



## Letters

### RESPONSE TO "THE USGA SHOULD BE ASHAMED OF ITSELF"

*Editor's Note: The following letter was written by Dr. David Cookson to Mr. Rob Schultz in response to Rob's article in the last issue of "The Grass Roots". It is reprinted here with permission from both writers.*

July 8, 1988

Rob Schultz  
Sports Dept.  
The Capital Times  
Box 8060  
Madison, WI 53708

Dear Rob,

I feel compelled to respond to your article concerning the USGA in the latest "Grass Roots", since I think you have unfairly maligned the one organization in golf whose primary concern is the game in its entirety, rather than just promoting one facet as most golf groups are created to do. As I read your critique, I believe your points are two fold; first, that a "USGA official" was quoted in *Golf Digest* as insulting Andy North thus tarnishing the USGA itself, and secondly, the USGA unfairly sets up Open courses which somehow you translate into golf becoming "a sport for the so-called elite" influenced by "hotsy-totsy USGA goof balls". Let me answer both these arguments as I see them.

First, it is absurd to slander an entire organization for the remarks of "an anonymous USGA official". We in Wisconsin ought to be acutely sensitive to this practice and its ramifications, having sent Joseph McCarthy to the U.S. Senate. This is akin to castigating the *Capital Times* for the personal opinions of somebody working in the circulation department; is that logical? There are over 700 USGA committee people, and 80 or so paid staff; should the USGA be held responsible if one of these persons utters a stupid opinion that *Golf Digest* decides to quote and then doesn't even identify who it is? (You said the USGA official declines to identify himself; I say it is *Golf Digest's* responsibility to identify its sources — are we even sure the comment was made without knowing the source so we can verify its accuracy?) You may be justified in your anger at the swipe at Andy North, but to lash at the USGA as a body for an individual statement that does not reflect the view of the organization itself is misdirected, overly broad, and harmful to the best interests of the game of golf.

As to the second premise, golfers can certainly disagree as to whether U.S. Open courses are "fair". Jerry Tarde at *Golf Digest* and Rob Schultz apparently feel they are not; I feel strongly the USGA is correct in trying to identify the best golfers in all aspects of the game by the way Open courses are presented — incidentally, the same way the British Open and the PGA Championship are set up, which is why they are "majors". Still, this argument has nothing to do with elitism; as you point out, the qualifying for the Open is available to all, and in fact the

USGA also runs the national Public Links championship and has a strong and intense commitment to public golf and its enhanced growth and development. I think if you reflect on it you may not really believe that USGA personnel are "hotsy-totsy goof balls" — look at the Wisconsin committee people as a cross section; and to know the USGA administrative staff is to realize that neither hotsy-totsy nor goof ball applies. These people are dedicated, knowledgeable golfers who love the game and are committed to try to widen its enjoyment to as broad and diverse an audience as possible, while at the same time respecting the integrity, fairness, and basic nature of the sport as it has developed over the centuries.

Sincerely yours,

Dave U. Cookson  
Past President, Wisconsin State Golf Association  
Sectional Affairs Committee, U.S. Golf Association

### THANKS

July 22, 1988

Mr. Michael R. Semler  
Education Director  
Wisconsin GCSA  
Bishops Woods  
200 Bishops Way  
Brookfield, WI 53005

Dear Michael:

Just a brief note to sincerely thank you and the Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendents Association for the most welcomed and thoughtful Membership Card recently received. I am certainly honored and wonder if you would be kind enough to pass this letter on to the Association's Secretary, President, and members. Thank you all so very much for this privilege.

My visit in May is a happy memory now, for I enjoyed myself thoroughly. I thought the Hawaiians had the corner on hospitality — but not so. Wisconsin is the new champion! And my new/old fountain pen is as beautiful and cherished as the night it was presented to me.

Thank you all so very much once more.

Sincerely,

Wm. H. Bengeyfield  
National Director  
United States Golf Association