

On Course welcomes your letters on subjects covered in the magazine, matters of green industry interest and topics pertinent to the MAGCS/GCSAA. While each submission must carry a signature and identifying information, we will consider on a case-by-case basis withholding an author's name upon his/her request. Please note that the opinions expressed herein are those of the author(s) and not necessarily those of On Course or the MAGCS.

**Ed Fischer, CGCS,
of Old Elm Club writes:**

I have many different thoughts about writing this letter. I don't want to seem like a know-it-all, and I don't want to hurt anyone's feelings, but with over 30 years of experience I feel it is about time that something is said about course set-up.

We have played many fine golf courses over the last five or six years at our MAGCS monthly meetings. All of the superintendents have presented a fine-conditioned playing surface for his fellow MAGCS members to play. But I have seen a disturbing trend to make the golf course too difficult to be enjoyed. Don't get me wrong, I like to be challenged, but not to the extreme. We don't need to be playing courses at over 7,000 yards, or have all of the pin locations so difficult there isn't any way to get to them unless the miracle shot is hit.

When I play golf, my first goal is to have a good time and enjoy the day. I will have a competitive game with the players in my foursome, but I think that we all want to enjoy the day and the golf course. Our members' golf abilities vary greatly, from a 0 to a 36 handicap, but the one thing we all have in common is that we enjoy the game and look forward to a great day. Lately, all too often, we tee off on the first hole and we find the markers near the back of the tee. We reach our second shot and find that the hole location is four steps onto the green and a 2-iron needs to be played downwind. Not much chance, but

it's the first hole. I take my bogey and go to the second hole. The next hole, say a par 3, the markers are back, playing 205, into a 20 m.p.h. wind, across water, through a narrow opening of trees. I can play that shot, but what about my partner, who is a 24 handicap?

The round continues and it becomes frustrating; every hole is playing long, and the hole locations are in very difficult positions. I go from enjoying my day to wanting it to end so I can go and drown my sorrows. I have had a bad day. Instead of my playing companions and I enjoying ourselves, all we can talk about is how this course wouldn't be set up this hard for a PGA event. My impressions aren't focused on the condition of the course, or the beautiful setting, but on how difficult the day has been. When I get back to my own course the next day and my members ask how I enjoyed XYZ Course, all I can remember is how difficult it was and how annoyed I became. My comments are not very flattering, and whomever I am talking to becomes turned off, thus their impressions are not good and their likelihood of wanting to play that course becomes less.

Gentlemen, let's put our egos away; remember, this is a fun game, and not everyone is a 0 handicap. When setting up our courses not only for outside functions, but also for our memberships, try to send the players away with a good feeling—make them want to play tomorrow. Our MAGCS tournament the last few years has been set

up too hard! It sure would be nice to see that someone shot 69 or 70 to win the tournament, and it would also bring a lot more competitors into the picture, not just four or five of our best players. **THE BEST PLAYERS ARE GOING TO WIN ANYWAY.** Set the course up so that everyone can walk away feeling good about himself, the course and his fellow superintendents.

**Paul Voykin, Briarwood
Country Club, writes:**

Isn't it nice to get such a nice letter from our first lady of golf. Perhaps you might want to print this. John [Husar, *Chicago Tribune* outdoor writer who recently passed away] was my friend.

Dear Paul: I was pleased to read "Overgrooming is Overspending, Revisited" in the (September) On Course. It brought back many fond memories, but what I really wanted to tell you is that several times over the years, John Husar mentioned to me that you were the one who first got him interested in nature and the environment, and he credited the time you spent with him and that of the other superintendents who helped educate him with preparing him for his long tenure as outdoor writer at the Tribune.

In case he never got around to telling you, I thought you'd like to know.

Sincerely yours, Carol McCue