

## TEE SHOTS—continued

Bunkers lining the sides of fairways are putting the clock back, but not far enough. Rough, on the other hand, there must be. The problem is — what sort? And if it has to be grass — how long?

What do you think?

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# Irrigation Systems — Economics

## The Automatic System

By CHARLES McCREA, Golf Course Superintendent

PERHAPS at some future date as historians write of the Twentieth Century, they will call it the century of automation. This is especially true of golf courses when you consider irrigation systems.

In the North-east, automatic systems are out of the novelty class. With the continuance of our four-year drought labor problems, increased play, and rising standards of excellence, more clubs are wondering whether to convert to, or install an automatic or at least a more modern irrigation system.

The unanswered question is will the automatic systems stand up to the test of time? Ten years from now we will have the answer

Well designed manual systems with sufficient water capacity can still operate efficiently. Two courses indicated that of the amount spent for labor, less than 5 per cent was used for irrigation. With an automatic system this percentage can be cut further with labor savings of from \$2,500 to \$5,000

Although a manual system with hose and travelers allows greater flexibility it should only be considered as a last

resort. The operational costs become excessive. Also, there is the added expense of hose purchase and repair which would be higher than for any other type system.

Another factor influencing system selection and operational cost is yearly rainfall. The North-east averages 40 inches of rain per year, with the distribution almost even throughout the year. As a result, we don't irrigate as many times per year as other parts of the country, and therefore we have to operate our automatic systems for a greater number of years trouble-free to re-coup the increased outlay for an automatic system. I'm in favor of automatic systems for golf courses in the North-east, but I think there are important reasons other than just economics. Member convenience in that they may never have to play when the system is operating and the fact that the superintendent has complete control over the water program alone are as good reasons as any possible labor savings in deciding to go automatic.

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