



SEPTEMBER 1971



## Golf Course Superintendents Association

OF NEW ENGLAND, INC.

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### BOWLING ALLEYS OR POLO FIELDS????

How wide should a fairway be?

There seems to be much disagreement on the answer. One golfer might feel the premium of his game should be placed on accuracy, in which case he'd call for the superintendent to let the roughs grow in so that the hitting area resembles a bowling alley. On the other hand, where length is proclaimed the most important asset, the golfer would lean to the cutting down of rough to the point where the fairway looks like a polo field.

As a matter of reason, there is no true answer to the width of the fairway, although there has been some evidence of country clubs leaning toward bringing them in to make for more champion-like conditions.

The decision has been placed, for the most part, in the hands of a few. Usually, the grounds or green committee takes it upon themselves to determine the character of the golf course. If, for instance, they are comprised of low handicap players, they might tend to favor the more narrow hitting areas . . . whereas the average golfer is liable to support a wider target to coincide with his ability.

A recent survey of selected British courses . . . as reported in "The British Golf Greenkeeper" . . . reveals that some of the fairways measured were wandering in widths of more than 70 yards. And on the other hand, there were found fairways that squeezed in as tight as 20 yards.

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The August meeting of Green Chairmen and Golf Course Superintendents was played in the rain and in sub-tropical weather. Despite the unfavorable weather conditions a fine time was enjoyed by all.

The golf course was in excellent condition and the club house manager, Mr. Joe Conlon, provided an excellent dinner for all. The excellent golf course, the steak dinner and the friendly hospitality of Vesper was most appreciated.

Dr. Joseph Troll of the University of Massachusetts gave a brief talk on why funds are needed to establish a good research program at the University of Massachusetts. This program is long overdue and it would seem that those Green Chairmen in attendance would carry back the word to their respective clubs that funds are needed for research in Massachusetts. The Chairman of the Twin Hills C. C. in Longmeadow, Mr. Nuger, said he would pledge \$100.00 from his club. Hopefully, other clubs will follow his example. Every golf course should contribute — an 18-hole course a minimum of \$100.00. Many clubs will probably want to contribute more.

Let's all get behind this program for research — put it in the budget. It's the clubs' responsibility to support research.

— Richard C. Blake

The general feeling appears to center around an average of 40 yards as the width of the fairway. Then, too, there is a trend to treat the fairway as some kind of a barometer for the ability of the player. The hitting area might be narrowed around the 220-yard mark and widened back at 150 yards or so in order to produce a degree of fairness.

One of the unpardonable sins of some committees, though, is the complete disregard for the playing ability of the club's typical golfer. Many courses, built in the last 10 years, concentrated on length, which added to the woes of the high handicapper. Now, on that same course, we find committee members tinkering with the idea of cutting the width of the fairways in half.

It has been noticed, too, that television has come to influence those who are to determine this ticklish question. Recently, the United States Open was staged on a "very tight" layout at Merion. It should be noted, however, that Merion also was a relatively short course. But, as the scores of the world's top pros indicated, members playing Merion under the same conditions would soon learn to despise it.

Of course, the ideal situation would be to have a composite of all the outstanding courses which are exposed to committee members by TV or personal visits. Then, a happy medium might be reached.

Also, it should be noted . . . as one superintendent suggested . . . that the entire membership sooner or later makes their feelings known. "I realize one thing", he laughed, "If my committee tells me to let the rough grow in and turn our course into another Merion, it won't take the rest of the members long to seek me out with a blast. In turn I shall return them to the committee . . . and the odds are overwhelming . . . that I would be told to get the fairways back to reasonable width again."

The fairways, then, can pose a unique problem other than the accepted one of keeping them in playing condition. Happily, the superintendent is not involved in the decision to make them bowling alleys or polo fields. For once, he's in the clear.

— Gerry Finn

### Nominating Committee for 1972

Chairman, Norman Mucciarone; Nary Sperandio, John Morse, Burt Fredrick, David Clement. The nominating committee should have the proposed slate ready for publication 60 days prior to the election which will be December 6, 1971.

Delegate to National G.C.S.A.A. — Tom Curran.

Advisory Committee Delegate — Wayne Zoppo.

Both to act as alternates for each other.



# Golf Course Superintendents Association

## KEEP 'EM ROLLING . . . A FALLACY

There's a new cry wandering through the vocal chords of country club green chairmen, and it has to bug the superintendent.

Maybe it's happening only in isolated cases, but this concept of keeping the golf cart rolling, in all kinds of weather, must be nipped in the bud before it gets out of control.

In the beginning of the golf cart it was understood that the super held the last word as to the feasibility of allowing its use during or after adverse weather conditions. After all, despite the members' taunts concerning the superintendent's fear for the safety of his turf, it still was considered sound to have him cast the deciding vote as to when and where . . . and in what manner the golf cart should be used.

Slowly but surely this grasp of the situation is slipping away from the superintendent. In some instances he has made a ruling against the use of golf carts on the grounds it would be detrimental to the condition of the course and along comes a chairman who overrules him.

"That's all right with me", spouted one confused super. "If the chairman wants to assume full responsibility for the condition of the golf course, then he can allow the carts to roll at midnight. However, when the same chairman snaps back at me and complains about turf injury, brought about by flagrant misuse of the golf cart, then it's time for others in the line of command at the club to take notice."

It has been tossed in as ammunition by opponents of the superintendent's theory that restricting the carts to the rough makes their use practically 100 percent harmless, even when the course is saturated with water.

"That really is not the answer", the same super returned. "I can show you where cart users travel the same path, over and over again, through the rough. In some places the grass has been matted down so much that severe compaction has occurred. And now I must add the burden of keeping the rough green to the already complex job of keeping the fairways in suitable playing condition."

There is further room for the superintendent to question some of the questionable actions of the chairman's release of golf carts. One other area is the so-called "selective permission to use carts." This involves occasions when 10 or 12 carts are allowed on the course to certain members because of "unusual circumstances."

Again this tangles the outlook of the super. "This happened to me several times", the involved super pleaded. "After I had issued the decision against the use of carts, I was confronted by walking members who wanted to know why a 'select few' were allowed to ride and the rest of the membership had to abide by the original rule."

Of course, the whole thing boils down to the confidence the country club has in its superintendent. Surely, it must realize that the super is the ultimate judge in the matter of determining when the course is leaving itself open to damage . . . whether it be from the use of golf carts or the playing of the layout by walking members.

It's time for the country club . . . and the public courses . . . to restore faith in the superintendent. They should finalize their stand on just who calls the shots on the use of the golf course. If they shy away from that decision, they should be prepared to accept the consequences.

— Gerry Finn

## NEXT MEETING

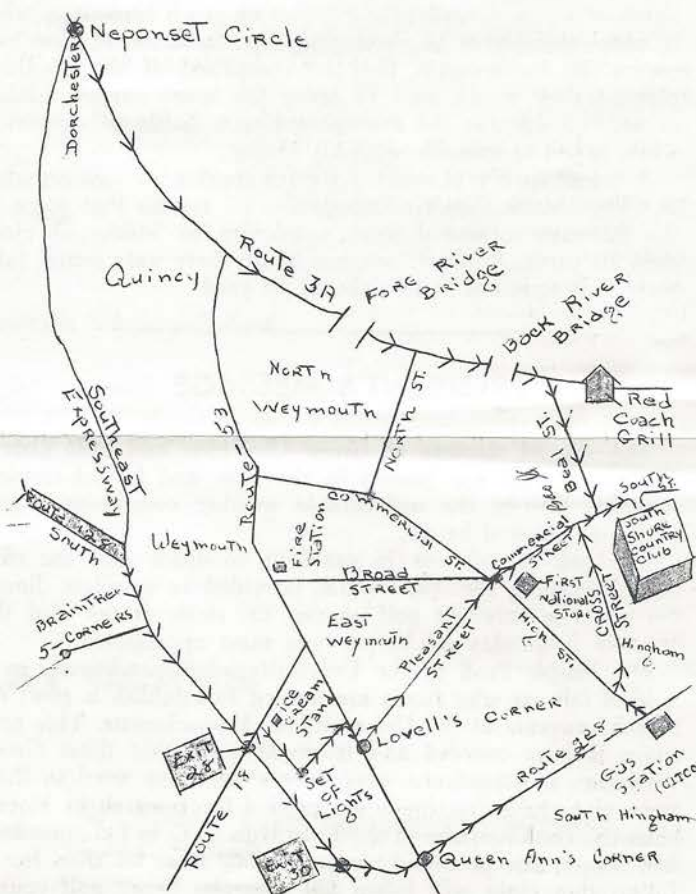
The next meeting of the G.C.S.A. of N.E. will be at the South Shore Country Club on September 20, 1971. There will be golf after 11:00 A.M. and the snack bar will be open. Dinner will be served at 7 P.M. and a regular and directors' meeting will be held prior to that.

Golf — Super-championship	11:00 A.M.
Directors' Meeting	4:30 P.M.
Regular Meeting	5:00 P.M.
Cocktails	6:00 P.M.
Dinner	7:00 P.M.



Al Auger is the super in charge of the South Shore layout and has been so for the past ten years. Prior to that he was the assistant at Concord C. C. under Nary Sperandio, and before that a laborer at Framingham C. C. under John Sperandio. Al has done much renovation to the 50-year-old course. Wayne E. Styles was the designer. The most recent renovation is the complete redesigning of the number 5 hole by Al Auger and owner Philip Farina. For the past two years the course has been private and before that it was semi-private.

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## SOUND OFF!!!!

(Here we are again ready to unload the gems and germs which hit this office through our Sound Off contributors. Remember, everyone is invited to take part in this monthly feature. The subject can be anything on golf . . . from the taming of poa annua to the use of the cross-handed grip in putting. Names and clubs will be withheld upon request. So, don't be bashful. Send your views to Newsletter Mail Box, 24 Riverview Drive, Newbury, Mass. 01950. The Newsletter reserves the right to comment on all letters published.)

\* \* \* \*

"I'm writing this in the hope that perhaps I can assemble enough allies among my fellow superintendents to help stamp out a creeping problem with labor, time, etc.

"Some of the members at my club feel that the greens should be mowed every Sunday morning; that is, in addition to the six other mornings on which my crew mows them. Since play begins at our club at 8 on a Sunday morning (and from both the first and 10th tees), I have tried to explain that it would be a physical impossibility to cut the greens without causing the golfers inconvenience.

"Certainly, the greens are entitled to one day of rest from the regular scalping they receive. Am I being too unreasonable in my thinking on this subject, or does everyone mow their greens on Sundays?"

JACK DALTON  
(Course Withheld)

A quick poll of our panel of experts came up with this jingle, Jack: "Never on a Sunday."

\* \* \* \*

"You might call me an irate member of my club, and if my gripe seems to make me out that way I guess I'll have to wear such a reputation.

"Anyway, I have been playing golf here for the last 10 years or so, and it often occurs to me that the club should give our women players more of an opportunity to better our scores by setting up special women's tees.

"Maybe they do it here because our course is relatively short and doesn't require the strength that some of the others do. However, I'm told that not too long ago there were ladies tees on our course but they were left to grow over. Eventually, they disappeared and now we girls must hit off the 'white' or regular tees, just like the men.

"I don't know the reason for this. Perhaps you can help. If there were ladies tees on the course in the first place, how come they were allowed to become overgrown and eventually phased out?"

GERTRUDE SIEBERLING  
Somers, S. C.

We have two answers for you, Miss or is it Mrs. Sieberling? First, the club's budget might have kayoed your tees or else some wise guy on the green committee took this women's lib thing too seriously.

\* \* \* \*

"Sure, get ready to laugh at me for bringing this up. But I am going out of my mind playing golf, not to mention going out of my financial worth because of my predicament.

"What has happened is that my club has built two ponds to serve as hazards on what used to be two of my favorite golf holes. Since the ponds were put into play, my game score has zoomed and my pocketbook has shrunk.

"My question perhaps is a silly one. But, it relates to what you think is the limit on the number of golf balls a player

should plunk into a single pond at one time. Last week, for example, I heard of another member who lost nine balls before he put his 10th on the green.

"Surely, the USGA would frown on the suggestion of taking the ball and carrying it to the other side of the pond. But this hole measures around 190 yards and you have to be a gorilla to clear the pond!"

RANDY CLEAVER  
Johnson, L. I.

The only thing we can say to you is see your pro, Randy . . . or start taking a body-building exercise course.

\* \* \* \*

"I am a superintendent in a fairly affluent club and feel that maybe I have reason to make known a complaint.

"This is strictly something between me and my club. It concerns the fact that they refuse to hire a mechanic as part of my work crew. As far as I'm concerned this is ridiculous.

"I have made it known to my committee members that I have neither the desire nor the inclination to perform the duties of a mechanic. They have come back with the view that the superintendent should make it his business to learn about such things.

"Right now we're in the middle of our busiest season since the course opened a few years ago. We have two or three tournaments a week and my time has been hard to come by in the matter of stopping to look at a golf cart breakdown or sprinkler head injury. Isn't it about time my club smartened up and got me a fulltime mechanic?"

(Name Withheld)  
Anywhere, U. S. A.

You have a right to make a lot of noise on this. Certain country clubs seem to think that the golf course superintendent must be a man with 1,000 hats. As it is now, the super wears around 100. There is no reason why a club can't hire a fulltime mechanic. In the long run it will find it least expensive. The super has enough on his mind trying to keep the members happy with a well-groomed layout. When he has to desert this to study some mechanical manual, it's time to throw in the towel.

\* \* \* \*

(On that long-winded reply, Sound Off slips away for another month. But we'll be back, hopefully with a letter from you.)



R. Sweed (left), Green Chairman, and W. Carter (right), Superintendent Foxboro Country Club.

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\* Contributors to the Lawrence S. Dickinson Scholarship Fund

# NEWSLETTER

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