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## How Can We Finance Our Club's Fairway Watering System?

**T**HE BENEFITS OF fairway watering has been discussed in these columns time and again by greenkeeping experts, club officials and equipment manufacturers, and in recent years few golfers have opposed such installations at their club from the course condition angle, although prior to this season, the average member was violently against having to dig down in his jeans for the money to pay for such added maintenance equipment. "Sure," said the average guy, "I'm for fairway watering whenever the club can make enough profits to pay for it—but no assessments!"

From this standpoint, the late unlamented drought was a blessing; not only has it aroused club officials to the loss in club patronage and income that inevitably results when a course is in poor condition, but it also has served to put the rank and file of the membership in a frame of mind where without too much persuasion they will agree to underwrite a sensible expenditure for the addition of a watering system to the club's assets. The members took dry Julys and Augusts as a matter of course, but a whole season without rain is something else again.

Out on the Pacific Coast, where weather conditions make fairway watering a necessity, sprinkling of entire courses has been common for years. The leading hose and hoseless systems and many important developments in sprinkler design originated there and were perfected under actual

working conditions, until today fairway watering is not only practical but also from the cost standpoint within the reach of every first class club, even though that club may find a real need for a sprinkling system on its fairways only during a few weeks in the season.

As club officials look at the matter, and as the ordinary run of members regard it, the benefits of fairway watering are not denied. The big thing with all clubs is—how can we finance a watering installation? Assessment? Bond issue? Contributions? Or what? Read how a few selected clubs solved this problem.

### Cash in Bank Is Best Way

The ideal way, of course is to have the money in the bank. That is the way fairway watering systems have been paid for by many clubs, including Edgewater GC (Chicago), Arcola (N. J.) CC and the Hudson River CC (Yonkers, N. Y.).

Lacking surplus funds in the bank, many clubs have financed the deal by asking for voluntary contributions from the membership. This was the case with the North Shore CC (Glen Head, L. I.) and the Olympia Fields CC (Chicago). In the latter case, members were asked to agree to an added charge of \$4.00 per month for five months. This was a contribution, and any member who did not want to pay did not have to do so. Over 80 per cent of Olympia's membership agreed to this plan and the watering system goes in this fall. At

Knollwood CC (White Plains, N. Y.) the members were asked to contribute and the system was paid for in one lump sum, reports H. M. Smith, manager.

### Waters One Fairway as Test

Where the club does not have the cash readily available and an assessment or donation plan seems inadvisable, a bond issue will often solve the financing problem. The St. Louis CC met the cost of sprinkling its fairways in this way. G. W. Oliver, green-chairman, writes:

"Three years ago we equipped our first fairway with a Buckner pop-up valve sprinkling system. After stripping the entire area to make it as free of weeds as possible, we cut in Coos County Sea Side bent, four pounds to 1,000 sq. ft. This developed a very close thick turf, almost perfect during the first two years. We have had some crab grass, which was rather easily controlled by weeding, and some patches of clover have developed, but of course this has been a very severe year.

"Our members were so impressed with this watered fairway we are proceeding to handle the entire course in like manner, and have financed the cost through a ten-year bond issue, to be amortized through a sinking fund accumulated by a nominal monthly assessment to members."

The La Grange CC (Chicago district) combined the installation of a sprinkling system with certain modernizations of its course. The club figured the course was going to be torn up anyway, so it might as well put the layout in the finest possible condition at the one time. La Grange's green-chairman, M. F. Skinner, comments:

### Sinking Fund Retires Bonds

"At the time our watering system was decided upon, the club also considered it a very opportune time to make a change in the style of sand trap and bunker hazards, as the dirt obtained from excavating for an enlarged reservoir for the watering system would give us material to carry out this work with lowest cost. The entire cost of both improvements was totalled together and we put out a bond issue sufficient to cover the entire expense.

"These bonds, issued for a term of 12 years, provide for a sinking fund sufficient to retire the entire issue by maturity. A certain amount is set aside each year and the numbers of bonds are drawn by lot annually and a sufficient amount equal to the sinking fund is called at par and ac-

rued interest. In this manner the mortgage is gradually being reduced and lower interest charges are effected.

"Interest charges on the bonds were taken care of by increasing annual dues \$6.00 a year. It was not necessary to rearrange the financial plan or budget of the club to take care of this interest item. As part of our bonds were turned over to the contractors in part payment of their work, it was necessary to qualify them under the Securities Act which resulted in a small additional expense."

### Says Sound Position Needed

Another Chicago district club, Sunset Ridge, installed its fairway watering system last season, and its former president, Robert B. Umberger, who was the guiding hand in this matter, tells us how the club went about it.

"As a matter of fact," he writes, "Sunset Ridge had no real financing job as financing is ordinarily spoken of, but there were and are elements in our picture which made it possible for us to install the watering system and look forward confidently to payment.

"In the first place, Sunset Ridge has been in an excellent current position, having gone through the last three seasons without an operating deficit. We have enjoyed an excellent cash position. We were one of the pioneers in recognizing the importance of a full membership and the necessity of keeping members' accounts in good standing.

"When we rescinded the vote of the members a year ago February for the installation as of last year, we had hoped that the law of averages on rainfall would shower blessings on us rather than scorching heat and no water. The Deity saw it otherwise, and last year instead of waiting until the Annual Meeting in November we proceeded as early as July to make plans for the installation this spring and cracked the boys an initial assessment of \$25 and a \$3 monthly charge until paid for. Everything has conspired to make the entire membership 100 per cent sold on the project, which is an important factor not only in financing the collection of the monthly charge but also as it reflects upon our credit.

"The project had been on the back of the fire for a couple of years, had been checked and double-checked, and, as I have compared the figures with installation costs at other clubs, I am inclined to be-



An example of fairway trapping that reduces manual maintenance and its expense to the minimum is shown at the 18th of Whitemarsh Valley, scene of the 1934 Women's National. Women's championship distance is 6,248; women's par 77. It was on this course in the 1923 Eastern Open that Glenna Collett's 78 was the first score under 80 to be registered in a major event by a woman, according to a recent search of the record books.

—Cholerton photo

lieve that we were ingenious, cost-minded, and maybe a little bit Scotch.

"Basically our original assessment of \$25 per member produced a sizeable buffer in comparison with the cost of the project, to warrant proceeding with the installation. The directors agreed that, inasmuch as the club was full of cash, it would not be inappropriate for the watering system as such to borrow money from general club funds with the possibility of having to borrow a nominal amount to complete, from banks or otherwise.

"After arranging a contract of a nominal amount to be spread over the ensuing six months, we felt it advisable around the first of September, when the interest on our mortgage fell due, to make a modest loan. The banks, after reviewing our record and condition, made an advance of \$7,000 for 90 days.

"Happily the piecing together and piecing out, cash on deck, the monthly watering charge, the extension of credit by one of the contractors, and a temporary loan from the bank, all have saved us a considerable interest charge under the conventional financing plans. This, fortunately, may mean that the Water Tax, as we call our assessment, which originally we thought would run for some 18 months, may be entirely eliminated in perhaps 14 months.

"If the financing of our watering system has been a success, it is not because of any particular focus on financing or anything else on the project as such. The

general atmosphere and interest of all the officers, directors and members in the affairs of the club have made the project almost incidental from the standpoint of raising the money to pay."

### Paying by the Round

St. Andrews GC (Mount Hope, N. Y.) paid cash for its fairway watering system, according to Green-Chairman M. R. Poucher, and set up a charge of 25c per round to members and guests to reimburse the treasury. The club estimates an average annual play of 12,000 rounds, which will pay for the sprinkling installation in 3½ years. "With us," Poucher says, "the most important problems were not the financing but the engineering and the equipment. It is not a job for the inexperienced layman; good engineering advice is needed."

Out on Long Island, the Fresh Meadow CC at Flushing is paying for its watering installation in similar fashion, except that the 25c charge is added to the caddie fee. As pointed out by Albert Arenson, green-chairman, this plan makes those who play do the paying, and the more a man uses the course and hence receives the benefits of a watered course, the more he contributes to the cost of the installation.

Hickory, Dickory, Dock,  
The sun gave turf a sock;  
It wilted and dried  
And a lot of it died,  
Hickory, Dickory, Dock....

Let **GOLFDOM's** watering equipment  
advertisers show you how to stop this loss  
of turf and play.