

The President's Super Secret Security proves a super's nightmare

ON THE LINKS

If you think he had added headaches the past eight years, pity Gregory D. Searle the next four seasons.

Searle is golf course superintendent at Cape Arundel Golf Club in Kennebunkport, Maine—the summer headquarters for avid golfer and President George Bush.

Bush, once a lefthanded-hitting first baseman at Yale University,

hits from the right side in golf and scores in the 81-89 range.

Searle and the Secret Service have taken elaborate precautions and made extensive plans to accommodate the Bush fitness and recreation program, often springing into action on short notice.

Security now must be beefed up considerably now that Bush is president. There's a lot of course

acreage to cover in satisfying security arrangements.

Cape Arundel, an 18-hole semi-private layout built around the turn of the century, boasts neither a bar nor restaurant. Its members mostly are summer residents in the Kennebunkport area. The Bushes and family have been members for years.

Searles says, "As Cape Arundel takes in a certain amount of greens

fees, just having (Bush) arriving to play golf causes a certain amount of amazement.

"The drive into the clubhouse crosses five golf holes. You can imagine the looks when an entourage of limousines, long station wagons and the like enter (about nine vehicles in all).

"Having (then vice-president) as a member who played frequently when at his Kennebunkport

residence, I came up with a 'Do's and Don'ts' list which a superintendent must have at his fingertips," Searle said.

"1. Probably most important is to make sure all equipment is fine-tuned. It's quite an experience having 10 Secret Service agents running and driving at you when to them a sound of a gunshot is heard in your direction. Make sure your turf vehicle—you supers know which one—doesn't backfire!

"2. Leave your new puppy at home—not in your office in the maintenance facility. Seeing the president trying to get to your phone during an emergency—climbing over a box blocking the door so the dog wouldn't get out, maneuvering around—well, you know what a puppy often does before he learns to do this certain thing outside."

3. Try to schedule your monthly top-dressing on a day the president and I think all the press persons in the world won't be present. We had an overly enthusiastic worker on the top-dressing machine that day. Oh, well, Bush played and we managed the top-dressing.

"4. Spray greens in the evening. He might decide to play early in the morning, just after you've sprayed greens. It appeared he was following the sprayer around the course! Oh, goodness, why did I spray this morning!"

Searle said dealing with these sudden and unexpected situations has been interesting, adding, "I'm sure I'll add to my guidance list the next four years."

Many courses need facilities

Sports geographer Dr. John Rooney notes that although there are about 12,600 golf facilities in the United States, there are shortages in certain areas, especially in public facilities.

"Many people believe that just because a course is nearby that they have an opportunity to play," he said. "In fact, in many places...especially the South...there is little opportunity unless one joins a private club."

He targeted the southern and western regions of the nation as having the greatest opportunity for golf development...especially public facilities.

The South, he said, has the fewest golf holes per capita, particularly in rural areas.

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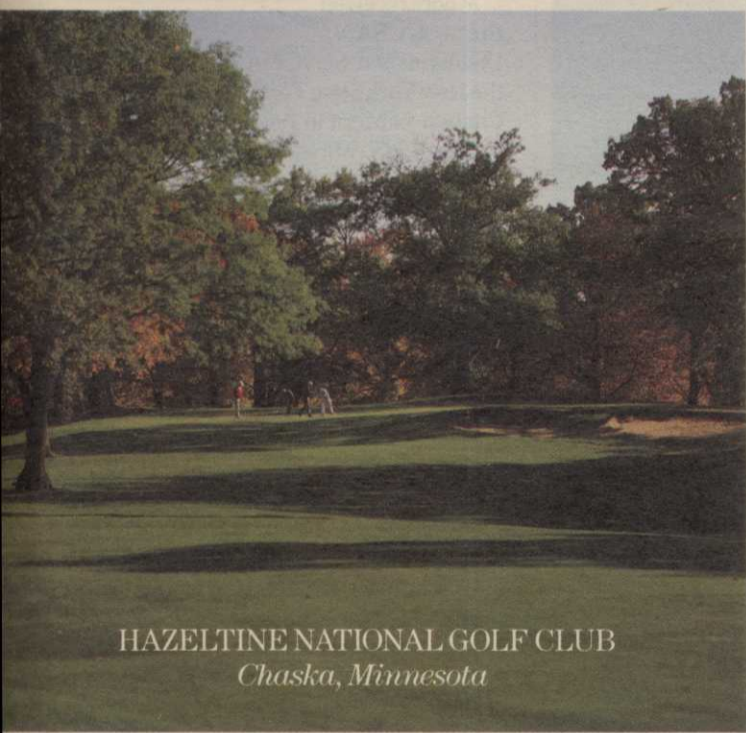
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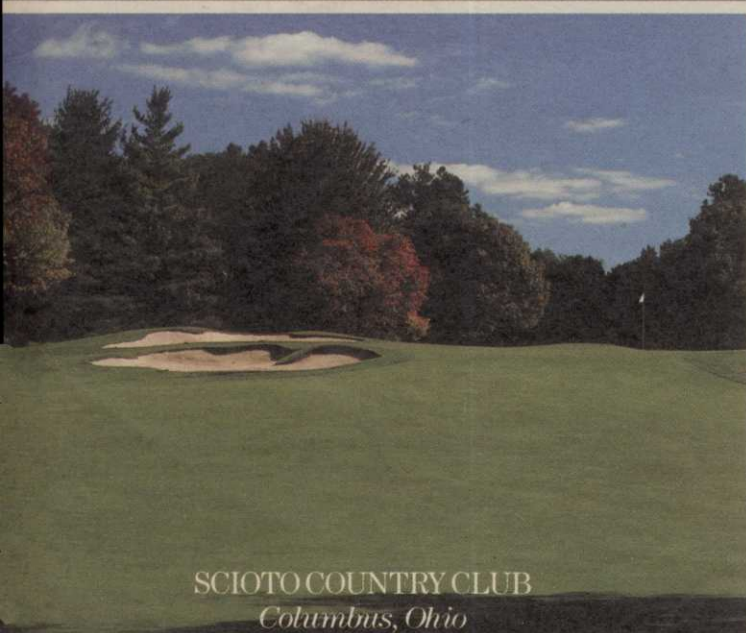
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