

Best Greenkeepers Work on Platform from Their Green-Chairmen

MUCH has been written and spoken on the necessity of versatility as a prime qualification for the successful greenkeeper. They tell about the greenkeeper being a turf expert, a fertilizer wizard, a drainage wonder, a labor management star, an accounting phenomenon, a landscaping genius, a marvelous mechanic, and heaven knows what all else. All these he must be, they say, in order to rate as one of the leaders of his profession.

But, in viewing the above list of the greenkeeper's qualities, it is GOLFDOM'S opinion that one of the prime requisites of of greenkeeper, according to many chairmen, is that of mind-reading. It is our observation that a good part of the misery of greenkeeping is not caused by weather, the budget, or other matters beyond the greenkeeper's control, or beyond the jurisdiction of his chairman, but is directly the result of failure to have a correct and complete understanding between the chairman and his chief of operations. In reviewing some sad cases of good men being divorced from club payrolls, it strikes us that the trouble can be traced to a failure to get some definite policy instructions from the chairman. Then, if serious misunderstanding crops out, all the chairman has to do in a crisis is to turn his rather onerous burden over to someone else, but the greenkeeper is the real sufferer in being discharged.

Every season we are reminded of this necessity of an understanding and close team-work between the chairman and the greenkeeper. It was brought up vividly lately in a note from Joe Valentine of Merion Cricket club. This note, giving some of the sidelights on the new Merion watering job, referred to elsewhere in this issue, is one of the pleasant things we like to mention. Joe sent us a picture of his chairman and said about the boss: "He is practically responsible for the installation of the system. He went to bat in the board of governors' meeting and got everything he asked for because he knew what was needed. He has been chairman five years, and is a grand, democratic fellow."

Some of the greenkeepers who have had experience with new chairmen coming to

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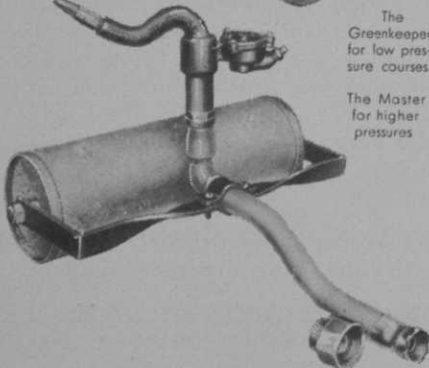
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the position with pep, high purposes and not the slightest idea of what it's all about, say the farther the chairman keeps away the better. The statement is not without its virtue in many cases, but unless the chairman gives the greenkeeper a good idea of what the club expects and how the course work has to be co-ordinated with other details of the club's operation, chances are there is a storm brewing.

Asking some of the chairmen about their relations with their greenkeepers brought forth a number of interesting replies. Leonard J. Fox, chairman at Losantiville at Cincinnati, tells GOLFDOM:

"In the first place—we do not use the expression 'greenkeeper' or 'green-chairman' at our club because golf clubs are no longer exclusively for golf but are recreation centers for the members, in that the modern club embodies golf, tennis, trap-shooting, outdoor dancing, swimming and even polo.

"So we use the term 'grounds chairman' and the man in charge of the grounds is the superintendent of grounds.

"Our superintendent and I have weekly conferences and when emergencies arise conferences are held as often as is necessary.

"Our grounds superintendent has a perfect knowledge of what is desired and instructions are given to him in writing, verbal orders are not permitted. I think this leads to a firm understanding.

"When perplexing club problems arise I send for experts who discuss the matter with our grounds superintendent and the writer, but this is seldom necessary on account of experience we have had.

"Verbal complaints from our members are not considered, they must put their complaints in writing; they are not always complaints for we get many valuable suggestions from the members.

"When we make certain improvements such as changing greens, deepening or adding new traps, changing fairways, etc., such matters are always planned far in advance of the fall season because there are many days during the playing season when our men cannot work on the general run of grounds work and may be used for preparatory work on changes wanted in the fall.

"I believe the fine condition of our course is due to the perfect understanding I have with our superintendent. When either of us have ideas we confer and when we are not sure we call in experts. Then when

we have reached a conclusion the instructions are placed in writing.

"We watch our budget very closely, having had our auditors prepare our report in a simple manner so that our superintendent is able to read it. We separate our various activities and a copy of this report is in our superintendent's hands. He knows exactly what can be spent for sand, cinders, gasoline, oil and such items as we purchase, although this is made flexible because in maintaining such grounds, emergencies arise and must be given proper attention.

"All our purchases for the grounds are made by our superintendent who must get at least two bids. Quality considered, purchasing is done from the lowest bidder. He places his order through our office which then mails out the requisitions. When the bill arrives—it is approved first, by the grounds superintendent and then by the writer."

Keep Budget Ample.

G. M. Posner, green-chairman of the Bryn Mawr C. C. (Chicago district), points out that close contact between the greenkeeper and chairman means that the chairman will know enough about what's going on to put up a good fight in board meetings for the greenkeeping budget.

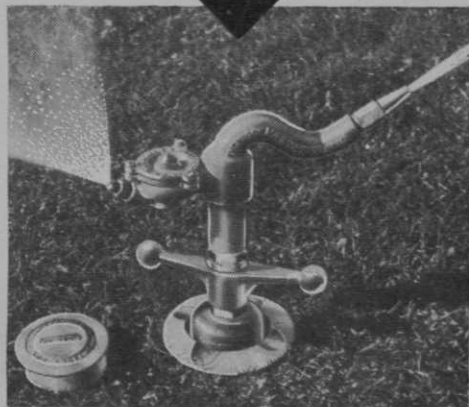
Mr. Posner, in his comment to GOLF-DOM, emphasizes that the more the greenkeeper keeps his chairman acquainted with the extent and character of the maintenance work, the easier it is for the chairman to get the greenkeeper the money he needs. He states:

"It is necessary that the chairman of the grounds and greens committee keep in close contact with the greenkeeper throughout the entire season, in fact throughout the year.

"A constant analysis of upkeep expenses, such as payrolls, fertilizers, sand, machinery and general supplies and equipment, and comparing same with each month of the previous years, going into this analysis frequently with the greenkeeper, making allowances for work that is out of the ordinary and only work done at periods of three or four years, will give you an idea of what the chairman can expect from the greenkeeper in the way of results and benefits to his course and keeping within his budget allowance.

"Almost daily discussion, if only over the telephone, between the greenkeeper and green-chairman, and at least a week-

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ly inspection of the golf course by the green-chairman, is the only way that he can expect results.

"We expect our greenkeeper to have the greens and tees cut daily; the fairways cut once or twice a week, depending on the weather; the sand raked loose after heavy rains and before Saturday and Sunday play; the greens topdressed once a month; all machinery and equipment kept in perfect working condition; the trees and shrubbery carefully watched and soil turned over at least once during the season; prevent brown patch and other diseases affecting the greens; and in general

keep the course in first class playing condition at all times. This can only be done by frequent discussions between the greenkeeper and the green-chairman with a budget allowance that is ample for the greenkeeper to do all of the work required to give the above mentioned results.

"In conclusion wish to state that to obtain what the chairman expects of his greenkeeper the chairman must be patient and helpful and give time unsparingly. It means work on the part of the green-chairman but you will get results. All that you expect of the greenkeeper will be fulfilled, and your club will prosper."



Audubon Makes Quick Time with New Fairways

AUDUBON C. C., Louisville, Ky. is boasting a new fairway this year that has an interesting story. Thirty-six days after the scrapers had left the job there was play on this fairway and a good stand of grass. Such a record is of particular interest to fee courses where time means money and the tale certainly is not without its value to private clubs confronted with the necessity of making alteration when the rush traffic is on.

A. C. Chapman, green-chairman of the club and C. O. Bohne, Jr., greenkeeper are proud of this achievement and tell of the procedure as follows:

"Our No. 13 is a one-shot 125 yard hole and was not visible from the tee. To get visibility it was necessary to excavate along the entire distance between the tee and the green. In some places as much as four feet and in no place was it less than 18 inches so of course there was nothing

left but a very heavy clay sub-soil on the surface.

"On May 1st we had finished with the rough grading and were ready to prepare our seed bed.

"We first plowed the ground to a depth of about eight inches, disc-harrowed it three times double discing each time and then dragged it twice with a tooth harrow to get it reasonably smooth. Our next step was to add enough manure and other fertilizers to make good soil out of that clay; so we put on per acre 18 cubic yards of mushroom soil, 1,000 pounds milorganite and 400 pounds of 20 per cent superphosphate. These materials were then thoroughly mixed with the top six inches of soil by going over it again with the disc harrow, four more times double discing this time also. Following this we again dragged it with the tooth harrow, going over it until the surface was perfectly smooth and ready for the seed.

"On May 3, we sowed 100 pounds of Kentucky blue grass, 80 pounds fancy red top and 40 pounds of rye grass per acre