

# The “Radical” 1980s

Editor’s Note: One article couldn’t possibly do justice to 75 years of history. So, in honor of the Midwest’s 75th anniversary, *On Course* presents a special decade-by-decade retrospective. This installment features the yuppie-infused decade of Reaganomics, the 1980s. Coming in November: the ‘90s.

*The Twenties were roaring, the Thirties gave us the Great Depression, the Forties was a decade of wartime, the Fifties gave us rock and roll, the Sixties free love and peace, the Seventies . . . well, to paraphrase from the movie Dazed and Confused, “The Seventies, oh my, they obviously suck. Maybe the Eighties will be radical, you know.”*

Well, I *don’t* know about radical; on some level the Eighties did seem rather boring and uneventful compared to some other decades, but it was the dawn of the Information Age that we live in today. IBM unveiled the first PC, and cable television was launched into households everywhere, thus allowing Americans to waste even more time in front of the tube.

### “Greed Is Good”

Actually, these were some interesting times on the political and economic fronts. Let’s not forget Ronald Reagan’s “trickle-down economics” and “Strategic Defense Initiative” (a.k.a. Star Wars). George Bush (without the “W”) asked us to read his lips, “No new taxes!” An obscure Marine lieutenant colonel named Ollie North took the stand and the blame in the Iran-Contra hearings. October 19, 1987 – Black Monday – saw the stock market plummet almost 23%, as \$500 million of stock equity vanished. This proved to be the largest loss on a single day in market history. The ‘80s saw the beginning of the end of cold war as Mikhail Gorbachev took office in the Soviet Union late in the decade. Minimum wage was \$3.35 in ‘81 and the average annual salary was around \$15,000, which wasn’t so bad considering a new BMW only cost \$12,000.



On December 8, 1980, John Lennon is gunned down.



October 19, 1987: the stock market tumbles 508 points.



On February 2, 1980, the U.S. hockey team captures the gold medal at the Olympics.

As with any other decade, the 1980s were not exempt from tragedy. Early in his first term, President Ronald Reagan was the victim of an unsuccessful assassination attempt by an insane man named John Hinckley who thought this would somehow

impress actress Jodie Foster. In 1980, a successful assassination attempt by Mark David Chapman took the life of Beatles legend John Lennon in New York City. The space shuttle Challenger exploded minutes after take-off in

*(continued on page 18)*

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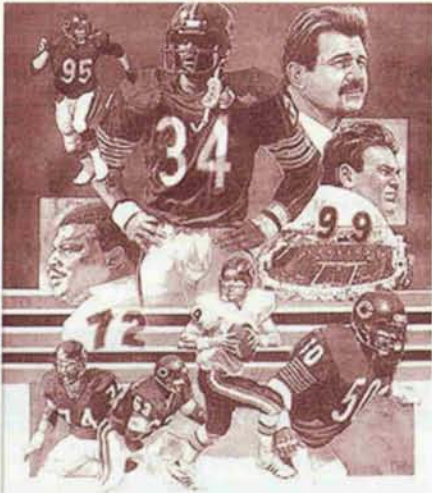
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January of '86, killing the crew of seven, including a schoolteacher from Concord, New Hampshire. The captain of the Exxon *Valdez*, Joseph Hazelwood, full of gin at the time, hit a reef causing the oil tanker to dump more than 11 million gallons of oil into Alaska's Prince William Sound in March of '89.

### "Video Killed the Radio Star"

On prime-time television, *Dallas* posed the question, "Who shot JR?" *Cheers* and *The Cosby Show* were Thursday night staples.



Da Bears are Super Bowl champs in 1986.

Unfortunately, tabloid television also took off with the likes of Gerardo, Sally, Phil and Oprah. A gap-toothed Indy boy with his "Top 10 List" became the king of late-night television.

The big screen brought us *E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial*, the #1 film of all time until *Titanic*. Other classics included *Raging Bull*, *Platoon*, *The Empire Strikes Back*, *Return of the Jedi* and the *Back To The Future* and *Indiana Jones* series. And let us not forget *Caddyshack* and Bill Murray's portrayal of Carl Spackler, which supposedly set the superintendent's image back; although I know a number of superinten-

dents who love the movie and could recite every line if asked.

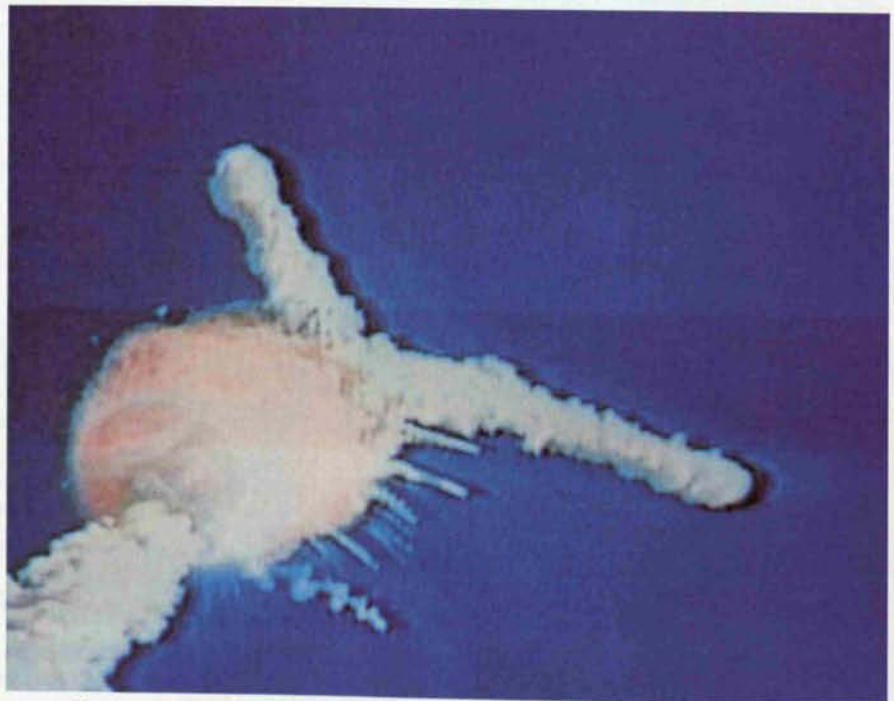
Sweetness, the Punky QB, the Fridge and Super Bowl MVP Richard Dent lead Da Bears to a lopsided 42-10 victory over the New England Patriots in Superbowl XX following a prophetic midseason recording of the *Super Bowl Shuffle*. The '84 Cubs won the National League Central Division, only to have our hopes for their first World Series appearance in almost 40 years disappear through the legs of Leon Durham and off the bat of Steve Garvey. In '89, they never had a chance against the Giants, who went on to face the As and an earthquake. Who could forget the Sox "winnin' ugly" in '83, only to lose ugly to the Orioles in the ALCS? The 1980 Olympics prompted the phrase, "Do you believe in miracles? Yes!" as the U.S. ice hockey team defeated the Soviets and went on to beat Finland and capture the gold. Pete Rose broke Ty Cobb's career hits record with hit number 4,192 in September of '85, only to be banned for life from the game for wagering as a player and manager.

## Locally, PGA Tour stops included the 1989 PGA Championship at Kemper Lakes, won by Payne Stewart.

Speaking of sports . . . illustrated at least, who could forget a photogenic blonde named Christie Brinkley? (I love *SI* in February.)

### Golfwise

Locally, PGA Tour stops included the annual Western Open at Butler National—won during the 1980s by Scott Simpson, Ed Fiori, Tom Weiskopf, Mark McCumber, Tom Watson, Scott Verplank, Tom Kite, D.A. Weibring and Jim Benepe—and the 1989 PGA Championship at Kemper Lakes, won by Payne Stewart. Chicagoland course openings included Bon Vivant



On January 28, 1986, space shuttle Challenger explodes; seven die.



In 1987, superpowers sign first missile reduction treaty.

C.C., Royal Fox C.C., Links At Carillon, Vernon Hills G.C., White Eagle G.C., Woodbine G.C., Wynstone C.C., Naperbrook G.C. and Fox Run G.C. MAGCS's very own Mike Bavier, CGCS, of Inverness Golf Club was elected President of the GCSAA at the Anaheim conference in 1981.

Hot topics, or issues frequently reported in *the Bull Sheet* during the '80s, included good times at the MAGCS hospitality suite, regardless of the city. C-15 decline, what is it and how do we control it? Putting green speed (imagine that), fairway conversion to bent, transition to lightweight mowers on fairways, the availability of PC-controlled irrigation systems, Dutch Elm disease, golf shoe damage on greens and sand topdressing selection. Unfortunately, many pieces of equipment advertised new in *the Bull Sheet* of the '80s look very familiar to me, since I still have to use many of them on a daily basis on my own course.

*Bull Sheet* milestones included the 1983 inception of the Ray Gerber Editorial Award for best superintendent-written article, while a change in cover art from the bull's head to the cup-cutter was instituted in June of '85.

Nationally, GCSAA's Old Tom Morris Award was presented for the first time. The award was conceived to go to an individual who through a lifetime commitment to the game of golf had

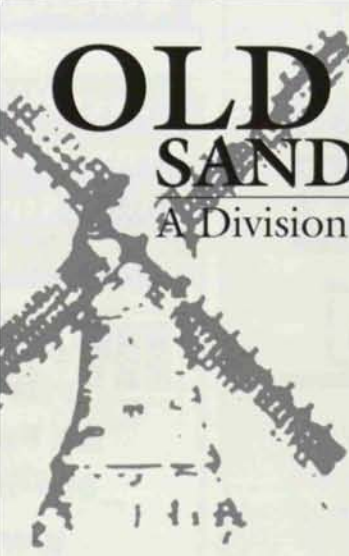
helped mold the welfare of the game in a manner and style exemplified by Old Tom Morris. Morris, who died in 1908, was the legendary greenkeeper and golf professional at the Royal and Ancient Golf Club in St. Andrews, Scotland. The inaugural Old Tom Morris Award went to Arnold Palmer in 1983.

Multiple Major winners of the decade were Seve Ballesteros, Ray Floyd, Larry Nelson, Tom Watson, Nick Faldo, Sandy Lyle, Curtis Strange and Jack Nicklaus.

### "Watching the World Wake Up From History"

By November of '89, the Berlin Wall was coming down and communism was on its last legs in Europe, which led to the eventual dissolution of the Soviet Union into autonomous republics. This left the U.S. as the world's only true superpower heading into the '90s.





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