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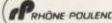
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THE GAME

and the Golf Course Superintendent

by WILLIAM C. CAMPBELL
President, USGA

I ask you, what is more important to any golf club or course, or to those who play there, than a friendly understanding by the golfers of the course superintendent's role, their recognition of his various problems, and their appreciation of his contributions to their enjoyment of the game?

To encourage that understanding, recognition, and appreciation, I would like to tell what I think most golfers should know about their course superintendent and what he does for their course and for them, because I greatly respect the superintendent's role and I doubt that he gets the credit that he deserves. I want to do something about it.

As past Chairman of the USGA Green Section Committee, and having been on and off the Executive Committee for the past 20 years, I am confident that the USGA shares my views. Here they are, in no particular order; some are obvious, but I'll list them anyway:

- The golf course superintendent is charged with the responsibility for the care of the most important asset that a club possesses, which is the golf course itself.
- The superintendent's job is difficult at best, and even worse at times, in that his results are influenced by weather and other factors beyond his control, and complicated by human nature.
- The superintendent's performance cannot be quantified. His expenditures can be checked against the budget, but there is no Stimpmeter or other numerical means to measure how successful or unsuccessful, or how lucky or unlucky, he has been in caring for his course.
- The final test is the degree of satisfaction of those who play his course — which is such a subjective consideration that the superintendent simply cannot please all of the people all of the time. For example, I happen to like firm, fast greens and closely cut fairways, regardless of color, whereas my wife may prefer soft greens of medium pace and lush, green fairways — but that's because she is better at tennis than golf.
- For these and other reasons, everyone who plays at his course should give the superintendent the benefit of any doubt. After all, he certainly knows more about the golf course than they do as a group, and probably more than any one person who plays there — unless, that is, the superintendent has the disadvantage of not himself being a golfer, or of not playing occasionally on the course for which he is responsible. The superintendent should be a golfer — not necessarily a good one, like Bob Mitchell of The Greenbrier or Bill Whitaker of Seminole — but a regular player of the game who understands and respects it. I happen to be a member of both

of those clubs, and I know that their courses' outstanding playing characteristics have been enhanced by Bob's and Bill's expert knowledge and love of the game even more than by the demonstrated ability of each of them to play it well. Bob Mitchell is a former President of the Golf Course Superintendents Association. He is now Director of Grounds at The Greenbrier and a regular competitor in the West Virginia Amateur. Bill Whitaker is a past National Lefthanders Champion and former regular Army sergeant who handles his men effectively. Bill studies Seminole's greens by Stimpmeter readings, but also by his own putting practice as he checks various greens after they have been mowed — which may be why he putts so well, at least on smooth, fast surfaces, like Seminole's. The superintendent's personal involvement in the game will be well known to the golfers at his course. You can be sure that Messrs. Michell and Whitaker, as outstanding superintendents, have even more credibility because they are respected also as golfers.

- Recently I was pleased to learn that when the board of my home club, in Huntington, West Virginia, was searching for a superintendent, they were able to recruit Dean Watkins from nearby Berry Hills, in Charleston, who not only plays the game reasonably well, but is also President of the West Virginia Section of the GCSAA.
- I think the superintendent should have a continuity of contact with someone representing the club's board or its ownership who ideally should have some knowledge of agronomy, but certainly a love for the game and an abiding interest in good course conditions. Such a green or course committee chairman should not be replaced so long as he is responsibly discharging his duties and the course shows it. His most important function may be to communicate with the superintendent and to support him. The superintendent has a lonely job and he needs someone in authority with whom to discuss things and even vent his frustrations, which are inevitable.
- At best, however, club boards come and go, and sooner or later the green or course committee chairman may go, too, while the superintendent is still there. Because of this turnover of club officials, it is up to the superintendent from year to year to assert the strongest single influence on the playability of his course. Other things being equal, his essential role as keeper of the playing standards makes the critical difference in any comparison of golf courses and, in the end, of superintendents. I would bet that at the courses with the best playability, the superintendents either play golf there regularly or at least are serious students of the game as well as of their own profession.
- The most successful superintendents keep up with developments of the game and their profession by using all available resources. They are active in their professional associations at various levels, they attend educa-

(continued on page 52)



Harbour Town Golf Links, Sea Pines Plantation, 18th hole (458 yards — par 4)

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a smooth, grain-free putting surface. It looks great throughout the winter season, and provides an easy spring transition.

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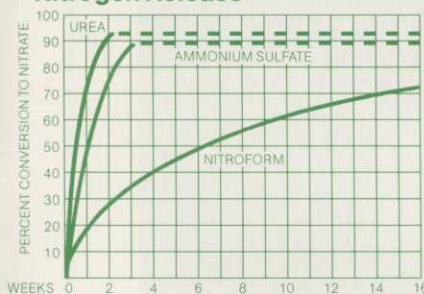




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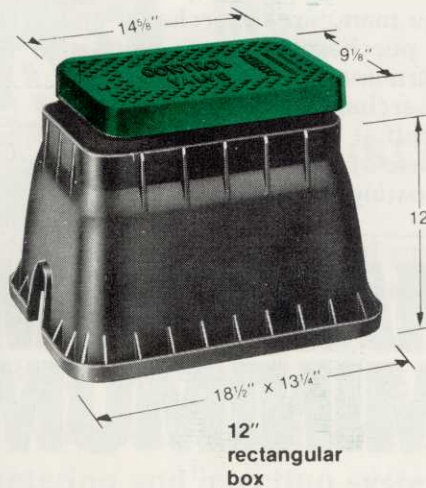
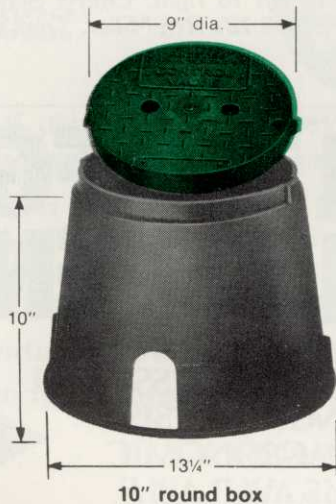
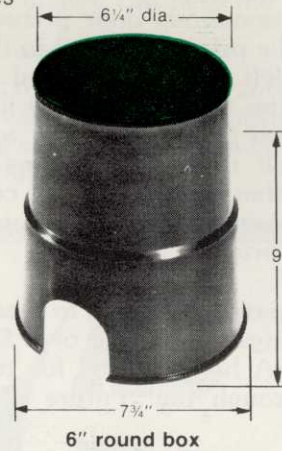
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The Future of Golf Tournament

On May 11, 1985 the Palm Beach Chapter Golf Course Superintendents' Association held its fourth annual "Future of Golf" Tournament to raise money for turf research and junior golf programs. Once again, the beautiful Golf and Racquet Club at Eastpointe hosted the event, as they have done for all the "Future of Golf" tournaments since its inception in 1982.

Tournament Chairman and course superintendent Gary Grump had the golf course in flawless playing condition, and Director of Golf Bob Komarinetz and Head Golf Professional Don Schultz perfectly orchestrated the event's proceedings.

The format was a 4-man scramble, and the winning team of Fred Klauk, Larry Mueller, Kerry Schwencke, and Dave Craft posted a superb effort of 16-under par. Each man received a beautiful plaque and a gift certificate for \$60. Close behind at 15-under was the team of Kevin Downing, Mike LeFebre, Rusty Carr, and Mark Jarrell.

Following the tournament, the players enjoyed a sumptuous buffet dinner where numerous door prizes were given away in addition to the prizes awarded to the top 8 teams. Nearly everyone left with a prize, and all left with good feelings about the tournament and its purpose. All the proceeds from this tournament are put back into the game of golf through programs doing research on the problems that plague our golf courses and through junior golf programs which help ensure that the future of golf is, indeed, bright.

This year over \$6,000 was netted to donate to these various organizations. This brings the total to over \$22,000 that the Palm Beach GCSA has donated for turf research and junior golf through the "Future of Golf" Tournaments since 1982.

Special thanks are due the many area merchants and golf course suppliers who purchased sponsor signs at \$100 each to make this tournament a success, the area golf clubs who donated merchandise for door prizes, and to the members and staff at The Golf and Racquet Club at Eastpointe for the use of their outstanding facility and their hard work in hosting this event. ■



The winning team at 16 under par: from l to r: Fred Klouk, Dave Craft, Larry Miller, Kerry Schwencke.



2nd place team at 15 under par: from l to r: Kevin Downing, Mark Jarrell, Mike Lefebre, Rusty Carr.



From left to right: Cheryl Sandy (now Mrs. Mark Jarrell), Channell 12's Reg Miller, Tani Sandy (Cheryl's sister).

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A & L to Offer In-House Nematode Analysis

A & L Southern Agricultural Laboratories is pleased to announce it will offer fast, in-house nematode assays to the turf industry, starting in mid-January. The Fort Lauderdale-base laboratory consulting firm will provide nematode testing in addition to soil, plant, water, and disease analyses

A & L formerly did nematode work via their Richmond laboratory. The delicate nature of nematode samples makes shipping them long distance impractical, as the nematodes can die and decompose in transit. The accuracy of such tests can suffer if the samples are exposed to heat or drying. By doing the assays right here in Florida, superintendents can ship nematode samples by UPS or another carrier overnite, with good assurance that the samples will arrive in good shape.

Speed is vital in nematode work. A fast lab can give the superintendent quick information that can be so crucial in making turf management decisions. A & L will phone your nematode results as soon as they're complete if you request, and they are proud to offer this new service to FLORIDA'S TURF INDUSTRY.

"Florida Golf Day Extends to Florida Golf Week"

For the last two years your Florida G.C.S.A. has been sponsoring the fund raising efforts focused around "Florida Golf Day." The efforts that have been displayed by many golf courses around the state should be commended and hopefully they will continue to show their support. In the year of 1986 we have lengthened the time frame to one full week in order to accommodate the clubs or superintendents that were not able to have an event on the one day that was previously selected. Florida Golf Week will be held on April 1 thru April 7. This week has been selected since it falls just prior to the Masters Tournament and the interest in golf and the beauty of the golf course is at an all time high.

In the past many clubs have been successful by sponsoring a closest to the pin contest or just running some sort of small tournament that can generate a return of 200 to 500 dollars per club. If we can get this type of support from only twenty-five per cent of Florida's clubs we can generate between 35,000 and 90,000 dollars. Folks, that kind of money can help the research programs a great deal.

The attractive posters advertising the Florida Golf Week will soon be distributed to each chapter throughout the state to help stimulate golfer interest. Good luck with your efforts.

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Watching Your Tees & Q's



By: Bud White
Southeastern Director
USGA Green Section

Groom That Bent!

With the significant increase of bent overseeding on bermudagrass greens in south Florida, there has been somewhat less than adequate grooming of that bent during the winter months. Bent is a very delicate type cool season grass that requires specific cultural management to produce the highest quality putting surface when compared to ryegrass, fescues or roughstalk bluegrasses. Some even believe no grooming is required at all as the bentgrass has a very low vigor and therefore will not tolerate active grooming.

Actually, the contrary is true. Bentgrass does require some specific grooming during the winter and early spring months to provide the maximum quality playing surface and the best putting speeds possible. One of the

big reasons that bentgrass has been used as an overseeding is to increase the putting smoothness and putting speed during the overseeding period. Therefore, proper grooming is essential to maximize the speed which is the ultimate purpose of bentgrass usage.

Basically, the winter and spring months should consist of an active grooming period with the use of very light topdressings and brushes on the putting green mowers. The brushings used about three times per week and set at a height dependent on green undulations and the traffic amounts are very crucial in keeping the bentgrass at an upright growth habit and maximizing surface uniformity. This also helps keep the bentgrass from establishing too much lateral growth which in turn helps the surface uniformity and quality.

Light topdressings at about 1/8 cu. yd./1000 sq. ft. periodically during the growing season will further improve surface smoothness and be very beneficial in promoting the best quality bentgrass surface possible. The bentgrass has a stoloniferous-type growth habit and therefore light topdressings help promote a vertical growth habit much more vigorously. These light topdressings, as mentioned above, can be carried out about every three to four weeks during the growing season for improvement of the overall surface.

Again, everyone using bent overseeding should very carefully evaluate their grooming programs and consider a combined program of very light topdressings and the use of brushes. You will find that the use of these very stiff or even metal bristle brushes on the greens mowers are excellent aids with the bentgrass overseeding. Light, vertical mowings with the triplex units can be used in the late spring when it is time to thin the bentgrass and allow the bermudagrass to reestablishing a predominant cover. However, prior to this time period, the brushing serves as a very vital grooming tool without being too vigorous or even detrimental to the more tender bentgrass.

Experiment with these grooming practices this winter. I am sure you will find that their combined efforts will improve even an already excellent putting surface. ■

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