

News

ASSOCIATIONS

Allied association group is now reality

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It was a monumental task to organize, but the first meeting and establishment of the new Allied Associations of Golf (AAG) went off without much of a hitch last month in Chicago.

Two years of conflicting schedules, lack of organization, and indifference on the part of several associations, which eventually decided to join anyway, had blocked any significant effort to get all the groups that deal with the game and business of golf around a table to discuss their mutual interests and problems.

Not everyone showed up in the end, but enough did make the meeting at the O'Hare International Airport that this time it worked.

Coordinated by Golf Course Superintendents Association of America Executive Director Conrad Scheetz and his counterpart in the National Golf Foundation, Don Rossi, the summit eventually included representatives from the Professional Golfers' Association and its Tournament Players Division, the Club Managers Association of America, the United States Golf Association, National Club Association, American Society of

Golf Course Architects, and the Ladies PGA.

Marshall Dann, executive director of the Western Golf Association, was brought in as chairman and moderator of the session, which lasted the entire day.

In what served as a getting-to-know you period, each association presented its programs and problems for the coming year. Prominent in most of their presentations was the continually rising cost of club operations.

Speaking for the CMAA, President Harry Gray talked about the membership problems his organization has run into and the expansion project it has in the works. Emphasis is still on the general manager concept, something about which the CMAA has been at odds with the other associations.

Scheetz also talked about the membership problem the GCSAA was having, attempting to get more superintendents into the association. Biggest area of concern for the turfgrass people in the coming year is the growing amount of government regulation on the horizon —

most notably OSHA, EPA, lack of greenbelt legislation, and the development of new chemical restrictions.

Restrictive admissions policies were on the mind of National Club Association's Executive Director Jerry Hurley. Hurley discussed his group's attitude on a recent case concerning California's Bank of America and its dropping of all corporate payments for its employees at private clubs. Hurley dubbed this an overreaction to "trial balloons" the Department of Labor has let rise on its policies concerning sex and racial discrimination at private clubs.

Mark Cox, executive director of the PGA, took a mild approach to the problems facing the industry. He said the PGA did not look at the issues as "severe." He pointed to the steady rate of increase in PGA membership, but failed to note the problems the association has had getting jobs for members in the last 2 years.

High costs were also mentioned by Cox, who cited a higher minimum wage as a real evil for the club professional. Cox pointed to the fact that as costs increase,

Photographed by GOLF BUSINESS at the first AAG meeting in Chicago were (left to right) Paul MacDonald, NGF president; Marshall Dann, WGA executive director and chairman of the meeting; and Jerry Hurley, NCA executive director, and Donald Padgett, PGA president.



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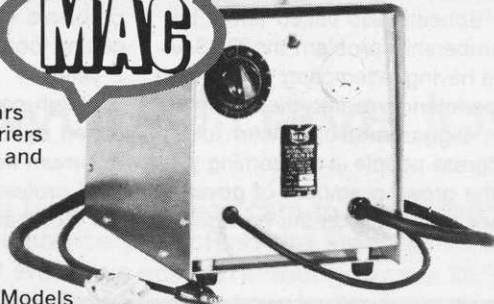
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members/customers at courses are hesitant to continue to pay escalating fees. Golf professionals have become the game's promoters, Cox noted.

"A responsive and flexible attitude toward the game," were the words of Harry Easterly, Jr., president of the USGA, describing his association's attitude. Although the USGA is more involved in the playing aspects of the game than in its day-to-day business, many in the group felt the success of the allied association project hinged on the serious acceptance of the outside world. The USGA presence bolstered that chance.

Easterly was quite aware of the public relations problems his group was having. For example, research surveys done for the USGA on public awareness have shown a real lack of knowledge of what the group is and does.

The USGA president took an old-fashioned, but practical, view of the advances the golf car has made in the game over the last decade. "We don't want to suppress technology," he said. "We do look at the game losing some of the basic camaraderie that walking around a course brings about."

In what he termed an overview on matters affecting the game and business, the NGF's Rossi brought up the sticky problem of inadequate junior golf efforts by all associations, including the efforts by the foundation. He pointed out that with more than 23,000 secondary schools in the nation, there had been no concerted effort to get more young people to play in the high schools. From where he sits, Rossi felt golf was indeed the worst taught of any sport in school.

Rossi called his organization

the "catalytic group" in the industry, eager and able to work with all others for the good of the game. In the initial stages of the AAG, that appears to be about the extent of what the new association will tackle.

In fact, Dann made it plain the AAG was not destined to be a group of much action in the next year. Each association is interested in hearing about the problems of the others, but it seems that is as far as it goes for the present. The biggest advantage the new group does have to offer, though, is the opportunity for each member association to be sure it is not duplicating the actions of another.

There will be no formal constitution or bylaws for the AAG. It will meet at least once a year and survey the problems of each association group and attempt to digest and focus in on the problems of the industry.

PGA headquarters agreement unveiled

Highlight of the annual meeting of the Professional Golfers' Association in Palm Beach, Fla., (see accompanying article) was the announcement that an agreement had been reached with developer E. Lloyd Ecclestone, Jr. to build a national headquarters complex for the PGA on one of five possible

GONE WITH THE WIND? The PGA has been headquartered in this building in Lake Park, Fla., for 3 years now, but is destined to move out in another 3 years—if everything goes smoothly according to the PGA's agreement with developer E. Lloyd Ecclestone, Jr.

