

Knox Points Out Value of Greens Knowledge to Young Pros

By JACK FULTON, Jr.

THERE'D BE MUCH less pro unemployment if the younger pros would form a working acquaintance with greenkeeping. So says George Knox, pro and course superintendent at Calumet C. C. (Chicago district). George is no maiden at this golf business, as he was born near the old Leith links, now out of commission, but in its time the playground of king and commoner. Knox can do some talking with authority this year especially, as his course was almost free from the blight that fell alike on the just and unjust during the recent season. He takes no particular credit for this escape, for, with commendable modesty, he points out that at many courses where the ability, thoroughness and industry of the superintendents marked them as aces of their field, the visitation of misery was as serious as it was mysterious.

Now let George do the talking:

"The laddies who shoot good games and have kept a watchful eye on the instruction methods and selling work of their bosses as training for pro jobs, would do wisely to watch the work of the greenkeepers on their courses and talk things over with these men. In my own work I had only the groundwork of soil, seed, sand and fertilizer. With the advances that have come out of the schools and other expert investigators, the greenkeeper today is furnished with a jump on the mastery of his business. There is a much better attitude of the elders toward the youngsters than there used to be in the old days, when the men who were experts in course maintenance were very jealous of their knowledge.

"Probably one of the hardest spots in this work, so far as the younger fellow is concerned, is getting out of bed not later than 6 o'clock, and often earlier, when brown-patch is expected. In the morning the young man should go over his course thoroughly, inspecting the greens, tees, fairways and rough, and give his foreman a list of the work that must be done. In the afternoon, a playing round, or a quick, but complete, inspection tour will enable the pro-greenkeeper to check up.

George Knox, pro at Calumet C. C., Chicago, who gives here some sage advice to aspiring junior pros.



"There's a lot to be learned out of books on greenkeeping now, but the young pro who is getting his bearings in this department should never forget a common sense parallel between grass and humans. Forcing of growth is seldom necessary and often injurious. Grass does very well with food, sanitation and air, just as humans do.

"From what I see of most of the smaller town courses, a young fellow who is pro and greenkeeper at most of these places can make himself a reputation by paying more attention to the tees. Large tees, close to the ground for easier maintenance, are not hard to keep in good shape at low cost.

"I have seen some very successful young men in pro-greenkeeping at the smaller towns, start their good work by getting the farmer who is to be foreman really interested in having the course better than any of the other courses his players visit. The young fellows tactfully get it across to their foremen that course maintenance is different from farming and help their men get good foundation for their work by loaning them greenkeeping books, GOLFDOM, and other printed matter concerning golf course work."

George says one of the great pleasures he gets out of his work is to have some young pro greenkeeper from a smaller town visit Calumet with a foreman to whom the sight and operating details of a metropolitan district course may be entirely new. In the Calumet veteran's opinion the best advice he can give any of these inexperienced visitors is to not get stampeded when course trouble appears. "Experiment some before you jump into any operation that you're not reasonably sure of." George counsels the newcomers who seek information from him.

He particularly tells the youngsters to go easy on drastic revisions in course architecture.

It is Knox's deep conviction that the development of more competent young pro-greenkeepers is one of the most important jobs the P. G. A. and the National Association of Greenkeepers can do in promoting the growth of the game.

"At many ambitious smaller clubs," so Knox comments, "the finances do not permit hiring a pro and a greenkeeper. A good young combination man can be afforded, though, and by his ability to make the course a more inviting spot, can create enough pro shop business to make himself a nice income. Then, when he graduates into some metropolitan club position, he is of positive value to his club. If the big club has a greenkeeper, a young pro with greenkeeping interest and training is going to make things much easier for his associate and contribute his share of teamwork that will make both men worth more to the establishment."

Illinois Pros Busy in Relief Fund Play

MEMBERS OF the Illinois P. G. A. have brought themselves a lot of publicity of the sort that advances the pro cause with officials and members, by activities in the Cook County Emergency Relief fund work this fall. Two of the biggest team matches ever presented in the Chicago district represented the pro contribution. A match between teams of the northern and southern sections of the Illinois P. G. A. was played at Glen Flora C. C., Monday, Oct. 19. Seven mixed foursomes of Illinois P. G. A. members and women sharpshooters of the Chicago district played for the fund at Jackson Park public course Oct. 25. Although the Monday event was an off day for the gate and the mixed foursome event

was played where a good part of the gallery was of unemployed people, the pro effort resulted in approximately \$500 for the fund. The boys contributed their entry fees in the team match and took out no dough.

Relief fund officials, many of whom are big shot business men and golf club officials, have made considerable favorable comment on the pro volunteer efforts. Some comment has been of a frankly confessional nature, the officials stating that if they had been as much on the job as the pros, and arranged convenient dates and clubs for the galaxy of talent the pros assembled, the events would have been biggest exhibition money-makers in Chicago golf history.

Star pro talent of Chicago district eagerly volunteered. Pres. Jim Wilson and the Illinois P. G. A. busy and capable secretary, Ed Newkirk, devoted much time to arranging the events. Newkirk's telephone bill in arranging the mixed foursome event was \$10.85 in tolls from Blue Island. Most of it was spent for calling up the gals to get them to play. This is a new high in pro persistence.

Rental Idea Makes Good for Bright Lads

SOME OF the smart pros this year make good pieces of change in using demonstration set of a prominent manufacturer's line as the ace rental set. The sets were loaned out at a dollar a time and in one case earned over \$100 for a pro during the season on rental income alone, in addition to putting on the works for several outright sales of sets.

Apparently the rental idea has been muffed by pros who have been providing only a sorry assortment of old, rusty clubs in a ragged bag. Good looking rental outfits can be used as a selling factor for the pro.

One manufacturer who has investigated rental possibilities among private and public course pros is figuring on offering the boys spiked overshoes for rental during wet weather.

MANY PROS have plenty of trouble with the "buy it wholesale" yen of members. Some good slants on combating this evil are given in Montague Glass' story, "Something for Nothing," in the October 31 *Saturday Evening Post*.