

Guide-Posts for the Newcomer in Course Maintenance Field

By G. A. FARLEY

This is from Mrs. Farley's forthcoming book on greenkeeping, a work in which she has enlisted the co-operation of many of the prominent and practical authorities. As a versatile and competent business woman, and one who has been in close contact with greenkeeping due to the Cleveland correspondence course and the National Association of Greenkeepers, Mrs. Farley has figured actively in course maintenance progress.

ENTERING the greenkeeping profession are many young men who have been gathering practical experience in general golf course maintenance under the supervision of expert greenkeepers.

It has been said, and truly, that greenkeeping cannot be taught. The statement may be qualified to the extent of adding "except in the school of practical golf course work." There are agricultural colleges which have established as a part of their curriculum special courses in greenkeeping theory and practice, and the progress of such departments is notably good. Perhaps their greatest value to the future of greenkeeping in America is the fact that such activities have created in the minds of students an interest in greenkeeping never before felt.

The fact remains that regardless of previous education and training, from three to five year's experience on a golf course is necessary to prepare a greenkeeper for the responsibility of taking charge of a golf course under construction or in play.

Agricultural college students are encouraging prospects, and those attracted to golf course maintenance spend the summer months as greensmen, mechanics and general helpers, thus supplementing their school work with practical experience under the direction of the greenkeeper in charge. Fresh from the classroom, and filled with interest in all things that grow, the young agricultural college man fre-

quently finds the problem of golf course management sufficiently fascinating to make of it his life work.

Following each year of school with a summer of practical course maintenance should equip the average student with qualifications as an assistant greenkeeper, from which point he is only limited by his natural ability and continued study as to what he makes of himself as a greenkeeper.

Young men who have had no opportunity to attend college, but whom circumstances have placed as helpers on a golf course, often develop into exceptionally fine greenkeepers through their interest and concentration under the instruction of practical greenkeepers.

Develop Study Habit

The expert greenkeeper finds it to his benefit to note and instruct the men under him who show evidence of being good greenkeeping "timber." The habit of study in which the college man has been trained can be developed by any young man of average education who has the ambition to get ahead in the greenkeeping field.

The most important angle to impress upon the mind of the man who has decided upon greenkeeping as the field of his endeavor is the paramount necessity of *getting the work done*. For much of the time the greenkeeper must stand upon his own feet. He must depend upon his own judgment. He must so handle his helpers on the course that the best they can do for him is done with pride and satisfaction in the job at hand. Getting things done in the management of any business demands *executive ability*. Greenkeeping is far from being any exception to the rule.

The greenkeeper may be a better mechanic than he is a carpenter, and a better theorist than he is either. He may know most of the fine points of raising turf and keeping good greens under trying conditions. However, if his executive ability is not greater than any single accomplishment he possesses, he will not be a success as a greenkeeper.

He may know how to handle any part of his work, but unless his perspective of the amount to be done is clear, and his assignments of labor to his crew well-planned in advance, he will very shortly find himself in a tangle from which no amount of turf-growing knowledge will extricate him. The old adage "If you would like a thing well done, do it yourself," if followed by the greenkeeper on the average eighteen-hole course, would soon prove him unfit for the job.

Most successful greenkeepers, which is only another way of describing those who receive the greatest co-operation from their club officials, are ever on the alert to discover or adopt efficient methods to reduce their cost of labor. Not only does this apply to the amount of time consumed in what is termed hand labor, but in these days of machine-equipped golf courses the greenkeeper must keep a constant check upon the working condition of the machinery in use, that as little time as possible may be lost in making repairs during the playing season.

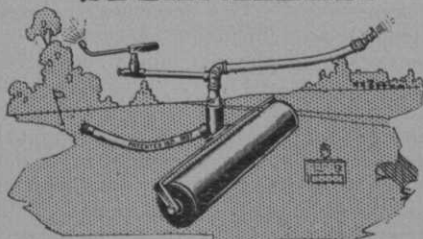
Instruct the Greensmen

With further reference to the subject of labor on the course, it is safe to say that

the greenkeeper will find some of his time well spent in properly instructing his greensmen. These men in the early stages of their work can do an inestimable amount of damage unless carefully watched until they understand in all its phases what is expected of them. On most courses the greenkeeper has an assistant who has had sufficient experience to oversee the instruction of new men, and to relieve the greenkeeper of other time-consuming details of the general work.

There is no hard and fast rule for laying out the labor schedule on any one course which will be found adequate and workable on another. Each greenkeeper must determine for himself, with the assistance of the club official in charge, and with close attention to the amount of money appropriated by the club for the maintenance of the course, how many men he may allow himself in his regular crew. Eighteen-hole courses employ anywhere from seven to 25 men besides the head greenkeeper, this great variation being due to conditions equally variable. The demands of playing members on some courses are far in advance of those found among a membership unable or unwilling to finance better turf maintenance.

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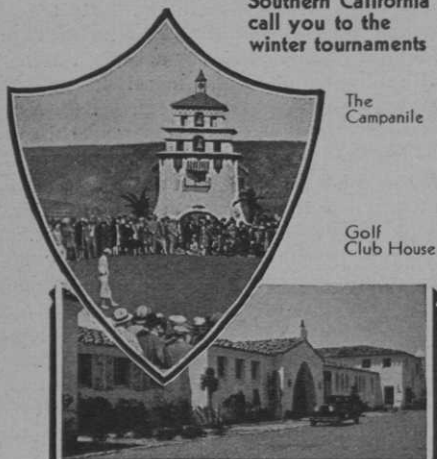
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SCHEDULE OF TOURNAMENTS

Tournament	Date	Prize
San Francisco	Dec. 4-5-6-7	\$ 7,500
Catalina	Dec. 11-14	7,500
Pasadena	Dec. 19-21	4,000
Glendale	Dec. 27-28	2,500
Long Beach	Jan. 2-3-4	3,500
Santa Monica	Jan. 5-6	1,500
Los Angeles	Jan. 9-10-11	10,000
Agua Caliente	Jan. 13-14-15-16	25,000

Horse Racing opens Christmas day

THE eyes of turfdom point to the new \$2,000,000 Agua Caliente Jockey Club where the annual Winter Meeting of 81 days opens on Christmas. Winter visitors to California will find the exotic air of these colorful racing days to their liking! The Meeting is featured by the \$140,000 Agua Caliente Handicap, classic of the turf, to be run on March 22, 1931.

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Wherever a competent greenkeeper is in charge and poor playing conditions prevail, the solution of the problem is more often than not found in a too closely trimmed course maintenance appropriation. In many cases the amount of money allowed a greenkeeper to manage an 18 hole course is not much more than enough to maintain nine holes in fairly good shape. The way out cannot be taken by the greenkeeper alone, as like any other employee of the club, he is engaged to handle a specific job, and is expected to make a success of it.

The greenkeeper's immediate superior is usually the chairman of the green-committee for the club, although there are instances where some other official or executive employee is responsible to the membership for the playing conditions on the course.

The chairman of the green-committee is almost without exception, a man of accomplishment in his own field of endeavor, one who has been successful in either business of professional life, and who has taken up golf as a means of recreation. He is usually of mature judgment and popular among club members. Occasionally he has had some experience in turf maintenance, and in some cases he has made a hobby of it over a long period of time. The "long-term" chairman is one who serves his club in that capacity from year to year, and is conversant with each step that has been taken on the course since his term began. This describes the ideal chairman, and fortunate indeed is the greenkeeper who works under his direction.

To go to the other extreme, there is the chairman who serves one or two years, finds the supervision too confining or not of particular interest, and lo, another man is appointed to step into his shoes. Given a greenkeeper of high calibre, many such otherwise short-term chairmen, instead of following their natural inclination to give up what seems to be a thankless job, become through enjoyable association with an expert and intelligent man in charge of the course, just what every golf club needs,—a long-term chairman of the green.

Chairman Is Greenkeeper's Ally


Whatever may be the knowledge or lack of knowledge on the part of the chairman in matters of turf maintenance, he is without doubt the best friend the good greenkeeper can boast of. Not only that, but he is the best and most understanding medium

through which the young greenkeeper may develop to his best effort and accomplishment. If the chairman has served his club for several years, his advice to the greenkeeper is invaluable, and his friendly understanding is as a rule only limited by the amount of interest the greenkeeper shows in his job. Through his chairman, be he "turf-nut" or utterly devoid of turf knowledge, the greenkeeper absorbs daily tips relating to the management of the course. As spokesman for his greenkeeper, he presents to the board of directors of the club all data relating to the cost of maintenance and possible re-construction and improvement on the course, with figures upon which are based the appropriations made from year to year, which amounts determine to a large extent the quality of the playing surfaces for which the greenkeeper is held responsible.


Some chairmen of green-committees are retired from business, and spend a great deal of time on the course, while others who are still active beyond the realms of the club have little time to devote to the greenkeeper's problems. Regardless of the time spent on the course by the chairman, one rule of conduct should be observed by the greenkeeper at all times. During a round of golf, he should not be disturbed, except in extreme emergency. Whatever the extent of his support and courtesy to the greenkeeper, his game of golf should be as inviolate to interruption as that of any other playing member. Regular appointments should be made between the busy chairman of a green-committee and the greenkeeper, at which time the greenkeeper should have reports in order covering any matter which may be up for discussion.

Make Pro a Partner

The club professional is in a position to materially assist the greenkeeper, particularly in times of stress, during tournament seasons, and whenever the course is in hard play. Imperfect work of greensmen comes to his attention at once, and his close touch with playing members gives him an opportunity to explain away any unusual circumstances which are the result of course maintenance work and which may for a time disturb the even tenor of play. A partnership of mutual respect and understanding between the professional and the greenkeeper is invaluable to both. A true partnership is one in which neither gains through what the other loses, and a relationship between



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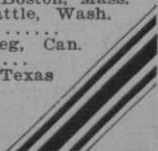
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them which can be described in such terms is one in which the best interests of the club are promoted and maintained.

The necessity for executive ability on the part of the greenkeeper cannot be over-emphasized. With this qualification, backed by the friendly co-operation of his chairman and the club professional, the greenkeeper need add but one other requisite in making a success of his job, the desire to be found equal to what is required of him.

Weekly reports showing a distribution of labor over each section of the course are required by the chairman of the green-committee, and for the most part these forms or blanks are individual in make-up with each club. Attempts have been made to standardize such report forms, but as they represent an integral part of the accounting system covering the business of the club as a whole, the most that can be said at the present time is that greenkeepers' reports resemble each other to a certain extent, varying to accord to the demands of the particular system of accounting favored by the individual club.

Checking up weekly reports of the cost of maintenance enables the green-committee chairman and the greenkeeper to keep within the season's appropriation. From a summarization of the reports at the end of the year, and an estimate of the cost of any changes or improvements contemplated, a comprehensive program of operations for the following year may be intelligently laid out and presented by the chairman for the consideration of the club directors.

Make Course a Show-place

The days are already gone when a greenkeeper, however experienced, can do just a full day's work and let the rest of the world go by. Like every other profession, new days bring new ways in keeping a

golf course. The members at one course play over others in the neighborhood, and sometimes far afield. They expect on the home course conditions that equal those they find elsewhere. The chairman and members of a green-committee in charge of a particularly well-groomed golf course are justly proud of what they can show visiting golfers in the way of perfect playing fairways and greens. This natural pride has two beneficial effects upon greenkeepers as a whole. It creates a desire upon the part of the greenkeeper of a less perfect course to match the excellence of the fine course to the best of his ability; the approval of his chairman and its hearty expression to visitors is the best possible incentive to the man in charge of a notably good course to further perfect his work.

The golf club is the second home of members, who quickly note evidences of haphazard and untidy methods around the clubhouse grounds and over the course. The greenkeeper should pay particular attention to the appearance of all grounds surrounding his playing areas, with an eye to anything unsightly which may obtrude upon the vision of playing members. Rollers, mowers, carts, rakes and other equipment should be in evidence only when in use, and kept under cover at all other times. Trash should be taken care of promptly, especially where it is apt to gather, on and around the teeing grounds.

Falling tree limbs, whether or not in the line of play, are a source of danger to both players and workers on the course, as well as objectionable to the sight, and should be removed without delay. Trees should be regularly inspected and dying or broken limbs cut before they fall.

Painting and refurbishing shelter houses, benches, flag poles and other small equipment should be done during slack times

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and often enough to keep them bright and attractive in appearance.

Paths should be kept cleared and well defined, and underbrush cut away in groves or woodland lying near the fairways and tees.

Grooming preserves the natural beauty that surrounds nearly all playing surfaces on a golf course, and in adding further features such as artistic bridges, steps, specially designed benches and shrubbery bordered paths and shelter houses, many greenkeepers show more than a touch of genius.

Compare Courses

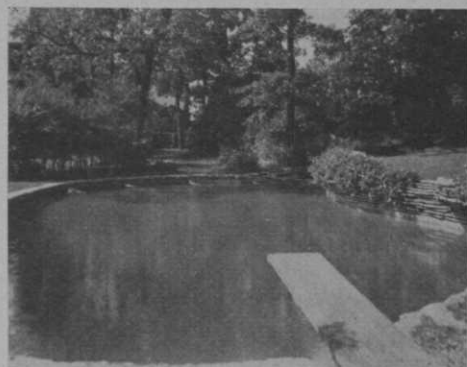
As golfing members visit other courses, so should the greenkeeper spend some of his leisure time in looking over the results for which other greenkeepers are responsible. At most golf clubs there are certain times during the year when the course is supporting its "peak load" of golfers. At these times the greenkeeper finds more than enough to do on the home grounds. At slack periods it is often possible for him to take enough time to call upon nearby greenkeepers who have been recommended for their achievements, and compare notes on methods around the course.

Throughout Canada and all northern and central states long evenings prevail in winter, and no greenkeeper who wishes to improve his standing can afford to let this time go by without assimilating all possible information, both scientific and practical, relating to the maintenance of golf courses. The greenkeeper on any course will find it distinctly to his advantage to index the important information in the publications, and keep them filed as read in loose binders easily procurable for the purpose.

In addition to the knowledge he picks up from day to day in handling the work around the course, and that secured through reading, the greenkeeper is the recipient of quantities of free advice from everyone interested in golf with whom he holds a conversation.

Here is where his natural commonsense and discrimination must guard and guide him. Sifting the wheat from the chaff of word-of-mouth advice about keeping greens is good mental exercise, and sometimes excellent information is the result of careful screening.

While he is on the course, and bending every effort toward getting the day's work done, the greenkeeper who is obviously busy at his job is less often interrupted.



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