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# HERB GRAFFIS

## SWINGING AROUND GOLF

**Required reading for golf businessmen:** The 81st annual report of the executive committee of the USGA must be considered required reading by anyone who claims to know — or should know — golf business.

The USGA report is for persons who are officially certified, or think they should be, as golf pros, club managers and superintendents. It is the ABC's and a preview of the higher learning for those needed and ambitious young men who are getting educated for happy, prosperous and secure careers in golf. It is a basic schoolbook for those in the PGA, CMAA and the many agricultural schools with which the GCSAA is associated.

The golf manufacturing company executive who has not read this report may not know what he should about his market. By the way, the USGA policy on the universal ball saved some manufacturers enough, so these manufacturers can spare the time to read the USGA report.

The USGA is the best-directed and operated organization in American sports today — perhaps in world sports. For national public service and usefulness to the amateurs and professionals and businessmen in the game, it governs with consent of the governed, and there is not a sports body anywhere nearly as good for the country and its sport as the USGA.

Everywhere one's eyes go in the sports scene, the USGA looks better. It has kept amateur as well as pro golf growing and healthy. Yet, as the most useful and best-operated organization in sports, the USGA lost \$49,291 last year. The difference in the bottom lines, while painful, is not dangerous as the USGA has about \$560,000 in the sock for a quick snatch and about \$900,000 in other assets.

The 1974 USGA deficit can be explained in simple terms — too many freeloaders. However, the decrease of 1974 tournament income over expenses from figures of the previous year accounted for 40,208 of the 1974 red ink. In 1974, the USGA Green Section deficit increased \$30,598. The Green Section expenses were \$364,113. Income from Green Section turfgrass service was \$261,065. Green Section service is the biggest bargain any sports organization — amateur or professional — gives its players and public.

The treasurer's figures can only tell a small part of the USGA story. Services contributed without charge by officials and committee members mean time, brains and results in the millions for the benefit of all golfers.

To know golf business, read the USGA annual report.

**Experience teaches how to balance inflation:** there are indications the necessity for economies in golf course operation is not proving to be the terrible problem it threatened to be.

The Green Section annual meeting in New York drew a record attendance of more than 500 and with its keynote of economy brought out ideas for improving the playing conditions, housekeeping and labor, machine and materials management at courses with economies to offset inflation. The traditional ingenuity of the golf course superintendent seems to surface every time there is an economic pinch. Things that seems to be unbeatable — things like higher prices for fertilizer, insecticides and herbicides essential to course condition — seem to be handled without deterioration of the courses. In some way experience appears to be nearly keeping inflation in balance with the budget.

to page 55

## GRAFFIS from page 4

**Aeration easiest answer to car traffic problems?** Except for areas around greens where inclines might be dangerous and golf car parking might delay play, the car paths theoretically ought to be any place on the course, outside bunkers, where the foot of the golfer is up supposed to go.

If for any reason the cars compact turf areas, aeration ought to care for that problem unless there is a drainage situation that needs deeper treatment. Some widely experienced and successful superintendents observe healthy grass on soil that does not get compacted shows such resistance to golf car traffic they wonder if there will be car paths on many holes on fine courses in five or 10 years.

**Superintendents who look like executives:** A superintendent at a prominent club — and a former GCSAA president — says too many able superintendents are not adequately recognized and paid simply because these men do not look like

executives in charge of a big investment.

"They should be dressed so they could go into the clubhouse for lunch and dinner as the professional and manager do. There they would be seen by members and get acquainted with them and learn the members' opinion of the job. I believe the superintendent should be seen on the course in a golf car that obviously is the mobile office of the man in charge. I have a note pad and a pen, a golf iron, pruning scissors and sometimes a device for taking soil plugs in my car. When it is by the clubhouse and I am getting lunch and talking to the pro, the manager and the members, the members know that every minute I am on the course I am giving what they want, need and pay for."

**PGA Golf Day 1974 fund distributed; 30 percent up:** National Golf Fund at its 1975 meeting held earlier this year distributed the \$141,000 raised by the PGA's 1974 National Golf Day. The 1974 revenue was 30 percent higher than the previous year. PGA Golf Day com-

mittee, headed by Joe August, had vigorous planning and promotion by PGA Executive Director Mark Cox and the PGA's public relations counsel, Earl Collings. Energetic promotion by PGA members at their clubs and fee courses revived pro's hopes of having National Golf Day recognized as the chief public service campaign by a professional sport.

Grants from National Golf Day were made to the GCSAA scholarship fund, \$18,000; National Amputee Golfers' Assn., \$3,500; PGA Benevolent Fund, \$5,500; PGA Educational Fund, \$31,000; Caddie scholarship funds of 28 district amateur golf associations, \$37,000; USGA Green Section turfgrass research at 17 universities and stations, \$19,500; PGA Relief Fund, \$11,000; United Voluntary Service for Swing Club work at veterans' hospitals, \$11,500; Women's Western Golf scholarships, \$5,000. The extent of golfers' aid in caddie scholarships was reported as \$1.6 million in 1974 by Marshall Dann of the Western Golf Assn. □



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