

Comparing Course Labor Cost Percentages

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FOR a long while the golf press, green-chairman, members of board of governors and greenkeepers have wondered "how much it should cost to maintain a golf course?"

At the Massachusetts greenkeeper's school this year, Prof. Dickinson required that his assistants devote a portion of their time to some special study closely related to the greenkeepers' profession. Having often wondered if there was a logical answer to the question, "how much should it cost for labor to maintain a golf course?" I set out to see if there was a definite answer.

Prof. Dickinson has in his files copies of greenkeepers reports as submitted to their chairmen, together with complete files of the magazines published in this country having to do with golf course maintenance, probably as complete a set as could be found in this country.

I felt that if there was an answer to this question it was in this collection of records, and by working on a percentage basis it would make the comparison of the course spending \$20,000 with that course spending \$10,000 perfectly fair.

The reports were studied and any construction figures found were deducted from the total as well the division to which they belonged. Compost piles and turf nurseries in nearly all cases were carried as separate items. These I combined under the division "greens." Watering labor was charged 90 per cent to greens, 10 per cent to tees; assuming this to be a fair basis. However, the amount represents only a small percentage. In no report used was any mention made of fairway watering. After the percentage of money spent for labor on greens, fairways, tees, traps and rough had been computed and added together in no case did it equal 100. This was due to the fact that each course spent money for other items that were not common to all courses. These items were such as landscape, walks and roads, re-

pairs, equipment, ditches, water lines, tennis courts, barn, police, etc. In each case, however, the percentage represented by these numerous items equaled 100 and I have grouped them under the heading "Balance."

Labor Percentages

The following table shows the percentage spent for labor on 18-hole courses for greens, fairways, tees, traps, rough and balance, as well as the location of the club:

Location.	Greens.	Fair-ways.	Tees.	Traps.	Rough.	Bal-ance.
Mass.	50	4	10	12	3	21
Ill.	48	8	2	7	8	27
Ill.	26	16	6	16	6	30
Mass.	26	16	6	16	7	29
Mass.	33	18	9	8	3	29

About half of the queries on course maintenance received by GOLFDOM concern costs. More questions on this subject come from greenkeepers than from green-chairmen,

Thus, in our opinion, this effort of a practical greenkeeper and a practical scientist, begun at the 1930 M. A. C. greenkeepers' school, deserves the serious attention and definite encouragement of every greenkeeper and green-chairman.

Cost percentages of course depend on a fairly large number of items ranging from soil character to the somewhat nebulous demands of the membership, but there's no sound reason why these percentages can't be determined close enough to enable the inquiring and conscientious greenkeeper to check on his labor management and labor efficiency.—
THE EDITOR.

Conn.	30	14	6	10	4	36
Mass.	32	16	8	8	4	32
Ill.	24	4	7	6	1	58
Ill.	32	14	6	12	5	31
Mass.	23	11	8	2	8	48

It is apparent that the labor expenditures are not much different, and when compared to the average it would seem as though costs were at present as near constant as they could ever be. The above figures show averages of 32 per cent for greens, 12 per cent for fairways, 6 per cent for tees, 9 per cent for traps, 5 per cent for rough and 36 per cent for balance.

The following table lists the nine-hole courses in the same manner. Unfortunately all these courses are in Massachusetts:

	Greens.	Fair-ways.	Tees.	Traps.	Rough.	Bal-ance.
a	48	13	6	..	2	31
b	29	7	4	5	6	49
c	30	11	8	4	8	39
d	37	9	4	6	9	35
e	30	8	6	6	7	43
f	32	12	4	8	9	35
g	30	13	6	..	2	49
h	34	11	6	5	11	33
i	35	8	4	5	11	37
Average.	33	10	5	4	7	40

Again in the nine-hole courses it seems they are running along the same lines.

A comparison of the eighteen and the nine averages is interesting:

18.....	32	12	6	9	5	36
9.....	33	10	5	4	7	40

As one would expect that the difference is due to architecture and it is clearly borne out in the traps.

Having found that on a percentage basis there is a fairly definite amount to be spent on the golf course labor, whether one has \$10,000 or \$20,000 at his disposal, cannot the green-chairman and green-keeper look around and see how near they are coming to the average, and if not why not? There is an answer somewhere on the course, it is probably architecture or maintenance.

Manager Discovers Secret of Good Management

RECENTLY the writer attended a dinner of managers held at a club where the managerial genius and his chef were determined to show the boys what a party should be.

As is usual at most golf club parties, many of the diners were engaged in earn-

est confab and sampling some of the alledged real "McCoy" for quite sometime after the hour announced for dinner. After the meal was served and the entertainment was being launched, the chef was brought up from the kitchen to receive well deserved plaudits from the expert appraisers of cuisine. The chef's remarks were short and to the point. In acknowledging his welcome he said:

"You are a hell of a bunch for club managers. You have dinner announced for seven and sit down at eight." After these terse and telling remarks he wiped off his brow and knocked off a mighty drink.

Next to me there was a veteran manager who leaned over and remarked: "That's the best speech I ever heard made at a managers' meeting. All of us are apt to forget that our members are human beings just like we are, while we are kicking that the members forget that we are human beings just like they are. Most of the troubles I have are just because humans are human. Here we, who share with our members' wives the complaint of the members staying too long in the locker-room at meal-time, are doing the same thing to drive a chef and the dining room captain crazy. It was different before we had prohibition. Why, I can remember....."

And then the manager and the reporter reminisced, sobbed and hoped far into the night.

Ban Sport Goods Paid Testimonials

ANY endorsement of sporting goods which is paid for, either in cash or merchandise, is to be used in advertising only when the advertising carries the statement that the testimonial has been purchased. This agreement and one prohibiting the secret giving of money or anything else of value to agents of customers as an inducement to influence purchases were the two features of the action taken by the sporting goods manufacturers' trade conference. This meeting was conducted by Garland S. Ferguson, Jr., chairman of the Federal Trade Commission, at White Sulphur Springs, May 7.

The eighth of the resolutions named as an unfair trade practice and slated for abandonment any person or firm discriminating in price between different purchasers "where the effect of such discrimination may be to substantially lessen competition."