

THE PERIODIC REPORT

By **PAUL N. VOYKIN**

IT'S a long way from Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, to Chicago, and even further to San Diego. But the longest distance we all must travel is the road toward becoming successful green superintendents.

After four years of experience in Canada, I continued my apprenticeship at Olympia Fields CC in Chicago. From there I went to another private club and, three years later, made a change to a private club in Chicago's north side where greater challenges and opportunities were offered. After a short time there, I asked myself, "How can I improve my executive position as green superintendent of this million dollar plant?" I wondered what some of the highly respected superintendents in my area did to attain their success. What keys to success did they possess?

I talked with these outstanding men and learned that one of the keys in their administration was submitting periodic reports to the green committee; and this is what this forum is about—Management Aids.

I will illustrate what I mean by giving you excerpts from some of my own monthly reports.

Case No. 1

This is from my February, 1962 report on weather:

"Weather—Fifty-one inches of snow has fallen to the end of February. The record snowfall was in 1952 with a total of 66 inches. We may catch up yet! The record rainfall we had last fall, combined with the almost record snowfall this winter, makes for a very wet golf course this spring."

Case No. 2

Here is the weather report from the following month of March:

"Weather—We have just experienced one of the worst winters on record,

snow-wise. It started on December 9th, and kept accumulating until 60 inches fell, and it wasn't until March 23rd that ground finally began to show, along with something else, winter-kill. This is a more serious condition than snow-mold, and is usually the result of poor drainage."

Case No. 3

Now, I will present a complete report to give you an idea of how they are set up. Here is my June report:

"To: Mr John Doe, Green Chairman, and members of the Green Committee.

"Subject: June Progress Report for the Grounds Department.

"Weather—The weather has been dry, with seven days in the nineties, which is normal for June. We watered 20 out of 30 nights and frequently in the mornings.

"Greens—The greens have made an excellent comeback, and all have the same color and putting quality. The exception is the 17th green, which is being cut higher because, as yet, the roots of the newly laid sod have not made a strong contact with the soil. Until the roots penetrate deeper into the soil and make the soil more friable, the green will be on the hard side.

"Tees—All the tees have been fertilized with 20 pounds per 1,000 square feet of 5-5-0. We are letting the grass around the tees get longer for the hot weather. The area around the tees has been cut at $\frac{7}{8}$ of an inch. We will now cut it at $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches. This setting will make the aprons around the tees look much better.

"Fairways—I believe we are one of the few clubs in Chicagoland that has clover-free fairways; in fact, at this time, we are free of any weeds. Clover is one of the most difficult weeds to get rid of, and the chemicals used to eradicate it are very potent. By carefully making tests on plots and spraying only on cool days, we have accomplished complete eradication of this weed with no damage to the grass."

I then go on to talk about irrigation, construction, and end up with miscellaneous items under title of "Porridge

Potpourri." Here are a few items from Porridge Potpourri:

- "1. If everybody we talk to adamantly informs us that they repair their ball marks, and those of five others besides, who are the golfers who do not? The greens are becoming very pock-marked going into the summer.
- "2. We have played several golf courses, including two public fee clubs this season, and our course takes first prize for litter! Chocolate and cigar wrappers, golf ball containers, cigarette packages and Pepsi containers were all over during the season!
- "3. Ladies' day was a success with compliments to the Grounds Department for using potted begonias in place of tee markers.
- "4. Briarwood hot rod! Driving through and up our highest sand traps in a golf cart!
- "5. Some goldfish sighted on No. 10 lake. If they get large enough through the summer, they will take care of our algae problem.
- "6. The duck hens are nesting quietly by No. 3 lake, and we have erected a sign that says 'Quiet! Duck Maternity Ward!'"
- "7. I wish the golfers would yell 'FORE' when the greensmen are working in the traps or are in the way. Some of the crew have been hit because no warning was sounded . . . we don't want anyone hurt."

I generally set up my reports under these headings: WEATHER, GREENS, TEES, FAIRWAYS, and end with PORRIDGE POTPOURRI. Sometimes there are additional headings, such as: ROUGH, TRAPS, LANDSCAPE, or CONSTRUCTION.

Why Reports?

Now, some of you may ask, What does this accomplish? Why go to all the trouble?

First, it is a summary of what was done during the month. Second, it is a catalog of weather conditions and maintenance procedures that can be referred to whenever necessary. Third, a copy of this report is given to the golf pro and the manager to keep them informed as to what has been done in my department for the month, and to give them a scheduled forecast of some of the future projects.

Most important, it is a means of educating my green committee members about what is going on each month. The reports explain some of the fundamental steps we take to give the members a top-notch golf course. And the committee, now well informed, works with me in trying to promote understanding among the more interested club members regarding our operations. This is of great assistance to me.

Perhaps the real reason a person wants to improve himself can be better explained in something I read recently in the Wall Street Journal under the heading "What is an Executive?"

What is an Executive?

"He is called by many names: the boss, top management, head man, chief, or just plain Tom or Bill. Each day he lives with problems and every day he's on the lookout for solutions. A good executive is understanding, fair, a cajoler, co-ordinator, arbitrator, listener, and decider. In addition he is efficient, hard-working, patient, impatient, aggressive, and ambitious for himself and his club.

"His constant companions are work, too little time, budgets, inventory, ideas, materials and equipment, employee relations, and company dollars. No one knows better than he the meaning of pressure. He is second-guessed, loved, appreciated, tolerated, respected, blamed, praised, understood, misunderstood, needing and needed, but never ignored.

"The executive knows the loneliness of management. For there comes a time for decision. Despite all the counsel from associates above and below, it is he who says YES or NO. He can't afford to err in judgment. Whether it be selection of personnel or the kinds of materials or equipment he purchases, he is always responsible.

"The good executive is the voice for his club . . . both written and spoken. Thus, he is reader, student, speaker, moderator, writer . . . as well as the subject of a speech or article. He is the product of business and means business. What he does can produce a ripple or tidal wave of activity.

"For this he has learned . . . To get a better job, keep *doing* a better job. That's how executives are made."