

Dear Ray,

I felt it necessary to comment on an article printed on the front page of GCSAA Newsletter, December 1977, titled "Long-Awaited GCSAA Pension Plan Approved".

After reading the article I discovered it is an IRA account established in a bank or an IRA annuity offered thru GCSAA's broker "Whitney Associates, Inc., Orange, NJ". This certainly is not news to any of us who read or are in contact with our own bankers.

Having participated in an IRA account for two years, I find the ideal arrangement is to have your employer make the maximum annual contribution.

Since any employed person who is not covered by a group pension plan, can obtain these accounts locally thru their personal insurance agent, a bank, or a savings and loan. It does not make sense to me why the GCSAA feels they are offering the members a service as a pension plan.

I speak from some experience having entered in a pension plan recommended by the GCSAA in 1964, a monthly investment in mutual funds and life insurance. This plan was dropped by GCSAA many years ago, but for a few of us hearty souls who remained active in it, it will provide a very small cushion in retirement.

Anyone planning to retire from being an active golf course superintendent should certainly make their own plans and investments.

In my opinion the GCSAA has not been of service to their members in regard to pensions.

**William S. Leith, Supt.
Elgin Country Club**

EDITORIAL SOME COMMON GROUND

One of the benefits enjoyed by us superintendents is the monthly golf outing at the meetings of our association. Because of this privilege we have the opportunity to play at many of the Chicago area's private golf courses. I cannot help but admire the intense maintenance of the acres upon acres of turfgrasses. In my experience as a head superintendent I even further appreciate this art of maintaining finely cultivated turf.

We as a profession realize that there are constraints that have to be dealt with in attaining our optimum turf quality. Some we cannot control. The first one that comes in mind is weather. All we can do is anticipate the weather and live with its effects, be they good or bad.

There are other constraints which although changeable can be managed or reasonably predicted. Some of these are membership attitude, equipment maintenance, and crew morals.

That constraint which seems to vary in direct proportion to the quality of turf on a golf course is the budget. The more money one has to work with, the more intensely he can maintain an operation.

The minimally maintained fairways do not have the fungicide applications, the insect problems, nor the high water bill as do a number of the well-groomed courses. The unwatered fairway can grow a limited number of types of grasses effectively. For instance common Kentucky might be the only variety of Kentucky bluegrass recommended for non-irrigated fairway areas. We have found that during most of the

Nutrient deficiencies, weeds, diseases, thin turf, insects.

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summer one inch of rainfall per week is needed. If we don't get that one inch within two weeks, the grass will be critically weakened. However, since our soil moisture content is relatively low, our drainage problems are practically nil.

Our tees are likewise minimally maintained. Few pesticides are applied. Fertilization is but twice a year. Tees are mowed between 1" and 1 1/4". And seed and soil is done at most twice a year.

That one area where we all, be we private, semi-private, municipal or public, are likely to maintain with equal intensity is the putting green. It is here on these 2 to 3 acres of ground that every golfer will walk, stand, stroke, and stoop. And it is here where we as superintendents are graded most critically.

I would imagine that most of us follow similar pesticide programs. From May to September we will fungicide 2, 3, or 4 times per month. Through periodic inspection we will decide when to apply insecticides. And when a herbicide is needed on the greens, the hand spraying technique will suffice and only if calibrated to the highest degree of accuracy. We probably topdress a number of times during the season. And we also aerify or spike periodically.

That management tool available for greens maintenance which probably varies the most amongst us is our fertilization program. Our programs differ due to agronomic conditions, professional experiences and even personal preferences for a particular brand name of plant food. Five years being in charge of a golf course turf program have given me five different programs for greens maintenance. This past year saw me change my program noticeably. After hearing many of you advocate "low N" for a fertilization program, I used your experiences and gave it a try. This year we used just under 4#/1000 sq. ft. actual K2O was applied. By the textbook analysis potash gives turgidity to the plant, makes it more tolerant to extreme hot and cold, and physiologically helps the plant resist disease infestation. We had good luck in '77 with these high amounts of potash and relatively low amounts of nitrogen. And if we could only keep the snowmobiles off the course I feel that the winter damage this season will be significantly lower than in past years.

Tom Vieweg, Supt.
Cary, Ill.

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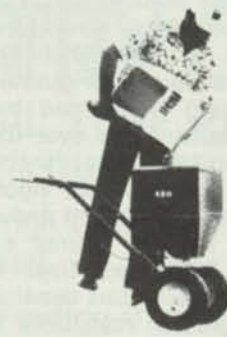


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