

E.D.M. - Initials To Note

Around about the time of the PGA National Championship, a story surfaced from the goings on at the Congressional Country Club. It focused on a feat, eligible for insertion in the Guinness Book of Records. It seemed there was a man who had driven a golf ball in competition—not 390, not 450 but 515 yards. And, believe it or not, his name wasn't Gargantua!

Is it possible?

"Anything's possible," quipped Bob Mustard, "but something like that I'd have to see. Don't get me wrong. I'm not questioning or challenging it. But 515 yards?"

Mustard probably could bring such a poke up to the level of authenticity because of the rig he totes around in a worthwhile project of the Massachusetts Golf Association. Bob, as chairman of the MGA's course rating committee, is busy in his hours away from his insurance business measuring courses in conjunction with the rating service provided by the MGA. And into the MGA enters E.D.M.

E.D.M. stands for Electronic Distance Measuring. It is a device which measures distance with the touch of a button. In fact, Mustard says sometimes he doesn't even have to move his pinkie to get a reading. "E.D.M. is so sensitive, sometimes the heat of my body triggers it and I get the measurement just by staring at the screen."

The machine works on a beam theory between its eye and a prism located on a target. The E.D.M. is so accurate, it can measure distances up to one mile. At that lengthy zero-in, three prisms are used to pick up a response.

The course measuring process, available to all MGA member clubs and at an astonishingly low price which includes the cost of

markers, serves as a prelude to the rating program. Mustard finds that the over-all distances of each hole makes the rating more accurate and easier for the person doing such rating.

Mustard, who has been measuring courses all summer, reports that most of the yardage on the cards is "true". He emphasizes that he is not on a witch hunt to flush out "phony" or "inflated" yardages. And his results prove it.

"I find that the E.D.M. reading may be off the reading of the card five yards or so," he tells. "But there are a number of factors responsible for the difference. When I measure, I start from the middle of the tee and go to the middle of the green. So, you can see that there could be discrepancies because of different starting positions or varying angles from target to measuring device."

In his travels Bob has found only one outlandish ballooning of yardage on a hole. The course happened to be one familiar to him and he had often wondered about the yardage on the card before even getting into E.D.M. "When I put the machine on it, I got a 364-yard reading," he revealed. "The yardage on the card read 415. So, they were something like 50 yards off. This could have an effect on the rating."

One of the biggest and most important aspects of Mustard's project is establishing creditable 150-yard markers. Here is where he finds that E.D.M. overwhelms the powers of the human eye. "I have set 150-yard markers on holes where I'd bet my life I could reach the green with an eight-iron," he noted. "But the E.D.M. doesn't lie. It conquers the contours of the land where the eye has trouble."

Mustard and the MGA think accurate and reliable 150-yard markers will speed up play—one of the pet goals of the MGA this season. "More time is lost when a player paces off the distance from his shot to the green," Bob remarked. "I figure that up to 20 minutes a round can be saved with accurate markers. But we still have to convince the golfer they are accurate. This will take time in itself."

Anyway, E.D.M. are initials every golfer and super should be aware of. They are a helping hand to both parties but mostly to the golfer who wants to know where and how far away he is on the golf course at all times. The MGA service deserves a four-bell response from all.

Gerry Finn

Mt. Pleasant Country Club and Bob McGuire will be our host for the Superintendent-Press/Celebrity Tournament. Bob is a 1965 graduate of Stockbridge School of Agriculture. He did his placement training under Arthur Anderson at Brae Burn Country Club. He also worked 1 year at Brae Burn under Bob Grant before spending 4 years at Mt. Pleasant Country Club as assistant superintendent under Dick Blake. Bob spent 1 year as a salesman for Irrigation & Equipment Supply Company and in 1974 he became superintendent at Mt. Pleasant Country Club. This is a well conditioned golf course that everyone will enjoy playing.



DIRECTIONS: From Boston either Rts. 9, 20, or Mass. Pike to 495 North. Take 290 East to Church St. exit Northboro-Boylston. Take a right towards Boylston and club will be about 2 miles up on the right.

NEXT MEETING

Oct. 1, 1976

Mt. Pleasant Country Club

Host Superintendent Bob McGuire

Golf Tournament: Superintendent & Press/Celebrity

Buffet Lunch at 11:30

Shot Gun Start at 1:00

Cocktail Hour after golf. Dinner on your own.

Where'd That Trap Go?

A recent incident at a well-known country club, one blessed with all the basics of a course above average in both difficulty and beauty, makes one wonder what the typical golfing member sees when he takes a turn around his favorite birdie sanctuary.

During a clean-up, shake-down project—designed to cut back on the soaring costs of maintenance—an obscure sand trap was eliminated. The grounds crew came in, covered it over and planted grasses and small evergreens so that the area blended in with the rest of what was a rough portion of the hole.

Actually, one looking at the area wouldn't have known, one way or the other, whether there had been a sand trap there or the remains of a dinosaur, so perfect was the reconstruction job. So, there the fun began and fun it was.

Two veteran members, touring the hole one afternoon, just happened to get into a conversation over the topography of the layout and the overall beauty of the course. And, just by accident, one mentioned that the hole they were playing didn't suffer by the elimination of "that old trap up on the right side of the fairway."

His golfing partner, who has been a member of the club for 50 years, had a puzzled look on his face. "What trap you talking about?" he asked. "I've played this hole a million times and I don't remember there ever being a trap there. You're crazy."

In turn, the closer observer of the scene offered to bet his man five dollars that such a trap had existed up until two or three months previous. Well, needless to say, the 50-year member had to cough up the five and take a second look at his powers of observation.

The incident is brought up here because of the crunch on golf course maintenance funds (or rather a reluctance to provide more money in an ever-increasing inflationary market) and the various means of cutting back on course conditioning without changing the over-all character of the original layout.

The elimination of traps, that seldom enter play, is one way of tightening the maintenance belt. Because of the changes in the game of golf, many courses now find themselves with "useless" hazards—including a number of bunkers or sand traps that lend neither beauty nor practicality to the scheme of the playing track.

The particular trap, over which a five-dollar bet emerged, was an example of a "trap going to waste." This doesn't mean it wasn't maintained. But the time spent, correcting washouts and performing the ordinary smooth-out chores, was a drain on the general schedule of course conditioning.

With its elimination, it became a part of a patch of rough which requires only occasional mowing.

Phase two of the same crackdown on the unnecessary outlay going into the maintenance and definition of sand traps is a face-lifting of sorts on those bunkers which contribute to the character of the course. Right now, there seems to be a return to the old in this situation.

Most of the older courses relied on bunkers with fairly flat surfaces and mounds that were grass-covered. However, on the scene appeared the deep-faced traps (more difficult to negotiate, to be sure) but equipped with a continuous problem—ugly washouts that took away from the aesthetic atmosphere and resulted in costly repairs.

These sand-extending faces are slowly succumbing to the grass-covered, gradual approaches into and exits out of the bunker. Although several courses have refused to bend in this direction (because it takes away from the difficulty factor), it would seem that the more practical avenue is being traveled here. If, as we all have at one time or another, you saw the results of Hurricane

Belle on certain of these traps, you would rush out for a box of grass seed and leveling equipment.

Thus, the sand trap syndrome is slowly but surely solving itself with the aid, comfort and hard work of the superintendent. It is one part of a changing golf world but not that streamlined to take away from the original concept of natural course design.

Gerry Finn

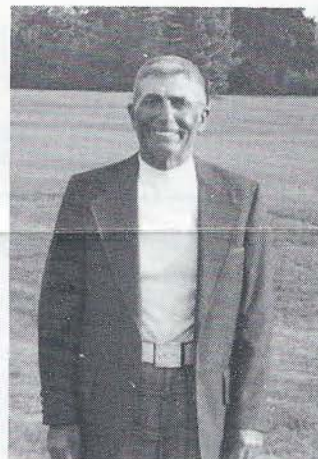
RESULTS OF GCSA OF NEW ENGLAND CHAMPIONSHIP GOLF TOURNAMENT OF 1976

| | | |
|----------------|-------------------|----|
| Bill Carter | First Gross | 76 |
| Ken Mooridan | Second Gross | 79 |
| Doug Johnson | First Net | 71 |
| Ron Kirkman | Second Net | 71 |
| Lenny Blodgett | Third Net | 72 |
| Nick Bruno | Seniors Champ | 77 |
| Guy Tedesco | Seniors Runner up | 81 |
| Joe Rybka | Longest Drive | |
| Nick Bruno | Closest to Hole | |

(Hole in One on the 137 yd. 17)



Bill Carter, GCSA of
New England
Champion



Nick Bruno, GCSA of
New England Senior
Champion. Had hole in
one on 17th 137 yd. par
3 at Weston Golf Club.

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George Wise, THE CLAPPER CO. First Net 73
Herb Farrer, E/W IRRIGATION Second Net 73

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Newsletter Notes -

This Newsletter again will be reaching you a little late because of the late date of our last meeting and the date of our next meeting had to be changed at the last minute. Sorry for the delay and we hope to get on schedule for our next issue.

Last month's meeting at Weston Golf Club was another great meeting. Don Hearn had the course in great shape and the lunch was indeed excellent!! The people of Weston Golf Club were extremely hospitable. An enjoyable day for everyone. The golf course presented a great challenge for our championship tournament. The course is not extremely long, I think around 6000 yards if my memory is correct. But the course demands that you be very accurate with your shots. The greens are nicely trapped and putt very true. Weston Golf Club is a perfect example that a course doesn't have to be long in order to prove to be a real challenge. It was a pleasure to play a course that didn't always require that you be a long hitter. If only I wouldn't have hit 2 balls out of bounds on the first tee! Don, couldn't you move the parking lot a little more to the left? Nick Bruno, who won the Senior Championship, also had a hole in one on the 17th, a 137 yard par 3. Nick used a 7 iron for the perfect shot. I couldn't think of a better birthday present than a hole in one. Nick's birthday was the following day.

Jim McCormack attended the meeting at Weston Golf Club and was presented his 50 year plaque by President Wayne Zoppo. Mr. McCormack is a charter member and has held almost every office in our association. He had an enjoyable day talking to a lot of old friends and meeting new ones, as well. Mr. McCormack said he missed being around fellow superintendents and working for the association. It was great to have him at our meeting and we hope he'll be able to come back in the near future.

Had a conversation with several superintendents about the thoughts and comments that have come out of the last two meetings with our honorary guests Howard Farrant, Elmer Fuller, and Jim McCormack. All three men stated how much they missed being involved in the association. All three men pointed out that the association is as good as its members want it to be. And all three men felt it was the best way to keep abreast with the changes in their profession. As this group of superintendents looked around the room and saw the familiar faces that make most all the meetings, we wondered where are all the other superintendents? A fellow superintendent made the statement that a member should be able to make at least 6 or 7 meetings a year. If this were the case, with a membership of 150, we would average 75 superintendents per meeting. We now have about 30 to 40 superintendents per meeting. Here are three men who were all successful superintendents, who felt that the association was a very important factor during their careers. I don't mean to say we have an association of unsuccessful superintendents, but it seems like there is a lot available to the members of our association if they want to make the effort. These three fellows are perfect examples.

The weather again was a topic of conversation at the last meeting. If you recall, it was reported in last month's Newsletter that a number of areas had only 2 inches of rain from the first of May through the latter part of July. I guess we all should of known that we would get drenched in August! The total amount of rainfall for the month was 17 inches! Most of that came along with hurricane Belle, but actually, the damage from Belle was minor compared to what it could have been.

Would like to welcome three new members to our association. Frank Santos from Cranberry Valley Golf Club, Roger Niccoli from Norfolk Golf Club, and Edward Wieloch from Nichols

College Golf Course. We hope to see all three at future meetings.

Next month's meeting, at Mt. Pleasant Country Club, will be a shot gun start a 1 o'clock. This is the superintendent/press/celebrity tournament. There will be a separate tournament for the friends of the association. Following golf, there will be a cocktail hour while the results of the tournament are being computed.

October 15 is the date for the Pro-Superintendent tournament to be held at Brae Burn Country Club. Make a note to call George Wemyss at 245-5441 for a starting time. If the superintendent does not have an established handicap, he will have to play from scratch.

Each year prior to the Annual Conference and Show, Chapters designate a representative to attend the Advisory Committee meeting to discuss matters related to the Association. Even though our chapter has not designated a representative, you are encouraged to begin thinking of agenda items that you would like our representative to submit. All items discussed at the advisory meeting will be brought before the Executive Committee for consideration and action.

I don't know about you, but I'm a little perturbed about the increasing complaints from professional golfers on golf course conditions. As stated in The Golf Course Superintendent August issue, three American stars - Jack Nicklaus, Tom Weiskopf, and eventual winner Johnny Miller, complained about course conditions while playing in the British Open. They felt that the greens at Birkdale were not in as good a shape as they should be for the caliber of the tournament. Everybody has read about the terrific heat wave and drought that the country has experienced this year. How they expect a superintendent to have his course in top playing condition under these circumstances is beyond my wildest imagination! So, Don January, Hale Irwin and J. C. Snead complained about the height of cut on the fairways at Atlanta Athletic Club while playing in U. S. Open. They labeled the tournament as the "Fly Lie Open." They felt the fairways should have been cut one quarter of an inch lower, so the ball would sit up better. Similar complaints must have come during the PGA Championship, when play was stopped to syringe greens several times during play. A number of the top pros pass up the tournament at Pleasant Valley Country Club because they feel the greens and fairways are not cut short, the way they like. Pleasant Valley is now considering changing their fairways to bent grass, so they can cut the fairways lower to suit the pros. All the complaining the Pros do will be picked up by the club members at the local level and the superintendent will be put under unnecessary pressure. Can't the Pros be a little more understanding about the fact that the superintendent can't change the weather and when it is against him, there isn't a whole lot he can do to change the situation. It's the same as when the Pro has to play in 40 mph winds, he isn't going to perform as well and will be less likely to shoot 68 rather than a 70 or 71. The complaint about cutting the grass shorter isn't justifiable either in my opinion. Every tournament is won by someone who goes out and shoots 8, 10, or 12 under par for the tournament, and sometimes more. Everybody plays the same course and if one person can play that well under those conditions, why can't the rest? If everybody shot lousy scores, then maybe I would listen to some of the complaints!! Doesn't it always seem to be the top golfers who do the complaining? Do conditions always have to be perfect? Most superintendents do the best job they can with what they have to work with. There are a lot of factors to be considered when evaluating the condition of a golf course. You just don't look at the surface and say this is the way it should be. Personally, I go along with Arnold Palmer, who labeled his contemporaries as "stupid" and "cry babies."

Larry Bunn, Newsletter Editor

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