



Remembering A Short Golf Season

By Rob Schultz

The past year marked the first time in 24 years that I didn't play golf in November.

My clubs are still in the trunk of my car. Waiting. Patiently. Yeah, I know there's snow on the ground. But I'm an optimist. There has got to be a forecast of a 40-degree day coming up soon. I'll use an orange ball.

The past year certainly was bizarre. No golf in November. For that matter, crummy weather meant there wasn't any golf in April, either. I hope this is just a phase the good earth is going through.

But the shortage of golfing days in 1992 didn't mean there wasn't a shortage of excitement. For the first time, I had the pleasure to walk on two of the finest golf courses in the world. I had the pleasure of witnessing my first hole-in-one. I had the pleasure of watching some exciting tournaments.

The good was mixed with the bad and the ugly, too. I watched a wonderful area pro get fired for no reason. I watched my favorite course go corporate. I got splattered on a highway in some God-forsaken place that seemed a million miles from home.

In other words it was a typical golf season. Here are the moments that stick out:

1) *Augusta National*. My trip with the Wisconsin State Golf Association to this piece of heaven was the highlight. Nine months later I can still smell the azaleas.

I'll never forget running into former Green Bay Packer coach Lindy Infante between the 15th and 16th fairways just after John Daly had rifled a long iron at the 15th green. Infante, still upset over being fired, didn't want to make any small talk with a reporter who covered his final day with the Green and Gold. I was being polite and was going to say hello, when he looked me up and down and said, "I guess they'll let anybody in here."

I responded by looking at his CBS-TV badge, then his face that was covered with ice cream, and saying, "I was thinking the same thing."

2) *Crystal Downs*. As I stood on the 17th tee of this mysterious place I gulped as I looked down at the fairway that was about as wide as my driveway. The hole was only 300-plus yards long. 300 yards of sheer fright. It epitomized the Crystal Downs experience.

"Just aim at that tree on the right side of the fairway," said Tuck Tate, who, with his wife, Becky, were my gracious hosts at Crystal Downs and were even more interesting than the course.

I followed Tuck's advice and hit the tree. I walked off with a double-bogey 6 and was happy.

What's amazing about Crystal Downs is that very few have heard of it. Designed by Alister Mackenzie shortly after he finished Augusta and Cypress Point, it's located on the western shore of Lake Michigan just north of Frankfort, Mich. and embodies all the features of Mackenzie's more famous courses.

3) *Vicky Welch*. It's hard to get choked up while watching a local women's golf tournament, but Vicky Welch managed to send waves of emotion through me and anybody else who watched her victory in Madison this summer.

Welch's father, Richard, died suddenly last winter. Since he was a tremendous supporter of the Madison women's tournament, it was decided to rename the championship trophy after him. Then Welch dedicated herself to win it for her dad.

Welch reached her goal with a late charge on the final round at her home course at Blackhawk Country Club that was capped by making a dangerous, 5-foot, left-to-right slider for birdie on the par-3 18th hole. That forced a playoff with Erika Brown. Welch won the championship, and the trophy, on the third hole.

Welch's comeback was totally unlike her. The 24-year-old had a reputation of collapsing late in tournaments. This time she said she felt she had guidance from above. She may have been right.

4) *Brown County Golf Course*. I played it in late July and was appalled. I enjoy Brown County because superintendent Paul Delfosse and his grounds crew work so hard to keep it in private-club condition. But a harsh winter left the course's fairways in horrible shape. It played, and looked, like any ordinary muni.

Then a great transformation occurred. Within three weeks it was back to its former condition. In fact, by late August I couldn't remember Brown County ever looking better. And that's saying quite a bit about one of Wisconsin's greatest jewels.

A rainy spell helped. But most of the credit for the transformation belongs to Delfosse and his crew.

5) *Lawsonia*. I grew up playing the old links course and still cherish the place. But since Tom Spaulding left, it has lost some of its character. A coldness from its new employees has taken over the place like a January blizzard.

The clincher for me occurred last May when I made a reservation on a Thursday to play there that following Sunday—Father's Day—with my dad. I called Saturday to cancel because my father couldn't make it. Since I guaranteed the tee time with a credit card, an employee of the place told me they would still charge me because I didn't cancel within 48 hours of the tee time.

I popped a gasket. I wasn't told of such a rule. I was never informed in writing. But the employee refused to be flexible. Rules are rules, she said. Lawyers are lawyers, I said.

The employee said I wouldn't be charged if they sold my tee time to somebody else. Fortunately, that happened. But the coldness that employee showed me, and I heard quite a few similar stories about Lawsonia's new way of doing business, has turned me off. I love Lawsonia like no other course. But I doubt if I'll ever go back there. And that saddens me.

(Continued on page 23)



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(Continued from page 21)

6) *Pete Reif*. Few golf pros were more important to a course than Pete Reif at The Springs. Yet, as of last spring, Reif was unemployed. Those managing the course decided to make a change for change's sake. Bad move.

The Springs has always operated on a shoestring, but it overcame the trauma associated with that because of Reif. He is the antithesis of those new Lawsonia employees. Always caring, always friendly, Reif was a major reason why golfers kept coming back to the place that had a mobile home for a clubhouse.

The mobile home has been replaced by a beautiful clubhouse as The Springs is trying to have a first-class look. You can build all the beautiful buildings you want, but they'll never be anything special if the people don't operate them in a first-class manner.

That old mobile home pro shop was more of a first-class operation with Reif running it than any of those new buildings will be without him. I hope the new owner hires him back.

7) *Whoops*. Following my wonderful round at Crystal Downs, I drove up the Michigan shoreline with my buddy, John Berman, to Traverse City to check out the Grand Traverse Resort. After spending 15 minutes there we decided to head south toward Grand Rapids, where we were supposed to play the following day.

I checked the map and then pulled out across a busy, four-lane highway. I didn't see a white Taurus station wagon barreling toward my Toyota Celica. Before the driver could barely touch her brakes she plowed into my door.

As a precaution I was taken to a Traverse City hospital. My buddy John and the four people in the other car weren't badly hurt, either. That was amazing since the collision occurred when the other car was traveling around 50 mph.

Strapped to a stretcher inside the ambulance, my first thought was, "They weren't kidding when they said seat belts save lives."

My second thought was, "I hope my clubs are OK."

My third thought was, "Gee, I'm glad I did this after I played Crystal Downs."

8) *A refreshing outlook*. It was a beautiful, late-summer day when my buddy, Scott Schwendeman and I were teamed on the back 9 at Odana Hills with two gentlemen, both of whom are over 70 years old. One of them had been pronounced dead-on-

arrival at a local hospital a few months earlier after an aneurysm reached his aorta. The miracles of medicine saved him, however, and on the day he played with me he shot a 3-under par 33. His friend shot a 35.

Throughout the round they were laughing and telling stories, enjoying every minute of it. They had already walked 18 holes and were thinking

about walking 9 more.

The man who had nearly died a few months later and, according to his friend, was still not entirely out of the woods, pulled me aside one time and explained why he was so happy.

He said, quite simply, "Forget I'm playing well, life is too short not to enjoy a beautiful day like this."

Amen. 🙏

Editorial



HUGO and ROSSI— *They're Both Right On This One*

By Monroe S. Miller

Frank Rossi's trip to our fall business meeting was a good idea. He met some more of our members, had an opportunity to discuss his vision of the turfgrass management program at Wisconsin for the next couple of years, and presented an outline of a number of research projects he has in mind.

He also came up with a good idea. After listening to conversation about how to improve attendance at the autumn business meeting, he stood up and basically asked, "why don't you hold this meeting immediately after the Symposium?"

Sometimes it takes an outsider to come up with the obvious.

The arguments in favor of such an idea are persuasive. It would eliminate a trip for most of us, a trip that comes when time is precious and we are busy getting Wisconsin golf courses ready for winter.

The Symposium is a huge draw. It is difficult to imagine most WGCSA members wouldn't stay around for another hour to attend the meeting.

This new idea of Rossi's eliminates a lot of planning on the part of the board—no additional arrangements for a meeting room or meals would have to be made.

And I've got to believe that our busi-

ness meeting attendance would be greater this way, even if some members did not stay for it. That's the whole idea in a nutshell.

The WGCSA board has wrestled with participation problems at this meeting for as long as I have been a member. In fact, I presided over a meeting one year that had only a dozen people in the audience. It was a grim scene.

We all understand the problems with the timing. Then in some years, bad weather and attending road problems has dictated who could even get there. Rossi's idea solves that, as well.

I believe the officers and board should let Rossi's suggestion be an incitement to action. A new idea like this shouldn't be dreaded or painful—a lot of the purpose of a governing body is to make sure the best ideas have a chance to prevail.

Ideas won't keep; something needs to be done about them. My recommendation is that when the board plans the 1993 Association calendar, the fall business meeting is scheduled to convene immediately after the Symposium concludes.

Victor Hugo, nearly a century and a half ago, wrote about "an idea whose time has come." I think Professor Rossi's idea is one of those. 🙏

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Dinner Dance Review

By Rod Johnson

The 1992 WGCSA Autumn Extravaganza, also referred to as the Dinner Dance, was held on October 9 and 10 in beautiful Minoqua, Wisconsin. The Pointe Hotel served as headquarters for 34 couples who were determined to prove that the 1991 "Minoqua Washout" was a fluke.

With dreary weather leading up to and a gloomy forecast for game time, a repeat of '91 looked imminent. The prediction of good weather during a full moon came through. 'Good' may be stretching it a bit, but we all had the opportunity to see Timber Ridge from somewhere other than the parking lot or the dining room.

The wait was worth it. Dean Musbach, host superintendent, has been trying to show off Timber Ridge for two years. Many thanks are due to Dean and his wife Margie for their role as hosts.

Custody of the coveted Mr. and Mrs. Mow trophy went to Mike and Mary Drugan of Castle Mound. Rookies to the event, but no strangers to the winners circle, the Drugans ran away from the field shooting an excellent score of 40 for the nine hole alternate shot event.



Follow the leader.

Winners of very nice course prizes were Joyce "Chi Chi" Krutilla, Mary "Roller Coaster" Larson, Scott "Six Iron" Schaller, and Mike "Steelhead" Handrich.

An excellent meal was served on Saturday evening at Timber Ridge. The always popular and extremely talented group "Duece Coupe" provided music for our dancing pleasure into the wee hours of the morning.

Greg Kallenberg of Horst Distributing was this year's hospitality host. We thank him for his efforts and

all of the associate members who picked up the tab for refreshments and golf prizes.

Numerous friendships have been spawned during the history of this event. Members and their spouses look forward to each year's event to renew those friendships and to exchange a few war stories.

1993 will mark the tenth anniversary of this event. We "seasoned veterans" extend a most sincere invitation to everyone to attend. 🍷



"And then she stepped on my foot!"



Reverend Murgatoyd gave the invocation.



Are we having fun yet?



Mike and Mary Drugan—The happy winners.



Brian "Stingray" Schmidt



The unknown golfer. Check the grip.



Lordy, Lordy, look who's forty!

Roundtable Meeting held at Lake Wisconsin Country Club

by Kendall Marquardt

On Friday, November 13, 1992, seven WGCSA members converged upon Lake Wisconsin Country Club for an afternoon of questions, answers, comparisons, philosophies and war stories that proved to be of great benefit to everyone.

This event was the culmination of two years' worth of think-tanking by WGCSA Superintendents Kendall Marquardt of Lake Wisconsin Country Club, and Tom Schwab of Monroe Country Club. The format was informal roundtable with welcoming remarks by

the host and a "loose" agenda presented by secretary Schwab.

The participants in this group have similar maintenance budgets and in general face some of the same problems. Basically, a question would be put on the table and would go around the table with each superintendent's answer or methods. Some topics discussed were fertilizer programs, pesticide programs, cultural methods, employees, benefits, budgets and operations.

It was interesting to note the differ-

ences in individual management programs such as greens fungicide recipe, and the degree of satisfaction that each superintendent had with his own program!

Beyond the exchange of information, it was a great benefit to get to know one another a little better. At this time, another meeting is anticipated near the end of February possibly coupled with a questionnaire survey. Anyone interested in participating please contact Kendall or Tom. ♣



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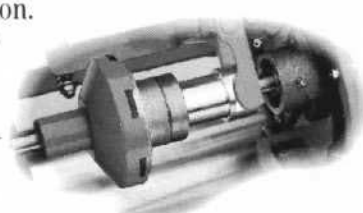
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Living in the Real (Golf) World

By Pat Norton

Do we live in the real world? Is our golf world anything at all like the cold, hard world that the news media constantly portrays?

Do we ever face the prospects of massive layoffs, wage and benefit cuts, or the specter of our golf courses simply going out of business due to poor economic conditions? It'll probably never happen in our lifetimes!

Do any of us foresee that golf will suddenly become less popular, ultimately reducing the need for our specialized services? I don't think so. Golf is on the rise, and its popularity continues to rise dramatically as the baby boom generation ages.

What great news for us all! Imagine being a tennis professional, or owning an indoor tennis facility. What are the long-term prospects for that kind of business? I'm not up on the facts, but I'd much rather be involved in golf, in whatever capacity. Imagine being a landscaper or a lawn care operator - related to our field, but not as specialized. They are more directly tied to the economy and usually face stiff competition from others trying to survive in the real world.

I think I'll stay right here in the golf world, thank you very much. There is a rosy future ahead for golf, and a solid future for all who stay involved in golf course management.

But, let's keep a real world perspective when analyzing our profession. The status of Wisconsin superintendents has skyrocketed since 1960, mainly due to the popularity of golf. Our status has also risen because of the efforts of GCSAA, WGCSA, WSGA, WTA, and the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Big thanks are also due to all those superintendents, past and present, who have helped to organize, shape, and drive these organizations. Our favorable status has been hard earned by our brethren. We must all keep it going.

Much of this progress, however, is internal and noticed mainly by others in the golf industry. We are all very good at attending meetings, seminars,

golf outings, and conferences. When there we all look, feel, and behave very professionally. How often do our golfers see us in these settings? Not very often!

The more intelligent superintendents know that bringing club officials, owners, members, or even friends to a meeting or seminar can do a world of good. It gives those "outsiders" a peek into our golf world and helps them understand us.

The less intelligent group, of which I am a part, never brings along club officials or others to monthly meetings or outings. Consequently, the people I work for and many club members here have a preconceived notion of what I represent. There is little talk of me as a superintendent (a little known term) or as a person backed up by a host of professional organizations, professional research, and professional knowledge.

The everyday, workaday, real world sees me as a "glorified groundskeeper"! And who is to blame for this faulty notion? I am 100% to blame! I am not enough of an advocate for myself or my profession!

The ultimate litmus test of attitudes toward superintendents is the following question that I ask myself: "If I ever decided to leave my present position, would the powers-that-be value the importance of the superintendent enough to unquestionably consider

only those replacement candidates who have formal golf course training, education, and experience?"

Or would a lessor qualified, less costly, more inexperienced candidate be considered? A frequent practice is for a club to immediately turn to the assistant as a probable replacement. This is great as long as that person has formal turfgrass education and training. We've all seen examples of golf courses hiring a superintendent who can't handle the job.

The real golf world is filled with golf facilities that take for granted both the superintendent and at times the golf course. If you have doubts about that opinion, then compare the number of trained, competent superintendents in your area to the total number of golf courses. Do you get the feeling that we're in the minority?

Or look through the WGCSA directory sometime. Where are all the of these golf courses located and who are the so-called superintendents managing them? These courses hire somebody with a bit of experience and a heartfull of desire, throw them out onto the course and then expect conditioning like Augusta National. It takes a lot more than just desire and hard work to properly manage golf courses these days. The average club official, owner, or member certainly does not realize this fact, however. Maybe that's a peek into the real golf world.

Those of us who are involved and strive for professional recognition, therefore, must continue to carry the ball. This means a constant promotion of our profession to the golf world will always be necessary. Right now Bill Roberts and GCSAA are doing an out-



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standing job of promoting the golf course superintendent. Our national association should retain Roberts as permanent president based on the accomplishments that have been piling up during his year at the helm.

Our biggest asset is the fact that our work is out there for all golfers to see. Golfers love to talk and compare different courses. If yours consistently compares favorably with others in your class, you come out a winner.

Our operating philosophy here at Cedar Creek has always been best possible conditioning at least possible cost. That attitude is one that I've had to learn from an owner who is very, very cost conscious. Many of you who are reading this column are probably in the same situation and can identify with these words.

As a profession I feel one of our weakest areas is lack of cost consciousness. We do not have to actually pay the bills, are not responsible for meeting payroll, or even wonder if our paycheck will be forthcoming. That would be a taste of the real world, now wouldn't it?

The real world is where we all live, work, and raise our families. Especially where we work. Make your golf world resemble the real world by being a steward for not only the golf course and the environment, but for the money that's entrusted to you.

Enhance the value that your employers place on your professional position so that they would never ever consider replacing a professional superintendent with a local groundsman.

It would be an injustice to the golf course, an insult to the profession, and a slap in the face to your fellow superintendents. 🏌️

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Environmental Pro-activity

By Dean Musbach

With the winds of change blowing, the environmental movement is catching wind in its sails and thrusting forward into the next century. Every captain needs a competent navigator to guide his ship through hostile water or doom is certain. Knowing the final destination, the navigator can harness the wind and guide the ship to friendly waters.

In the recent election, President-elect Clinton and Vice President-elect Gore referred to the winds of change frequently, and for obvious reasons it seems fitting that they represent the winds of change in this analogy. The environmental movement represents the ship, and the legislatures and governmental agencies represent the captain. Who is the navigator? You guessed it; you are.

The point that I am trying to make is that as superintendents we can guide the environmental movement, and our actions can positively and negatively affect the outcome. We must become environmentalists, educating and promoting environmental awareness to everyone, especially to people in our profession.

It wasn't too long ago that when someone mentioned an environmentalist I pictured a bearded, long haired guy, wearing circular wire rimmed glasses, a tied dyed shirt, torn blue jeans and sandals, eating a granola bar, drinking unsweetened fruit juice, smoking a joint, and driving a Volkswagen camper-van with a "Better Red than Dead" bumper sticker. (If anyone reading this actually has or does resemble this stereotype, send Monroe a picture for his next quiz). The slightest thought of this environmentalist made me sick. The irony of the situation is that now I label myself as an environmentalist.

The environmental movement, dominated by extreme activists, is looking different today. The new players in the movement are more open minded and realistic about environmental issues. They realize that the environment needs to be protected, but not at any cost.

They realize that any environmental impact must be studied so the pros & cons can be examined. The positive effects should overwhelmingly outweigh the negative effects before interacting with the environment.

So, what can superintendents do? We need to be proactive at national, regional and local levels.

On a national level, GCSAA must continue its pro-active agenda in government regulation. If possible, this effort should be intensified. The GCSAA has done an excellent job educating its membership and affiliated chapters, but this needs to be expanded.

The GCSAA needs to reach more superintendents;—its educational resource is priceless and it's the best preventative medicine for our industry. If the proposed by-law changes get passed, the GCSAA will move quickly to create new membership classes that will attract superintendents that previously were excluded for economic reasons.

Currently in the northwoods, there are many superintendents that want to be members, but they aren't because they do not have expense accounts.

Although it is important that the GCSAA be accessible to all superintendents, I feel that the responsibility to educate rests more with the local chapters than with the national. GCSAA cannot address regional diversities as accurately or effectively as the local chapters. GCSAA should continue developing a national strategy, but the implementation needs to be accomplished at the local level.

Local chapters must take a pro-active approach to education, particularly environmental education. If a chapter is to be successful, it needs to reach every superintendent in its region. This should be the primary objective of the chapter.

As I stated earlier, many superintendents in the north lack professional affiliation for economic reasons. I know that some people say, "If you really care about your profession, a couple hundred bucks won't hurt you." My answer to this is, "Welcome to the real world!" I have a wife and four children who depend on me. If I have to choose between putting clothes on their backs or joining a superintendents association, my family will win—no contest.

(Continued on page 31)

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