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## **THE GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENT'S JOB AT A PRIVATE COUNTRY CLUB**

by Julius Albaugh  
Supt. Westmoreland C. C.

My major function would be the care and maintenance of the golf course and the grounds of the club. My prime objective, as stated by the club, is to create a favorable golfing environment for the club equal to the better clubs in the Chicago area.

The control and management at a private club and its affairs and properties are entrusted to the Board of Directors or Board of Governors. The directors of the club in turn appoint a Grounds and Greens Committee which has supervision over all grounds of the club including roads, walks, golf course and landscaping. The chairman of the grounds and greens committee should be a director of the club. The grounds and greens committee is responsible for the setting of policy in golf course maintenance and is responsible for preliminary examination and approval of the golf course maintenance budget before it is presented to the finance committee. This committee is also responsible for approval and revision of long term planning and is responsible for general guidance in cooperation with the superintendent. It also functions as a liaison between the superintendent, the Board of Directors and the membership.

As superintendent in a private country club I am

now responsible to a committee of four men instead of the entire membership. The greens chairman at my club generally has a tenure of three years, that is, if he is appointed greens chairman the first year of his three year term as a director. This makes it easy for me as a golf course superintendent to work with the committee because it generally takes one year to educate a new greens chairman as to the many variable conditions a superintendent has to work with and to organize it so that you and he can work for the betterment of the club.

As superintendent I am responsible for playing conditions of the golf course. I plan maintenance operations and procedures and supervise the different maintenance functions. Any major changes in maintenance operations are discussed with the greens committee before actually being started. The greens committee when suggesting a change, such as, a change in the height of cutting turf or an additional fairway mowing per week will ask for my opinion as a professional turfgrass manager as to what effect this change may have on the turf, operating budget or the effects in general on maintenance. Also in area maintenance I am responsible for the trees and shrubbery at the club. We have a permanent tree committee of which I, as golf course superintendent, receive the quotations for work to be done and supervise the work on the course such as trimming, tree removal, planting and spraying. I am also responsible for the maintenance of structures such as bridges, fences and golf course maintenance buildings. At my club buildings fall under the jurisdiction of the house committee and I work with the house committee on these functions.

I recommend the purchasing of all golf course maintenance equipment, receive quotations and hand in a type written explanation for their needs to the greens committee. The greens chairman presents the material to the Board of Directors. After an item of equipment has been approved, I then purchase it, direct the use of the machinery, store it, keep inventory records and am responsible for the maintenance of the equipment. Any item of equipment over \$300.00 must have approval of the Board of Directors.

As superintendent of a private country club I am responsible for all grounds and greens employees. I have a crew of eleven men at the peak of the season, consisting of one foreman, one mechanic, two year-round greensmen, four or five seasonal employees and three high school or college boys.

I purchase all materials and supplies needed to maintain the golf course. These items are covered in the maintenance budget which is presented to the grounds and greens committee at the beginning of the fiscal year. After the budget is approved I may purchase supplies and materials by pre-season orders or as they are needed during the year. In the event of an abnormal year and more supplies are needed than were budgeted for a call to the the greens chairman and his authorization is all that is needed to purchase additional items.

Another duty of a superintendent is record keeping. I keep daily records of the weather conditions, materials purchased and used and rates of chemical applications. I also keep records of daily maintenance. These records may never be used. But next year I might run into a problem I remembered having had the previous year, it would be much simpler to glance through my records and see what the solution had



been before. Daily records of chemical applications can make analyzation of a problem much simpler.

As superintendent I make up both the operating and equipment or capital improvement budgets. When these budgets are turned in they contain a summary sheet of all items plus an explanation for the purchase of each item for capital improvement or equipment. In the maintenance or operating budget each heading is analyzed to explain their needs. The superintendent of a private club is often called on to make other reports. The grounds and greens committee may request a plan for the screening of a particular area. A plan of this sort could include three or four alternatives and each alternative having materials used, labor involved, long term maintenance aspects and cost. A report of this type can take much time and detail; it should be type writtten, contain sketches or pictures and be handed in neatly. This way it is recorded. Other types of reports superintendents of private clubs may be called on for are progress reports on a certain construction project, a report on golf course conditions to be printed in the club newspaper or a report to the grounds and greens committee as to why you feel you need a salary increase. Reports are an important part of the superintendent's job and the manner in which the material is presented can determine whether the request is granted or denied.

I feel that in a private club 90% of the golf course superintendent's job is public relations. Cooperation with the committees, suggesting ideas, going over the different facets of golf course maintenance with them, inviting the committees to your maintenance building and office, all are things that they enjoy and it gives you a more friendly and working relationship with them. With each club member it is helpful to learn their names and to greet them on the golf course. Explain different maintenance operations you're performing to them when you are asked and listen to their suggestions, for they are just trying to help you to improve the golf course. Keeping the golf course clear of paper and other litter, keeping maintenance equipment out of the paths of golfers and adding flower beds or beautification plantings are other methods of improving your relationship with the club members.

Also important is cooperation with club department heads, the golf professional, the manager, the locker room men and the caddie master. By all working together everyone's job can be much more enjoyable and you can accomplish a lot more for the club.

A golf course superintendent should be knowledgeable in the game of golf. In an ideal situation in a private club, the superintendent would have a standing golf game with a member of the greens committee, the pro and another club member. Since I am a poor golfer and haven't taken the time to improve my game, I depend a lot on our pro to keep me informed as to the playing conditions of the golf course.

Another important aspect as superintendent of a private club is continued education. Keeping up with maintenance magazines, attending local, regional and national turf conferences, association with fellow superintendents are all methods to increase your knowledge.

In a private club there are often responsibilities beyond the golf course. These may be tennis courts, swimming pools, gun clubs, curling rinks, indoor tennis courts, or even club house maintenance.

When conditions are such that damage can be done to the golf course by play or carts, I have the responsibility and authority to close the golf course to play or carts. The Board of Directors and greens committee stand behind me on these decisions. It is important that the superintendent use sound reasoning and stick to his decision so that membership respect can be maintained.

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