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GOLFDOM

THE MAGAZINE OF GOLF BUSINESS

Vol. 50, No. 3, MARCH 1976, INCORPORATING GOLF BUSINESS

ARTICLES

IS THE GREEN CHAIRMAN STILL IMPORTANT? The private club of yesteryear placed all the decisions of course maintenance into the hands of one man and it wasn't always the superintendent. Thousands of clubs around the nation still employ the committee system, even with the added professionalism the superintendent has attained. GOLFDOM analyzes the question in this report _____ **8**

PGA: ORLANDO OPTIMISTIC AFTER YEAR OF DOUBT It was the second year in a row for the Disney World site at the annual Merchandise Show. More exhibitors were on hand to show the pros what was new for '76. GOLFDOM tells the story of the biggest buying event in the industry in words and pictures _____ **13**

GCSAA: TEMPERATURES HIGH, CROWD LOW With the vision of below zero temperatures in Minneapolis, the annual GCSAA Turfgrass Conference and Show drew the lowest number of superintendents in four years. Still though, educational seminars were well attended and those that showed in the Twin Cities got a lot for the effort _____ **19**

CMAA: MANAGERS ARE IN PEOPLE BUSINESS In its 49th year as an association, the CMAA met in Washington, D.C., to discuss the problems facing them in this Bicentennial year. A fire and a labor walkout in the conference hotel couldn't stop the business of the annual get-together _____ **25**

MAC HUNTER: PRO ON BOTH SIDES OF THE COUNTER One of the best merchandising pros in the country for more than two decades at Riviera Country Club in Los Angeles, Mac Hunter grossed more than \$300,000 yearly in his shop. Now a club manufacturer, Hunter takes a look at both side of the pro shop market and gives an overview of the industry. Interesting reading _____ **29**

NEWS Dorset gets out of golf equipment market, while Action and Golf Limited reorganize . . . Bill Blanks is named PGA Director of Employment Service . . . Progress of 'Golf Card' grows, as more clubs join . . . PGA offers employment manual as aids to pros, clubs . . . GOLFDOM editor has new book out on history of PGA . . . Toro exec gets USGA Green Section Award . . . Granular Linuron effective in Poa control . . . Florida course, a graveyard for golf balls . . . Platform tennis firm adds five to distributor network . . . PGA cuts coverage on pro personal liability insurance . . . New faces take over for AMF Harley-Davidson in west _____ **32**

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ON THE COVER

With the advancement of management training for the superintendent and the advance of the general manager concept, is there still a place for the committee system of dealing with club problems? In many cases the committee or the chairman form of cooperation with the golf course superintendent is working. For example, at Cleveland's Canterbury Country Club, the situation works well between the two subjects on this month's cover, superintendent Bill Burdick, left, and his green chairman George Dawson. Even with that in mind, though, a recent survey by the GCSAA indicated that the superintendent is becoming more and more the major authority on budgeting and buying decisions. GCSAA figures indicate out of both areas, 90 percent of an answering 1,233 superintendents are making out the financial plan.

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SWINGING AROUND GOLF

USGA's Look At Harsh Reality:

When the USGA took a look at its 1974 figures in money and members and compared them with 1973 figures it was certain that in 1975 the canny businessmen who work free as USGA officers would be studying the hard facts of life today.

Despite a slight increase in membership for the 30th consecutive year and a boost in the tournament broadcasting income to \$420,156 in 1974 the expenses of the most efficiently and helpfully operated organization in amateur sports — maybe in all sports — the USGA in 1974 wound up around \$50,000 in the red. The 1973 excess of income over expenses was \$55,655. That approximate \$105,000 difference jolted the USGA Executive committee into taking a new look at the changed conditions in golf as a business as well as a game.

I don't know what previous explosion of realism brought a beneficial revolution to the USGA Executive Committee. That change of life for the USGA and world-wide golf came July 14, 1922, at the Skokie Country Club in north suburban Chicago when National Open championship gallery fee was charged for the first time.

The facts most pressing for a change in the foundation of the USGA's sound business are that there now is too much dependency on the National Open revenue from the show business phase of golf and a big gap between the USGA and the large number of players; the pay-play golfers the USGA serves usefully in the pursuit of happiness, as it does the private club members.

Golf is fundamentally a player's game rather than a spectator's pastime. Golf happens to be the most popular of participant sports in the U.S. It also is the sport with by far

the biggest effect on the economy and ecology of this country. Golf began suburban development and continues to have immense effect on the nation's real estate business. Golf began the development of light weight fabrics; first as golf wear, then as a new comfortable smart style of living. Golf is played on grass. The Green Section of the USGA in its pioneering work and in coordination with national and state agricultural research has had and is having immense benefit to the beauty and ecology of the country.

As a maker of the golf rules the USGA definitely has preserved the game. The USGA and a few far-sighted pros halted an effort by bubbleheaded tournament players to make the money game easier and different from the game played by the amateurs who pay to play golf.

Membership connection between the USGA and all golfers has been needing modernizing for years. The old idea of golf being principally of, by and for private clubs and their members long ago was turned obsolete. USGA operations show that. But with the membership requirements not paying much attention to the fee courses and their players, about 7,000 of the nation's 11,000 courses weren't part of the golf family.

The former qualifications of private and fee courses memberships in the USGA are being continued. The modernizing addition is of annual single members at \$12, husband and wife memberships at \$16, and junior membership at \$8.

At first these new memberships undoubtedly will be pretty much prestige items bought by and for those who know the most about golf and feel a responsibility to share in the progress and protection of the game. □



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IS THE GREEN CHAIRMAN

by NICK ROMANO

Hardly anyone would disagree that today's golf course superintendent is a professional man. Most have college educations, continue to keep abreast on new developments in the turfgrass field and are trusted with investments of hundreds of thousands of dollars in equipment, chemicals and fertilizers.

Still, though, the superintendent is not alone. Many private clubs throughout the nation still employ

the committee system and the watchful eye of the green chairman is ever-present when the superintendent deals with money.

There are probably as many opinions on the subject of the real importance of the chairman, as they are superintendents. For that matter, there has been an ever increasing question as to whether the committee system in the running of a club is altogether archaic, in view of the continuing acceptance of the general manager concept.

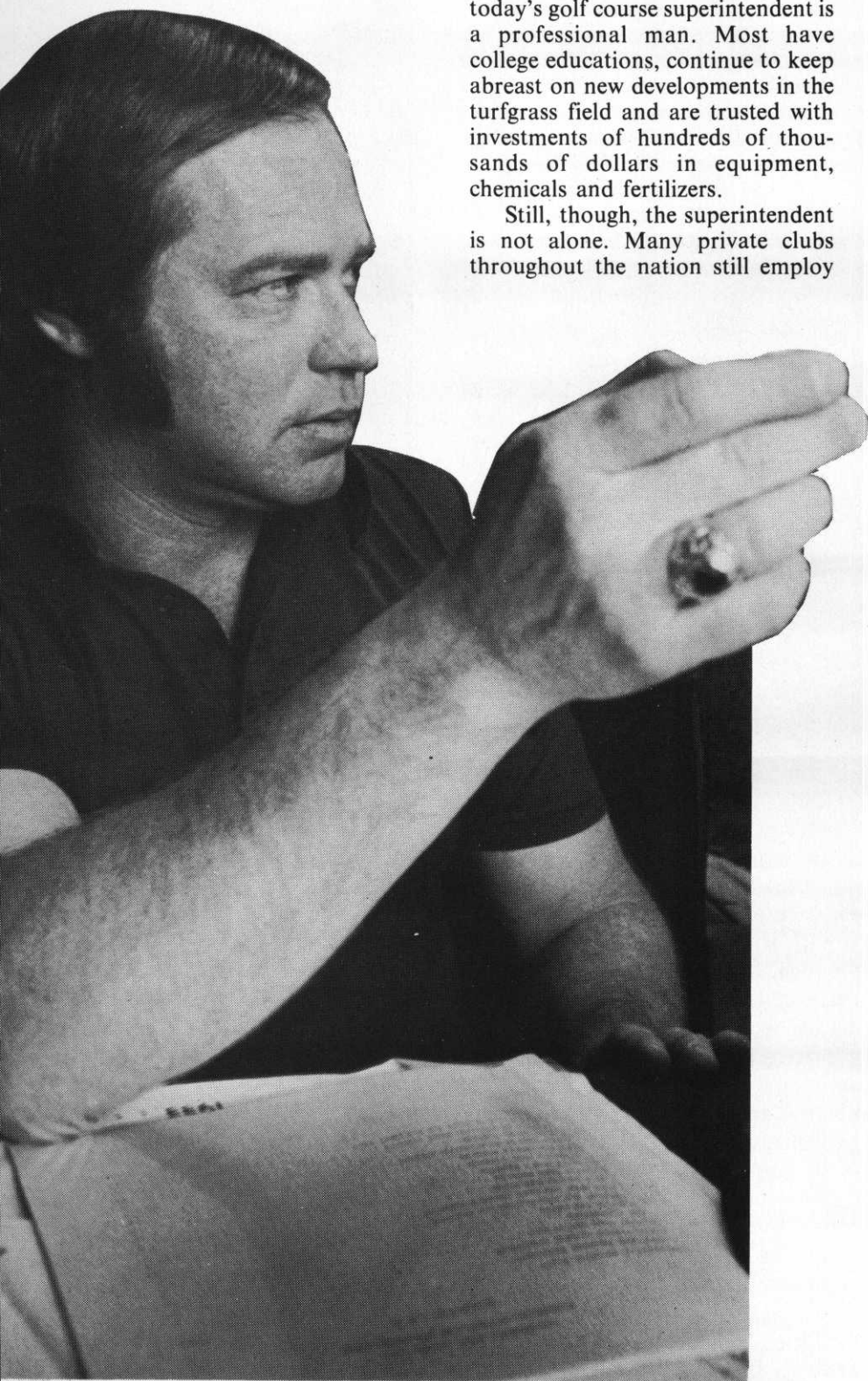
Golf has become a big business in the last 30 years. Private clubs are filled with members that are business successes, but those same businessmen would not make their every day decisions by committee.

A random sampling of superintendents from around the country by GOLFDOM on their feelings about green chairmen was surprising.

Many superintendents that talked to GOLFDOM said their individual experiences with chairmen were, in general, good ones. For example, Ted Wuehrle, national vice president of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America and superintendent at Oakland Hills Country Club, Birmingham, Mich., said the green chairmen of today seem to be less involved in decision making, but are still important as liaisons between the superintendents and the membership.

The idea of the chairman remaining the public relations and complaint taker for the superintendent is one that many superintendents accept as the prime duty of the committee head.

Many think the chairman should have some technical knowledge of the superintendent's job and this was echoed by George Polillo, superintendent at Decatur (Ill.) Country Club for 15 years. "My green chairman has a 6-year term of office," said Polillo, "but we are going to a general manager and I'm



IS IT STILL IMPORTANT?

not sure if the committee system is going to stay in tact."

Not all superintendents are as fortunate as Polillo in having a green chairman for a long term, although some superintendents will say that can be a disadvantage, at times. Tom Malehorn, now in his fourth year as superintendent at Red Lion (Pa.) Country Club, commented that he gets a new green chairman every year and just when the old chairman is getting the hang of the job, a new one comes in.

Malehorn prefers the committee system and says he likes working his ideas over several people than just one decisionmaker, as in the general manager concept.

Often a good, veteran green chairman can lend a sense of direction to a superintendent new on the job. In the case of Ron Brandon, Warwick Hills Golf and Country Club, Grand Blanc, Mich., the chairman technique has worked well for him, since coming to his club less than 10 months ago.

"I had no way of knowing the needs and wants of the golfers on my course," said Brandon, "and it took my green chairman to let me know what they wanted."

When the green chairman first gets his new position, he usually knows little about the job he is taking or the job the superintendent has. According to former United States Golf Association president Richard Tufts, there are several things the chairman has to know to do a good job.

"The job of the green chairman is to serve your fellow members by maintaining the type of course the majority of them want . . . a tough layout that is a challenge to the expert may not be very enjoyable to the average golfer — of which there are so many. Certainly, your job is not to rebuild the course the way you want it."

Tufts states that the duties of the chairman and the committee members cannot be done in a passive

manner. Problems demand time and attention. Tufts continues:

"You should be willing to learn and spend some time reading journals, pamphlets and magazines dealing with turfgrasses. You should attend an occasional turfgrass meeting. A good chairman should be an active golfer, but not necessarily the club champion.

"A good chairman knows his limitations. He should avoid causing problems by crossing bridges that, in reality, may never have to be crossed.

"A golf course program of maintenance and management is an intricate combination of men, materials, timing, climate, grasses, etc. What is good for one course is not always the best for the course down the road. Don't be "bulldozed" into doing things because someone else does them. Leave the program up to your superintendent, for it is his responsibility to grow grass for golf. A good chairman need not become a turf expert. He must, however, have sufficient knowledge to answer questions asked of him by the board and the members.

"Visit the course occasionally while the men are working and thus understand their problems. Good chairmen have found the best time to acquire the confidence of the superintendent, as well as a better understanding of his job, is to go out with him at 6 a.m. when he faces his problems for the day. Walk the course with him," Tufts added.

Other functions of a good green committee chairman:

1. Maintain liaison upwards among course operations, club members and the board of directors.

2. Employ a competent superintendent, capable and progressive. He should report directly to the green chairman.

3. Keep up to date on member complaints. Remember, there are no "little" complaints.

4. Assist the superintendent in



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