

(Speed - Slope - Skill cont'd.)

replace their entire greens, and you can't blame the replacement solely on Toronto bentgrass, for that strain has been used for sixty years or more. You can't blame it on some "new" specific bacterial wilt either for that organism has been around for thousands, perhaps millions of years. What you can blame it on is over-stressing a grass plant by mowing the grass too short and thus making it susceptible to a disease that normally would not cause a problem. Just as a minor infection can kill a severely weakened human, so can a minor disorder kill a severely weakened plant.

Plant pathologists are beginning to report bacterial wilt on all bentgrass varieties and not just C-15 Toronto. Their only common denominator is short mowing.

Golf should first be good, healthy recreation that provides hours of pleasure. This pleasure is intensified when played amid the beauty of a well-maintained sea of turfgrass. Furthermore, golf should be a game requiring a blend of strength, skill and strategy, with some luck thrown in as spice. So using these ingredients of golf, the most pleasurable blend is one that tests golfing skills, on goof turf conditions, that requires judgment and execution. To my mind risking this blend for the sake of super fast greens is a poor trade-off. Let's settle for everyday greens that roll 7½ to 8 feet with the Stimpmeter and everyone from golf course architects to skyscraper architects can enjoy the entire spectrum of pleasure that golf has to offer.

Credit: Ohio Golfer Magazine

## Dreams. We All Have Them

by Edwin Wollenberg, Retired Supt.

Sometime ago I read an article, stating that a hole-in-one is not really all that rare. There have been something like 650,000 of them reported since the start of the Golf Digest Hole In One Clearing House, which was in 1952.

Nonetheless, I will share with you a little story of one more, which I know will never be accepted by the Clearing House, but to me it was the most impressive golf shot of the century: MINE.

It was a slightly overcast day, breezy, and a mild threat of rain. Jim Byrd, congenial bartender of the American Legion and member of my foursome, drove the cart up to the No. 7 tee at Mangrove Bay Golf Club.

Jim, as is his custom, was having a miserable round and, as is not my custom, I wasn't far behind. But what the heck, it was still fun. My philosophy is that any round of golf, however poorly played, is more fun than no golf at all.

Anyway, No. 7 at Mangrove Bay is marked at 154 yards from the white tees, which is what we were playing. It's over the water but nonetheless is rated as 17 in the difficulty rating. Don't believe it. It's a treacherous hole, intimidating, laden with problems to test the best. Jim, not surprisingly, put his tee shot in the water.

I dug around in my bag for a ball.

"Wollenberg is looking for a water ball. Hah hah," bellowed Jim to the other two members of the foursome.

I ignored him — which wasn't easy to do — stepped up, 7 iron in hand. I dug in, waggled a bit, and cut loose with my beautiful fluid swing, as taught to me by George Capune at the Gary Country Club in 1961.

"You're gonna like that one," said Jim.

"Of course, (my conceit returning), I'm a pretty good golfer you know," I replied.

Because the cup was cut in front of the green, and hidden by some reeds and bulrushes, I never saw the ball hit the green.

We drove up to the green, but failed to see my ball. Damn it, it must have bounced off the green and into the trap.

Sooo, I walked slowly up to the flag, my heart beating with the rapidity of a jackhammer, thinking, no, it really couldn't be in the hole. But yes, there it was. The dingy Titlist — okay, so I'd hit a water ball — was in the hole. An ACE. An ace, an ace, I got an ace, I kept saying.

And on to the next hole, where I lined a drive down the middle like it was shot from a 30-30 rifle, a drive at least 250 yards. Easy game. Nothing to it I thought, as my confidence and conceit gained momentum. But then back to reality: Approach shot into the sand, two shots to get out, three putts, a triple bogey seven. But I didn't really care, I just wanted to get through with the round and get out of there, have a beer or something more alcoholic, buy everyone else a drink, as is the custom for anyone getting an ace.

Of course, we ended up at the Legion for this celebration, and that's where my wife caught up with me.

"Honey, I got an ace. A hole in one", I shouted to her.

"Honey", she replied, "I don't give a damn. Get your butt home. It's your turn to cook tonight, in case you forgot".

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I reminded her: Honey, I may be retired, but I'm a golf course superintendent. It's essential that I play and follow the traditions of golf, which include indulging in a drink or two or three after an ace.

She was not sympathetic, which like an ace, is not all that rare. It was here that I was awakened by "natures" call.

I have mixed emotions, but I think I'm glad this was only a dream. It could have been a living nightmare.

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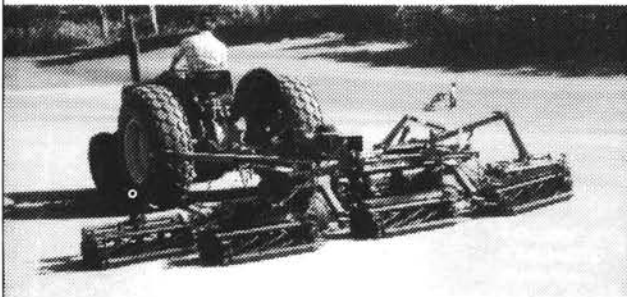
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