

A Behind-the-Scenes Look at the Course Ranking System

*How does a course achieve that Top 100 ranking?
The answer may surprise you.*

by Greg Wojick



*Golfweek raters Enjoy their round
at Bayonne Golf Club in New Jersey.*



One of the most interesting and enlightening endeavors I've entered into after shifting from superintendent to industry consultant/business owner is course rating. Signing on as a Golfweek rater (one of the three most recognized course rater groups), I have played some of the area's—and country's—finest courses, traveling with various groups of raters who have only played golf, never worked it. They're the norm. I'm more the aberration.

Does my experience and knowledge of golf courses influence how I rate a course versus how my non-turf professional partners rate courses? Frequently.

I know that rankings matter to many clubs and superintendents. If you ask David Dudones (Westchester CC), Steve Rabideau (Winged Foot GC), and Scott Niven (The Stanwich Club), they will acknowledge that their clubs are keenly aware of the rankings and how it affects their memberships. All three are regularly alerted when raters make their way to their respective first tees, and they make sure to be available to discuss the day's course conditions with each rater group. For Steve, communicating with raters is one of his yearly management goals and objectives.

Knowing that many clubs and their superintendents strive for that Top 100 ranking, I thought I would shed some light on not just the ranking process, but also the people and organizations behind the ratings. Are clubs focusing their efforts in the right place to boost their rankings? Read on. Then you be the judge.

The Makings of a Course Rater

One thing superintendents should know is that golf raters, even those on the top three rating panels—*Golf Digest*, *Golf Magazine*, and *Golfweek*—never have to take a turf exam and, in fact, generally know very little about turf conditioning. Their primary focus when ranking a course? Its design and architecture.

Here's a bit of proof of this notion—an excerpt I drew from a discussion posted on golfclubatlas.com:

"Is the 6th hole at Piping Rock one of the

great par 5s in golf? Would it be an even better par 5 if the bunkers in the driving zone had been left intact? Did Pete Dye err by taking out the fairway bunkers in the driving zone? Is that two-tiered green one of the best par 5 greens in golf?"

Golfclubatlas.com is an online forum that does not formally rank courses, but it does host lively discussions surrounding golf course architecture and other related golf course topics. Occasionally, participants do delve into course conditioning.

This kind of focus is quite typical of the golfing public—raters included. Even the raters groups I mentioned weigh course design and architecture far more heavily than conditioning in their rankings.

There are three "gatekeepers" who manage each of the ranking lists. Brad Klein of *Golfweek* magazine, Joe Passov of *Golf Magazine*, and Ron Whitten of *Golf Digest* each have the ultimate say in how the lists are created, and each group has a set of criteria for not only ranking courses, but also for selecting their raters. Here's what I've learned about each rater group and the standards your course may be measured by.



Joe Passov, *Golf Magazine*

Golf Magazine's Rater Program

The *Golf Magazine* group handpicks its course raters. There are only 100 panelists across five continents: Asia, Australia, Africa,

Europe, and North America. The panel boasts pro golfers Jim Furyk, Amy Alcott, and Justin Rose, as well as a host of renowned architects such as Rees Jones, Tom Doak, and Tom Weiskopf, and golf industry insiders, including the USGA's Mike Davis and Herb Kohler.

Explaining *Golf Magazine's* special breed of rating, Joe Passov notes, "We have no specific criteria that our raters must follow; they tell us what constitutes 'greatness' in a course. Still, among the architectural elements they consider are design rhythm, variety of terrain and holes, setting and conditioning, and how well the course tests a player's full arsenal of skills. Our panelists determine how much value to assign to each characteristic."

Golf Magazine's 'Top 100 in the World'

At year's end, with all the raters' ballots in, Joe Passov has the difficult job of tallying all the ratings and formulating a list of the Top 100 in the World. Here, in short, is how the *Golf Magazine* system works:

Each course that places in the top three on a panelist's ballot earns 100 points; spots 4 to 10 earn 85 points, followed by 11 to 25, which earn 70 points, 26 to 50 earn 60 points, and so on down the list up to those ranked 251+, which are given 0 points. Any course that receives a "remove from ballot" vote has 10 points deducted.

Architects on the panel are not permitted to rate their own original designs, and course owners cannot rate their own properties.

Tripp Davis's Sentiments on Rating

Golf Magazine panelist and Architect Tripp Davis, well known to Met area superintendents, takes a concerned approach to the rating of golf courses.

"Too often the rating comes down simply to beauty contests," says Tripp, also an accomplished amateur player, who feels that no one can sufficiently rate a course from just one round of golf. Tripp would ultimately like the rating event to include, at the very least, a round of golf followed up the next day with another visit to the course to more closely evaluate the architecture of each

“If I had my way there would be a troupe of cavalry horses run through every trap and bunker on the course before a tournament started, where only the niblick could get the ball out and then but only a few yards.”

— C.B. Macdonald,
golf course architect

*Tripp Davis and Associates
Completes Phase Two
Restoration of Spring Lake
Golf Club in New Jersey.*

hole. He clearly knows that many raters, and average golfers alike, can't help but base their opinion of the course on their own personal experience of the day.

“If the sun is shining,” says Tripp, “and the course is firm and fast and the rater plays well, it's likely that that course will receive a better ranking than if the same individual played on a rainy, soggy, cold day and played poorly.”

Tripp was clear that the strategy of each hole, and the overall course, should be the basis for rating a course.

From a conditioning standpoint, Tripp admits that focus and importance on conditioning can vary from club to club. Often-times, members who frequently travel from course to course will create relative rankings for conditioning.

Bunkers, in particular, have been a real concern for Tripp. He notes that the current trend for bunker construction and maintenance assures a more perfect and consistent lie than the surrounding grass can offer. In a recent televised golf tournament, Jordan Spieth was actually caught on camera urging his ball to get in the bunker!

“Bunkers are supposed to be hazards,” says Tripp, “and many architects will deepen bunkers to create the feeling of a hazard while striving to design the structure for perfect sand conditioning. Liners, capillary concrete, and Billy Bunker-type construction have definitely made their way into course construction and renovation.” This perfection has unfortunately become perceived as what constitutes good conditioning.

In Tripp's observations, he's noted that playing host to important tournament events gets more serious golfers talking about those courses and can ultimately help the course's chance of receiving a high ranking. He also knows that having a public relations person on staff helps spread the good word about a course.

Tripp's ideal rating system: Put aside the course's beauty and conditioning and your overall golf experience, and acknowledge the best through analysis of the course's strategic interest.

Golfweek's Rater Program

As director of *Golfweek's Best Course Program*, Brad Klein knows that course ratings can be debated almost endlessly. In his book, *A Walk in the Park: Golfweek's Guide to America's Best Classic and Modern Golf Courses*, Brad describes the difficult job of a rater and what he believes constitutes a great course:

“The amazing thing about golf holes is how little they have in common,” writes Brad. “The rulebook specifies only a single regulation—that the little cup we play for on each putting surface be four-and-a-quarter

“The ideal hole (or golf course) is surely one that affords the greatest pleasure to the greatest number, gives the fullest advantage for accurate play, stimulates players to improve their game, and never becomes monotonous.”

— Alister MacKenzie, golf course architect



Brad Klein, director of Golfweek's Best Course Program

inches in diameter. All else is up for grabs: terrain, elevation, soil, grasses, and setting, as well as yardage and par. When these elements are combined in an aesthetically pleasing way, we have the makings of greatness. Mere beauty, though, isn't enough. The course must be intriguing, strategically challenging, and perhaps even a bit whimsical to be recognized as great.”

Continuing on the “business” of rating, Brad adds, “All golfers have their likes and dislikes when it comes to course design. The trick in golf, as in any endeavor, is to move beyond the realm of individual opinion and arrive at a more systematic method of evaluation. The process might not be an exact science, but it certainly can be more than personal preference. Along the way, golfers might learn some things that will help them appreciate their own courses and play better as well. What good is the business of rating unless it helps us enjoy the game more?”

The Profile of a Golfweek Rater

In 2004, *Golfweek* had a team of 285 volunteer raters (representing 49 states) who perennially scoured the countryside in search of the best of the best. The number of raters has now swelled to nearly 700, drawn from

every state and half-a-dozen countries.

In recruiting raters, *Golfweek* looks for people who:

- Love golf and are seriously enthusiastic about looking at different golf courses
 - Handle themselves well and represent *Golfweek* with the utmost professionalism
 - Play quickly and without emotional outburst
 - Are able to rise above their own golf score in examining a course and be objective about a series of detailed architectural criteria
 - Have the time and willingness to get around and see courses they have never played before
 - Are willing to study, read, and look behind the scenes, as well as ask good questions of established professionals in the field
 - Are willing to turn in their ballots on a rolling basis throughout the year
 - Have the ability to cast their ballots online
 - Are willing to attend and participate in *Golfweek* rater educational events
 - Are not members of any other national publication's course rating staff
- (On several occasions, raters have resigned from other panels to join the *Golfweek* rater program.)

Once prospective raters are accepted into the program, they are sent a brief orientation that helps educate them on the many elements that go into rating a course.

Golfweek raters are a diverse group with a variety of playing abilities, careers, and socioeconomic backgrounds. More than half of *Golfweek's* raters are single-digit handicappers. Nine percent are women—the highest percentage of female raters of any national publication panel. Many raters are couples who travel and play golf together.

Golfweek raters range from the former head of the American Medical Association to a truck driver. There are golf writers, course designers, superintendents, and golf course management executives, as well as pharmacists, attorneys, schoolteachers, dentists, psychotherapists, and even a brain surgeon. There are a handful of raters who own their own airplanes and some who travel the country in their RVs.

Ranking 'America's Best'

Golfweek refers to its top-ranking courses as “America's Best.” Those rankings are based on 10 criteria, including strategic considerations of shot-making and design balance, as well as the aesthetics of conditioning and golf course setting. *Golfweek's* patented “walk in the park test” is another crucial variable. It refers to the extent that the four or so hours spent at a course are worthwhile as an overall outdoor engagement.

What distinguishes the *Golfweek* America's Best Courses from the course ratings done by other publications is a division of the golf course universe into two categories: Classic (up to 1959) and Modern (1960 and after). Roughly half of the existing stock predate 1960 and half postdate that year. More important are the era-specific differences in design, construction, and grassing.

Andy Staples, an up-and-coming architect who has presented educational sessions at *Golfweek* rater events, feels that a great course requires more than a good feel or “walk in the park” appeal. It needs to have a soul. It needs to reek of golf throughout the entire property experience.

Golf Digest's Rater Program

Golf Digest is viewed by many as the best of the three magazine rating systems. Debuting in 1966, it is the nation's oldest course ranking system and easily the most recognizable. Though the group started with a rating system known as the “200 Toughest,” they altered their system in 1969, changing their focus to today's “100 Greatest.” Recently, *Golf Digest* added a second level to their 100 Greatest, now putting the 200 Greatest courses on their list.

Though held in high esteem, not everyone sings this group's praises. Criticism seems to stem from the time when *Golf Digest* based its course rankings on “toughness,” while requiring all their raters to maintain at least a 5.0 USGA index. The implication was—and still is—that only the best players know how to rate courses, and as high-level players, they tend to be more

“If a course needs to be in great condition to be played effectively, then the design strategy is flawed.”

– Tom Watson, pro golfer



Ron Whitten, Golf Digest

keenly focused on identifying hole and course difficulty and ranking courses accordingly.

Seemingly taking a contrary stance to *Golf Digest's* ranking priorities, Architect Donald Ross describes his more low-key approach to course design in his book, *Golf Has Never Failed Me*.

“Most of the golf courses I’ve built are hardly championship courses,” writes Ross, “but rather intended to be a delight to play. Outside of Pine Valley, the National Golf Links, and Lido, none I would call real championship tests. A championship course today,” he continues, “would mean a distance of between 6,500 and 7,000 yards, and not five golfers in a thousand want that kind of course for everyday play.”

Ranking the ‘100 Greatest’

Controversy aside, many clubs and courses recognize only *Golf Digest* as the irrefutable “top gun” in the world of course rating. Winged Foot Superintendent Steve Rabi-deau is quick to admit that his club doesn’t recognize any other rater group. “We focus solely on *Golf Digest*,” he says.

According to Ron Whitten, who is responsible for overseeing the *Golf Digest*

program, *Golf Digest's* list is the most respected because they offer the most transparency. “We publish category-by-category scores of all winning courses, and we base our results solely on those scores,” says Whitten. “We don’t cook the books.”

Below are the criteria that go into creating *Golf Digest's* rankings:

1. Shot Values. How well does the course pose risks and rewards and equally test length, accuracy, and finesse?

2. Resistance to Scoring. How difficult, while still being fair, is the course for a scratch player from the back tees?

3. Design Variety. How varied are the golf course’s holes in differing lengths, configurations, hazard placements, green shapes, and green contours?

4. Memorability. How well do the design features (tees, fairways, greens, hazards, veg-

etation, and terrain) provide individuality to each hole, yet a collective continuity to the entire 18?

5. Aesthetics. How well do the scenic values of the course (including landscaping, vegetation, water features, and backdrops) add to the pleasure of a round?

6. Conditioning. How firm, fast, and rolling were the fairways, and how firm yet receptive were the greens on the day you played the course?

7. Ambience. How well does the overall feel and atmosphere of the course reflect or uphold the traditional values of the game?

To arrive at a course’s final score, Ron Whitten explains that they first discard “outlier” evaluations at the high and low end. (Statistician Dean Knuth, creator of the United States Golf Association’s Slope and Course Rating System, does the math for

How Much Things Change but Really Remain the Same

Look closely at this chart created in 1907 by C.B. Macdonald, who is considered the father of American golf course architecture. Note the similarities between today’s ranking systems and his vision of the ideal course layout.

Essential Characteristics		Merit
I. Course		45%
a. Nature of soil	23%	
b. Perfection in undulation and hillocks	22%	
I. Putting Greens		18%
a. Quality of Turf	10%	
b. Nature of undulation	5%	
c. Variety	3%	
III. Bunkers and other hazards		13%
a. Nature, size, and variety	4%	
b. Proper placing	9%	
IV. Length of hole		13%
a. Best length of holes	8%	
b. Variety and arrangement of length	5%	
V. Quality of turf of fair green		6%
VI. Width of fair green of the course 45-60 yards		3%
VII. Nature of teeing ground and proximity to green		2%
		100%



Greg Wojick (second from left) and his Golfweek raters group head out to play Fishers Island Club in Fishers Island, NY.

the group. He tosses out any evaluation that's more than two standard deviations from a course's mean score.)

"We then total the course's average scores in the seven categories, double-weighting the Shot Values category," says Whitten. "A course needs 45 evaluations over the past eight years to be eligible for America's 100 Greatest. The minimum ballots for 100 Greatest Public is 25, for Best in State, 10.

PGA.com Sums Up Golf Digest's Latest 'Greatest' List

This year, with the "Golden Anniversary" of *Golf Digest's* biennial course rankings, it has revealed its newest edition of what is now called "America's Greatest 100 Courses."

As a PGA.com writer recently noted, there are a number of changes to the 2015-2016 ranking, which no doubt, will prompt much debate in clubhouses and grillrooms nationwide over the next few months.

He points to the biggest change right at the top, where Augusta National reclaimed the No. 1 spot from longtime top choice Pine Valley, which now slots in as No. 2. Another change in the top 10 sees the East Course at Merion move up from sixth to fifth, switching places with Oakmont.

There are many more moves up and down, and off and on, the top 100—and even more throughout the second 100. According to Ron Whitten, this is due, in part, to the fact that 51 of the current top 100 courses weren't even around when the inaugural list was issued.

In fact, Whitten reveals, only 24 courses have appeared on every one of the lists—and, he notes, several well-known courses haven't always been ranked. Among them are Shinnecock Hills, which is now all the way up to No. 4; National Golf Links of America, now No. 8; and Chicago Golf Club, now No. 14.

Here's another tidbit worthy of note: Seven courses joined the top 100 this year, but only two of those were built in the past 30 years: Wisconsin's No. 42 Erin Hills, which opened in 2006, and Florida's No. 100 Streamsong Red, which opened in 2012. What took the other five so long to be recognized?

Though Whitten doesn't offer any insight into these specific courses, we can surmise that it's due to a combination of maturity and improvements; slippage among some of the courses that fell down, or off, the list; changes to the raters' tastes and criteria; and changes to the roster of raters. Whitten notes that there were 125 raters when the list began and 10 times that many now.

Another interesting fact: Course architect Seth Raynor had three courses join the new top 100 list, and he's been dead for 89 years. How'd that happen? All three—No. 53 Camargo Club, No. 64 Yeamans Hall, and No. 99 Shoreacres—have been recently renovated by Tom Doak. As Whitten says, they're all classic designs that have been fully retrofitted for the modern game.

So What Is a Superintendent to Do?

Now that you've read the ins and outs of what's involved in course rankings, you're probably sitting there scratching your head. What I've realized in my personal experiences as a rater, and now in my research for this article, is that, first and foremost, you shouldn't disqualify any one rater group from coming to rate your course. As I hope you can see from this article, each group has its own merits.

Beyond that, quite honestly, I would be hard-pressed to recommend that you do any one thing over another to win the hearts and ratings of the golf course rating groups.

While superb architecture and design are important, they're not the be-all and end-all of getting your course ranked among the Top 100. There are at least several courses throughout the country that have completed massive renovations only to have their courses' rankings fall.

Conditioning can't be your sole focus either. What is considered the ultimate to one rater, may mean little to another. As you can see in comments made throughout this article, even famed golf course architects and other industry professionals have opposing views of what makes golf courses great.

That said, I do believe you can't ignore the benefit of putting effort into creating an overall good playing experience for golfers, one that leaves them with a favorable impression of your course. Despite the supposed downplay of conditioning in course rankings, I've found conditions do, if only subliminally, affect most raters' perceptions—and potentially ratings—of a course.

Good press about your course, even if it's just by word of mouth, is another factor that can influence raters' opinions. Hosting a notable tournament—though not practical for everyone—can be a great way to attract the kind of attention that might actually up your course's chances of receiving a high ranking. Everyone, after all, likes a winner.

Debates about rankings invariably enter into grillroom discussions so at the very least it's wise to become conversant with the pros and cons of various architectural and design features that your club may one day feel obligated to consider.

I've tried, here, to open everyone's eyes to the fact that finding a precise formula for earning a high course ranking can be a bit like shooting in the dark—unless, perhaps, you're an Augusta National or Pine Valley, which has near-endless resources and all the right things in place from the very beginning.

It's up to each individual to acquire the knowledge needed to communicate to club boards and committees the potential pitfalls of making significant changes to their course with the sole mission of bumping up their course ratings.

But as I said in the beginning of this article, my mission here was to present a look at the world of course rating—not a definitive prescription for boosting your ranking. After working on this piece, I feel only one thing in the world of golf rating is for certain, and that is that *nothing* is for certain.

So is your club focusing its efforts in the right place to boost its rankings? I'll have to let you be the judge.

Greg Wojick is a member of the Tee to Green Editorial Committee and co-owner of Playbooks for Golf.

A Year in the Life of a Golfweek Rater

by Greg Wojick

This past year, I played some great courses with great conditions. I golfed with fellow Golfweek raters who are Wall Street professionals, businessmen, doctors, lawyers, green committee members, club board members, real estate pros, and CPAs, many of whom are private club members.

What you'll read here are a few of the facts and figures surrounding my travels as a Golfweek rater, as well as a number of interesting, even valuable, lessons learned along the way.

To put things in perspective, here are a few statistics from my 2015 golfing year:

- **Rounds played:** 20 as a rater; visited another 100 or so on work-related trips (My experience is that a typical rater plays between 50 and 150 courses per year.)
- **Met-area courses played:** 12
- **Raters retreats attended:** 1 (Utah/Nevada)
- **Years as a Golfweek Rater:** 4+

Rater Retreats: They ARE a Treat

The year started with me and three other local raters traveling to Utah and Nevada to attend a Golfweek Raters retreat. Raters are

required to attend a minimum of one retreat every two years.

A retreat typically offers space for as few as a dozen to as many as 50 or more players. Some are mini-retreats that might include two or three courses played over a couple of days.

Other retreats offer the opportunity to play four or five courses over four or five days, with dinners, breakfasts, and educational sessions thrown in. As part of the educational sessions, Brad Klein frequently is there to offer insightful observations and comments about the courses we're about to play. Other times architects like Gil Hanse, George Bahto, Andy Staples, Pete Dye, and Tom Fazio will present their thoughts. And often, the courses' superintendents will be on hand to present an overview of the days' conditions, upcoming or completed project work, or recent golf course renovations.

In 2016, Golfweek is offering 20 rater retreats throughout the U.S., Spain, Portugal, South Africa, and Nova Scotia. The retreats offered every year include Bandon Dunes, the Kohler courses, several Casino-related courses, Pinehurst, and Kiawah Island. In addition, Golfweek sets up retreats surrounding the Masters and the Ryder Cup.

Lessons Learned on the Links in 2015

Here are a few things I picked up in my travels.

Lesson #1: Raters aren't always welcome. A rater can simply contact a club and ask permission to play and rate the course. Most always the Golfweek membership card must be sent to the club. Raters can play and rank a course alone, but more often than not, a group of fellow raters will come to rate a course together.

Generally, clubs are pleased to have their courses rated, but every once in a while, I'll get a less-than-receptive initial response to my request to rate a course.

One of the "best" of these responses came from a superintendent I know. When I told him I would like to have a group of card-carrying raters join me to rank his course, he responded: "*Card-carrying? Meaning washed-up middle-handicappers who are looking for free golf on courses they can't afford to play, and then rate those courses based on how they set up to their game?*"

Ok. I had to acknowledge a tincture of truth in this super's "joking" response, but

"A great course requires more than a good feel or 'walk in the park' appeal. It needs to have a soul. It needs to reek of golf throughout the entire property experience."

– Andy Staples, golf course architect and designer of Sand Hollow Golf Course in Hurricane, Utah

nonetheless, he did connect my group of Golfweek raters with the proper channels to play and rank the course. The club? It was Siwanoy and the super, none other than Steven McGlone. It was a pleasant day and opportunity to see the newly renovated course, a Mike DeVries design.

Meadow Brook's John Carlone was another area super who graciously paved the way for our group of raters and gave us a sneak peek into the specifics of their upcoming renovation work set to start in August. John and his committee have hired both Brian Silva and Brad Klein to design and oversee the work.

This chance to play Meadow Brook before and, hopefully, again after his significant renovation is a great opportunity for the non-turf professionals in my raters group to better understand the dynamic nature of courses and ultimately improve their ability to rate them.

Lesson #2: Raters' perceptions aren't always reality. No matter where we play, I always ask my partners questions about their perceptions of the golf course presentation. Invariably, I would be taunted about my observations, which of course included commentary on disease, mowing patterns, watering techniques, trimming, and rough

height. Though my golf partners had trouble conversing about golf course maintenance, and would often make light of it, they could speak quite authoritatively about green speed and smoothness.

When I would press them to describe what they feel makes for excellent course conditions, they more often than not couldn't list any specifics, just that they would "know it" when they "experienced it."

Keep in mind, that this kind of subjective assessment isn't likely unique to this group. I suspect that it happens more often than you might expect among other groups of course raters.

Lesson #3: The Information gap hasn't closed. This past year, I would play with rater groups of non-turf professionals, and we would often be joined by golf pros and members from the clubs we were rating. With each experience, I was made painfully aware that the information gap between turf professionals and golfers is as wide as ever. Little progress has been made in the public's perception and knowledge of the turfgrass management profession.

Golfers do generally believe, however, that they have a grasp on what seems to be "easy work" maintaining a golf course. If only they understood the myriad challenges superintendents and their crews face each day.

Educating the golfing public about what it takes to cultivate and maintain these beautiful golf courses to their standards is a job that still needs to be done—each and every time the opportunity presents itself.

Lesson #4: Raters are only human. On a glorious weather day, three fellow Golfweek raters and I made the fun trip to play Fishers Island Club, ranked by all three magazine systems as among the top in the world. Each hole offers wonderful views, as well as golf challenge, strategy, and interest. As circumstances would have it, on this day, one member of our foursome was struggling with his game. He hit a number of shots offline, sometimes way right or way left.

After a dozen holes or so, I politely asked him if he agreed that this course is worthy of one of the world's top 10 bests. The obviously dejected rater responded, "Not one of my favorites at all." The 11.0 index golfer ended with a very high score for the day scoring just shy of 100. Human nature can clearly obscure a rater's perception of the course. Most don't succumb to this type of rating, but some do. I can attest to the fact that most raters are golf nuts who do take their role seriously, usually in spite of their personal golfing experience on a particular day.

Member News

New Members

Please join us in welcoming the following new members:

- **Rafael Bances**, Class C, Sunningdale CC, Scarsdale, NY
- **Kelly Barrell**, Class C, Quaker Ridge GC, Scarsdale, NY
- **Steven Bigelow**, Class C, Winged Foot GC, Mamaroneck, NY
- **Sean Blatz**, Class C, Upper Montclair CC, Clifton, NJ
- **Joshua Callan**, Class C, Trump Golf Links at Ferry Point, Bronx, NY
- **Nicholas DeBellis**, Class C, Bonnie Briar CC, Larchmont, NY
- **Timothy Doherty**, Class C, Fenway GC, Scarsdale, NY
- **Wesley Foster**, Class C, GlenArbor GC, Bedford Hills, NY
- **Richard Gold**, Class C, Winged Foot GC, Mamaroneck, NY
- **Shawn Haverdink**, Class C, Quaker Ridge GC, Scarsdale, NY
- **Anthony Heath**, Class C, Paramount CC, New City, NY

- **Hunter Keech**, Class C, Round Hill Club, Greenwich, CT
- **Scott Lund**, Class SM, Tashua Knolls Golf Course, Trumbull, CT
- **Carlos Martinez**, Class C, Upper Montclair CC, Clifton, NJ
- **Noah McCahill**, Class C, Trump Golf Links at Ferry Point, Bronx, NY
- **Patrick McGinn**, Class C, Waccabuc CC, Waccabuc, NY
- **Ron McNaughton**, Class C, Apawamis Club, Rye, CT
- **David Miller**, Class C, Sunningdale CC, Scarsdale, NY
- **Thomas Panton-Lula**, Class C, Wykagyl CC, New Rochelle, NY
- **Nicholas Pfister**, Class C, Waccabuc CC, Waccabuc, NY
- **Nicholas Roberto**, Class AF, Cushman/E-Z-GO, Augusta, GA
- **Mike Scheyd**, Class C, National Golf Links of America, Southampton, NY
- **Daniel Stover**, Class C, Innis Arden GC, Old Greenwich, CT

In Sympathy

It is with great sorrow that we announce the passing of **Al Dolge** of Alfred K. Dolge Company in Westport, CT. Al passed away August 23 in his sleep at the age of 88.

A member of the MetGCSA since 1991, Al called on many Met area superintendents throughout the years. After earning a bachelor's from Harvard University and attending UPenn's Wharton School of Business, Al enlisted in the air force where he achieved the rank of captain.

After his military service, Al joined the C.B. Dolge Company of Westport, CT, a family industrial chemical manufacturing business founded in 1889. He later became president of the C.B. Dolge Company, which merged with Rochester Midland Corporation of Rochester, NY. Throughout the years, Al's interaction with his customers was his greatest enjoyment.

Al is survived by his wife, Susan Grondona Dolge; his daughter, Elizabeth Christina Dolge of San Rafael, CA; his son, Alfred Karl Dolge Jr. of Chapel Hill, NC, and many friends.