

Mid-Atlantic Association of Golf Course Superintendents NEWSLETTER

Published by this Association to aid the advancement of the Golf Course Superintendent through education and merit.

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From The Golf World

Nearly half of the new TPC at Avenel has been sprigged with zoysia, and some 25 Mid-Atlantic members were guests of Brian Finger of Summit Hall Turf Farm on July 18 for a preview of the operation. For anyone who missed this outing and who is interested in the process, a visit can probably be arranged.

The Water Hog, a machine designed to remove standing water from turf, came in very handy on the final day of the U.S. Open at Oakland Hills in Birmingham, Michigan in June. Superintendent Ted Woehrlé said afterwards, "The Water Hog saved us. Without it, we would not have been able to mow all the fairways. Water was removed from seven fairways in less than an hour, and in some spots there were six inches of standing water that it removed with ease." The machine was developed by Phelan Investments of San Diego and had been used at the British Masters the week before being called into service at the Open, its first trial in the U.S.

Bill Love, who is affiliated with local golf course architectural firm Ault, Clark and Associates, has been elected to regular membership status in the American Society of Golf Course Architects. Congratulations to Bill, who is a MAAGCS member.

Keynote speaker at the GCSAA Mid-Year Turfgrass Conference and Show in September will be Bart Starr, former quarterback and coach of the Green Bay Packers; the occasion will be the show's luncheon banquet on Friday, Sept. 20.

Much Praise for Prairie Dunes

by Douglas T. Hawes

My favorite golf course is Prairie Dunes, a Perry and Press Maxwell design nestled in the sand dunes of Hutchinson, Kansas. It was love at first sight for me. I had moved from Maryland to Dallas about one month before I first saw it. After a month of flatness, to be suddenly exposed to such a beautiful layout amongst sand dunes and unusual vegetation that appeared to me to have been moved from Cape Cod, near my birthplace in Massachusetts, was too much — I thought I was home again.

To fully appreciate this little gem, you'll have to go there yourself. But, I'll attempt to give you a little insight. "The Dunes," as it is called locally is built on enough land so that there is a good separation of holes. Also, the club has seen fit to maintain only greens, tees, fairways, and very moderate amount of rough. The rest is native plum bushes, yucca, cottonwoods, and wild flowers.

Thus, almost every hole presents you with a narrow expanse of manicured green turf contrasting beautifully with the surroundings. On many holes, Doug Petersen, the superintendent, and the members have added a new back tee. Typically, these tees have been placed up on a sand dune so that you look down on a spectacular view. The best way to enjoy all this is to walk or ride around the golf course without your clubs. Attempting to play it can make you feel the rough is something other than beautiful, unless you only stray a bit and are able to stay in the band of rough that is occasionally mowed.

The greens (called "Maxwell Rolls") are not overly large, averaging 4,500 square feet. They are very definitely undulating, a characteristic of Maxwell design. Even at a 7½-foot Stimpmeter speed, they are never dull to putt, although Doug rarely lets them slow down to that speed. The resulting small number of pin placements, combined with heavy play from members and visitors, makes maintenance of these old, soil-base greens difficult, although a sand topdressing program begun in early 1980 has helped considerably.

From a maintenance point of view, the course has some problems. Hutchinson, Kansas, is not the coolest spot in the nation in July, and even though sand hills surround the fairways, the soil in the fairways is most often a clay loam.

With the fairways located below the surrounding rough, drainage is a problem. Most of the drainage problems have been solved in recent years by an extensive system of drains. Now all the course needs is zoysia fairways, something Doug (and I) would like very much to see.

The new "Golf Course Maintenance Report," a joint study conducted by the National Golf Foundation and the GCSAA, reports that U.S. golf courses spend \$1.7 billion a year to maintain their facilities. Of this amount, \$137 million is expended for new equipment and \$103 million for projects to improve existing facilities; the remainder, almost \$1.5 billion, represents annual operating costs. The some 2,300 golf courses that responded to the survey have a maintenance equipment inventory valued at over \$1.8 billion. The study will be repeated every two or three years to keep the industry up to date on the changing nature of their business.

MATCH PLAY (Continued from page 1)

There were 41 open golf entries, and Virgil Robinson was the low net winner with 66, followed by Steve Nash with a 67 that matched out a similar score by J. Blick. Low gross honors went to Jack Montecalvo with a fine 75, trailed by Harry Allen with 76 and Doc Sands with 78.

Meeting Schedule, 1985

August 13 — Bretton Woods, Annual Picnic, Gerry Gerard, Host
September 10 — Hobbits Glen G.C., Bill Neus, Host
October 14 — International C.C., Steve Nash, Host
November 12 — Hunt Valley G.C., Bob Orazi, Host
December 10 — Naval Academy, Mike McKenzie, Host

NEW MEMBERS

Ronald Lee Ponton, Class D
Assistant Superintendent
Hillendale Country Club
Phoenix, Maryland

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Assistant Superintendent
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Chevy Chase, Maryland