



Golf Course Superintendents Association
OF NEW ENGLAND, INC.

AUG. 1977



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Remember that Early Getaway?

A funny thing happens on the way to the golf course every July or August. Many of those players—the ones who frequented the early bird public courses of budding spring and fading winter—just keep on going. Their purpose has been served. Now, they seek what in biblical terms are greener pastures. . . but in their case constitute greener greens and tees.

Alas, the public course player is fickle. His allegiance, for the most part, is in a permanent spread formation. He tells all that the course on the other side of town is the “greatest” because it opens its gates the last week in February or the first week in March. Then, in the middle of summer’s big heat when those early openers are suffering turf ills, he beats the drum loudly for the layout on this side of town which had the sense and patience to cool it with the cash register in March so that it could play a concerto on that piano in August.

This is not a condemnation of those courses who beat the gun, so to speak, and open their arms to the public. . . sometimes in the dead of winter. Each has a business approach of its own and each may offer the golfer just what he desires at certain weather checks in the year. However, they must pay the price in reduced receipts once “a better course” is discovered.

The public course enjoys the rare luxury of being independent in his operating method. Suffice to say there are courses which depend on an early winter thaw to get them over the financial hump. These layouts thrive on early spring because they know they will suffer once other courses are ready for play.

Ready for play? That’s another interesting item in the annual syndrome confronting courses—both public and private. Ready for play all depends on the mood of the player. In late February or early March one should imagine that anything with tee markers and flagsticks coming out of the ground is ready for play. This is why certain early bird courses have gone to such an extent that snowblowers are employed to clear the greens should a late winter storm upset the plans to be the first on the block to open.

However, the golfers (especially those from private clubs sneaking out for a quick shot and early takeoff) are inclined to exaggerate the playing condition of courses that operate “out of season.” Some come back to the home club raving about the public course. Consequently, the word spreads and the superintendent has 300 on his back clamoring for a chance to get into the act.

Those same golfers, too, wouldn’t be caught dead near one of the early openers now that the thick of summer engulfs all courses and many succumb to its grasp. So, it is common to hear of those winter golfing havens becoming vagrant stations at this time of year. And it is common to hear of an alarming number of serious turf problems accompanying the fallout with the “loyal” public.

It should be within reason, then, to propose that all golfers take a look at this recurring situation. . . the course that bubbles with excitement in early spring and chokes from inactivity in summer. Perhaps an appreciation of the dangers early course openings entice can be gathered from that look.

This is not to say that there isn’t a time and place for everything. . . and pardon the double negative. But certain

courses serve a certain purpose and others etc etc etc. Next time you tee it up in the middle of winter remember how that course will look in the dead heat of summer. And, if you are a private club member, be thankful your super allows your course the proper amount of winter rest.

Gerry Finn

NEXT MEETING

the Country Club

Tuesday, Aug. 9, 1977

Superintendent - Press/Celebrity Tournament

Sandwiches available in Pro Shop

Golf after 12 noon

Dinner at 7:00 p.m.

Carts and caddies available. Please call Pro Shop if you have a foursome. 566-0240.

DIRECTIONS: Mass Pike to Rte. 128 South. Take Rte. 9 East to Brookline. After Longwood Tennis Club at the fourth traffic light bear to the right onto Lee Street. You’ll see Jamaica Pond at the fourth traffic light. Follow Lee Street to Clyde Street. Take right at Clyde Street and club is on the left.

Pete Coste is our host for this meeting. Pete came to The Country Club in 1972. In 1973 The Country Club was host for the Walker Cup Championship and has had several state tournaments. Pete graduated from URI with a B.S. in General Agriculture, graduated from the Winter School at Stockbridge and became a Certified Golf Course Superintendent in 1973. He also serves as Educational Chairman of our association. I’m sure everyone will enjoy playing this great golf course.

CONGRATULATIONS to Edmund B. Fraser of Chelmsford Country Club and Robert J. McIntyre of Holden Hills Country Club who were voted in as Associate Members.

Golf Course Superintendents Association

Another Endless Season

"They're at it again," one golf course superintendent cried to a colleague recently.

"Again?," was the reply. "When did it ever stop?"

The "it" is a familiar disease. . . yes disease since the carriers of same have to be sick. The subject? Vandalism. And, as the super in the second paragraph implied, it is another endless season. Vandalism neither ends, takes a break nor a vacation. It hangs in there, ugly example of warped hypo that it is.

Obviously, each and every super has a vandalism story to tell... whether it be the tale of simple pranks or willful destruction. It happens, almost every day, in fact. You wake up one morning and you don't see a ball washer on the place. . . or you look out at the course and there isn't a flag stick in sight.

Although such acts are slightly more than annoying, not to mention expensive since the replacement of materials and the man hours deployed in correcting the situation take an unexpected nip out of the budget, they are more tolerable than others. If vandalism began and ended with the snapping of a green pin or the occasional disappearance of a ball washer, it wouldn't rate all that much concern. However, the examples of vandalism are escalating to the point where golf courses are in danger of suffering serious financial and other economic-related setback because of them.

Recently in the western end of Massachusetts a private country club fell under the assault of a vicious wielder of destruction. Even as long as a month after this particular culprit drove amok across the course in a pick-up truck, the extent of the damage couldn't be finalized. First estimates went to \$20,000 and from there the figures took a crazy bounce as the cost of repairs fluctuated considerably. At last check, it appeared the total could run as high as fifty thousand dollars.

Naturally, the deep scars were scorched into the greens. The path of destruction was a wide one, too. It hit several greens... some heavier than others. It was thought that at least two of the

greens could be lost for the remainder of the season. Others were closed for several days and members had to take the temporary route to par.

For some reason, vandals know their "hit" areas. They realize the most vulnerable spot on the golf course is the green. Not only that, the green just happens to be the most expensive item on the course in matter of being replaced or repaired. Thus, the greens have been the popular target of these senseless acts of destruction.

There are few deterrents to vandalism, what with the permissive attitude of certain judicial courts standing between logical punishment and feeble reprimand. Because the occasion of vandalism on the golf course courts overtones to thoughts that it is just another form of childish prankstering--an aside to growing up, it is more than likely that a judge sitting in on the case will deal with it in that perspective.

Because of the step-up in the dependence on mechanical aids--both in playing the game and maintaining the course, entrance to the playing area gives would-be vandals a green light to their target. Service roads, cart paths and the like must be left wide open and the vandal can walk in without anything or anybody challenging his presence.

There might be some merit in throwing out a bear trap or two (because the vandals are animals in a sense) but complications would be sure to arise from such a drastic move. A watchdog system is also a remedy to be considered but it beats its head against the budgetary wall.

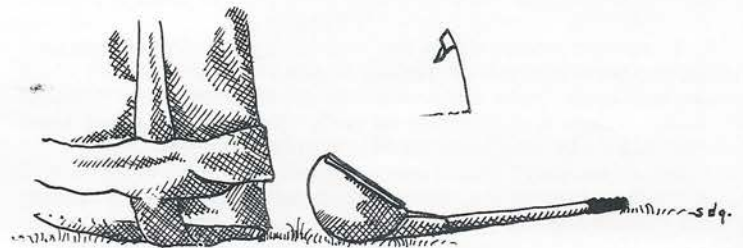
Live with it, then? It appears inevitable, unless some judge slaps one of the parasites with a sentence that fits the crime. Until that moment vandalism remains another endless season.

Gerry Finn

Family Picnic August 15, 1977

Bring the family and come for a day of fun. Softball, horseshoe, basketball, volleyball and other games will be the activities of the day. Clam cakes and chowder will be served at 12 noon. At 5:30 a traditional New England clam bake with all the trimmings will be served.

DIRECTIONS: From Boston take Rte. 95 South to I95 East to exit 4. Follow Rte. 44 East until you come to Francis Farm sign. From Cape Cod take I95 West to East Providence exit, take right, then bear right and take Rte. 44 East, about 1/4 mile from I95 exit.



Many thanks to Gary Luccini, Superintendent and Franklin Country Club for hosting our June Meeting. We enjoyed playing the golf course and found it in excellent condition. Special thanks to the women members who served as ball spotters on several holes. Also thanks to Frank Murphy, Superintendent and Halifax Country Club for hosting our July Meeting. The golf course was in excellent condition as always and was a good test for our championship tournament.

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Of Golf, Capitalism and Socialism

By Armen A. Alchian

A puzzle has been solved. Despite their intense interest in sports, no golf courses exist in the Socialist-Communist bloc. Why is golf solely in capitalist societies? Because it is not merely a sport. It is an activity, a lifestyle, a behavior, a manifestation of the essential human spirit. Golf's ethic, principles, rules and procedures of play are totally capitalistic. They are antithetical to socialism. Golf requires self-reliance, independence, responsibility, integrity and trust. No extenuation is granted misfortune, mistake or incompetence. No second chance. Like life, it is often unfair and unjust, with uninsurable risks. More than any other sport, golf exploits the whole capitalist spirit.

A golfer is his own creator, his own destroyer. He plays his own ball. It is a contest against Nature, by, and yet against, himself. No scapegoat can be found—no socializing of skill or consequences. No opponent's or partner's skill or clumsiness affects his performance. Tennis has an opponent on whom one can rely for aid or error. Football, with many partners and many opponents, is more socialistic.

Randomness of fortunes in golf, as in life and investment, defies specification, calculation or insurance. Rolling into a divot mark, getting a bad bounce or lie in a bunker is part of the game. The game even has a name for this unfairness—"rub of the green." Like illness or disaster it is to be borne without relief. The unfairness of golf is like that of capitalism. Some risks and hazards are foreseeable. Bunkers, trees, lakes and wind cunningly offer a rewarding or disastrous gamble or test resistance to temptation. A golfer plays his own style and reaps his own rewards—or consequences. Whatever causes misfortune makes no difference. He alone bears the consequences. No socializing of disaster or success.

No second chances. Every stroke counts in golf. In other activities, second and even third chances are given. Two serves in tennis, two free throws to make one in basketball, three strikes in baseball, four downs in football. No later act or good fortune will cancel earlier misfortunes. But later misfortune will cancel earlier good performance.

Honor and integrity are always at stake. A golfer monitors himself with no possibility for a stroke to be uncouneted. Any temptation to dishonesty is thwarted by the impossibility of lying to one's self successfully. You live with what you do, not with what you may say you did. No umpire calls errors; no umpire judges performance. The game is purely objective. A stroke was taken or it wasn't; the ball is out of bounds or it isn't; on the green or it isn't; in the cup or it isn't.

How elegantly one performs is irrelevant. No A's for effort-only for results. Only the number of strokes counts, not how you did it. Results—not intentions, or procedure—count. How thoroughly capitalistic.

The game is unreliable. Disaster strikes in the midst of good performance. Confidence is shaken. Was it luck? Deterioration in ability? What change could be made, if any? As in capitalistic society, those persisting questions are answered privately with

responsibility for consequences yours alone. The reward for good performance—whether by real skill or good luck—is insecure. If due to increased skill, a new reference base is established, and elusive improvement remains the goal. To do better—always better—is the goal. How powerfully capitalistic and antisocialist.

Antisocialist, but not antisocial. More, it is individualist and civilized. A golfer is courteous to other golfers. He does not distract others from their best play. He does not gain—and more important—does not lose by success, or failure, of others.

Golf is conservative. Rules change slowly; some never. Ancient and honorable customs must enhance survival values if they have withstood the test of time.

The socialist spirit, so pervasive in other areas, has tried to invade golf. Handicaps are proposed to equalize results. But a true golfer shuns handicap play. At best it is to him only an index—a prestige—of ability. Efforts to make competition more equal or "fair" are diseases that would have killed a less capitalistic game. The socialists have also sought to reduce the penalties for misadventure—the two stroke penalty for a ball out of bounds or lost. A two-stroke penalty for a ball lost because of poor eyesight or because of weeds was deemed unfair. But not by the true golfer who understands the reasons. The game withstood the attempt and the conventional penalty has been restored.

Match play was introduced to permit partners or opponents to save one from himself. But the true golfer plays for his own score. What his playing companions do is of no interest, either during or after play.

Even in the beginning of golf we have evidence. Who but the self-reliant individualist Scots, the progenitors of Adam Smith could create a game so congenial to the capitalist society and mentality. And at this end of history, who have become the most recent and avid devotees of golf? The Japanese and nationalist Chinese. Is more evidence required to demonstrate that golf is the spirit of capitalism?

Looking into the dim future, if golf is ever to enter in the rifts of the socialist bloc, surely it will be where the latent, but suppressed, capitalistic spirit is strongest—in the valleys of Soviet Armenia. Actually, seven courses exist in Czechoslovakia, holdovers from pre World War II society with 1,000 members—only 160 per course. Is it surprising the Czechs are the most troublesome people now behind the curtain?

Mr. Alchian is a professor at the University of California, Los Angeles.



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