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Sand Hills Golf Club sits in the middle of nowhere Nebraska. It was built or "discovered" by its two architects Bill Coore and Ben Crenshaw.

Photo credit: Luke Cella

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The Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents (MAGCS), founded December 24, 1926, is a professional organization whose goals include preservation and dissemination of scientific and practical knowledge pertaining to golf turf maintenance. We endeavor to increase efficiency and economic performance while improving and enhancing the individual and collective prestige of the members.

The MAGCS member is also an environmental steward. We strive to uphold and enhance our surroundings by promoting flora and fauna in every facet in a manner that is beneficial to the general public now and in the future.

All editorial and advertisement inquiries should be directed to Luke Cella, Publisher, *On Course*, 11855 Archer Avenue, Lemont, IL, 60439. (630) 243-7900 or visit www.magcs.org for rates and requirements. Statements of fact and opinion are the responsibility of the authors alone and do not imply an opinion on the part of the officers or members.



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DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

Dave Kohley, *Silver Lake Country Club*



Dust Off Your Clubs

It's that time of year to start thinking about our monthly meetings and the 2011 golf season. With the GCSAA National Convention just wrapping up and everyone getting stir crazy from this long winter, it's time to check out some of the venues we will be visiting and events that are coming up this year.

Let's start things out by going to Arrowhead Golf Club and Mike Mumper hosting this educational meeting on March 1st. Mike and Arrowhead Golf Club have hosted golf and educational events in the past for us and have not disappointed at this wonderful facility.

Second time is a charm. On April 27th we are having our kickoff scramble at Naperville Country Club with Tim Anderson, CGCS MG as our host. No better way to get the golf clubs out of your office and dust them off for this four person scramble. You don't even have to be good at golf, let your partners carry you.

On May 24, the Midwest will join forces with the Illinois Turfgrass Foundation and head into Indiana. ITF President, Erwin McKone will host this play day at Briar Ridge Country Club.

Luke Strojny, CGCS will be hosting our June meeting at Prairie Bluff Golf Club. This will be the Class C Championship plus the Dom Grotti Championship. We will also be celebrating Ken Shepherd's retirement and his contribution to the business.

Don't forget about the Annual Family Night Picnic this year on August 6th. Bring your family and friends and come out to watch the Kane County Cougars play baseball. It's a great way to relax with the kids, watch baseball and see a great fireworks show after the game. We've reserved one of the new upper decks again this year that proved last year to be a great venue for this mid-season get together.

We will also be going to visit Brad Legnaioli at the new Bowes Creek Elgin in August to battle it out for the 2011 MAGCS Championship and the Senior Championship. Designed by another MAGCS member, Rick Jacobson, Bowes Creek will offer a great challenge for our championships and a very enjoyable track for those not competing.

In September the Midwest will make way to support the ITF's annual iTurfExpo at the Midwest Golf House on the 22nd of the month. This is a fund raising event and each year it's getting better and better. The ITF counts on our support as superintendents so it can support the Chicago District Golf Association's turf research program. Please come out to the Midwest Golf House and check out the ongoing and new research by our Illinois and guest instructors.

We're still working out the details for our October event at this time, but as in year's past it will be a competition where school colors fly.

Please come out and attend one, two or all the events this year. It's a great way to get away from work to recharge your batteries and play a round of golf with your fellow colleagues and friends. On behalf of the MAGCS Board we hope to see you this 2011 season. **-OC**

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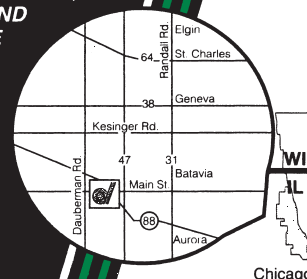
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FEATURE I

Greg Martin, ASGCA ASLA RLA



Ratings and Rankings: Let's Start by Stopping

I am fortunate to have played a lot of golf on a lot of golf courses. I have played many, but not all, of the courses considered to be the 'best.' Certainly, I have my favorites, and my impulse tells me to rate and rank those courses. I have attempted this on countless occasions, but with little success.

Many of my favorites are just that – my favorites. Not because of any rating, but because of numerous intangible and personal responses to those golf experiences. My favorites might not stack up against your top choice and viceversa. I ask myself, “How then can we possibly apply objective ratings to a golf course?” More importantly, can or should we, or the industry, even try to rate or rank any golf course?

Ratings

Today's ratings and rankings are intended to provide specific measures, standards that provide comparison. These include: resistance to scoring, memorability, aesthetics, walking, par, yardage and slope, condition, as well as historical factors such as championships hosted. The average golfer accepts rankings as objective determinations. They are not. Many are wholly subjective. For instance, can the beauty of Pebble Beach or Cypress Point be objectively measured against the simplicity of Shinnecock Hills or the stunning landforms at Bandon Dunes? Isn't each equally spectacular within its setting and treatment?

I would submit that the top 20, 30, or maybe 50 courses in the country are just that...the best. Beyond that, differences become so slight as to be indistinguishable. There are probably as many as 200 courses, maybe more, that could be given consideration as the next best. The difference between #50 and #250 isn't measurable, other than by someone's less than impartial review, or personal perception of beauty, condition, or shot-making on any given day.

Moreover, great maintenance is significant, but can it or should it distinguish equally great golf courses on any specific day? Can an average golfer/rater really measure condition? One golfer may want plush, another may want 'firm and fast.' Without an understanding of budget, soil conditions, staff, weather cycles, or ownership expectations how can condition be judged fairly and objectively or with any consistency? Further, as Bill Coore and Ben Crenshaw said, “If immaculate conditions are necessary for a great golf experience, then the golf course is flawed.” I agree.

Rankings

The restaurant industry, by comparison, doesn't use this system. Fantastic cuisine and dining is defined within broader classifications (Five Stars, or Four Stars, etc.), mostly because it is impossible to establish fair comparisons in the diversity of 'bread and circus' experiences that modern restaurants provide. Restaurant ratings distinguish great from good and average, but rankings do not exist.

Why do we place such import on yardage and challenge? No one would attempt to compare restaurants based upon how many tables are provided or how many choices there are on the menu. Do larger portions rate high for an excellent dining experience? Each dining experience is unique: menus are different and ambiance is distinctive. As a result, experiences cannot be compared. Evaluations focus on comparable value, experience, and execution. Golf should do the same.

(continued on page 7)



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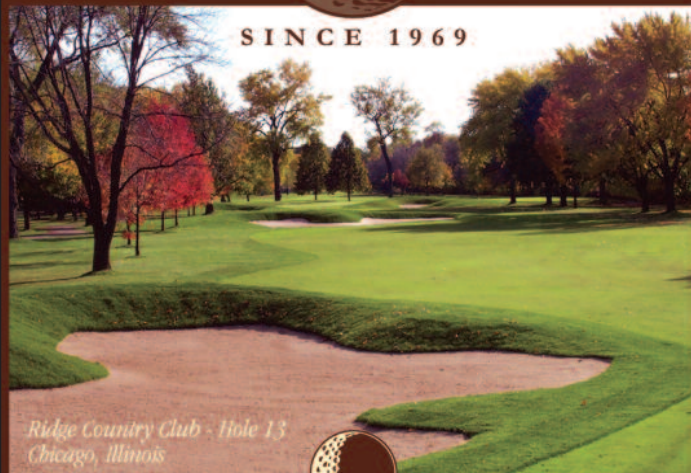
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The pursuit of higher ratings has accelerated the race for yardage, challenge, higher maintenance expense, and artificial beauty. All of these cost money, increase time of play, and increase maintenance and play costs. The basic measuring devices seem antiquated. More succinctly, these devices have created an unsustainable industry. These standards are inadequate for determining the most insightful works or the best golf. Both individual golfers and the industry have taken these rankings as doctrine. They are not. These rankings do little for the industry, and less for golfers.

Developers, architects and operators use these standards and lists in an attempt to distinguish their product. But the outcome is the opposite. More and more golf courses look alike. Because rating systems are inherently flawed they continue to damage an industry searching for clarity and direction. Golfers should be encouraged to enjoy and revel in their own unique and personal appraisals of the golf courses they play. This has less to do with 'number crunching' and more to do with understanding the distinctiveness of a golf course, its landscape, its inherent beauty, the resultant golf course design treatment, and a personal connection.

Yes, this is subjective...as it should be. Golf is a subjective experience. Objectivity has nothing to do with golf, just as fairness has nothing to do with play. Let's frame the significance of a golf course toward 'meaning, value, and authenticity.'

Keep in mind these three simple appraisals when playing a golf course:

- Is it Meaningful? – Max Behr said "The object of golf architecture is to give an intelligent purpose to the striking of a golf ball." Is the golf course an evocative, uplifting, and engaging golf experience? Does it provide memorable and distinct golf holes? Is it playable, challenging, and strategic? Does it make you think...and tempt you to execute a variety of shots? And maybe most importantly, is it FUN?



- Does it have Value? – recreationally, culturally, environmentally, or historically?
- Is it Authentic? – Is the golf course true to the site conditions? Does it create an authentic appeal? Stanley Thompson said "Strive to retain as much of the natural ground formation as possible. The most beautiful courses are the ones that hew the most closely to nature." Do the landforms and landscape treatments highlight and utilize the surrounding landscape? Does it belong in that landscape? Is it beautiful and enriching?

If the answer is yes, more often than not, you have a wonderful golf course. If the answer is yes to all of the above, you are walking on hallowed ground.

Where do we go from here? Let's start by stopping the ratings system and move forward by understanding the value of golf in a more personal light. Golf should be an encounter between the golfer and the golf course, not a prize, trophy, or badge. Dismiss the pervasive standardization of number-numbing ratings and value a golf course based upon its unique ability to engage us with meaning, value, and authenticity. **-OC**

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FEATURE II

Doug Davis, Flagg Creek Golf Course

Where is Your AED? (Automated External Defibrillator)

Re: Raymond Gee, Sr., Binghampton, New York

Saved at Conklin Players Club Golf Course, Conklin, New York

Date of Sudden Cardiac Arrest: August 13, 2010

Age at time of SCA: 60

Rescued by Bill Gorman and fellow golfers.

Raymond Gee, Sr. and Bill Gorman, friends for 30 years, looked forward to their Friday night golf league games. Gee remembers admiring Gorman's putt, one summer evening — then waking up in the hospital and being told he had nearly died. When Gorman saw his friend lying in the grass, he thought for a second that Gee was fooling around. But it didn't take long for Gorman, a volunteer firefighter for 29 years with the Conklin, New York, Fire Department, to realize it was no joke.

Gorman began chest compressions. When fellow golfer Brian Bailey saw what was happening, he ran up to see how he could help. Gorman told Bailey to take over chest compressions, while he did mouth to mouth. At the same time, Matt Smith ran to the clubhouse to retrieve the automated external defibrillator (AED). Gorman shocked Gee's heart and revived him on the scene. A week later, Gee had recovered enough to return to his job as a steel structure draftsman. "Sometimes I just sit here and feel real lucky to be here. I get all tingling and emotional when I think of the alternative," Gee says.

This is a survival story. There are many of them. They should be celebrated! Unfortunately there are many stories where there is no survival. Having an Emergency Action Plan at your facility is probably not something you think very much about, but when the need arises, are you and your staff prepared?

There are 330,000 deaths each year from Coronary Heart Disease. Most of us have some sort of first aid training. I hope your facility regularly certifies or re-certifies employees for CPR on adults, children, and infants. Today, though, having one or more AEDs at your facility and being trained in their safe operation is another critical tool in your Risk Management Practice.



Surviving sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) is often dependent on how fast a patient is defibrillated. For each minute a patient is in arrest, the chance of survival decreases by about 10 percent. After as little as 10 minutes, very few people are successfully resuscitated. In the past, defibrillation was provided by EMS personnel, but EMS response times often exceed 10 minutes. In most cases this is too late. With an AED you can provide defibrillation before EMS arrives.

AEDs are small, portable devices that can accurately identify whether defibrillation is needed. An AED analyzes heart rhythm, advises you when a shock is indicated, and defibrillates the patient using electrode pads applied to the victim's chest. By providing AEDs for use by trained bystanders, some AED programs have dramatically improved survival rates by as much as 50 percent.

CHAIN OF SURVIVAL

The Chain of Survival for SCA consists of four links: early access to EMS, early CPR, early defibrillation, and early advanced care. Any weak link in the chain will reduce a patient's chance for survival. Early defibrillation with an AED has been shown to be the link that most improves the patient's chance of survival.

Invest in one or more AEDs for your facility, make sure everyone is trained on them, and make sure that everyone knows their permanent location. It just might make the difference for you, an employee, or a customer when Sudden Cardiac Arrest strikes. **-OC**



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