

# NEWSLETTER

*Golf Course Superintendents Association*  
OF NEW ENGLAND, INC.

APRIL 1976



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

## "Two Things We Can Keep!"

John Campbell is a much-traveled as well as a multi-talented ambassador of good will for the golf course superintendent's profession.

The course manager of Foxhills in Surrey, England has hit most of the European countries and the United States while catching the rounds of turf conferences and golfing seminars. He is well-respected, too. He was held in near reverence as head greenkeeper at St. Andrews for 14 years. So, credentials . . . he doesn't need to flash.

Campbell is much for blending the old and new in golf into the one ultimate result—the perfect golfing condition. And he's all for modernizing the product, if it doesn't take away from the original intent of the game.

"I like new ideas and like to see them get started in Britain and Scotland," he declared while preparing for a delivery at the UMass Fine Turf Conference in March. "But there are two things you Americans can keep. One is the golf car. The other is slow play."

No golf cars at Foxhills? Members must be poor, eh John?

"Quite the contrary," Campbell laughed. "Foxhills is located in a London suburb. Surrey is known as the stockbroker's belt. I would say it is a most affluent area. Certainly, the Foxhill members could afford the luxury of mechanized cars. But, apparently, they don't wish to get themselves into the bad habit of riding around the golf course."

Even with the absence of golf cars at Foxhills, one would assume the members keep the caddy business in full force. "Oh, we have caddies there but not like the old veterans at St. Andrews," Campbell advised. "However, many of our members seem content to walk . . . and carry their own bags."

Campbell revealed that it's not uncommon to see the president of the local bank walking the course with a golf bag slung over his shoulder. "We have the old fashioned idea that golf is a form of exercise," Campbell remarked. "And to exercise, you have to put something in before you can take something out. That's why our players turn their back on golf cars. They still believe golf is a form of exercise."

Campbell tells the story about the introduction of the golf car to St. Andrews. "There were two or three people who thought we should experiment with the use of a golf car," he told. "Well, when I left St. Andrews, that thing was still in the same place . . . abandoned!"

As for slow play, Campbell claims the Americans invented it.

"I know that television has done more to promote slow play than any other recent intrusion on our free time," Campbell offered. "You people see those pros every weekend and before you know it, you're trying to emulate them. Even the high scorers take too much time to miss a shot."

John says that the average round at Foxhills requires three hours. That's average, not fast. "Of course, if you have good players, you can make it in two and a-half," he added. "But there is no need for any golf round to take more than three hours."

How does five grab you, John?

"Ridiculous," he replied. "In Scotland and England we're not score conscious like the Americans. We play matches and the loser picks up his ball as soon as he's out of the hole. But I still

maintain that the biggest offender is the pro . . . and the golfer who learns from him."

Campbell does lay it onto the pros. "This surveying and lining up a putt for minutes upon end are things the pros started and your amateurs picked up," he insisted. "I can't imagine anyone pacing off a 150-yard shot to the green. But I've seen Jack Nicklaus do it. Of course, he also plays a decent game. However, that is not the issue. We simply do not have the problem of combatting slow play in England because it doesn't exist."

So, the folks who turn the British and Scottish fairways into freeways can do without the golf cars and the slow play. As a matter of fact, we could do without them, too. Or should we not get into that argument?

Gerry Finn

## NEXT MEETING

NEXT MEETING Oyster Harbor Country Club, April 5, 1976  
HOST SUPERINTENDENT Charles Gardner  
DIRECTOR'S MEETING 9:30 a.m.  
MEMBERSHIP MEETING 11:00 a.m.  
LUNCH (Reservations please!) 12 noon  
GOLF After lunch  
Evening on your own



Charles Gardner will be our host for the April meeting at the very fine Oyster Harbor Country Club on Cape Cod. He worked at Oyster Harbor during the years of 1954 to 1961. In 1961 he was construction superintendent at Blue Rock Golf Course on Cape Cod. In 1965 he went back to Oyster Harbor as superintendent and has been there ever since. Noted as one of the finest golf courses on Cape Cod, we are sure everyone will enjoy the course.

Directions: Rte. 128 south to Rte. 3 south, take Rte. 6 (Mid Cape Highway). Take exit #5 off Rte. 6 and follow signs to Oyster Harbor.



# Golf Course Superintendents Association

## British Are Coming.....To Our Ways

To John Campbell, it always has been this way.

"You people (the United States) take the lead, come through with something new and eventually it gets to us (Great Britain-Scotland). The latest, for us--anyway, is the multi-facility golf club."

Campbell, as most of us know, is the former greenkeeper at tradition-laced St. Andrews. He spent 14 years there and, as he labels himself, "I was part of the furniture." Now, he has taken upon himself a new and exciting challenge . . . even moving up in titles . . . with the task of grooming Foxhills--a 36-hole complex 30 miles outside of London in the stockbroker's belt at Surrey.

The venture is a striking departure from the time-honored grasses and groce he cultivated at St. Andrews. There John was the "head greenkeeper." At Foxhills, he is the "course manager."

"Sounds very fancy," Campbell quipped between educational sessions at last month's University of Massachusetts Fine Turf Conference. "But what's in a name, anyway? I know you people have changed the nomenclature somewhat in that you are now superintendents--not greenkeepers. And I go along with that change if it has benefitted you. From what I hear, it has. So, maybe "course manager" is a step in the right direction."

That direction has taken John from the straight lines of golfing by tradition at St. Andrews to golfing for profit at Foxhills.

"This is a commercial venture for the people who had the idea to build such a complex," Campbell told. "It is one of the first of its kind in England and probably is the face of things to come. And it is a close replica of the type of golfing operations popularized recently in the United States."

Foxhills is a rather unique--for Britain--arrangement. Presently, it offers 36 holes of challenging golf on two courses. There is one tennis court and one squash court on the grounds. In addition, a swimming pool will soon open and there are plans for the immediate construction of additional tennis and squash facilities.

"We're just doing what the United States has seen fit to try and succeed at in recent years," Campbell offered. "That's providing recreation for the needs of the entire family. We're simply following an American trend. And, I daresay, I expect this is the beginning of a wave of multi-facility operations here and in Scotland."

Campbell reports that a similar setup has been started in Scotland's Glasgow area. "I'm not too familiar with it," John remarked. "However, I'm sure it will give the family a selection of sports to play. One trip will do it all--for golf, tennis, squash or swimming. It's a good idea."

At Foxhills, there is no thought of expanding to the condominium type of operation . . . another break from golfing tradition which had its roots planted in the United States. And there never can be.

"We are a green belt area," Campbell revealed. "And, it means that no homes, apartments or what not can be built on the grounds. We have all we need without that. But, I suppose one day we'll be having them here. It's just a matter of time and someone deciding to venture it."

The two courses of Foxhills were designed by one of the world's outstanding architects--Fred Hawtree. And even they are an example of the changing ways in British Isles golf. "I've gone

from the oldest golf course in the world to one of the newest," Campbell disclosed. "At St. Andrews it was a links-type course . . . no trees. Here, it's just the opposite . . . tree-lined fairways with elevated tees and greens."

Even the maintenance methods between the two are different. "We let nature do most of the work at St. Andrews," Campbell said. "The rough never was cut and some of the gorge grew as high as eight feet. You could lose yourself in there, let alone your golf ball. Foxhills has rough but we keep it at semi-rough length--four inches. And we also have all automatic irrigation . . . everything. I guess it's just a matter of making progress. However, St. Andrews remains the epitome of golf architecture. After all, God designed it."

Thus, the transition continues for Campbell . . . from the old to the new. It's a gap, all right. But the newness is rubbing in. "Squash," he piped, "that's a darn good game, too."

Gerry Finn

## NEWSLETTER NOTES

In the last 50 years our profession has gone through many changes from old mowers that were powered by the human being, to the highly mechanized hydraulic mower we now use. From golf courses where a lot of terrain was left in its natural habitat to golf courses that are now highly manicured. From the old days when the golf season ran about 4 to 5 months to the present days when some courses open as early as mid-March and don't close until sometime in December. In the old days the superintendent was primarily involved in growing good turf on his golf course. Certainly he had other job related problems but not to the degree the superintendent faces today. Today the superintendent must be versed in agronomy, horticulture, entomology, plant pathology, landscape architecture, construction, accounting, civil engineering, mechanics, public relations, and labor relations. He must make reports of planning and progress to the greens chairman as well as work with other committees and department heads at his club. His decisions and leadership directly relate to the success and future of the club.

Each year while attending the national and local conferences I am impressed with the progress through research and education that help the superintendent perform his duties. New equipment that does our work more efficiently is made available to us each year. Knowledge from educational speakers keeps us well informed and up to date with the results of research. Of course we certainly learn from fellow superintendents in our area and throughout the country.

There are 3 groups we must recognize for all the knowledge provided to us. Manufacturers who provide us with products of high quality to do our work. Universities throughout the country who continually supply us with knowledge through research. The last group is our own Golf Course Superintendent Association of American. GCSAA is an educational oriented professional organization. It provides us with many avenues for knowledge that help us in performing our jobs. Shortly GCSAA will provide a new service that will make available specialized turfgrass books and related reference material at or below suggested retail



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Sorry to hear that Jim Fitzroy was involved in a car accident. Jim is in the Quincy Hospital and we sincerely wish him a speedy recovery. If you're in the area, stop by and say hello or drop Jim a card, I'm sure he'll appreciate it.

## Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

How many superintendents are getting heat to open early? I know I am.

It should be explained to these "early birds" the problems that can arise from this foolish venture. Freezing and thawing is nature's way of airating and loosing the soil and it does it far better than we can mechanically. Golfers who insist on playing early negate this process by compacting the soil wherever they walk. Also, because of the turf grass being dormant it is brittle and will be damaged very easily. The problems do not show up right away, but will cause all sorts of problems when the turf is under stress during the hot summer months.

By playing early the soil is compacted, the grass plant can be injured and this results in a shallow root system. As we all know we strive to have good root systems in the spring because as the year rolls along, the roots shrink due to the very nature of turf grass management. By starting with a shallow root system, what will we have by July or August? This will force you into bad cultural practices by overwatering to keep the turf alive. It will also increase the chemical budget in order to hold down disease. Maybe by educating our members, telling them their actions will hit them in their wallets, it may sink in.

Tom Schofield Wellesley Country Club

Agronomically you only lose by opening early, there is nothing to gain. Patience is virtue.

Any change of address of superintendent or club official please notify the editor of Newsletter and also contact the national headquarters office at 1617 St. Andrews Drive, Lawrence, Kansas 66044.

## Newsletter Notes (Cont'd)

prices. This is one of the many services provided to the members of GCSAA.

Our association was organized Sept. 13, 1926 at the Sylvania Country Club in Toledo, Ohio by Colonel John Morly. The goal was to be that of the improvement of the man for the job, for better distribution of knowledge and closer association of all superintendents. GCSAA certainly has done that and more. The GCSAA has become the organization whose members have influenced the enjoyment and increasing interest in the game of golf more than any factor by their ability to produce and maintain superior turf on which to play.

This past year, GCSAA had the largest enrollment of members in the history of the association. As members of GCSAA we all should acknowledge the benefits of the association and try to interest fellow superintendents in joining. Members who attest to 5 or new members to GCSAA during the year are given a special citation during annual meeting by the membership committee. In this our 50th year, I think every member of GCSAA should make an effort to promote the GCSAA and make this year even bigger than last year.

Larry Bunn Newsletter Editor

A note from Ron Kirkman of Needham Country Club on painting ball washers and flag poles that you might want to remember for next season. After paint has built up to a number of layers over the years, your local strip removal shop will remove the paint for approximately \$1.50 per flag pole and \$2.25 per ball washer. It is most important to apply an aluminum primer coat first and then paint. Flag poles and ball washers look like new. You also can have the paint removed by sand blasting for approximately the same cost.

## Superintendents Merit Respect As Turfgrass Doctors

Golf Course Superintendents are professionals, not magicians. An analogy between superintendents and medical doctors can be drawn to illustrate the point.

After years of training and experience, both superintendents and doctors are prepared to examine ailments and prescribe treatment. Both are dealing with living objects. Both are concerned that the life continue. A great deal of mystery and misconception surrounds both occupations and their practices. Often the cost of their services is considered too high, in some instances exorbitant. Appreciation is expressed only when the "patient" approaches some near tragedy and is "saved," to be useful and complete again.

One major difference between superintendents and doctors (other than income) is that superintendents must work to keep their "patients" at the verge of death, through extremely close cutting, followed by an armada of golfers and carts. The "intravenous bottles" of fertilizer and other soil conditioners can never be turned off, and should some virulent "infection" invade the course in the form of fungus, insects, drought, etc., the superintendent cannot let the "patient" recover through bed rest. He is lucky if he can keep carts on paths, let along golfers off the course to let it recover naturally.

Each year stories circulate of how a superintendent has been fired because the "Course didn't measure up." Seldom do we hear of those who overcame tremendous odds and did keep the course in great condition, and almost never do we hear of course officials recognizing what may have caused the course not to measure up without pointing a finger at the superintendent. The common cold can remain uncured, but superintendents can have nothing short of perfection.

There are those who contend that all of this is what the superintendent gets paid for, and few superintendents would argue that particular point. What they might like to add, given the opportunity, is that should the "patient" suffer a setback or lose some vitality, conditions other than the superintendent's abilities and actions should also be given consideration. Superintendents are professionals not magicians and they can only perform minor miracles, regardless of budget golfers' desires and demands or other factors.

Although there may be a few charlatans in the business, superintendents over-all are more interested and aware of the conditions of their course than any golfer, professional or amateur, could ever pretend to be. If you wouldn't tell a doctor how to remove an unsightly wart, why should golfers assume so much knowledge and tell the superintendent how to perform his responsibilities?

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