



Mergers: A sign of the times

Think leisure and tune in to tomorrow's potential

Recently, one of the country's leading newspapers pointed out that the initial leading to corporate merger often takes place in such unlikely places as an airline terminal, luncheon club, steam bath or on the golf course. It comes as no surprise to those associated with golf that the course is a good place to begin planning a corporate merger.

This role for the golf course may not be a new one, and it's more than a now-and-then proposition. More important to the golf industry, or to be more accurate, the leisure industry, mergers and acquisitions are not only being discussed within the precincts of golf, but are taking place inside the industry itself.

Whether corporate marriages in golf are taking place at the same rate as corporate mergers throughout the country is difficult to assess. A Chicago consulting firm that specializes in mergers and acquisitions has been keeping score on the business marriage statistics and says that in 1968 there were about 4,200 proposals with only about 300 failing to make it to altar.

Business realignments are taking place within golf. They are happening to such a degree and in such numbers that it becomes more and more necessary to think in industrywide terms and begin to realize we must talk of golf as a segment of the leisure industry. We will probably all have to make the adjustment to calling our industry by that name. Just as the old-fashioned title of greenskeeper was replaced

by the current superintendent because the character of the job required a name that would more fully describe what was going on, so does it require that leisure fit into the vocabulary of golf-associated people as the character of our game takes on this view.

The leisure industry, of which golf is so important a part, has been no exception to the uniting of businesses. For the active, day-to-day operative such as a pro, manager or superintendent what do these realignments mean?

Let's look at one instance of a merger that was cooking and where the pot got to boil but for some reason, unknown to the general public, the stew never got cooked.

In September of last year it was announced that Kearney National of New York and Jacobsen Manufacturing Company of Racine, Wisc., were getting together. Of interest in this deal to golf people would have been what the merger meant to Jacobsen. This firm supplies a large amount of machinery and through its subsidiary, Kansas-based Rogers-Jacobsen, heavy equipment such as spikers, aerifiers, sweepers and utility vehicles.

Both companies got to the altar and suddenly the marriage was called off. Neither Jacobsen nor Kearney National disclosed any reason for the cancelled nuptials.

This, however, has not always been the case for the golf industry. Many are aware that Miami-based Ernie Sabayrac, a supplier of golf equipment and apparel to a great

many of the country's pro shops, has joined forces with David Crystal, Inc., of New York City.

The merger from many angles is a natural for both. Sabayrac and Crystal are companies that pioneered much of what has been done in the golf apparel field. The merger is viewed by industry experts as one that will help pros do a better and more profitable job in their shops. From all vantage points this seems almost a certainty. The joining of two companies that so complement each other will strengthen both and enable the united firm to do a stronger job of aiding the pro. Results of this marriage have to be a benefit for club pros everywhere.

Of equal importance to the golf scene was the uniting of Acushnet and Golfcraft. On the date the merger was announced Ted Wooley, Golfcraft president said, "The merger brings together several ingredients we feel offer unique benefits to the golf professional and consumer as well. The combination of our products and technical know-how with Acushnet's broad marketing experience and resources will be an exciting one." He might well have added it will also be one that sees great benefits accruing to the club professionals.

One immediate consequence of the merger was the announcement that Golfcraft would begin phasing itself out of that part of its business that was not pro-only. Since 1935 Acushnet has operated on a pro-only basis and has stated its

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Understanding and using fertilizers

By Joseph M. Duich

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One would be inclined to think that a basic understanding of most routine turf maintenance practices should not be too hard for a turf expert to come by. Not so! Fertilizer use continues to plague and confuse many, and perhaps the greatest amount of confusion is generated by the belief that fertilizing programs can and should be standardized. The net result of this kind of thinking has been oversimplification of the subject without accompanying development of good practices.

Not only does oversimplification set in, but following right on its heels is an additional error—the concept that fertilizers can be depended on to solve most turf problems. This misconception leads to much abuse in the use of soil nutrients rather than leading to their use as the valuable tool they can be.

In all probability the only area of agreement among experts regarding fertilizers is reached on the point that they are necessary to keep turf healthy enough for continuous golfing. On the other hand, disagreement is almost universal regarding fertilizer's effectiveness, rates, timing, material, brand, ratio and soil testing, and the disagreement is further complicated by nature of the geographic area under discussion.

The importance of good fertilizer use techniques is pointed up by the often too true fact that fertilizers are blamed for just about every major calamity that occurs on turf and many of the minor calamitous occurrences.

To bear this out one need only recall past instances of turf losses that were classed as winter problems due to disease, ice and desiccation, or high temperature and humidity at the other extreme. For the super these losses prove embarrassing when it appears that they are worsened by increased fertilizer use. And it becomes particularly discouraging (and often creates an uneasy feeling regarding the super's continued employment) when the glorified cow pasture course down the road appears to be unscathed by whatever is tearing up your pea patch.

Fertilizer quantity use per unit area has steadily increased since the early fifties, but the factors that have contributed to this evolution are obscured. Although what has gone into making this increasing use of fertilizer is not too well understood (by me as well) certain factors are evident.

At the top of the list must be the ever-increasing usage demand placed on golf courses. Use pressure and other associated less prominent factors are rapidly bringing many courses to the point where they may be placed beyond the pale of being biologically manageable.

Not only are total rounds of golf up beyond most expectations, but they are being played throughout the year, without regard to the consequences.

In addition, the impact of golf cars, women and junior golfers has also become a factor in this unmanageability. As a matter of course, turf stimulation through fertilizer application and associated watering has been adjudged the answer to these artificially created problems, problems that cannot be tended by nature in her own due time. This has put the super in a vulnerable position.

Climate, soil, management and use are the major factors contributing to successful turf culture. The first and last are always con-

sidered the most unpredictable variables requiring great attention and many safeguards. Most competent superintendents are optimistic about them to the point of believing they can cope with them if given the necessary resources. However, few members, owners, professionals and superintendents realize that it is becoming less and less possible for the super to manage the turf successfully.

Expanded budgets and improved techniques are misleading many supers into thinking they are successfully dealing with their turf problems when in fact they are not and in some instances are even mistaking what these problems may be.

The introduction of rotary spreaders and granulated fertilizing materials have increased the efficiency of fertilizer applications. Time and labor have been reduced up to 80 per cent. Agronomically speaking these newer techniques have decided advantages. The danger of foliar burning encountered when more soluble materials are used has been reduced and more important the new techniques have given better control of general fertility status.

Observations and research are providing continuous information related to basic fertilization programs. Improvements in the method of nutrient analysis and inter-

"It becomes particularly discouraging when the glorified cow pasture course down the road appears to be unscathed by whatever is tearing up your pea patch."



Fertilizing and planting in 1919. We've come a long way.

pretation have proven a giant step forward, though not yet complete. The adoption of the cation exchange capacity method in soil tests to assess soil's ability to hold nutrients and measure their balance is increasing. These techniques are leading to a change in nutrient ratios in fertilizers, and from a practical point of view they help break the habit of applying the same materials in the same amounts annually for want of something better to do. As an instance, recent attention to potash and magnesium deficiencies is paying dividends in better turf conditions under seasonal stress.

Limited use of research and pressure for any result when there is an absence of observable growth or color response often leads to the ignoring of nutrients other than nitrogen which is undoubtedly why nitrogen gets the big play it does. It should be

recognized that nitrogen is too often the overriding element in fertilizer programs. As a result it creates a substantial portion of supers' problems, regardless of its general value. The heart of many fertilizer puzzlers is nitrogen due to its vast foliar effect. Extensive use of nitrogen may have a detrimental effect for any number of reasons.

Probably the most negative effect comes from its use to force necessary growth under conditions where natural growth is seriously limited, especially when there has been a judicious use of water. Increased course activity and rolling over the turf with heavier maintenance equipment also have their toll on the soil and adversely effect growing ability. To combat this, corrective measures should be taken constantly. On the other hand pros know that there is a general attitude that dislikes playing a course

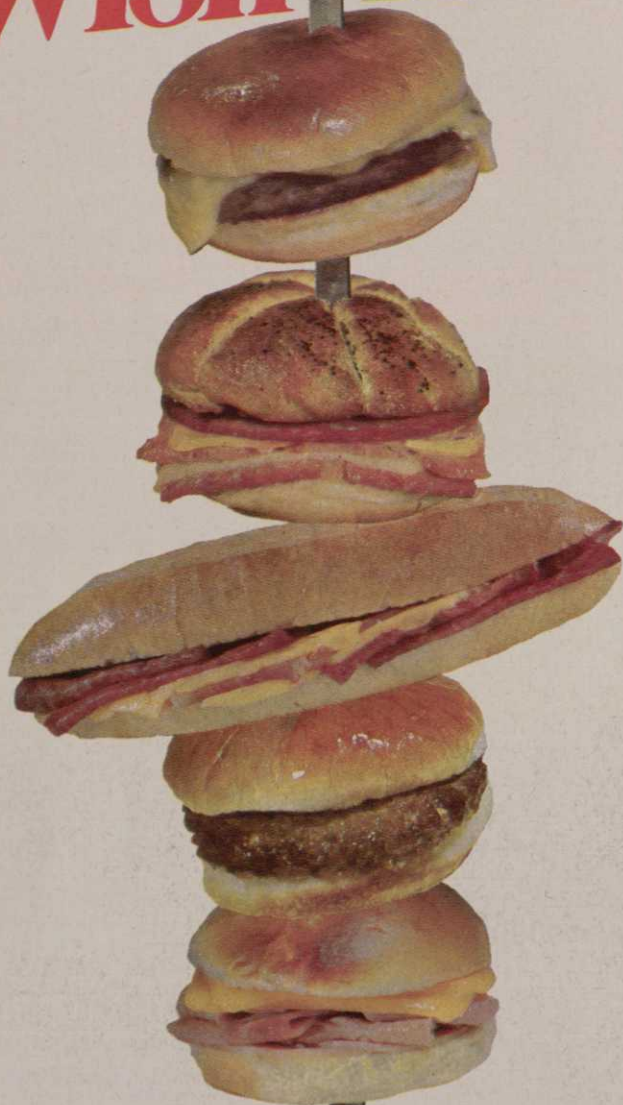
following aerification, grooving, spiking and topdressing. Supers find they must curtail such practices and employ less effective methods.

It must also be appreciated that maintenance practices of five years ago are no longer as effective as they might have once been. This is most certainly true where golf cars are used extensively; without much thought to the damage they might do to turf. They also diminish the effectiveness of fertilizers, although what this may be and to what degree it occurs is difficult to ascertain.

Golf turf is unique because it practically stands alone as an example of mass ecological change. (Ecology is the response of plants to their environment.) We have seen changes take place in a decade that ordinarily take hundreds of years to occur in nature. The prime change has involved the establishment of a specifically

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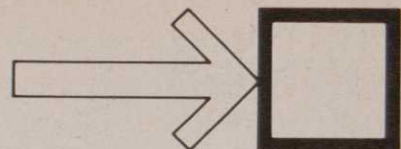


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COMING EVENTS

- Club Managers Assn. of America Conference**, Dallas, Texas, February 11-15.
- Three-Day Turf Courses**, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey; law and utility turf, February 17-19; golf and fine turf, February 19-21.
- Cornell Turfgrass Conference**, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, February 24-27.
- Southern Turfgrass Assn. Annual Turfgrass Conference**, Sheraton-Peabody Hotel, Memphis, Tennessee, March 2-4.
- Midwest Regional Turf Conference**, Purdue University, Lafayette, Indiana, March 3-5.
- Annual Fine Turf Conference**, High Point Motor Inn, Chicopee, Massachusetts, March 5-7.
- Rocky Mt. Management Seminar**, Pinehurst CC, Littleton, Colorado, March 10.
- 34th Annual Iowa Turfgrass Conference**, Hotel Roosevelt, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, March 10-12.
- Michigan Turfgrass Conference**, Kellogg Center, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan, March 12-13.
- Northern California Turfgrass Exposition**, Santa Clara County Fairgrounds, San Jose, California, March 14-20.
- University of Maine Mid Winter Turf Conference**, Steer Inn Motor Lodge, S. Portland, Maine, March 19-20.
- Eighth Annual Chicago Golf Show**, Sheraton-Chicago Hotel, Chicago, Illinois, April 21.
- Georgia Golf Course Superintendents Assn. Meeting**, Callaway Gardens, Pine Mountain, Georgia, May 13.
- National Hardware Show**, Coliseum, New York, New York, September 29-October 2.

GOLFDOM would like to publish a complete and accurate Coming Events calendar. If your organization or association is planning a meeting, please notify us as far in advance of the event as possible. Send the information to: GOLFDOM, 235 East 45th Street, New York, N.Y. 10017.



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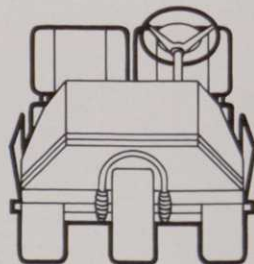
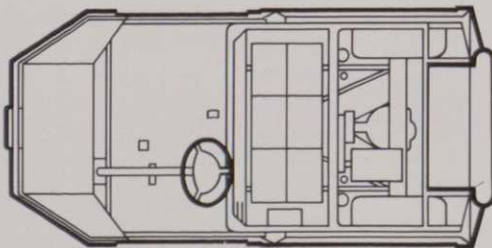
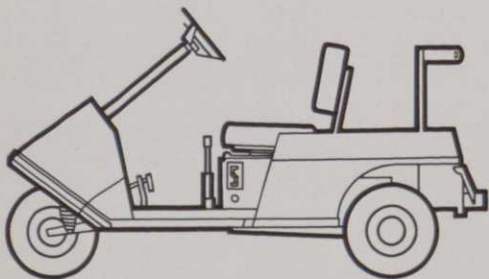
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CMAA

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This year's conference will gather data about today's manager, offer training aids, run an idea booth, and hold a dance. So bring your pencil, your glasses, your wits and your tuxedo

Although the largest attendance in the history of the Club Managers' Assn. of America is expected (about 1,500, 800 of whom will be managers), the previously announced project to profile the typical club manager will not be part of this year's 42nd Annual Conference which meets at the Statler-Hilton in Dallas, February 11 to 15. The reason, according to CMAA officials, is the belief that only those managers who perform at an unusually high level will be attending the conference. Thus, an accurate picture of the typical manager will be impossible. CMAA officials hope to get the project rescheduled and programmed later in the spring.

Despite this setback the Day of Statistics, scheduled for February 14, will take place. The CMAA will ask some 150 questions of the managers attending, classify the information gleaned into four general areas—professional backgrounds, employment practices, educational activities and social habits. A box with three dials

marked A, B, C will be in clear view for the expected 500 to 600 members of that day's audience with terminals connected to the box through which managers will register answers to questions posed. For example, the following question might be asked: If your salary is \$20,000 a year or more, press when letter A is called; if \$15,000 to \$19,000 press when B is called; if under \$15,000 press when letter C is called.

Tabulation with this system, says the CMAA guiding spirits, will be immediate, and managers would be able to take away from the conference any information they may want for the future.

This event will run a full day; country club managers will be queried in the morning, town club managers in the afternoon.

In addition to the statistical survey there will be a training aid center and an idea booth opened to those not being questioned. The training aid center will show a selection of slides that the manager may order for his club. A

list of all the topics available will be provided.

No meetings will be scheduled on opening day, which will enable managers to arrange their own business meetings, if they wish. The formal program will begin on February 12 with the basic theme, Transitions in Leadership.

The other days will be filled with talks and seminars. Don Fuller, author of "Manage or Be Managed," will be the main speaker and will open the conference with the topic, Transitions in Management. Dr. Robert Beck, dean of the Hotel School at Cornell University, will be the featured speaker at a luncheon and will talk on Operation Breakthrough. This talk will be a projection of what the club management industry will be like in the year 2000. Mr. Fuller will close the afternoon session with the talk, How to Reduce the Risk in Decision-Making.

Seven seminars, each one hour long, will be the next day's activities; each will be repeated four times. □

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