

Match Play Tourney Opens 1983 Season

The 1983 golf schedule will get off to a flying start on April 12 at Evergreen Country Club in Haymarket, with the first round of the Match Play Tournament. This year, it will be limited to the first 64 entries, which should be called in to Walter Montross (451-6619 or 455-0524—home) as soon as possible.

Walter and golf co-chairman George Renault have announced several policy changes, including the requirement for a USGA handicap. They'll be able to take your most recent scores and have them figured by Compu-Golf (the fee is \$4 for the year), or you can have your handicap figured at your club. Their goal is to have everyone with a current USGA handicap by 1984, and they will be checking to see that cards are turned in after each round and that Stroke Control is observed.

The annual Superintendent-Pro Tournament will be at Washington Golf & Country Club on May 10. Check with your pro early, because the field will be limited to 50 teams. The low net team will earn possession of the Clare Emery Memorial Trophy for the year.

The 1983 Golf Schedule is as follows:

March 8 — Open play, Penderbrook

April 12 — 1st Round, Match Play; open play for non-contenstants, Evergreen

May 10 — Superintendent-Pro, Washington Golf

June 14 — 2nd Round, March Play; blind bogey for non-contestants, Andrews AFB.

July 12 — 3rd Round, March Play; flag tournament for non-contestants, Mt. Pleasant

August 9 — Annual Picnic

September 13 — 4th Round, Match Play; open play, non-contestants, Bonnie View

October 11 — Annual Superintendents Championship, Ocean City Yacht & C.C.

November 8 — Match Play Final; 2-man team scramble, non-contestants; Leisure World

December 13 — Open play, Belle Haven

DIRECTORS' MEETINGS

The Mid-Atlantic Board of Directors will meet on Tuesday, March 8, at Penderbrook Golf Club, time—3 p.m. Their April meeting will be on Thursday the 7th at 1 p.m. at the Woodmont Country Club maintenance building.

Re-Rating Process Underway in Mid-Atlantic

If you spot four guys prowling your course, carrying notebooks and a Stimp-meter, don't call the State Police. It's just a course rating team from one of three local associations, doing the re-rating that is part of an effort by the United States Golf Association to make handicapping of golfers fairer and to take into much more account the differences in the difficulty of the more than 13,000 golf courses in the United States. The re-rating is going on nationwide and in 1983 will be in its second year.

The system devised by the USGA to do this is not a simple one, but its aims and methods are understandable. For many years, golf courses have been assigned a "rating" by their state or regional associations. These ratings were based primarily on the length of the course, according to a set formula (total yardage divided by 220 plus 40.9), so that a 6,100-yard course would rate at 68.6 whatever its par, while a 6,900-yard course would rate at 72.3. Ratings are important, because when a handicap is figured for each golfer, the basic differential used is that between the player's score and the course rating.

Under present rules, handicaps are figured using the low 10 of your most recent 20 scores, with 96% being taken of the average differential (result of subtracting course rating from your score) to arrive at a USGA handicap. The lower the rating, the lower the handicap. But, by using only length as a criterion of difficulty, some short, tight little courses ended up with low ratings, while long, wide-open ones had high ratings. Also, there was no way to assist a golfer with a handicap earned on an easy course who had to play in competition on a harder one.

In order to implement the new USGA system, which involves the assigning of a "Slope" number to each course, all courses within an association must be re-rated. The Slope expresses numerically the relative difficulty of each course, compared to an average course Slope of 113. Through a formula based on the new ratings, each course's Slope can be determined and used as the basis for adjusting the handicaps to the course. Thus, a 15-handicapper would get 20 strokes on a course with a 150 Slope and only 11 at an 80-Slope course.

The re-rating considers 10 factors, seemingly subjective but based on an objective scale of from 0 to 10, with detailed descriptions in a written guide to help the raters arrive at a figure. The factors to be considered for each hole are:

- Topography — What kind of lie does the landing area offer? Uphill? Downhill? What type of approach shot?
- Fairway — How wide? Sloping? Overhanging trees?
- Rough — How heavy? Recoverability?
- Out of Bounds — Where? How close?
- Water Hazard — What effect? How much is hole impeded?
- Bunkers — Fairway and green, size, depth, texture
- Trees — Density, height, location, affect on play
- Green-Target — How difficult to hit, firmness, clearly visible
- Green-Surface — Speed (using a Stimp-meter), undulations
- Psychological — 1st and 18th holes usually play hardest

The rating team of four trained golfers walks each hole, making individual judgments on the above factors. If they differ by two points or more on a factor, they discuss it and resolve to within one point. They should not play the course when rating, although the fact of having played it before gives them added insight.

The bulk of the re-rating in the Mid-Atlantic area is being done by teams from the Washington Metropolitan Golf Association, under the leadership of Ed Dosek, an outstanding senior golfer who is chairman of the WMGA Course Rating Committee. To date, 29 courses have been re-rated and assigned a Slope, and the general trend has been for ratings to go up very slightly. There are also Virginia State Golf Association and Maryland State Golf Association rating teams and cooperation among these three associations is excellent, because there is a great deal of work to be done in a fairly short period of time.

If your course has not yet been re-rated, be patient. Either the WMGA, the MSGA, or the VSGA will get around to you in 1983. Then, in 1984, if all courses have been re-rated, the comparative Slope charts will be posted at each course, and handicapping will be fairer for everyone.



Ed Dosek