

GCSAA show bigger and better

The Golf Course Superintendents Association of America show was bigger and better than ever! The Orlando Convention Center has to be one of the best in this country, if not the world.

I can understand the GCSAA's reasoning in moving from east to west and around the country every year, but wouldn't it be nice to come back to Orlando every other year?

One of the advantages of my job is being able to engage in some business meetings and conferences that include golf as part of the program. I have been invited to two such outings during March.

As the representative for the JC Penney Classic, I will be playing in the Commissioner's Cup Tournament just prior to the TPC Cham-



pionship at Sawgrass, March 16-19. The two-day event is played on the Valley Course and March Landing Country Club. It is sponsored by the PGA Tour and Commissioner Dean Beman for the American Golf Sponsors.

This group of ladies and gentlemen consists of tournament directors and corporate sponsors who underwrite a large portion of the Tour tournaments. With approximately 40 PGA Tour-sponsored events, this group works in all phases of tournament management with one goal — to raise money for charity. The AGS and the PGA Tour have raised more funds for charities than all the other sports organizations combined!

Later in March the American Society of Golf Course Architects will open its meetings to more press coverage. I look forward to meeting with this elite group who have designed and continue to design the great golf courses around the world.

This association, with approxi-

mately 100 members, has been most supportive of *Golf Course News* from the very first day, and I want to thank Executive Secretary Paul Fullmer and his staff for including *Golf Course News* in the spring meeting. Managing Editor Mark Leslie plans a report of this meeting to our readers in the May issue.

Soon the green will be overtaking the brown on the northern courses and the heat will slowly kill the rye in the South.

Another season is upon us. I sincerely hope that you continue to enjoy *Golf Course News*, and that we help you to keep informed of industry news.

Sincerely,
Charles E. von Brecht
Publisher

Handicapped easy to accommodate

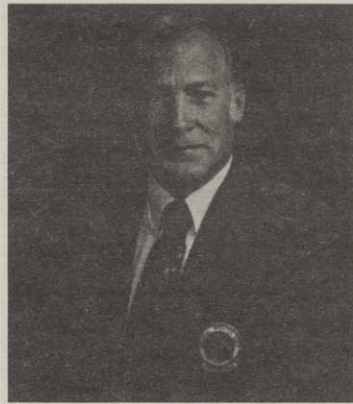
BY BOB WILSON

An observation for the 1990s:

As designers and builders struggle to keep pace with the demand for new facilities — environmental impact, costs, new grasses, materials, etc. — let us pause for a moment to consider the ever-growing need for golf courses to be accessible to the physically challenged player.

Who are the physically challenged? Are they the new wave of human beings who are joining the thousands already waiting in line to tee it up?

Well, yes and no. The physically challenged community is made up of those individuals with a physical handicap or disability — amputees, blind, people suffering from polio residuals, plegia, a stroke, or birth defects to mention a few.



Bob Wilson

Although there are a great number of folks within this special community already enjoying the game, golf's popularity as a recreational activity is now being bolstered by the fact that it can be rehabilitative both physically and mentally.

'... there will be increasing demands on facilities, particularly those municipally owned, to be accessible.'

What is accessibility? In many cases, it might just be providing special parking areas adjacent to the clubhouse or pro shop. For those who need a golf car, a pennant or flag to denote authority to leave cart paths may suffice.

It should be kept in mind that accessibility is usually the small things rather than purported monumental obstacles. A good many physically challenged individuals need no special considerations in order to enjoy the game.

One of the hardest questions related to accessibility is accommodating individuals in wheelchairs. One would assume that where a golf car can go so can a chair — with one major exception, the putting green. In order to include this facet of the game, many innovative ideas are coming to the fore and are being tested as to their playability.

Instruction for the 1990s

The National Amputee Golf Association was incorporated in 1955 and has been conducting tournaments annually since 1949. In 1986, with the support of the PGA, NAGA began conducting Learn To Golf Clinics. These clinics are not limited to amputees.

Also in 1986, two instructional videos were produced — "Challenge Golf" with Peter Longo and "Never Say Never" with Kathy Corbin — as well as the "First Swing Program" by the PGA's Junior Golf Foundation.

The First Swing Program was designed to introduce and prepare teachers to conduct basic instruc-

tion in golf. The curriculum, backed up by the two videos, forms the basis for NAGA's seminar and clinic program at hospitals and rehabilitation centers throughout the United States. Aided by a grant from the Disabled American Veterans Charitable Service Trust, NAGA held eight seminars in 1989 and will conduct 16 this year.

"The training sessions provide the rehabilitation professionals an excellent background for golf instruction to patients," said Laird MacCubbin, CTRS, of Good Shepherd Rehabilitation Hospital.

"The fact that clinics can easily be implemented at any accessible community driving range or golf course also gives the program an added plus," said Leslie Hoffman, CTRS, of Moss Rehabilitation Hospital.

It is interesting to note, however, that as these individuals progress from hitting whiffle balls from mats in a gym to the driving range, the lure of the "course" becomes the challenge.

At one hospital with extensive grounds a "course" was suggested using vast areas of "lawn." In order to accommodate the large physically challenged population (many in wheelchairs), the "lawn" was mowed closer in areas representing tees and greens. The "lawn," it is assumed, would be no worse for wear from wheelchair traffic.

Also on this "course" the Cayman (Modified Distance) Ball was exclusively used, permitting a regular course feel in a much smaller area.

As the physically challenged population becomes ever more aware that they can play this greatest of games, there will be increasing demands on facilities, particularly those municipally owned, to be accessible.

Bob Wilson is executive director of the National Amputee Golf Association. People may contact him at NAGA, P.O. Box 1228, Amherst, N.H. 03031; 800-633-6242.

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