

CONNECTICUT CLIPPINGS



Connecticut Association of Golf Course Superintendents

Devoted to sharing knowledge and experience for better turf

August, 1990

Volume 24, No. 2

**CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION
OF GOLF COURSE
SUPERINTENDENTS**

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Connecticut Clippings
is an official publication of
The Connecticut Association of
Golf Course Superintendents.

Newsletter Staff
John F. Streeter, CGCS, Editor
Michael Dukette, Technical Copy

The object of this Association is to encourage increased knowledge of golf course management and greater professionalism through education, research, exchange of practical experience, and the well-being of each individual member.

U R I TURF FIELD DAY
August 22nd
University of Rhode Island
Kingston, RI

President's Message

Thomas Watroba

When was the last time you played golf at your course? Yesterday, last week, last month, or it's been so long you can't remember. My next question is when is the last time you played golf period? My guess is that many superintendents will have to give both of these questions a little thought to come up with an accurate and honest answer.

I know what you're thinking. It's the height of the season - the time of year that separates the men from the boys and the girls from the women, and this guy wants to know if we're playing enough golf. Right Tom, I'm going to tee it up just as soon as I'm through dealing with chasing wilt, patch diseases, weather-wearly help and equipment, three tournaments this week, petty complaints, beat up tees, an irrigation system that works great until the weekend, ditto for some employees, funny looking spots, what blew up? And, where did all this clover come from, anyway?

Seriously, I'm well aware of how intense matters can get on any golf course during mid-summer. Long hours, heat, and hectic schedules tend to transform the summer weeks into a blur, and can become physically and mentally draining. Necessary time off is usually spent away from a golf course with family or friends, preferably near water and air conditioning. Even superintendents who are truly avid golfers can struggle with the desire to play at this time of the year.

The point of this message to you is the importance of making an effort to play some golf. Ability and scores are not important. The fact that you are playing is. If your schedule is just too demanding, get out on your course early in the morning with a couple of clubs and a putter and hit some shots. Find out for yourself if that clover in the rough is as difficult as they're saying; or, if that pin placement on 12 was a little unfair. Maybe the greens are a little bit too firm, the fairways slightly spongy. Sure we value the opinions of our professionals, our staff, a trusted member, or friend who plays the course; but, remember, aside from mother nature and budget limitations, the superintendent is the one who controls the playability of the golf course. Examine the course as a golfer as well as the superintendent.

There are superintendents within CAGCS who are getting together to play each other's courses. Perhaps they are not playing as often as they would like or had planned, but they are playing. This type of interaction amongst local superintendents who share regional problems and concerns is what our organization is all about. It can be an educational experience as well as a nice way to better get to know your neighboring superintendents.

You can convince yourself that you are just too busy to play until after Labor Day (or as one of our colleagues so aptly puts it, "It ain't over till Columbus Day."), or you can make some time to get together with some of your neighboring supers and play golf. If you can't, get a group together and at least try to get out and play on your own course.

Often we become so involved in the science of turfgrass management and golf course grooming, we forget what this profession is really about. Golf, in my opinion, is the finest game man ever invented.

Loose Impediments

Frank Hannigan

A Super Job

We live in a society of declining standards. It's not easy to put your finger on anything that's better today than it was 20 or 30 years ago. Our air is lousy, our politics disgraceful and our music appalling. Golf courses, though, are in better shape than they used to be.

That's partly because there is more knowledge about how to maintain delicate turfgrass under conditions never intended by nature, but mostly because today's turfgrass managers are better at their jobs.

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.

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 hands. Golf course superintendents historically have been the game's forgotten servants because they were hidden behind compost piles two miles from the clubhouse and wore old clothes.

"The machines used to maintain a golf course are complicated. A fancy modern fairway unit costs as much as a Mercedes - and when it busts, you don't get a loaner."

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.

The superintendent's relatively low station in life was mirrored by his income - traditionally lower than his colleagues, the clubhouse manager and the pro.

Superintendents are no longer hurting in the financial department. Their salaries soared during the 1980's. The national average for an 18-hole course is close to \$60,000, but salaries of \$100,000 are not uncommon, and the superstars of the trade earn \$125,000 and more.

And why not? The job has become increasingly technical and demanding. Annual maintenance budgets of \$500,000 are commonplace, and that figure doesn't include the cost of new equipment. The machines used to maintain a golf course are complicated. A fancy modern fairway unit costs as much as a Mercedes. And when it busts, you don't get a loaner.

The superintendent also is a personnel manager with a year-round staff of 10 or more, supplemented in the summer by college students who have to be watched continually lest they make a break for the beach.

Most superintendents are college-trained. Many have four-year degrees in agronomy from such universities as Penn State and the University of California at Davis. Others have two-year associate degrees from various state institutions. Still others train by taking two 10-week winter programs, a specialty of Rutgers University in New Jersey. Graduates usually start out as assistant superintendents. The better ones are running their own shows by



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A super job
(continued from page 2.)

"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."

their mid to late 20's.

Despite the favorable trends, the maintenance of American golf courses continues to be beset with some basic flaws. Foremost among these is the tendency to overwater. Overwatering is a cop-out on the part of superintendents who know better but react to the pressure of golfers who want everything a rich green. (Joe Dey, former executive director of the USGA, once labeled this hue "cemetery green.")

Overwatering is a short-term fix and a long-range disaster. It weakens the root system of the grass, causes compaction, invites plant disease and certainly encourages the spread of the annual bluegrass called *Poa annua* - which is okay for golf courses until it's subjected to high heat and humidity. Then it tends to die. When you see a brown golf course in the summer, you're looking at dead *Poa annua*.

Superintendents will also tell you they dump water on courses to achieve that phony green look because televised golf tournaments push them in that direction. The look of the Augusta National GC during the Masters telecast has become the standard, not only in this country but throughout the world.

There is also increasing pressure to produce putting greens that are superfast, like those at The Masters or at a U. S. Open. Golfers don't understand that those greens have been specially prepared for one week. They can't possibly be maintained at such speeds throughout the year.

Superintendents also have a problem with the high priests of modern golf course architecture. The complaint is that the sexiest looking courses, those built to attract attention when photographed from helicopters, are difficult and expensive to maintain because of their slopes and over-all artificiality.

I heard a superintendent from Austin complain at a conference of his peers that he is expected to maintain an "agronomic zoo" because the architect,

in a frenzy of false creativity, installed seven varieties of grass, only three of which made any sense in the middle of Texas.

The hot new topic among superintendents is the environment. People who take care of golf courses are, by their very nature, pro-environment. They wouldn't have gravitated toward their line of work if they were indifferent to the look and feel of the outdoors.

But they find themselves on the defensive and accused of being chemically careless. In a profession of 10,000, there are bound to be a few bad apples. But, by and large, superintendents - who have to be state licensed to apply pesticides - are sensitive and careful. If they aren't, they can go to jail.

The superintendent tends to be invisible until something goes wrong. Then he becomes a celebrity. That's true in both recreational golf and on the Tour.

Take the case of Fred Klauk, the man in charge of the TPC Stadium Course at Ponte Vedre, Fla., where there was a monumental flap earlier this year because the greens were not up to snuff during The Players Championship. All of a sudden, he became a media figure, including a live television interview. Coincidentally, I once conducted a USGA national championship at another Florida course with Klauk as the superintendent. He was sensational.

So his greens were a little thin and bumpy during the 1990 Players Championship. The world didn't come to an end. The fact is, when the temperature hit zero in the Jacksonville area last winter, it was ordained that the TPC greens were not going to be dense and smooth for a golf tournament in March.

Klauk kept his temper. He managed to restrain the impulse of saying, "Who the hell are these guys, who have never done a thing in their lives except hit golf balls, to criticize my work and my golf course?"

At a U. S. Open, I was once asked to name the single most important person

on the premises. Without hesitation, I said it was the golf course superintendent. "If he fails, we all fail," I commented.

Think of that this month when you watch the PGA Championship telecast from Shoal Creek. That's in Birmingham, Alabama. Bentgrass greens in Alabama in August are like hand grenades in an incinerator; they can blow up at any time. The superintendent at Shoal Creek, Jim Simmons, is experienced and cool. He also will be very glad when the week of the PGA Championship is over.

Superintendents get fired. As a rule of thumb, if the superintendent has two bad years in a row, even if the climate has produced nothing but fire and brimstone in that time, he's gone - and he goes without a golden parachute.

At private clubs, superintendents are subject to the whims of volunteer green committee chairmen, many of whom haven't the remotest idea what they want or why. A very successful and expensive lawyer said to me not long ago that his would be the best of all professions if only there weren't clients. Many golf course superintendents feel the same way. It would be a great job - if only there weren't golfers.

At resort courses, superintendents often take the hit for disappointing bottom lines. There is an inherent conflict between quality golf and the profit motive. That conflict is almost never resolved. That's why a place like Pebble Beach changes superintendents so often.

Still and all, the lot of the superintendent is to be envied - if he survives. The single most exhilarating experience in the game is to be on a golf course at dawn - alone.

(Frank Hannigan is a former Director of the U. S. G. A., and this article appeared in the August, 1990, issue of Golf Magazine.)

Grass Catcher

Dr. Vittum and Metro Milorganite team up for demonstrations of high pressure injection

Dr. Vittum believes insecticides work best for control of grubs and hyperodes when they are placed through the thatch layer to the root zone.

The object of these test plots is to prove her theory in our area. She has been studying the problem for many years and will welcome your input.

This is a new approach to an old problem. Every superintendent will benefit by being present at one of the trial clubs.

The Magovern Company has made a trailer available. Joe Stahl of Metro Milorganite, Inc. will pick up the trailer, tow it to the University of Massachusetts to pick up the sprayer, and provide the time and transportation to bring it to various clubs in Westchester, Long Island, Connecticut, and the Hudson Valley for Dr. Vittum to demonstrate and discuss high pressure injection and subplacement for control of grubs and hyperodes on August 22nd, 23rd and 24th.

Contact Metro Milorganite, Inc. and speak with Joe Stahl or Rick Apgar (914-666-3171) for date and exact time.

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RECALL

DuPont has issued a recall of Benlate® 50 DF and Tersan® 1991 DF fungicides. A small portion of these products was inadvertently contaminated with atrazine herbicide. The levels of atrazine pose no health or safety problems, but the affected product may harm sensitive ornamental plants.

If you have any of these products in

stock, here's what to do:

- The 2- and 5-pound packages that have the letters O or B in the lot numbers (formulation date and batch number) on the bottom of the boxes should be returned to the dealer or distributor from whom you purchased them as soon as possible. This includes partially used or sealed boxes. You will receive new product for all product returned.

- Return *all* product purchased in 25-lb. drums.

- Return *any* product if the lot number is missing or illegible.

- Do not return product containing the letter U in the lot number. This product is not contaminated and is safe to use as directed.

Only dry-flowable (DF) formulations may have been affected. No wettable powder (WP) is involved in this recall.

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GCSAA DISEASE IDENTIFICATION AND CONTROL SEMINAR Co-Hosted by CAGCS

January 14 & 15, 1991

Treadway Hotel
Cromwell, CT

This two-day educational seminar in applied turfgrass pathology will cover disease fungi, nematodes, viruses, bacteria and other factors affecting plant health. The use of recent research reports in the development of effective turfgrass disease control programs will be emphasized. Both novice and expert will gain practical, up-to-date information immediately applicable to their turfgrass management operations from this seminar.

The seminar will be co-instructed by Dr. Houston Couch, turfgrass pathologist at Virginia Polytechnic Institute, and Dr. Philip Larsen, head of the Plant

Pathology Department at the University of Minnesota.

"Great material and superb instruction!" "This seminar probably reduced my chemical budget by 40 percent." "Most worthwhile was information on new chemicals and application techniques." These are comments from former students.

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SEEKING EMPLOYMENT

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Received Certificate in Golf Course Management from the Univ. of Mass. in 1984 (Winter Course); Received Operator's license for spraying Pesticide Applications.

Experience: 1981-present Orange Hills Country Club, Orange, CT. February, 1984 Assistant Superintendent in charge of a crew of ten, overseeing work of crew, plan maintenance duties, train employees for various equipment and jobs, changing cups and mowing and watering of greens. 1987-1989 Acting Mechanic - Responsible for the overall maintenance of the golf course equipment.



NEWS FROM GCSAA HEADQUARTERS

Membership Reaches 10,000

GCSAA GIVES \$35,000 FOR RESEARCH

The GCSAA presented a record \$35,000 contribution to the joint USGA/GCSAA Turfgrass Research Committee to support research into turfgrass breeding and environmental considerations during the 1990 U. S. Open.

"We certainly appreciate the support that GCSAA has shown us -- not just the financial support, but also the moral support that golf course superintendents have given us," said Dr. Mike Kenna, USGA research director.

Last year GCSAA, through its Scholarship & Research Fund, donated \$25,000 to the committee for general support of turfgrass research and an additional \$25,000 earmarked to fund a full review of all scientific literature on the environmental impact of golf course management practices. Results of the review are now serving the starting point in the development of a comprehensive manual of best management practices. GCSAA's 1990 contribution will go into the committee's general fund and will support research that results from the review's findings.

According to Kenna, even though many superintendents already consider the environmental consequences of their management practices, the manual will provide needed documentation of environmentally responsible pest control. "I feel confident that we're in good shape to meet the challenges not only of the '90's, but of the next century as well, especially in the area of water use," Kenna said.

GCSAA MEMBERSHIP HITS 10,000

One of the sports world's fastest-growing organizations, the GCSAA, announced that its rolls officially exceeded 10,000 for the first time in the Association's 64-year history.

Norma M. O'Leary, golf course superintendent at Silver Bay (Minn.) Country Club, became the Association's 10,000th member in late May. O'Leary said her membership in GCSAA "will keep me in touch with current events in turf management, and the education and information programs will help me stay on top of my job."

GCSAA's growth is indicative of its

active and visible role in golf. Overall, GCSAA's membership grew 108% in the last decade.

John Schilling, GCSAA Executive Director, said, "This has been a tremendous decade for all of golf, particularly for our members and our Association." Janet Rose, GCSAA Director of Membership, echoed Schilling's thoughts, "We are ecstatic to have added our 10,000th member to the GCSAA roster."

Founded on September 13, 1926, as the National Association of Greenkeepers of America, GCSAA was established as an association dedicated to informing and educating its membership. Today, GCSAA continues as the only international organization that serves the professional needs of golf course superintendents.

GCSAA members provide outstanding playing conditions for some 24 million golfers who play approximately 500 million rounds each year in this country. Currently, GCSAA is working with legislators and regulators to promote environmental protection and to communicate the importance of sound ecological management to its members through education and research.

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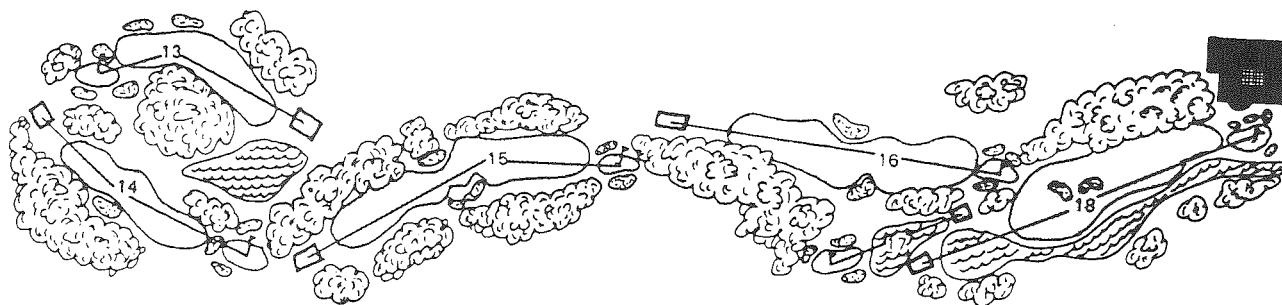
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The Clippings



Calendar

CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION OF GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENTS

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	HOST
August 22	URI Turf Field Day	University of Rhode Island Kingston, Rhode Island	University of Rhode Island
September (TBA)	CAGCS Monthly Meeting	Pequabuck Golf Club Pequabuck, CT	Peter Pierson
October 2	Met Team Championship	St. Andrews Golf Club Hastings, NY	Met GCSA
October 3	S & R Tournament (Scramble)	Glastonbury Hills Country Club Glastonbury, CT	Douglas Webber
October 17	CAGCS Monthly Meeting	Heritage Village Country Club Southbury, CT	Peter Burnham
November 5	CAGCS Annual Meeting	Old Lyme Country Club Old Lyme, CT	Brian Skelly
January 14 & 15, 1991	GCSAA Disease Seminar	Treadway Hotel Cromwell, CT	CAGCS

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