

The PERFECT GREEN-CHAIRMAN Would Be Like This

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Many greenkeeping authorities believe the best analysis ever written on the qualifications of a green-chairman to be the article which appeared in the December, 1926, issue of the Green Section Bulletin. It was written by Sherrill Sherman, veteran green-chairman of Yahundasis G. C., Utica, N. Y.

At GOLFDOM'S request, Mr. Sherman has revised his article in the light of the past four and one-half years' developments, and it appears here with the urgent recommendation that club officials ponder these words of wisdom when the club next considers a green-chairman appointment.

IT IS A matter little considered, yet nevertheless strange, that golf clubs, composed mainly of successful business and professional men, use so little method in selecting members of the different committees of the club. Certainly the board of management of a club, selecting men for the different committee chairmanships, should know what the work for the committee is and what qualifications the chosen man should have for the work of that particular committee. It should be self evident that the different committees of the club require for their successful work men of ability along different lines, for where one man would be extremely successful as a green-committee chairman, he might fail badly as a leader of the entertainment-committee.

With a feeling that in this age of so-called efficiency, a chart or short concise list of such qualifications would be of help in the selection by a board of governors, I have presumed to write this short article. Having spent a number of years in green-committee work I feel that I may safely express my opinion as to the qualifications which would normally insure a club successfully choosing a man for the important post of chairman of the green-committee, with its great responsibilities for the successful growth and reputation of the club, for undoubtedly golf and the condition of the course are the main foundation stones upon which the success of a club rests.

It is possibly trite and seemingly unnecessary to list such qualifications but

often the repetition of the plainest facts, even if not in a new form, is beneficial. I believe that if these qualifications are listed separately, with maybe a division in major and minor groups, with a few words of explanation, the candidate can be checked against them readily and quickly, with the result that a good man could be chosen promptly. It is rather difficult to say what one qualification is the most desirable, but there can be no doubt that an intense interest in the work can overcome the lack of certain qualities, for interest generally enables one to overcome difficulties that without interest would appear too great to solve.

While it is hard to divide these qualifications arbitrarily and absolutely accurately, I believe the average reader would agree in general with the following division:

Major

Spare time.

Good player.

Willingness to use successful methods.

Freedom from prejudice.

Knowledge of proper greenkeeping standards.

Ability to visualize the needs of all classes of players.

An intense interest in the work.

Minor

Good organizer.

Artistic viewpoint.

Acquaintance with good courses.

Firmness to abide by a plan.

Pleasant manner.

Popularity.

Practicability.

Clear expression of opinion and explanation of ideas.

Use of knowledge of predecessor.

Major Qualifications

Spare Time—Unless one has sufficient spare time and the will to use it to oversee the work properly, no matter how great his other qualifications may be, he will find it an extremely difficult matter to keep a golf course in first-class condition. Constant supervision is vital to correct the ever-occurring troubles. Due consideration must be given to the fact that the men commonly employed are those taken from the class of ordinary unskilled labor, for whom it is necessary to do the planning and thinking to obtain satisfactory results. The varying conditions under which greenkeeping must be done require constant thought to obtain the best results.

We are assuming conditions as they prevail at the ordinary club, lacking the services of a long-employed, competent greenkeeper. Where such a man is employed, the green-chairman's burden is considerably lightened, but his responsibilities continue, because no matter how fully qualified a greenkeeper may be, someone else can view conditions from a different angle and often catch what might be overlooked. In addition, the green-chairman must not shirk the responsibility of being the contact point between the members and the condition of the course.

Good Player—At least an average player, but preferably a good player, for the better player has passed through the different viewpoints as his game improved and is more likely to understand the desires and needs of players of all different abilities.

Willingness to Use Successful Methods—The use of successful methods, proved either locally or by tested trials in other clubs or by the Green Section, the Department of Agriculture or the different state agricultural colleges means better results at lessened cost. It hardly seems necessary to go into detail on this heading, for it is now possible through the Green Section *Bulletin*, the different golf magazines or state publications to learn of the proven ways for good greenkeeping. There should be an ability to adopt the standard to local conditions.

Freedom from Prejudice—The advantage

of such a condition of mind should be most evident, for all along the line it will reduce friction with both the members and the employes. It is well to be strong-minded, but one's own ideas should not be allowed to prevent the adoption of new and better methods.

Knowledge of Proper Greenkeeping Standards—With a knowledge of what are the standards of good greenkeeping as regards the condition of the tees, the fair-green, the rough, the greens, the hazards and the grounds, one will naturally, with intelligent effort, keep the course in better condition than if there is no standard by which to judge of a definite goal to be reached. It is not the purpose of this article to list in detail what these conditions are or should be, for that information is available elsewhere. The chosen one can not ordinarily have a full acquaintance with all the necessary knowledge of greenkeeping but his learning through experience is much aided by the intelligent help that he can obtain through the accumulated knowledge that has been assembled.

Ability to Visualize the Needs of all Classes of Players—This is where the fact that a man is a good player proves of as much advantage as does his freedom from prejudice, for this qualification undoubtedly means much to the happiness and development of a club and its club spirit; with pleasant relations among all, the prospect of the growth and prosperity of the club would be greatest. All kinds of men with different golfing ability and ideas make up the average club, yet all pay the same dues and feel that their desires and needs should have equal attention. The ability to visualize these needs, and as far as possible to gratify their wishes, is most important.

An Intense Interest in the Work—It almost seems needless to mention this, yet by this intense interest better work can be done, and results accomplished that would be lacking without it. The golf courses of the country that have had a man who combined interest and intelligence stand forth as leaders.

Minor Qualifications

Good Organizer—The proper selection of the greenkeeper and a check-up of his organization, so that following a definite layout of the work lost motion is removed, and the same amount of work done in less time and better for less money. This surely means economy for the club, for

fewer men on the payroll means more money in the club's bank account at the end of the year.

Artistic Viewpoint—A golf course is more than just an expanse of land for the playing of golf. All work should be done with the viewpoint of good golf and good landscaping. The courses we all like to play and visit are those which combine a good golf layout with the proper utilization of all the natural beauties of the grounds; landscaping and golf can be combined successfully.

Acquaintance with Good Courses.—It is by personal visits to good golf courses that one is able to see a real standard by which he can properly gauge the upkeep conditions of his own course and its layout and so can change whenever and wherever necessary.

Firmness to Abide by a Plan—Continual changes in method of upkeep or layout of the course cost much money. Hence, after due consideration and the adoption of a plan, abide by it in spite of criticism, mostly given without due thought, by the members.

Pleasant Manner—A pleasant manner in discussing complaints and suggestions by members, with a willingness to accept good ideas cheerfully with due appreciation, and the discernment to be able to show clearly the lack of practicability of those which can not be used. At times it is necessary to issue some rule or order that is based on sound grounds that to the crowd may appear unreasonable, and in such a situation agreeableness would go a long way to handle the matter without friction.

Popularity—It is well to choose a popular man, if he has the ability, for he will be better able to carry members to agreement with his ideas and his popularity will mean that members will approach him in a mood of friendship when expressing to him their opinion whether of praise or criticism.

Practicability—To have ideas, visions, and time to fulfil them is not sufficient alone to insure success, for one must have the practical ability to turn ideas into actual work, at a cost that is within the income of the club as outlined in the budget submitted to cover the work of the year by the green-committee.

Ability to Express Opinion Clearly—An ability to express his opinion clearly so that all hearing may definitely understand

his idea. Also the ability to be able to show the reason for his orders to the employes, for knowing the reason for doing a certain thing in a particular way makes the work more intelligent, and consequently better results are obtained. If a workman is shown how worm casts deflect the course of a ball as it rolls on the putting green toward the hole, he will be more careful when poling the green to eliminate the worm casts.

Use of Predecessor's Knowledge—If the predecessor has performed the work well with due consideration for economy and permanent results, and kept the course in first-class shape to the satisfaction of the members, do not hesitate to use his knowledge and methods acquired through perhaps years of actual experience. Do not feel that it is necessary to follow the old saying that a new broom should sweep clean and change everything about; probably there has been a good reason for the methods used. On the other hand, do not feel that you are bound to follow slavishly without any initiative, but improve as you are convinced that you can better perform the work in another way either more quickly, more economically or more easily.

It is hoped that these few simple suggestions may prove of some value to the golf clubs in the selection of the right man for the very important position of chairman of the green-committee, with his great responsibility for the financial success and good name of his club. Clubs are judged as much by the condition of their courses as they are by the completeness of their clubhouses.

"PUTTING GREEN," NEW SCOTT BOOK, GREENKEEPING AID

Marysville, Ohio.—O. M. Scott and Sons Co. recently has issued an exceedingly practical and handsome booklet, "The Putting Green." This book represents a substantial contribution to the useful literature of greenkeeping and should be in the hands of every greenkeeper and green-chairman. The book is sent free on request by the Scott company.

Compilers of the book brought together material from successful greenkeepers, the Green section, various state university authorities and experiment stations, and from GOLFDOM in preparing a volume that covers the entire range of greens construction and maintenance. A notable job has been done and the booklet is certain of a prominent and busy place in the working library of the greensman.