

# Don't Despair *If you fight hard enough, bad weather can be licked*

## When

# Nature Frowns

By  
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LAST season, I went through an experience in greenkeeping that convinced me, after summing it all up, that if I had been yellow instead of taking a fresh hold on myself with the determination to overcome the difficulties which just then looked impossible to bridge, I would be in the discard by now.

The Chicago Golf Club was awarded the Walker Cup Matches in 1928. I was informed of this by my Green Committee the latter part of September in 1927 and immediately set about preparing for this great golf classic. I wanted to have the course in as good or even better condition than any layout over which this tournament had been played in the past. Considerable work was accomplished in the fall of 1927.

In the spring of 1928, I set out to finish the job of grooming the course. Everything was going along on schedule and coming fine; in fact, I was quite elated at the progress being made. But I was premature in my elation.

The dates of the matches were August 30 and 31. Along about the last week in July, Old Dame Nature said, "Now I will see what you are made of," and she did! It rained several days in succession, and every time it rained the ground became more water-soaked, and all of this time I was trying to get about 3,000 yards of sand into the traps.

On the final day a veritable cloudburst flooded everything. The water was about level with the grass on the greens and, before it had a chance to soak in, the sun came out. It seemed to be hotter that day than at any time during the year, and as a result the water got so hot that it scalded the grass.

Next morning, when I walked over the greens, my heart was sick. Greenkeeping up until that day had been comparatively easy and pleasant, but just then the bottom seemed to have dropped out of my

world. I had my opinion of any one who would set the date of a tournament in August, but that did not help my case any, so I studied this catastrophe and decided what I could do about it.

Fortunately, a spell of dry weather followed; so I let the greens dry out—that is, the seven which were hit. For a week, I left them absolutely alone. As this was the dormant season for grass, I knew I must be careful.

While the greens were drying out, I was preparing compost for top-dressing and hauling it to the greens. When everything was ready, I got the top-dressing machines out, sending two men out ahead to mix 100 lbs. of 12-6-4 fertilizer with the compost at every green. The greens were top-dressed immediately, the compost brushed in, and the greens given a thorough watering.

There was no evident change for about four days, then the grass started to grow and continued to do so until the end of the season. Of course, there were some places so badly scarred that they could not recover, and such places were plugged or re-turfed, using the turf around the collar of the particular green I was patching. This gave me the same texture and color of grass as the green. Ordinarily I would not have attempted this but necessity is the mother of invention.

Every eight days I used brown-patch preventive, although I do not think it was necessary. I stayed with those greens day and night and believe under the circumstances had them in good condition on August 30th. Two days before the tournament I got the last of the sand in the traps and a lucky rain immediately after packed the sand just right for play.

There was other important work to be done. I lined up the men for the different jobs which had to be attended to during the matches. Greens were to be cut in the morning, starting at six o'clock.

Before play started, a man was placed at each green to erase the ball holes and rake the traps around the green. The same applied to the fairway traps, one man for each fairway. I had the pleasure of hearing a member tell me he did not see one trap with a footprint in it, nor a green with a ball hole.

Another item of importance was the mowing of the fairways. This gave me food for thought. How was I going to cut the fairways without interrupting the play? I finally decided to *cut them at night*; so I had the tractors equipped with lights and the men cut the fairways every night, starting about 5:30 p. m., finishing about 2 a. m.

It is significant that on the seven greens which were hit so hard in July, I did not see a sign of brown-patch the remainder of the season, but on the greens which were *not* hit in July, the small or dollar patch was much in evidence.

## Planning Season's Maintenance Campaign

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THE greenkeeping profession is advancing by leaps and bounds and what I might consider the right thing to do this year maybe all wrong next year. Like any other scientific research work some things are stumbled into and others very carefully thought out.

Following is the program I intend to follow this season, weather conditions permitting. I do not claim that this can be used on other courses but to my particular case it seems to fit and work very nicely. The first part of April I shall use about 15 lbs. of sulphate of ammonia to greens that average about 6000 square feet. I will follow with applications every week for the rest of the summer but reduce the amount each week until I get to about 5 lbs. per 6000 square feet and run through the hot summer months with this amount. In the fall I raise the amount again until I reach 10 lbs. per 6000 square feet. My greens get two top-dressings a year, one in April and one in September. The top-dressing contains top-soil, sand, and char coal. Before the greens are top-dressed I give them a light covering of tobacco dust, about a hundred lbs. to a green about

6000 square feet. The method I have just told about has been very successful on my course and that is as much as I will say about it.

I have found out through sad experience that it does not pay to use new compost with a great amount of manure in it, because I have had a great deal of trouble with it. The difficulty I had last fall made me go back to lime and I intend to use some this year. The amount I use will be very small.

No doubt you have heard about fertilizers causing a great deal of trouble. I do not think it is fair to condemn the fertilizer itself but the way it is used. You can over-feed and under-feed just as easily as feed the right amount. I think that if you can find the right proportion of fertilizer for your grass and not go to extremes but stay at a happy medium you will not be able to blame fertilizers for other diseases.

### Scald Is Real Horror.

Brown-patch of course is the terrible enemy of the greenkeeper! But give me brown-patch instead of scald. I can bring my grass back in a short time with brown-patch but it is a different story with the scald. Last spring we had some unusual weather. A cloud burst of rain in the morning followed by a sun that would cook eggs, and what did we get? A blistered grass that was hardest in the world to bring back to life. I have no plan to offer for scald. For brown-patch a light application of lime might prevent it. If you have brown-patch start a little raking and some nitrate of soda will bring them back if you can start at the work the minute it turns up.

The golf course today is getting motorized. I might spend just as much money this year, with all my equipment motorized, but that is not saying I am spending it for the same amount of work. I am absolutely sure that I can give more time and attention to things that were impossible when we had hand equipment.

Watering is an important factor but here again conditions of course say whether you should water one day a week or two. I water each green twice a week during the dry season. The watering is done in the evening in about two and half hours. We cover our greens with about  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch of water per night. This will change according to conditions of the green.