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work ethic. These types flock to the golf shop to "shoot the breeze" with the guys, but rarely walk the course just for fun and would never consider visiting the maintenance shop. They would be totally out of their element.

It's a great thing that there are so many new golf courses cropping up all around Wisconsin. They will be intelligently designed and built, wisely grown in and managed, and be a

definite asset to this state. It will be a good use of the land, providing that the landowners truly care for their properties and enhance them over the years.

In many regards, golf course superintendents are like the farmers that we know as friends and neighbors. We all love the land and are devoting our lives to managing it. In the process we are also preserving it for future generations. 🌱

Editorial



A Modest Proposal

By Steve Blendell
Brynwood Country Club

Anyone who has been closely involved with the game of golf for a substantial period of years has probably seen many different golf courses, ranging in condition from lush and manicured to thin and weedy and everything in-between.

I grew up playing, and eventually working on, a golf course where the fairways were as hard as an interstate highway and the greens were sometimes not much different.

I have been fortunate enough to play golf in Scotland where maintenance levels are quite modest. I have also had the pleasure to play golf on some of the most impeccably maintained turf in the United States.

The question that has bothered me for some years now is this one: why do I, and I suspect most other golfers (including professionals), shoot the same scores on golf courses that, having similar degrees of difficulty, are maintained in such different ways? Put another way, if higher levels of maintenance don't lead to better scoring, why do we do it?

Unfortunately, I cannot answer my own question. But I would like to speculate just the same.

I think that it is the nature of American business to try to do better than the competition. In some fields, this has been a blessing to the consumer. When we turn to golf course maintenance, I think that the opposite has occurred.

A famous American author said, "progress was fine, but it's gone on way too long." This should be the motto of the GCSAA.

Golf turf maintenance "improvements" have gone on way too long, actually rendering golf courses less playable than they could be. In addition, the incessant search for better (greener) turf has caused us to utilize too much water, fuel, landfill space, pesticides and other precious commodities.

Using my earlier thought, if "better" turf doesn't provide better scoring, are we justified in using our resources in the amounts that we use them? I think we have reached the point in American golf where we are maintaining for aesthetics, at least partially at the expense of playability.

This discussion leads, at long last, to my modest proposal. I propose the GCSAA direct all members to have firm greens, hard fairways, a tolerable population of weeds, sparse tree populations and rough that is whatever the weather will allow.

Further, I submit that bunker maintenance should be done with the idea that bunkers are a hazard, not a scenic

refuge. At many venues, professionals hope to land in the hazard rather than the jungle that surrounds it. One wonders if the grass isn't the hazard and the sand bunker is a sanctuary for some unknown wildlife species.

I feel that we must all band together and maintain golf turf in a manner that the game of golf demands, not in the manner that a botanical garden requires.

Like that old Lite beer commercial said, "...everything you always wanted in a golf course, and less."

P.S. Don't try this at home... 🌱

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