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8/74 GOLFDOM MAGAZINE 41

The New Superintendent

By RICK SAWYER, ProTurf Division, O. M. Scott & Sons

There's no way to pin down a date, but somewhere along the line, golf course members and management began to realize that the quality of play on their course was a direct result of the efforts of one man: the golf course superintendent.

As one superintendent pointed out, "You can have a golf course without a clubhouse . . . you can have a golf course without a pro . . . but you can't have a golf course without grass."

And with that strikingly apparent observation, one by one, courses from coast to coast and on both sides of the Mason-Dixon line, are beginning to demonstrate a new respect for the superintendent. An attitude of professionalism has come into being where it never existed before. More and more, the superintendent is being appreciated as a manager, a man of science. Gone are the days of coveralls and drafty barns. The superintendent is taking his place alongside the golf pro and the clubhouse manager in sharing the responsibility of running the course.

Of course, this new stature isn't gained overnight. Nor, in fact, has it made inroads in every golf course . . . not by a long shot. But it is happening. And a look at six top superintendents from across the country will give some insight into why the superintendent has gained respect in the eyes of his management and his membership . . . and why he deserves that respect.

Thirty-five miles south of San Francisco, along the rocky northern California coast lies one of the newest, one of the most dramatically scenic golf courses in the country: Half Moon Bay Golf Links.

With a spectacular view of the Pacific Ocean and a layout to rival the most challenging in golf, it isn't too surprising that Half Moon Bay is frequently compared with Pebble Beach, ninety miles or so farther down the coast. Someday, however — probably someday soon — Half Moon Bay will prove itself a great golf course in its own right. And much of what will be said about it in the years to come will be due to the work of Ron Taborski, the golf course superintendent.

Trying to keep a half-century-old course up-to-date is the task that faces superintendent Ward Swanson at Plum Hollow Golf Club in the Detroit suburb of Southfield, Michigan. His nine years at the club have been a continual period of improvement and modernization. In the past year alone, Ward installed a completely new irrigation system using his own men and equipment; and, he rebuilt eight greens.

At Meridan Hills Country Club in Indianapolis, golf course superintendent Steve Frazier feels that "part of any stature I have attained has been due to my association with the golf pro." Working in tandem with the pro, Gary Carle, Frazier has established himself as a top superintendent by keeping his tees, greens and fairways immaculately manicured and conditioned for good play. Steve firmly believes that it's the play that people appreciate most.

In Germantown, Maryland, golf course superintendent Jerry Gerard at the Bretton Woods Recreation Area operates his club under somewhat unique circumstances. Bretton Woods was built by the International Monetary Fund for its

employees on temporary assignment in Washington D.C. As might be expected, applications for membership in private golf clubs were often wait-listed beyond the length of the employee's stay in the States. So the Fund's employees got Bretton Woods . . . and Jerry got himself an everchanging membership. Hired right out of turfgrass school, Jerry originally went to the course as the assistant superintendent. But almost immediately, he was given the course all to himself. He credits a close working relationship with his 6-man crew, most of whom have been with him from the beginning, as the major ingredient in his success in maintaining Bretton Woods' turf in peak condition.

The hurricanes that swept Cape Cod in 1938 and 1954 have left a lasting mark on the Kittansett Club in Marion, Massachusetts. The Kittansett Club is a golf course where they've never heard of a starting time . . . and where superintendent Lennie Blodgett is called on to grow grass in places where soil tests have indicated a salt level too high to grow anything, thanks to periodic submergence in sea water. Yet, Lennie maintains the challenging, rustic course with its narrow fairways and picture-postcard glimpses of the Atlantic Ocean. What's more, he takes care of the course with just a crew of four and the support of Winthrop Baines Wing, the greens chairman, who'll go out of his way to give Lennie any help he can.

At the other end of the Atlantic coast is the JDM Country Club (formerly the PGA National Golf Club), in West Palm Beach, Florida. There, for the past nine years, super-



Lennie Blodgett, superintendent of the Kittansett Club in Marion, Mass., grows grass in places where soil tests have indicated a salt level too high to grow anything. He credits televised golf tournaments for improving the image of the superintendent.



Ron Taborski, the golf course superintendent at Half Moon Bay, heads every phase of the golf course operation, including the activities of the pro and pro shop. Ron figures he spends only 20 percent of his time in the actual business of growing grass.

intendent Carl McKinney has held probably the most demanding position in the profession; up until January of this year, the three courses at the PGA were the winter stomping grounds of the leading touring pros. Carl didn't just have to tune up his turf for the season or an occasional tournament, he has had to satisfy the world's most intense golfers day in and day out.

Why have these superintendents gained the respect they now enjoy?

To a man, they agree: money.

Carl McKinney understates the situation "I spent more money than any other person at our club. My responsibilities include more equipment and personnel than the other departments combined. Since I spend over a half million dollars per year, this must be recognized as being of importance to our owner."

Plum Hollow's Ward Swanson quickly passes over the importance of his six-figure budget to make the point that he feels respect for the superintendent is the result of "the total volume of the job the man is doing; the total amount of dollars he handles and the responsibilities he's charged with. For example, Plum Hollow was worth in the neighborhood of \$200,000 ten years ago. Today, it's worth close to \$3 million. The superintendent today simply has a greater investment to protect — a bad superintendent can lose that investment real quick."

Out on the West Coast, Ron Taborski considers the money aspect from still another angle. According to Ron, "To have a top golf course . . . a championship course . . . you need a top man to maintain it. Of course, you're going to have to pay him. He gets respect as a result of his earning power . . . because in any business, the man making the most money is usually put in charge."

Naturally, there would be no need for a top man . . . no need to spend enormous amounts of money on turf if today's golfer didn't expect — didn't demand — great grass.

As Lennie Blodgett points out, "Every weekend on T.V. people tune in to see a beautiful layout . . . beautiful grass that plays beautifully. They can't see any reason why they can't have grass like that at their own course. Television has gone a long way in improving the image of the superintendent."

And one course the viewers often see — once or twice every year — is



Carl McKinney, superintendent of the JDM Country Club in West Palm Beach, Fla. (formerly the PGA National Club), has held one of the most demanding positions in the profession. Until January of this year, McKinney's course was the wintering grounds of some leading touring pros. "The multimillion dollar pro tour has increased pressure for turf perfection. Now the superintendent is being recognized as the professional which did more than just get the grass green," he says.

Carl McKinney's. With the number of tournaments played at the PGA over the years, Carl's insight into this aspect of the question is perhaps the sharpest: "The multimillion dollar pro tour has increased pressure for turf perfection. Now the superintendent is being recognized as the professional which did more than just get the grass green. Over the years because of our quality turf we have changed the game of golf. No longer is golf a game of chance but a sport of skill."

"And," Ron Taborski adds, "just try having a tournament where the grass is in poor condition and see how fast that superintendent gets some recognition . . . I guarantee his name will become known. They just can't afford to have bad grass with the stakes they're playing for. Who's the most important man on the golf course? Have a tournament and find out."

Gary Carle, the golf pro at Meridan Hills, notes that at their club, he and Steve Frazier have "quite a few members who are very sophisticated travelers. And they have the means to go to many differ-

ent golf courses. They go all over the country . . . all over the world to play golf. And when they get back here to the club, they say that there's no better place than right here."

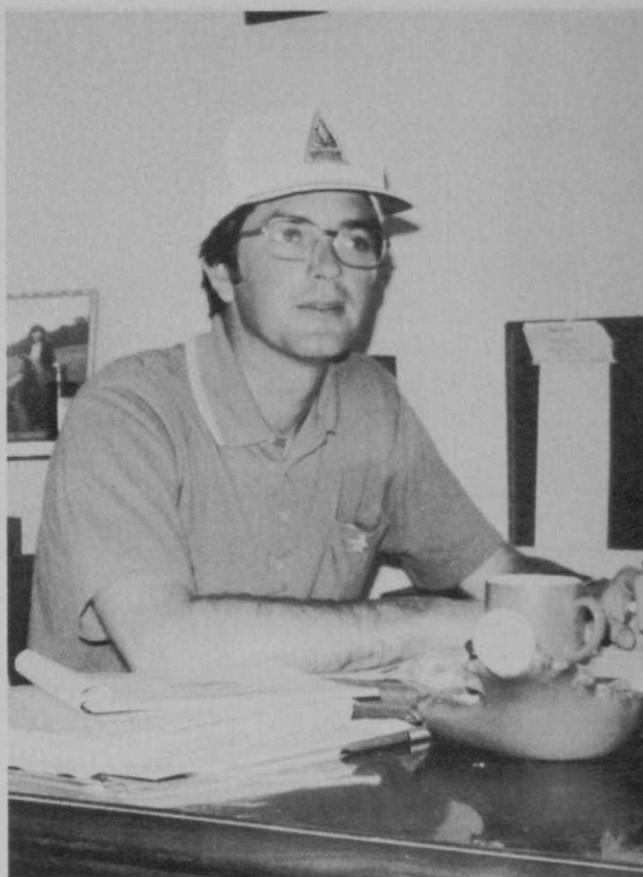
Steve says that it couldn't be any other way: "Anybody who belongs to a club wants it to be the best it can be."

So, for a superintendent to gain any respect at all, he first must be a top grass man. He has to know grass. Looking back twenty or thirty years, Kittansett's greens chairman Winthrop Wing recalls that the old greenskeeper "had to learn in the fields, from experience. There were no turfgrass schools. They didn't know the technical data . . . what they were actually doing. They made numerous mistakes and some of the mistakes were actually good, they worked out well. They just went out and did the best they could."

By contrast, each of these superintendents has made an intense study of his subject, much like any other professional in any other field would do. Jerry Gerard has a degree in turfgrass management from Maryland. Lennie Blodgett got his agronomy



Steve Frazier has a master's degree from Purdue University and spent ten years working in turfgrass related areas before settling down at Meridian Hills Country Club in Indianapolis, Ind. Frazier feels that maintaining good communications with the golf pro and clubhouse manager is essential to successful management.



Jerry Gerard is golf course superintendent at the Bretton Woods Recreation Area in Germantown, Md. "It's a very technical profession now and the superintendent has to be a scientist, public relations man, jack of all trades," he said.

degree and served an apprenticeship as an assistant superintendent. Ward Swanson got his degree, then worked on public golf courses in the Detroit area before going to Plum Hollow. Ron Taborski graduated from Penn State and was superintendent and assistant superintendent at a number of private and public courses in both the Los Angeles and San Francisco areas before accepting the post at Half Moon Bay. Steve Frazier has a master's in turf management from Purdue and spent five years as a superintendent and five years with his own landscaping firm before settling down at Meridian Hills. And, Carl McKinney spent the first dozen or so years of his working life in heavy construction, then went on to golf course construction and finally worked as golf course superintendent at a few clubs in the area before going to the PGA.

But even being an outstanding turf man isn't all there is to being a modern superintendent, respected and treated like a professional. He also had to demonstrate that he is a competent administrator.

"A superintendent manages money . . . he manages the manpower working for him . . . and he manages the members . . . all of which is a far greater percentage of being a superintendent today than it was twenty years ago," according to Plum Hollow's Swanson. "He's an administrator, a manager in every sense of the word. I spend a third of my time in administrative duties . . . a third with public relations, meeting players on the course and in the pro shop, being there to talk with the members about the course . . . and a third, usually before nine in the morning, in the actual care of the grass. Of course, these things overlap . . ."

Jerry Gerard agrees. "It's not just fertilizing once a year and mowing grass. It's gotten into a lot more than that. It's a very technical profession now and the superintendent has to be a scientist, public relations man, jack of all trades.

What's in a title? Ron Taborski, the golf course superintendent at Half Moon Bay, heads every phase of the golf course operation, includ-

ing the activities of the pro and the pro shop. He started at Half Moon Bay when the construction started. He was on hand when every decision about every facet of the course was made . . . the irrigation system, fairways, tees, greens, cart paths, everything. And thanks to an understanding management, his word was the last. More of an administrator than the oldtime greenskeeper could have ever imagined, Ron figures that he spends only twenty percent of his time in the actual business of growing grass. He relies heavily on his assistant to take care of the everyday chores, while Ron himself is kept busy with public relations, labor relations and all sorts of administrative duties.

To Carl McKinney, too, "It's not just growing grass as the situation was in the past. It's also a thousand other things. You must deal with personnel all the time. Today you must be able to communicate. On a yearly average our staff is nearly fifty people. I really could not say but approximately 30 percent of my time is dedicated to management, which ex-



Ward Swanson, Plum Hollow's superintendent, feels respect for the superintendent is the result of "the total volume of the job the man is doing, the total amount of dollars he handles and the responsibilities he's charged with."

cludes equipment maintenance decisions. In an operation of our size, because of a constant personnel turnover, I am always training new people. We are located in the fastest growing area in the country; thus our labor pool is competing with higher paying construction rates. Gone are the days of having the 15 to 30-year employee. Getting quality people to operate ten thousand dollar machinery is a constant problem. Educating personnel is a never ending task."

Carl's club was probably among the first to recognize the true value of the golf course superintendent. Carl has been a member of the club's board of directors for the past five or six years. He answers only to the owner of the club and his budget is more a guideline than an iron-clad decree. Having been at the club since shortly after it opened, Carl finds his tenure of great value: "I've been here so long, I really don't need approval on a lot of things, which makes the

job much easier . . . we're ready to move on whatever decisions I personally make."

Add to a knowledge of grass and the ability to administrate, the art of communication and you've almost completely described why these men have achieved their individual successes.

Meridian Hills' Steve Frazier feels that "when there's a breakdown in communications and the golf pro can't talk with the superintendent, you're in trouble. And when the golf pro can't talk with the clubhouse manager . . . and the clubhouse manager can't talk with the superintendent, you have real problems."

Lennie Blodgett points out that the people a superintendent is working for at a golf course are not professional turf men. They are experts in some totally unrelated field, yet they are his boss. "People in strange businesses don't know a darn thing

about golf courses. You must inform them. Don't try and snow them under. Be honest all the way. Sometimes you may have to say things that people don't want to hear, but you must communicate."

When Jerry Gerard has a problem at Bretton Woods, he does his best to keep his membership aware of what's happening. "If I lose turf, I owe it to them to let them know that something has happened and that everything possible was done to keep it, but those things didn't work, and now I'm doing my best to bring it back."

Things are no different in Michigan, Ward Swanson agrees. "You have to show your people that you're working on their course. If there's a problem . . . if someone has a complaint, be there. It's much better for a member to air a complaint to me than to go into the locker room and bad mouth me for this or that. It's quite possible that what's bothering him was a situation created by the greens committee in an attempt to better the course. So his argument may well be with his own elected officials rather than with an employee of those officials."

The final thing that brings these superintendents out of the realm of the foreman in charge of a grounds crew . . . the thing that makes their commitment to professionalism become apparent to their management and membership . . . is an intangible, an inner drive, an attitude.

Jerry Gerard says that to be treated like a professional, "you have to act like one."

Lennie Blodgett urges that a superintendent try to do everything possible for his club. "It's just that whenever a problem comes up, you've got to tackle it."

Steve Frazier gets a little closer to the mark when he says, "I really do love the game of golf and I've dedicated my life to the game of golf. I get my kicks out of seeing people have a lot of fun and enjoying my golf course. It's quite egotistical, too, but I want to be recognized as an authority and as a good superintendent . . . and the only way you can do this is by having a fine golf course. This is part of the enjoyment I get out of my job."

Then there's Carl McKinney, after almost a decade of keeping his course in tournament conditions at all times: "You have the materials, the chemicals, the fertilizers, the

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TOFTREES from page 31

with, in terms of the project concept, we have increased our membership, increased the number of green fee players and have a fantastic restaurant, cocktail lounge and motel business. One of the keys to the big increase and activity is the fact that each element of the complex plays on the other. For example, if you're looking for a motel we have a motel. If you're looking for a restaurant, we have a restaurant. Except that we have a set-up that lets you play golf before you eat and then, if you want, you can spend the night. In other words, we haven't added business, we've multiplied it."

Even the glowing statement above does not do justice to the true extent of what has happened at Toftrees. Golfing memberships have gone from 100 in 1969 to 400 in 1973. Number of weekend green fee players has increased from 100 to 225 in the same period. The restaurant, Le Papillon, aided by an excellent chef, does turn-away business on the weekends (some people reserve two and three weeks ahead of time and some drive 50 miles each way) and is packed for luncheons. It even does a breakfast business thanks to the lodge. The lodge, too, does a turnaway business. As shown below, Sieg's decision to do something out of the ordinary for a country club generates an excellent income:

Income item	Gross income (February, 1973 to November, 1973)
Golf club	\$125,000
Room rentals	\$120,000
Food	\$295,000
Beverages	\$120,000

The nearly \$700,000 gross in 10 months of 1973 compares with a \$270,000 gross for the same period a year earlier. It includes 7,000 member rounds and 9,000 public rounds, plus 5,000 car rentals (77 per cent occupancy grossing \$28,000). Sieg estimates that the gross will pass the \$1 million mark in 1974.

Looking back, Sieg says, "Bucher Meyers and I both agreed that we did the right thing when we scaled down the first set of preliminaries. After all, it was prudent and the best thing to do."

Fortunately, the Bucher Meyers design featured many expandable components. Some expansion has already taken place and plans now are being

finalized for even more. A platform tennis facility with two courts and a warming hut/tennis pro shop already have been added, which members use when the weather isn't right for golf. Two more tennis courts are underway, plus 15 more golf cars; expanded pro shop facilities; 96 more lodge units; members' dining room and enough space to turn the country club into a conference center for business, the Pennsylvania State University, which is nearby, associations and other groups, much of which will help Toftrees CC expand its already booming business, and its off-season business.

Although Toftrees is unique, it should be pointed out that this uniqueness is so only because it is among the first, if not the first, to use a golf course as the focal point and expand outward. It would not be difficult for other golf courses to follow suit. But, as Alan Meyers warns, "First of all, don't depend on gut reactions alone. Undertake at least a rudimentary market survey to determine what people want, what the competition is and so on. Second, assuming that you think you can proceed, hire a top architectural/planning firm with experience in recreational and related planning. Take a look at what they've done in the past. My own advice, naturally based on my own biases, is to select the firm that doesn't go along with the traditional, simply because 'sameness' can kill the entire project. A healthy respect for the existing nature of things also is very important. Third, integrate all your planning, so you create and work with unity as you go along. If the design firm has interior design and landscaping capabilities, fine. If not, then be sure that whatever additional talent is retained works together, so everyone's on the same wavelength. Appoint one competent team leader, preferably the architect. Fourth, don't wait for the right time, because there really is no right time. The longer you wait, the more likely someone else in your area will pick up on the idea or that construction and related costs will make the project unfeasible. At the very least, put down a few ideas on paper and look around on your own. Fifth, do as Phil Sieg did, go first class all the way. Even if it is more expensive, which in many cases it isn't, top quality means extracting a lot more value per dollar than second or third best." □

COMING EVENTS

RHODE ISLAND TURFGRASS FIELD DAY, University of Rhode Island, Kingston, R.I., August 21.

NORTHERN MICHIGAN TURFGRASS FIELD DAY, Michigan State University Experimental Area, Traverse City CC, Traverse City, Mich., September 10.

TURF AND LANDSCAPE DAY, Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center, Wooster, Ohio, September 10.

FLORIDA TURFGRASS ASSN. CONFERENCE AND SHOW, Riverside Hilton, Curtis Hixon Convention Center, Tampa, Fla., September 16-19.

SOUTHERN ILLINOIS TURFGRASS FIELD DAY, Southern Illinois University Agricultural Research Station, Belleville, Ill., September 24.

NORTHWEST TURFGRASS CONFERENCE, Sun River Lodge, Sun River, Ore., September 24-27.

MIDWEST TURF FIELD DAY, Purdue University Agronomy Farm, West Lafayette, Ind., September 30.

SOUTHWEST TURFGRASS CONFERENCE, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, N.M., October 10-11.

CENTRAL PLAINS TURFGRASS CONFERENCE, K-State Union, Manhattan, Kan., October 23-25.

WISCONSIN GOLF TURF SEMINAR, Pfister Hotel, Milwaukee, Wis., October 30-31.

FIFTH ANNUAL GEORGIA GCSA/UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA TURF-GRASS SHORT COURSE, Center for Continuing Education, University of Georgia, Athens, Ga., November 3-5.

TEXAS TURFGRASS CONFERENCE, Texas A & M University, College Station, Tex., December 1-4.

OHIO TURFGRASS CONFERENCE AND SHOW, Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, December 3-5.

THE OLD SUITS THE NEW

from page 33

which were suspended a bucket of sand and a bucket of water. A strip of carpet was also attached to each frame. It was for rubbing the ball clean! The unusual ball washers gave Pennbrook an amusing touch of character right out of the late twenties that can never be recaptured.

An addition to the original barn clubhouse during an expansion program retained the flavor of the old building, which has perched proudly on top of Pennbrook's Watchung ridge for many years. Bright barn red and trimmed in white, this handsome structure backs the home hole's small, contoured, well-trapped green in beautiful style. Pennbrook's touches of the past add greatly to the enjoyment of a round at this excellent mid-Jersey layout.

Not every course can have water as famed as Merion's Baffling Brook in Ardmore, Penn. This partly hidden stream, which bisects the 378-yard 11th hole and forms a Y in front of and alongside the green, has proven disastrous for many of the game's greatest. Sarazen triple bogeyed here in the 1934 U.S. Open. Young Mason Rudolph (16) added eight extra strokes to his 1950 U.S. Open score by taking a 12! Many lesser known courses have used water to provide their golfers with unique challenges.

Green Knoll, Somerset County's exceptional public course near Somerville, N.J., maintains a classic water hole among 10 that are affected by water in varying degrees. Peters Brook, flowing through a trough lined with thick rough, angles across the eighth fairway four times during its wandering. Purposely left in its natural state, the brook is a real character builder. No compromise has been made to faster play. As a result, Green Knoll retains a look of distinction seldom evident at revamped public layouts.

Bridging fairways over waterways may speed up play, but it can destroy course character, too. Streams and brooks left to follow their own paths through the course terrain add natural hazards no architect can duplicate. Lakes and ponds have been artificially created

when the need for a water supply was genuine, and they frequently have become unique features. The best of these, however, seldom replaces the attractiveness of already existing water.

Islands, set in natural lakes, are always a pleasurable sight at any course. If they are the target at the end of a hole, even more so. There is no more enjoyable shot in golf than lofting a wedge to a patch of green surrounded by water.

At Old Orchard CC in Eatontown, N.J., the 483-yard seventh has just such a finish. What makes this hole more unique than most is the canal feeding into the lake. Flowing between planked bulkheads dating back to 1930, it crosses fairways, causing havoc with badly-placed shots.

Another excellent island green contributing character to a course is Ascarate Park's 16th in El Paso. Here the island also provides a tee position for the 17th hole at this layout etched into sandy flats bordering the Rio Grande in Texas' westernmost tip.

Old Orchard and Ascarate, two totally different kinds of courses, provide unique touches to a round of golf because of their island water hazards.

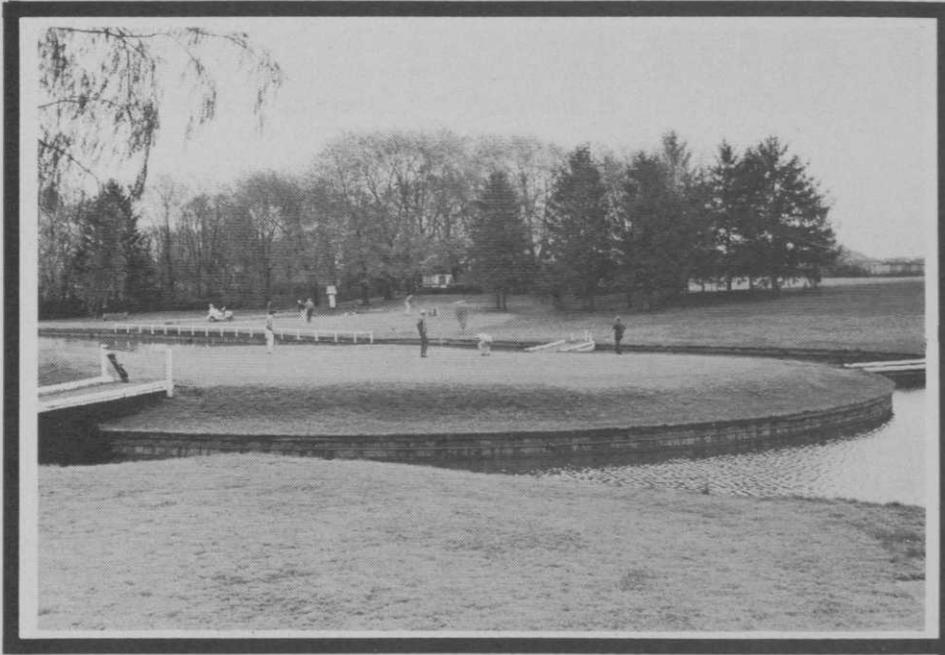
There are, of course, many layouts not fortunate enough to have water hazards, especially those on flat, former farmlands. Unique features in other forms frequently add a serious challenge while adding character touches at these "farm" courses. Commack Hills, set in the broad plain of mid Long Island, out beyond the Dix and Half Hollow Hills, has several unique features worth retaining. The course is dotted with over 200 pine trees less than three feet tall. Wide open spaces are formed into fairways wherever these evergreens are clustered into bordering hazards. A huge tree, almost dead center in the 375-yard seventh fairway, is in the landing area for most tee shots. Although it is true this tree might be considered in the way by many players and speedier play might result if it were removed, no such expedient action has ever been contemplated. Thus, an unusual challenge from the tee also adds a touch of character. Additionally, Commack retains reminders of its past in the animals frequently found

grazing near the 13th green and 14th tee. It's not unusual to see a goat and several ponies nibbling the excellent turf, because the old Carl Homestead farmhouse and barns are still standing and bordered by the course grounds on three sides. Commack's trees and animals contribute character of a most unusual nature, thereby helping overcome the natural monotony of most farm courses.

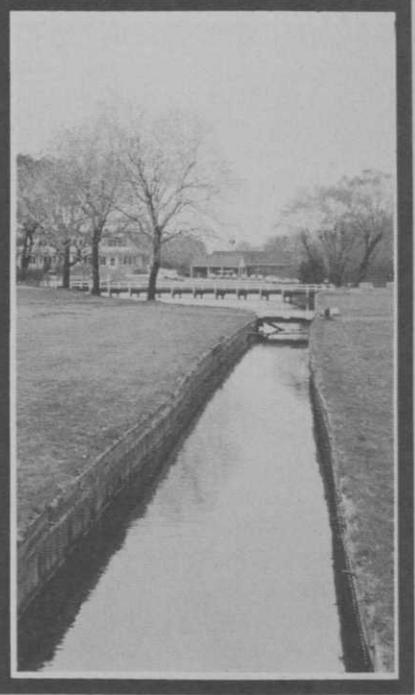
Another exceptional public course with a natural hazard in the middle of a fairway is Sheridan Park Municipal in Tonawanda, N.Y. Its toughest hole, the par-four, 458-yard seventh is bisected by a stream that affects no less than 10 other holes, including the 10th and 17th twice each. Angling across number seven at 45 degrees, the stream must be carried by the second shot. However, just beyond the stream, at the height of a well-placed three wood shot, a tall, bare-trunked tree blocks the way to the green. Looking like a giant slingshot topped with leaves, the upper part of its trunk forms a perfect Y and the temptation to put the shot through it is hard to resist. No doubt this monstrous tree has deflected many a good shot. Cutting it down would speed up play, but Sheridan Park, host of the 1961 Publix and already a distinctive course, has wisely made no move to eliminate one of its unique features.

Necessity for change in the face of financial pressure is frequently coupled to an examination of the number of rounds played. This has led to decisions that hopefully might result in speedier play. On many occasions that decision has ultimately destroyed irreplaceable elements in some locations. Speeding up play by eliminating or modifying sand hazards is the common adjustment, but not necessarily the wisest.

Consideration should be given to the self-sustaining aspects of an excellent bunker prior to filling it in, letting it grow over or reducing its size. Generally, drainage is no problem in a well-constructed old bunker. Raking and the removal of loose impediments need not be a daily chore. Autumn leaves are probably the biggest clean up job the maintenance crew must face. Mowing around a bunker can be a costly process, because in most instances it must be done by hand. Modifi-



Old Orchard's "canal" running through planked bulkheads crosses eight fairways before forming a lake around the 7th green at the tough New Jersey course.



cations in bunker shapes have frequently been motivated by grass cutting problems in addition to the rationalization of speeding things up.

At most municipal and public courses the brand of golf ranges from beginner to expert. Hackers are balanced by low handicappers. The broad middle segment of golfers generally represents the bogey and over shooters. Scores run from the upper 80s to just over 100. In this large group one finds few expert trap shot players. A key shot in the game is seldom, if ever, practiced by this group and is a nightmare when faced. The result is a lot of flying sand and a lot of time wasted in the bunkers. And yet, sand shots are an integral part of any decent round. Bunkers certainly contribute to the beauty of a layout while adding the degree of difficulty envisioned by the designer when he laid out the hole.

The dilemma for management is easily understood. Lose revenue because of slow play or speed up play and lose character. Unfortunately, most revisions have been motivated solely by the financial consideration.

A simpler and far less costly approach to overcoming the problem of slow sand play is to move the tee markers as far back as possible. Placing them forward, which seems to go hand in hand with an attempt to speed things up, is a delusion. Tee shots by most average golfers on a par four, for instance, are not long enough to permit the following

fairway shot to reach the green in regulation figures. Still, the average player will wait until the foursome ahead putts out even though he hasn't a chance of reaching the green in two. Etiquette dictate he must wait. When he does shoot he may not be on line, and the groans can be heard all over the course attesting to his having found the bunker. The cycle begins again. By starting him off with the longer distance, his second shot, in many instances, could be taken without waiting in the middle of the fairway.

Each hole, particularly the par fours, should be carefully analyzed as to driving length and degree of difficulty facing the average player. Analysis might reveal that the delay on a given hole is really in mid fairway and not necessarily in and around the bunkers. The finest elements that truly add character to a course may, in fact, not be the cause of slow play. At least not to the extent that has caused the wholesale revamping and elimination of so many bunkers.

Compromise after careful analysis can result in retaining course character, especially when dealing with the elusive problem of time spent in bunkers by the average golfer.

At the Lakewood CC in New Jersey, which is a very popular semi-private layout, the problem was solved through compromise. As an example, huge shallow bunkers fronting the left approach at the par-five, 537-

yard 11th hole were cut down in size to ensure against too many trapped shots. When forward tee positions were used, two good back-to-back woods frequently found the leading edge of the old bunker, particularly when the fairways were a little dry and there was some roll on the level terrain. The shot remaining to reach the green in three was a long sand shot needing an expert's touch. The finesse required was simply not in the average golfer's stock of shots. By tightening up the bunker at the front edge, fewer second shots rolled into the bunkers, resulting in faster play. This same technique was employed at several holes thus eliminating some beautiful bunkers that had withstood the test of time. Lakewood dates back to the early twenties. Speedier play resulted, but character diminished.

Lakewood was fortunate. With so many character elements it could afford to sacrifice a few. Unique bunker work was retained along

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NATIONAL CLUB ASSOCIATION

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The National Club Association is a non-profit trade association of private social, athletic and recreational clubs. Its principal purpose is to seek improvements in the economic condition of the private club industry, and its activities are directed primarily to this purpose. Association activities include the gathering and dissemination of economic, social and legal information relating to private clubs and acting as the spokesman for the industry to all levels of government. Among its functions is the influencing of legislation, directly or indirectly, in order to secure the passage or defeat of measures affecting the club industry at both the federal and state levels of government.



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