

Golf Course Superintendents Association

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Our Pete Pulls It Off

Pete Coste, the energetic golf course superintendent at The Country Club (Brookline), is accustomed to handling gigantic tasks and coming through with rewarding results.

So, preparing the historic course he manicures on a daily basis for the United States Golf Association Amateur Championship is right up Pete's alley - so to speak.

The big event will be played at The Country Club next September, even the closing days of August.

"It runs a full week with the finals scheduled Sept. 7," Pete pinpointed the playing dates. "By then, I think we'll be in the run-out stages of keeping it up to snuff. But I'm ready for it. Whatever the USGA orders, I'll do my darnedest to deliver."

The USGA is familiar with The Country Club layout, having scheduled many major events there. The most recent was the Walker Cup matches in 1973. Coste was on hand for that one. In fact, this is his 10th year at Brookline.

"I just got out my 1973 file and started to collect my thoughts," Pete described his first fling at the job when it was learned he'd be greening up the layout for the world's top amateur golfers. "That experience will be a big help getting this one off the ground."

The Country Club has such outstanding architectural character and on-going commendable condition that very few changes will be necessary to bring it up to ultimate championship standards.

"We've had a very good conditioning year here already," Pete disclosed. "Right now (November) the turf is in remarkable shape. If it winters well, we should be able to get right on top of the rest of things in the spring."

Coste and his crew have just completed a sand-buildup project.

"We've brought in new sand and edged 81 bunkers," he told. "The USGA wanted to sand in at this time so that it would be well-aged by the time the tournament starts. The only thing we'll do in the summer is maybe add a little sand that's been lost over the winter. So, that part of the preparation appears to be going smoothly."

With the USGA aboard in an advisory capacity, Pete finds that his needs are quickly met.

"Whenever the USGA talks, the people at The Country Club listen," he laughed. "But that's the way it should be. Both parties have been great in setting up the course. Really, I'm having fun. Of course, it's work - but what else is new?"

Pete expects to be bringing in some of the fairways by late spring.

"The USGA likes the width of the landing areas to be 30 paces," he explained. "That's about 90 to 100 feet. Where it's necessary, we'll be cutting back to conform to its specifications. That won't be any problem. Many of our fairways are tight to begin with."

The rough-cutting will be old hat to Coste.

"It figures to be the same when we got things together for the Walker Cup," he said. "There will be a two-inch cut for the first six feet of rough. After that, it will go up. Since we'll be growing it in late August, it might go beyond reasonable height. However, it's up to the USGA to determine just how high it will go."

It should be remembered that The Country Club's rough was the determinant during the 1963 U.S. Open, a tournament Julius Boros won by negotiating it with a sand wedge in a dramatic winning-playoff against Arnold Palmer and Jacky Cupit.

"I think the course will be just as tough as it was for those players," Pete cautioned. "That means it will take a real champion to win the Amateur."

Solid and swift greens are another must with major tournament layouts and The Country Club will have them this time around.

"The greens will be just as hard as the USGA wants them and the speed will be there, too," Pete added. "The players will have to put up with another potential problem in making low scores because our greens are small. A couple of them don't run any more than 3,000 square feet. I'd guess there might be a few curse words coming out of some mouths when players leave the greens."

The tournament agenda calls for a practice round on Monday with qualifying Tuesday and Wednesday (alternate sites in action with Charles River the other course.) That will trim the field to 64 players who will engage in match play until the finalists square off for the title Sept. 7.

The Country Club is the fourth stop for Pete in his superintendent's travels. He began his career in Brewster, then moved to Connecticut where he handled the conditioning of The Patterson Club in Fairfield and Pequot Golf Club in Stonington. From there he landed in Brookline where his work has been a model for the profession the past 10 years.

The National Amateur is just another notch on his achievement gun.

"I'm really looking forward to this," Pete concluded. "It's a big job and the responsibility goes with it. However, I welcome the challenge. We're really going to have some fun around here for the next 10 months or so."

Gerry Finn

Next Meeting

December 2, 1981
Needham G.C.,
Needham, Mass.

Host Supt. Ron Kirkman

- 9:00 Directors Meeting
- 10:00 Regular Meeting and Educational Session
- 12:00 Lunch

Directions: From 128 take exit 57. Go toward Needham and take fourth left, Green St. Club is on right.



NEGCSA -- Accent on Action

The Golf Course Superintendents Association of New England shook hands with reality recently with passage of a streamlined Article IV as part of sweeping revisions in the organization's by-laws.

The overwhelming vote, conducted during a scintillating session at the International Golf Club, guarantees that supers no longer will be required to join the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America before being accepted as members of the NEGCSA.

"This brings us up to date in matter of establishing a democratic basis for operating our organization." NEGCSA president Ron Kirkman noted, "The democratic process will be honored by giving our members the option of joining the national. Eventually, some will choose to become part of the national and others will not. That's the way the process was meant to work."

What the new arrangement does is eliminate a form of discrimination for those potential NEGCSA members who would have had to forfeit voting rights and meaningful participation in official group discussions.

"I would expect that the change will give us more numbers in membership," Kirkman added. "It also should be a source of fresh input into our meetings and formation of organizational goals. The size of the vote proves that this is what our members wanted. After all, the NEGCSA was created for the professional welfare of its members."

Article IV is just one more step in streamlining the NEGCSA. Another unpublished advancement also deserves mention.

"A lot of people are unaware of our new method for voting in members," Kirkman told. "Now, the final vote is in the hands of the board of directors. Again, this does away with the danger of employing discrimination of another kind."

In the past, a new member's name was presented to the overall membership for a first reading and subsequent offering to challenge that presentation. Furthermore, the budding member's fate could be decided by one dissenting vote. In other words, one member had the power to kill the presentation.

"This doesn't mean that the board of directors has usurped the individual member's right to question the qualifications of the man in question," Kirkman emphasized. "Members still are allowed to voice disapproval of a particular presentation by voicing their objections to the board. However, it is up to the board to scrutinize such objection and then act on the presentation."

The purpose of the new method is obvious. Members no longer will be able to use petty or personal differences with a NEGCSA membership candidate as the basis for denying him the opportunity to join the organization.

"We're not saying that this has been done in the past," Kirkman continued. "I think that the record of our established members is a good one in this situation. However, the new process is more of a preventative measure. Everyone retains his right to oppose a new member, and if the objection is legitimate, it will be recognized as such by the board."

The passage of Article IV and the updating of the method of accepting new members should be viewed as an example of increasing input into the NEGCSA by an active membership.

"The enthusiasm shown by members in making these changes has to be a major step in improving our group,"

Kirkman opined. "I think that some claims that our organization was becoming stagnant might have been justified. But I believe all groups go through this type of rubber-stamped participation. The input by members in the meeting at International and their increased interest in our operational procedures have to be considered an upgrading of the whole organization. All of them are into this thing and it's encouraging."

Members are reminded that copies of the new by-laws will be available to them in the near future.

Revision has been a lengthy but rewarding process. However, it will take time to get the new standards together so that members will be able to refer to them in handbook form.

Therefore, members are asked to be patient along these lines. In the meantime, they are to be applauded for their judicious involvement in bringing about the by-laws revision and putting some clout into the professional organization which represents them. Truly, the Golf Course Superintendents Association of New England is shaping into a group operated by and for its members. That's the way it should be.

Gerry Finn

**Congratulations and welcome to:
Stephen Carey, Royal Crest C.C.
Voted in last meeting**

We have been remiss in thanking the superintendents that have hosted meetings and tournaments. On behalf of the Association a thank you goes to:

Mark Taylor
Ron Milenski
Bob Grant
Jim Fitzroy

Haverhill C.C.
The International
Brae Burn C.C.
The Presidents

Hosting a meeting always requires some extra time and effort; and we sure appreciate it. Thanks again fellows.

JOB OPENING:

**Superintendent Holden Hills Country Club
Contact: Jim Walgren Phone 829-4346**

Random Thoughts

It's easier to eat an elephant if you cut it into small pieces first.
--Impact.

I've discovered that I can get more with a kind word and a gun than I can with just a kind word.

--Willie Sutton, bank robber.

He who knows nothing else knows enough if he knows when to be silent.
--Japanese proverb.

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Pythium - Some Eyeball Observations

Charles Lane, CGCS Framingham C.C.

Just in case some of you hadn't noticed; Pythium is here, and in my opinion, here to stay. There are many of us educated to believe that Pythium only hits south of New York City. Well, this is just not as true as it may have been ten or twelve years ago. We are now hearing reports of pythium outbreaks as far north as Maine.

Since I probably see (or have seen) as much pythium as most supers in the area; I've decided to proclaim myself an expert and put my observations into print. This may be a bit presumptuous on my part, especially when you consider that three years ago I couldn't spell pythium. I am going to break editorial tradition and mention brand names, mostly because I cannot spell the generic or chemical names. This should not be considered an endorsement of any kind, merely a statement of what has worked for me.

Basically I get three types of pythium, not too bad considering there must be a thousand species or sub-species out there. During the heat and humidity of July and August I will get the typical "grease spot" pythium. This is classic textbook pythium, killing leaves crowns and roots devastatingly fast. In its earlier stages the spots are 2-4 inches in diameter. They are irregularly shaped and range in color from orange to straw. The edges of the spots will be ringed by bluish to black, slimy looking and feeling plants, thus the name grease spot. Spots will show a streaking pattern, brought on by wind, water, or machinery movement. This stuff seems to need about two days in a row above 90° with a 68-70 degree night in between, and a lot of free moisture. Experience has shown that susceptible areas are clobbered on the second night. I have noticed that I see very little, if any, grease spot anyplace except greens. I can't quite explain it, but three years of observation have shown this to be true.

The second type of pythium I see a good deal of is what is most commonly known as "cottony blight". This is not nearly as fast or devastating as "grease spot", but if left alone, will wipe out a fairway without even looking like it. Small white to straw colored spots, usually 1-2 inches in diameter are characteristic. If seen early in the morning, the white mycelium are visible and give the appearance of a small piece of cotton. If noticed later in the day this cottony blight could easily be mistaken for a dollar spot. This variety does not seem nearly as fussy about temperature as some of its cousins. I have noticed that it does need the high humidity to really take off. It seems to have a way of shriveling up and going away after a few dry days. A couple of dry days won't help though on a low wet fairway. In three years of looking, I have never seen "Cottony blight" on a green or tee, only fairways, collars and rough have ever been hit. Again, I don't know why and only offer the observation for what it is worth.

The third pythium I've seen (and will probably see more of) is what I call cold weather pythium. Affected spots will look like "grease spot" but without the greasy ring. It is not as devastating as grease spot but can be ugly on a green. I saw a good deal of this in late May and early June of '81 on a few greens and collars. It seems to prefer night temperatures between 52 - 62 and of course a lot of free moisture. So far I have noticed it only on collars and greens. I suspect that this disease will be more of a problem in the spring than in the fall. This is an educated guess based on the fact that we have been spraying all summer; and there is probably enough residual hanging around to stop this variety, at least until the first frost. This cold

weather variety is relatively new to us, and definitely bears watching.

When and where does pythium hit? Here at Framingham, it hits everywhere and almost anytime during the golf season. The only thing all pythiums seem to require are a lot of free moisture. This can be high humidity, or excess surface water, or both. Pythium also seems to prefer areas of poor or marginal air drainage. Low or pocketed spots are generally hit hardest or first. Probably because my tees are all elevated and drain well they have never been touched by pythium.

Control of pythium is difficult using cultural practices alone, but some things may help. I try to water greens in the morning during July and August, syringing only in the afternoon or evening. Aerifying during the first week in July seemed to help the drainage problems during the stress period. I'm not sure I would go so far as to recommend July aerifying, but it worked for me.

Preventative sprays must be employed during the months of July and August. I have had excellent results with Tersan S.P. It is a tried and true product that has worked for all of us for many years. Having lost 1/2 a green on the 5th day of a 7 day schedule early in July, I shifted gears on greens spraying. We went with two sprays per week (Mon. & Thur.) at 3oz./1000 of Tersan S.P. This may sound drastic, but at Framingham conditions are always optimum for pythium. I was able to sleep at night, and in spite of the added cost, it was well worth it. It was successful and we didn't see pythium the rest of the season.

My fairways are sprayed every 14-15 days with 1 can of Acti-dione TGF and 10 oz. Acti-dione RZ per acre. This mixture works here and has given me control for as long as 21 days. Don't be tempted to use more than 10 oz. of RZ per acre, you may find yourself looking at a lot of yellow grass. This stuff can singe in warm weather, but I've never had a problem at the 10 oz. rate. I have never tried RZ on my greens, so you will have to do your own experimenting there.

There are a couple of new systemics on the market this year for pythium control; and for that we should be eternally grateful. To get solid pythium control for 21-28 days from a single spray is like dying and going to heaven.

I have not, as yet, used any Subdue; but have talked to a few superintendents that have. Their reports are favorable and based on this, I am sure that it will be a part of my chemical arsenal.

In cooperation with the manufacturer and distributor, I have had some experience with Banol. This is also going to be a good product. At 1.3 oz./1000 I got control for 21 days with one application and 28 days with the second. Trials were made on greens, collars, approaches, and fairways.

The chemical industry has done us a great service with the new systemics. This past season I had to use 12 contact sprays for the same control I got with 2 systemic applications. The savings in labor alone would more than offset any additional cost.

So, there it is, my Pythium article. It is not real scientific, not based on laboratory observation, or microscopic observations. Simply an on the spot eyeball observation of what I've seen and what worked to get rid of it. I hope that it might serve to remind us all that there is no disease (or other pest) that we "can't" get in New England. I am convinced that we will see more Pythium in this area before we see less.

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