

Greensmen-M. A. C.-Golfdom Join in Upkeep Percentage Study

FOR some time a certain New England greenkeeper has been intrigued by the possibility of determining a maintenance cost basis to serve in comparing his own operations with those of other greenkeepers. The fallacy of comparing total costs was obvious to him and to other greenkeepers and chairmen with whom he discussed his ambition. This greenkeeper, Jay M. Heald, of the Greenfield (Mass.) C. C., attended short courses at the Massachusetts Agricultural College. With Prof. L. S. Dickinson of that institution, and other practical greenkeepers at the courses, Heald examined the maintenance costs from a percentage viewpoint, considering the variable factors of areas, treatment and condition, and discovered that the figures gave a promising indication of establishing cost standards. Details of this preliminary work were given in GOLFDOM (June, '30, p. 29).

Publication of this speculative material in GOLFDOM aroused considerable interest. Thoughtful greenkeepers saw possibilities of getting maintenance cost deliberations on a practical basis; a greenkeeper has enough to worry about without having some really green green-chairman turn native and stomp and howl when he learns some other course in the neighborhood is being kept for less money, regardless of the conditions governing costs at the courses being compared. As it is now, two elements in this maintenance cost situation are being focused on the greenkeepers.

First, they cannot be immune to the general battle-cry of strict economy that their club officials hear all day long at their places of business. Fortunately the golf course is so generally the sadly skimmed part of club operation that the greenkeeper with the full figures can make out an excellent case for a proper maintenance budget. In this connection the remarks of Major Jones in the April, 1930, Green Section *Bulletin*, may be recalled. Jones wrote:

"Perhaps one day someone will ask a far more important question [*than the total annual course maintenance cost*]

namely, what proportion of the club's income is spent on the golf courses and essential facilities of a golf club and what proportion on the trimmings that go to make up a country club?"

The other element adversely affecting the greenkeepers is that their salaries generally are too low, even under the prevailing situation of unemployment in general business. Greenkeepers are not gifted with selling temperament and it will always be a tough job for a man who is a fine greenkeeper but no salesman of his own services to get the money he deserves unless there are available figures to speak his case to his chairman and other officials eloquently. The results of this national cost research will help the greenkeepers materially in this respect.

Work Centers at M. A. C.

Work of examining, tabulating and summarizing course maintenance costs is being undertaken by Heald under the supervision of Prof. Dickinson at Massachusetts Agricultural College. The work is being financed by GOLFDOM through an arrangement worked out by Dr. Seviars, director of the Massachusetts State Experiment Station.

In getting together figures for the various clubs, GOLFDOM has sent to every green-chairman on its list the questionnaire shown here, with the request that the green-chairman and greenkeeper fill out the sheet and forward it to Heald at the M. A. C., Amherst, Mass.

It is earnestly hoped the returns will be promptly forthcoming so that preliminary findings may be published in time to have a favorable bearing on 1931 maintenance work.

This work for the good of the clubs and greenkeepers is the first energetic national effort to get something helpful out of the maze of course maintenance cost figures, and for that reason all concerned are hopeful of quick co-operation in supplying the figures.

Definite Help to Good Men

There is no competent and conscientious greenkeeper in the country who needs to

worry about his own figures doing anything but help him operate as he wants to operate for the good of his course. As an example of how figures may be used, there is the following statement made by Heald to his green-chairman after comparing the cost percentages at Greenfield with those of other Massachusetts courses. Heald's report read:

"Last winter at Amherst, in looking for a percentage of money spent for maintenance of each of several divisions in relation to the whole amount, an average was established. Let us compare our course this year with these findings and see if there is any light:

	Fair-					
	Greens	Tees	Traps	Rough	Bal.	
	ways					
Average	32	12	6	9	5	36
Greenfield . . .	40	8	3.5	2.5	3.5	42.5

"We spent above the average on greens; however, didn't we have above the average number of greens to maintain. Perhaps a green not in play should have been carried in the balance column, and this would reduce the percentage.

"Fairways costs are below the average, in view of the fact that our fairways are above the average condition. One reason is that the well-established grass does not burn out. The fairways have been mowed when it was felt necessary and not by the calendar, as are many courses. I am satisfied here to say we are running below the average with as good as average conditions.

"Tees: Almost half of the average. Were our tees watered? No. Were they topdressed? No. Were they up to the average in condition? No. Would these two items bring them up to the average course?

"Traps: Way below the average. Most golf courses have their traps filled with loose sand that takes longer to rake than our sand. Most courses rake daily; we raked three times per week. You know that our traps have been below the average in construction and much easier to maintain than the average.

"Rough: 1.6 below the average and I believe in as good condition as the average.

"Balance (which includes everything else) is above the average. As this includes new construction, which amounted to nearly 20 per cent, our larger percentage here seems very evident.

"Until further work is done with the percentage idea, with more clubs to work

from, these findings are all that have ever been gathered and they do not seem to be far out of the way.

"When our course is put against them, fairways and rough are below the average and are as good in condition. Greens will probably come up to the average in another year. It is evident that the trouble with our tees and traps could be corrected with average care.

"Am I justified in saying these findings throw light on our shortcomings as well as show us that in two cases we are better than average?"

U. S. RUBBER HAS NEW EDITION "PROS, PLAYERS AND PROFITS"

A NEW edition of "*Pros, Players and Profits*" and its companion volume, "*The Golf Professional's Handbook of Business*," have been issued by the United States Rubber Company, golf ball department. The 1930 editions of these works were received with acclaim by pros, who employed the books as most effective guides to bigger and better business in the pro shop.

The 1931 edition shows patient and thorough research and a carefulness in preparation that substantially contribute to the value the studious professional will get from the volume. There is special reference to the developments of the year and much material that was not covered in any respect in the first publication of the volume.

The book is a splendid example of what manufacturers can do and are doing to help the pro take command of golf goods merchandising and reflects high credit on its sponsors and compilers.

The pro who is planning ahead for a record year's business can't spend his time to much better advantage than by a study of the helpful pointers in these books and then seeing to it that his assistants go over the books thoughtfully.

Copies of the book are available to any pro, without cost, from United States Rubber Company branches.

BUILD your tees large so that a given strip of turf can have plenty of time to recover from divot scars before it is necessary to use it again. On many courses, each hole has two tees; one is allowed to rest and the turf recover while the other is in use.