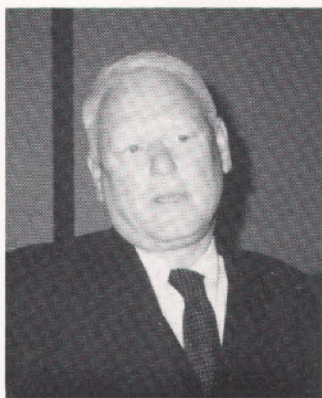


COOKSON FEATURED AT OCTOBER WGCSA MEETING



Dr. David Cookson, author of "A Player's Perspective," considers a question from his audience of WGCSA members.

Host Golf Course Superintendent Randy Smith provided superb golf course conditions at the Nakoma Golf Club, site of the final golf meeting of the Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendents Association. The meeting, held on October 15, was attended by 70 WGCSA members and guests.

Dr. Jim Love took advantage of the Madison meeting site to introduce the 1985-1986 group of Turf Management students enrolled at the UW—Madison. The current classes total 15 students who are working on their Bachelor of Science degrees.

The speaker for the meeting was Dr. David Cookson, a leader in amateur golf in not only Wisconsin but at the national level as well. He has particularly close kinship with the WGCSA since he has, for the past two years, served as a columnist in the GRASSROOTS as author of "A Player's Perspective." In a wide ranging speech, Dr. Cookson touched on some timely topics important to Golf Course Superintendents. Among many of the points he made were:

1. The emphasis in management of a golf course must be, of course, the putting surfaces. Key points, in his opinion, were the need to mow greens **every** day, including Mondays. He feels that if greens are neglected on Monday it takes until Thursday to recapture the speed of those surfaces. He feels strongly that more attention needs to be given to placement of the cups and that this task also needs to be done each day for the frequent golfer. He complimented Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendents on their progress in judicious use of water, especially

on putting greens and decried conditions in the past when they were more often too wet than too hard. A firm putting surface is a paramount goal in managing quality putting greens. Consistency was also emphasized. He spent some time qualifying fast greens but amplified the need for "fast" conditions. This judgement can be made by providing greens where the player is able to stroke the ball, not hit it.

2. Dr. Cookson spent just a few minutes on tees, and his remarks were summarized by saying that tees should be short and level, and that the tee blocks should be moved daily. He is of the mind that good players would rather hit from a tee that is bare soil than from one that is too long.

3. Cookson's comments about quality fairway conditions can be summarized by saying "keep them dry." He also feels that a height of cut around $\frac{1}{2}$ inches should be considered, even at the expense of some turf losses. He also pleaded "Don't water the players!" on those days when syringing had to be done.

4. Fundamental to good sand bunkers was dryness — Dr. Cookson felt that Golf Course Superintendents should consider watering putting greens early in the evening hours so that sand in adjacent bunkers had a longer period of time to dry prior to play. He also suggested using modest amounts of sand and keeping bunkers on the lean side. He pointed out that the frequent player appreciates having sand traps raked on a regular basis in the late season.

5. Among opinions that offered the most conversation were Cookson's comments on aerating; quoting, "Don't aerate fairways!" He did recognize that there are instances when it is necessary — different soil conditions, varying amounts of thatch and needs for leveling. He asked that when it is necessary, be certain to give the membership of the Club adequate notice, don't aerate in the rain, and consider cutting down on the number of aerations in a season. His reasoning had less to do with the need of aerification and more to do with the disruption of play in an area when the golf season is

already too short.

6. He had only brief recommendations on golf course trees and those mainly related to trimming. Most emphasis was placed on trimming those trees that have overgrown the air space above fairways and he commonly sees fairways there 30 — 40 percent of this space is grown over.

7. The closing of a golf course is a frequently discussed topic among players and golf course managers, and Dr. Cookson expressed himself on this topic in a past issue of the GRASSROOTS. He again said that he didn't think a course should ever be closed and most certainly not to the walking golfer. His feelings are qualified, however, by early morning frost and he does recognize the damage that can result from playing on those mornings.

Dr. Cookson had several general comments that focused on the relationship between the Golf Course Superintendent and the Green Committee Chairman. Foremost was the thought that we should work to develop a partnership with the Chairman, rather than an adversary. He advised to never surprise the Chairman with decisions we've made on the golf course, suggested regular **committee** meetings and not with the Chairman alone. He begged not to bother the Club President with trivia, but do inform him of major problems, should they arrive. Most golf course problems should be solved with the Green Committee.

Other good points he made, especially during his conclusion, were the importance to admit mistakes and never make excuses; do not hesitate to experiment; and finally, always strive for excellence.

Winners of the various golf events of the day were as follows:

Closest to the pin on #4 — Roy Zehren, Closest to the pin on #13 — Pat Norton, Longest drive on #16 — Rod Johnson, Longest putt on #8 — Scott Gardener, Closest to the pin on #15 (2 strokes) — Erv Graf, Closest to the pin on #9 (2 strokes) — Kelly Johnson, Longest putt on #18 — Bob Markham, Blind bogey — Roy Zehren, Bud Kelsenberg, Rod Johnson, Mik Aponia, Roger Bell, Dean Lund, Jim Belfield, and Ray Mertens.