



January February 1985

Editors Note: A recap of the January February 1985 issue of the Grass Roots. I start with Dr. Cookson's column on The Role of the Greens Committee Chairman which is still as applicable today as it was in 1985. It is printed in its entirety.

Dr. David U Cookson's column "A Players Perspective" was titled The Role of the Green Committee Chairman. Dr. Cookson was starting his 9th year as a Green Committee Chairman at Maple Bluff Country Club.

"Your editor assigned me this topic this month; but in thinking about what I would say and reflecting on experience, it is obvious that a complete summation would include both the ideal and hoped for exemplary role of the Green Committee Chairman, but also recognize the too often opposite example of the Green Chairman who fails to play his role effectively. Both results, success and failure of accomplishment, can best be noted by outlining the Green Chairman's role in golf club interaction.

The fundamental duty of the Green Chairman is to serve as liaison between the club membership and the Green Superintendent. All else is peripheral to this basic obligation. If the Green Chairman fails this role, he fails completely. He succeeds by earning and maintaining the confidence and respect of both the membership and the Board as well as the Green Superintendent. He must be political enough to recognize and deal with the various interest groups within the club, and maintain lines of communication with all, yet tactfully synthesize these concerns in presentations to the Green Superintendent such that advice and counsel is not perceived to be arbitrary and unrealistic. At the same time he must be cognizant of the real needs of the Green Superintendent in performing his job to his best capability, and be prepared to lobby the club membership and Board to support the necessary expenditures and policies to keep the golf course in top condition. Unhappily, this ideal Green Committee chairman is too infrequently found; generally due to either inexperience, lack of interest in or understanding of the position, or commonly a dogmatic and authoritative approach to problems which leaves little room in the mind for breadth of understanding or interest in accommodating diverse points of view. A wise Green Superintendent would spend some effort subtly promoting the concept of the ideal Green Chairman to the club leaders in hope of influencing selection of the appropriate type of individual to this position.

There are of course other important roles for the Green Committee Chairman. He must be knowledgeable

about the best turf conditions for playing golf, and have traveled sufficiently and visited other clubs to have a general appreciation of this subject. This is necessary to be able to convey meaningful suggestions to his Green Superintendent as to whether things are on the right track, and also that the Superintendent will respect the opinions he is hearing. The Green Chairman must play his own course enough so that he is always aware of the current status of its condition. He must educate himself to some understanding of the kinds of grasses and disease processes prevalent on his golf course, as well as acquire knowledge of the usual problems of cultivation and maintenance of turf. Lastly, he must be able to make a decision, and then to take responsibility for those decisions made even if adverse consequences occur, without placing blame on other factors or trying to shift responsibility to the Green Superintendent.

The successful Green Chairman will certainly maintain a close relationship with the Green Superintendent, close enough so that policy questions are clearly understood and acknowledged by both, but not so close as to interfere with day to day management decisions of the Superintendent in relation to his crew, or in the details of precise utilization of fertilizers or pesticides. He will be available; and an individual that the Superintendent will feel comfortable in presenting problems to and recommending solutions, feeling that the Green Chairman will listen fairly and be reasonable in his evaluations.

Finally, I feel the Green Chairman should provide continuity in the ongoing relationship between the club and the Green Superintendent. Every successful and continually smooth interaction involving the club and the Green Superintendent that I have observed has

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also included a Green Chairman providing continuity in service. Short term Green Chairmen lead to inconsistency of direction and disruptive operations and policies, and should be resisted. Clubs which pursue this practice feel they are promoting healthy conditions by bringing in fresh faces to try new approaches; but in fact, there are few members at any club whose talents exist in broad enough measure to be good Green Chairmen, and they should not be wasted once they have undertaken these duties by being too often rotated out and retired.

These then are what appear to me to be essential in the role of the Green Chairman, at least in a good Green Chairman. Most Green Chairman will fall short in some or perhaps most of these attributes, but there are also a number who do successfully combine these qualities into their performance, and serve to show all of us how effective and important a good Green Chairman can be; the club and Green Superintendent who have one of these working right now are fortunate indeed."



The Architects Opinion by Bob Lohmann was titled The Art of Putting Green Design. With 18 approach shots and 36 putts the average golfer spends 75% of their shots on and around the green area.

"Putting greens and the adjacent area form the most important part of the golf course and are often the most costly items to construct and maintain. Because of their importance in both use and development of character, each dollar spent on them is well worth it."

Bob discussed the history, methodology and design characteristics of putting greens and surrounds.



Monroe Millers President Message was a list of Murphy's Laws for Golf Course Superintendents.

Laws of the Golf Course

- The weather is either to hot, to cold, to dry to wet or to good to last.
- Next years weather will be better for us.
- More often than not, bad weather reports will be right and good weather reports will be wrong.
- The Greensaire will always break down with three greens to go. To late to cancel aerifying and with enough left to aggravate play tomorrow.
- The sprayer breaks down when pythium is running wild on your fairways.
- The impeller on the Lely spreader will break when it is full of fertilizer.
- The seeder breaks down the day before a rain, and it will rain right after contact fungicides have been applied.

Budget Laws

- Everything you decide to do on the golf course costs more than first estimated and budgeted. It will also take longer than you planned and more time than you have.
- The cost of fertilizer drops the day after you buy.
- Bentgrass seed will be sold out the day before you order.
- Discrepancies in your budget never will be in your favor.

Shop Laws

- Your distributor's parts department will always lack one part - the one you need.
- The wrong part will come in the right box.
- A machine will break down immediately after the warranty is up.
- Leftover nuts never match leftover bolts.
- You will have every size of bolt in the bin except the size you need.
- The right tool is not ever in the right toolbox.
- If you tinker around with something long enough, it will break or malfunction.
- Anything used or loaded to its full potential or capacity will break.
- If something jams, force it: if it breaks, so what? You needed to replace it anyway.

Laws of Golf Course Management

- The day; no the very minute you lean back to relax is the very time the Club President and the Green Committee Chairman stop by. They also stop on those rare occasions when you are gone - usually only on a parts run.
- Precise, conscientious planning and minute attention to detail will never succeed like blind dumb luck.
- A Golf Course Superintendent always thinks next year will be better.
- The first place to look for something is the last place you'd expect to find it.

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Just when you think things are going pretty well on the golf course, something really ugly is right around the corner.

If you faithfully work ten hours a day for long enough on your golf course, you may eventually be successful enough to work twelve hours a day.



Roy Zehren, President of Natural Athletic Turf was elected to the Board of Directors of the Sports Turf Managers Association of America at the fall 1984 meeting.

After 7 seasons working for Ray Knapp at Tuckaway Country Club, Ed Witkowski reported on his first year working for Lesco as the Wisconsin Sales Representative.



**HORMAN NAMED
1ST WISCONSIN
WINNER OF TUCO
SCHOLARSHIP!**

Wayne Horman was named the first winner of the TUCO Scholarship. Horman a senior at the University of Wisconsin Madison was majoring in Soil Science. The TUCO Division of The Upjohn Company was represented by John Turner.




The topic of the editorial by Monroe Miller surprised me as Monroe debated the name of the association and the profession as a whole. Monroe favored Golf Course Manager as the best descriptive title to our jobs and

Wisconsin Golf Course Managers Association as the best association name.

Monroe explained although he was romantically intrigued with the old title of Greenskeeper the shortened version of Keeper of The Green, he thought it was sometimes used in a subordinated sense and even with a contemptuous tone. He expressed the word accompanies a vision of a "good ol' boy" digging a hole in bib overalls. In the end Miller expressed Greenskeeper in no way reflects our duties and is not fitting.

Monroe went on to say he was never quite able to establish why and how the word "Superintendent" became into use. "The word "superintend" is not a verb in common usage - I don't superintend my family finances, I manage them. Bankers don't superintend their banks, they manage them. I don't superintend my golf course, I manage it. The word, over and over is MANAGE. I am a manager."

Monroe went on to say he was going to make a motion at the next meeting to change the name of the association to the Wisconsin Golf Course Managers Association. Obviously he changed his mind or the vote failed because you are reading the publication of the Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendents Association. 



Coming Events

- Feb 2-7 - Golf Industry Show, New Orleans, Louisiana**
- Feb 5 - Wisconsin Hospitality Room, Café' Giovanni, New Orleans**
- March 2 - WGCSA Spring Business and Education Meeting**
Ramada Hotel, Fond du Lac, WI
- March 4 - Northern Great Lakes GCSA**
Spring Symposium, Wausau WI
- March 11, 12 - Reinders Turf and Irrigation Conference**
Waukesha Expo Center, Waukesha, WI
- April 20 - WGCSA Meeting, Geneva National Golf Club, Lake Geneva**
Kevin Knudtson, Host Superintendent
- May 27 - PGA/WGCSA Super Pro, Brown County Golf Course, Oneida**
Scott Anthes, Host Superintendent
- June 15 - WGCSA Meeting, South Hills Country Club, Fond du Lac**
Jim Van Herwynen, Host Superintendent