

Martino consistently (and modestly) shoots "around par" golf. This "around par" ability has earned him many local amateur victories through the years. In 1960 and 1961 he won the Brookmanor Country Club Invitational. In 1959 and 1962 he captured top honors in the Bellhaven Fourball Tournament. Martino was "Club Champ" at Argyle Country Club in 1958, 1959, and 1960. In 1964 he won the Manor Club Member-Guest Tournament.

Despite his obvious success as a "super" and as an amateur golfer, Martino reluctantly admits to his one and only regret in life — the fact that he "never turned pro." Considering his ability with a set of clubs, this seems a legitimate longing.

Martino was born and raised in Clarksburg, W. Va. As one of 14 children, he "had to make money some way" and

took up caddying at 25 cents a round (18 holes) at a local private club. While he admits that he "took to golf naturally," he also adds that he availed himself of every opportunity to play "anywhere and anytime I could" to improve his game. Caddies were allowed on the private course each Monday morning and Martino was always "one of the first there." As well as he can remember, Martino was 11 when he became serious about golf.

At least once a week Martino can be seen on the Village links attempting to improve his already enviable game. "I play only about once a week since my operation (for ulcers) last March," he says. "During September I hope to get in at least two or three days a week" in preparation for the tournament in October.

During this period Martino intends to "work hard on my woods" which he considers the weakest part of his game. Putting, however, should prove no problem. "Putting is definitely the high point of my game," he says.

FEBRUARY CONFERENCE PLAN AHEAD FOR AIR TRAVEL

Air travel plans to Anaheim, California, for the 1974 conference and show should be made well in advance to benefit from special reduced rates.

A recently received flyer from our GCSAA Executive Director, Conrad Scheetz, states that American Airlines will offer up to a 48% reduction in fares between Washington and Los Angeles if plans are made three months in advance. Three months in advance is mid-November of this year. The plan is called the "look ahead plan". Other airlines might offer similar advance notice flight plans if you look into the numerous possibilities. As of yet, the Mid-Atlantic has not officially planned on a charter or group rate plan, either of which still might be a possibility for those people not able to take advantage of the 3-month advance registration plans.

GOLF COURSES IN NORTHEAST IN WORST CONDITION IN 20 YEARS

Golf courses in the northeast area of the United States are in their worst condition in the last 20 years. Varying types of weather since spring have caused havoc to fairways and greens.

"If anything could go wrong it did. This is the worst year for fine turf grasses that I can remember and I've been around for 20 years. It's rare to find a course not in trouble," said Al Radko, eastern director of the United States Golf Association's Green Section and its national research director.

Radko listed a weather chronology of events that has resulted in this year's increase of turf diseases, the Long Island and Westchester invasion of a weevil, and a resurgence of crab grass. Crab grass, of course, is known to suburban gardeners but golfers don't like to hit shots from its surface. Neither do most of them enjoy playing "winter rules" in professional competition or in friendly matches in mid-summer. It's all right, they say, when there is frost on the hard ground.

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GOLF COURSE EQUIPMENT
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MISCELLANEOUS GOLF SUPPLIES

But since June, two-thirds of the tournaments supervised by the Metropolitan Golf Association, because of unfavorable course conditions, have allowed players to move the ball from its original position to a preferred lie.

Rich Event Postponed

One August deluge forced postponement of the \$250,000 Westchester Classic. When it was resumed, officials decided to allow all contestants to lift and clean and move the ball on all fairways on a course, which in other years was readily groomed for the play of the experts.

"It all started," said Radko, "with cool, rainy and cloudy spring weather. Then we had bright sunlight in July. It was too much sunlight. It wilted the grass. They became weak and spindly. It was as if someone, who had been in solitary confinement in a cold-dark cellar for three months, suddenly was exposed to the blazing sun.

"Then, we had heat and humidity that brought on diseases plus heavy rains that caused drainage problems and so much flooding that the grasses couldn't breathe. More hot weather and humidity followed."

This also posed a problem for course superintendents. With golfers anxious to play, should the heavy wet fairways and greens be cut? Or should they be given time to dry out? The golfers had to be pleased and the mowers went to work, which caused damage and some scalping.

Need for Research

What can be done now? Ted Horton, superintendent of the Winged Foot Golf Club, Mamoroneck, where the 1974 United States Open will be played, says research and development of new grasses will be an answer to offset seather damage to courses.

Last year, the U.S.G.A. and Rutgers University, developed Bonnieblut, a new bluegrass hybrid, "there are a hundred new varieties but it takes years to breed a plant and then offer it commercially," said Horton.

Estimates of golf-course maintenance in the metropolitan area range from \$80,000 to \$120,000 annually. One survey revealed the national average for upkeep per hole for a course is \$5,300 a year.

The weevil is being fought by insecticides developed at Cornell University, said Radko. Among the turf diseases that have been prevalent in this recent scourge of courses are pythium, dollar spot, brown patch and fusarium.

While artificial turf has been introduced and used on football and baseball fields, there is no present concept to carpet a golf course of a mile or more in length in this fashion. At \$20 per square foot that would be a rather costly job," said one official. "I don't think we'll ever have it in golf," commented Radko.

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