

SUPERS URGED TO BACK THEIR MECHANICS

Superintendents should support their mechanics as they attempt to form professional associations around the country, according to a speaker at the GCSAA convention in Orlando, Fla. in February 1990.

There are a handful of regional mechanics associations, mostly in the Southeast. Organizers of the mechanics session hope their efforts will encourage mechanics in other regions to form their own associations, which could one day lead to a national organization, like the GCSAA.

"An association is formed by individuals with a common interest. Golf course mechanics need a forum to express themselves and exchange ideas on equipment maintenance and repair. The entire industry and superintendents at the individual courses will

benefit from mechanics joining and participating in an association," said Bruce Williams, superintendent of Bob O'Link Golf Club in Highland Park, Ill.

From a superintendents' viewpoint there are many advantages to having a mechanics' association.

"The role of the mechanic has changed with the growing complexity of equipment. We need educated, trained technicians to run them. Better-trained mechanics means less down time for equipment. Well-running equipment makes for a happy superintendent and a happy superintendent makes for a good working environment."

But having a mechanic who is active in an association comes at a cost to the superintendent—a direct cost in dues

and educational expenses and a time cost when the mechanic is away at meetings and seminars. Since that time and money aren't available without the superintendent's blessing, there are things the mechanic can do to gain his boss' support:

- Give the superintendent plenty of notice for an upcoming meeting, explain what you expect to learn and report back on what you learned after the meeting.
- Hold meetings at appropriate times
- Discuss appropriate topics at appropriate places.
- Don't use meetings simply as a gripe session

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BACK TO THE FUTURE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

Where is it going to end? Even the commentators are spoiled. Sure, they give us a lot of respect and credit when they compliment the golf course, but the point is, they are calling attention to the very best-conditioned courses in the world.

Is this whole golf business heading in the right direction? Have you ever really thought about what golf will be like in the year 2010? I'm not talking about laser golf with high-tech clubs; I'm talking about the green stuff we play on. We dream of drought-tolerant, heat-resistant, special grasses that we haven't even seen yet. In reality, things might be completely different from what we now envision.

First, let's assume money always will be available to support the top-level clubs. Twenty years from now, money might not even be an issue anywhere.

Instead, the issues might be water

availability and banned chemicals. Golfers may have to adapt to brown, dry turf, weeds, and insect damage.

In 20 years, we might be irrigating greens and tees just three times a week and fairways only once a week. Perhaps by then man will have consumed or polluted so much of his fresh water sources that the precious remainder will not be available for golf course at any price.

Lush, wall-to-wall green may be a distant memory.

You've heard of organic gardening. What would it be like to manage a golf course the organic way? That's right; no pesticides of any sort! Environmentalists and government regulations will have virtually eliminated all the current pesticides except those which are so safe as to be ineffective.

If for no reason other than political reality, the current restricted pesticides that combat nematodes and mole crickets will be long gone and these insect pests will abound in numbers

we have not yet seen. (The Rules of Golf may even permit a golfer to knock down mole cricket mounds in his line.)

And as for weeds, they will be prevalent everywhere. The current herbicides on the market will be long gone. We could contemplate pulling weeds by hand, but labor cost make clean golf course prohibitively expensive. It will be easier just to let the weeds grow because, after all, everybody will have them.

As a matter of fact, we might even play winter rules and roll the ball onto a clump of weeds because at least they offer a better lie than sand.

What about these new so-called low-maintenance golf course that architects currently are creating with abrupt mounds, huge bunkers, and excessive fields of love grass? Somebody out there is going to get rich modifying all these modern monuments to the way they should have been constructed in the first place.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6