

18 HOLES WITH HAWTREE

No. 12—THE HIGH VELD

by FRED HAWTREE

It is rather more fashionable to write about South Africa than from South Africa just now but the Horton victory at Royal Durban gives a certain excuse—"The first foreigner to win the South African Open" as the *Eastern Province Herald* put it. It is also not uncommon for golfing journalists covering tournaments abroad in winter to slip in a few words about the sunshine which is roasting them with the hope that the snow back home is not too deep. If I fall into the trap it need cause no resentment because spring should be in the air by the time this 12th hole is played and I shall have been home a month or more.

Summer in Johannesburg is the green time; in winter, frosts turn the golf courses a light brown and the game reminds one of early prints of golf on the ice. Putts skid across the greens and the ball runs nearly as far as it carries from the tee.

Contouring of green surfaces is therefore very subtle—so subtle, in fact, that it is often hardly visible. The type of undulation which caused alarm on British seaside greens before watering became general, would cause mayhem here. The local *Cynodon dactylon* does not like water when it is dormant and in any event this would not keep it green when temperatures fall. By the same token cross slopes on fairways need to be restrained and calculable.

These limitations have in no way inhibited design generally. On the contrary, the standard of the layouts I have seen is uniformly high. C. H. Alison the English golf architect no doubt helped to set this standard with Glendower, Germiston, and Pretoria West End. He later collaborated with A. F. Tompsett who was responsible for Kyalami amongst many others. Bob Grimsdell, another South African golf architect recently completed the River Club, with some very fine holes in awkward country

and now collaborates with Brian Wilkes. Both Tompsett and Grimsdell were contemporaries of Sid Brews who came out here from Minchinhampton in Gloucestershire. All three did a great deal for South African golf in other ways besides designing courses.

The modelling of greens and bunkers on these courses is a delight and the uses of trees and water both in play and as decor often out-Trents the Jones's. Length naturally, gets considerable emphasis (where doesn't it?) because at 6,000 ft. the ball flies much farther in the thin air. All the 200 yard posts are at 225 yards and Mr Gary Player is even now advising a new Rand Mines development on a golf course which will top 8,000 yards. Serve him right if he has to play on it!

Short holes are proportionately longer short par 4's of, say, 340 yards are not liked because they are driveable. "Sky-line" greens where the base of the flagstick is not visible also gets low marks though it is hard to see how they can always be avoided.

The grasses used are mostly indigenous strains of *Cynodon* in Florida being popular for greens and Cape Royal on fairways. A local "kweek" is also generally in attendance and may be developed instead of commercial strains while the aggressive kikuyu will send its tentacles into everything unless kept at bay.

When the frosts come, the season's growth on the greens has left a brown fibrous mat which serves to support winter play until just before spring when all greens are scarified down to bare earth. The members seem to tolerate this for three or four weeks when all becomes green again.

Labour for upkeep is plentiful and possibly over employed. At one course during the scarification process I counted 24 native workers round one

green. One man was operating the machine, two were sweeping behind him and 21 were draped round their brooms in earnest conversation. But there was nothing they could do even if they had wished to take a more active part in the operations. But while there is handweeding of undesirable grasses to be done this situation has its advantages.

The rough can be very impressive especially in higher rainfall areas near the coast. Palms, tree ferns, tree heathers, tall reeds add to the spectacle beside flowering trees and shrubs. It is reported that the following conversation took place within earshot but not within sight of a fairway.

“Where are you caddie?”
 “I’m here, master.”
 “What are you doing caddie?”
 “Looking for your ball, master.”
 “Well stop worrying about the ball. Come and look for me!”

DATES TO REMEMBER

**INTERNATIONAL
 SPORTSGROUND, MACHINERY &
 EQUIPMENT EXHIBITION**

**Motspur Park,
 15th, 16th, 17th September 1970**

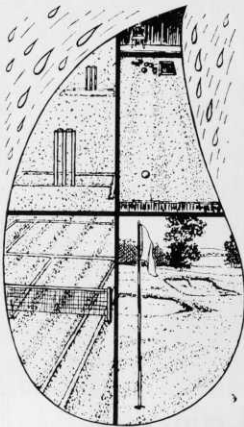
AND

**INSTITUTE OF PARK
 ADMINISTRATION EXHIBITION**

**Bournemouth
 22nd - 23rd September 1970**

Correction

The Open takes place at St Andrews and not at Royal Lytham and St Annes as stated in Hon. Secretary’s note. We wish to apologise for any inconvenience caused.



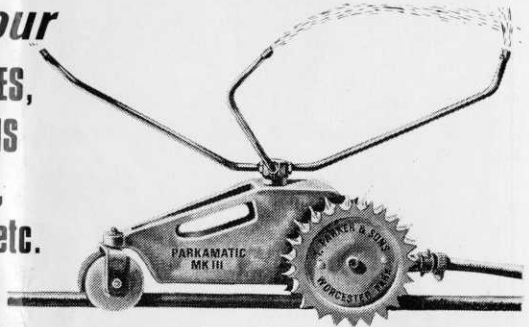
**Water your
 CRICKET SQUARES,
 BOWLING GREENS
 TENNIS COURTS,
 GOLF COURSES etc.**

**the easy
 way**

with the

**PARKAMATIC
 TRAVELLING
 SPRINKLER** from

PARKER



This Sprinkler has been developed in conjunction with Mr A. McTaggart, the Ground Superintendent of the famous Motspur Park Athletic Grounds.

Designed to provide the Professional user with a completely Automatic method of even watering. Cricket Squares, Bowling Greens, Tennis Courts, All Weather Surfaces and Running Tracks all come within the scope of this machine which represents a break through in high speed efficient and even watering.

No staking, wires or other elaborate preparations are necessary with the "PARKAMATIC" simply lay out hose pipe on a pre-determined course and the "PARKAMATIC" will do the rest, straight travel and curved all come within its scope.

The machine travels 140 ft. per hour pulling 3/4" Alkathene Tubing at pressures of 40 lb. p.s.i.

Full details from: **T. PARKER & SONS [Turf Management] LTD.**
 The Independent Firm with the Personal Service.

Worcester Park, Surrey Tel: 01-337 0861 01-337 7791 (10 lines)

NEWS FLASH: PARKER LOAM USED FOR NEW WEMBLEY PITCH. MAY WE QUOTE YOU?