

Special Care Helps Success of Bent Greens in South

By O. J. NOER

THE Mason and Dixon Line has been the boundary — east of the Mississippi — for bent grass greens, excepting the hilly and mountainous regions of Tennessee, North Carolina, and Georgia. Bent culture there has been made possible by the cooler nights. There have been good bent greens in Knoxville, in western North Carolina, and northeast Georgia. The original greens at Fairyland Golf Club on Look-out Mountain near Chattanooga, Tennessee, were seeded originally with a mixture of fescue and mixed German bent. Later they were Bermuda grass in the summer and rye grass was used for wintertime play.

Four years ago Charles Danner of Richland Country Club in Nashville, Tennessee, decided to try bent grass on one green at his club. He received encouragement from Mr. Johnson, Chairman of the Greens Com-



Dual greens, No. 3 hole, Capital City CC, Atlanta, Ga. Summer green in front covered with pine needles to prevent growth of poa annua and winter weeds. Winter green of rye grass in back.

mittee. His first move was to contact the Green Section of the USGA, and other turf specialists. The final plan and program was based on their advice. A start was made on the sixth green. It has been in use for four years and the bent looks better now than ever before. The practice green was converted to bent more than a year ago. The club is considering a switch to bent grass on all other greens.

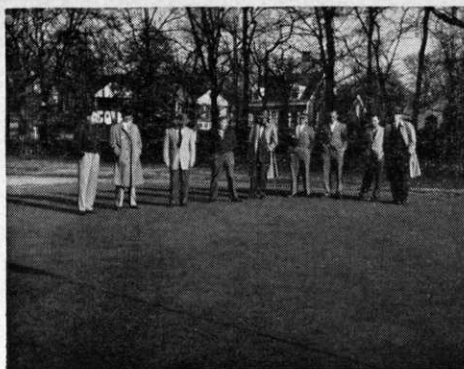
The Capital City Country Club in Atlanta, Georgia, has two bent grass greens. Mr. H. H. Beckett built both of them. This club has alternate greens at every hole, both with a base of Bermuda grass. One is overseeded with rye for winter play, and the other is used for summer play only. During the winter it is covered with pine needles to prevent growth of poa annua and winter weeds. Besides seeking expert advice, Mr. Beckett visited clubs in Washington and Philadelphia. It is three years since the first green was planted to bent, and the second one has been in use for one season. Both came through surprisingly well, but surface drainage on the first one is to be improved.

Fairyland Golf Club had one bent grass green in play all of last year, and has changed three others to bent. The plan is to change the others over a period of several years. Pictures of the bent could not be taken because of the bad weather the day the greens were inspected. The green in play had a fine cover of grass.

Some of the officials of the Chattanooga Golf and Country Club were so impressed with the bent greens in Knoxville that they prevailed upon Alec McKay to change their Bermuda greens to bent. All eighteen greens were in play throughout 1952. There were nineteen straight days of above 100 degree temperature, but, fortunately, no rain so Alec was able to avoid extensive loss of grass.

In every instance cited above success so far has been due to careful soil preparation before planting, or seeding, together with good surface and underdrainage. The selection of good grasses helped, but Seaside, which is a bad actor in bad weather, did quite well for the first year at Capital City, but not when it was seeded for fill-in at Richland.

Tile underdrainage was provided in every instance. The herringbone system was used. Laterals were close together and the lines were placed near the top of the subgrade. A blanket of gravel was placed over the tile and subgrade, and was covered with 8 to 10 inches of top soil.



Charlie Danner shows Arlington bent on No. 6 green to local group. The bent was planted four years ago.



A close-up of Charlie Danner examining Arlington bent on No. 6 green, Richland GC, Nashville, Tenn.

The amount of sand in the top soil mixture was high, in the range of 60 to 70 per cent. The sand particles varied in size with those of larger size predominating. The balance consisted of loam or a mixture of loam and peat. McKay did not mix peat with the original top soil, but added about 20 per cent by volume to the subsequent top-dressing mixture. The others used 15 to 20 per cent peat by volume in the original top soil mixture.

Danner planted Arlington bent on the sixth green, and also on the practice green. He seeded with Seaside on the back corner of number six, and over the entire practice green, because the original planting of Arlington made such a poor start on this green, probably because the planting was done in hot weather. The Seaside areas contain the most poa annua and have the poorest turf. Alex McKay relied on Old Orchard and has eighteen good-looking greens. Fairyland has used Arlington mostly. In the first green at Capital City, H. H. Beckett used a mixture of Arlington, Congressional, and Collins. When the ninth green was changed he used a mixture of these three grasses across the back, and used seed on the front two-thirds. Seaside was used in the center and Polycross in the front section. The seeding rates were 2 pounds of Seaside and 1 pound of Polycross bent per 1,000 square feet. The Polycross bent has been very fine, but Seaside has been good also up to now.

It is too early to state positively that bent greens are feasible below the Mason and Dixon's Line. Yet indications point that way in parts of Tennessee and Georgia, provided the club can and will pay for their maintenance. Success depends upon the use of the right grass and careful con-

struction with respect to drainage and physical soil condition. Severe surface contours cannot be tolerated. The man in charge must learn to know bent, and how to handle it to prevent disease. He must learn to recognize wilt, and must be ready to use a little water promptly to revive the grass and cool the soil. A switch to bent will eliminate the bad playing conditions during the transition periods in fall and in spring. The over-all expense should not



A. H. (Pop) Beckett on No. 1 green, Capital City CC, Atlanta. The turf is a mixture of Arlington, Congressional, Collins planted two years before picture was taken.

be excessive. Based on his experience up to now, Danner does not think bent greens will cost any more than the rye grass-Bermuda combination.

For the time being, the pioneering being done should be followed and encouraged but not necessarily extended. When a nearby club decides to try bent the spot selected for the green should be out in the open in a spot where a temporary green of Bermuda can be developed as a

part of the fairway out in front for use during bad or trying weather.

On courses where there are dual greens, it would seem feasible to put bent on one and leave Bermuda on the other, reserving the latter for use only when the weather is extremely bad for bent. Almost every club has one or more greens in a low-lying pocket area. These are the bad spots for bent grass everywhere. It would seem wise to provide a small Bermuda green alongside the one of bent to be used as a temporary from time to time in spells of bad summer weather. The Bermuda must have access to sun because it does not grow well on putting greens even in partial shade.

Population Statistics Show Junior Golf's Importance

FORESIGHTED professionals got something more to think about when figures on school attendance became big news in September. With 31,000,000 kids of school age, school facilities in teaching personnel and space are seriously inadequate. In most large cities the youngsters have to attend grammar school in shifts.

The offspring of World War II vets are starting to school. Population trend is increasing and despite housing shortages and expenses the big family idea is strong among young married couples.

On the dark side is the warning of J. Edgar Hoover of a vast increase in juvenile crime.

It all adds up to tremendously increased responsibilities, opportunities and work for golf pros.

In almost every district this year junior programs have been enlarged and worked more vigorously by pros at private and public courses than ever before. In many cases the pros are doing the job without needed appreciation or cooperation from club, public or semi-public course officials, although parents' pressure finally is forcing an awakening of the officials.

Thoughtful club and public course officials and pros, educational authorities and parents see in the developing junior situation the probability of having junior play account for practically all of the time that might be open at private courses, an enforced increase of courses to care for the juniors, and an increase in pro salaries and guarantees to care for the greatly increased and important work with the kids.

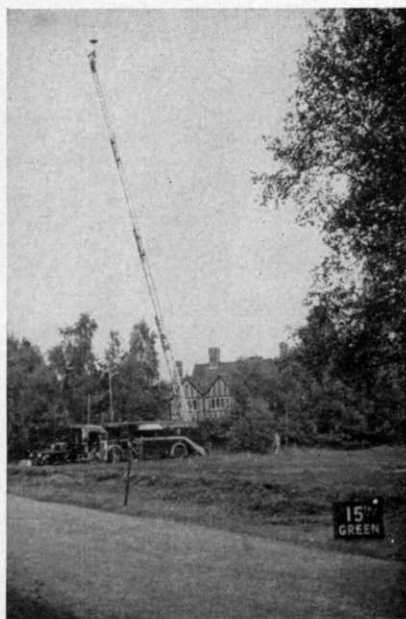
Pros and manufacturers see in the population statistics a sound promise of a dou-

bled golf market within the next 20 years, and many more good pro jobs, if the junior opportunity is properly handled.

The caddie situation is being given study in several metropolitan areas as probably providing a strong element in reduction of juvenile delinquency. Juvenile court judges, police and child welfare workers have observed that the kid with no work record usually is the one who gets into trouble with the law. Caddie facilities and management has improved greatly at clubs but the increase of bag carts and their economy over costs of boy caddies has cut down the proportion of demand for caddies. Child labor laws enacted without informed consideration of caddie work also is a factor limiting the performance of golf in combatting juvenile delinquency.

At any rate the jump in the birth rate and millions of kids now on the threshold of golf have the best minds in the game planning to take better care of more kid golfers.

EXTENDS GOLF TV RANGE



Television coverage of golf at the 1953 Ryder Cup matches at Wentworth (Eng.) GC was much more extensive than TV cameras cover U. S. golf tournaments. The British coverage was made possible by the portable telescopic mast shown above. On top of the mast is photographic equipment for close-up and wide shots and broadcasting antenna.