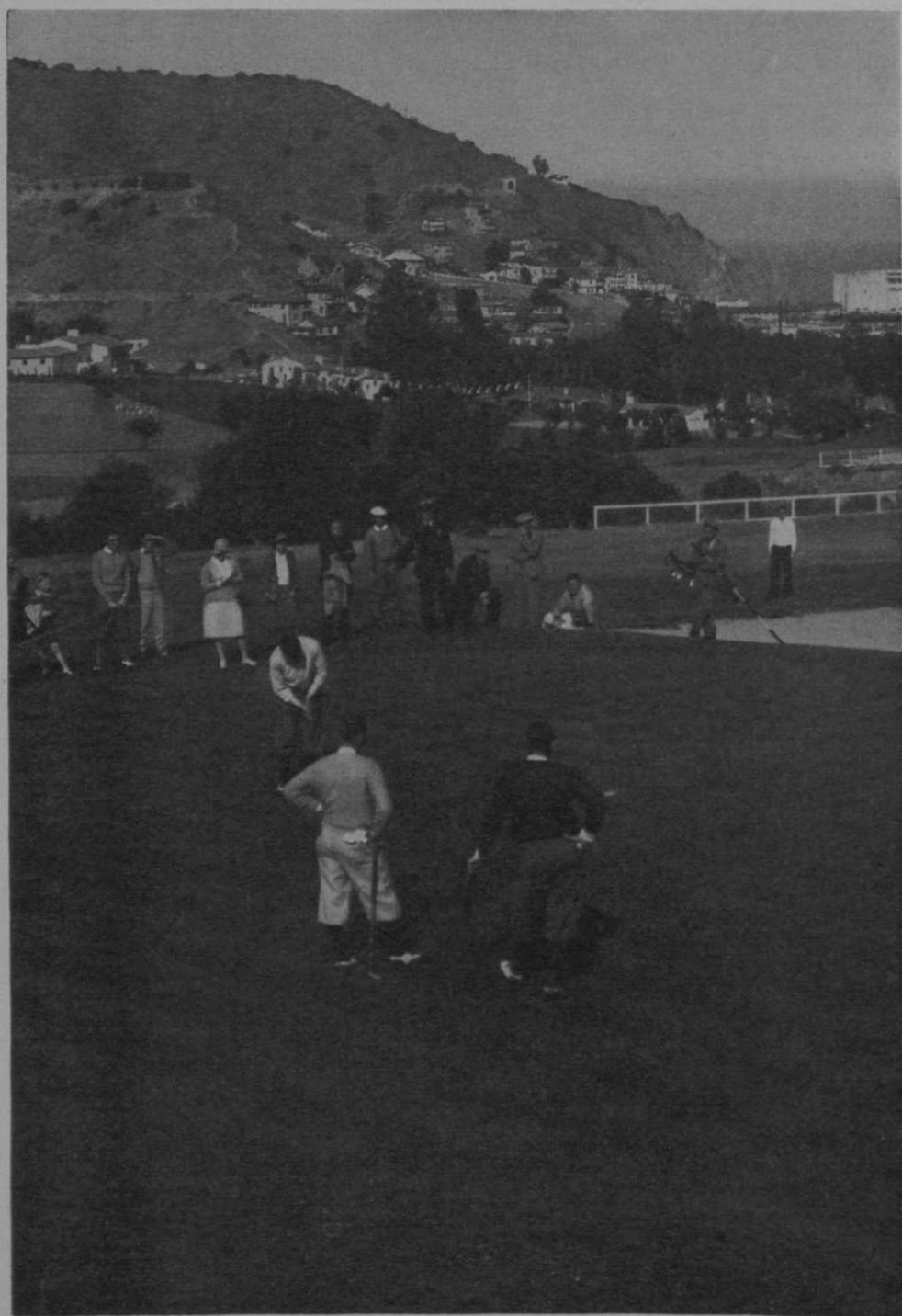


# East Works Most Beneath the



# Summer Sun — But COAST Greens Work Is NEVER Done

By

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Greenkeeping genius and the spur of tournament golf brought greens, like this one at Catalina, to the Coast region. But Bill Wrigley discarded the spur this year.

THE wind blowing cold across the moor may blow a great deal of good to the eastern greenkeeper in giving him a period of welcome respite and reflection. As he listens to Boreas whistling through the wires and piling snow into the traps he can throw another log of wood on the fire or turn over in bed and reflect that no one expects him to do anything about it. On the other hand, a wind in California at this time of the year blows nothing but evil as far as the local greenkeepers are concerned. As evidence of this statement, witness the results of a blow during the last month in which trees, shrubs, signboards, and buildings were scattered about with a fine disregard for tees, fairways, and greens.

However, in case prospective visitors to these golden shores get the wrong idea, and out of respect for the wrath of the neighboring chambers of commerce, it must be said that such a blow is "very, very unusual." And if the same wind had disported itself in a similar manner in the east, the greenkeepers there, warming

—Photo, All Year Club of Southern California.



stoves as they would be, would not notice any appreciable change in the weather. But such a wind in California is fraught with disaster, because, out of loyalty to the Golden State's well-advertised traditions, top-heavy trees do not have deep roots, branches and leaves are not firmly attached to the parent plant, billboards are not created for the ages, and barns and tool houses are not made to defy very elemental elements.

As a result local golf courses are going through a period of retrenchment and reconstruction accompanied by furious activity on some courses because of the knowledge that mid-winter tournaments are impending. Cleaning up is much more of a task on some courses than on others depending upon the proximity of trees. One course surrounded and interspersed by oak trees will require the remainder of the winter season to clear away drifted piles of leaves and branches as well as many whole trees.

### Stronger Fertilization Required

All this is introductory to the fact that the winter season is one abounding in work for the golf course superintendent in the Pacific southwest. Primarily, of course, play is heavier out here at this time than any other, but in addition a number of different conditions prevail which have to be met. For example, fertilizers to be effective must be applied in more concentrated forms than during the summer. When in the warm months a certain amount of ammonium sulphate will burn the grass to a crisp, it will be barely sufficient to agitate the near-dormant plants in the winter. The exact proportion of change cannot be given here because it differs with every course in the state.

It must also be remembered that although the fertilizers can be applied in a more concentrated form, they should not be applied in the bulky dressings customarily used during the months of the year when the plant is active. This is because the grass will experience difficulty in penetrating the mass of matter covering it, all of which would make things unpleasant for the golfer, who in turn would do the same thing by the greenkeeper. One greenkeeper found that on his course in the winter it takes his greens two weeks to hide the effects of a topdressing, whereas in the summer it takes only two days.

The irrigation schedule undergoes a revision, not only because of the fact that

the winter months are the rainy months, but because an oversupply of water has a tendency to turn grass yellow during the current season, just as a paucity of moisture has the same effect during the summer. Then, in regard to those clubs which have Bermuda grass fairways, watering will not make any difference to their dried up appearance.

### Grass Dormant in Heavy Play

Many California greenkeepers have found that the period from December 15 to January 15 of each year represents one of the state's two greatest dormant periods in grass growth, a period during which a 7,000 foot green will yield only about half a hopperful of grass when cut. Incidentally the other dormant period occurs late in the summer and is more comparative than absolute. This dormant period in the winter, accompanied as it is with a great amount of play, makes for tremendous wear and tear on all turf, with the result that holes have to be changed oftener, tees require repairs more frequently, and fairways take on a spotted appearance due to divot holes. Matters are made more complicated because of the fact that seeds will germinate to a tune of only about 20 per cent, thus making drastic repairs impossible.

Recently it has been brought to the attention of the writer that eastern greenkeepers have it all over their contemporaries in California when it comes to getting long life out of their machinery. Owing to its year-round, every-day use, especially in regard to cutting units, Pacific greenkeepers have to write off anywhere from 25 to 50 per cent on the value of machinery when the year's inventory is taken. Toughness of the grass, steepness of the hills, and hardness of the ground are other factors which enter into the economic scheme of every local club because of the mechanical breakage they cause.

### Shops Are Models

Mechanical deterioration would be very much greater than it is even at the present were it not for the fact that most of the local clubs are supplied with good tools and efficient mechanics. Some of the greenkeeper's shops are models of perfection and are equipped to accomplish any ordinary repair and a good many of the extraordinary variety. There are lathes, welding equipment and power drills ready to go so that at a moment's notice an ailing tractor can be torn down and repaired;



The winter tournaments were started to give publicity to California. But they have performed another equally valuable service: Non-golfers in the tournament galleries, such as this one at Wilshire C. C., Los Angeles, immediately bought clubs and began the game themselves, thus accounting for the Coast's rapid golf growth.

the grass will not gain more than a few hours in its race with the mowers. One local golf course superintendent has said with a considerable degree of truth that his success as a greenkeeper was won in his shop aided by his mechanic.

However, even the best-equipped of modern courses is stumped when an integral part of a complicated machine is smashed beyond hope of repair. Then it is a case of making a dash for the nearest manufacturer's representative, and thereby hangs a tale. Eastern manufacturers of equipment who expect to find a sale on the Pacific Coast for breakable machinery must see to it that there are plenty of local representatives to supply service in capital letters when it is needed. It is a long and expensive way from Chicago or Detroit, for instance, to the shores of the Pacific, and one of the first things that any greenkeeper does when buying new machinery is to determine how quickly he will be able to obtain new parts. Machinery must be kept going every day without interruption, and if this is not possible with one brand because of unavailable parts, another will be substituted at the first opportunity.

### The Simple Life

There is one type of course in California that is affected little by the seasons, by heat or by cold, sunshine or storm, by drought or by flood. This is the type represented by numerous "hardpan" golf

courses especially popular in the inland portions of the state. Devoid of grass on green or fairway, they get along as well on one kind of fertilizer as another, so none is applied at all. Brown patch means nothing unless one is referring to the color of the sand "greens." The greenkeeper does not have to worry about the dictates of club officials, because usually there are none. He has his own crew well under control because he is it. There is no friction between the professional, the manager, the caddie master, and the golf course superintendent, because one man fills all the offices. Truly, the men on these courses lead the life of Riley.

As insignificant as these courses may seem to the casual visitor they are worthy of consideration. Probably the man who said that the people who play upon them represent a class which obtains the maximum of enjoyment from the Royal and Ancient game was not far wrong. The players in this class are not to be worried by such trifles as caddies, tipping, the correct clothes, the right number of clubs, nor the orthodox method of playing the game. Each man is as liable as the next to hit a 300-yard drive on the concrete-like fairways. The rocks and stones and other inequalities around all the greens put skill at a discount. Anybody may get an eagle—or a snake or an owl, owing to the peculiar habits of these creatures of occupying holes on golf courses made by burrowing animals.