country Club at Woodloch Springs brought a gathering of 68 golfers. We played a four person scramble to help play move along through the hills and the gorges. Some players were heard to say: "I can carry that gorge;" or "These homes are beautiful - glad I missed the windows;" or "Here's my ball on the deck;" or "Think there's any snakes?"

Woodloch opened in 1992. It is a Par 72, measuring 6,579 yards from the gold tees. It offers bentgrass tees, fairways, and greens and was voted one of the top ten new courses by *Golf Magazine* in 1993 and a Four Star Winner in 1996-1997 by *Golf Digest*.

Mark Eisele, Superintendent of this beautiful 18-hole layout, is assisted by Jeff Coccodrilli. Mark is a graduate of

SUNY at Delhi, with an associate degree in horticulture. He was the assistant at Woodloch for two years and has been the super for the last 4 1/2 years. He is a member of the PTGA, PTC and GCSAA. I would like to thank Mark for inviting the Pocono Turfgrass Association to his club. It was fantastic!

We would also like to thank John Pillar, Golf Professional, and his staff for the help throughout our golf event. John had the pleasure and honor of playing in the 1992 *United States Open*.

Winners of the Pocono Scramble:

Championship Flight:

- 1st - 61 John Vojick Scott Andre
Gene Huelster Steve Luty
2nd - 63 John Downer Robert Vail
John McAndrew Ed Cimoch
3rd - 64 Hal Parr Ian Kunesch
Jeff Lansdowne Bill Smith

First Flight

- 1st - 65 Thomas Zimich Phillip Zimich
Walter Zimich
Scott VanGorder

- 2nd - 65 Garry Phillips, Sr., Gary, Jr.
Mark Albino, Chris Phillips
3rd - 66 Kelly Kressler, Ron Garrison
John Chassard Tony Grieco

Second Flight

- 1st - 67 Jim Carville Scott McConnell
John Bodock Bill Rahling
2nd - 68 Tony Barletta John Meyers
Ed Beson Tony Trefilietti
3rd - 69 Jonathan Suitch Steve Colvin
Jim MacLaren

Closest to Pin - Hole 8:

John Vojick

Longest Drive - Hole 9

Mark Albino

Closest to Pin - Hole 17

Jack Bird

Jack Bird, Golf Committee



1997 MEETING SITES

JULY 22, 1997

Edgewood in the Pines
Drums, PA
Anthony Barletta, Host Supt.
Speaker: Bob Dickison,
Upper Montclair C.C.

AUGUST 18, 1997 - PTGA Clambake

Blue Ridge Country Club
Palmerton, PA
Paul Weiss, Host Superintendent

SEPT. 16, 1997 Philadelphia

Paupack Hills Golf and Country Club
Greentown, PA
Mark Monahan, CGCS, Host Supt.
Speaker: Dr. Peter Landscoot,
Penn State

OCTOBER 7, 1997 -

PTC Valentine Tournament
Huntsville Golf Club
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Scott A. Schukraft, Host Supt.

OCTOBER 1997

Split Rock Country Club
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POCONO ROUNDUP

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE POCONO
TURFGRASS ASSOCIATION

Please note the PTGA is now taking nominations for the October elections. If you would like to nominate someone, please call Jeff Peters, Nominations Chairman.

We are also soliciting PTGA Meeting Sites for 1998. What better way to show off your course than to host a PTGA meeting for all your fellow PTGA members.

For those who are interested, two research articles appeared in recent issues of Crop Science, a Journal published by the Crop Science Society of America. They are as follows:

"Effect of Repeated Fungicide Applications on Creeping Bentgrass Turf" by Zachary J. Reicher and Clark S. Throssell

&

Fertilizer Influences on Soil and Turf Quality

by Wayne R. Kussow

For reprints of these research reports, contact Scott Schukraft.

The Annual Joseph Valentine Memorial Golf Tournament will be held at the Huntville Golf Club in Lehman, PA on October 7, 1997. Proceeds from this event will benefit the Turf Project at Penn State University. Contact John Chassard (610-967-4643) or Todd Struse (215-884-2590) for more information. Anyone interested in assisting with the preparation of the course on the day of the event, please contact Scott Schukraft, Superintendent at 717-675-3800.

According to golf shoe manufacturer Foot-Joy, as of April 2, 1,524 U.S. golf courses had banned metal spikes. Could a Softspike Survey in Northeastern PA be in the making?

We would like to welcome the following new members:

Nestor L. Dickert, Jr., Class C, Lehigh Country Club

Scott Gergal, Class AS

Scott McConnell, Class B, Wild Pines G. C.

Patrick Williams - Class AF, Penn State Seed Co.



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