

Course superintendent honored by pros

Gene Comely, Firestone C. C. crew presented scroll signed by field in American Classic.

Greens superintendents are usually regarded as "the enemy" by tournament golfers. But Gene Comely of Akron's Firestone C.C. is an exception.

During the 1965 American Golf Classic, Comely was presented a large poster signed by all entrants thanking him for the fine condition of the course.

There are many reasons why Firestone, annual site of the Classic and World Series and next year the PGA, is a favorite with tournament players. Comely is one of the reasons.

Writers at the Classic were amazed at the pros' voluntary testimonial and unable to recall a similar incident anywhere on the tour.

The presentation was the idea of Jay Hebert, who suggested it to PGA press secretary Doc Giffin.

Doc had Hebert's sentiments lettered on a five-foot high cardboard poster:

"To the Firestone Country Club Ground Crew:

"We want you to know how we

appreciate the marvelous condition in which you have the golf course for us in this tournament. It is obvious that you and your crew worked many long hours and days in bringing the course to such peak condition and we want you and your men to know how much we appreciate it. Thanks so much for making at least that part of our week here in Akron so enjoyable."

The poster was signed with colorful magic markers by about 100 of the tournament participants. It now hangs in the Firestone clubhouse where members can see what the world's most critical audience thinks of their course and ground crew.

"I've complained enough about courses I didn't like. I thought it was time to do something about the ones I do like," said Hebert. And he said it after a disappointing round of 78.

Firestone members play all year under the same conditions the pros enjoy at

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Bob Watson Named Pro at New Course

Robert L. Watson, well-known Westchester, N. Y., professional, has been named head pro at the new Fountain Valley Golf Course on St. Croix, U. S. Virgin Islands. The course, designed by Robert Trent Jones and now being constructed on a 330-acre tract in the northwest sector of the island by Laurance and David Rockefeller, will be ready for play early in 1966.

Watson is currently head professional at Wykagyl Country Club in New Rochelle, N. Y. Formerly he held similar positions at the Fairview Country Club, Elmsford, N. Y., Ardsley Country Club in Ardsley, and the Metropolis Country Club in White Plains.

FIRESTONE

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tournament time.

"It's maintained the same the year round," said Comely, "except that we honor the PGA request to let the rough grow a little longer at tournament time."

Firestone roughs are lush. They get fertilizer, aerification and water the same as the fairways.

Comely, 55, has been with Firestone since 1934 and heads a full-time ground crew of 18. The crew works in two shifts, 6 a.m. to 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. to 3 a.m. or longer if necessary.

"We have 600 members and the only way to keep the course in play is to do much of the work at night," Comely says. "All mowing and watering of fairways and the application of fertilizers and fungicides is done at night."

"Greens and tees are mowed and sand traps raked the first thing in the morning."

Firestone's greens particularly are praised by the pros. Comely says their condition is not the result of any special formula. It's just constant attention that keeps them letter-perfect.

The greens are a combination of Seaside and Nimisilla bent, the latter having been added when the greens were enlarged for the 1960 PGA. Commercial fertilizer is used.