The golf course contractor 
an unsung hero

There is a tendency for people to attempt to isolate the one person who seems the most responsible for something of note. Perhaps it is because we wish to have a solitary figure to focus on, for admittedly, it is much easier to praise a general than all the men of his army, a conductor instead of the orchestra, or the quarterback instead of the team. Although we know better, we sometimes forget that the person being singled out is tall only because he stands on the shoulders of people who helped him achieve his distinction. The world is filled with such unacknowledged people, whether it be the families who make personal sacrifices to permit our hero or heroine to rise, or it is the friends, associates, or subordinates who directly assist the effort. Similarly, in the field of golf course development, there is a tendency to focus on the architect instead of the unsung hero, namely the Golf Course Contractor.

In fact I believe that the term “contractor” or “builder” does not do these men justice, for they are artisans in the strictest sense. Their tools may be bulldozers, earthmovers, and tractors but their medium is the earth and the best of these craftsmen can mold the landscape to produce earthsculptures of tees, greens, mounds and sandtraps. They understand the subtleties of nature, landforms and natural processes, and strive to blend the necessary artificality of golf features imperceptibly into the surrounding environment. In addition these men know that fine turf must be grown and maintained on the soils and slopes that they leave, so much attention is given to agronomic matters such as the texture of the topsoil, drainage, seedbed preparation, planting, mulching, watering, early establishment, erosion repair, sandtraps, tree planting, and sometimes, complete golf course maintenance.

Because there are fewer courses being built now than ten years ago, the competition during bidding can be fierce, thus requiring small profit margins. Once selected as the successful bidder, the contractor must execute all of this work in a tight time frame, hoping that delays and forced overtime wages will not eat up all of this profit. Most “contractors” find such bidding and working conditions intolerable and thus they do not enter golf course construction or they last a very short time. Further, since golf course projects are so scattered it means that these men must be apart from their families for long periods or they must develop an almost nomadic family experience.

The obvious question then, is why do they persist in golf course construction? The answer is because these people are artisans who find reward and take pride in the work they do. To remain in this business and to produce high quality golf courses requires that a Golf Course Contractor put a bit of himself into every mound, every green, every feature. He is creating as he constructs and he feels good about each day’s work. But if golf course construction is so creative then what is the function of the Golf Course Architect? He plans at a micro-scale and is concerned, while designing, about 150 or 200 acres, or more at a contour interval of perhaps one or two feet. The architect must plan the relationship or elements on a site that may be covered with jungle, below water level, or has problems not clearly discernible.

The Golf Course Contractor, on the other hand, works at the micro-scale of perhaps 1/4 of an acre at a time and contour changes of inches on a site that is completely cleared. The Golf Course Architect may draw detailed features at a scale of 1” = 10 feet, but it is the contractor who must build that feature at 1” = 1′. No matter how sophisticated the plans may be drawn there must always be field interpretation of those drawings; and it is this ability to field interpret that separates the great contractors from the others. This ability is learned from technical training, repeated experiences, and years of honest constructive criticism. But it is not born solely of intellect for the great contractor has a superb imagination, reliable intuition, and good eye-to-hand coordination. It is my personal feeling that any dummy can be taught to run a bulldozer but only a precious few can develop the skill to grade a green.

I don’t believe that any Golf Course Architect would disagree with me when I say that a great contractor can make your work look outstandingly good, and a poor contractor can butcher the greatest design in the world. In fact, there are some Golf Course Contractors who have taken bad golf course plans, and made enough field adjustments to fashion a good golf course, only to have the designer get all of the credit.

These are hard times for Golf Course Contractors for fewer courses are being built, and inflation, interest rates and rising wages make it difficult to make a profit. This may be good for it will force those shady types to leave the field but in the meantime it does work hardships on the good contractors. This is not just a personal problem for it affects every golfer who appreciates a fine golf course. Each time we lose one of these artisans, the evolution of golf course design is set back for we lose the subtleties of interpretation so necessary to produce a great golf course. An analogy would be if a gifted composer wrote an imaginative and inspired piece of music, but if the only musicians around to play it were a street corner band, you can imagine the result. This is humorous perhaps, but the same results might be expected if you gave a superb golf course plan to a road builder.

Now even I am not so naive as to think that human nature will change and we will acknowledge all of our unsung heroes, but the next time you are impressed by a great golf course, don’t just think of the designer, remember the Golf Course Contractor.
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PRODUCTS
PORTABLE PUMP
Weed has corrosion-resistant unit

Bunton claims first for standard model

36 inch and 52 inch Rake
Bunton's Diesel-Powered, 36-inch and 52-inch rotary mowers are claimed to be the first walk or ride behind, offered as standard models in the USA. The 8 H.P. diesel engine is a 4 stroke, air-cooled, direct drive, self-contained, single-cylinder, 38 inch battery ram truck. A chromium steel and corrosion-resistant wire cage, Buna rubber-covered hose and aeration line are included. The 38 inch battery ram truck is also furnished with a remote control box. No permit line is necessary. The pump utilizes a 1 or 3 phase AC motor. The pump is built into a sealed unit in the top of the Pump.

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CONCENTRATE ON RAISING TURF.
NEW CHEMICAL HOSE
Co-extrusion for high performance

Flexitube Int. Corp. has pioneered the development of a new spray hose called "SUPER-TREL". Produced by a process called "Co-extrusion", SUPER-TREL combines different plastics with different properties into one type of high performance hose.

The inner core is manufactured with a very thin layer of DuPont's Hytrel, polyester that fills the gap between the contrasting yielding nature of rubber and the rigidity of plastics. Hytrel has better high temperature properties than the polyurethanes, and can be used satisfactorily at higher temperatures in the same fluids. Hytrel is not susceptible to solvent extraction or heat volatilization either. Hytrel has excellent resistance to hot, moist environments.

Flexitube Int. Corp. has taken all the properties of Hytrel for the inner bore of the spray hose, welded it to a double layer of braid for a good PSI, and surrounded the thread with an abrasion-resistant cover of corrugated PVC.

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TRI-ACTION VALVE
Provides less restriction

A valve that provides less restriction in water flow and works on both plastic and asbestos cement water lines is being marketed by Hydro Engineering, Inc. Called the Tri-Action Irrigation Valve, it provides combines pressure relief, vacuum relief and positive air relief at pump head and at end of line. The Tri-Action Valve can be pre-set in plant or field, and does not require factory pre-set PSI setting. It is necessary to stock only one size for all systems, up to and including 12-inch IPS and PIP. It is also available in low pressure ranges. Hydro Engineering also markets a Dual-Action Valve for air and vacuum relief, and specifically engineered for use with the Tri-Action Valve.

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21 HORSEPOWER ENGINE
Kohler introduces second of series

Kohler Co. has introduced a 21-HP engine, model KT21, the second in a series of air cooled, four cycle, twin cylinder engines. The new model is almost identical in size and configuration to the 17-HP KT17 which is already in use by major equipment manufacturers. Both are designed to power a variety of equipment — lawn and garden, construction, industrial, and agricultural.

The KT21 features long-life demountable cast iron cylinder for heavy-duty use. Crankshafts are made of forged steel and camshafts of durable cast iron. Combustion air is drawn from within the cooling fan housing, thus substantially reducing air intake noise. The engine is designed for easy installation in an enclosure for further noise reduction. Breaker points, condenser, spark plugs, oil fill, dipstick, air cleaner, and carburetor are all conveniently accessible for ease of service. Other features include: Automotive type oil pump; High clearance

Continues on page 44

Ryegrass Now Has an Added Dimension

Emergence of the highly successful, exceptionally handsome turf-type perennial ryegrasses lends further credence to the age-old claim that "ryegrass is the world's most widely used grass."

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They have proven themselves on greens, tees and fairways of some of the world's finest golf courses, thriving at standard cutting heights as well as when close-cut for a putting surface. And both the public and proprietary varieties are the perfect answer for the winter seeding of golf course greens and fairways in the Southern U.S.

You can count on ryegrass to germinate in a week or less, respond rapidly to fertilization and never require pampering.

Ryegrass . . . it's truly the all-around performer.

Oregon Ryegrass Commission - Salem, Oregon
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The full foam seat and back cushions are covered with heavy-duty, all-weather vinyl, and can be quickly and individually replaced in case of damage or wear. The GR-007 can be quickly mounted on any greens mower, fairway tractor, trap rake, or other vehicle.

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BUCKET SEAT
Universal seat is indestructable

The Grand Rock Company’s GR-007 universal bucket seat features a virtually indestructable metal shell with a high contoured back and standard fore-and-aft slide adjustment for greater operator comfort and safety. Optional armrests provide additional comfort and side-to-side support. The full foam seat and back cushions are covered with heavy-duty, all-weather vinyl, and can be quickly and individually replaced in case of damage or wear. The GR-007 can be quickly mounted on any greens mower, fairway tractor, trap rake, or other vehicle.

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SQUIRREL/GOPHER BAIT
Two new products are available

Two new RoZol (chlorophacinone) baits are now available for ground squirrel and pocket gopher control, and do not cause bait shyness, according to Chempar Chemical Co., the manufacturer. RoZol ground squirrel bait is a parafinized pellet formulation. It has a California label for special applications also. RoZol pocket gopher bait is a coarse grain bait for use where holes made by burrowing gophers can be hazardous. Bait is placed in gopher tunnels with probes.

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One of the most dependable vehicles for moving your crew around is the 3- or 4-wheel Cushman® Turf-Truckster. But it was also designed for more than just transportation.

Equipped with an optional PTO and hydraulic system, both models accept a wide range of special, add-on turf maintenance equipment. So with just one Turf-Truckster you can haul, dump, grade, seed, spray, spread, top dress, aerate and more.

But there's more to a Turf-Truckster than versatility. There's a rugged 18-hp engine that's built to take on your turf. It comes with a standard 2 to 1 auxiliary transmission. A transmission built to allow a gear driven PTO to be attached directly to it. And common sense engineering makes the Turf-Truckster steer clear of the repair shop, too.

The 3-wheel model gives you the maneuverability of a tight 17' turning circle, while the 4-wheeler has seating room for two. And it just takes minutes to add any of the Turf-Truckster's accessory pieces, thanks to Cushman's pin disconnect system. No bolting, no hitching. Just snap two or three pull pins in place and you're ready to hit the turf.

If a good transportation/hauling vehicle is all you need, though, look at the Cushman Runabouts. There's an 18-hp two-seater, and a fuel-stingy 12-hp one-seater model. Both Runabouts are economical to own. And like any Cushman vehicle, they're built tough.

There's nothing like a Turf-Truckster or Runabout to get more work done, in less time and with less manpower. For a closer look at what goes into, or behind, a Cushman vehicle, return this coupon today.

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November issue closes October 9
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