

Southern Course Building, Too, Needs Right Man on Job Early

By RALPH H. HALL

Golf Course Architect and Constructor

WE in the South are faced with problems, some of which have been most successfully met, considerably different from our northern brothers. There, they have a playing season considerably shorter than ours and, as a result, their greens and fairways are given a chance to recuperate even though the weather is bitterly cold and perhaps everything is blanketed under a foot or two of snow.

Green-chairman and committees should insist that the club directors allow them to employ a capable course architect and, at the same time, they should contact and contract with the man whom they want as greenkeeper. He should be on the job when the first shovelful of dirt is moved so that, from his experiences and knowledge gained while the job is going on, he will be able to meet intelligently any future problem that should arise. He would then know and not be guessing.

Drainage Is the Start

Let us assume, for our example, that we have a typical piece of land not too rolling, nor flat nor very heavily wooded. Of all the factors entering into the construction the most important is, to my mind, that of drainage. Too much stress cannot be placed on having the entire course properly drained. This does not mean that the entire tract must have sub-surface piping, but it does mean that excess water, in the form of rain, spring discharges, etc., must be deposited into some central discharge point as a lake, creek or be impounded for pumping purposes.

The greenkeepers' first real job is to get out on the entire course while a terrific rain is falling even though he has in his possession a really excellent topographical survey of the property. He will see and should make notes of, drainage necessities that no topo would show and which would, if neglected, raise hallelujah with his maintenance budget in future years, provided, of course, that he has in mind a

course as nearly perfect as is possible to obtain.

Whenever it is determined to install storm culverts the more quickly they are placed the better. All open ditches should be thoroughly cleaned out and sharp bends should be softened so as not to impede the flow of water which will, in turn, prevent numerous wash-outs, flooding of fairways and bank erosion. Low wet places should be piped with perforated metal pipe immediately and the trenches back-filled with the small stones which would otherwise have to be hauled off or buried under some fill only to cause trouble later on.

I, personally, am thoroughly sold on the perforated metal pipe for this purpose for, having tried everything else along with it, it is the one medium which, once installed, never has given the slightest trouble.

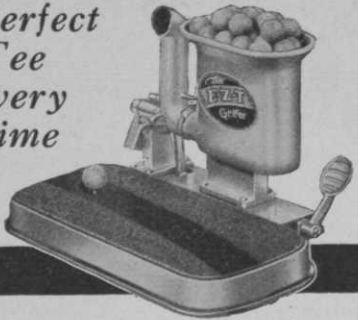
Particular attention should be given to the areas set aside for the greens. Nowhere else on the course is drainage so vital. It matters not what your putting surface is but, if you want it perfect, then drain it perfectly.

Stick with Greens Till Finish

The construction of the greens is the next major step in the work and, by the word greens, I mean an area completely encircling the putting surface for at least an additional 25 feet. If you are filling on a portion of this area bear in mind that the entire area should be plowed, and deeply, before you start to fill. Should the fill be a shallow one you can usually obtain soil of equal fertility from the excavation of the traps and the balance of the cut can always be used rough in the mounds and undulations.

Once you have started the construction of a green, stay with it until you have finished it even to the seeding if possible. This does not mean that no other work should or can be going on. The point I want to make is not to shape and prepare the green for seeding, or nearly so, and then let it sit so long that it has to have

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another duplication of effort in order to finish it. The preparation of the ground of a green's area so that an excellent and perfectly hardy stand of grass will be obtained and then easily maintained is a subject in itself and should be treated as such.

Fairways of course come next. Deep plowing, thorough cleaning out of stones and roots and all foreign materials, proper fertilization and a renewed acquaintance with our friend Mr. Drainage always has produced excellent results. If the soil is not too poor, a fine stand of Bermuda can usually be obtained quickly by obtaining a few million roots from local farmers or a nurseryman (who usually plants it on his terraces to prevent erosion and then is eager to give most of it away due to its habit of trying to gain possession of all of his land). Chop them up well and distribute them by broadcast and then harrow them in. I've always been told to plow under but I have secured much better and much quicker results by discing them in.

One other small tip. Regardless of how well you have picked up stones, slip over immediately after a rain to a fairway that has been prepared and if you don't find a couple of thousand additional stones I'll buy you a hat.

If you are troubled with crab grass or other pests too numerous to mention plow your fairways lightly or harrow them deeply once a week for about three weeks early in the spring. It's a cure that is certain to obtain results.

If you are working on rolling ground it will be almost compulsory to run a parallel ditch or ditches along the upper edge of the fairway in order to minimize the erosion of your newly planted seed. It is a simple matter, after the grass in the fairway is well established, to go back and eliminate the ditch if absolutely necessary.

Careful About Trap Banks

In the construction of your traps, secure immediately a good, thick, tough sod and prepare the banks most thoroughly for seeding as there is, to my mind, no other portion of the course which receives as rough and thoughtless treatment as the banks of traps. The base of the trap should be well tamped and trenched so that rainfall will be carried away almost as fast as it falls. Use a good size of drain tile, filling each joint either with crushed stone or cinders to prevent the sand itself being carried away.

Clean Up During Construction

Clean up as you go along and, in addition, have a thorough clean-up campaign prior to the opening of the course and regularly thereafter. If you remove leaves, small stones, roots, etc., all through your course boundaries, the caddies, small boys and even some players with whom I am familiar will not be tempted to litter the course with them and many a fairway mowing blade will not be ruined. Heavy rains, too, will pile up the refuse unless you yourself carry it all away once.

Trim all the deadwood out of trees bordering the course while construction is going on. You can haul away ten loads of it at this time cheaper than you can one after the course has been opened. Insist, too, on a serviceable road for you to move your maintenance equipment and, last of all, don't recommend the purchase of any kind of equipment unless it is of the best.

Volunteer Member Labor Cuts Costs at Lakefield

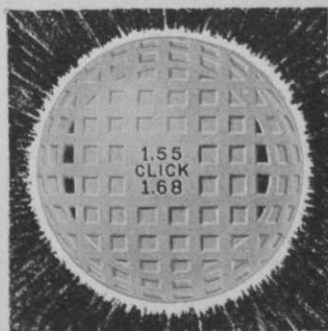
THERE are close to 6,000 golf courses in the United States, among which can be found layouts of all degrees of pretentiousness from the million dollar establishment, with luxuries and services on all sides, to the humble little cross-roads club whose links consist of little more than nine tin cans spotted about a pasture. Yet one fortunate thing about the game of golf is the fact that the elaborateness of the layout has little to do with the members' enthusiasm for the game. Be it ever so humble, there's no game like golf.

As an example of how inexpensive yet satisfactory golf can be, consider the Lakefield (Minn.) Golf Club with its 9-hole course laid over 40 acres of rather rolling and hilly terrain. Lakefield charges its members only \$10 annual dues, \$5.00 for women, and manages to meet all expenses without serious assessments. The answer lies in the fine co-operation the members give whenever there is work to be done about the club. In a letter to GOLFDOM, George A. Payne, secretary of the Lakefield club, tells of this, as follows:

"We hire a man to work afternoons only for \$50 per month. He keeps our grounds mowed and finds time also to take care of our sand greens. We rigged up an old Ford and have a 3-section mower.

"When this man finds he is running be-

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