



Golf Course Superintendents Association

OF NEW ENGLAND, INC.

JULY 1974



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

TO SWEAT OR NOT TO SWEAT

There appears to be a growing feeling among veteran golf course superintendents that they are caught in a spiraling upheaval of sorts which threatens their very own physical being.

Frankly, the burdens of the profession have reached the point where certain superintendents are beginning to ask themselves ... "are the returns worth the investment?"

This has nothing to do with the stock market or the race track. It concerns the job outlook of dignified men who must re-evaluate their present positions because of a slow but sure tipping of the scales in regard to the "compensation vs. responsibility" syndrome.

It has reached the point where superintendents are leaving the responsibility-choked atmosphere of the big country club for less of same...and less money. Examples of pay cuts in the thousands have come to this desk's attention. And with them, complementing comments that the reductions are worth it.

Fortunately, the job structure of the superintendent is arranged so that he often is able to pick his spot on the success ladder. He has the option to shoot for a position bathed in responsibility which will reward him accordingly or he can level off at an assignment where he has the luxury of choosing how much of himself he will pour into the job.

The gradual recognition of the superintendent as a most integral part of the country club operation has brought his job into focus as far as the membership goes. It has come to realize that conditioning of the course is something more than running amok with a lawn mower and tossing grass seed in the air like so much confetti. The superintendent's job is a science. Therefore, he is expected to turn miracles with the turf where once it was thought to be a hit-or-miss operation.

Whether you like it or not...whether you choose to recognize it or not, the job of the superintendent has become one of increasing pressures. And it follows a realistic pattern. The man in charge of a 36-hole course where national championships are contested is like the executive vice-president of a large corporation, the make or break aspects of business resting on his shoulders. The man putting the green touch to the little nine-hole

layout down the street doesn't come close to such responsibility...nor is he affected as much.

One superintendent claims that a man in the profession must find his own niche. "Often this isn't easy", he tells. "For example, what once was a job with little pressure can change over the years. That little nine-hole layout could become ambitious and transform itself into an 18-hole championship course. And all of a sudden, pressures appear that weren't supposed to."

It's only natural that every once in a while a superintendent take himself into a little room and have a heart to heart talk with himself. In that session he has to ask himself... "is it worth it?" Then, he puts the reassessment measuring stick to work and decides which road he'll travel...easy, medium, difficult.

The demands of the recreational and sports participation field are on a tremendous upswing. The family has come to realize that the best vacation buy is the country club. It can gather there and find all of its recreational needs for the asking. There is golf, tennis, swimming, skating, bowling, bridge...even curling if you require it. And in the center of it all stands the superintendent whose job it is to provide the playing grounds for all of these activities.

It boils down to one question as to how far a super goes: "To sweat or not to sweat." Only he can answer it.

Gerry Finn

Next Meeting...

July 9, 1974

COHASSET GOLF CLUB

Directors Meeting 11:00
Regular Meeting 11:30
Golf after 1:00
Buffet after golf

Directions — Route 128 to Route 3 to Route 228.
Cross Route 3A and take fifth right.
Club is at end of Lambert Streer.

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1st Net. - Mr. Anderson and Mr. Kirkman 61
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Mr. Cleary and Mr. Johnson 64
Mr. Damian and Mr. Gagnon 64
Mr. Barnes and Mr. Schofield 64
Mr. Kusser and Mr. Morton 64

Golf Course Superintendents Association

TENNIS EVERYONE?



Sure, this is a golf-oriented periodical...all about the golf course superintendent and his workstyle. But, wait a minute. Haven't you heard of the tennis explosion? Are you not aware of the cries of "let", "out" and "take two" around your club? And aren't you stuck right in the middle of this national rush to the net?

If you aren't, stick around. Just in case you haven't been reading the surveys and the projections, tennis is running up golf's back in the sports popularity race. Country club members are looking beyond the golf course to get full value out of their recreational dollar. They have seen the many advantages of the racket rage.

Country clubs in general are joining the tennis court construction outburst. Within a 20-mile radius of Western Massachusetts and Northern Connecticut, three clubs are in the process of adding to the tennis needs of members. One will have completed two new courts by the middle of this month and begin the spade work on two more for fall delivery.

Another club is moving even faster. Six new courts are being built and if they are not enough to service the growing needs of members, there are plans to put more on the grounds. The third club is in the process of resurrecting two courts that had gone to seed over the years. They will be rebuilt and two more added should an expected demand for them develop.

So, what does this have to do with the superintendent? The answer... in one word, "plenty"! The superintendent now finds himself the keeper of two playgrounds...the one where members chase a little white ball and the other where members smash a larger one back and forth.

Maintenance of tennis courts is not all that easy or automatic. For the most part, country club members prefer clay courts or a surface comparable to that cover. For this reason, keeping the courts in top playing condition requires know-how and labor. Most of all, it taps the superintendent's priority list for allocation of his work force because in most instances he is being asked to get along on the same budget.

There is only one sensible reaction from the superintendent, that being "impossible". The maintenance of a typical clay court goes like this: Each court must be watered at least once a day, preferably early in the morning or when the last lobs have been hit well into the night (most of the new courts are lighted). Service and outside lines must be cleaned, the net kept from assuming a sag stance and the courts swept periodically to erase footprints.

"This is a job in itself", comments the typical super. "One man could be kept busy all day if we're talking about four or more courts. And his time would have to be split. The watering task is such that it has to be done at odd hours. Arranging for a split shift is not all that easy."

There might even be the possibility that tennis courts will fall into the automatic irrigation ways of the golf course. However, this appears to be very expensive since the amount of water needed is not worth the cost of installing and maintaining automatic watering devices.

Most tennis courts or the new ones at the clubs are being built away from the main recreational area of the club. This means that new parking lots must be built and serviced. In addition, fencing often is required to retain the "private" atmosphere and a beautification program adds another drain on the super's manpower.

Thus, the superintendent finds himself smack dab in the middle of a tennis boom which adds to his responsibilities. It used to be.... "tennis, anyone?". But don't tell that to the super. From this side of the court it sounds like... "tennis, everyone?"
Gerry Finn

MEETING SCHEDULE

JULY 9 Cohasset
AUGUST 12 Ferncroft
SEPTEMBER 9 Spring Valley
OCTOBER 11 Brae Burn
NOVEMBER Cape Meeting



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SOUND OFF

(Here we are again, all gathered to put the envelope opener to work and see what spills onto the Sound Off space. This feature belongs to the reader and offers an opportunity to air complaints or extend compliments. Everyone is welcome to contribute his or her thoughts and all we ask is that each letter be signed and identified with an address. The names and addresses will be withheld upon request. All views are accepted at Newsletter Mail Bag, 290 North Road, Sudbury, Mass. 01776. The Newsletter reserves the right to comment on all letters published.)

"At the present time the superintendent is locked into one of the most critical months of the golf course conditioning period. These are the high humidity days when the grasses are subject to Mother Nature's greatest assault of summer.

"I'm writing only to suggest that we, the superintendents, take a proper perspective in the attempt to temper the effects of high humidity. Much too often we reach for the panic button at the first sign of a high humidity-no clouds day. The panic button, of course, is the one we use to put our irrigation systems into use.

"What can happen, in the case where we over-correct a situation with an uncontrollable outage of water, is disaster. Instead of cooling the plants, we drown them and invite wilt. And we find that high humidity has beaten us without a fight.

"I can only add one more thing in relation to this problem. Proceed with caution in applying your irrigation system as a counter attack against high humidity. Don't have a hasty trigger finger."

LEON ST. PIERRE
Longmeadow, Mass.

After that bit of advice, all trigger fingers should be in good working order for the rest of the summer.

"I'm writing to my fellow superintendents with the hope that they can benefit from my experience with the labor force problem.

"Everyone admits that the labor issue is a burning one for all of the superintendents, especially at those times when temporary help is needed. I have found this to be one large pain when I'm looking for a man to work three or four hours a day.

"There is a solution. The retired men of our community serve just that purpose of providing part-time help. The City of West Hartford has a service available to their own city and surrounding cities in which they act as an employment agent to line up part-time jobs.

"Presently, I have three men working those short-hours jobs and each one has proven to be just what the situation called for. In fact, there is one retired worker who has been here for seven years. He does such a good job that I don't even have to give him any direction. When he arrives at the club, he's off to his

chores...sometimes without me knowing he's even here.

"So, for what it's worth, I suggest that superintendents inquire about retired men's clubs and other such community services when they are looking for part-time help. It's worked here and I can't say enough for it."

AL HAWKINS
West Hartford, Conn.

We hope this relieves some of the superintendent's labor pains, Al.

"Once again I'm offering the same old complaint to you people, not about you but about the thoughtless golfers who think of the golf course as one giant dump!

"It has been happening for years, this continuous disregard for the beauty of the golf course. What is it? The on-schedule appearance of that cad--the litter bug.

"I really don't know what we're going to do about them. My golf course is like so many. Our superintendent puts out those litter cages on every tee and even his reminder signs tacked onto trees at conspicuous places throughout the course. I must say that the amount of debris has decreased but there's still plenty of room for improvement.

"Isn't there anything else we can do to lick this problem, fellows. I'm an old lady and perhaps don't carry too much weight in trying to correct things like this. But I have to have my say. I say stamp out the golf course litter bug. He (and she) is a disgrace to the game and themselves."

LINDA GOODNOW
Bernardston, Mass.

We'd like to spray those "bugs" with DDT, Linda. That's the only treatment they deserve.

"May I say that I am very pleased to read about the idea of your periodical allowing people like myself to give their views on golf.

"I really don't have any gripes at this time, other than the usual screams about golf becoming an all-day game because of the way people take too much time with their shots and putts. However, this is not a problem the superintendents can solve. We, the golfers, have to do it ourselves.

"Anyway, keep up the good work. You'll be hearing from me."

DOUGLAS WARNER
Southwick, Mass.

No complaints about the super, Doug? You're one in a million!

(This brings us to the end of this month's offerings. But more will be coming, perhaps from you. Remember, all letters are welcome. Keep them headed our way.)

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NEWSLETTER

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