



Get a handful of sharp pencils and start working
on Professor Kussow's information lode
— It begins on page 39!



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1991 Wisconsin Golf Turf Symposium Doak Hammers "Excessive" Maintenance

By Monroe S. Miller

"If a golf course needs to be in perfect condition for a golfer to play well, the design must be screwed up."

Tom Watson

Tom Doak, a golf course architect and author from Traverse City, Michigan, used the luncheon speaker's forum at this year's Wisconsin Golf Turf Symposium to criticize the maintenance extremes some players are demanding.

Those conditioning demands, coupled with heavy play, are straining some golf courses. He was also critical of some golf course architects whose designs demand excessive maintenance costs. These courses are out of reach to all but the very wealthy.

During his undergraduate study at Cornell University, Doak traveled extensively in the British Isles for a year. He visited and photographed 175 golf

courses. He shared his extensive photographic record of that year with the audience through slides.

"I've never met an American who, after playing a Scottish golf course, didn't absolutely love it," Doak said.

"But they don't want to see those playing conditions here."

Doak also blames TV golf for much of the crying for near perfect playing conditions. "Northern golfers watch tournaments on television all winter. They see golf courses in peak tournament condition and when their season comes around, they want the same conditions," he said.

Real estate projects have had a negative influence on golf courses, according to Doak. Too much emphasis is placed on appearance, too little on playability. The reason is a need to "sell memberships to pay for the place."

Session Chairmen

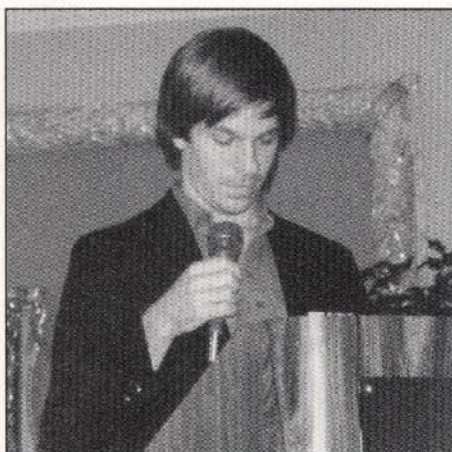
Kris Pinkerton, Tom Schwab and Randy Witt guided the educational sessions like pros.

The chair of each of the three sessions handles speaker introductions, keeps the program on time, makes necessary adjustments in meal and refreshment breaks and presents speaker mementos. Nice work by this crew.

Why Traffic?

The thrust of this year's theme was a reflection of a current problem in golf course management — traffic. The traffic takes the form of heavy play, cart traffic and excessive maintenance requirements.

Wear and tear are showing badly on older courses designed for a fraction of
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Tom Doak



(Left to Right) Mike Vogt, Jerry Kershasky, Tony Coleman, and Jeff Parks

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the play they are now getting. New courses are experiencing wild popularity in some cases; other new facilities are not given sufficient grow-in time.

Players won't repair ballmarks; spike marks are the bane of some golf courses. Golf cars, originally intended for people who couldn't play without one, are now as common in a round of golf as a nine iron. With cars come irresponsible drivers, asphalt cart paths and worn traffic areas.

Practice facilities are worn. Tee expansion plans are common on a lot of golf courses. And we are witnessing more and more golf play at times (spring and fall) when there is no new plant growth for recovery.

The topic, selected by the Symposium Committee, was the best for the times we now work in.



Catherine Suddarth

The Speakers

Catherine Suddarth, a National Golf Foundation staff person, came to Milwaukee to confirm what we all know — golf is in an extremely popular time right now. The number of players and the rounds they play are reasons why 300 new golf courses will be built in America in 1991.



Clark Throssel

Many in the audience were anxious to hear Purdue agronomy professor Clark Throssel talk about strategies for dealing with golf traffic in the design of a fertility program. He dealt with both components of traffic — wear and soil compaction—and emphasized the need to separate these problems in a fertilizer program.

His lecture focused on N and K fertility and featured recommendations on sources, timing, rate and frequency for each element. He criticized low N programs and discredited unbalanced N/K ratios of recent years. He strongly recommended a N/K ratio of 1:1.



Bob Vavrek

The USGA's Bob Vavrek discussed the things a golf course superintendent can do to speed up play on the course he manages. He drew together and summarized the best of many such ideas he has seen on his TAS visits in the Great Lakes Region.

They ranged from 150 yard markers to a clearly defined OB. He discussed the many systems of paint lines to control traffic that he has seen. He emphasized how important communication between the golf course superintendent and golf players is.

Quality green surrounds, proper tree trimming and good sized tee signs all help in moving players around the course in a reasonable amount of time. Even adequate numbers of bunker rakes and a flag system for pin placements help in promoting a faster pace of play.

Golf course superintendents are always popular speakers on an educational program, and Doug Peterson was no exception. He gave a superb lecture on his success with deep tine aerification at Prairie Dunes C.C. and at Baltimore Country Club.

The deep tines on the Verti-Drain machine have relieved compaction on putting greens, tees, fairways and heavy



Doug Peterson

cart traffic areas. He has literally used it everywhere on the golf course, with success. Doug's lecture was complemented by some excellent slides.

Tim Kelly was the perfect person to speak to the subject of traffic control on a golf course. As the golf course superintendent at the Village Golf Links in Glen Ellyn, Illinois, he is continually faced with serious cart traffic problems.

Tim devised a thorough plan of traffic control using orange "wear" lines for green and tee surrounds. The lines are moved once a week.



Tim Kelly

The Village Links is also known around the country for its "Keep Pace" program to combat slow play problems.

The panel discussion part of the Symposium covered all bases: Jeff Parks offered the perspective of a golf course superintendent at a public golf facility; Jerry Kershasky represented the private golf course view; Mike Vogt spoke as a club general manager and a former golf course superintendent and had a unique story; and Tony Coleman, as executive director of the Wisconsin PGA, represented their positions on golfer expectations.

Parks focused his comments on controlling play on an extremely popular new golf facility, and was happy to report that he was successful in limiting play to 200 daily rounds. That was a significant drop from the 290 rounds that were damaging University Ridge in its first months.

He also discussed reconciling demand with the golf course's financial needs.

Kershasky had an interesting story about his program for dealing with golfer expectations at Westmoor C.C. During the golf season, the green committee (three members, all past presidents and 25+ year members) meets weekly for two hours. Minutes are kept and posted in the clubhouse.

Kershasky's club has high expectations. The 76 bunkers are raked eight times a week; greens are double cut four times a week and rolled the same. Green surrounds are mowed five times each week, and the intermediate rough is cut daily.

As Jerry said, they are "grooming the golf course to death." The extra equipment and the extra trips are creating more and more wear areas. More aerification, increased fertility, different turf species and demand for redesigned routing are the result.

Lots of golf course superintendents are proud of Mike Vogt. Promoted to general manager at his club, he is in a unique position to control play at the private club which employs him.

They limit play through their fee structure for outside groups. The club is closed on Mondays. Any outing must be both profitable for the club and nondisruptive to their golf course maintenance.



Mike Saffel

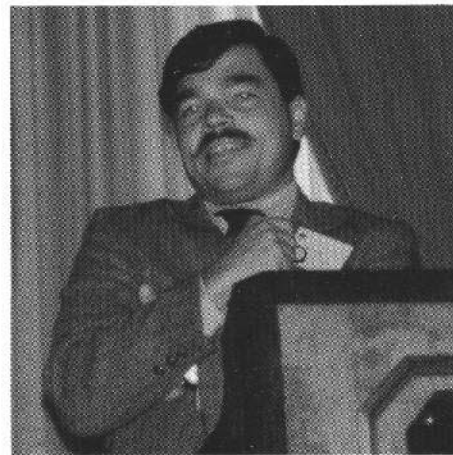
Mike reported on several other techniques they use for play limits. No golf before 7:30 a.m. and 10 minute intervals between tee times have been especially effective.

Coleman reviewed the PGA programs for providing each golfer with a "quality" golf experience, and their hope to introduce golf to all in our society who want to play the game.

A hot topic among golf course superintendents, since the Toro Hydrojet introduction, has been aerification. Mike Saffel, a former golf course superintendent, came to Milwaukee from Michigan State's graduate program in turfgrass science. He reported on various aerifying techniques, the planning involved for the various options, and the timing required.

Once the Hydrojet is established in what it will and will not do for golf course turf areas, it may be adapted to inject materials like wetting agents and insecticides and fertilizers directly into the root zones of turf areas.

The strength of this new technology may be the fact that it can be used more easily in midseason than other equipment will allow. It offers a minimum of surface disruption and may be best used as a supplement to other practices.



Bob Lohman

Although headquartered in Illinois, Bob Lohmann has strong ties to Wisconsin. It is his home state; he is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Madison. And he has many golf course clients in the Badger State.

Bob approached the topic of master plans for golf course redesign. Many of the master plans he is doing these days are the result of increased play. These

plans weigh options and alternatives, reveal what is desired by the players, show what is affordable, and determine the proper sequence of events in the construction phase.



Charlie Passios

Charlie Passios appeared on the program to update Wisconsin on GCSAA affairs. His emphasis was on the old saw "the only thing certain in life is change." Another GCSAA director was present, as he has been at so many other Symposiums. Bruce Williams came up from Chicago for the program again this year.

In recent times, it has been tradition to have our USGA Green Section agronomist summarize the meeting. Jim Latham did that again this year. He demonstrated why he is known as one of the most articulate spokesmen on golf turf affairs in the country.

The 1991 Symposium was very well attended. There were 210 pre-registered attendees — an all-time record — and the final count went beyond the 250 mark. The state-by-state numbers went like this:

Wisconsin - 164
 Illinois - 20
 Minnesota - 7
 Michigan - 5
 Nebraska - 4
 Indiana - 2
 Missouri - 1
 New Jersey - 1
 Florida - 1
 Massachusetts - 1

The 1991 Wisconsin Golf Turf Symposium had both a good subject and good attendance. Participation from everybody was great.

All in all, O.J. would have been proud.