

NATIONAL OPEN

Several Chicago Area Superintendents ventured down to St. Louis, Mo. to witness the biggest farce in modern day golf, The National Open. They saw the best golfers in the world embarrassed by trickery and poor golf course design. These golfers were penalized to the point of being ridiculous. This wasn't golf as the United States Golf Association tells us it should be played but it was golf as some one individual or Committee wanted it played.

It was an entirely different golf course as compared to the one that the members of the beautiful Bellerive Country Club play. The fairways were narrowed to less than 60 feet in some landing areas. The Bermuda rough was ROUGH. It required an iron in many instances to recover back to the fairway. The greens were so large (many of them over 10,000 sq. ft.) that you had to maneuver over two hills and depression as well as having putts over 100 ft. long.

For an organization that has done so much for golf it seems strange to see them play their top tournament under conditions that prevailed 20 or more years ago. I'm glad that they didn't require the players to use outdated wooden shafts.

A comparison might be made with Automobile racing. Say that all races were run on good smooth asphalt tracks for the entire season, and then when the "big one" or World Championship was run, the drivers were asked to race on a dirt track.

Superintendent, Ernie Schneider had the course in perfect condition, although he was required to use some trickery to toughen the course with pin placements and hard soil surfaces. The turf on the greens was without blemish so the turf was not the reason for the three and four putt greens that so many humble golfers had. The combination of C1-C19 was outstanding. The fairways and tees are Bermuda which was also in perfect condition.

Many spectators were disappointed by the performance of their heroes and some were heard to remark that the Open is unfair and that they wouldn't pay \$5.00 and up for the privilege to watch the tournament again.

Gary Player played a superb game and still couldn't beat par. As long as all players must play the same course under the same conditions why not play them on the golf course as we, the Superintendents, maintain them during the remainder of the season. They should play the course for what it is, not for what some individual or Committee dreamed up from some night mare. Many good courses have been ruined by the "Open" and require expensive rebuilding so the members can enjoy their course once more.

The USGA is putting too big a premium on hitting all shots perfectly. This is an impossibility especially when they want all players to hit the long ball — Remember, it doesn't take much of an error to miss the fairway when you are hitting 275 or 300 yard drives.

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