

NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 1971



Golf Course Superintendents Association
OF NEW ENGLAND, INC.

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

THAT HAUNTING RECURRENCE

Every year, at that point when the frost begins to visit the pumpkin, a haunting recurrence pops up to make uneasy the golf course superintendent's life when things should be leveling off.

The drag on the scene, of course, is the usual hair-raised reaction by certain golfers to the use of temporary greens. While the super is trying to use the foresight of a technician in protecting the regular putting surfaces, often times his efforts are thwarted.

Thwarted by whom? Sometimes, they are referred to as the "dirty dozen", that hard-core insignificant percentage of the golfing membership who believe that the course is their playground and that the playground's open all year.

The case for temporary greens already has been established. No less an authority on the subject of regulating turf condition than Dr. Fred Grau has made the temporary green and playing restriction problems one of his special projects and has issued the following advice to those superintendents who are harried by the situation:

"I would propose that this sign be displayed at the country club at that time of year when playing conditions are unpredictable:

"In the interests of all the members and in an attempt to preserve the high quality of our greens, the course is closed to play until conditions warrant resumption of traffic.

"Foot and wheel traffic on frozen grass causes the grass to turn brown and die. Ice crystals within the grass blades are distorted and rupture living cells, causing death.

"When the frost is thawed by the sun, the greens remain overly wet for a short time. In this condition foot traffic can cause severe damage by breaking roots, creating compaction, and footprinting so badly that pleasurable putting is not possible.

"Every effort is made to keep the course continuously playable, but when Nature fails to cooperate and brings frost or floods we have no choice but to limit play. The understanding and consideration of the members are greatly appreciated."

Dr. Grau's suggestion seems highly practical at this time and an offshoot of that is an overall realignment of the calendar boundaries which cover the length of the season.

Although the membership probably would revolt at such a proposal, it isn't all that alarming to look upon the future of golf as having a regulated season with definite dates for opening and closing, the latter coming no matter what the weather conditions might be.

Just as long as the "dirty dozen" are allowed to dictate the policy of course conditioning, the act becomes discriminatory since it endangers the future playing conditions of the 400 or so other members who chose to view the length of the season with common sense and foresight.

Temporary or alternate greens. This is only half of the problem. Members, though, continue to be the victims of attempts to curb the use of them. Here is one instance where the majority should not be silent and should be heard . . . and it should rule.

—Gerry Finn

THE BIG KNIFE

Never has it been so evident that the coming golf season (that's the one scheduled just as soon as the overzealous players decide that last season has concluded) poses a definite challenge to the fiscal discipline of those in charge of regulating and fixing budgets.

Will the big knife fall on the golf course superintendent who usually is the first guy club members seek out when it has been determined that the old money belt must be tightened?

This is a good question and, with the national economy chugging along with a sputtering motor, it would seem in order to analyze the areas where a thousand or so might be lopped off the top.

First of all, it would mean less services for the members. If, for instance, the labor stockpile were whittled, the superintendent would have to make certain changes which might result in the shrubbery around the clubhouse growing ragged and the flowers wilting under the heat of a cutdown in personnel.

Equipment would be affected. Any form of new equipment would be purchased under the pretext of saving manpower. The regular apparatus would have to undergo refurbishing of a nature which might squeeze another year or two out of its hide.

This, in itself, might be costly. Regular breakdowns of said equipment would have to be taken under consideration . . . tracking down parts, use of labor to effect extensive overhauling and an operate-on-a-prayer outlook . . . all of these could backfire on the cutback.

The possibility of such a second look at the overall operation of the conditioning process of the course brings up the age-old argument of what is the most important aspect of the country club family . . . course, clubhouse and pro shop. Maybe it would be more feasible to make due with that old set of drapes in the dining room or perhaps put off the remodeling of the pro shop for another year. These are testy items the club membership, or those designated to regulate the spending of club revenue, must meet when it comes time to set the financial outlay.

One of the perplexing asides to the dangers of cutting corners, whether they be in the clubhouse or on the course, is the service and goods expectancy of the typical country club member. Whether the budget is sliced or not, the member is going to expect the same standards of country club life. And he might be in for a rude awakening.

As far as the conditioning task of the superintendent is concerned, that budget figure could make or break his effort. The greener grasses of last season were the result of a combination of superintendent knowhow and budget means to put that knowhow in good working order. Both will suffer under a budget slash, one almost dependent on the other.

So, country club boards of governors, directors or whatever the title is which throws them into the budget battle must put serious thought and study into the job of fixing a budget. Some of the consequences could make or break the morale of the membership . . . not to mention the golf professional, club manager and course superintendent.

—Gerry Finn

Golf Course Superintendents Association

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is December 6, 1971 at the Holiday Inn, Grove Street, Newton, Massachusetts. This is the annual meeting and it is important that all members attend. Hopefully there will be snow on the ground and you will not be busy.

Directors' Meeting	10:45 a.m.
Regular Meeting	11:15 a.m.
Lunch	12:15 p.m.
Annual Meeting	12:45 p.m.

Proposed slate to be voted on at the annual meeting:

President	Robert Grant
1st Vice President	Tom Curran
2nd Vice President	Wayne Zoppo
Secretary	Ron Kirkman
Treasurer	Lucien Duval
Trustee 3 years	Burt Fredrick
Finance Chairman	Nary Sperandio
Golf Chairman	Julius Aksten
Educational Chairman	Larry Bunn
Newsletter Chairman	Dean Robertson



Dick Hanson, Pro, and Steve Kristof (right) Superintendent of the Charles River CC teamed up and won the 35th John Shanahan Tournament October 26, 1971 at Brae Burn CC, Newton, Massachusetts.

JOB OPEN

Blue Hill Country Club
Canton, Massachusetts
27 Holes — New home on property
Salary open

The Association was saddened by the recent death of Emil Mashie of Lake Forest, Ill. He was a member of the GCSA of NE in the 1930's.

SOUND OFF!!!!

(Here goes the whistle for the sound to the mailman for another batch of inspirational messages from our readers. Sound Off is just that, a feature by and for the reader. It allows each and every one of you to express an idea, knock an irking situation or talk about nothing, if that be the case. Anyway, we welcome any and all letters. Just send them, with name and address, to Newsletter Mail Bag, 24 Riverview Drive, Newbury, Mass. 01950. Sound Off will withhold names or club affiliation upon request. And the Newsletter reserves the right to comment on all published letters or cards.)

* * * * *

"I am a superintendent in one of those hot spots where members seem to think the golf course would be in the same condition in November as it is in July.

"There have been continual complaints about how hard the greens are on cold November mornings. I try to explain that a 15-degree temperature is something I can't do anything about as far as bringing about the resiliency the members wish on a green.

"Is there someone on the Newsletter who can make my members understand that this is the time of year when greens are expected to get hard and bumpy? These people are driving me whacky!"

CONNIE CARUTHERS
(Club Withheld)

We're surprised that you're having all the static, Conny. Why don't you tell them they're lucky to be using regular greens at all at this time of year . . . and shame on you for not making them play temporary greens.

* * * * *

"Again, we're about to have the call to the annual meeting of the New England Superintendents Association. And I think it is very much a part of the Newsletter to appeal to members to come out in droves.

"I think you'll agree with me that in these times there is a good deal of apathy on all sides and it's about time the majority of the membership got off their tractors and made this important meeting.

"It has been said that a certain few make all the decisions and do most of the persuading when our organization meets. If this is true, it is only the fault of those who continue to stay away.

"So, let's get out and make this the best-attended annual meeting in our history. If we care about our profession, then let's prove it by showing up at this session."

(Name and Club Withheld)

There's nothing to add to this challenge, other than to say that the Newsletter seconds the motion.

* * * * *

"Enjoyed Gerry Finn's article on Certification very much. It is indeed satisfying to me to read your words which do such a great job of describing the intent of the program. It has never been better said.

"Thank you for the support."

CLIFFORD A. WAGONER
Modesto, Cal.

Thanks for the kind words, Cliff, we here in New England are trying to do our part.

President — RICHARD C. BLAKE 211 Sewall Street Boylston, Mass. 01505 Phone 869-2737 Club Affiliation Mt. Pleasant Country Club	First Vice President — ROBERT GRANT 22 Patricia Road Sudbury, Mass. 01776 Phone 443-2671 Club Affiliation Brae Burn Country Club	Second Vice President — THOMAS CURRAN 153 Fisher Street Walpole, Mass. 02081 Phone 668-7221 Club Affiliation The Country Club	Secretary — WAYNE ZOPPO 48 Barbary Drive Seekonk, Mass. Phone 399-7141 Club Affiliation Agawam Hunt Club	Treasurer — LUCIEN DUVAL R.F. No. 5 Gault Road Bedford, N. H. 03105 Phone 432-3454 Club Affiliation Manchester Country Club	Trustee — RONALD KIRKMAN 25 Green Street Needham, Mass. 02192 Phone 444-8412 Club Affiliation Needham Golf Club	Trustee — ROBERT MUCCIARONE 465 Summer Street Westwood, Mass. 02090 Phone 329-9682 Club Affiliation Dedham Country and Polo Club	Trustee — NORMAN MUCCIARONE 101 Alban Road Waban, Mass. 02168 Phone 332-3056 Club Affiliation Woodland Country Club	Finance Chairman — NARY SPERANDIO Concord, Mass. 01742 Phone 369-4723 Club Affiliation Concord Country Club
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The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

University of Massachusetts

Amherst

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE

DEPARTMENT OF
PLANT AND SOIL SCIENCES

September 15, 1971

Dear Green Chairman:

Providing good turf is a Golf Course Superintendent's profession. Excellent playing turf is the golfers desire and necessity. Demand for better golfing turf is increasing and it can only be obtained through research.

The University of Massachusetts is one of the leading schools in the United States that has and is instrumental in producing turf managers (golf course superintendents). The University of Massachusetts also has the personnel and facilities to undertake a greater turf research program -- but research requires capital.

At a recent Massachusetts Golf Course Superintendents and Green Chairmen meeting persons attending were receptive to the proposal that the superintendent, with membership approval, place in his budget yearly a certain amount of money for turf research. It was suggested that an 18-hole course place in their budget a minimum of \$100.00 per year; a 9-hole course \$50.00 each year. Monies so obtained would then go to a central turf research fund at the University of Massachusetts.

This money will be administered by University personnel but strictly for turf research. Research projects may be determined by Golf Course Superintendents and/or a committee of both Green Chairmen and Superintendents. A full accounting of all research projects will be made each year.

Yours for better turf through research,

Joseph Troll
Professor
Turf Management

cc: Golf Course Superintendent

P.S. It is important to the superintendent and the chairman to implement the above to see that the program be initiated for the benefit of the playing membership.

18 HOLES WITH HAWTREE

No. 17 — What is a Bunker?

By F. W. HAWTREE

An eighteenth-century golfer, recalled from the Elysian Fields for a mixed foursome, would not understand many features of the contemporary game. Tee, green, hole, style, garb, his partner, all are different. But he would recognise the bunkers even if he did refer to them as "hazards".

The word "bunker" was not written into the golfing vocabulary until 1824. The earliest codes of rules (St. Andrews 1754, Leith 1775, Aberdeen 1783) did not use it. But Rule IV, Lifting of Break-clubs, etc., of the 1858 Royal & Ancient Rules reads: "All loose impediments within a club length of the ball may be removed on or off the Course, when the ball lies on grass When a ball lies in a bunker or sand, there shall be no impression made, nor sand or other obstacle removed by the club, or otherwise, before striking at the ball. When a ball lies within a club length of a washing-tub, the tub may be removed, and when on clothes the ball may be lifted and dropped behind them". The distinction "bunker or sand" does not necessarily mean that bunkers were not sanded but, in dialect at least, the original bunker was an earthen seat or bank in the fields.

The bunker, indeed, is about the last remnant of golf as it was originally played—the game, as Gordon G. Smith said, "of the slow, canny yet strong, resourceful Scottish character . . . the game of the patient, self-reliant man prepared to meet whatever fortune may befall him". Notions of equity have changed all that but the bunker has managed to survive—a rich source of debate on what is fair and unfair. If the bunker goes, we shall have to rely on the rough. But most of that, like the wash-tubs, has gone already.

We touched on the penal versus strategic question early in the round so the proper location of bunkers can be shortly dismissed. Those which give options are more exciting than those which give none: those which affect the player before he plays are more stimulating than those which only affect him after his shot. But having devised a scheme on these lines, there must still be some manoeuvring to get the bunker into the right place for the general appearance of the hole and for its relationship to the ground around it. And on most courses, there will always be holes which can only be bunkered in a way which punishes a bad shot because the layout is a compromise with

the land as a whole. Therefore the idea that a golf course can be transformed by a general overhaul of its bunkering system is often misconceived. There may be room for improvement but much broader factors determine merit. A general overhaul also runs the risk of too much change being dictated by fashion. Soon after the war there was a big drive to reduce the number and size of bunkers. Somebody made the statement that each bunker cost £30 a year to maintain. In those days that sum, duly multiplied, was at least equivalent to the wages of two men doing nothing else. Many superfluous bunkers were filled up but they were seldom replaced by others more effective and appearance sometimes suffered. Others were simply grassed over without correcting the shape so that balls tended to collect in one area and concentrate divot marks.

Next it was noticed that sand became confused with the soil underlying it. There were trials with beds of ashes, gravel, concrete and perforated plastic sheeting as insulation.

The question of the overhanging lip had been more or less exhausted long before but it came back in disguise with demands for fairway bunkers which permitted playing a long iron or even a wood to the green. It is not clear how this idea was to be reconciled with another practice which required raking the sand to leave deep grooves which would ensure the opposite.

Now a well-known championship course has turfed the faces of most of its bunkers in case a ball should bury itself and be lost. In championships, with expert players, caddies, markers and spectators, this chance seems remote and no recent results seem to have been affected by it. On seaside links, the problem of maintaining sand faces against wind erosion is often acute and Scottish greenkeepers first developed the turf wall system to provide a solid backing. Covered with sand, a natural formation is retained but grassing the slope produces a new maintenance problem and an artificial appearance while the total effect on the landscape is mournful. The paucity of design elements available to the golf architect has been mentioned before, the concealment of sand limits them still further, destroys visual scale and tends to reduce a links to a meadow.

But to judge fashion, we must have basic principles. Here is a round dozen:—

- (1) The forms of a bunker are infinite. Exploit them to the full to produce good landscape and demand a wide variety of shots.
- (2) If the hole allows, site them to give options inspiring a complete plan for playing the hole from tee to green. This means that all bunkers in a hole are related.
- (3) Continue this relationship visually to form an agreeable pattern with asymmetrical rather than precise balance.
- (4) Vary this pattern at holes of similar length to produce different situations and make different demands.
- (5) Show sand strongly for landscape effect and scale.
- (6) Relate bunker location to the standard of scratch. This is the only standard which, by definition, is predictable. Higher handicaps normally adapt to options because of shorter tees and random length shots.
- (7) Vary predetermined distances to site bunkers in desirable contours (e.g. cut into rising rather than descending ground).
- (8) The variation of form includes orientation, size, contouring but there will often be one form correct for a particular situation. Avoid similarity in neighbouring bunkers, an outline generally at right-angles to the line of play and situations which disperse interest rather than concentrate it.
- (9) Be discreet with bunkers which limit tee shot distance.
- (10) Give full thought to drainage on clay or low-level sites.
- (11) Build boldly with curves and banks adaptable to machine mowing.
- (12) On inland sites, use a coarse washed sand free of fines at one end of the scale and of small stones at the other. An even particle size gives least binding.

You can doubtless produce a dozen more of your own. That is the delight of bunkering. We have not, for example, touched on the delicate question of the bunker at the back of the green. But if grassing the faces is the first step to grassing the rest, we shall not have to bother.

"I am writing this letter for a friend and therefore there won't be any connection between my name and hers.

"It was brought to my attention that your organization, while doing a wonderful job for the men in it, have been a bit behind the times in providing a form of socializing for their wives.

"My friend tells me that she remembers when there were Christmas parties scheduled and regular ladies' days during the golfing season. She wants to know what happened to all this?"

"It certainly is no consolation to the superintendent's wife who sees him go on his merry way every first Monday of the month and come back home sometimes at all hours. The superintendent's wife is fast becoming associated with the better known 'golf widow'.

"Don't you think it's about time you started to do something for the girls again?"

MEG MUNDY
Waltham, Mass.

Tell your friend's husband to suggest something along these lines to the proper channels and the ladies shall rise again!

* * * * *

"This is a short rejoinder to those butterfly chasers and bird watchers who harp on the question of using chemical products to condition the golf course properly.

"They think that the superintendent should shuck all the technical advancements made in recent years and return to a program of complete and exclusive use of organic products.

"What I would like to say is one thing. How would it look to see a golf fairway completely covered with horse manure while the members were aboard looking in on the conditioning program?"

TOM DUNLOP
Putney, Vt.

We don't know how it would look, Tom, but we have some idea as to how it would smell.

* * * * *

"May I commend you on your recent Certification article by Gerry Finn in the latest New England NEWSLETTER. It is gratifying to me personally, and, I'm sure, to the entire Certification Committee, to receive such a favorable reaction to the program.

"No doubt you are aware of the fact that the development of the Certification program to its present status is the result of a determined effort by a handful of dedicated men who, for the past eight years, has believed in and promoted the principles of professionalism which you so ably put forth in your article.

"Of course, the success of any program of this type is greatly dependent upon the cooperation of its beneficiaries, and to the unswerving adherence to the basic principles upon which it was chartered.

"Congratulations on a job well done."

WALTER R. BOYSEN
CoChairman, Cert. Comm.
Santa Rosa, Cal.

Walter, we want to congratulate you again on the fine work of your committee.

* * * * *

"Your group is to be congratulated for your excellent "News-letter". It has to rate among the best I am privileged to receive. Keep up the goodwork!!

"After reading the September, 1971 issue, I felt that I must answer a Mr. Jack Dalton who was complaining about mowing greens on Sunday. Maybe you can see that he receives my comments. If you wish to use this in your "Sound Off!!" column, you may do so.

"I am a superintendent of a golf course in Western Oregon. It is one of many courses on the West Coast that are open for golf twelve months of the year. Although a private club, several days of the week, especially Saturday and Sunday, we have golfers starting on the front nine by 7:00 a.m. and on the back by 8:00 a.m., many times even before that time. We have one triplex greens mower with which to mow greens. Virtually every morning we mow, the mower leaves the shop at first light in the morning in order to keep ahead of the golfers. Other tasks likewise are geared so as to keep the maintenance crew as much ahead of the play as possible. We will mow greens during Spring, Summer, and Fall six days a week, sometimes seven days. If there is a day we don't mow, it will be Monday.

"We have quite a few golfers who play only on Sunday. Would you wish them to play on unmown greens and, in effect, relegate those who play on Sunday to second class golfers? They pay dues, or green fees as the case may be, as well as those playing the rest of the week. Don't you suppose that they appreciate the same amenities the other golfers receive? Perhaps by rescheduling your men and equipment the Sunday golfer can play on as nice a course as those playing the rest of the week. It is our job as a superintendent to provide the finest golfing facilities possible within the limitations of the budget provided us."

R. W. MALPASS
Vancouver, Washington

Enjoyed your letter, Dick, however, when it comes to mowing on Sundays, many clubs consider that it is an added expense with the overtime and the double time. I refer you to the article on budgets in this month's Newsletter.

* * * * *

"Perhaps you people aren't accustomed to this sort of letter, but I felt I had to write it while the golf season was still fresh on my mind.

"What I'm making all the fuss over is the fact I would like to congratulate all the superintendents of New England for giving golfers in that section of the country probably the best playing conditions they've seen in a long, long time. I was a visitor to several courses down your way and know compliments usually are hard to come by.

"So, just let this pass on to all concerned from one hacker who appreciated playing conditions your regulars should brag about."

JOHN LAWSON
Syracuse, N. Y.

Better yet, John, send the supers in your area a similar accolade. We're sure they'd appreciate it even more than we do.

* * * * *

(That puts the lid on another session with the reader. Remember, you make or break this feature, so sit down and pen a letter or post card to us. We welcome everyone with a message of his or her own.)

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* Contributors to the Lawrence S. Dickinson Scholarship Fund

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OF NEW ENGLAND, INC.



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FIRST CLASS

