

# Have A Laugh With Me

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WITH the hope that you will forgive the frequent mention of "I" in this paper here goes for the slim story of a man who didn't know any better.

For nineteen years I had played golf—not good golf, but just the ordinary dub's game, and had a lot of fun out of it. Played not with any particular man or men but anyone out of two dozen whom I ran around with. They were all good fellows in every sense of the word—ready for any kind of a game or stake that might be suggested and as you can imagine none of us paid much attention to just what was done at any time of the year to keep the course and greens up. We simply took the thing for granted.

## I'm Seized with a Good Idea

Our course was as good but no better than many others we played on, and so long as the grass was cut and we could sometimes sink a remarkable putt, we didn't care. We laughed and joked and set off fire crackers behind each other and played the nineteenth hole for all it was good for. But a day was to come when all these joys were to be things of the past, when I was to be confronted with golf from the other side of the fence. That was when I was seized with the fool idea that there was a lot of money and fun to be had from establishing a public course and running it.

No sooner had the idea occurred to me than at it I went, and in September 1924 became possessed of one hundred and twenty-five acres of land that the farmer couldn't farm because it was too rough. To be sure it was only seven miles out of town and the road to it was fine, and the sun came up nice and bright each day, and there I stood and looked the landscape over.

## Started Construction Before Lay-out

I was lost in a dream when the fellow whom I had hired as foreman came up and said "Where do we start work?" Well, how did I know?

There stood the gang of ten men and the tractor snorting to go, and the only tools we had were the tractor, five shovels, two axes, two mattocks and five gallons of gasoline. Not to be bluffed, I looked around and seeing a swamp of tall grass and a few cockeyed trees in it, I gaily waved my hand and told them to clear it out. At it they went while I sneaked off to a shady tree and began to take stock of the thing.

That was the start, and while they were working at the swamp I spent days and days walking over the place and imagining just how the thing should be laid out. If I put a green there, where would the next tee be, etc.

But within thirty days the course began to take shape, and while I had the lay-out in my mind I hadn't done a thing toward the greens. Fortunately a fellow came along one day whom I knew had done work on a golf course and I hired him to help. He at once began on the greens and within a few weeks we had them ready for seed—but what kind of seed?

He told me I should sow Italian rye and redtop, so that was done, and in the spring when I hung out my sign there was some grass on some of the greens and the others were indicated by the flags without the aid of grass. I guess that of all the golf courses that were ever offered to the public, mine was the worst. But in spite of this, the players began coming and I began milling around and listening to first this fellow and then that one (I am now referring to greenkeepers), and making notes of the unfavorable (there were none favorable) comments on the course by the players until it began to dawn on me that there was a darn sight more to this thing of keeping a course in condition than I had ever imagined—and that the fellow who was able to do it was "some baby."

## Sowed All Kinds of Seed

So again I girded up my loins and consulted some seed men and sowed a lot of all kinds of seed both on the greens and fairways, began to lay in a supply of equipment, and the course commenced to look better and really some of the players mentioned it—quietly and in a low voice. I guess so no one would overhear them and think they were crazy.

This past season I have had some real help from a good greenkeeper and I am beginning to cheer up, but Lord, the time and money I've lost.

## A Sense of Humor Helps

Yet there have been many days when I've laughed, for I am learning that but few players know what they are talking about when they criticize.

And things are funny—when you have an undertaker drive in, take his clubs out of his hearse and shoot eighteen holes—and when a player hires a caddy at the regular rate to play with his baby while he plays golf, and, when a fellow with a clothes pressing outfit on a truck drives in and presses two suits of clothes for me and I gyp him and his partner into playing golf for his bill.

I have yet many problems to solve and I hope to get the answers to many of them when we have our first greenkeepers' golf tournament at Braeburn next spring.