



Lined up is part of the mobile equipment Dooley needs to keep his course in top playing shape.

## In Birmingham, They Have a 12-Month Job

By George H. Watson

**Y**EAR-ROUND playing requirements together with soil conditions are primary factors to be considered in the maintenance of golf links in the South, according to Frank H. Dooley, greenkeeper for the Birmingham (Ala.) CC, and formerly connected with Donald J. Ross Associates.

But against the added expense of year-round maintenance, turf culture budgets may be balanced somewhat by the fact that labor costs are less. At several representative clubs in the South, Dooley explains, the custom is to allow from \$500 to \$700 per year per hole for maintenance, although he mentions figures with his fingers crossed, as do other experienced greenkeepers when they refer to cost "averages".

The 36-hole Birmingham CC course is located in a mountainous section where it has been necessary to build up the fertility of the soil over a period of years. The course was established in 1923, moving from a location nearer the city. The club has 800 members and from 1,000 to 1,500 use the links per week. About one-third or more of this play is at the week ends.

Native Bermuda grass provides a de-

pendable turf with domestic rye (Oregon) used as a green winter cover crop over the dormant Bermuda. Some clubs in the South use double greens, one for winter and one for summer, but Dooley finds he can change over without interruption, except that a green may be closed down two or three days while the rye is being planted in the fall.

The Bermuda greens are played through mid-October or November when the rye is planted. The rye dies out with hot weather, usually about the first of June or thereabouts when the Bermuda gets a fresh start.

Lime is used considerably as a soil conditioner since Bermuda and rye are both lime-loving plants. Milorganite and sulphate of ammonia also are on the fertilizing schedule. Effort is made to keep the soil at a pH value of 6 or 7. If allowed to get on the alkaline side weeds develop too rapidly, so a slightly acid base is preferred. Weeds with which the club has to contend are crab grass, crowfoot (goose grass) and nut grass. Woods soil is bought, broken down with No. 1 sand and applied as a topdressing.

Dooley reports that arsenate of lead is used to control worms, grubs, beetles and other such pests. It has been found also that arsenate of lead controls crabgrass successfully at Birmingham.

"Greenkeeping is a strenuous twelve-month job with us," says Dooley. "There is the fall planting of the rye as the Bermuda greens begin to play out. In a few weeks the rye greens give most

Smart lad, this Tommy Meehan, pro at Illinois CC (Chicago District). Being a snappy dresser, on and off, as the actors say, Tommy gets himself a winter job representing a clothing company and does right well.

Southern golf courses better greens, perhaps, than they have in the summer. The Bermuda, however, is entitled to some of the credit, for although dead to all appearances, its roots form a base for the rye, giving the green its cushion and texture.

"Besides coaxing the winter grass, our labors are concerned with some reseeding of the Bermuda, fertilizing and odds and ends of new work. In the summer months a disc is run over the Bermuda occasionally. The fairways are cut twice a



FRANK DOOLEY

week in the summer and the greens daily. In the winter cutting is as the weather and other conditions permit and require. Borders and tees are cut twice a week by power mowing. The rough is constantly being cut."

Of some 120 acres of fairways, tees and greens (not counting the rough), Dooley estimates that greens comprising about six acres at the most, require about one-third of the time and money devoted to the whole course.

#### Water at Night

The club has its own water system, pumped from a spring-fed pond to the greens and tees. Watering is done at night. Ice drinking water is also provided at convenient spots on the links.

About \$10,000 worth of equipment is required to maintain the two 18-hole courses. Major pieces are two International motor trucks, one a pick-up and the other a 1½-ton job; three tractors which pull the five-gang fairway cutting units and the rough cutting unit; two motored mowers for cutting tees and

greens borders, a discing machine and 10 hand mowers used for cutting the putting greens. In addition various small implements are required as well as considerable shop equipment for upkeep of the equipment. A full-time mechanic is employed and in the off season the equipment is completely overhauled in the club's own shop.

Dooley's power machines are rubber-tired and have been for three years or more.

"Since equipping our tractors with rubber, we are cutting one-third again as much as we had done in the past and that without consuming any more gasoline," says Dooley. "We have found that tractor tires absorb shocks to the driver while eliminating the stronger part of all vibration. We are now able to do any construction work necessary with the same tires and do no damage to our present courses, as the tires give us all the traction needed in either cutting, plowing, harrowing or any other work."

Dooley tells that from 5 to 25 lbs. of air can be used in the tires, so they can be inflated or deflated as circumstances require.

Dooley is a native of Rome, N. Y. He was retained by a club there as time-keeper and clerk and while Donald Ross was building the club's course. Ross, on completion of the course, invited Dooley to join his staff. Dooley put in more than 10 years with the Ross Associates. Dooley's last Ross assignment, prior to going to Birmingham, was on the second 18 holes of East Lake CC in Atlanta. He was then sent to Birmingham where Ross was doing some work on the West course. That was in 1930. Club officials liked him and invited him to stay on as green-keeper.

**W**ERE not saying it might be a good idea for general use but Wolf Rimann, pro at Hillcrest CC, Kansas City, put in a special price of \$1.50 monthly for club storage for husband and wife. The bargain price accounted for a quick and big hike in his storage income. Rimann figured that women have to be brought in by bargains. He also reasoned that about half the women at Hillcrest were playing only once a week, hence the deal would not put a burden on the shop.

In addition to the increase of storage revenue, the deal brought more people into the shop and gave Wolf a better chance of making ball and club sales.