



August, 1981



## Golf Course Superintendents Association

OF NEW ENGLAND, INC.

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

### Taconic's Mountain Magic

Dick Tworig calls it "mountain magic." Many of the members refer to it as our "natural watering system." Players in last month's Massachusetts State Amateur Golf Championship were inclined to keep their descriptives short and sweet. "Miracle" was the favorite word.

All of this rhetorical solicitation concerns the lush condition of the Taconic Golf Club in Williamstown, whose 6,600 yards of rolling terrain and lush turf challenged the abilities of most of the state's finest shotmakers.

Taconic, as a championship course, is unique in that it has no irrigation system, as such.

"Only five holes - the first four and the 18th - are man watered," disclosed Tworig, who has been the course superintendent for the past several years. "Once in a while the rest of the holes get hit with a dry spell and we get some brown spots. But Mother Nature has been good to us. Generally, we go through an entire season without having to cross our fingers."

Taconic is located in the Berkshire Mountains in the shadow of two particular ranges - Taconic and Mount Greylock. Because of its bowl-like setting, it is the beneficiary of heavy mountain dew. That's where Tworig draws his mountain magic explanation into its superb condition.

"The dew is so heavy you'd better have a good pair of waterproof golf shoes, if you play here before nine in the morning," stated veteran Taconic member Walt Pringle. "So, who needs a watering system? Of course, Dick does a marvelous job spreading it around. No kidding, the natural irrigation is a godsend. However, Dick also puts his heart and soul into the rest of the work to be done around the course."

For many years, Taconic was treated as somewhat of a golfing shrine by its longtime pro-superintendent, the late Dick Baxter. He treated the course as if it were a member of his family. He passed on the grooming methods to Tworig's father, Stan, who took over from Baxter upon the old gentleman's retirement.

"I've had good teachers," Dick Tworig explained. "Ever since I was a kid I've been part of Taconic. I played here, worked for Dick (Baxter) and my father. When I took over as superintendent, I was well-schooled and well-prepared to pick up the work of Dick and dad."

Tworig, in fact, is co-holder of the course record at Taconic. He shot a 67 when he was one of the Berkshires' leading amateur players. The other 67 belongs to pro golf tour veteran, Tommy Aaron. He fired his numbers while playing in the National Collegiate Athletic Association Championship.

Taconic offered the state am field stiff resistance, especially when shots strayed into the rough.

Roger Barry of the Quincy Patriot-Ledger, one of the nation's leading golf writers, declared that Taconic's rough put to shame the rough the U.S. Open field had to combat at the Merion Golf Club, near Philadelphia.

"I've seen them both," Barry told. "And I'd say Taconic's rough is more rugged than that at Merion. I don't know what Tworig did to raise such a crop of 'wire,' but, it certainly impresses me. This is a true championship course. The Massachusetts Golf Association has to be applauded for bringing the state am here."

Tworig has a simple explanation for cultivating the rough. "I just use a mixture of grasses and keep adding to it," he said. "Of course, everybody connected with Taconic always have prided themselves in having a strong test to offer good golfers. We don't try to trick anybody, either. The course has length and character. When it's in good condition, you have to go far and wide to find its equal."

Tworig claims that Taconic is the golfer's golf course because of his interest in the game as a player. "I don't get a chance to play as often as I'd like," he remarked. "However, I think all superintendents should play their course. You'd be surprised the things you miss when you aren't in a position to view the course from the player's standpoint. After all, we do set up and condition it for golfers. We aren't running a garden club."

Taconic, then, is living proof that natural conditioning methods do work when they are applied in the expert manner Tworig delivers to his duties. However, Dick also notes that the course's geographical location is the basis for his unique approach to grooming it.

"I never forget that I'm lucky to have those mountains around us and an occasional break from stifling temperatures in the summer," Tworig concluded. "Sure, Taconic is a breathtaking adventure for a golfer. But that outside help from Mother Nature is a must, here. Without it, my job would be twice as tough as it is." Gerry Finn

Congratulations and welcome to:  
Neil Loomis      Wayland C.C.  
John Medvecky   Merrimack G.C.  
Kevin Osgood    Newton-Commonwealth G.C.  
Charles Passios   Middleton G.C.

### Next Meeting

Joint N.H. and  
New England Meeting  
Sept. 14, 1981

Haverhill C.C. Haverhill, Mass.

Host Super: Mark Taylor

9:00      Director's Meeting  
10:00      Regular Meeting  
11:00      Educational Session  
            Robert Mershon - Speaker  
12:00      Buffet Lunch

1:15 SHOTGUN

Directions: From 495 northbound take second Rt. 125 exit (#51) toward Haverhill (east). Continue to Kappy's Liquors (few hundred yards). Take next left at Marsh Ave., go 1/2 mile - club driveway is just after you cross back over 495. From 495 southbound - do same thing except get off at the first 125 exit (#51).



## Golf's Colorful Problem

A combination of economics, shrinking water supplies and the resurgence of a return to nature, could make for a changing face as far as the nation's golf courses are concerned.

"The underlying factor in golf course conditioning today is the amount of money the country club member is willing to spend," one veteran superintendent noted recently. "If he is satisfied to pick up the tab, most courses can be made into impeccable golfing playgrounds. However, the trend has gone to tightening of maintenance budgets. Should it continue, the golfer may have to get along with something other than their accepted definition of a well-groomed course."

Does a golf course really have to be green and lush in order to offer players an acceptable playing experience?

There is a popular theory that it does not. Several years ago the United States Golf Association was confronted with an approach to conditioning that defied logic.

Several wings of the group, hit hard by water shortages and depleting maintenance funds, advanced the declaration that "brown is beautiful." They proposed that color on a golf course had nothing to do with the basics of conditioning. In other words, good turf was the foundation for the execution of a golf shot - whether it was green, brown, red or purple.

Accordingly, the introduction of automatic irrigation systems to the conditioning process is intended only for aesthetic purposes.

"It's become more a matter of pride and recognition to have golf courses bathed in sparkling green," one advocate of the brown is beautiful movement insisted. "What has happened is that superintendents are being asked to make showplaces of their golf courses. As a result, conditioning costs have skyrocketed, and in some cases the golfer has actually suffered because certain courses have become too lush."

As a matter of fact, it is true that some golf courses are over-watered. This adds to the confusion and the expense of proper maintenance.

Most club members are average golfers who must rely on unrefined skills to move their golf ball from wet lies. More often than not, the resulting divot comes up twice as large and more often than not, it isn't replaced, which only has to add to the overall expense.

The proponents of the greening of the golf course have even extended their aesthetic urgings to the rough. Nowadays, it is common for watering systems to cover everything on the course that grows.

Therefore, the drain on the water supply has increased drastically. Sooner or later, the private sources of water will run out or restrictions on the use of public sources will be implemented to alleviate the danger of all wells running dry.

Disregarding the looks of a golf course and the future of its playing conditions, surfaced in this year's USGA Open at Merion.

Because of a frequency of rain storms before and during the competition, the usually "lightning fast Open greens," were slowed down to a crawl. The USGA chose to have the

greens rolled continuously in order to pump new life into the putting areas. Obviously, brown is beautiful where the legitimacy of a USGA tournament course is concerned.

Golf courses, then, are about to be caught in the middle of the economic pinch and the increasing danger of drought conditions. In some instances, there will be no choice open to those determining whether or not the greening process will be continued. Where water restrictions are imposed, brown is beautiful will be the rule - regardless of the drag it places on aesthetic appointments.

Where water is still plentiful, courses will have to decide if it is still economically feasible to retain the appealing lure of green fairways and roughs as costs for the basics of conditioning continue to soar.

Wherever the direction takes them, golf courses are sure to feel the drain of money and/or water. Green is nice, but is it absolutely necessary when many in the game still insist that brown is beautiful?

Gerry Finn

## G.C.S.A.A. News

### San Francisco named as site for 1985 Conference

From Jan. 30 - Feb. 5, 1985, San Francisco will host the 56th International Turfgrass Conference and Show. The soon to be completed Moscone Conference Center offers 275,000 square feet of unobstructed exhibit space.

### 1982 Tournament to be held in Orlando, Florida

On Jan. 28 & 29, Walt Disney World will be the location of the GCSAA's 1982 Championship Tournament. The men will compete on the Palm and Magnolia courses, while the ladies test their skill on the Lake Buena Vista Golf Course. The ladies tournament has been changed to a 2 day, 36 hole format for 1982. Look for more info in your conference brochure.

### Headquarters hotel to be site of meetings and educational sessions

The Hilton, named headquarters hotel for the 1982 Conference, will be used for educational sessions and some business meetings. Located just across the street from the Rivergate Convention Center, the Hilton is easily accessible to all conference attendees.

The N.E.G.C.S.A. wishes to announce that Paul Miller, Tedesco C.C., has been appointed to fill a vacancy on the Board of Directors. Our thanks and congratulations to Paul. While we are thanking people, we should also thank Wayne Zoppo and his staff for an excellent day down in Rhode Island. A good time was had by all. Thanks again, Wayne.

### JOB OPENING

Mt. Pleasant -- Lowell

Contact: Mike Cambray

Club: 452-8228

Home: 957-1315 (after 5:00 P.M.)

### Cape Cod Tech

#### Field Day

Sept. 29, 1981

Rain Date Sept. 30

Cape Cod Vo-Tech

Rte. 124, Harwich

10:00 A.M.-3:00 P.M.

### U.R.I. Field Day

Sept. 26, 1981

Univ. of Rhode Island

Kingston, R.I.

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Recently we ran an article entitled "This is the week that was - Greenskeepers diary." It was incomplete and not credited to the proper source. The remainder of the article appears below. Credit goes to Bill Smart, of the Hudson Valley Association.

## This is the week that was - Greenskeeper's Diary

**Monday** - Want to spray bad dollar spot on greens. Cushman won't work. Sprayer won't work. I don't want to work. Nobody else wants to work. Two of the crew stayed home and did not work. Just had a phone call that the Junior Golfers are to have a shotgun start on both nines at 8:30. Hung up in the caller's face. Should not have had that last beer last night. Mowed greens and tried not to notice that the cups needed changing and the dollar spot is even worse than I thought. Did not mow 13. Hate it. Between the winterkill, oil spill kill and the disease, we ought to tow it to the SPCA and have it put to sleep. Chairman left message in the pro shop to get in touch with him at once. He better not hold his breath. Hit 95 by late afternoon. Late for supper, wife mad, supper lousy, I'm mad. Watered 'til dark. Showered and went to bed. Wife sexy - I'm not.

**Tuesday** - Went in at daylight - the air feels like a police dogs breath. Got the sprayer working. Can't figure out why the chemical companies package dusty chemicals in bags that are impossible to open without getting it all over yourself, and the sprayer, not to mention breathing it. The cheapest cereal on the market is packaged in easy-to-open-and-close containers. We all should go to granulars - that would snap their eyes open. Fairway tractor stuck in wet spot right next to the huge localized dry spot the crew calls Iran. Why are there so many cars in the club lot? The Pro Shop says it is a ladies member-guest transferred from another club that had a fire in their kitchen. I think I will set one in ours and let them eat at Burger King. Go home early - sleep through supper. Wife mad again, too tired to be mad. Mow rough 'til dark. Showered and ate cold, leftover supper. Felt sexy - wife still mad from early evening. Lost interest.

**Wednesday** - Slept late, went in at 7:00. Changed cups 18 greens, hit 14 rocks. No record, but close. Thirteen green has a disease that looks like vomit - on close inspection it is vomit - what a relief! You can always hose off vomit. Birds working on greens - how many cutworms does it take to fill up a crow! I think their mother was raped by a rooster the way they scratch with their black toenails and dig with their beaks. The member who owns the ice cream plant told me we need more sand in the traps - I told him his maple walnut needs more nuts. He said "times are tough" - I agree. Went in the club for a cup of coffee and the manager asked me if I knew anything about the septic backing up. Left without getting the coffee. Fairly normal afternoon except we are down to one Cushman. Are flat tires contagious? Home for supper at the right time for a change - no one is home. Note says heat a T.V. dinner. Go down to the Old Eagle Inn and wash a steak down with half-dozen hinnies. Finish mowing rough. Wife mad. Don't care, sleep on floor after watching Sands of Iwo Jima. Love Big Duke.

**Thursday** - My yellow crud is back. Every year it comes the end of July. Interesting light green spots get weaker looking then turn yellow ... then grey ... then dead. Some say it is Fusarium, some say anthracnose, some say funose. Wife says it is my imagination. My assistant got rid of the persistent red leaf spot patch on the practice green, he cut it with an eight-inch patcher and threw it in the pond. Sure is wonderful what they teach you at the U. of Mass.

## Mr. Superintendent - Are you an "endangered species?"

*continued from last month*

So-o-o-o - Where does all this leave us? Some obvious conclusions:

1. Expect to see very few new pesticides in the foreseeable future.

2. Be ready to get by with far fewer pesticides than you've ever had before. You'll have to take what you can get, and be satisfied. It won't matter that what's available to you just might not work.

3. Watch for alternate methods of pest control. Close at hand may be the era of biological controls - or even the control of pests with sophisticated electronic devices not yet even dreamed of.

4. Pests could increase their activity to where, perhaps, intolerable conditions for the public may force changes in government thinking to the point where the bureaucrats will really have to decide whether to control pests or choose the only other alternative and let the pests overwhelm the people.

If the average turf manager must choose between eliminating some of the management "tools" he now has to work with, it has been determined that the very last thing he'll give up is his store of good pesticides. He simply cannot maintain fine turf, especially putting greens, without good pesticides - at least as of now.

What's to be done? That's mostly up to you. You can either endure the restrictions and regulations, or you can do something about it! Write to your Congressman! Write to your Senator! Work through your association and its fine membership, and let the government know that its actions are jeopardizing your career. In order to manage fine turf properly you need good tools - especially good pesticides! Just because something "might," at a future time, cause a problem, is no reason to ban it if it has never caused a problem before. Mercurial fungicides are a good example. For over 50 years - one-fourth the entire history of the United States - mercurial fungicides have served golf course superintendents well. They are without peer in performance and low in cost-in-use. In all those 50 years there has never been a documented case of injury with these materials when used as directed. And yet there is the threat of a denial of registration of these mercurials. Why? No one really knows. It happens that a number of routine items of commerce, readily available over-the-counter to anyone of any age, appear to be far more dangerous than mercurial turf fungicides, used as per their labels. It has been said, for example, that ordinary aspirin causes more deaths every year than all pesticides combined - of any type - and designed for whatever purpose!

What man can do to pollute the Earth is infinitesimal compared to what the Earth does to itself. A recent article claimed that when Mount Krakatoa, the volcano, exploded and sank into the Pacific back in 1880's, that single explosion threw into the atmosphere, more particulate pollutants than has all of Mankind since the world began! By the way, the title of the article is, "The Earth Is Its Own Worst Polluter."

Why is it that you are the key to the future of good pesticides? Because you are the only one government officials will listen to - because you are the one most adversely affected when important pesticides are no more. Thus, it is imperative that you let your voice be heard - individually and through your associations. If you don't it might just be you, the Golf Course superintendent, who becomes the endangered species.

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# NEWSLETTER

*Golf Course Superintendents Association*  
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