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Ninth green of the Columbus C. C. course is nine-year-old Metropolitan strain in excellent condition.

Columbus has Gems of the Notions—

By HERB GRAFFIS

The story of a country club that has no red ink, no topsy-turnover in personnel, no cliques and no caddie problem to disturb its smooth operation.

IF YOU can get the right men in office and keep them there you have no worries and no assessments at your club. It's just that simple. At least for the members, if not for the officers. This business of operating personnel turnover at golf clubs is one of the serious sources of waste, that's certain. GOLFDOM'S rec-

ords show about a 60% annual turnover among the operating and executive personnel we cover.

It's a fortunate club that can get these men who stick and serve, and you can see good black figures on the extent of the good fortune when you look over the annual statement. One of the outstanding

cases of successful golf club operation is that of the Columbus (O.) C. C. They get fellows who stay on the job.

Twenty-five years ago O. A. Miller went on the directorate of the club—just when it was starting. He's there still and on the board with him are other men with service stripes running from the wrist to the shoulder blades. Fred Rathburn, the present president of the club, joined the official family ten years ago as green-chairman. He has been president for three years. The manager, E. A. Hart, has only had three club jobs in all his managerial experience, and he's been at Columbus for eight years. Attilio Millrenee, the green-keeper, came to the club 10 years ago and the pro, Charley Lorns, is another substantial fixture, having been at the club 9 years.

Since the club was founded the nearest it has been to an assessment was when the original 9-hole course was expanded to eighteen. Instead of a set assessment the \$8,000 required was raised by "passing the hat," with no one contributing more than \$200 and no one less than \$50. Incidentally, the club does not enter course improvements as a capital charge.

Waiting List Means No Delinquents

Today the club has a waiting list of 100. It has 500 members. In addition to the regular dues for the club there is an annual golf playing charge of \$50 which is paid by 328 men, \$15 that 126 women pay and \$50 for the junior's annual golf playing charge. There are 20 of these junior members who are single men between the ages of 21 and 26, and whose fathers are members of the club. The waiting list is prominently displayed in the lobby. With a waiting list of this length it may be correctly guessed that the club has no trouble with delinquent accounts. Initiation fee at the club is \$300 and requires the purchase of a share of stock at \$200. The club dues are \$100 annually. The plant today represents a \$350,000 investment. For two years the club has done no borrowing. Its sole indebtedness is a \$65,000 5% first mortgage. With 245 acres of highly desirable property located only 7 miles from town and right in line with the "gold coast" residential section, the Columbus plant is worth, conservatively, three times the invested capital figure.

Fred Rathburn, president of the club, is so wrapped up in the progress of the enterprise that when GOLFDOM'S editor went to him with the request that he tip

off the rest of the clubs to the methods that have made the Columbus club one of the solid club successes of the golf field, he called an armistice on his own business activities and opened up about in these words:

A convenient location and a full membership, the latter detail running right along with the first, are the basic reasons for the satisfactory status of the club. Most of our members live within 10 to 15 minutes drive from the club. We increased our membership so we could take in the desirable young and active element, several years ago, for we then had the same problem that bothers a lot of other clubs—the inactive member. Due to the age of our club and the number of members who are good "old-timers" we found that this section of the membership, at one time, was too large for profitable business operation. When we went over the figures we found there were 110 members who were utterly dormant as house accounts. Any club that goes into such an investigation will find that it can handle more members with its facilities and stand a good chance of operating at a profit.

No Cliques With Profits

By heaven's grace we have no cliques. Have you noticed that when a club is operating profitably there is an absence of bickering groups?

When I was shanghaied into the service as green-chairman ten years ago we had some of the finest crab-grass fairways in the country. Our greens were a mixture of bent, poa annua, blue-grass and mongrel blades of other grasses and weeds. We bought anything from anybody. That was the time when the urge for high maintenance standards was just beginning to get its hold. Knowing nothing about turf development myself and being right up against the job of getting the course in better condition, I took counsel with other officers and members and we decided to have the agricultural experts of the Ohio State university come out and advise us what was to be done. Prof. Fred Ives and seven of the university staff came out to the course to look things over and take soil samples. There was one young professor among the bunch I noticed kept running around like an All-American end after a punt and digging up twice as many samples as the rest of the fellows. He was the fellow who stuck with the job after the rest of the technologists had gone into executive session and agreed that our course looked in pretty hopeless shape. This kid had faith enough in himself and soil science to believe we could be helped—or maybe he was so young and full of pep and high purpose



This sight greets Columbus C. C. members when they come out for the club's big New Year's day party.

he didn't know what he was up against. Anyway, that was our introduction to Wendell Miller. The plan he worked out for the course conditioning was to take some years, but in desperation we were eager to get even the cheer of hope long deferred. "Tilly," our good greenkeeper, has adhered to the basis recommended by scientific knowledge and we all have nothing but joy to express at the results.

Up to the time "Tilly" got on the job the club never had a greenkeeper. The usual old ideas prevailed. If a soil was black, then it must be good. If one dose of top-dressing was good, then a dozen must be better. Any of your readers who can recall their maiden-flights as green-chairmen a decade ago will get what I mean.

Follows Advice

But, to get back to the plot. After Miller had made the soil recommendations covering our situation (which was the first golf course he ever had seen) we were all hope and courage so we decided to plunge in. It was a lucky thing we did.

We started with drainage. Up to this time we had been fortunate if we were able to open our golf season by May 10, the course was so wet in the spring. A good rain meant discontinuing golf. Our clay soil and shale sub-soil meant the rain stayed with us. Although it takes 4 or 5 years for a drainage system to get operating at its peak efficiency, our initial drainage of 3 lines with laterals in every, fairway functioned so promptly that we were able to open our golf playing season ahead of the usual time, and with good playing conditions.

Those who have had some fear of bent "wearing out" will be interested in what Rathburn had to say about the Columbus greens. Nine years ago they got some Metropolitan bent from Washington, and from the first production of their nursery they planted their present No. 9. The members enthused about the green so the other greens were planted to this strain as soon as possible. All of the greens today are in great shape and the grass has its original health, color and texture, according to Rathburn and Millrenee.

The greens were remade when the bent was planted. Capt. Alison took part in the redesign and rebuilding of the greens and the work was so handled that the number of temporary greens were kept at a minimum. Rebuilding of the entire course took 7 years. These greens are of surface soil for the 6 in. seedbed, over stone backfill to 8 in. above the drain tile. The drainage is 24 inches deep.

Plan Prevents Assessments

"Tilly" operates with a force of 14 men. He figures the cost of putting in the new greens averaged \$425. The work of reconstruction was done at odd times when the tractor was available and the club's own men were used under supervision of the consulting experts who worked with Millrenee on the job. There never was an assessment for this reconstruction. As previously mentioned, this reconstruction was charged to general expense, instead of to capital. When they needed money for new work they economized some place

else. That is one of the beauties of a course development plan that covers a period of years; one can look ahead and plan for switching the expenditures as the work demands.

The present fairway fertilization program has been operating for three years. The greens top-dressing program worked out for the situation calls for a light dressing weekly. In the spring the fairways are given an application of a complete fertilizer. "Tillie" uses sulphate of ammonia on his greens at the rate of 4 lbs. a green, applying it every other week in summer. He applies his fungicide at the rate of 3 to 4 oz. a green, and applies it dry with specially trained men doing this careful work. These men do the work by hand and use no water, it being the idea that the fungicide comes into more intimate and effective contact with the blades of grass.

This Columbus case is full of a lot of good practical tips that can be generally applied in the golf club field so we are going to spread it over other issues of GOLFDOM. In the March issue we'll tell something about the financial aspects of the club and the way this man Hart runs the clubhouse. Then there's one of the best caddie yarns we've ever bumped into that will come to the elect when your humble servant can get the space and make out what the pocketful of scribbled notes all mean.

Louisville Park Courses Are City's Pride

THOSE greenkeepers who are especially interested in municipal golf courses will find their 1930 convention city has some interesting exhibits to offer the roving investigators. In the Louisville array of public recreational facilities golf occupies a prominent place, three popular courses being provided for the constantly growing army of players. Good greenkeeping plays a lively part in the municipal course operations and it is the hope of A. G. McKay, who is in charge of the course maintenance, to make each public course rival the city's finest private clubs in condition.

In 1930 Louisville opened its third course, Shawnee, and boasts that it is one of the model public courses of the country. The course is an 18-hole layout with Washington bent greens and is well trapped

for a public job. The clubhouse is a \$40,000 concrete and stone structure with men's and women's bath and locker departments and a large assembly room for the use of the Shawnee G. C., which contributed to the clubhouse construction cost. The Shawnee organization operates the clubhouse.

During the past year considerable remodeling was done on the other Louisville public courses. A number of the greens were rebuilt and planted with bent supplied by the park board's nursery at Shawnee. McKay, in addition to being greenkeeper for the establishments, was architect for the new course and for the remodeling.

Louisville's first two public courses were laid out on regular park property. Ground for the Shawnee course was acquired by arrangement with the Board of Public Works.

Couses Pay Their Way

New work has been financed for the most part by a bond issue granted the park board at the 1929 Louisville election, the remainder being handled by the income from the courses themselves. The courses, say Donald McDonald, Jr., chairman, golf committee of the Board of Park Commissioners, are more than self-sustaining.

No politics interfere with the maintenance of the courses at Louisville. McDonald gives McKay a free hand in using the maintenance budget for utmost effectiveness so the work is not hampered by a mob of payroll patriots. McDonald is firmly of the belief that the public reaction to public golf courses varies directly with the quality of the courses and the service rendered. The Louisville public course history has amply verified his platform.

McKay came to the park course job from Audubon where he was greenkeeper for some years. Prior to that time he was at Sidney and at Lima, Ohio. Mac, as might be inferred from his patronym, is a veteran in the pro and greenkeeping ranks. He is enthusiastic about this business of municipal golf and shares with McDonald the conviction that first-class greenkeeping is every bit as vital to the public courses as to the private establishments.

In the application of fertilizers, the maxim "little and often" is a good one. They should be in a fine powdery condition and distributed on a calm day.—*From the Journal of the Golf Grnkprs. Assn., England.*