

Who's away

?

(And what's he putting for?)

BY JOEL JACKSON, CGCS

Who's away? What's he putting for?

Those were the questions that crackled again and again over Roger Halak's headset as he worked as a spotter during the PGA Seniors Championship last month at the PGA National Club in Palm Beach. His partner at the 10th green, Peter Brooks, called in the scores of the players after they finished the 10th and made their way to the 11th tee.

Halak is assistant superintendent at Boca Del Mar GC in Delray Beach and Brooks, CGCS, is superintendent at The Everglades Club in Palm Beach.

Members of the Palm Beach chapter of the Florida GCSA collectively have earned a reputation as savvy, knowledgeable spotters during ESPN's coverage of the Oldsmobile LPGA Classic at Wycliff C.C. and NBC's coverage of the PGA Seniors Championship.

In fact, they have done such a good job that Lou Safrin, a freelance television producer who has been organizing and coordinating spotters and score reporters at golf events for the past 10 years, wants the

superintendents back next year.

He also invited the Palm Beach crew to handle the Disney Classic in October and the TPC at Eagle Trace next year.

"The Palm Beach group worked out just great," said Safrin, who works with all the networks but mostly NBC.

"Because of their knowledge of golf and golf courses, I had a lot of confidence in their reports and answers. The guys knew where to look and what to look for. It made my job a little easier because I felt comfortable that they were on top of the action.

"Besides that, the guys had a lot of fun doing it."

Using a superintendent chapter has another advantage for Safrin: one-stop shopping.

"Sometimes I have to use three or four contacts to get enough people to meet my needs," he said.

Among his other sources for spotters are collegiate golf teams and local amateur golf associations.

Although flattered by the offer to work the tournaments out of Palm Beach County, Paul Crawford, Palm Beach GCSA external vice president, advised Safrin that other FGCSA chapters around the state could provide equally qualified spotters.

Members of the Palm Beach GCSA earned \$5,200 for scholarships and research by working as spotters at two televised tournaments



PAUL CRAWFORD/PALM BEACH GCSA

Peter Brooks, CGCS, left, and Roger Halak on the 10th green at the PGA Seniors Championship.

Crawford suggested that a core group of experienced spotters go to the Disney event this fall to help coach and train the Central Florida group and help establish contact with the networks.

Golf tournament organizers provide volunteers for most tournament operations, but the television networks must provide their own communications personnel, and that's where the Palm Beach chapter members come in.

Rich Brogan, formerly superintendent at the Polo Trace Club in Delray Beach, was contacted by Safrin and asked if he could find about 20 people to help with the February LPGA event at Wycliff CC in Lake Worth. He said ESPN would donate \$2,500 to the Palm Beach GCSA for scholarships in return for services rendered.

Brogan took the proposal to the Palm Beach Chapter and the members agreed to participate. Because of a very close contact with the tournament director of the Wycliff event, the chapter was able to buy time to air a GCSAA TV ad for only \$500 and get credit for the members' work during the telecast.

Impressed by the group's efforts, Safrin contacted Brogan a few weeks later to see if the Palm Beach superintendents would be willing to work for NBC at the PGA Championship in April.

Brogan had left the area and he passed the baton to Crawford. This time the Palm Beach Chapter netted a \$2,700 donation

for scholarships and research.

The routines at each tournament were slightly different.

At the LPGA event, 10 spotter-scorer teams walked the back nine with assigned groups of players. The spotters reported scores, club selections, situations, difficulties, etc., back to the control booth so they could track and report the most important action going on. The scorers called in the scores for each player at the completion of each hole.

At the PGA Seniors event, the spotters were stationary — assigned to tee, fairway, and green locations — but essentially reporting back the same critical information needed to produce a logical, coherent, and interesting telecast of the event.

Each location had a coded receptacle for



FGCSA

Part of the crew at the PGA Seniors Championship, from left, Steve Goedereis, Jeff Klontz, Mark Henderson, Paul Crawford, Dale Mitchell, Peter Brooks, Ray Hansen, Scott Spara, Richard Colyer, Brad Stuart, Vince Meade.

the spotter to plug into the “wire” that ran throughout the course and back to the “high resolution trailer.”

At each green there were two lines: one marked “Away” and the other marked “Score.”

Safrin and his wife, Patti, are responsible for the “high resolution board” in the “High Res” trailer, which provides the updated scores and information shown at commercial “cuts.” Lou handles the “Away” line and Patti oversees the “Score” line. This freelance production couple is a fixture at many of golf’s televised events.

Each day, the spotters met at the Safrins’

trailer two hours before air time for a briefing and to receive their assignments. They were given “color sheets” to help identify the players by the color of their clothing.

At 45 minutes before air time, everyone had to be at his assigned spot for roll call. Then they got a 30-minute break. Everyone was back on line 15 minutes before air time and stayed on line for the duration of the broadcast.

At each green, the spotter on the “Away” line was responsible for providing the putting order and the score the player was trying to attain with that stroke when asked “Who’s away and what is he putting for?”

The scorer called in the scores of the players as soon as they completed play on that hole. Spotters at par-three tees and at fairway locations on par fours and par fives gave club selections and shot results when asked.

“Based on the proposed schedule of events that we know about now, we stand to raise almost \$10,000 by working these tournaments,” said Crawford.

Actually, if the FGCSA worked all 15 tour events in Florida and earned an average donation of \$2,500 per event, the association could raise \$37,500 annually for scholarships and research.

“The biggest hook is the fun we had doing it!” says Crawford. “There are guys asking if they can be assured of working at next year’s events based on their ‘seniority’ established this year!”

“There’s no reason we can’t develop this thing statewide and even nationally. With our knowledge of golf courses and our love for the game in general, superintendents are naturals to provide excellent communications to enhance televised golf events.”

“Because of their knowledge of golf and golf courses, I had a lot of confidence in their reports and answers. The guys knew where to look and what to look for. It made my job a little easier because I felt comfortable that they were on top of the action.”

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FGCSA SPOTLIGHT



KIT BRADSHAW

Paul Turcotte's den in Hobe Sound is decorated with the mementos of nearly four decades of service to the Florida GCSA. He was the association's second president.

You're never too old to keep on learning

BY KIT BRADSHAW

What do you think Paul Turcotte would talk about in an interview?

His early affiliation with the South Florida Golf Course Superintendents' Association and his term as one its presidents?

His presidency of the state association?

The fact that he's attended more than 25 national GCSAA conventions, including the last one in Las Vegas?

No, the winner of the FGCSA President's Award for lifetime achievement talks about education. He's passionate about the need for golf course superintendents to continue to learn throughout their careers.

"It's nearly impossible for a superintendent to come up through the school of hard knocks like I did," Turcotte says. "Superintendents should really consider getting four-year agronomy degrees. That's the best foundation for the job.

"If they can't do that, then they should go to Lake City Community College and get their two-year degrees. But they shouldn't think that because they have a degree they know everything. They need to study all the time to keep abreast of the changes in the industry.

*President's Award
for
Lifetime Achievement
1990*

*Carl McKinney
Bud Quandt
Bob Sanderson
Paul Turcotte
Adam Yurigan*

"I know these young fellas say it's hard to keep up with everything. But I kept learning throughout my career. I'm retired, and I still try to keep abreast of new developments."

A native of Maine, Turcotte was working after school at a local nursery by the age of 11. When he was graduated from high school, he became the general manager of the nursery.

• *With all the changes in the regulations, with the Title III and all of it, I don't see how any golf course superintendent could stay away from local, state, or national meetings.* •

Five years later, he and his wife, Germaine, and their infant son migrated to Florida, where Turcotte worked with Exotic Gardens, a greenhouse and retail flower operation in Miami. Within a year, he had accepted the job of horticulturist for the City of Miami.

"My horticulture background was one of the best experiences I had for the work I've done all my life," Turcotte says. "It's all the same plants and turf. Horticulture became the basis of everything else I've learned."

And he has learned.

As Miami's horticulturalist, Turcotte was responsible for the citywide street tree planting program and was in charge of the plant and greenhouse nursery.

In 1959, he worked on the Melreese Golf Course, and the following year he became the superintendent of both city golf courses, overseeing a staff of 24. It was also that year that Turcotte became a member of the South Florida GCSA. He served in various capacities with the organization, becoming its president in 1970.

Turcotte was one of the founders of the state association and was its second president in 1971.

"In the early 1970s, we had the bylaws in place, and we rotated the responsibility for the presidency among the chapters," Turcotte says. "At that time, the South Florida chapter went all the way north to Vero Beach. But the organization didn't really get going until 1978, and since then, there have been tremendous changes."

During this time, Turcotte's responsibilities for the City of Miami were changing as well.

In 1972, he became the assistant director



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of the Parks Department and the golf division for the city. In this position, Turcotte oversaw the maintenance of the city's 92 parks, eight swimming pools, 60 tennis courts, two golf courses and 20 football and baseball fields, including the Orange Bowl.

The department was split in 1978 and in 1979 he was named the director of the golf division, where his responsibilities centered on the two city golf courses and the management of a staff of 50. Turcotte retired from the city in 1985.

Throughout his career, Turcotte continually honed his skills. He took correspondence courses from Cornell University in floriculture and attended yearly turfgrass management seminars at the University of Florida. He traveled throughout the country, attending seminars in turf management, irrigation and equipment maintenance.

He estimates he has attended as many as 2,500 turf meetings at the state and local level and, for more than a quarter of a century, was a faithful participant at the GCSAA national conventions and semi-

nars.

Turcotte was even involved with *The Florida Green*.

"*The Florida Green* was started by the South Florida association," Turcotte says. "I was almost thrown out of the organization when I suggested it should be turned over to the state association. But Dan Jones agreed, and now it's grown right along with the state association."

Even though he's retired to Hobe Sound, Turcotte still attends the Treasure Coast and South Florida chapter meetings.

"With all the changes in the regulations, with the Title III and all of it, I don't see how any golf course superintendent could stay away from local, state, or national meetings," Turcotte says. "There is so much to be learned, and golf course superintendents are such an important part of the industry.

"For years, we stressed that it was important for the superintendent to be involved in the beginning of a golf course, to work with the designers from the start.

"In the past, some of the designers got

carried away, and the golf course superintendent who was brought in after the course was built had to work with what was there.

"Now, this is changing. The golf course superintendent is part of the planning team. He has to know the value of planting native plants, he has to know maintenance and pesticides and irrigation. The only way he's going to know what's necessary is to attend the meetings and learn about changes in his business.

Despite his rigorous work schedule, Turcotte was involved in community activities during his years in Miami.

He was a motivational instructor for Miami's city employees, and for 18 years, he held weekly motivational classes for inmates at Dade County prison. He was also active in the Boy Scouts, an activity which led to finding his present home.

"I've been coming to the Hobe Sound area for several years. We used to camp with the Boy Scouts at Jonathan Dickinson State Park," says Turcotte. "So when I retired, we started looking to look for a home in this area.

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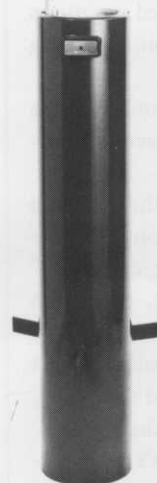
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PHOTOS BY KIT BRADSHAW

South Florida Field Day draws crowd

Members of the South Florida GCSA gathered at Rolling Hills Resort in Fort Lauderdale April 17 for the chapter's fourth annual field day. Dr. Houston Couch of Virginia Tech University (seen right talking to Steve Kuhn of Doral CC) was the featured speaker in the education session. Following a trade show and lunch, everyone gathered outside for equipment demonstrations under working conditions (above).



Now that he's not working full time, Turcotte stays busy playing golf, biking every day, and hitting the ocean for vigorous swims. He and Germaine also travel to Alabama to see their son, Richard, and to Kentucky to see their daughter, Joline, and their families.

But his interest in the industry remains. One of the most satisfying occurrences has been the growth of golf in Florida.

"They say now that Florida is number one in the country in golf courses, but I could see that coming years ago," Turcotte says. "Golf was one of the main tourist attractions in Florida for years, and now it

brings in millions to the state.

"I think that's why it's even more important for our association to be strong, to have knowledgeable professionals who work for the betterment of golf involved in the association. The entire country is looking at what we do here in Florida with golf course design, management and environmental issues."

Crowfoot set for Grand Cypress; may move to new Disney course in '92

The 1991 Crowfoot Open weekend will take place this year on August 3-5. The

event will be again held at the Grand Cypress Golf Club and Villas and will include the FGCSA Summer Board Meeting, the FGCSA Annual Business Meeting, Educational Seminar, Banquet and Tournament.

Next year look for a possible change of venue as the Crowfoot Committee investigates the possibility of holding the event on either the new Tom Fazio or Pete Dye courses nearing completion at Walt Disney World.

Two new resort areas, Dixie Landings and Port Orleans, across the street from the new courses will make this an exciting site for the 1992 event.

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Sam Robinson, above, USGA Section Affairs Committee member from Orlando, moderated the morning session. At left, Jim Moore, center, demonstrates the weather service available on ComputerNet to Richard Haas, superintendent at Crescent Oaks CC in Holiday, left, and Tom Trammel, Indian River Colony Club.



JOEL JACKSON

USGA Green Section Conferences sell out

Approximately 300 golf course superintendents, greens committee members and other club officials attended the USGA Green Section Regional Conference sessions in West Palm Beach and Kissimmee.

The Kissimmee conference at Orange Lake CC was sold out, assuring the continuation of future Green Section programs in the Central Florida area, according to Shelley Foy, administrator of the Green Section's Florida Region.

Five sessions filled the morning and three more rounded out the afternoon.

The Kissimmee program March 14, outlined below, varied only slightly from the Palm Beach Gardens presentation two days earlier.

Ron Dodson, president of the Audubon Society of New York, discussed his organization's new "Cooperative Sanctuary for Golf Courses," suggesting ways similar programs could be set up in Florida.

The New York program was the first of its kind and ushered in a new era of cooperation between the Audubon Society and the golf industry.

Other morning topics included maintenance facilities, Steve Brock and Don



JOEL JACKSON

Ron Dodson, president of the Audubon Society of the State of New York, discussed his state society's Cooperative Sanctuary for Golf Courses.

Dr. Bert McCarty of the University of Florida discussed integrated plant management.



Above from left, Roger Harvie, USGA regional director; Tom Alex, Arnold Palmer Management; and Larry Kamphaus, Walt Disney World. Left, Steve Brock, architect, and Don Raudenbush, vice president of Erwin Construction Associates, discussed maintenance facilities.

Raudenbush, Erwin Construction Associates; pesticide storage, Lee Bloomcamp, Mobay Corporation; water management; Dwight Jenkins, hydrologist with the St. Johns River Water Management District.

Afternoon topics were computer applications in golf course management, Jim Moore, director of the Green Section's Mid-Continent Region; integrated plant management, Dr. Bert McCarty, University of Florida; successful renovation of 18 greens, Cary Lewis, superintendent at Country Club of Orlando, and Brian Silva, architect.

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