

How to Adjust the Greens Cost to a Reduced Budget



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BUDGETS are warnings that there is only as much money to spend and they also remind us of the needs that we will require money for later.

Many golf clubs have been reducing their yearly grounds budget 10% each year for the last three years in a vain effort not to overspend their operating expense. Other clubs carried on with their usual budget until this year and then reduced by 15 or 25%. In order to have a working basis let us assume that my green committee allotted me a \$10,000 appropriation for this year. This will in no way intimate that grounds maintenance cost can be standardized on all golf courses nor should it indicate any sample of cost accounting form, but it will, by setting up an actual cost of items and operations for one year on my course represent a figure whereby I can budget for the following year. This way of budgeting is on the percentage basis and it is the only way each greenkeeper can estimate his expenditure consistently for the ensuing year. We can also assume this allotted \$10,000 appropriation is a 25% cut from the previous year. As an example a sample budget can be illustrated showing a 25% cut making an annual expenditure of the grounds amount to a \$10,000 budget for the following year.

Explanation of Table

You will notice in the illustrated chart where the greens item is reduced \$535.00. This amount is almost equivalent to one man's salary for a year and in order to meet the demand something drastic has to be done. Some of the 400 to 441-yard hole greens that are of good size may be cut down so as to eliminate mowing and topdressing expense. On a cost unit basis for the areas reduced a definite sum can be estimated toward the saving. Some of the

short hole greens may be cut down also if necessary. The proper fertilization of the grasses may make it possible to reduce the frequency of mowing. The texture of the grasses can be overlooked in extreme cases of this kind. Good selection of topsoil can help to eliminate some weeding. The kind of sand used for topdressing is an important feature also.

Tees are usually too small but a reduction of \$69.00 is almost negligible. Consideration should be given to nature of subsoil as this retards the growth of grass and slows up the time of repairing.

Fairways Serious Problem

The acreage of the fairways is large and \$265.00 taken from that item means quite a little less to spend. Reseeding and topdressing is very important so the mowing item would have to suffer. When it only takes one man from 10 to 15 hours to mow 50 acres one can readily see where the number of times the fairways would be mowed would be decreased 25 times. It is tragedy.

Roughs comprise from 30 to 60 acres and are usually sickled twice a year, or so, except on public and semi-public courses where the requirements are more stringent. The hay is usually raked in rows and hauled away, but with \$116.00 less to spend it could be burned as it is windrowed. The hay may be also exchanged for manure and thus eliminate the costly expense of hauling.

The watering operation includes greens, tees, fairways and sometimes the trees, shrubs and flowers. The budget deducts \$220.50 from the sum of the year before. If the night sprinkler is paid 40c an hour there would be 551 hours less of time for work. This item would suffer considerably.

The outside rough is that area beyond the 20-yard limit and among the trees and

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outer areas. Most of this expense is sickling, raking and generally cleaning up of fallen debris. Much depends on the number of storms as to appearance and a \$115 difference might be unnoticeable some years. Many clubs have a yearly supply of dead limbs and trees to be removed from these locations. Often this wood can be exchanged for services of the man and team who do the sickling of the tall grass.

Can't Escape Neglect

It costs from 15c to 30c to rake a trap depending on the size. To reduce this item \$176.00 would mean considerably less raking. The time for raking would become more important and would have to be neglected on quiet days.

Greens, tees and fairways are supplied with sod from the nurseries. It is essential to keep them up in first class condition. In order to reduce the amount on this item the turf gardens would have to be neglected.

Seeds, fertilizer chemicals, gas and oil, depreciation and incidental items are all tangible and can be reduced according to the money allotted for such, but often to the point of serious lowering of maintenance standard.

The repairs item can't very well be reduced \$388.00 as it is necessary to keep the golf machinery in good working order. The repairs to barn and painting can't be neglected and the golf equipment such as tee boxes, poles and flags, etc., must be maintained in the usual manner.

Nothing is said of the construction item because a separate fund is usually created for this expenditure.

One of the chief advantages of budgeting in this manner is the finding in the course of a year's work that savings in some of the items and operations can be made while in others none can be effected.

Reduced budgets, if extreme, can only be exercised for a year or so until the condition of the course is such that the members as a whole become dissatisfied. Most of the greenkeepers have always operated their courses very efficiently and any reduction of the total appropriation works a hardship on them. Good managers will keep the general appearance of the course good through the playing season; but even so, the principal parts of the golf course are neglected.

Waste with Untrained Men

The reduced scale of wage that is being adopted generally among golf courses works to a disadvantage. Experienced men do their work more efficiently and quicker than inexperienced men. It takes care and time to train new men. This is especially true where many golf clubs are reducing the working hours by laying off their men three half days a week.

The forces of nature affect the budget very much. The weather can almost be called the barometer of your budget. Rainy seasons increase the mowing items considerably. All mowing equipment is kept busy at such times. The reverse is true if it is dry but then your watering operation is doubled. Territorial location has much to do with the diseases that visit the golf courses. Wooded golf courses favor insect

Items	Actual Cost for a prior year	25% Cut	Amount to spend
Greens	\$ 2,139.00	\$ 534.75	\$ 1,604.25
Tees	276.00	69.00	207.00
Fairways	1,061.00	265.15	795.85
Rough	467.00	116.75	350.25
Watering	882.00	220.50	661.50
Weeding	272.00	68.00	204.00
Outside Rough	459.00	114.75	344.25
Bunkers & Traps.....	705.00	176.15	528.85
Turf Nursery	493.00	123.15	369.85
Seeds	619.00	154.75	464.25
Fertilizer	1,464.00	366.00	1,098.00
Chemicals	425.00	106.15	318.85
Gas & Oil	749.00	187.15	561.85
Repairs	1,552.00	388.00	1,164.00
Depreciation	990.00	247.50	742.50
Incidentals	780.00	195.00	585.00
Total.....	\$13,333.00	\$3,333.00	\$10,000.00
Total Labor	\$ 6,132.00	\$1,533.00	\$ 4,599.00
Total Material	7,201.00	1,800.00	5,401.00
Total.....	\$13,333.00	\$3,333.00	\$10,000.00

migration, so these obstacles all work against any form of budget and are utterly impossible to forecast.

Many greenkeepers will be forced to spend their appropriations more carefully whether they are taking care of an old course or a new one. Due to the budget being slashed it will take longer to bring a new course into good condition because of the more cautious methods of spending, but good results can be obtained by a gradual scheme of building up. Six fairways can be fertilized and topdressed each year. Some of the trees can be fertilized, pruned

and treated every year. A quantity of sand can be put into the traps each season. A just amount of depreciation of machinery can be charged off yearly. Some funds should be set aside for old and new construction work. A green might need remodeling or some new trees should be planted. Such a gradual development of improving your golf course will fix a standard budget each year. It will help to do away with deficits and overspending. What is saved on each year's budget can be set aside for depressing times such as we have been going through.

Revamping Golf Courses Today Requires Real Economies

By GRANGE ALVES*

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IT IS true enough that hundreds of golf courses could stand a lot of revamping and reconstructing and that alterations would make the game more interesting for hundreds of thousands of players. A necessary preliminary in each instance of rehabilitation, however, is the dull job of balancing the country club budget.

The first great change in everything relating to golf courses came about 1903 and 1904, when the old gutta percha ball went into the discard, and was superseded by the Haskell ball, with a hard rubber core. The game lengthened drives, and in fact, all shots, many yards, and many players had to adjust themselves to new conditions, because of the ball's liveliness. Naturally, this brought a necessity for rehabilitating end lengthening the courses.

This meant purchase of more land, and almost every club faced the problem. Careful consideration was given all plans, but by 1910 the reconstruction generally was well under way. It was about this time, I believe, that the big golf "boom" began. The game grew by leaps and bounds. It was about this time, too, that the first fairway power mower was introduced.

Many of those courses rebuilt 20 to 25 years ago have stood well the test of time; they remain, today, fairly modern and interesting. Others have lost their attraction; clubs find their members drifting away to other organizations with more recently built layouts. Then, too, we have the clubs that started modestly with 9-hole courses, desiring at the time of organization only a "place to knock the ball around." Members of these younger clubs

soon want a real course, and eventually, have to dig down in their pockets and build one.

So the subject of rehabilitation, reconstruction and enlargement is always with us. It is a matter that requires a great deal of study. Primarily, the club's officials, who must shoulder the responsibility for whatever is done, should consider first the size of their pocketbook.

The club that has the vision and the money to buy the best expert knowledge, and supervision, as a rule always gets the best results and has to worry the least of the future. If the course is built of championship caliber and on proper land, with favorable soil conditions, so that maintenance costs will not be excessive, that course is destined for success.

False-Alarm Bargains

The clubs that suffer the most, in my opinion, are those clubs that, with rehabilitation in mind, seek the most for the least amount of money. They generally wind up confronted with everything wrong, and have to begin all over again. Experience has been a great teacher, and in the era of inflation and overproduction, from 1920 to 1930, there were formed some golf course contracting companies that I blame, along with too credulous club officials, for disastrous results. Eventually new expenditures of money were necessary to correct conditions that, if the job hadn't been let out on too close a margin, would have been right in the first place. It seems to be true that you get what you pay for and no more.

I am not a believer in contracting golf course work. I believe in the old time

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