

Guest Editorial

Open letter to Florida Golf Course Superintendents

By TIM HIERS



Tim Hiers

Florida has the second largest golf course industry in the nation, ranking only behind California. Recent growth and construction statistics indicate that within five years Florida may surpass California in total number of golf courses.

Yet when it comes to representation within the GCSAA the Sunshine state hovers near the bottom of the totem pole. Only one president of the GCSAA in the last 51 years has been from Florida and the board of directors representation fits in the same category. As a result of this past poor representation a great majority of research funds and national programs have not been directed toward problems concerning Florida's golf courses and their respective superintendents.

The state of Florida is not out to gain control of the GCSAA but merely to obtain equal representation and recognition. This situation cannot be fully corrected by Florida superintendents joining the GCSAA individually. In order for a meaningful and productive change to come about it is necessary for us to unify and support the GCSAA in the form of a strong and well-organized statewide association.

This can be accomplished without effecting the operation or identity of the individual local superintendents associations.

In essence the purpose of the Florida Golf Course Superintendents Association is to improve communications among the local associations and to form a strong unified group of associations that have common goals in mind. This will directly benefit the individual superintendent who is shackled with such imposing problems as the possible energy crisis, precious chemicals being taken off the market by the EPA, lack of communications and service between superintendents and their suppliers.

In October of 1978 the four presidents of the original Florida State Golf Course Superintendents Association met in Orlando to nominate and elect me as your statewide president. Since that time we have had two meetings. An attorney, Bob Hoffman, was hired to lay the groundwork for articles of incorporation and by-laws. At our first meeting on Dec. 8, 1978, in Orlando, several amendments were made to the original articles of incorporation. Included in these were Amendment 1, to change the name from Florida State Golf Course Superintendents Association to Florida Golf Course Superintendent's Association and Amendment 3, to include all existing associations and future associations in the FGCSA. The president of your association has a copy of the articles and amendments.

Due to the organization becoming inactive in 1973, we had to re-file through the state to become an active corporation. When these proceedings have been accomplished, the new articles of incorporation will be printed and distributed. At the December meeting we asked the presidents of the local associations to collect \$2 from each superintendent. Dr. Harry Meyers, professor from the University of Florida, was the first to contribute his \$2.

These limited funds have assisted in the reorganization of our association. In our last meeting at the Holiday Inn Central in Tampa March 8 we reviewed the amendments and laid groundwork for the future. Bill Wager was appointed head of the by-laws committee and hopefully they will be submitted and approved in our August 26 meeting in Melbourne.

On Monday Aug. 27 the third annual Crowfoot Open will be held at Suntree CC in Melbourne. Consult your local association and plan to attend this tournament as we hope to use this as our annual state meeting. We also hope for the possibility in the future of changing the South Florida Green to the Florida Golf Course Superintendents Ass'n magazine. In the eventual formulation of membership fees we hope to include a weekly subscription to Florida Golfweek to each superintendent as a tool for ongoing communication across the state. This could include articles on a weekly basis from local associations.

Some people may be quick to point out previous failures of the state association even though competent and hard-working people were involved. Unfortunately support they received, if any at all, from across the state was not unified. We believe that because of the growth of Florida, a better means of communication and more concerned individuals the Florida Golf Course Superintendents Association will be a useful tool and an outstanding success.

In closing I would like to emphasize that our association is not affiliated with Florida Turfgrass Association. The FTGA is simply interested in our future success and is willing to lend a helping hand. It is my hope that each superintendent across the state will extend his cooperation to his local association in their support of the statewide organization.

I want to personally thank Charley Stine, publisher of Golfweek, for contributing his time and interest in the progress of our association. He has agreed to provide a free subscription to each individual member until such time as the Florida Golf Superintendent's Association can incorporate a subscription into the membership fees. I request the president or secretary of each association to send Golfweek a mailing list of their respective members.