

Some Hints on Maintaining TRAPS and ROUGH

By G. A. FARLEY

THIS article is an excerpt from Mrs. Farley's forthcoming book on greenkeeping. The author has been associated with greenkeeping work since 1922 when she started with the Cleveland District Green Section as secretary.

In this capacity she compiled the popular greenkeepers' correspondence course which was given further circulation when she became associated with the National Association of Greenkeepers.

Mrs. Farley is a versatile and successful business woman and has applied her lively industry and talents to a noteworthy job of gathering the ideas and methods of leading greenkeepers for the manual of greenkeeping which will appear in book form in February.

WHEREVER the type of hole and surrounding slopes allow, the faces of modern traps show a gentle slope from the fairway edge up to the cop. Such traps are natural in appearance, and keeping sand on the surface is an ordinary job for the greenkeeper, not a real problem.

The "cop" or side and back of a trap is that portion which extends from the rough and sometimes from parts of the fairway to the top edge of the face, which face fronts on the fairway. The cop should be gently sloping down to the rough or fairway, not only because they are more beautiful built that way, but because such cops may be easily and smoothly cut with power mowers.



Dr. Willing plays from a tough, natural trap at Pebble Beach. Natural details reduce maintenance.

Traps which are set into a high bank present two particular problems to the greenkeeper; the first, that of keeping the edge over the face from breaking down under the weight of the mowers, and the second, that of keeping the upper surface of the face covered with sand.

Sometimes the face of such a trap is so nearly perpendicular for a foot or so down from the top that sand will not stick. In such cases turving the upper surface down to where a sanding surface can be held is recommended. It should be understood by the greenkeeper that the entire face of any trap should be free from pits and any unusually long growth of grass, as either may prevent a ball from rolling back into a position from which it can be played.

Keeping the top edge of the face from breaking down is best assured by "revetted" with strips of sod. This consists in placing one strip on top of another all around the edge to a depth of about a foot, with the top sod cut double the width of the sods placed under it. This extra width of the sod which forms the top edge of the cop surface is allowed because of the strength it lends to the entire job, by knitting into and becoming a part of the surrounding turf surface well back of the revetted edge. The quick knitting of the top or finishing sod to the surrounding turf and the sods and soil below is assured, providing it is cut not more than an inch thick, fertilized, topdressed and kept watered until new root growth is established.



Tight trapping on a one shot hole. This is No. 12 at Fresh Meadow. You're either on or else.... Costs money to maintain these frequently used traps properly.

The ruling in favor of the golfer as to "casual water" on a golf course *does not apply to that found at any time in a sand trap*. The golfer is forced to make his shot from whatever spot his ball lands in a trap, whether in water or not. Wet traps cause a lot of complaints, which may be avoided only by particular attention to their drainage problems and by preventing water from higher slopes flooding the trap surface.

Drainage of Sand Traps.

Leading surface water away from its natural course down a slope, at the bottom of which lies a sand trap, is the only way to prevent flooding the trap during a severe rain. This can be done by establishing grassy hollows, (or in extreme cases, open ditches) so laid out that flood waters are distributed over a larger area where they are absorbed out of the line of play.

After even a hard rain, a sand trap should drain so efficiently that water disappears almost immediately from the surface.

Sometimes traps are so placed that they present problems which can be solved only by a competent golf drainage engineer. Particularly so when it is desired to carry the excess water from the trap through tile connected with the main lines of the course drainage system.

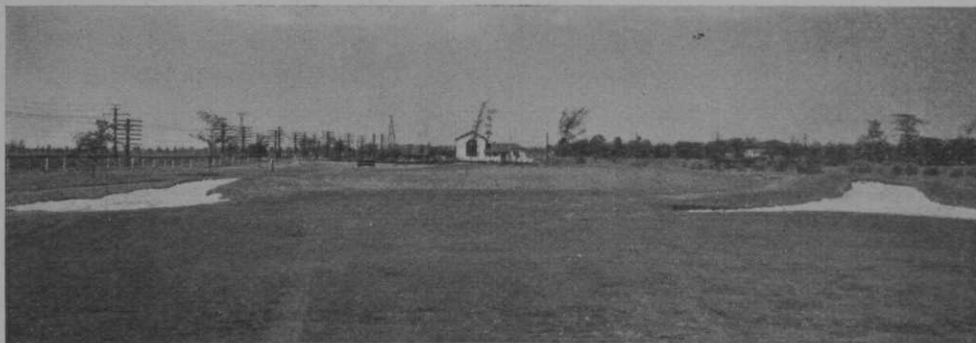
A method of special drainage followed by the greenkeeper on what is called a "hard clay" course, has served his pur-

pose in keeping the traps dry, as well as distributing the excess water underground where it is eventually taken care of by the lines of tile in the fairways. He lays tile six inches in diameter lengthwise of the low area of the trap, at a depth of two feet, carefully sloping the sub-soil down on each side of the trench to the tile line. The trench is then filled with slag or pea gravel to within four inches of the surface which will later form the bottom of the sand coat to be applied. This final four inches is filled with strips of sod cut from an area of well-rooted grass, placed upside down along the trench. Through such a sod the water filters down to be carried away by the coarser material and the tile, without loss of "facing" sand. The sod remains as an active and effective filter for a period of some years, and also prevents the coarse material from working up into the sand coating which is spread to face the trap.

General Maintenance of Traps.

The rough contour of the trap should be raked after such drainage has been installed, and left to settle before applying the sand coat. Scanty coverings of sand on the face of a trap are difficult to keep in order, and quickly become mixed with any loam which may wash down from a somewhat perpendicular surface above.

From four to six inches of medium coarse washed lake or sea sand spread over the face gives a surface that can be



No. 1 green on Fourth Course at Olympia Fields. A par 5 hole with fairly wide entrance. Note how trap at right calls for daring shot if player shies from out of bounds at left.

maintained with the least amount of labor. Sand that is so fine that it is easily blown about by the wind should not be used and neither should ordinary bank sand which contains loam and crusts over when dried out after a rain. Sand of a quality which is ideal for traps is sometimes hard to get, but a greenkeeper is amply repaid for his trouble in seeking out a satisfactory source of supply, and particularly if his course is what is termed "well-trapped."

Special rakes and drags, all designed to keep the sand surface broken up and ridged for fair play, are still another example of the forethought and service with which the manufacturer has anticipated and filled the requirements of the greenkeeper. Sand traps kept with these special tools present a handsome appearance, which is to be desired at all times, and which make efficient the work of obliterating footprints.

Besides the traps which guard the front and sides of greens, sometimes there are grassy hollows and mounds placed back of the green to catch a ball which is over-shot on the hole. These should be cut as the rough, of which they are a part.

Sand on the faces of traps should be kept renewed as well as constantly raked, and this should be done whenever the surface shows a tendency to cake and crust over after drying out. Usually it is only necessary to add two or three inches of fresh sand to the surface, except where severe washing has brought down a large quantity of loam which has mixed with the old sand and filled in the surface to too high a level. At such times, it is sometimes necessary to re-establish the contour by removing or distributing the

soil and sand, upon which a fresh supply can be applied.

General Care of the Rough.

The rough on a golf course has often been likened to pasture areas, but if ideal in the eye of the average golfer, a cow would require considerable "hand-feeding" if confined in such a pasture.

Sparse, tufty growth is encouraged in the ideal rough, and more frequently than not this area is left to the attention of the greenkeeper in exactly the same condition as when found by the contractor who built the course. While the builder may have taken out some roots and stones, it is quite likely that these attentions were devoted to a very narrow strip around the fairway.

The impression that a rough can't be too rough is a bad one, and one which is not entertained by experienced greenkeepers.

Regular mowing is necessary to keep the grass from becoming a hayfield, and to cut off the seed heads of the coarse grasses and weeds that would be otherwise blown onto fairways, greens and tees by every passing wind.

A bumpy condition of the rough is hard on the mowers, and creates too unfair a hazard for the golfer.

Where the land devoted to rough on a new course is uneven and full of hillocks, peppered with stray bushes and gouged with wagon ruts, weeds are apt to be the main crop, and it is an ideal rough to burn over, turn over, and plant with sheep's fescue or a mixture of sheep's fescue and Canada bluegrass. A few pounds of sweet vernal added to any mixture of seed intended for the rough adds a note

of interest whenever the rough is cut, as the perfume from this type of grass is enjoyed by both players and workers on the course. It is, like fescue, a tufty grower. If it seems unnecessary to plant the entire area of rough, that which lies within 30 to 35 yards of the fairway should receive the attention of the greenkeeper, and soon.

The usual procedure of plowing, harrowing and smoothing, after large rocks and roots have been removed, is followed by seeding at the rate of approximately 150 pounds of seed per acre. No fertilization is required prior to seeding ground for the rough, as a sparse growth is to be encouraged.

The length at which the grass of an established rough should be cut depends upon conditions of weather, thickness of growth, and whether or not there is a preponderance of fast-maturing weeds growing thereon. Specific directions for keeping the rough at the proper height are impossible to give, but it is safe to say that whenever it gets too high the greenkeeper hears about it. If it is unfair in any way for play, such criticisms soon reach his ears, and allowing the grass in the rough to mature and spread seeds of

coarse and weedy growth over his greens, tees and fairways is a gross neglect of duty.

Sometimes fairway mowers set to make a high cut are used for the rough. Special equipment of various kinds for cutting this surface is now on the market and available to most greenkeepers.

Roadways over which the equipment for maintaining the course is moved occasionally become deeply gouged and rutted. Such roads and paths in and around the rough should have the attention necessary to keep them within reasonable level of the surrounding area. A ball landing in a deep wheel rut is many times practically unplayable. Some bare spots are unavoidable, but holes and deep ruts should be kept filled up.

Burning the rough over in the fall is a good practice, as it is an economical method of killing out weeds, and does no harm to the grass. Weed seeds in tremendous numbers are scattered all over the course by winter winds, and where there is heavy weed growth in the rough, such burning cuts down to an appreciable degree the time and money spent on weeding the playing surfaces after growth starts in the spring.

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