

It's
Showtime!

Spodnik, MacCurrach honored by GCSAA

By MARK
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LAWRENCE, Kan. — Superintendent John Spodnik, who has "inspired many people throughout his career," and PGA Tour agronomist Allan MacCurrach, cited for "exceptional contributions to the superintendent's profession," will be presented the GCSAA's 1994 Distinguished Service Awards at the international golf show.

The award "means being recognized by your peers as a contributor to the advancement of the profession in general and to the turfgrass industry," said Spodnik from Westfield Country Club in Westfield Center, Ohio, where he has served for 34 years.

"I'm overwhelmed," MacCurrach said. "Superintendents have made my job easy over the years. People like us, who are able to travel, are exposed to different things [agronomically]. Oftentimes, I'm just passing on information I've picked up the week before."

Spodnik, who retires in September, was the 1969 president of the GCSAA and has been secretary-treasurer of the North Ohio

Golf Course Superintendents Association for 34 years. He has been director of the Midwest Regional Turf Foundation at Purdue University for several years, holding the office of president in 1975. Serving in his third year as treasurer of the Musser International Turf Foundation, he was a director during the formative years of the Ohio Turfgrass Foundation, which honored him with a life membership in December.

MacCurrach is senior agronomist for the PGA Tour, making advance visits to sites for Tour, Senior Tour and Nike Tour events. He also assists Tournament Players Club superintendents in de-

veloping their agronomy programs. Before joining the PGA Tour in 1974, he was superintendent at Valley Country Club in Warwick, R.I., and Chevy Chase (Md.) Country Club. He left the Tour to consult Golden Bear, Inc. from 1984-88.

GCSAA President Randy Nichols said the two men "have made exceptional contributions to the advancement of the golf course superintendent's profession."

Their careers, he said, "embody the highest traditions of this award."

Spodnik, Nichols said, "has inspired many people throughout his career."

Spodnik feels his main contribu-

tion has been "setting the right example" of professionalism and, through chapter involvement, helping agronomy students with scholarships and training programs.

"If your profession is going to grow and be recognized, you have to have professional people presenting that image to the public," he said. "Some very talented young people are joining the industry."

"I can remember the average age in our Northern Ohio chapter was 54. It's down near 32. That's remarkable, and it means we're attracting new people. People now look at education when hiring, whereas before it was the School of Hard Knocks."



John Spodnik



Allan MacCurrach

MacCurrach said: "The most positive thing I've seen over years is the fact that superintendents now are part of the game of golf. Twenty-five or 30 years ago, they really weren't in the forefront, or known by the pro golfers, or ever mentioned on TV. Now, not only for me, but for the rules people as well, our first contact at a course is the superintendent. He's the key man the week prior and all during tournament week."

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usually try to bite off more than they can chew," Pinick said.

Another Texan who could do well is board of director candidate Tommy Witt of Bent Tree Country Club in Dallas.

"Tommy used to work in the Austin area and knows the courses," Smith said. "He's a very good player. He can't hit the ball out of his own shadow. But he sure can putt."

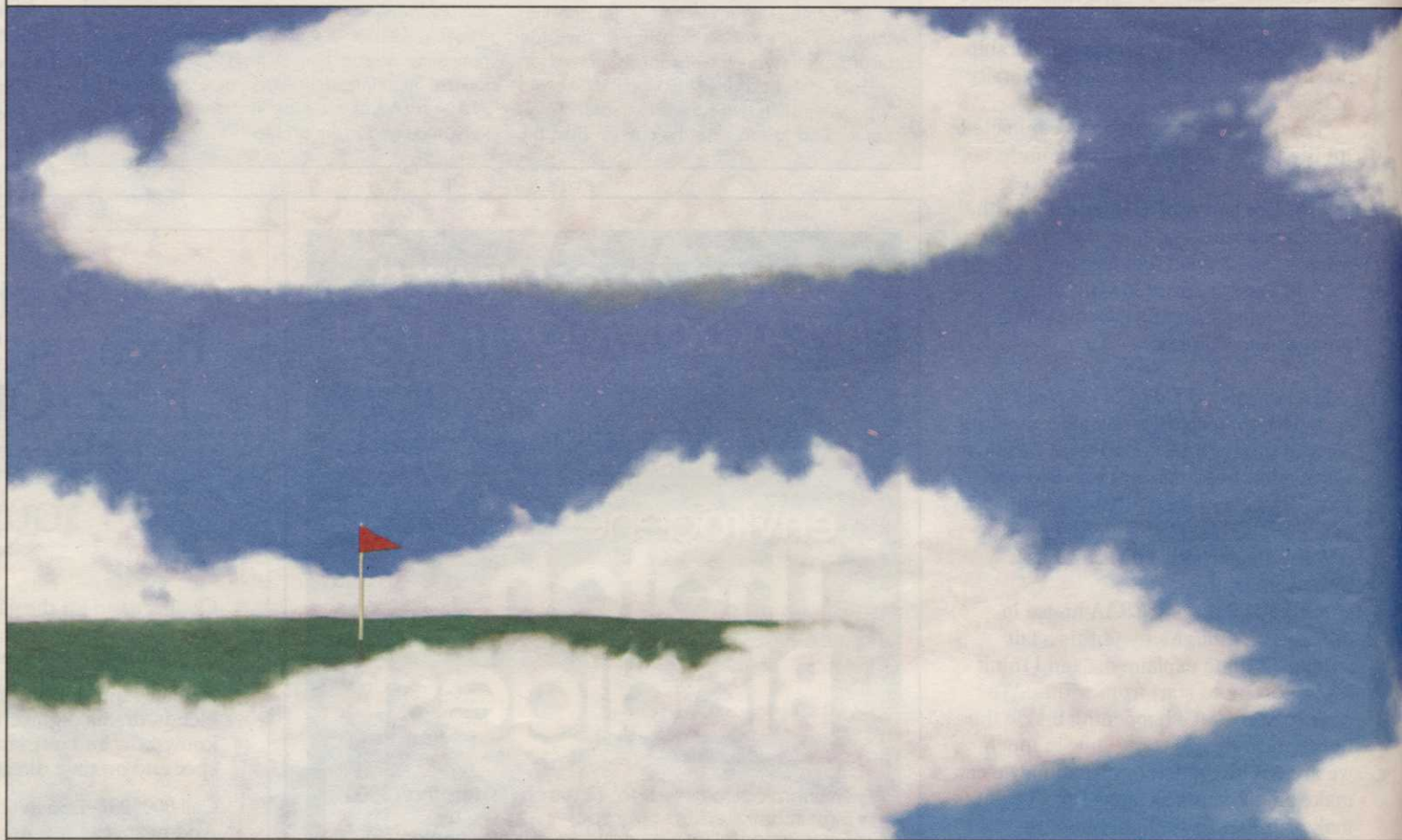
Several people in the know also mentioned GCSAA President Randy Nichols as a likely contender. Nichols and playing partner Dave Powell of Myers Park Country Club in Charlotte, N.C., were among the final-round leaders in last year's tourney in San Diego. On Steele Canyon Golf Club's third hole they had the misfortune of inadvertently putting one another's balls. Both were disqualified.

"You can't talk about who might win the tournament without mentioning Dave Powell. He's won it several times [1985, '88, '89]," said defending champ Richard Stuntz of Alvarado Country Club in Lawrence, Kan.

Stuntz won his first title last year after several near misses. Stuntz plans to play in the Jan. 29 two-player, Best Ball Mixer with neighbor Roger Null (champion in 1983, '90 and '91) of Boone Valley Club near St. Louis.

"Roger's playing real well. He tied for fourth in this summer's U.S. Golf Association Mid-Amateur Championship qualifying round," Stuntz said.

If Powell or Null wins a fourth title, they would move into second in tournament victories. Emil Masciocchi won six championships (1940-41, 1946, 1948-50).



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