

GET IN ON THE ACT

By Gerry Finn

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This being the age of spiraling inflation, there seems to be a feeling roaming the golf courses that maybe you know who is being shortchanged.

Like the hardshipped athlete, lo, the golf course superintendent finds himself at the mercy of his employer. There's only one minute difference (sic). Nowadays athletes can set up a rosy future for themselves in about 10 years playing time. After that, they're set free from the shackles of punishing their muscles for good behavior at the bat or on the greens.

Superintendents, too, are rewarded with hope for the future. However, as our esteemed president — Anthony Caranci — once remarked, "I'm afraid all of us (supers) shall have to wait for our true reward when we go to that big golf course in the sky."

There must be a realistic approach to this justified pursuit of earthly returns. Naturally, a mother cannot raise her son to be a course superintendent and expect him to earn \$35,000 a year for finishing 59th on the money list. Touring golf professionals, whose starry scores are partially attributed to the true roll of a green or sit-up lie on a fairway, should be the first to endorse the financial well-being of the superintendent. It's a matter of accomplishment relatively, meaning the better conditioned course produces the better score.

This may appear to be raising question marks in the heads of the local country club mogul who probably can't see the connection between, say an Arthur Anderson and an Arnold Palmer. But, if you were to take a general poll of the country club set and the publix fraternity, you would fast learn that Joe Doak's weekend score is just as important to him as Arnold Palmer's tally is to the jet-flying ace. There certainly is relativity there. A 50-cent nassau crowds a 50-grand tour battle for importance, if the talk you hear around the 19th hole means anything.

What is the average salary of the superintendent? According to most people in the profession, it is low enough to cause a reinvestigation of young turf students who originally set their post-graduate sights on a career in the golf field. Even some public-supported municipal parks and recreation opportunities are causing budding supers to think twice before they leap into the demanding fires of country club members who are the first to suggest dismissal when their course loses a green or becomes infected with a turf disease.

Should the trend continue, golf eventually will underprice itself out of the superintendents' market. On the other hand, those supers now engaged in their chosen profession might do themselves well to join the swelling ranks of compatriots who are bringing about a general upgrading of salaries in every phase of the sports world.

Maybe this constitutes contribution to the dreaded rise in inflation that now confronts the nation. However, the golf course superintendent can't let this financial moonshot pass him by if others climb aboard the flight. The time is ripe to get in on the act.

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