

## Nae gaulf on Sundae

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able for conditioning of the links. Golfers placed their demands upon Old Tom, but he maintained his commanding position by proclaiming "nae gaulf on Sundae!"

This was perhaps the first and last time a greenkeeper had such power.

The idea of accepting conditions dealt by fate was as much part of the game as the golf ball and golf club.

Putters were manufactured with varying degrees of loft for putting on greens of multifor-

mity. Golfers were noted for their ability to overcome such conditions. Walter Travis was able to "putt a ball in from 40 feet over peanut brittle." In 1900, James Braid wrote, "Good putting can be learned from hard toil."

The major philosophies of this period were summed up in two quotes from two great golfers.

"You must adjust to the conditions."-Walter Hagen, 1930

"Golf is a religion and it exposes in a man things which ordinarily he is at considerable pains to conceal," said W.J. Travis, circa 1910.

Many golfers had a great insight about changes over the years and knew precisely where to give credit. In 1930, Horton Smith said: "Of course, putting is much better than it used to be. Greens are much truer than they used to be. Golfers can thank greenkeepers for that part of the improvement."

It is certain there was some grumbling about turfgrass condition, and golfers, both amateur and professional, were no doubt disgruntled about playing on crudely or ill-maintained golf courses. During the 1950s and 60s, golf was played by every class of American.

The golfing boom continued on the heels of Arnold Palmer, Jack Nicklaus and the miracle of televised golf. Thousands of people who had never played golf and probably never would have watched television and became enamored and eventually attempted the sport. An entire generation of golfers flooded the courses with little knowledge or awareness of golf's great past.

Looking back at the changes that occurred from 1900 to 1974, we can see changes influenced by developments in technology and the growing numbers of people playing golf. The growth supplied more money for development, research, and better golf course construction technique. Better grasses and methods of construction led to a dramatic increase in turfgrass uniformity and playability.

The definition of a "good" putting surface would be one that was maintained at approximately

3/16 to 1/4 inch, mowed on a regular basis, and was firm, but not too hard.

A note on grain, since it seems to be so misunderstood today. Grain in a putting green is a result of two things: The natural tendency of some grasses is to grow in a prostrate pattern, and the height at which the grass is mowed.

Higher cut bentgrass greens will have a tendency to "lay over," forming a grain that affects the role of the golf ball. Bermudagrass grows aggressively in a lateral habit. Left alone, Bermudagrass can

achieve a high degree of graininess.

Bermudagrass runners must be regularly vertically cut to keep grain to a minimum. Putting greens of this era were naturally grainy and golfers had to adapt to this condition. In 1941, Patty Berg said, "You must make allowances for grain."

Byron Nelson walked all of the greens before a major tournament so he could evaluate the direction of the grain. He would then attempt to hit his shots to that side of the hole which would give him the "with-the-grain" advantage.

It was much easier to putt a golf ball with the grain than against it. Great putters of the day were characterized by their ability to read greens.

Bobby Locke, the great South African golfer, had a superior ability to read the grain in putting greens.

Golfers of this era were ready to accept any playing condition and, in fact, regarded this as an innate part of the game.

**Next month:  
1974-present**

### PHILLY SUPERS CITE HARPER

The Philadelphia Association of Golf Course Superintendents has presented the prestigious Eberhard Steiniger Award to Dr. Jack Harper III, a professor of agronomy and extension turfgrass specialist at Penn State University before his retirement in 1988. An expert in a broad spectrum of turf disciplines, he received the Distinguished Service Award from the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America in 1978.

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