

Superintendent is 'most important person at my course,' say most *Golf Digest* readers

GCSAA in particular and superintendents in general were viewed in a positive way in the January issue of *Golf Digest*. Steve Mona, CEO at association headquarters, was listed among the 36 people deemed most powerful in golf. Mona, CAE, was ranked 29th on the list that was headed by Tim Finchem, commissioner of the PGA Tour.

In that same issue, *Digest* released the latest in its at-random series of reader surveys, this one titled "Things we didn't know until now." The final question was, "Who is the most important person at your club or course?"

The resounding answer? Golf course superintendent drew the nod from 48 percent of the respondents. A distant

GCSAA Online
Items of interest from GCSAA's Online web site

second was golf professional with 25 percent. Club manager was third with 14 percent.

USGA president praises work of superintendents

NOTE: The following comments are excerpts from a media conference featuring Judy Bell, USGA president, conducted Feb. 10.

Q. What is your outlook for your second term as USGA president?

A. The first year was terrific, and our championships were terrific. Our mission is to open the game to everyone who wants to play.

Q. What, in your opinion, is the role of the golf course superintendent in the game?


A. We have a wonderful relationship with GCSAA. I believe we are on the same page as to what we can do to improve the game of golf. We have one mind in the direction we want to go.

I can't tell you how important the golf course superintendents are to the game of golf. We need to preach that, not to the choir, but to the world. I don't think there is anything more beautiful than a

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golf course. We need to portray our work with the environment in a positive and beautiful way.

Q. What are your perceptions on USGA green construction specifications?

A. We have 15 greens constructed around the country to do research. Real world test-

ing is important. We want to take our testing to the playing field.

Sometimes our specifications have taken some heat, but we strive to be good listeners. If there are concerns, or questions, we will always listen. We are hoping that this varietal testing of grasses will be the proof of the pudding.

Q. Could you comment about technological advances in the game?

A. Technology can get in the way of how golf should be played. We are so focused on the latest gadget. Courses can remain pristine and natural, they do not need to be perfect.

One of the charms of our game is it isn't like basketball or football, where the field is the same. Our playing field is different every time we play. Golf courses are natural, not contrived.

Q. What about green speed?

A. Who says that the challenge is greater for speed than it is weight and line? As golfers, we blame everything except where the blame should go - us.

Q. What would you like for the golfing public to know about the role of the golf course superintendent?

A. I don't think they have a great enough identity today. I don't think the public knows how unusual and creative their jobs are. I'd like to see that message get out.

"Par" begins fourth season, moves to The Golf Channel

"Par for the Course," GCSAA's award-winning, 30-minute television show, moves this year to The Golf Channel. The production's fourth season began March



Judy Bell

22 at 6:30 p.m. (Eastern time).

Each week, "Par for the Course" takes viewers inside the world of golf by featuring how-to-play tips from Golf Digest school instructors, interviews with industry leaders and celebrities, site visits to top golf venues throughout the world, agronomic insights and environmental success stories.

GCSAA also will produce feature segments for The Golf Channel's live tournament broadcasts. The Golf Channel is currently available in 7 million homes, but projections are that it will reach 14 million homes by the end of 1997.

"Par for the Course" was aired on the Prime Network in its inaugural season, then moved to ESPN in 1995 and 1996. This year, GCSAA will produce 13 episodes, airing every Saturday at 6:30 p.m. EST, with replays Tuesdays at 3 a.m. EST and another weekday afternoon.

GCSAA will carry on its strong relationship with ESPN, continuing to produce the popular feature segments during the network's 1997 PGA Tour and Senior PGA Tour telecasts. GCSAA also will expand its presence on the airwaves by broadcasting feature segments to be run during TBS telecasts of various PGA Tour and PGA of America events.

"We are excited about GCSAA's television presence for the upcoming year," says Bruce R. Williams, GCSAA president. "First and foremost, we have a product recognized by our membership and the golf community as high quality that promotes our association and educates the viewer.

"The Golf Channel gives us an attractive early prime-time viewing slot vital to reaching our target audience. And, the combination of The Golf Channel, ESPN and TBS provides a widespread distribution to those who enjoy the game of golf."

"Par for the Course" has been afforded honors in the past, including selection to the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE) Associations Advance America Awards honor roll.

The award recognizes significant contributions to society by associations and their programs. The International Network of Golf (ING) also selected "Par for the Course" as a finalist in its Public

Relations/Promotional Program category in both 1995 and 1996.

GCSAA's Scott Smith, senior manager of video services, returns for his fourth year as the show's producer, and veteran broadcaster Duke Frye also returns as host. Postproduction service will be provided by Great Plains Television and Creative Communications of Kansas City.

The Scotts Co. is once again the show's presenting sponsor, and this year's supporting sponsor is Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment (RISE). Several RISE members have also joined with the organization to sponsor a new segment within each episode.

Segment presenting sponsors are Novartis, Rhone-Poulenc Ag Co. and Zeneca Professional Products, and the segment contributing sponsors are AgrEvo USA Co., American Cyanamid and Bayer Corp.

GCSAA headquarters site joins Audubon system

GCSAA's national office has joined the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Corporate/Business Properties. Located at 1421 Research Park Drive in Lawrence, Kan., the grounds at GCSAA headquarters cover nearly eleven acres, including three acres of native grasses.

GCSAA staff members have worked on a volunteer basis to enhance the property for wildlife with deer licks, bird feeders and nesting boxes as well as installing shrubs and trees when replanting that serve as food sources. Day-to-day work activities also include energy conservation and paper and aluminum can recycling programs.

"The Cooperative Sanctuary program gives people an opportunity to do something good for the environment right where they live, work and recreate," said Neil Gifford, environmental educator for Audubon International. "We welcome GCSAA's commitment to managing the property in an environmentally sensitive manner."

Aside from the current on-site activities, plans also call for the development of a nature trail lined by bluebird nest boxes. Native plantings will be used to enhance

the trail which will pass a section of prairie grasses that will be left undisturbed.

In addition to its on-site improvements, GCSAA and Rain Bird Golf Irrigation serve as co-sponsors to the ACSF for Schools program. Through the program, superintendents work with schools to create projects that foster resource conservation and wildlife enhancement.

Crenshaw hails Old Tom Morris in acceptance speech

NOTE: The following comments are excerpts from a media conference featuring Ben Crenshaw, 1997 GCSAA Old Tom Morris award winner, conducted Feb. 11.

In his speech to accept the Old Tom Morris Award, GCSAA's highest honor, Ben Crenshaw made this opening statement:

"I am so honored. The two awards that will always mean the most to me are the Bobby Jones and the Old Tom Morris. I've been reading about them since I was 14. They are a part of history. Bobby Jones has always been my idol. And Old Tom Morris, he's the fountainhead.

"As greenkeeper, Old Tom Morris took care of the course, but let nature take its course. But he did so much more. His life was unbelievable. He did as much to spread the game as anyone. I think those values, and those of Harvey Penick's shaped me as much as anyone."

Q. What importance does the golf course superintendent play in the game?

A. Without a doubt, the most important person on the golf course is the man who takes care of it. It's backwards [the recognition]. Those men and women are far more important than we give them credit for. They do a wonderful, incredible job, under some tough scrutiny, often times by people who do not know anything about the job. They are amazing.

Q. What is your basis for your love of golf course architecture and history?

A. What started it was my first USGA Junior at the Country Club of Brookline. It was the first time I had left the state of Texas. I was so scared to take a divot. I think I was there two days before I finally took a divot. It was so beautiful. I really fell in love with the game, the architec-

ture and history, so it really started right there.

Q. What are your perceptions on current golf course architecture?

A. Designers are doing incredible creations on what can be called throwaway properties. We are returning to a more classic design, which I like. I feel the

Answers to Quiz

1. d. Baffy – 5 wood; 2. a. Brassie – 2 wood; 3. c. Cleek – 4 wood; 4. f. Jigger – 4 iron; 5. h. Lofter – 8 iron; 6. g. Mashie – 5 iron; 7. e. Mid Mashie – 3 iron; 8. i. Niblick – 9 iron; 9. b. Spoon – 3 wood

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Q. How do you feel about your tournament play?

A. I still enjoy competitive golf and I feel like I've got a lot left to play.

Q. Tell us about your architecture business.

A. I am so lucky to be a partner with Bill Coore. He's an agronomist, and has taught me so much about this field. In turn, I try to work on the playability of the golf course design.

Bill's got a soft spot for the superintendent, because that is how he got his start working with Pete Dye. It is amateur play that is the basis for the strategic design of golf courses. And hand-in-hand, glove-in-glove with this design are the people who take care of golf courses.

PGA Reserve South named best new affordable course

The PGA golf course at The Reserve's South course has won an award for best new affordable course for 1996 from Golf Digest magazine. The North course was named this year's 7th best new affordable course. This course also was featured in



Ben Crenshaw, pro golfer, architect and golf historian, is flanked by fellow Texan and GCSAA Director Tommy Witt, CGCS, left, and Immediate Past President Bruce Williams, CGCS at the GCSAA Press Conference. Photo by Joel Jackson.

the September issue of Golf Course Management.

In addition, construction plans are under way for a vacation village complex, including the first PGA vacation club by Vistana Resort. The development, planned by the PGA of America and situated on 70 acres next to PGA Golf Club's South Course, will begin with vacation villas, a hotel and the PGA's new golf learning center.

Smyers building Tampa course

Golf course architect Steve Smyers has been selected to design and build Lochenheath in Tampa, Fla. The private, national golf club is owned by Outback Steakhouse founders Bob Bushman and Chris Sullivan. Construction of the course began in September. It is scheduled to open in fall 1997.

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