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HON. EDITOR: F. W. HAWTREE



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No. 260 New Series

NOVEMBER 1966

ON THE FIRST TEE

*It seems to me—
And I should be
A very good authority—
Those who claim
They're off their game
Are in the great majority.*

—Goldie Goldman

NOVEMBER

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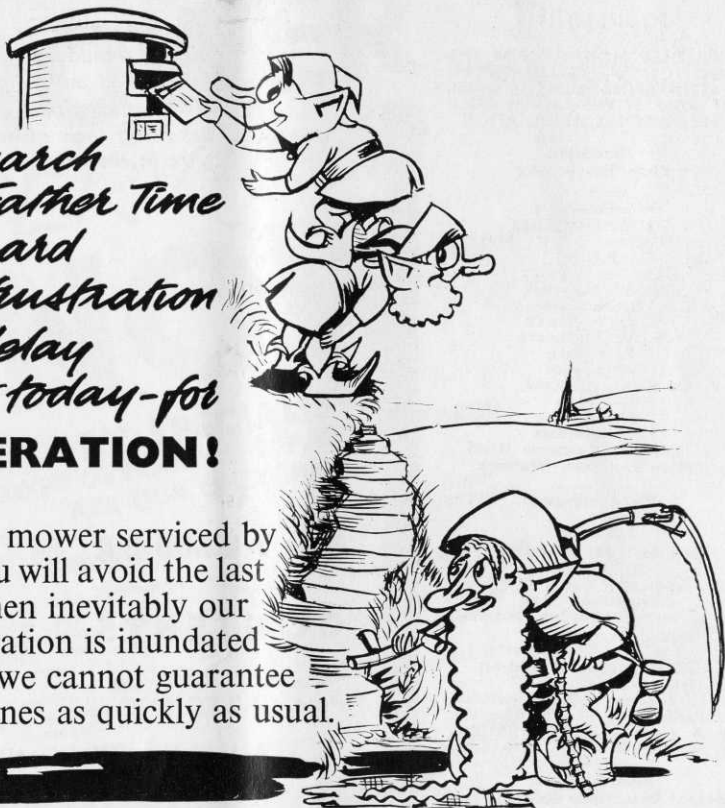
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TEE SHOTS



by the Editor

The "length" fetish still influences Green Committees and often leads to danger, boredom and bad holes. Too many think that because J. Nicklaus reduces a 550 yard hole to a drive and an iron there is a general need for more length to suit the modern game.

We ought to go by the facts. Jack Reddy, the U.S.G.A. Scoring Analyst, has been seen measuring again at the U.S. Open and his findings appear in the current U.S. Golf Association's *Journal*.

Drives were measured on the 435 yard par 4 17th of the Olympic Country Club in San Francisco.

The average drive for all players in all four rounds was 245 yards. This compares with 251 last year, 252 in 1964, 243 in 1963 and 253 in 1956. The average run was 12 yards and this year wind was not favourable hence the slight reduction.

Jack Nicklaus hit one 273 yard drive, the longest recorded, and had the highest average, 262 yards. But the long hitters were only 10 or 20 yards farther on than the general run of competitors.

Another interesting light on the matter is given by the number of players who hit the green with their second shot, 25 per cent — no more! Another 16 per cent came within 30 feet with their second shot.

Some of the erring 75 per cent may have been playing from the rough. The fairway was 38 yards wide in the landing area but even so 35 per cent failed to find it.

If all these facts fail to convince you that the ball is not being hit all that much farther, at least you will agree that human fallibility is still roughly the same.



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THE VALUE OF COMPOST

By J. K. CAMPBELL

Links Supervisor, St Andrews, Scotland

John Campbell, President of the Scottish Golf Greenkeepers Association, discusses one routine task and others which his staff often have to face. These two articles originally appeared in Golf Illustrated and are reprinted by kind permission.

A GOLF course more often than not is judged by the condition of the greens, and if the putting surfaces are bumpy, the turf soft and soggy, badly pitted with ball marks, the course will, with some justification, be considered poor. There is no good reason why this should be the case.

The ideal conditions to aim at for all the year round are those where the turf is firm, resilient, and with a true putting surface that allows the ball to run smoothly without being deflected by avoidable irregularities.

Normal practice during the autumn and winter months is to spread sharp sand on the greens to keep the turf firm and open textured, and this can be beneficial only if done lightly and the sand well brushed in.

On the other hand it has been found that a too liberal use of sand will inevitably result in a hard layer being built up in the soil, impervious to moisture, and through which grass roots cannot penetrate and so produce a poor thin quality turf.

A proved method of building up good putting surfaces and, perhaps to a lesser extent fairways, demands a sufficient supply of compost, which can be in-offensive and a necessary adjunct to any golf course.

There but few courses lacking in material and compost can be briefly described as a mixture of good top soil, suitable organic material such as well rotted horse manure, grass cuttings, leaf mould, and this mixed with a sharp lime-free sand into a workable mixture.

These materials are usually built in alternate layers of about 4 or 5 inches

thick until a heap of some 6 feet high is reached, after which a period of time should be allowed for settlement and decomposition. The heap should be turned over at least twice during the year and allowed to stand for another 12 months to give adequate time for fermentation and elimination of weeds.

Regular light applications of this material well rubbed in will improve the texture of the soil, imparts humus, help to make the turf drought resistant and gradually build up true and firm surfaces capable of withstanding the wear and tear of the constantly increasing every day golf.

The preparation of suitable compost is often neglected perhaps due to shortage of labour or unavailability of suitable materials, (e.g. sand). Whatever the difficulties, attempt should be made to overcome them as every well-maintained golf course cannot have enough of this material in stock for top-dressing bulking fertilisers, and dealing with divot marks. The nature of compost is both cheap and valuable.

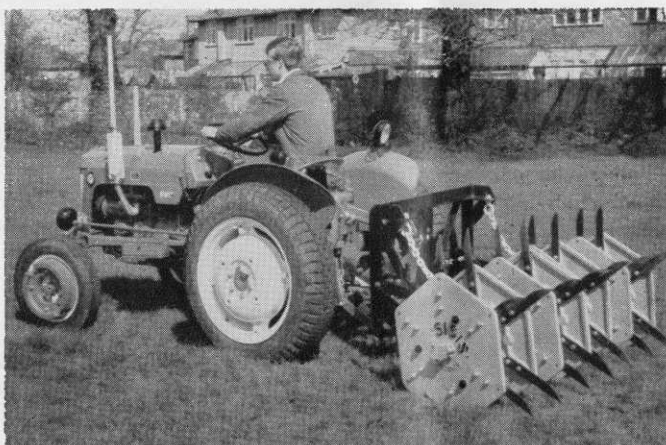
Soft greens, often the result of poor surface drainage, can be improved by more regular mechanical maintenance to assist aeration. Spiking and slit-tining is extremely beneficial and not nearly enough of this is done.

Scarification, which was hard work for the greenkeeping staff when done by hand, is eased by the use of one of several powered machines now available. The gentle combing action of this operation done lightly and frequently is beneficial to the turf particularly if matted and helps to produce firm and true putting surfaces.

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THE BACK ROOM BOYS

By J. K. CAMPBELL

Links Supervisor, St Andrews, Scotland

TOURNAMENT golf today is a spectacle world wide in its aspect, the modern championship course is the arena where the leading players are attracted to exploit their skill against one another and for lucrative prizes.

Much is being done to improve the facilities for spectators, and at the main championship courses permanent amenities have been installed such as toilets and drinking water, while miles of permanent cable have been laid for use by officials, T.V. and the Press to give up-to-the-minute information. Vantage points have been built, and ground levelled around the perimeter of the course to ensure reasonable walking conditions.

The construction of "natural" vantage points to accommodate spectators by the thousand involves considerable thought, time, material, and a co-ordinated programme for transport and other mechanical devices. Essentially the work is done by the greenkeeping staff in the winter months as weather and regular course maintenance permits.

As to the siting of these vantages many are obvious, and after an event the treading of many thousands of spectators give a clear indication of others which can be improved at little cost and so spread the load. Connecting pathways around the perimeter, and this includes to and from the back tees, are of equal importance and all new work has to be consolidated and turfed over to present spectators with the best possible conditions underfoot. The whole layout must be pleasing to the eye as well as practical, and the traditional appearance of the course left undisturbed. Where necessary tubular stands can be left in the hands of the erectors, but the main object devolves on the greenkeeper whose task it is to make best use of natural amenities which in the course of time will thoroughly blend with the surroundings, so that, apart from maintenance, the first cost of which is the last.

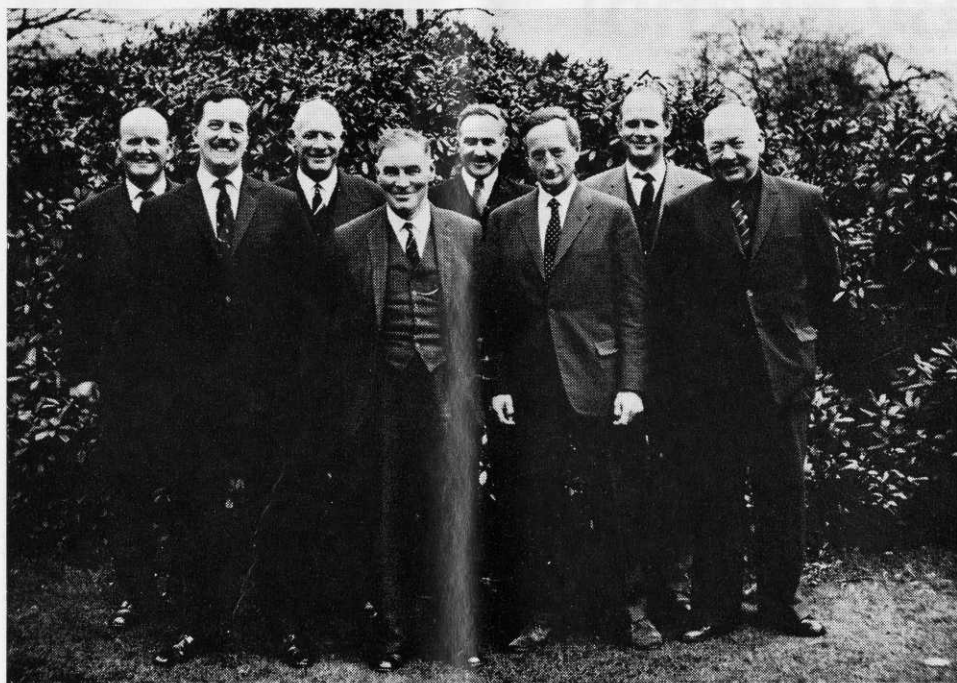
In the process of toughening up the course it often means the construction of special tees to lengthen or improve some of the holes. While as this is being done it is important that the regular routine of course maintenance should proceed unhindered, and club members enjoy their daily game with as little inconvenience as possible.

As the day of the tournament draws nearer the greenkeeper's services are much in demand, liaison with the committee is important to decide where the holes will be placed each day, the tees to be used, and to establish the sites for prefabricated stands if necessary, television towers, marquees and tents, scoreboards, mobile caravans, fences for crowd control, notice boards, collection and disposal of litter. When the lorries and vans arrive with gear of all sorts it is only the greenkeeper with his intimate knowledge of the terrain who can pilot them out to the pre-selected sites without fear of getting bogged down with heavy loads anywhere on the course.

When the players arrive they expect and must find the course groomed to perfection, so by this time preparations have been completed. Greens, tees and fairways have been given their final trim, bunkers also meticulously dealt with including the fringes. Flags freshly painted flag-pins and hole cups stand out against the background of emerald greens carefully manicured showing the familiar striped lines, which is the pleasing effect produced by the greenkeeper with his mowing machine.

During the course of a tournament the players and spectators see very little of the greenkeeper as his work must be done before play begins. This means a daybreak start every morning to cut greens, tees and fairways, move pole positions and rake bunkers. Irrespective of the weather all this work must be done on schedule though often it may mean wet skins.

By the time the spectators and players arrive the work of course grooming by



**JOINT COUNCIL FOR GOLF GREENKEEPER APPRENTICESHIP
MEETS AT BINGLEY**

*Members of the Joint Council after their Annual Meeting at Bingley
on Tuesday, 11th October.*

Left to right. John Campbell, President S.G.G.A., Brian M. Wood, F.C.I.S., Hon. Secretary, W. A. W. Sivewright (Scottish Golf Union), George Herrington (B.G.G.A.), R. B. Moffatt (Hon. Secretary S.G.G.A.), F. W. Hawtree (E.G.U.), Chairman. J. R. Escritt, M.Sc., Director, S.T.R.I., John Parker, B.G.G.A., Vice-Chairman.

BACK ROOM BOYS—continued

the staff will be completed—then they may be employed to help with car parking, posted at strategic parts of the course for dealing with bunkers, etc., and any other tasks of suitable maintenance.

This schedule of work continues throughout the course of the event, jobs such as cutting fairways can begin when the days play is over. In the event of drought pre-conceived plans would be brought into operation for watering greens and tees, etc., in the evening and overnight. This considerably adds to the greenkeepers many tasks as it involves moving equipment with care

being taken to ensure that all areas receive the same amount of water and the run of the ball will be uniform at every hole. When this is done all equipment must be out of the way before play begins in the morning.

After the event the work of the staff really begins with the task of cleaning up and storing away all the paraphernalia. Bottle tops, nails and studs, etc., are a menace to the mowing machines and make routine maintenance more arduous for the next few days.

When next you view a satisfying event either on the spot or on television and possibly admire the look of the course, remember those behind the scenes and particularly the Back Room Boys.

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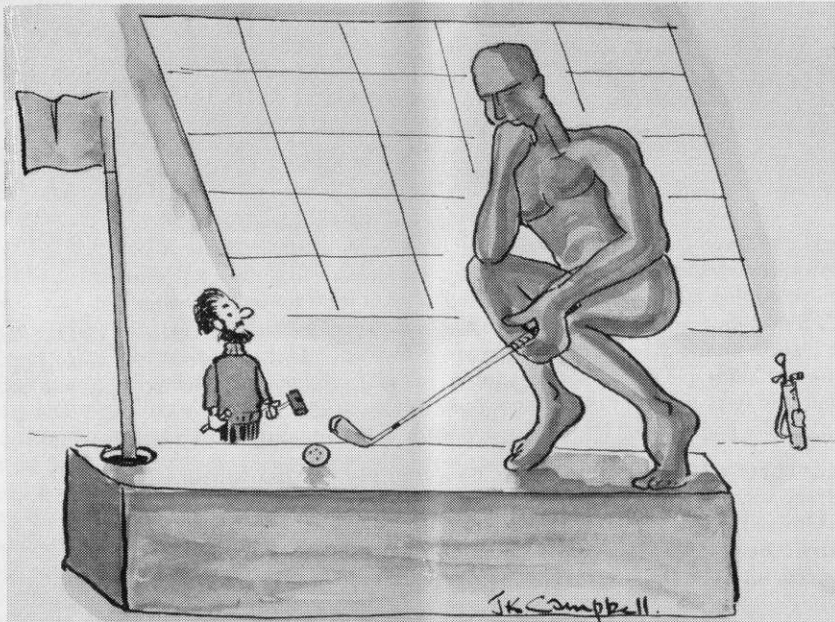
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