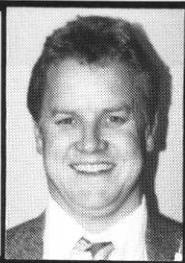


TEE TALK

By
Scott Turtinen
Executive Director, MGCSA



Attending my first national GCSAA International Golf Course Conference and Trade Show in February was, to say the least, a very worthwhile experience.

Perhaps my most vivid memory of my visit to Dallas was the size and scope of the trade show exhibits. The Dallas Convention Center is approximately twice as large as the one we have in Minneapolis.

More important, from my standpoint, was the three-hour seminar that focused on association management, which I attended with MGCSA President Joe Moris. This, basically, was an informal gathering of chapter presidents, executive directors and executive secretaries.

After a variety of topics were suggested for discussion by the group at large, we broke up into small groups to focus on topics like membership, finances, conventions, etc. Joe went to the membership group and learned, among other things, that the MGCSA is about in the middle as far as dues are concerned nationally.

I wound up in a "financial group" with persons from the Carolinas, Ohio, Virginia and Florida. Investment of available cash was a major item reviewed. It was interesting to find out that the Carolina Association, for example, has

Merrill Lynch invest its money, rather than have that association earning a comparatively small return on certificates of deposit.

I also attended a Cart Path Seminar, which was all right but not as illuminating as the association gathering, and it was enjoyable to participate in the "Minnesota Hospitality Night" put together in excellent fashion by Steve Garske and other Minnesota associates.

Perhaps the nicest part of conferences like this is the opportunity to chat with a variety of people from all around the country. Just a tip here and there can make attendance worthwhile.

In comparison with our Minnesota Conference, the national, of course, is about 10 times as big. However, I don't think we have to take a back seat as far as the quality of our program is concerned.

Aside from attending the GCSAA show, about 30 superintendents and I took a break to watch the North (whoops) Dallas Stars play in the attractive Reunion Arena. It was fun to see a pro hockey game again, even though the Stars got clobbered by San Jose 7-1. The Dallas fans still have some learning to do, like the players sit on a bench and not in a dugout.

Overall, the Dallas conference will be long-remembered, but it was nice to get home, even though the temperature difference was nearly 80°.

Congratulations to Bob Distel and Tim Mihalko of Wayzata C.C. on their bungee jumps.

The renewal of your Pesticide License will take place during the 1994 Annual Conference December 7, 8 and 9th.

Rerouted

By Dick Morey
Southern Golf Magazine

There's an old adage in this golf course business that says that superintendents never unpack their bags! They are always awaiting the next "board meeting" or the next Green Chairman to see if they are still on the staff. What a pity, what a shame, what a waste of talent! The assignment of a superintendent's job is very involved and with all the new environmental "twists" becomes more and more so every day. It's no wonder superintendents "split" from the current position and seek another try at a different facility. But, will that change bring about more satisfaction and a better feeling of security in the job? My guess is it may not. My guess is that the assignment of the average golf course superintendent is so diverse that not many can breach the gap. So, what are some of the pitfalls we as course superintendents must overcome?

Maintenance Pitfalls

When all the "smoke" clears away from the GCSAA euphoria about our being "golf course managers" and we get down to the "nitty-gritty" of our job, we are "caretakers" of our golf facility. Experts in such a multitude of maintenance assignments, that it's no wonder we often consider

a "re-routing" and "greener fairways" elsewhere. The November/December issue of the *USGA Green Section Record* presents and summarizes some 20 "pitfalls" we as superintendents encounter. What a list! What a challenge! This list is so complete in delineating the responsibilities of the superintendent, and since it is probably not seen by too many of our working superintendents, *SOUTHERN GOLF* would like to list these 20 "Maintenance Pitfalls." Then we would like to make one summarizing statement at the end of this listing on why superintendents very often consider a "new assignment" and move to a supposedly better situation at another course. Here they are:

- 1) Communications & PR
- 2) Overwatering
- 3) Fast Green Speeds
- 4) Excessive Use of Pesticides
- 5) Continuity of Course Officials/Green Chairperson
- 6) Pesticide Storage and/or Maintenance Buildings
- 7) Tree/Landscape Management
- 8) Amount of Pay
- 9) Labor: Not Enough/Under Qualified

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“Traps,” Waste Areas and Bunkers

A pet peeve of mine is the misnomer “traps,” used by golfers and television announcers to refer to sandy depressions on golf courses. “Traps,” as often stated in Rules seminars that I have taught, are what we use in New Jersey to catch mice in our garages during the wintertime. I also began to take a mousetrap to these seminars and pass it on to each person who said the word “trap” for “bunker”; the person holding the trap at the conclusion of the seminar receives some type of penalty, in addition to becoming the owner of the trap. It’s no big deal, but, as with the incorrect substitution of “pin” for “flagstick,” knowledgeable golfers should know the correct terms.

According to the Rules of Golf, the Definition of a bunker is “a hazard consisting of a prepared area of ground, often a hollow, from which turf or soil has been removed and replaced with sand or the like; grass-covered ground bordering or within a bunker is not part of the bunker. The margin of a bunker extends vertically downwards, but not upwards.”

Oakmont, site of the 1994 U.S. Open, is famous for its church pews (grass-covered areas) in bunkers. If a player’s ball comes to rest in a church pew, by Definition, the ball is not considered in the bunker.

A new term on the scene is “waste area” or “waste bunker.” The USGA has received numerous phone calls and letters on this very subject. What are waste areas, and does a player have different options in playing a ball from these so-called waste areas? Not in the eyes of the USGA.

The Definition of “through the green” is as follows: “the whole area of the course except (a) the teeing ground and putting green of the hole being played; and (b) all hazards on the course.”

Thus, by declaring an area that should be a bunker (hazard) as a waste area, players can now treat it as through the green and do such things as ground their clubs and remove loose impediments. Again, the USGA disagrees with areas that meet the Definition of bunkers being called “waste areas.”

We send the following to those who contact us regarding waste areas:

“Under the Rules of Golf, there is no such thing as a ‘waste area’ or ‘waste bunker.’ By Definition, a bunker is a prepared area of ground from which turf or soil has been removed and replaced with sand. There is nothing in the Rules under which a prepared area of sand (bunker) may be categorized as not a hazard, through the green, by terming it a ‘waste bunker.’ On the other hand, a natural sandy area is not a hazard, and a player whose ball lies in such an area may ground his club lightly in, or remove loose impediments from the area.”

Individuals and clubs, to support the Rules of Golf and the history of our great game, should refrain from treating such areas as through the green. Play them as bunkers, please!”

—Tom Meeks, USGA

Rerouted

(Continued from Page 28)

- 10) Equipment: Not Enough/Poor Quality
- 11) Time Spent on Course
- 12) Documentation
- 13) The Bandwagon Concept (The Leadership CC is doing it)
- 14) Rules Of Golf/Marking The Course
- 15) Lack Of Outside Interest (No Time For Rest Or Family)
- 16) Test Plots
- 17) Staying Current With Technology
- 18) Long Range Planning
- 19) Training & Delegation
- 20) Managing Carts & Cart Paths

Wow! What a list. No wonder the superintendent “leaves home!”

How To Keep Us!

I’m sure most of us superintendents can handle these various and diverse assignments. However, there are two great big obstacles in the way of making our job more tenable. The “low handicappers” and the “Green Chairperson” are

the major problems at most courses.

The severity of the Green Chairperson problem varies with the type of operation. The Private Club is the worst of all because the Green Chairperson along with the elected board change yearly, or even more often! Most Green Chairpersons are the least qualified to handle the management of the superintendent, and most are too stupid to admit that they are out of their territory.

The other major problem area plaguing superintendents is the “low handicapper” who insists that the green be shaved down to “mud” in violation of all good agronomy practices. Close clipping of the green is one of the worst problems afflicting the game of golf today. Greens were meant to have some turf, and the so-called “fast” green is the ruination of more superintendents than any other one factor!

Let’s not “throw the baby out with the bathwater.” Let’s find a way to keep the fine superintendents we have and give them the much needed confidence they deserve. They may even unpack their bags! And we won’t see their names on the “Rerouted” list!