

Superintendents Study Turf and People at Big Meet

By HERB GRAFFIS

PEOPLE shared top-rating with turfgrass on the program of the 26th National conference of the Golf Course Superintendents' Assn. The superintendents' gathering at St. Louis Jan. 16-21 drew approximately 900 course authorities from the U. S., Canada, Mexico, Hawaii, Guam and England.

Turfgrass development and maintenance problems got a broad range of expert treatment but at this conference there was far more consideration given the human side of course operations than in any of the 25 previous meetings.

Frankly presented was the aspect of golf clubs not being up to modern conditions as employers. There has been an undercurrent of thought along that line, among club officials as well as department heads.

Welfare and retirement plans, which private, semi-private, and public courses have had to buck in competing for capable help, rarely appear in golf operations. Department heads, generally having kindly and loyal attachments to club membership, haven't thought much about their own employment "fringe benefits" as compared with those now becoming general in industry. But when they try to hire desirable employees and can't compete with hospitalization and pension security common in other businesses the club department chiefs have received blunt reminders that they'd better modernize.

Club managers especially have had to contend with the problem, combined with unionization which has had, in some cases,

dishwashers in clubhouses receiving pay about equal to that of course supts.

Talk Plain About Workers' Security

James D. Fogertey, PGA vp and chairman of that association's insurance committee, brought the subject out in the open in his remarks on department head cooperation at golf clubs.

Thomas C. McGuffey, pres., Club Managers' Assn. of America, gave further impetus to wider establishment of club employees' welfare and pension set-ups when he followed Fogertey on the departmental co-operation theme.

At a luncheon given by GCSA Pres. Norman C. Johnson, McGuffey, Harry Moffitt, PGA president, Johnson and Wm. Beresford, incoming head of the superintendents' association, agreed to appoint representatives from each of the three organizations to explore benefit plans and prepare a report for consideration of golf club officials who are, in many cases, well aware of the urgent necessity of taking action on employee security in order to retain control of employment on a sound basis.

Study Maintenance Records

Compilation of records with the practical objective of controlling costs of golf

Robert Williams, supt., Beverly CC, Chicago dist., named supt's. representative to serve on joint committee of PGA, GCSA and CMAA to study retirement benefit plans.



NEW OFFICERS OF GCSA FOR 1955

The above officers including three holdover directors were elected at recent St. Louis Turfgrass Conference to head up the GCSA for 1955. They are: (L to R) seated, John Gormley, Wolfert's Roost CC, Newtonville, N. Y., dir.; Ward Cornwell, Lochmoor CC, Grosse Pointe, Mich., v-pres.; Wm. Beresford, Los Angeles (Calif.) CC, pres.; Agar Brown, secy-treas.; Paul Weiss, Lehigh CC, Emmaus, Pa., dir.; standing, James Thomas, Army-Navy CC, Arlington, Va., dir.; Earl S. Bell, Armour Fields CC, Kansas City, Mo., dir.; Frank Dunlap, The CC, Chagrin Falls, Ohio, dir.; and Donald Strand, Westmoreland CC, Chicago dist., dir. Dunlap, Strand and Thomas are new directors.

to its players was another program feature.

Other subjects sharply directing conference formal and informal discussions on the individual golfers included the growing use of golf cars. The consensus was that the cars are here to stay and themselves didn't present serious maintenance problems but that careless or uninformed or bullheaded drivers were the sources of the car misuse trouble and expense.

Superintendents also reported, in numerous small confabs on operating problems and their solutions, an epidemic of what agronomist James R. Watson has identified as "kids' disease," senseless vandalism on golf courses committed by mentally defective kids.

Pres. Johnson got the formal program under way in introducing Wm. H. Bryant, Pres., Witte Hardware Co. and Pres., St. Louis Convention and Business Assn. Bryant paid tribute to the work the supts. were doing for improved and efficient maintenance of their courses in their convention sessions.

He reminded the course authorities that the courses themselves couldn't do all the selling job for them as acts of providence and other mysteries might afflict courses, hence it was essential that each superin-

tendent discreetly acquaint golfers with the fact that the supt. worked at a complex and puzzling occupation.

A tough part of the superintendents' work was, observed Bryant, that any mistakes or bad temper of Mother Nature in golf course maintenance, appeared out in the open, whereas the troubles of executives in other businesses usually were comparatively private.

Mrs. Edgar M. Brungard, Chmn., St. Louis recreation commission, lauded the work of Vertus Mitchell, Supt., Forest Park's 27-holes of munny golf, in a tremendous job of rehabilitating and improving this heavily-used and run-down layout. She detailed some of the work Mitchell already had done in pushing what originally was a 5-year plan of reconstruction and improvement so it appears the program will be completed inside three years without undue interference with play.

This attractive and energetic executive also lauded the job done by Leo S. Bauman, veteran greens committeeman of the St. Louis district, in his capacity as Chmn., Citizens' Golf Committee. She urged that any city needing increased interest and efficiency in public golf establish a Citizens' committee.

Transcripts of convention addresses will appear in GOLFDOM as space permits.

Supt., Pro, Managers In Team

Constructive cooperation between club department heads and officials was handled in detail by Jim Fogertey, representing the PGA; Tom McGuffey, Club Managers Assn. of America, Pres.; Ward Cornwell, representing the GCSA, and the veteran J. Porter Henry, many years

jobs. Each job has its headaches that must be prevented, eased or cured by the men the golfers hire for handling all problems.

The brisk and durable Henry reminded the operating department chiefs that club officials also had plenty of problems—and without pay. They expect smooth coordination from department heads, along with information to enable officials to perform their duties with a minimum of misery and a maximum of results. Henry said that cooperation between superintendents in the St. Louis district had been tremendously profitable to clubs in getting and keeping golf turf despite a multitude of natural handicaps.

Ethan Kirkhart, Youngstown (O) CC presided at the Wednesday morning session. Charles G. Wilson, Western Regional Director, USGA Green section, summarized the session and handled the Questions and Answers wind-up.

Gordon Brinkworth, Brookwood CC, Addison, Ill.; Beryl S. Taylor, Iowa State College GC, Ames, Ia.; and James E. Thomas, Army-Navy CC, Arlington, Va., collaborated in a symposium on records as the basis of golf course business management.

Jobs for the Records

These three, each successfully experienced in the use of records, advocated:

Records must be simple, so they'll be easily, accurately and adequately kept;

Records must be such that they'll tell the story not only to the supt., but to his chairman and other officials;

Records must give details of major maintenance jobs so the log may be consulted in appraising significant factors in the work as the results are studied;

Records must be signals as well as reports.

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Exhibitors enjoyed lively interest of supts. and club officials at recent St. Louis show.

Green-Chmn., Algonquin CC (St. Louis dist.) and member of the USGA Green Section.

The department heads all recommended that it be a rule at each club to have the supt., pro and manager meet at lunch at regular intervals to exchange ideas and observations, frankly and without interruptions. They freely conceded that no golf department ever could be so perfect it couldn't make welcome use of tips co-operating department heads had picked up.

Failure to get departmental teamwork at golf clubs, these three qualified authorities said, was primarily due to lack of basic understanding of the other fellows'



St. Louis supts. did excellent job of entertaining and arranging transportation for visiting members and guests at the 26th annual GCSA Turfgrass Conference and Show. Group above is shown U-30 Bermuda planting on 18th fairway, Westwood CC, during tour of golf courses in St. Louis area.

SUPTS. STUDY TURF

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Noer Tells of Supts' Ingenuity

O. J. Noer, the widely-travelled sales engineer of the Milwaukee Sewerage Commission in an address with many interesting slides showed how the ingenuity of course superintendents had produced methods and equipment to correct troublesome situations. Noer's coverage of the pioneering devices showed remarkable resourcefulness and versatility of men in charge of courses.

Stan Graves, Colin Smith, Nelson Monical, Carl Springer, Earl Yesberger and Charles Winch put on two of the Cleveland superintendents' "Little Theatre" sketches, one showing the right and wrong ways of a superintendent handling complaints about the course, and the other of a superintendent in an annual report session with his chairman and the green committee.

Handling the Kickers

The presentations were not too far from life. The kicks of high-scoring golfers were handled by a greenkeeper who asked for critics to "pop for a drink", then told them their complaints were simply because they were poor golfers. The right way was that of the superintendent who went over the maintenance details involved in the complaints, told the whys and wherefores and made it plain that he was doing his competent best.

That act concluded with one of the critics saying "I never realized taking care of a golf course was such a complicated job. Maybe this man should have more money." That curtain line drew thunderous applause.

In the report sketch the chairman and supt. went over the course hole by hole, and the grounds, in telling what work had been done and what new work seemed to be advisable.

Showmanship on Course

One point that was brought out as fine showmanship for the supt. and the committee was reference to a test strip of various fairway grasses and treatments, put in across a fairway about 200 yds. from a green.

Henry Elmer, Indian Hills CC, Kansas City, Mo., was chairman of the Thursday a.m. session. Alexander M. Radko, Northeastern Regional Director, USGA Green Section, summarized the session and presided over the Q&A period which gave the speakers a second time on the tee.

Dr. Frank Howard, head of the department of plant pathology-entomology at the University of Rhode Island, in speaking of grass diseases, said the demand for greater specialization and finer golf turf accounts for more diseases.

Disease Identification First

Now, when new diseases — or old ones that are more prevalent — are properly identified, new chemical treatments can be effectively used. He told of conditions favoring development of grass diseases and the necessity of constant vigilance, revision of maintenance practice and prompt control after the disease is accurately identified.

W. H. Daniel, agronomy dept., Purdue University, told of promise in his experiments in control of poa annua with arsenicals. Daniel said lead arsenate control of poa annua could be tried on a small and cautious scale by superintendents but that experience at Purdue disclosed so many puzzling factors, especially in the relationship between lead arsenate and phosphorous, definite recom-

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AN ORCHID BETWEEN TWO TURFS

Dee Sanderson, representing St. Louis, Mo., convention bureau, learns from outgoing GCSA president Norman Johnson, Jacksonville, Fla., (L) and his successor William Beresford, Santa Monica, Calif., that samples of highly developed turfgrass held by the two gentlemen have a value about equal to that of the orchid she holds. Authority for this statement is the new GCSA prexy Beresford who is past pres. of the Hollywood Horticultural Society and a director of the So. Calif. Horticultural Institute.

mentations could not be made at this time.

Bluegrass Still Cool No. 1

Prof. Harvey L. Lantz of Iowa State college in reviewing cool season grasses (bluegrass, fescue and bent) expressed the conviction that bluegrass has performed better than any other fairway grass in territory where winters may be long and hard. He showed slides of turf on which he based his judgment.

The northern season isn't warm enough long enough to warrant much future for the zoysias or Bermuda, he said. For short cutting the bents have the call in the cool season regions, Lantz noted.

Lantz remarked that the color and good condition of bluegrass can be well maintained during July and August with heavy soakings of water at proper periods.

There may eventually be other fairway grasses having all-around superiority to bluegrass in the cool weather area, the Iowa turf authority conceded, but up to now bluegrass has proved to be the sturdiest fairway turf and with chemical weed elimination treatment, the most generally satisfactory and economical. He stressed that most fairway maintenance practices in the northern part of the country had been based on bluegrass and if other grass was desired maintenance procedures would have to be modified to favor the kind of grass wanted.

The Thursday afternoon session on Turfgrass maintenance in the southern climate was conducted by George Lanphear, supt., Riviera CC, Pacific Palisades, Calif. The first speaker, Dr. James Watson, Chief Agronomist, Toro Mfg. Corp., emphasized the M-A-N part of management as vital to production of high quality turfgrass in the South but the real problem confronting this area where golf is more or less a year around game, is the inherent limitation of any one species or strain of grass to produce satisfactory turf throughout the year. This situation can be resolved only through a two grass system.

A review of the progress made in the improvement of special purpose turfgrass was outlined by Dr. J. C. Harper, II, Research Agronomist, USDA, Beltsville, Md.

The subject of plant nutrition was most ably covered in the concluding session of the conference, Friday morning under Chairman George Prieskorn, supt., Burroughs Farms CC, Brighton, Mich. Dr. Frank A. Crane, Univ. of Ill., with the use of slides, made the complex subject of how plants use nitrogen, phosphorous and potash a simple one for all to understand.

Other papers by Dr. W. Albrecht, Univ. of Mo. and Prof. H. B. Musser, Penn State on "The Living Soil," and "Getting the Most Out of Fertilizer," will appear in the March issue of Golfdom.



ENGLISH, NEW IGA EXECUTIVE

John P. English has been named new executive secretary of the International Golf Association with offices at 445 Park Ave., New York City. Appointment of English, formerly assistant executive director of the USGA and an ex-newspaperman from Boston, to the key spot was announced by John Jay Hopkins, founder and head of the IGA.