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# HERB GRAFFIS

## SWINGING AROUND GOLF

**Forgotten superintendent:** Herbert Heinlein, superintendent at Indian Spring Country Club, Silver Spring, Md., recently asked his fellow members of the Mid-Atlantic Association of Golf Course Superintendents if it occurs to them that everybody takes the superintendent for granted and expects miracles from him every time a player steps on the course. Many golfers think a fine golf course just happens.

That is strange. A golfer will spend hours and many dollars, get his wife and kids busy and hire outside help trying to keep a yard of 60-foot frontage in good condition. Yet the same man will go to 180 acres of golf course and raise hell if a couple of square yards are not in perfect shape.

As long as I have been reporting on golf course maintenance, men, methods, machinery, problems, results and costs, I was for the first time hit with a new and painful slant a few weeks ago. I sat down and figured out what my home yard maintenance had cost me in 1974. Then I looked at the cost of maintaining the golf course to which I belong in the American tropics. The brief research showed me that if it had cost as much per acre to maintain my golf course as it did my yard, the course budget last year would have been an appalling \$467,543.60. Most golfers should realize what a bargain they are getting from the unsung superintendent.

**The USGA tests:** Tests conducted by the Implements and Ball Committee of the USGA give me a hunch they are going to be more useful to the great majority of golfers than any tests in the past.

The good sound sense of the USGA testing program is demonstrated by the fact tests are being made in different classes of clubhead speeds. Obviously, the 15- and 30-handicap men and women play

golf under different conditions of shafts, clubhead weight, swing weight and ball compression than the equipment used by the strong and adept specialists who do little else than play golf. The tests should develop some interesting arguments and perhaps some new construction and instruction ideas.

But of course the tests in the new and bigger area of golfers won't be conclusive. After all, in the matter of tests in an art, you have to remember the story of Ben Hogan being asked by Bob Rickey to play a fine new MacGregor ball when Hogan was a star of the MacGregor staff and Rickey a sales executive.

"But Ben, the machine tests show our new ball is longer than any other ball," pleaded Rickey.

"OK then," replied the wee Ice-man, "enter the testing machine in the Open."

**National Golf Day:** There are a number of important golf turf programs at state agricultural stations being financed by money golfers contribute in their competitions on National Golf Day. The USGA Green Section's nationally coordinated research program includes the continuance of important projects developing highly desirable strains of golf grass, the prevention of diseases, and studies having useful effects on course maintenance budgets and the cost of golf.

This program will be continued due to the supply of National Golf Day money under the direction of Al Radko, the USGA Green Section's coordinator of research. This money buys time. If research on promising new strains were to be halted, all the previous years of research would be lost. This golf turf research must continue. Again let us remind you that no other sport does what golf does through the USGA Green Section in beautifying this country. □