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THE PROFESSIONAL'S CHOICE ON TURF
Where are they today?

GILBERT FOSTER

By JACK KOLB

Have you ever felt like an anthropologist who has just discovered a species of man that the whole world thought no longer existed?

That was my feeling as I probed the archives for a subject that I was sure had long passed on to the "Eternal Green" where 100-yard putts are gimmees. This gentleman is a virtual dinosaur in the turf industry. The name Gilbert Foster will register only with those of you who have been around since the years immediately after World War II.

Gil Foster attended the old "Agriculture School" which was located on the St. Paul Campus of the University of Minnesota. This was back in 1928, with succeeding years of stock market crash and depression.

To have a scientific background in those days was to be a "Rare Bird." In peddling his knowledge he was befriended by a gentleman "Greenkeeper" at Keller Golf Course in St. Paul by the name of Harold Stodola. So Gil worked for Harold learning the intricacies of "greenkeeping" until 1936 when the head pro at Town and Country Club, Jock Hendry, was casting about for a knowledgeable "Greenkeeper."

Gil Foster labored at Town and Country Club for 17 years. Many changes took place during those years. The U.S. had gone to war as did many of the club's members, money was directed toward the war effort, budgets shrank, equipment was impossible to buy, tires were allocated on agricultural need, which left many a tractor set on blocks. Gasoline was rationed and that meant golf courses would have to go back to horses if they were to remain operating.

War's end came and in 1946 some of the chemistry developed during wartime was released to the civilian population. Town and Country Club, with Gil's supervision, was to benefit from one of the earliest uses of 2, 4-D which was used to eliminate weeds from its fairways. Equipment manufacturers such as Toro and Jacobsen started manufacturing "Power Greens Mowers" both of which demonstrated their first models during Gil Foster's administration.

Ryan Manufacturing Company came out with the first "Sod Cutter." Herb Cohrs had made the first "Greens Aire" (Airifier), also demonstrated at Town and Country Club in St. Paul.

In interviewing Gil Foster he kept reminiscing about the venerable people that worked in the industry such as Paul Miller, Scotty McLaren, Leo Feser, Emil Picha, Jim Graham, Joe Rush and many others. Some day maybe we can elaborate on each of them in another story. Gil was Secretary of the Association in 1948 and President of MGCSA in 1949.

In 1953 Harold Stodola moved from Keller to Firestone Country Club in Akron, Ohio, thus leaving a vacancy that was filled by Gil Foster. In this capacity Gil began to expand his horizons. He was now in charge of both Keller and Goodrich golf courses. Gil also had bought a farm in Gem Lake Township near White Bear, Minnesota and began to develop what became Gem Lake Golf Club. He also became the first Bent Grass Sod or Stolon grower in the area, growing certified grasses such as C-1 Arlington and C-19 Congressional bent. Several golf courses were converted from sand greens to Bent grasses at this time which included Goodrich Golf Course in St. Paul.

There are many old stories that Gil would love us to tell. We neither have the room nor space for them in this article, and I have been privy to some of the lesser escapades that he referred to.

The Minnesota Golf Course Superintendents' Association should be proud of this man, who probably is the closest (by a couple of years) living person to being one of the original charter members of our organization.

Gil now lives in Phoenix, Ariz. He plays golf regularly with daughter Susan. He is in his 87th year hale-and-hearty and is looking forward to coming back to the Twin Cities to visit another daughter and whatever old friends that are still around. "Play on through, old buddy!"
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1997 MINNESOTA TURF TOURONEY

FORMAT
The week of June 9-13 each entered four-person team will play 18 holes of golf at its assigned club. Two golf carts are included in the entry fee/donation price. Club assignments will be made on a first-come basis. All entry blanks were mailed at the same time to give everyone an equal opportunity for desired course selection. Entries will be accepted starting May 1, 1997.

ENTRY DEADLINE
Entry forms must arrive by 4:00 p.m. on Monday, June 2, 1997 at the MGCSA office, 240 Minnetonka Avenue South, PO. Box 617, Wayzata, MN 55391. The donation/entry fee must accompany the entry form — $80.00/person . . . . $320.00/team. Late or incomplete entries are not acceptable and will be returned.

PRIZES
Tee prizes will be given to all participants.

APPLICATION FOR ENTRY

The 11th ANNUAL MINNESOTA TURF TOURONEY OF THE MINNESOTA GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Please enter this team in the 1997 Minnesota Turf Tourney of the Minnesota Golf Course Superintendents’ Association. The donation/entry fee of $80.00 per person ($320.00 per team) is enclosed.

The players named below are members of the

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GOLF COURSE PREFERENCE:

1ST CHOICE: 2ND CHOICE: 3RD CHOICE: 4TH CHOICE: 5TH CHOICE:

- Bunker Hills Golf Club (6/11)
- Eau Claire Country Club (6/12)
- Edina Country Club (6/12)
- Golden Valley Country Club (6/13)
- Hillcrest Country Club (6/10)
- Indian Hills Golf Club (6/11)
- Izzy’s Golf & Yacht Club (6/9)
- Madden’s Resort—“The Classic” (6/9)
- Mankato Golf Club (6/11)
- Midland Hills Country Club (6/12)
- Minnesota Valley Country Club (6/12)
- North Oaks Golf Club (6/11)
- Olympic Hills Country Club (6/12)
- Stillwater Country Club (6/11)
- The Minikahda Club (6/9)
- The Preserve Golf Club (6/10)
- Wayzata Country Club (6/9)
- Woodhill Country Club (6/9)

DRESS FOR THE GOLF GAME: Players must wear proper golf attire which is acceptable by the host clubs. No tennis shorts or jeans. Please report to the golf shop at our assigned club at least 10 minutes prior to your scheduled starting time and be available to start.

Liability:
- We acknowledge that the Minnesota Golf Course Superintendents’ Association or the host clubs are not responsible for any injury during the playing of this golf game.
- We agree that this entry is subject to rejection at any time (including during the Tournament) by the MGCSA. The reason for rejection may include unbecoming conduct.

The MGCSA Tournament Committee will make club assignments and contact the No. 1 player on each team of your tee time and club.

Signatures of Players:

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THE PROFESSIONAL'S CHOICE ON TURF
MGA Hires New Legislative Counsel

The Minnesota Golf Association has hired the Minneapolis law firm of McGrann, Shea, Franzen, Carnival, Straughn & Lamb to serve as its new Legislative Counsel.

The firm will represent the MGA in monitoring current legislation and/or assisting in proposals introduced before the Minnesota State Legislature as they relate to golf interests in the areas of real estate tax, environmental, employment and other pertinent issues.

William R. McGrann will assume primary responsibility for the MGA and will be assisted by Doug Carnival, Randy Morris, Doug Franzen and Kathleen Lamb. The firm will work with MGA’s chairman of the Government Relations Committee, William Bohmer, who said, “In that the MGA serves as an umbrella, under which all the state’s allied golf associations can work together, we have hired an extremely talented group to represent all of our joint issues.”

“Legislative representation at the Capital is one of the many services that the MGA provides to its member clubs and its associate members,” said MGA President Roger Gordon. “I am delighted to have such a well-qualified firm representing MGA in this endeavor.”

“We are delighted to have our law firm acting as legislative counsel to the MGA,” said McGrann. “Some of our firm members have been members of the MGA and we have greatly admired the organization and everything it stands for. We look forward to representing the association at the Minnesota Legislature and to help accomplish the goals of the organization.”
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Pruning and Common Sense

By MICHAEL ZINS
University of Minnesota

It has often been said that pruning and common sense go hand in hand. Too often though, we view the pruned trees in our communities and wonder indeed where the common sense went. Perhaps it went on the brush pile, callously disregarded like the tree parts that were rejected. What can be done about some of this appalling butchery and total disregard for the natural beauty of our trees? Plenty, if we just think about it. By following some basic rules and pruning techniques, we can have a profound effect on the shaping and maintenance of our community trees.

To many tree care novices, pruning means removing branches, often with little thought as to what will happen afterwards. Pruning rules and techniques are thought of as unimportant or not even thought about at all. It is easy to understand their position when we hear “professional” terms such as Drop Crotching, Callous, Branch Collar, Included Bark, Scaffold Systems and other seemingly unrecognizable words being used to describe the proper way to prune trees.

So what are we trying to accomplish with tree pruning anyway? First, we should look at why we prune. One reason is to help the plant develop its form. Damaged and broken branches, crossing or rubbing branches, inward growing branches and multiple leaders should all be pruned. Another reason for pruning is to help preserve the health of the plant. Diseased, dying or dead branches, injured branches, narrow angled crotches and watersprouts should all be removed. Hazardous branches should also be pruned. Any branches that interfere with pedestrian traffic and utilities fall into this category. (Remember, only qualified arborists should prune around electric lines.)

Pruning is really preventative maintenance. It is really critical on young trees to avoid problems before they exist. Too many young trees are improperly pruned, or in more cases not pruned at all, for several years. Then it becomes a major operation to remove bigger branches that will deform the tree. The following figure illustrates some potential problems to prune.

The best time to prune most trees for tree health is in the late dormant season (March & April in Minnesota). To minimize the spread of oak wilt, trees should not be pruned in April, May or June. For fireblight problems which show up on apples, crabapples, mountain ash and others in the rose family, prune them when dormant in late winter. Honeylocust should be pruned when dormant or during dry conditions. Trees that “bleed” may be pruned in June-July if the “bleeding” is a concern. Maples, birches and nut trees fall into this category.

When pruning any branch, the cut should be made outside of the branch collar (see diagram above). Proper pruning will eliminate stubs and allow proper wound sealing.

There are several reasons not to prune trees, but two of the most common are to thin out the crown and crown reduction or topping. Of these two bad practices, topping is by far the worst offender and is perhaps done the most often. Cutting off large vertical branches will allow decay organisms to enter the branches through the cut stems. Eventually, the tree may become hollow and considerably weakened. If a crown reduction is desired, branches should always be cut back just above a lateral branch as shown in the diagram at the right.

Remember, the best pruning job isn't judged by the size of the brush pile, and yearly pruning is much better than putting it off for several years.