

Beauty Overlooked, Distance Overstressed, in Course Building

Frank Sirianni, superintendent at Sewickley Heights (Pittsburgh area) and new vp of the GCSA of Western Pennsylvania, recently gave his views on the rapidly rising cost of course maintenance. In an interview with Ray Kienzl of the Pittsburgh Press, Sirianni explained why he believes some designers have helped to raise the cost of maintenance by using built-in bottlenecks and tricked-up courses.. He also said that players' demands for high quality turf have helped send maintenance costs spiraling.

In commenting on costs, Sirianni estimates an average of from \$3500 to \$4000 is spent yearly for tee-to-green maintenance of each hole. He figures that it costs a club between \$63,000 and \$70,000 a year in overall maintenance, with half of this going for wages. Sirianni says, "Ten years or so ago it took only six men to maintain a course, but all they did was cut the grass. Now it takes between 12 and 16 men because the golfers demand such a fine course. A course not only has to be cut, it has to be aerated, sprayed and fertilized. Golfers like a short-cut fairway, usually a half inch, and this makes the grass more susceptible to disease. We have bent grass on greens, fairways and tees. And these take plenty of fertilizer, fungicides and insecticides. Chemicals run as high as \$6 a pound."

Build Them Too Long

"Too much emphasis is placed on length. If this trend continues the average golf car will need two more batteries or a 10-gallon tank. Clubs will be charging mileage rental fees," Sirianni says. He points out that while he feels architects are overlooking beauty and stressing distance, he is not rapping the golf course designers. He feels, though, that present mechanized equipment, limited hours of maintenance, and the high cost of estab-

lishing and grooming the turf for today's golfers are not considered or met by present construction.

Sirianni says, "Greens should be built and rebuilt according to the contours of existing landscaping with plenty of room for moving flags and tee markers." He points out that "... most tees are square and long and are often high banked. These require hand mowing and take time." In many cases, Sirianni believes, tees could be shaped in semi-circles, horse shoes or a T, thus placing the golfer in a different position for his shot.

"A course should be built with an eye toward maintenance," says Sirianni. "Trees in areas which must be mowed should not be too close together. Swampy areas should be drained. A pond that is to be used for watering the course should not be a water hazard."

Hidden holes, short doglegs, flat greens and square tees aren't a fair test of golf and do nothing to bring out the beauty of a golf hole. The golfer who stays his shot should be penalized, but when the shot is played accurately he should be in a position to score."

The Sewickley Heights supt. feels that when a course is being built, an architect should consider the membership. He says, "There are many beginners now and I'm afraid these long, difficult courses may discourage many of them." Sirianni believes that, "a golf hole should be sporty and challenging and beautifully landscaped for the membership who play it and not for Arnie Palmer or Jack Nicklaus, who will probably never play it."

North Calif. Turfgrass Exposition

The first annual Northern Calif. Turfgrass Exposition will be held April 1-3 at the Santa Clara County Fairgrounds in San Jose. It is sponsored by the Northern Calif. Turfgrass Council.

Named NCA Directors

Jerome F. Healy, Jr., president of the New York Athletic Club (NYC), and Icer Malouf, president of the Lakeside Golf Club of Hollywood (Calif.), have been named directors of the National Club Association.