

# How Greenkeepers Should Regard Golf and Their Jobs

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**S**INCE WE have chosen as our trade, a profession which is sponsored by golf it stands to reason that our attitude toward the game should be one of appreciation and encouragement even when considered from a selfish or personal viewpoint only. When we take into consideration the more worthy unselfish and, I might say, patriotic viewpoint, we visualize millions of people who enjoy the pleasure, the health-giving recreation, the element of clean competitive sportsmanship and good fellowship, and the enormous field of employment for thousands of people, all of which are provided by the game. Then we recognize a far more worthy reason why we should present an attitude of appreciation and encouragement toward the game.

What is our attitude toward the game? I know of no better answer than that expressed by the action of the sponsors and attendants of this convention and every other gathering of greenkeepers I have attended since I became interested in greenkeeping. Our attitude is expressed by the trend of conversation, by the papers read and the interest shown in the exhibition of golf supplies and equipment.

Our efforts to acquaint ourselves with every means calculated to help us to provide the best possible conditions for the game leave little doubt that our attitude toward golf is still one of faith and genuine appreciation. We appreciate the game for its contribution to humanity and we have faith in the possibilities of its future as a provider of remunerative industry and its continuous fascination and popularity as a game. Otherwise, we surely would lose interest in the things which are so entirely dependent upon it.

## Greenkeepers' Interest Broad

Our attitude toward golf as a sport is very generally expressed in our evident interest in all items of news pertaining to the game. Give a greenkeeper his local

newspaper and I'll venture to say that in the majority of cases at least he will not overlook any item of news pertaining to golf or his club or fail to show in some manner his prevalent interest in such news.

It is an interesting fact that a great many of the most successful greenkeepers are familiarly conversant with the rules and terms of golf as well as with the technicalities of greenkeeping. Ask a greenkeeper where or when any particular important golf event either national or sectional was held. By whom such event was won? Or any other question as to the outstanding highlights of such events and almost invariably the answers are at his command. We talk, play, read, and think golf, all of which is evidence of a favorable and appreciative attitude toward the game.

The industrial phase of golf is made up of the various elements required to provide facilities and equipment necessary to the pursuit of the game. During the past decade or more the golf industry has occupied a place among the great industries of this country. The manufacture and production of golf and golf course equipment and supplies has kept millions of dollars in circulation and has provided employment for thousands of people. Construction and maintenance of golf courses, clubhouses, and other facilities incident to the game has also been a great source of employment and trade. These and various other factors pertinent to the golf industry certainly merit liberal consideration and public-spirited appreciation. And it is my impression that no better example of our attitude toward "golf the industry" could be cited than that expressed in the same interest and enthusiasm exhibited at the conventions and gatherings previously mentioned.

## Golf's Losses in Line

While it is impossible to disregard enormous loss suffered by golf and the indus-

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try as a result of the general economic depression, it cannot be regarded as relatively greater than that which has been experienced by other sports and other industries. I do not feel that we as greenkeepers nor the many other beneficiaries of the trade and employment subsidiary to golf should accept this condition as an insurmountable obstacle to the success of the game or the business any more than have the promoters and pursuants of other sports and industries.

It has been gratifying to the interested observer to note that as the trying conditions have presented themselves they have been met with increasingly courageous efforts that have proven successful to a degree that would have been unbelievable three years ago. Credit for the degree of success achieved by the greenkeepers must be shared with the equipment manufacturers, the producers and distributors of supplies, scientific research, and many other contributing agencies.

The liberal co-operation of these agencies supplemented by our unflinching interest in our work and our pride in the quality of our achievements have made possible the continuation of a very high standard of golf course maintenance at a cost much less than would have been possible only a few years ago. We have learned to organize and utilize labor in a manner that greatly reduces the labor hours per unit of work. Manufacturers have developed labor-saving machinery and we have learned to use it advantageously. Chemists have perfected more effective and less expensive formulas for the control of diseases and other pests and for fertilization, and we have learned to use these more effectively and more economically.

### Helped by Scientists

Science has contributed greatly to our cause. The scientific investigator through research has accumulated an enormous store of valuable information and has given it to us through the agencies of men who have been trained to interpret and disseminate scientific information in terms modified in such manner as to be easily understood and economically and effectively applied. Through the aid of these men we no longer have to depend on scientific or technical generalities as they bring the information to us in such form as to be applicable to the various in-

dividual conditions obtaining on our golf courses.

The conditions which we encounter in golf course work are the objects of the experiments which have been and are still being scientifically conducted in this particular field of research. Consequently each specific case receives thorough investigations and the results of these investigations are given to us in specific case prescriptions. This modern tendency to simplify and allocate scientific information has been the means by which science has given us the greatest aid in our efforts to save money in golf course construction and maintenance, and better still to keep our golf courses in better condition at no additional cost.

Other important scientific contributions to our work have been the development of simple methods of testing soils to determine their physical suitability to turf production and the presence of or the possible deficiency of necessary plant food elements.

How may these scientific contributions have affected our attitude toward golf? They have given us added assurance in our efforts to cope with the every-day problems of golf course maintenance and consequently a brighter and more confident attitude toward the work which we have chosen as our profession, and in turn toward golf, the sponsor of this profession.

The progress of the game during the past decade has brought about many developments in various features of the average player's game that have in some cases made necessary certain adjustments of facilities for the game, including the structural features of the golf course and maintenance methods. In still other cases the modern game permits alterations and adjustments of other features that are not actually required for the game but that tend to simplify maintenance problems. Here the greenkeeper has shown his attitude of interest by following the progress of the game and acquiring an understanding of the inherent requirements, modernizing his course and maintenance methods to suit. These modernization activities have included the installation of drainage and irrigation systems, construction and alteration of greens, tees, bunkers, etc., and changes in methods of watering, mowing, fertilization, and other minor phases of maintenance, most of which have been beneficial both from a standpoint of the game and the up-keep of the golf course.

Greenkeeping must be progressive in order to provide satisfactory facilities for a progressive game, and we as greenkeepers must be progressive and bear a progressive attitude toward the game in order to keep up with our jobs. That many of us have managed to hold on to our jobs during this period of golf progression and economic depression bears evidence of progressive attitude and inclination toward both the game and our jobs.

### Landscaping Is Asset

There is one particular phase of the true golf course modernization scheme which I believe to be of great importance in the matter of adding attraction to the game and elevating the recognized rating of our profession, and this is the beautification or improvement of landscape appearance. There has been a very noticeable trend in this direction during the past few years which has certainly justified any effort or expense put forth in such work.

Yet I am inclined to believe that we greenkeepers as a rule would find it to our ultimate advantage if we gave more thought and consideration to this work in the future than we have in the past.

Of course the scarcity of funds has been a handicap to such work but it is reasonable to believe that if sufficient thought is given to this end we will be able to accomplish quite a lot with little or no added expense. A little cleaning up of the waste areas here and there and the judicious planting of native trees or shrubs, which may be found on most club properties, at properly selected sites about the course will add greatly to the beauty and attractiveness of the course and grounds. This work may be accomplished at such spare time as may occur during the course of a season at practically no noticeable burden on the club treasury. I earnestly recommend that this phase of greenkeeping be thoughtfully considered when planning next year's maintenance and improvement program, as I am sure that such work will be appreciated and commended by our employers and by those who use or have access to the course or grounds.

Our attitude toward our clubs should be considered from the standpoint of both business and association. Our work brings us in contact with many members of the club, which necessitates diplomatic consideration of their requests or suggestions. While, as a rule, we are directly accountable only to the green-chairman,

we are frequently called upon to explain various phases of our work or to defend our ideas or reasons for various things we do or leave undone to any member of the club who wishes to discuss such matters with us. In this respect our position is different from that of most business employes. Being accountable in a sense to each member of the club may be confusing or even disagreeable at times, yet we seem to get something out of the contact that tends to instill within us a more fraternal attitude toward the members than employes have toward their employers.

The responsibilities of keeping the golf course and grounds in good condition rest jointly on the shoulders of the green-chairman and the greenkeeper; consequently these two men should understand each other as thoroughly as possible and should co-operate fully in all matters requiring joint thought and action. They should be able to discuss matters pertaining to the upkeep or improvement of the course in such a manner as to bring about intelligent and practical execution of the work, and this can be accomplished only through understanding and liberal co-operation.

The greenkeeper's attitude toward his club and its officials should be loyal, respectful, and co-operative, and the extent of time marking the period that many greenkeepers serve one club bears evidence that such a policy is generally accepted and practiced in our profession.

There seems to be some sort of inherent bond that grows up with association with a golf club, even in the capacity of an employe, that we can't very well elude if we are interested in our work and are at all receptive to human interests and activities. The strength of this bond is indicated by the comparatively small percentage of people who voluntarily abandon club work in preference for other occupations after they have once become affiliated with such work.

We have fought a good fight in our respective positions and in our individual and collective efforts to aid golf and the clubs to survive and thrive during this depression period. I am confident that our attitude has been made no less loyal or faithful as a result of extended efforts and added responsibilities, and that we shall carry on indefinitely with the same interest, courage, and determination which is bound to result in continued aid to golf and our clubs.