

Golf is healthy, and here's why

We try not to engage in a great deal of golf industry flag-waving here at *Golf Course News* because, basically, there are plenty of people to do it for us. When some media outlet takes a shot at golf, as *Forbes* magazine did in August, the legion golf-industry optimists come out of the woodwork.

Geez, did that *Forbes* article get under people's skin or what? Everyone was talking about it, faxing it to each other, discussing its pros and cons. Indeed, while I commented on the *Forbes* story last month, *GCN* Managing Editor Mark Leslie and National Golf Foundation President and Chief Executive Officer Joseph Beditz weigh in this month (see stories at right).

The article in question was anything but complimentary, of course. However, it's not my opinion that anyone on the *Forbes* staff owes the golf industry an apology. In fact, we owe Steve and the Gang a debt of gratitude. Why? Because criticism like *Forbes'* tends to induce corrective reactions like Leslie's and Beditz'. More important, it tends to result in introspection. Let's face it: That *Forbes* story made a lot of people think about the golf industry and where it's going.

I did. And you know what? Golf is healthy and about to get healthier — a fact illustrated by several developments that have only recently come to light.

As I noted last month, flat participation figures will soon feel the omnipresent influence of the Baby Boomer generation. This is no revelation, but soon there will be so many 50-year-old former peaceniks on the golf course, there won't be enough parking spots for their new BMWs.

What is new? Golf is apparently catching on with Generation X. Yes, if *USA Today's* front-page story (Sept. 13-15) is to be believed, the 18-30 crowd is beginning to see the light with regard to this fine game of ours. For this we have Hootie and the Blowfish front man Darius Rucker and REM bassist Mike Mills to thank. Some young punks may pull out their nose rings when they find out rockers dig golf, but just as many will view the game with a new, more accepting point of view.

Continued on page 30



Hal Phillips,
editor

Leslie study, not exactly scientific, refutes 'Golf-is-sinking' mentality

Can I make a case here? While the folks at *Forbes* magazine and the National Golf Foundation duke it out (opposite page), I did a little microcosmic study of my high school classmates and unearthed a startling fact. If replicated countrywide, this fact would send investors and entrepreneurs scurrying to dump their dough into golf projects. A whopping 40 percent of the men in my Class of 1966 are golfers. That is, when asked their "hobbies and interests," they independently wrote down "golf."

(That was with no arm-twisting from me or old golfing bud Barry Hobert. No one was whispering in their ears, offering free subscriptions to *Golf Course News* or discount rounds of golf at Sugarloaf. No one urged them on with Johnny Carson-like chip-shot swings.)

I realize this is anecdotal evidence, but 40 percent is twice as many as the NGF reports in its latest participation survey of males aged 40-49. An anomaly? Perhaps, but the figure could be higher, still, than 40 percent, because many of the jocks in my class did not respond to the survey.

I called my old pal Jeff Waring, now a stockbroker in Bangor, Maine, and asked him about this. Jeff actually attended Phillips-Andover Academy his last three years, but he was our summertime buddy and our class claimed him as ours (something like Chappaquiddick claiming Teddy Kennedy). Anyhow, Jeff explained: "Our class was different from other classes. Most of the athletes were in the top academic division and were active in everything. Usually a lot of athletes come from the lower divisions. That same group is playing golf. Also, a lot of them are professional people and they, as a whole, are the ones playing golf."

Jeff's explanation would, indeed, belie my findings as having less clout that I thought. But Jeff, I think, is like a lot of guys my age. He quit golf for a number of years — through college and his early upward career climb — then took it back up when he reached his 40s. When did he resume the game? "When my father gave my son some lessons last August and he liked it."

Listen, my research may be anecdotal. But if nothing else, Mr.



Mark Leslie,
managing editor

Continued on page 31

Book Review

By MARK LESLIE

When Ben Crenshaw called it "required reading," that was enough for me. And truly, the first book in the Tillie Trilogy is a treat. Tillie is A.W. Tillinghast, the iconoclastic and brilliant designer of such masterpieces as San Francisco Golf Club and Winged Foot. And the book is "The Course Beautiful."

Fittingly, it is published by Baltusrol members Bob Trebus and brothers Richard and Stuart Wolffe. When researching information for Baltusrol's centennial, they compiled a library on Tillinghast — a wealth of information that has translated into three books. "The Course Beautiful" will be followed in 1997 by "Reminiscences of the Links" about golf in America in the early days and "Gleanings from the Wayside" about Tillie's travels from East to West.

"Tillinghast was a prolific writer — and very funny," said Robert Wolffe, who lives in Florham Park, N.J. "He has some terrific stories, like his times with Old Tom Morris [at St. Andrews Golf Club in Scotland]."

"The Course Beautiful," Richard Wolffe added, "is essentially all Tillie's best essays on golf course



The Black Course at Bethpage State Park, another A.W. Tillinghast design.

design and maintenance and his thoughts on what makes a championship course."

TreeWolf Productions, an enterprise of the Baltusrol trio, published 10,000 copies of "The Course Beautiful."

They should sell fast.

Here we have Tillie, "the dean of American-born golf course architects," on golfers who hate playing out of dunes: "No doubt many of the hazard-shirking fraternity would declare that playing a wayward ball from such places was entirely too difficult.



What utter nonsense!

"There were and are shots that will do it; another generation knew how to play them, and it is not altogether pleasant to think that golfers of today are going soft. Possibly a

bit more of sting in the rod of golf chastisement in these, our modern times, would render it more of an achievement to break par so habitually."

On The Turn: "I was out in 39, but it took me 50 to come home!"

"Then, why didn't you stay out?"

"This wheeze and others like

the well-known Grand Army pun, each honorably ancient, were born at the Turn. In the old days, beyond recall, the halfway house was always located there, not because it happened to be the geographical center of the course, but because it was without a doubt the best place to dispense stimulants, for at the ninth-and-a-half hole elation and depression rose and ebbed to an extent only slightly less than at the 19th."

On the Home Hole: "I like to see the Home hole looming up from the teeing ground in a mighty, impressive way. When a match arrives there on even terms, let that hole reward the courageous. There is more yellow spilled all over the teeing grounds of good Home holes than any other spot on the course."

Loaded with vintage photographs and original Tillinghast sketches, this book is truly a plum ripe to pick for all lovers of the game — especially those interested in course design. Topping them all, Tillie spells out and diagrams his philosophy in building, at the least expense, the sand bunkers for which he became most and lastingly famous.

(Available via the *Golf Course News* Bookshelf: \$34.95)

GOLF COURSE NEWS

THE NEWSPAPER FOR THE GOLF COURSE INDUSTRY

Publisher

Charles E. von Brecht

Editorial Director

Brook Taliaferro

Editor

Hal Phillips

Managing Editor

Mark A. Leslie

Associate Editor

Peter Blais

Editorial Assistant

J. Barry Mothes

Contributing Editors

Terry Buchen, CGCS, MG
Vern Putney

Editorial Advisory Board

Raymond Davies, CGCS
CourseCo
Kevin Downing, CGCS
Willoughby Golf Club
Tim Hiers, CGCS
Collier's Reserve
Dr. Michael Hurdzan
Hurdzan Design Group
Mary P. Knaggs, CGCS
Hazelton National Golf Club
James McLoughlin
The McLoughlin Group
Kevin Ross, CGCS
Country Club of the Rockies
Brent Wadsworth
Wadsworth Construction

Editorial Office

Golf Course News
Box 997, 38 Lafayette Street
Yarmouth, ME 04096
207-846-0600; Fax: 207-846-0657
hphillip@biddeford.com

ADVERTISING OFFICES

National Sales:
Charles E. von Brecht
Box 997, 38 Lafayette Street
Yarmouth, ME 04096
207-846-0600; Fax: 207-846-0657

Western Sales:
Robert Sanner
Western Territory Manager
2141 Vermont
Lawrence, KS 66046
913-842-3969; fax: 913-842-4304

Marketplace Sales:
Diana Costello-Lee
207-846-0600; fax: 207-846-0657

Public Golf Forum Sales
Michael Lafaso
207-846-0600; fax: 207-846-0657

Subscription Information

Golf Course News
P.O. Box 3047
Langhorne, PA 19047
215-788-7112

United Publications, Inc.
Publishers of specialized business and consumer magazines.
Chairman
Theodore E. Gordon
President
J.G. Taliaferro, Jr.



Copyright © 1996 by United Publications, Inc. All rights reserved and reproduction, in whole or in part, without written permission from the publisher is expressly prohibited.

Phillips comment

Continued from page 10

And lest we forget the marketing and plain ol' cultural clout wielded by noted golfaholic Michael Jordan, whose shoe manufacturer has taken to Tiger Woods in a big way (I wonder when he'll sign his first "design" deal). Many credit Woods with golf's emerging popularity with "the kids." However, at this stage of the game, only the golf community hails Tiger as the greatest thing since

sliced bread. The public at-large and, more specifically, the minorities over whom Woods is supposed to hold sway, haven't had time to be impressed. I believe Tiger's impact won't be felt for some time.

It's Nike's influence that is becoming more evident every day. Where Nike goes, so go the fashion lemmings: Golf lines have already been introduced by Armani, Tommy Hilfiger and Ralph Lauren, and Italian designer Mossimo Giannulli plans to come out with a golf

accessory line. Of course, Woods will have his own line of clothing (stripes, perhaps?).

More substantively, golf appears to have made real headway with its elitist image. Public-access golf has carried the day in development circles for some time. Seventy percent of the nation's golf facilities are now open to the public, and nine of every 10 courses under construction can make the same claim.

The icing on the cake is the recent

announcement from the U.S. Golf Association that the 2002 U.S. Open will be held at Bethpage State Park on Long Island, marking the first time the championship will be held at a publicly owned course in the century-long history of the event (see story page 3).

Healthy signs, all.

Now, if we can only get the NBC affiliate here in Portland, Maine, to stop blacking out the U.S. Amateur to show "Cannonball Run II" or "Francis the Talking Mule"...

NGF to Forbes

Continued from page 11

and and cashed out. Frequently those sellers go on to build another course in another location.

The Prospects for Growth

Anyone knowledgeable about the golf business comes away from reading your article wondering how (and why) you could paint such an unrealistically negative picture of the current state of, and future prospects for, the game and business of golf.

Consider the fact that as golfers get older they tend to play more and spend more ... significantly more. The first baby boomer golfers turned 50 this year. They represent the leading edge of an 18-year-long population bubble that will swell the ranks of over 50-year-old golfers. This demographic trend will undoubtedly create a rising tide for golf. And what about after that?

These 78 million baby boomers had 72 million children who, as the last of their parents pass 50, will be passing through their 20s and 30s, which our research shows are the prime years during which most people take up golf. Again, a demographic trend with very positive implications for the golf industry.

Golf, already very accessible, is becoming even more so. At present, 70 percent of America's 15,000-plus golf courses are open to the public... and these numbers are growing.

Almost 90 percent of all new facilities being built today are accessible to any and all golfers. Add to this the progress that has been made by the golf industry in creating a more open environment in the game for women, minorities and those with physical disabilities, as well as the great number of golf learning and family centers that have opened in recent years, and the elements are in place to facilitate the entry into the game of many, many new participants in the years ahead.

In closing, and on behalf of all those who have been equally disturbed by the distorted picture painted by your article, let me say that, in the future, I sincerely hope that anyone at Forbes doing a story on the business of golf will take the time to obtain all the facts and thereby present a better informed view of golf's overall health and growth potential.

Sincerely, Joe Beditz

You want your course to be a perfect showplace. Your reputation is built on it. Which is exactly why your disease control program should start with BAYLETON® Turf and Ornamental Fungicide for rock solid control of the toughest turf diseases. Including summer patch, dollar spot and anthracnose.

BAYLETON is the fungicide superintendents have turned to for over 15 years. And for good reason. With its broad-spectrum control and long residual, they know they can apply it throughout the season to control 15 of the toughest turf diseases.

That's why BAYLETON should be the corner-

stone of your disease management program.

Tank-mix BAYLETON with ProStar® for enhanced control of brown patch. Or include Daconil® in your tank-mix to control leaf spot. And add Subdue® to BAYLETON to tackle Pythium. With BAYLETON in your tank, not only will you be able to control these diseases, but you'll also get unsurpassed control of course-threatening diseases like summer patch, dollar spot and anthracnose.

No other fungicide offers as much versatility. In addition to giving you numerous tank-mixing options, you can also treat ornamentals to get outstanding control of powdery mildew, rust



Summer Patch



Dollar Spot



Anthracnose



BEFORE YOU CAN PUT YOUR COURSE ON A PEDESTAL, YOUR FUNGICIDE PROGRAM NEEDS A FOUNDATION.