

Going Spikeless Hits Snag

Where would golf be without burning issues? The latest to find the rounds of the golf course superintendent concerns the pros and cons of the spikeless golf shoe - another gimmick-laced product which has the public wondering if it could be the ultimate answer to scores commensurate with their expectations.

Actually, there are no pros about the shoe as far as the super is concerned. It has no value in maintaining turf. It doesn't give out a squirt of fertilizer every third step nor does it repair ball marks with one, gentle stomp.

All of its advantages (if any), then, are in the feet of its wearer. The shoe is lighter than the conventional, cleated model and therefore takes some of the pain and strain out of walking. It also is said to be more comfortable but this aspect varies with the quality of the shoe. Translated, that means price.

The cons are what the issue is all about. Some supers insist that it has more of a compacting effect on turf, especially the tender grasses on putting greens. They also fear that the quick-turning action of the lighter shoe lays turf bare to tearing.

According to sources close to the United States Golf Association, that august body has its opinion on spikeless shoes at half-mast. Originally, the USGA suggested that golf courses entertain the idea of banning the shoe - at least temporarily. However, it's understood that USGA testing teams are at work and those results will be released soon to give clubs a clearer picture of the situation.

Some courses already have acted without learning test results. Some of the original spikeless shoes had waffle-like cleats, scattered in every direction. They came down hard on greens and the immediate reaction was to keep them off the grounds.

However, other versions of the spikeless shoe have been met with approval by some courses - even their superintendents.

Brian Cowan of Eastward Ho, president of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of New England, has gone spikeless, himself.

"Like anything else, you must handle the shoes with the same attention you give to a regular model," Cowan emphasized. "You can rip up a green with cleats. In fact, the golf world is full of foot-draggers. But the spikeless shoe doesn't influence any more damage to greens than the old style. It's really how you walk in it."

The GCSANE hasn't issued any official opinion on the feasibility of wearing spikeless shoes and Cowan's experiences must not be construed as such. However, other associations have made their members think twice about endorsing or banning the use of these new turf huggers.

The Connecticut supers group says member courses should handle the situation on an individual basis. Fred Bachand, known for his expertise in giving touring pros the best greens on the PGA circuit at Wethersfield, isn't sure of the spikeless effect.

"We have sort of an unwritten rule at Wethersfield banning the spikeless shoe," he said. "But it's not that solid. I think we'll be like most courses and wait until the USGA comes up with a report on the tests out in California."

The opposition to spikeless shoes points out that, like different strokes for different folks, there have to be different reactions to the shoe. Obviously, soft greens would succumb to the quick twists encouraged by the light weight of the shoe. So, if in the best interests of those clubs to view the situation with a leaning to at least a temporary ban of the shoe.

Most golf professionals don't care about the spikeless issue, since golfers are going to continue buying shoes whether they are conventional or revolutionary. However, the more concerned await further word from the USGA.

So, going spikeless has run into a slight snag. No conclusions on the effects of spikeless shoes on turf can be drawn until the USGA comes up with a finding. In the meantime, it's to each his own with the super basing his opinion on his particular turf structure.

Gerry Finn

Next Meeting

Monday, September 12, 1983
Salem Country Club,
Peabody, Mass.

Directors Meeting 9:45 am
Regular Meeting 11:00 am
Lunch noon
Golf 1 pm Team of two
championship

Host: Kip Tyler

Kip is in his 2nd year at Salem. Prior, he was assistant superintendent of Medinah C.C. in Medinah, Illinois for 3 years.

Kip is a 1977 graduate of Ohio St. University. He is single and lives in Salem. We all look forward to Sept. 12th.

Directions - Rt. 128 North to Rt. 1 North. Stay on Rt. 1, go approx. 3 miles, you'll see the Bel-Air Diner. Take a right (Forest st.). Follow a short distance to club.

Please call to make a reservation by Sept. 9. Call Kip at 532-2236.



Outside Tournaments can be costly

It's been many years since the arrival of the golf car and its impact on the revenue turning process of the private and public golf course.

The golf car was a particular thorn in the side of the golf course superintendent who was saddled with the damaging effects its use laid on his professional domain. There has been example after example of tear-your-hair-out incidents in which golfers undid what their supers had done with one turn of the wheel.

Down through the walls on the maintenance building's walls the super has learned to live with the golf car. Well, to tell the truth, he had no choice. Once golf became a game of riders rather than walkers cars were here to stay.

The times of the country club change every now and then as do the means of raising revenue. The club has been content to allow the cars to take over some of the financial responsibility in order to keep membership costs within sight and up to this point, it seems to be working.

However, the endless search for a complementing endeavor to the golf car explosion has reached fruition with the latest addition to the revenue-raising ranks - the outside tournament.

Strangely, the influx of this new weapon to fight expenses has had a backlash on the people it was designed to aid. Members have come to find that "outsiders" are forcing them to play their rounds elsewhere on certain days and having to pay for the privilege, at that!

One veteran member of an established country club, west of the State House, reports that he is irate over the situation.

"Not only do I lose the right to play my course eight times a year, on four of those days I can't even get into the clubhouse for a drink," he bellowed. "They close that down to members, too. But I guess there's a reason for it. Everytime they shut down to members, they make a mint off the guests."

Of course, the hardship to the member in the abundance of outside tournaments doesn't necessarily end at his doorstep.

In fact, a heavy burden falls on the golf course superintendent who has the responsibility of preparing the layout for visitors and then regrouping his forces to clean up the pieces after they have left.

Most of the time, outside tournaments are arranged by those members who can't wait to show friends and business acquaintances how spiffy their course is. This, the superintendent had better make sure everything's in place and in order.

Outside play is an invitation to problems for the super in that most of the contestants use the occasion for their once-a-year attempts at hitting a golf ball. This puts a herd of buffalo, so to speak, on the course and its effects can turn out upsetting in the every day maintenance schedule of the superintendent.

The theme here is that country club officials (members if they are involved in the staging of outside tournaments) should be aware of the consequences approving such events bring to them and the man who's expected to provide the ultimate in playing conditions all the time.

True, the outside tournament is a money-maker for the club and, in the long run, helps to make membership more affordable. However, it does nothing to ease the task of the superintendent whose work load is doubled the five, six and even 10 times a year the course is given over to virtual strangers.

Sure, the golf car has been a member of the financial rescue squad to the private and public course and now the outside tournament is taking its place in that category where country clubs are concerned.

The superintendent has no control of this type of interruption in the flow of his maintenance program. But he should command some compassion when it comes time to "get things back into shape" after the invasion has been completed.

Country club officials and members please take note the next time you fill the till with an outside tournament.

Gerry Finn

August meeting at Weston Golf Club

We had a fine turnout for the meeting and golf. Our thanks to Don Hearn and the staff at the Weston Golf Club for being our host.

The tournament format was team of four. The winners were: Jim Fitzroy, Jim Bean, Pat Vittum and Neil Loomis.

Insect Update - August 22, 1983

As many of you know, the summer of 1983 turned out to be a banner year for black turfgrass *Ataenius* (dung beetle). Populations appeared to be somewhat heavier than last year, but damage was much more apparent because of the heat and water stress the turf was subjected to for several weeks. The weather has been warm enough this summer that we may see a second generation of grubs feeding in late August, but this generation should not cause significant damage in most cases (because the weather will not be stressing the turf so severely at the same time the grubs are most active).

Good news! I received a notice from Mobay Chemical Corporation last week that OFTANOL 5G and OFTANOL 1.5G received federal registration. The 5G formulation will be for restricted use, while the 1.5G formulation will not be restricted. The materials are not yet cleared in Massachusetts (the company has to file some sort of paperwork) and probably will not be cleared soon enough for this year, but should be available for Spring of 1984. Meanwhile, OFTANOL 2F (a flowable) is legal in Massachusetts now. The user must be licensed or certified, and the material must be watered in.

One last rambling thought concerning isofenphos (OFTANOL 2F or SCOTTS PROTURF INSECTICIDE 4) - either formulation seems to take at least two or three weeks to work well. In general, I would not suggest using isofenphos for September grub treatments. Use a faster acting materials instead (something like PROXOL). Save your money and put the isofenphos out next spring instead.

Pat Vittum
Suburban Experiment Station
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Editor's Note

We wish to express our sadness and deepest sympathy to the family of Joel McKoan of Sawtelle Bros. who recently passed away.

Joel was a dynamic man who was a personal friend to many of us. He will be missed dearly.

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*A Story of Early Golf at Franklin Park, as Copied From
Boston "Herald," Saturday, December 13, 1890.*

SAMPLING A ROYAL GAME

Golf Played on Local Grounds for First Time.

It Proves a Great Cold-Day Sport.

The royal game of golf was played on a local grounds yesterday, for, it is believed, the first time in the history of the city.

For some weeks it has been whispered in athletic circles that a game was on the tapis, but those principally interested kept their own counsel, and when the contest came off, spectators were conspicuous by their absence, excepting a *Herald* man who was on hand by invitation.

The gentlemen comprising the "foursome" were Messrs. Fred Mansfield, the expert tennis player and cricketer, Sam Donald, George Wright and Temple Craig, while J. B. Smith admirably filled the onerous position of scorer.

Before the game could be attempted it was necessary that the permission to use Franklin Park be obtained, and that permission the commissioners granted as soon as asked. In fact everybody interested contributed something, the Park Commissioners the ground, Wright & Ditson the clubs and balls, Mr. Smith dug the holes and, scored, the other players gave their time and energy, and the *Herald* man carried the spare sticks and niblick filling for the nonce that humble but useful position of "caddie."

Bitterly blew the blast and rapidly was the mercury in the thermometer seeking the shelter of the bulb when the pioneers of the game foregathered near the northern boundary of Franklin Park. Although Mr. Smith had showed much sagacity in laying out the links, and the shots included many "hazards" and "bunkers," the prospect was almost as blue as the noses of the players. But ten minutes after play had commenced all were warm as toast, proving, if proof of such evident fact be needed, that golf is hard work.

Just a few words about the method of playing this little known game. Holes are dug in the ground at any desired distance apart, ten such constituting a round, the object of each player being to "putt" his ball into these consecutively, in the fewest number of hits. Clubs are used which are not unlike horse-polo sticks, and with these the hard elastic ball is sent whizzing through the air for prodigious distances — one of Mr. Fred Mansfield's shots yesterday was fully 200 yards.

The first hole was situated near Seaver Street and the second about 70 yards to the southwest. This was an easy shot but all the players were new at the game and none got in with less than seven strokes. The third hole was about 100 yards from the second, at right angles to the first two and close to some trees. It was a little more difficult, but with patience and perseverance all made it.

From the third to the fourth was a corker — up hill, with a brook and a couple of hazards in the way. Donald distinguished himself in three shots — meritorious for a veteran, marvellous for a tyro.

The shot from four to five was a long one, over 120 yards. It took the competitors from six to nine shots to hole.

Six was the turning point, and from it to seven which lay under the "castle" was fully 150 yards, but Mansfield got in in five shots and all did respectably considering that a blizzard was getting in its best work during the progress of the round. From seven to eight was not over 60 yards, but every foot was dangerous — trees, high grass and rocks. Mansfield came near making a record, by landing within 3 inches at his first shot, but was unlucky afterward and did not hole until the fifth.

Nine lay beyond the brook, and was surrounded by tall grass, making it difficult of access, while ten was on the further side of the knoll and had to be aimed for with the eye of faith.

From that point into number one was plain sailing, provided a 10-foot bank covered with burrs could be surmounted. Some did and some didn't. These latter attracted much attention on the horse cars when returning, as they were decorated with many of the said burrs, having had to fish their "putties" out of the tangle.

Then followed one of the most solemn rites of golf, and one which should never be neglected. It was accompanied by crackers and cigars.

The second round was a repetition of the first, except that the play was better. Everyone enjoyed the game and acknowledged to an attack of "golf fever." At present the necessary implements are scarce in Boston, those loaned on this occasion having been imported from Scotland, but as it is said the Boston Athletic Club will shortly take up the game there should soon be many sets of sticks owned in the city.

The following were the scores yesterday:

Wright.....	8	7	8	9	9	6	6	5	4	8	— 70
Donald.....	11	7	3	8	4	5	11	7	8	8	— 72
Mansfield.....	14	8	7	9	6	6	5	5	6	8	— 74
Craig.....	7	6	6	7	7	5	7	9	11	10	— 75

Second round:

Wright.....	6	6	4	5	3	4	10	9	6	6	— 59
Mansfield.....	7	4	5	5	7	7	6	6	6	6	— 59
Donald.....	6	4	5	8	9	6	5	5	4	8	— 60
Craig.....	6	9	7	6	6	6	6	9	4	6	— 65

Divot Drift ... I'm sure everyone is happy that fall is just around the corner. It's been a long, hot, dry summer ... October will be a busy month for us. The October meeting will be at Kittansett on Oct. ??, the member-3 guest at Blue Hill on Oct. 12 and the Pro-Supt. on Oct. 15 ... Golf chairman Steve Murphy on why his hair style is called the Watergate. "I cover up as much as I can." ... finally, Pete Coste has been renamed the cocoanut by Bobby Brown. Bobby states that Pete has the unique talent of having his golf ball hit off multiple groups of trees shot at a time and the ball makes the sound of a cocoanut.

Something new to gripe about

Regulars at the Taconic Golf Club, which is owned by Williams College in Williamstown, Mass., have the impression that management really doesn't want them to use the new suggestion box it has put up. The box is attached to a post implanted in the middle of a large water hazard on the 4th hole.

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