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## After First Cost There's Maintenance Follow-Thru

By PROF. L. S. DICKINSON

ON MANY golf courses the fate of the fairways has been decided or will be decided at the next board meeting. The grass on the fairways under discussion is unquestionably thin and unhealthy. Few good "lies" are found, and many a "side kick" has lost yards of distance for the player.

Every club member who thinks about the fairways wants them improved. The low handicap members are bound they will be improved. The pressure of member's opinion is so great that the fairways are up before the "Board."

There are only sufficient funds left in this year's budget to carry on routine work. In order to fertilize these fairways this fall (and all agree fall is a good season to fertilize fairways) a special appropriation will be required to purchase the fertilizer. After much discussion the "Board" decides to purchase fertilizer and use it on the fairways "that need it most."

### Spreading the Glad Tidings.

With the conditions as above noted well in mind let's follow the project to the end and frankly discuss each step, except the decision as to what kind of fertilizer to purchase. Authorization has been given to purchase ten tons of fertilizer at \$75.00 per ton, delivered at the club, a total expenditure of \$750.00. The "Board" has adjourned and thinks no more of the project.

The greenkeeper sees ten tons of fertilizer coming to him all at once and it must be spread within a few days without additional laborers. "Ah," he says, "here is where I get my fertilizer distributor," and the request is placed with the green-chairman for a good distributor. The cost is \$200.00 with all attachments for distributing large and small quantities over small and large areas. The "Board" is appealed to, with the argument that now you have bought the fertilizer you must provide for its distribution.

The "Board" is surprised. Its members had not thought about the cost of distribution. "Suppose the workmen would spread it as part of their regular work without additional cost," says one member. To this statement the greenkeeper replies, "The cost is far from ended with the purchase of the fertilizer."

The "Board" asks a few questions. Mr. Greenkeeper, why do you need the distributor? Answer: "Ten tons are too much to spread by hand. It takes an awful lot of work to handle ten tons from storage to truck, to field, to pail, to ground."

The question then arises among the "Board," is the greenkeeper personally scared of the labor involved, and will he transmit his fear and prejudices to the men? If so, the money cost of hand distribution will be greater than it should be.

The chairman of the green-committee

says, "A distributor will spread much more evenly than a man can by hand," to this the Board replies with the question "Just *how* evenly is it necessary to spread fairway fertilizers?"

### Even Distribution Important.

The answer comes back, "Uneven distribution will cause an uneven growth of the grass which in turn will make unequal lies for the ball."

The Board: "That is a point to be considered."

"Mr. Greenkeeper, are your men so unskilled or so specialized that they can't spread fertilizer?"

Answer: "I've only two men that can do it; the old timers."

The Board: "Teach some of the young sprouts then. The personal grooming of a golf course and attention to weak and sick spots must not give way completely to machinery."

Other questions to be considered and evaluated before the distributor is purchased are as follows:

1. Will spreader be used annually, or every two or three years?

A. Will fairways need fertilizer each year, and if so can the club afford to do it?

2. Is there storage room for the distributor and can it be properly taken care of?

3. How much actual labor time will the spreader save?

4. Will routine work be unknowingly speeded up by the efficient "gang" so that there will be little or no loss by the time the season actually closes?

5. Can a good spreader be rented for a reasonable price, say 12% of the initial cost?

6. If routine work can't be speeded up, what shall be neglected? Neglect is an added cost.

Can the well organized greenkeeping force that is doing a fair day's work be speeded up without lowering the standard of workmanship, and increasing the number of idle minutes? The writer doubts it very much except for emergency work.

The Board has made its decision and the fertilizer is spread. Certainly this job isn't going to cost any more and the dividends will be in the form of better playing conditions.

The greenkeeper knows the cost isn't over yet. He also knows that next year he should maintain the same standard as set this year and if possible raise that

standard. He, therefore, very justly appeals to the Board again. This time he wants a budget increase of 5% of the average amount spent on fairways during the past three years.

### Right Fertilizing Pays.

The Board is horrified. The greenkeeper's arguments are as follows: On fairways that haven't received fertilizer for four years or more, fertilizing will increase the cost of mowing from 6% to 10% because of the increase in the growth of the grass. A part of the increased cost may be offset by a slight decrease in fairway patching and seeding costs. The increase in maintenance cost is an income tax on the dividends of better fairways.

Fairways that are fertilized every two or three years would not show this added cost of maintenance because the grass would remain in a more or less uniform condition. Whether the investment in fairway fertilizers is really profitable or not can only be accurately told by comparing carefully records taken twice a year. Such records should convince any member that fairway fertilizing is a profitable investment as far as the playing conditions are concerned.

On public and semi-public courses that are not already overcrowded actual money returns would be received in the form of additional fees. On private courses it would tend to increase member play, and thereby reduce the cost per membership round. On a number of courses this cost is greater than the guest fee.

### Comparing Seed Prices.

A greenkeeper frequently has to choose between several competitors for his grass seed order. For example the following quotations are received: From A, 95-90 grade for \$1.00 per pound; from B, 90-90 grade at 90c and from C, 80-80 at 80c. The guarantee in each case is unquestionable and the analysis shows very little difference in the weed contents of each sample. The first question to be answered is "are the values equal?"

The following formula will soon answer that question. Consider the highest grade seed price as fair.  $p$  = guaranteed purity of accepted value.  $g$  = guaranteed germination of accepted value.  $P$  = purity of comparing seed.  $G$  = germination of comparing seed.  $\$$  = price of accepted value.

$$\frac{p \times g}{\$}$$

Then  $P \times G \div \frac{p \times g}{\$}$  — relative value of comparing seed.

Substituting the above values the equation comparing A's and B's prices would read as follows:

$$90 \times 90 \div \frac{95 \times 90}{100} = X.$$

Solving the equation the answer is 94.7. Therefore the actual cash value of B's seed is greater than the price. By the same formula we find that the value of C's seed is 74.6c per pound or less than the quoted price.

Obviously, one can only use this formula to compare prices of the same variety of seed. C's bid is eliminated at once and the choice must now be made between A's and B's seed. The value of the seed is equal. On the basis of a 100 lb. order: 1. How much more of B's seed must be purchased to obtain an equivalent amount of viable seed? That question can be answered by formula also.  $p \times g \div P \times G$  = ratio of amount of inferior seed required to equal a like amount of better seed. Then  $95 \times 90 \div 90 \times 90 = 1.05$ .

1.05x100 lbs.=105 lbs., the amount of B's seed necessary to equal 100 lbs. of A's seed. The balance sheet will read something like this:

Cost A. 100 lbs. @ \$1.00 = \$100.00  
 B. 105 lbs. @ .90 = 94.50

Balance in favor of B's bid, \$5.50 less express charges on 5 lbs.

Now is the time to consider who A and B are. We find A to be a local merchant and club member, and B a purchasing organization. Under such conditions would the \$5.00 be really saved if the order was placed with B? Isn't the friendship, accommodations and loyalty of A worth more than \$5.00?

### Trapmania's Cost.

The fall fever for altering courses attacked a green-committee in the form of trapmania. The committee obtained a special budget for traps and built and paid for fourteen large traps. They did the job right by hiring extra men to do the work and thereby kept the course maintenance up to standard. The course was made sportier and more like a real course. And according to the self-satisfied committee the costs are all over.

The far-sighted greenkeeper, however, has to spoil the fun by asking for an annual budget increase of \$150.00 to care for those traps. Because the greenkeeper has kept accurate costs of trap maintenance he is able to convince the Board that the budget addition is needed. If the increase is not

granted, the standard of maintenance cannot be maintained.

Many greenkeepers are annually saddled with the problem of increased "fixed charges" such as the above mentioned traps. The club may expect annual increased efficiency in management to offset these charges to a limited amount but must be prepared to pay the balance.

### A Penalty of "Economy."

False economy is practiced at many clubs. For example, there is a piece of abominable rough that can't be mowed frequently because the ground is too wet to operate a mower on. A request for \$100.00 to drain the area has been made and has been turned down because the club couldn't afford it and besides if the area was dry it would have to be mowed oftener.

To the greenkeeper's knowledge the cad-die hounds had retrieved over 150 balls from that particular piece of rough during the season. Each ball had at least 40c worth of play left in it. In balls alone the members (and visitors) were paying at least \$40.00 annually (under good conditions there might have been 50 balls lost) plus the greenkeeper's charges to keep the rough in *bad condition*. An expenditure of \$100.00 will save \$40.00 in cash, plus wrecked dispositions and scores. The cost of maintenance will not be increased as improved conditions will cut each mowing time in half. Personally, I don't like to play certain courses because I lose a few balls in the rough. There are others also with a similar idea. Clean rough increases green-fees and cuts the cost of golf.

Unfortunately, the average player does not realize that an increase of \$10.00 a year (for a time) in dues, will very likely pay him in some such forms as these.

- |   |         |
|---|---------|
| 1. Five good balls @ .60.....   | \$ 3.00 |
| 2. Ten side bets (over the average winnings for the past 3 years) @ .25 ..... | 2.50    |
| 3. Five more rounds because of clean rough @ 1.00 ....                        | 5.00    |
| 4. The best score "I ever made" at owners stated valuation.                   | 25.00   |
| 5. The satisfaction of showing the brother-in-law a good course .....         | 50.00   |
|   | \$85.50 |

### Whose Fault Is Not Saving?

There are many ways that money can be saved in the maintenance of any good

course, and who is at fault that it isn't being saved? The greenkeeper? No. The greenkeepers through their associations are working hard to obtain all information possible whereby their course can be more efficiently maintained. Neither is it the green-chairman's fault, though they could use their business ability more effectively (broadly) than they do.

For my answer I quote this startling bit of information from *The Journal of the Board of Greenkeeping Research of the British Golf Unions*, Vol. 1, No. 1: . . . . Greenkeeping has passed through a steady evolution but at the same time its complexity has increased. But the really important point to be brought out is—that this evolution, or sequence of changes, has been largely the results of trial and error, hit or miss. Perhaps only ten per cent of the ingenuity lavished upon golf course problems is fruitful, but with a little advice, based on scientific principles, there is no reason why this figure should not be raised to 75% or even more. Applied science, in general, may be said to be increasing the 'hits' at the expense of the 'misses.'

No innovations should be undertaken at the expense of immediate or future maintenance, for more satisfaction and lowered scores can be obtained on a course that is constantly improving, without innovations, than on one with annual innovations and lowered maintenance standards.

## Club Manager Marvels at Loeb's Locker-Man Tale

THOMAS REAM, manager of Calumet C. C. (Chicago district), has thought long and seriously of the locker-room men he has encountered in his extensive and successful experience as a club manager and makes the same decision about Loeb's locker-room man that the farm boy made when the kid saw his first kangaroo: "Hell, there ain't no sich a animule."

Doubting Thomas in a kindly vein of questioning comments on the Loeb article relative to Hillcrest locker-room operation in the following terms:

"Mr. Loeb says that the members are always in a hurry for service, always anxious to impress their guests with their own importance and the character of the club, and unfortunately, they take this service perfection as a matter of course. Does it sound logical that towels be kept

in each member's locker along with the soap and bath slippers? Why dictate to a member just how many towels he is to use. One day he might want one and the next day he is just as likely to ask for five. We have towels in the shower booths, paper slipper racks, soap and brush holders, sponge rubber mats, telephone, hand towels, bath stools, rubbing alcohol and talcum powder—all there at the disposal of any member who wishes to help himself whether sparingly or generously. Our attendants are nearby at their beck and call.

"Only one attendant to serve these 220 golfers, and he is obliged to open each locker and place therein bath towels, soap and slippers and all the things necessary to the comfort of each member after his game. He personally bundles up the soiled laundry; naturally, he is to label and count it, get clothes ready for the cleaners and clean shoes. Mr. Loeb also insists on each detail of the locker room being immaculate. With this department subject to such hard use and to guard against untidiness, it requires constant care. How, then, can one man be there, smiling and neat, to give "impressive" service, answer the telephone, counting up laundry bundles and cleaning shoes? It certainly doesn't sound, reasonably, like good management to me. We have four attendants and sometimes it is all they can do to get away to eat a hurried meal, and our locker-room is kept in perfect order at all times and the members get A-1 service, but the valets have to be on their toes every minute to do it. We have about the same number of players.

"This locker-man has to eat his three meals a day, have a day off, shave and bathe and get into his uniform, so how is he to do all these things in the little time allotted to him without the aid of even one assistant throughout the week? On Saturday and Sunday each and every one is waiting to tee off, and they certainly wouldn't call it good service if they were impatiently waiting for the locker-man to finish up with the member at the extreme end of the room. No, sir, Mr. Loeb, you'll have to tell a better one than that; I am from Missouri."

And so, Brother Loeb, Brother Ream puts the request for enlightenment. Is this man of yours the marvel of the age or is it on account of the climate that a California manager can get one man to do what it takes four to do in the turbulent area of the mid-west?