

IN PRAISE OF GOLF, and IN PRAISE OF GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENTS

By Monroe S. Miller

EDITOR'S NOTE: Our feature this issue might better be titled "From State Golf Associates Across The Country."

Each piece below was authored by the executive director of a state golf association. The first was written by Wisconsin's own Gene Haas in response to a decision to eliminate golf as a sport in the Milwaukee Public High Schools. His eloquent plea to the school board serves as a reminder to many of us involved with golf how important the game can be.

The second article was penned by the executive director of the Georgia State Golf Association, Steve Mona. It appeared first in Vol. IV, No. 2 (Spring 1991) issue of GOLF GEORGIA. I read it in Vol. 27, No. 4 (July-August 1991) issue of CAROLINAS NEWSLETTER, which is edited by Dr. Landon Miller. Steve offered a needed reminder to the golfers of Georgia that needs an even wider audience. He offers credibility and an impartial view that certainly enhances the works of all golf course superintendents.

Both narratives appear here with permission.

SUPPORT YOUR SUPERINTENDENT

By Steve Mona

Executive Director Georgia State Golf Association

Within the golf industry, there is one profession deserving as much, if not more, support than all the rest—the golf course superintendent.

Why?

Simply put, all of the other organizations involved in the golf industry depend upon the golf course superintendent for their very existence.

Think about it.

Would there be golf cars, golf equipment, or tournament programs without golf courses? No. Without professional superintendents to maintain courses, golf doesn't exist. So it makes sense that all organizations and individuals who rely on golf for their livelihoods, or for leisure, support the profession that helps them enjoy their place in the world of golf.

First and foremost, let's recognize the golf course superintendent as an equal partner in the professional management of a golf club. The superintendent should be thought of in the same sense as a club manager or head golf professional—as much a part as they are of the management team that produces the finished product to the club member, one who should be equally well thought of in the eyes of the club members.

Second, let's remember that the golf course isn't self-maintaining. A mature, well-maintained golf course did not happen magically overnight, nor will its continued top-level maintenance be possible without the commitment of future budget dollars and manpower. Simply put, little elves do not take care of the course while the club member sleeps; rather, paid staff members using expensive equipment get the job done.

Third, do not forget what the course represents to the continued operation of the entire club. The swimming pool, tennis courts and restaurants cannot support the club. Would you even have a club if not for the golf course?

And, what would you do for recreation if you didn't have a golf club to which to belong? Would you alter the way you conduct business? Would you lose some of the "perks" that your job affords you?

If we agree on the answers to these questions, only one logical conclusion can be drawn: *We should all support our local golf course superintendents.*

June 18, 1991

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE MILWAUKEE SCHOOL BOARD

SUBJECT: *ELIMINATION OF THE GOLF PROGRAM IN MILWAUKEE SCHOOLS*

Recently an article appeared in the *Milwaukee Journal*, referring to a statement made by Mr. Howard Fuller, who is the newly appointed Milwaukee School Administrator, recommending the elimination of the boys High School golf program effective in the Spring of 1992. Also recommended to be eliminated were the swimming and cross country programs. The main reason for their elimination is to help reduce expenditures of an already swelling school administrative budget.

We believe that at a subsequent "hearing" of interested school athletic officials both the swimming and cross country programs were "reinstated," but golf remains scheduled to be eliminated. One of the apparent reasons to continue swimming and cross country is that most school facilities already have swimming pools and facilities for running programs are easily obtained at minimal cost. The golf program requires the use of "non-controlled" facilities with a "user-cost" attached to it. Apparently, this "user-cost," along with other program expenditures, has made golf a program of the past. It is estimated that the cost is between \$300-500 per student participant.

Those of us who have dedicated our lives toward the introduction, development, sustenance and preservation of the game of golf are saddened by the proclamation to remove golf from the Milwaukee High School curriculum. We feel that this is a mistake. Golf to many of us is a part of our lives and we believe it will "touch" every student sometime in later life. It is growing rapidly each year with middle age and senior citizens taking up the game without any previous exposure. We would like to see golf become an even greater part of the High School physical education program so that students will become exposed to the game at an early age rather than wait until later years. High School competition enables the more "gifted" or competitive athlete the opportunity to display his or her talents with other athletes from different schools, just

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as all the other competitive sports do. Elimination of this program will remove an important part of a "future" for many young hopefuls.

Every taxpayer is concerned about the escalating costs associated with education—be it faculty payrolls, athletic programs or whatever. Obviously, MPS has to deal with these programs and we have great empathy for your decision-making responsibilities. Naturally, we are hopeful that you will reconsider the elimination of golf from the High School athletic program so that every interested student will have the opportunity to learn and participate in this "game of a lifetime."

If there is any way that we "golfers" can assist in preserving the Milwaukee High School golf program we would like to offer our services and expertise so that developing golfers will not be deprived of an important part of their High School Educational and recreational process.

Eugene R. Haas
Executive Director, Wisconsin State Golf Association

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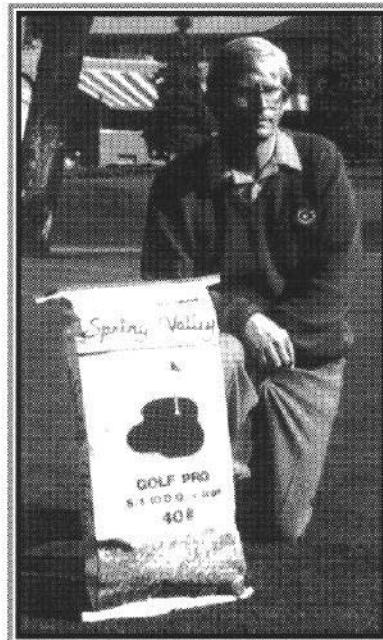
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