

How Veteran Chairmen Get Greens Results

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THE newly elected green-chairman today, it would seem, has a very much easier row to hoe than a decade ago. Information is now available to him through district organizations enabling him more intelligently to select and purchase equipment, seed, fertilizers and the various other necessities for the course. Technical information regarding conditioning his course is available through the U. S. G. A. Green Section Bulletin, magazines, and other channels. Apparently, all he has to do is to get himself elected and everything is at his hand.

However, there is one thing, perhaps the most important of all, that cannot be given him. In fact, it is something that can never be given away; that is, experience. He must go out and get this himself. It is not obtainable in one or two or three years. It can be had only by very hard work supplemented with diligent study of the best maintenance practice, which has become highly technical of recent years, and seems to be progressing with faster steps each year.

What seemed good practice five years ago is no longer considered so today. The duties of a green-chairman today entails so much work that it is hardly fair for a club to expect a man who joins a club for recreation to undertake the work as it should be done. It is no longer an honor, but a job. Golf clubs have grown so rapidly of recent years that good green-chairmen, unfortunately for many clubs, are not easy to find. The average club with, say, 300 members might not have a member capable of performing the duties, but there will be named, nevertheless, one who will give up the work at the end of a year or two, and the job is passed along to another member who takes it simply because a golf club must have a green-chairman.

Every club, of course, does not run its greens matters the same, but 75 per cent

of them are so similar that there should be a standard for a green-chairman's work. The methods and management of golf clubs differ widely according to the size of their membership and finances. Clubs with 36 holes and more may have a manager or superintendent capable of taking care of the greens, and are in a position financially, through their greater membership, to pay the salary such a man would require. Unfortunately for the green-chairman of the small club, his members compare his course with those of the larger organizations, and want to know why their course is not so good. To one with experience, the reasons are obvious.

Work to a Plan

The average 18-hole course would do well to standardize its methods. The board of governors choose the president. The president then appoints the chairmen of the various committees. The chairman of the green committee must then select his committee. Three members are enough, as large committees rarely function smoothly, and often hamper the work on the course. The green-chairman then must choose the method by which his work will be done. He must first decide if he is going to do this work for more than a limited period, for if he is only going to do it for a year or two he should decide upon what expert advice he will follow and stick to that advice. There is such a variety of counsel that confusion will ensue if he listens to all he will get. A little knowledge is very dangerous and has been costly to a great many clubs.

However, if the newly elected chairman is going ahead for an indefinite time, then he should lay out a plan to follow, say for five years. He should study his job carefully, avoid making any drastic changes and go about his job sober-mindedly, with his greenkeeper as his best friend and with whom he must be in constant contact. This

latter point is essential for there are so many things in golf course work that need consultation to relieve the greenkeeper of responsibility which the green-chairman should rightfully take. In general, the standard of greenkeeping has been so raised of recent years that the new green-chairman can make little mistake in consulting with his greenkeeper, and he should try to make himself the buffer between the board of governors and the greenkeeper's work.

The first thing the new green-chairman will probably be staggered with is his budget for the year. A budget system is the only way to run any club (despite the fact that if the green-chairman is economical he will find the house committee will likely spend every dollar he saves). A golf course can be maintained on the basis of, let us say, a Ford, a Buick or a Rolls Royce. The Ford is too cheap, and the Rolls Royce, too extravagant. So take the Buick, and run the course on that basis. The new chairman should ask for a budget of, say, \$25,000, and see how he can get along. This includes the professional and caddy-master, and if the clubhouse grounds are not extensive he may take care of them. However, if it is necessary to maintain one or more men around the house grounds constantly, then he should ask for a separate budget for this work and not let it be confused with course expense. This later is very commonly the case, only to the detriment of the golf course.

A gang of eight to twelve men should take care of any 18-hole course in good condition. The new chairman should try to keep married men in his gang. They are more reliable and are more apt to be with him from year to year. He should keep a skeleton gang during the winter of three or four men, even if it is necessary to alternately lay a man off for a week every three weeks or month. Cost accounting, according to my observation, won't do much good, although it may benefit some clubs. It looks very well on paper, but doesn't get the new chairman very far, and supplies him with information that may not always be accurate, for the reason that the average greenkeeper up to now does not look favorably upon bookkeeping. Further, what difference does it make if you are going to do a job to know the cost of it afterwards to the last penny. The chairman and his greenkeeper can always figure the cost beforehand within a few

dollars, while the routine work of cutting greens, fairways, top-dressing, etc., will always be done in the most economical way with a limited gang of men. Cost accounting is necessary in a factory where something is made to sell and it is necessary to know exactly what it costs. Then one must have a bookkeeper and timekeeper or an efficiency man to supply accurate information. But greenkeeping is different. There is certain work to be done, and if the chairman thinks it can be done more economically he should show his greenkeeper how, but should not hamper him with a lot of figuring and bookkeeping. Otherwise one is liable to spoil a good man.

Inventory all machinery, tools, equipment and supplies, and above all things stay within the budget. Don't starve the course, but rather lay out a program of fertilization and stick to it each year. Avoid discussions with members of the club on the subject of course architecture for there is no more arbitrary subject in the world. A composite drawing of the ideas of each hole from the members of any club would make good copy for the comic page of any newspaper. Call in the advice of someone with known ability if architectural work is necessary.

Be generous with the men in the gang. Treat them as human beings and remember they are not city-bred men. Give them a word of praise when they have done a good job here or there, such as a neat piece of sodding or a well-built trap.

The Green Chairman and the Golf Club

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THE fact that the golf course is the most important possession of a golf club and that the condition of the course reacts upon each member emphasizes the importance of the green-chairman's position.

The greenkeeper is directly in charge of all construction and maintenance work on the course, and one of the principal duties of the chairman is to co-operate fully with the greenkeeper so that the best possible construction and maintenance job will be done for the club, consistent with the money expended.

In order to co-operate fully, the green-chairman and the greenkeeper must understand, like and respect one another. The chairman, who may be well versed in some