

Municipal Golf at a Profit

By EDW. M. LAING

Secretary and Superintendent of Parks
Highland Park East Park District, Highland Park, Ill.



Edw. M. Laing

IT is with much misgiving that I am writing this article after having faithfully read the many interesting articles of the experienced greenkeepers and others appearing in your magazine, but I feel that I would be ungrateful should I neglect to voice some recognition of their valuable work and unselfish willingness to impart the results of their experience to their co-workers. It would be hard to single out any one or number of articles appearing in your paper for special comment, for they all have merit.

During the last thirty years I have engaged in various pursuits. None have been more interesting than the care and management of a golf course, and I may say none required as much unceasing care and watchfulness. I can safely say that the varied experiences of that period have proved valuable in my present occupation.

My experience in the management and operation of a golf course began some six years ago. A nine-hole course was built by the Highland Park East Park District at that time. It is located in the Skokie Valley. To the reader who is familiar with the Skokie Valley along the North Shore in Lake County, Illinois, it will not be necessary to state that it would be hard to find a location more suitable for the production of fairway turf.

The Park Commissioners had purchased 120 acres of this land half of which was subject, at that time, to overflow. Therefore nine holes were constructed on the higher ground. To say that the commissioners were severely criticized for this purchase and venture is putting it mildly, but they had the foresight to grasp the future situation, and perhaps the only result of these objections was to make them proceed more slowly with the expenditures.



View looking south across water hazard to Number 3 green at Sunset Park municipal course

Limited fairways were plowed, disced, harrowed, and seeded and simple dome greens were built with no provision for watering them. Well, that doesn't sound much like a golf course. I

may say that the lack of water for the greens had much to do with the writer's present occupation and interest in golf as I was elected a commissioner for the purpose of securing water for the greens, and the next season saw the greens watered to the satisfaction of the patrons of the course.

Draining Overflowed Land

About this time a drainage ditch was projected up the valley through the property providing a means for drainage of the overflow portion and making the construction of nine additional holes possible. Much of the ground occupied by the second nine holes is not more than three and one-half feet above mean water level and before work of construction could be commenced some means of drainage had to be provided. A system of tile drains was laid, the quantity of which was materially restricted by the limited funds available. I might say that this lack of funds was a most important factor in all the development of the course.

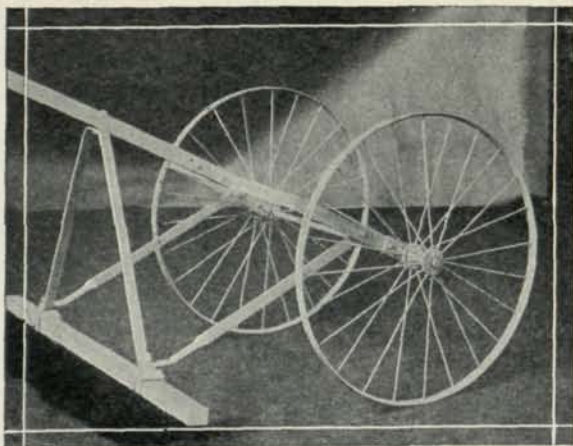
The drainage thus constructed at least made it possible to plow and disc and, profiting by the experience of the unpardonable condition of the rough in the first nine holes, the entire area was plowed. Portions of the area plowed were covered with a heavy growth of cat tails. This work was done in the late summer and fall of the year and remained in this condition until the following year when the work was completed. The tile drains, while being a material benefit, were not adequate for the following reasons: first, sufficient depth was impossible for the efficient operation of the drains; second, a large water-shed lay beyond the property causing flooded condition during storm periods.

Water-shed Presented Unusual Problem

To provide for the drainage under these several conditions a system of open ditches has been dug. Where these ditches cross fairways double strength sewer pipe has been laid. The pipes vary from twelve to twenty-four inches in diameter. Where possible the tile drain first laid has been diverted to discharge into these ditches.

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THE MacGREGOR COMPOST BRUSH



What A User Says:

MacGregor Compost Distributor Co.,
Wheaton, Illinois.

Gentlemen:

Two years ago I had the pleasure of visiting the Chicago Golf Club, Wheaton, Ill., and I was deeply impressed with the methods used in getting the soils for top-dressing worked into the turf, by the use of a compost brush.

Having used several devices for working the compost into the turf, which have not given me good results, I tried out the MacGregor brushes, and I feel, owing to the good results which I have received from them, I should acknowledge my appreciation to you for the service that the two brushes which we received from you have given.

Yours truly,

(Signed) John Morley, Greenkeeper,
Youngstown Country Club,
Youngstown, Ohio

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Municipal Golf

(Continued from page 13)

This arrangement has proven most satisfactory, thus solving one of our most troublesome problems.

We are constantly improving our course or perhaps I had better say working on the completion of it. I have found that not only I am interested in the latter but the golfing public is enthused. It would be hard today to recognize the old nine-hole course owing to the improvements. From nine holes without a water system six years ago that was not paying operating expenses, we have today an eighteen-hole course having a water system of nine thousand feet of pipe, good greens, and a club house, recently completed. To prove its popularity, 21,000 people registered for play last season.

Analysis of Receipts

The receipts for the year were in round figures \$22,000. This course is semi-public as a membership is provided for local residents. Of the total amount collected 50 per cent was paid by non-resident guests who

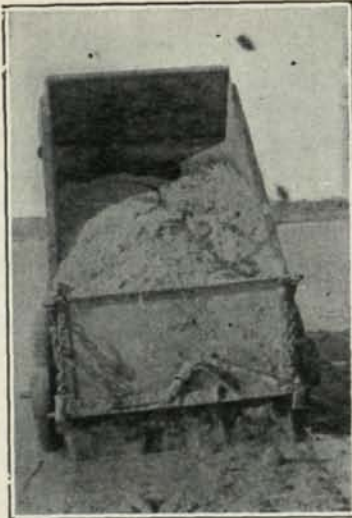


Float used in parade on "Highland Park Day"

represented 31 per cent of the total registration. Of the remaining 69 per cent of the registration, 65 per cent of whom were members, paid \$6500.00. 35 per cent were local residents who paid green fees at half the

(Continued on page 42)

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November 5, 1927

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Green Committee

Hyper-Humus
TRADE MARK REGISTERED
"Puts the Top in Top Soil"

rate charged the non-resident guests and paid \$4500.00. There were 500 members. From the foregoing you will gather that we supply the members with very cheap golf. The rates to members are as follows:

Man and wife \$25.00 per year, individual \$20.00 per year, individual under 21 years of age \$10.00 per year, children under 16 years of age \$6.00 per year. While the Park Board has other recreational activities, golf is by far the most participated in, and it is the only one that is self supporting.

A municipal golf course has problems of its own and presents a situation calling for men trained to meet its

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requirements, for if the game of golf is to be provided to the public in general it must be furnished cheaply to fully cover the field. I think that you will agree with me that the field of municipal golf has only been scratched, and the time will come when municipal courses will be in the majority. Municipalities can purchase tracts of land for this purpose providing the funds by bond issues or some other means permissible by the laws of the city, county, and state where located. One feature of the expenditure of the people's money in this manner is that something of real value is secured and it is safe to say that the value will increase while many municipal expenditures are, like the purchase of machinery, valuable for the time being only. I might dwell on the benefits of golf to the residents of a municipality, its influence on health, its training to the younger generation, its moral influence, and the spirit of good fellowship it creates among the citizens, but

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that would consume both time and space, and golfers do not need to be told.

General Suggestions for Success

In order to make a golf course a success both financially and from the standpoint of the golfer you must provide good greens, a reasonable amount of hazards, good turf on your fairways, keeping them in good condition constantly, provide clean, orderly, sanitary conveniences, the help must be capable and considerate, and rules that result in justice to all and favors to none.

Going back to the problems of the greenkeeper, we have had them and met them, and I can truthfully say that in meeting them your valuable paper has given much assistance.

Grass Seeds

Get Our Prices

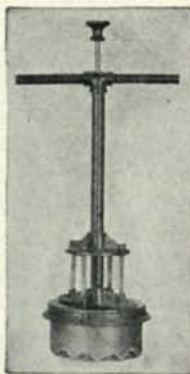
Fertilizers

**CLEVELINE
 FLAG SWIVEL**



A bronze rust-proof wire swivel which may be attached to any wooden and to the Cleveline Steel Pole. This device will prevent the flag from wrapping around the pole. It can be easily attached by slipping the large loop over the pole and screwing the small loop to the top of the pole.

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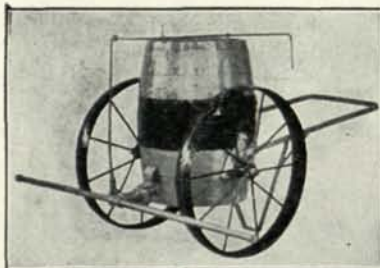


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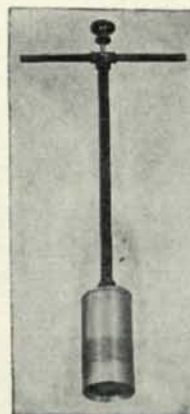
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