

Unconsidered Trifles on a Golf Course

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SOMEONE once said a greenkeeper is known by the quality of his putting greens. I would go a step further and say that an up-to-date greenkeeper is known by the golf course he keeps. One of the many things we greenkeepers are apt to overlook are the unconsidered trifles of a golf course, and this is a subject that is very rarely touched upon in any of our magazines on golf-course work. I will try to enumerate some of these trifles that I have noticed on many golf courses and trifles which I am ever on the lookout to obviate.

One of these important unconsidered trifles, and probably the worst, is the removal of grass cuttings, no matter how good our green or how perfect. A pile of cuttings that has been allowed to sweat and rot, generally not many feet from the green, is a very objectionable feature. Its unsightliness as well as the obnoxious odors which arise from this rotten and malodorous heap takes away all the beauty and effect of your green by its very presence. These heaps are good nurseries for breeding many insects. I would strongly urge the removal of such heaps as often as the greens are cut, if that be possible.

Keep Tools Carefully

Tools are another unconsidered trifle on many golf courses, and in many cases a very expensive item. Machinery of all descriptions ought to be under some covering in the winter months. Spades, shovels, rakes, hose, piping, wheelbarrows and other smaller and necessary articles used on a golf course should at all times be kept indoors and out of sight. Careless workmen can soon be made efficient if a check is made on the tools each man works with and each man is made responsible for any tool's general condition during the time he is using it. In the mere trifles that make up most of a greenkeeper's worry, things that look so unimportant to him are very often noticed at once by some members. We must always remember that men and women who have big estates of their own like to compare their estates with the general upkeep of a golf course.

Train Men to Seek Trifles

Up-to-date methods require that a golf course should be attractive, something pleasing to the eye. Greens and fairways alone have no beauty—it is what goes with them, trees, shrubs, hills, etc., that give them their artistic effect, but so many times these mere trifles in the way of dead branches, broken limbs, fallen twigs that are left untouched, side shoots from young trees that ought to have been removed, give a neglected and untidy appearance. Train your men to look out for the mere trifles. If you give them that privilege and encourage them, it will be astonishing the small things they will draw to your attention.

One of the items which is often considered trifling but which I consider very important is the removing of all partly submerged stones in the fairways or in the rough. I instruct all my men when they are crossing the course, should they see a stone protruding from the ground, to mark it by placing a stick against it and then report same. By taking these impediments out, what a tremendous saving it means to the life of the mower, also to the club, and much anxiety is saved the greenkeeper.

Hidden Stones Expensive

When your machinery is constantly breaking down, the cause is often the hidden stone. I have seen scores of marks on some stones and, I dare say, you have, made by the revolving knives as they passed over it every week. I once visited a golf club that was having trouble with its fairway mowers. Being asked for an opinion on this particular kind of mower, I said to the chairman of the greens committee, "Your man must be surely hitting a rock somewhere." But that theory of mine was tabooed—it was the machine. However, on walking over the course I kept a watchful eye on what I surmised to be the cause and was soon rewarded by finding the object I was looking for. I drew the chairman's attention to it. He at once sent for the tractor man. When he was asked if he knew it was there and why he did not take it out, his reply was,

"I never had time. There are more of them up and down the course."

The pro-greenkeeper, when this matter was mentioned to him by the chairman, said, "Hellfire! I must have that taken out at once," and instructed, with various commands and ejaculations, a man to remove the injurious stone at once. I might mention the pro-greenkeeper had had charge of affairs for seven years, but he had not seen that rock or any of the others. It was just an unconsidered "trifle," and there are scores of them on a golf course.

In conclusion, I would say that we must all recollect that trifles make perfection and perfection is no trifle.

Labor vs. Machinery in Greens Budget

By "Mac"

"WHAT shall we spend on upkeep?"

Far too few greens committees can answer that question with any degree of certainty. Because the average greens committee does not know the amount of work required to keep a golf course in good condition, most of the estimates of annual maintenance costs are too low. But there are some clubs that are too liberal in course maintenance allotments. It has been my observation that these clubs usually do not operate on a budget basis and the greens operations are carried on in the fashion made traditional by a sailor on shore leave.

I have seen a case where \$23,000 has been spent on upkeep that I would consider expensive at \$5,000. In my part of the country a man who will spend over \$18,000 for an average year's upkeep I would hold open to an argument. If he spent more than that I consider it safe to say that he is not using modern equipment and modern methods.

In my opinion a good greenkeeper can keep an 18 hole course of good design in first class condition on a budget from \$16,000 to \$18,000 a year, barring extra work that is really a capital expense.

I have been connected with four clubs in this country since coming from Scotland. Not any of them have spent more than \$16,000 a year for upkeep and their courses were kept in good shape. My course right now is one of the best in the district (the south central) and my budget is \$15,750 a year. This is my first season at my club. The course was not in the best condition when I took it over and

there are still a few things that need improving, but they will have to be worked up gradually as time and the budget permit. My members say they never saw the course looking so good and so well trimmed up, and visitors from some of the country's foremost courses compliment its condition, so I have every reason to believe that my budget is a reasonable one.

Cutting Labor Budget

I have tried it and know that a good bit can be cut out of the labor budget by the use of modern machinery, such as compost mixers, etc. When a lot of greens committees realize that they can spend for up-to-date equipment and stand a very good chance of quickly saving its cost in reduction of labor charges, the greenkeepers' work is going to be easier and better.

What I consider a reasonable budget for a course to follow is:

Labor	\$11,500
Sand, gas oil, repairs, etc.	2,500
Machinery	1,500
Seed and fertilizer	1,000
Weeding	1,000

I work my budget on an elastic basis. For instance; if I am under my budget for weeding and need some more machinery, I pay for the machinery out of what I have saved in weeding. I never have seen a budget where there wasn't some room for adjustment along this line.

From boyhood in Scotland I have been connected with golf and during my connection with it have seen nothing that equals, in its practical significance, the present interest greenkeepers are taking in course maintenance. Much more now is available in the way of information, and a greenkeeper must keep in touch with all available data or slip behind the procession.

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