



WATERED FAIRWAYS

now considered essential of A-1 Course

By CARL KOHL

LAST SUMMER'S experience emphatically marked fairway watering as an essential of the first class country club. Fairway watering installations in the central and eastern states now are so common that opportunities for comparison of watered and unwatered fairways not only abound but are unavoidable.

So strikingly did these comparisons reveal the desirability of fairway watering that it now is obvious that the unwatered course—at least in the metropolitan districts—is going to have a tough job keeping its members from going to watered courses of perhaps inferior architecture. With that danger confronting the clubs which do not now have fairway watering, it already is certain that the fairway watering installations to be made during the present "off season" will constitute the greatest volume of construction work done in the golf field during the last three years.

Of course the one drawback to fairway watering installation is expense, but with the decided economies effected by most golf clubs during the last two seasons, the majority of private clubs in metropolitan districts find themselves in the soundest financial condition they have enjoyed since golf became "big business." Costs of fairway watering installations now are about as low as they can get unless the whole country goes to hell, in which case any investment that is made in fairway water-

ing would have been just as sour as it would be if placed in any other improvement or investment.

Costs Vary Widely.

We have seen fairway watering jobs at 18-hole metropolitan district clubs that varied in cost from \$7,500 to \$100,000, and although it is plainly foolish to say that the work of the two installations, representing the extremes, is the same, these two courses are the best conditioned courses we saw during inspection trips to many establishments during the summer. The \$100,000 job is a fully automatic installation with a minimum of labor operating cost and a design that probably will need no revision for years to come. Considerable of this expense represents a well and elevated storage tank.

The \$7,500 job is a hose system with a fairly steep labor bill, but even with the additional labor required for fairway watering the annual budget of this course is quite close to the figure of unwatered courses. It is surprising to see what economies were effected in the operation of these hose systems during last summer. In one case \$24 a night was knocked off the labor bill by a change in sprinklers and a slight additional expenditure in hose. Costs of the change were amortized quickly after the change was made.

Right now, at many clubs there is favored a policy of installing fairway water-

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ing on a design that can be extended and made near to full-automatic when additional money becomes available. Experiments made by various greenkeepers, by Green Section authorities and by Prof. Sprague at the New Jersey station have helped to popularize the installation of fairway watering systems by showing that heavy operating costs to supply a deluge of water are not only unnecessary but damaging. At some of the eastern and central automatic installations made several years ago we have noted injury to the turf because of excess watering. It was the practice of some of the fellows who had the earlier installations to water just to see the wheels go 'round. The harvest, in numerous cases, was a bountiful crop of clover.

In some districts, notably St. Louis, fairway watering is being held back by an inability to determine the correct operating practice. The problem has baffled some expert talent in that section because watering fairways, despite careful variations in volume and time of watering, has seemed to promote the growth of crab grass.

How Much Water?

In the departed bull-market days several of the then affluent clubs that installed fairway watering were victims of a neglect to make certain of one rather vital element of fairway watering—water. Seeing some of these systems only intermittently operative has scared more than a few of the clubs considering watering systems into a belief that a water source of many times the volume actually required, is necessary. Costs of assuring this unnecessarily large volume are discouraging the work. Right here is where the combined knowledge of turf and soil experts, hydraulic engineers and practical greenkeepers can be employed to great advantage.

But when one takes a second glance at the above mention of bringing in all the high-powered experts the thought occurs that whatever valuable services they are able to supply are not at all necessary in deciding whether or not fairway watering is desirable. Anyone who has walked in comfort over the luxurious fairways of watered courses and played with invariably good lies gets the answer when he trods over the baked, scanty turf of an unwatered course with every spike in his shoes stabbing through to his skull.

The big mystery is why golf clubs have waited so long to install fairway watering.

Seventeen Years Ago

New York, February 8, 1915.

Percival Schmuck, Esq.,
26 Foster Avenue,
Mount Vernon, New York.

My Dear Percy:

I am delighted to learn that you have taken up the Royal and Ancient game and that you are holding so important a post as membership on the Green Committee.

At Baltusrol the total expenditure by the Green Committee varies from \$7,000 to \$9,500 each year, this including, however, construction of new bunkers, of which no separate account is kept. The cost of each bunker of course varies, but I should think the outside limit for new construction would be \$500. May I venture a suggestion which, if you accept it, the members of your club will bless you for many a generation? Pipe the fair green so that a system similar to the Boston system may be used in watering the fairway in summer. Do it at once, and you will save the club money in seed, which, as you know, is one of the largest items in the Green Committee's budget. We have such a system at the National and at Garden City and the pleasure one has in playing over both courses in the summer time is as great as that one has in the spring or fall. Baltusrol is impossible in the summer, and I have no doubt yours is as well.

I hope to see you at the Amherst dinner on the 24th.

Yours always faithfully,

(Signed) CORNELIUS J. SULLIVAN.

The able, eminent J. C. Healy, manager at Siwanoy C. C., Mount Vernon, N. Y., sent us a copy of a letter from the late Cornelius J. Sullivan to Percival Schmuck, more than 17 years ago. This letter is reproduced in the accompanying box.

Shrewd Sullivan! If that suggestion of yours about fairway watering had been adopted earlier by golf clubs their members would be debtors to your memory.

As many will recall, Cornelius Sullivan was a golfer of keen enthusiasm and in his home club official capacities, as well as in his official connection with the USGA, he had ample opportunity to study the needs of the game. It's the game's own tough luck that it took at least 13 years for his advise on fairway watering to be generally appreciated.

Healy comments that Siwanoy's experience has checked perfectly with the advice in Sullivan's letter. He remarks: "The dry summers we have been experiencing in recent years have made everybody realize that at last we have come to the necessity of piping our fairways. At Siwanoy we went to this expense 2 years

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ago. It certainly has been warranted by the added pleasure given to members, and the extra inducement it offers has helped to fill up our membership."

Healy further reflects that the mention of a maximum of \$9,500 required 17 years ago for the maintenance of a championship course like Baltusrol, compared with the present-day costs is going to make a lot of us think about the exacting standard of maintenance now insisted on and its cost.

It has taken many golf clubs plenty of time to catch up to Sullivan's vision but none can deny that the prevailing realization of fairway watering's necessity to high standard of course condition thoroughly checks with the lamented sportsman's tip to his pal, the then neophyte on a green-committee.

MACGREGOR IS PREXY

Elected to Head NAGA

as Successor to

John Morley

JOHN MAC GREGOR, formerly vice-president of the National Association of Greenkeepers, was elected to the presidency of the organization at an executive committee meeting held Sept. 26 and 27 at Hotel Statler, Cleveland, O. John Morley, president of the greenkeepers' association, was made president emeritus.

Morley was the leading spirit in bringing the greenkeepers into a national association five years ago and has been president of the body since its organization. Demands made on Morley's time by organization activities has been so great they have retarded complete recovery from a severe illness more than a year ago.

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