

# High Tech Golf—Who Needs It?

While watching the Wimbledon Tennis Championships last week a couple of things struck me as being non-traditional in the valley of all tennis tradition. The tennis attire and the grass surface of the Wimbledon courts were once based upon the highest standards and traditions of the game.

Wimbledon has long set the standard of tennis apparel and for years required plain white shorts, skirts and tops for all participants. I can recall when the collars and sleeves of the shirts began to show small colors in pipings and stitchings. Then McEnroe or somebody showed up with red and blue inserts in the shoulders of their shirts. Tradition slipped to "predominantly white" uniforms. From that point on, the "Give 'em an inch and they will take a mile" syndrome took over.

Now the costumes (not uniform by any stretch of the imagination) have exploded with color, design and individuality as well as stitched on and printed logos and advertisements for tennis equipment and clothing.

Furthermore, Jim Lampley of ABC suggested that the long held preference for grass courts at Wimbledon may be the next tradition to go. The mutilated grass courts gave evidence of bad bounces and a few slips and tumbles that would not have occurred on a clay court or an artificial composition court. Although Arthur Ashe gave an eloquent defense of grass surfaces, one can imagine that the day may not be long coming when the tennis prima donnas will insist on a more reliable and consistent surface for play.

After all, who would want to lose a quarter million dollars to a bad bounce? That includes the lucrative commercial endorsements that go to the winners and the finalists. Football and baseball have succumbed to the siren's sound of true, smooth surfaces. Even though, it is statistically proven that these surfaces cause more injuries.

## Can Golf Be Far Behind

How soon will we be seeing a golf course with astroturf fairways and indoor-outdoor carpet greens? We already see other inroads in commercialism. Almost all the professional tournaments and many local events are now named after their primary sponsors: The Anheuser-Busch Golf Classic, The Hardee's Golf Classic, The Buick Open.

Golfers are already laden with logos and commercial endorsements. The Silver Pages, Sea Palms, Titleist, Spalding, Ping, and gosh knows what else appears on their clothing, their caps, visors, bags, shirts, trousers and shoes. There is an ongoing competition between golf equipment companies to add successful golfers to their advisory staffs and have them carry their bags, play their clubs and balls. On any given golf telecast you can see Ping bags, Hogan bags, MacGregor bags, etc.

In fact, it may be said that televised golf tournaments have been the source of much of the commercialism on today's Pro Tour. The big bucks of television have attracted the large corporate sponsors even though golf telecasts do not usually garner a large share of the viewing audience. It was discovered that the people who do watch golf telecasts spend a lot of money, not only on golfing equipment and paraphernalia, but on stocks, bonds, insurance, real estate, etc. In short, the golf viewers were a select group of spenders that advertisers wanted to reach.

## Artificial Courses

Owners, operators and maintenance personnel for football and baseball stadia with artificial surfaces claim that maintenance costs for grass have become prohibitive. They also claim that footing and drainage is remarkably improved on the artificial surface.

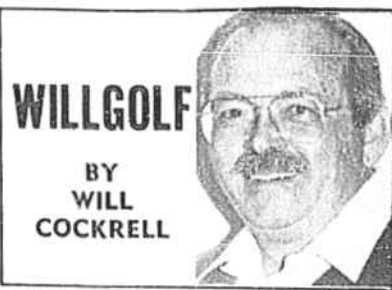
The costs of operating and maintaining a golf course has risen almost as fast as the demand for play. The two combine to make course maintenance a thing of concern for all course superintendents and greens keepers. Certain kinds of maintenance can be postponed until the slow season of the year, but the basic maintenance of grass and turf does not allow such intermittent attention. It demands constant attention. Some of the lush layouts cost between \$25,000 and \$50,000 per hole each year to keep their immaculate playing conditions.

Courses which host PGA Tour events often close their courses for several weeks or more to prepare the landscape for the tour events. Under these circumstances, it seems a foregone conclusion that the day is not far away when someone will venture to construct a course with artificial greens as a minimum or even fairways as a possibility. It will be Putt Putt Golf on a large scale.

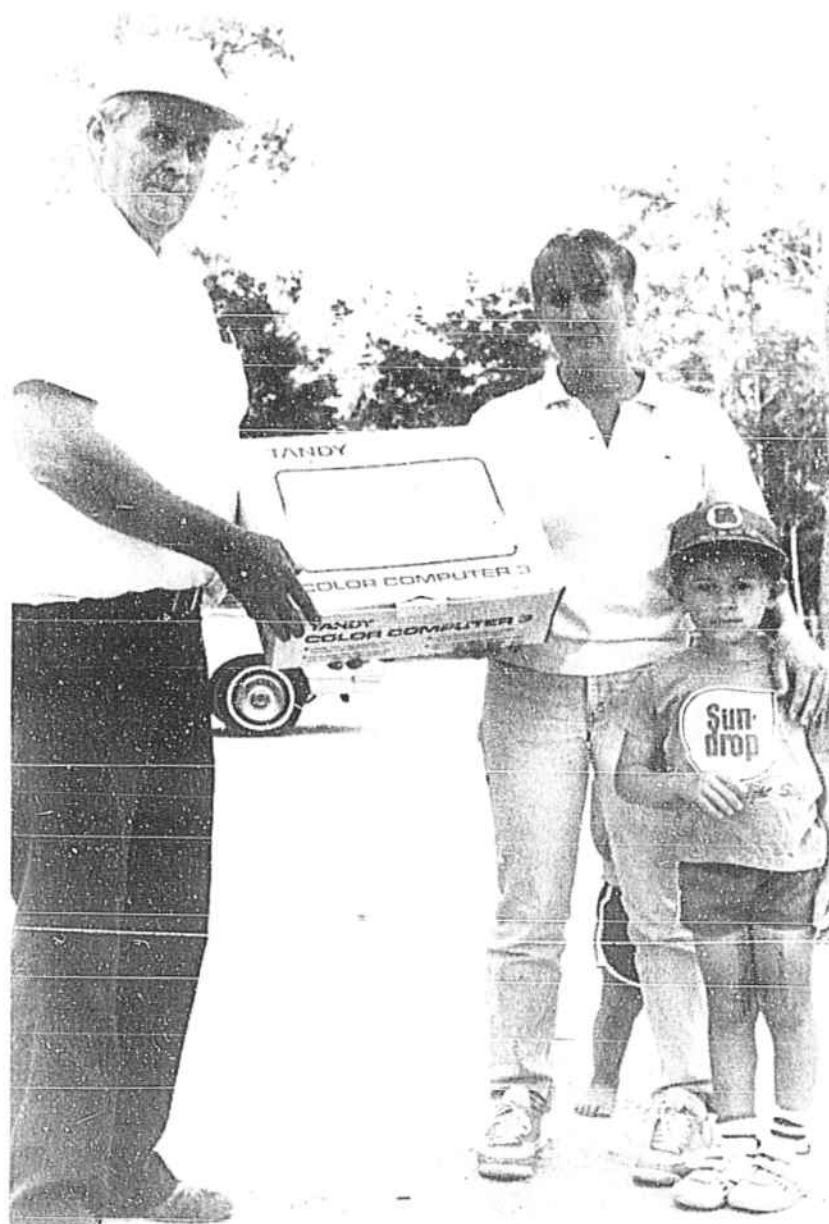
Talk about slick greens. Have you ever putt on outdoor carpet? The ball rolls from here to Calabash with just a touch of the putter. Can you imagine what some of the contours will do to the ball? It may even be necessary to flatten out the existing contours in greens or develop a synthetic surface with more closely approximates grass.

And if that sounds like fun, imagine the kind of spin you could get off of a synthetic surface without the interference of grass between the ball and the clubface. Those shots would make box or square grooves unnecessary. What would they use for rough? How about shag carpet? Now that would really make the game interesting.

Let's hope this is all a pipe dream and someone will soon develop an extra hardy turf grass which will be easy to maintain. We have had about all the High Tech and commercialism we need in golf for a while.



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STAFF PHOTO BY DOUG RUTTER

## Hewett Wins Drawing

Wanda Hewett of Supply and her son, Rusty, won this computer system in a drawing by the Charlotte Babe Ruth League last Friday at Shallotte Municipal Park. League President Homer Andrews, the presenter, said the project earned about \$1,200 for Shallotte's Tee-ball, minor and major league teams. Mrs. Hewett said she bought five tickets earlier Friday.

## Wildlife Commission Warns Against Feeding Alligators

State and local wildlife enforcement officers, concerned with the safety of many well-wishers, are advising people not to feed alligators or any other wildlife species that live in areas where alligators are found.

According to a news release from the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission, alligators are most commonly found in the southeastern part of North Carolina and are considered to be a threatened species in the state protected by federal law.

Feeding alligators, however, turns them into tame creatures who will lose all fear of people and can eventually display aggressive behavior toward humans.

"Brunswick County's loaded with them," said Fred Taylor, local wildlife enforcement officer, who added that the alligator population in this county is as high or higher than any other county in the state.

He said most are found locally in the Green Swamp and Lockwood Folly River. He added that there are several living in the lakes at Oyster Bay Golf Links.

Taylor also said there is one living in a canal at the west end of Ocean Isle Beach which has become used to handouts and has lost its fear of people. Those alligators, he explained, and not the wild ones, pose the biggest threat to humans.

He said an easy way to tell a wild alligator from one which has no fear of humans is to approach it slowly. If it does not dive into the water, it's not afraid and is likely to attack.

Alligators are deceptively fast on land, added Taylor, and can catch most people if they get within 15 feet of them.

"The biggest problem we have is getting people not to feed them," he said. "The alligators get used to that easy meal and stop feeding on their own. They associate the food with humans, and when they get hungry they go looking for humans."

The news release said inquiries into the status of alligators in this state was prompted by the death of a child who was attacked by an alligator last month in Florida. Although wildlife biologists recall no incident in recent history in which an alligator attacked someone, they warn against feeding alligators.

Persons should also avoid feeding ducks in areas where alligators live because alligators feed on ducks and are attracted to the feeding area. Biologists also recommend against cleaning fish in areas known to be gator habitats.

## Brierwood Women Play Odd And Even Golf Holes

The Brierwood Ladies Golf Association played an individual tournament last week, using scores from odd holes on the front nine and even holes on the back nine with half the handicap.

Though she shot birdies at the sixth and 11th holes and a chip-in at the eighth, Ann Hierman finished in a tie for first place with Claire Aston in the top flight.

Other first flight winners in the June 28 event were Nel Justice, who added a birdie at the sixth hole, and Nearle Einstein.

In the second flight, Lucille Martin and Edith Grice tied for first place, while Kay Quackenbush finished second and Doreen Spearin came in third.

Olive Seitz was the only golfer in the tournament to claim first-place honors by herself, with a victory in the third flight over Dot Frey.

Marion Corbin and Maggie O'Mara tied for third in that flight.

Low putt honors for the event, which saw action from 33 members, went to Ann Causer with 29.

Other chip-ins during the event were recorded by Joanna Lang at the fifth hole, Toni Iossi at the fourth, Mary Schaack at the 13th and Lucille Martin at the sixth.

Birdies were also carded by Joanna Lang at the first hole, Mary Schaack at the 17th and Maggie O'Mara at the ninth. Claire Aston, Ginger Sugrue and Toni Iossi each birdied the fifth hole.

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