

FOR CHAMPS

By HOWARD D. FARRANT
Supt., The Country Club, Brookline, Mass.
(At Massachusetts State college conference)

What work is done when a course is groomed for a big championship

WHEN Brookline first received notification from the USGA awarding us the Amateur Championship for 1934, my green-chairman immediately called me into conference and explained at length his ideas of the steps we would have to take to put our course in as good a condition as possible. He stated that putting our course in good playing condition should not be confined to the condition of the putting surfaces, because the condition of the rest of the course was equally important. We considered it necessary to measure the depth of sand throughout every trap so as to make sure there were no hidden stones or rocks that would interfere with an explosion shot; that the banks of the traps should be carefully scrutinized so as to eliminate any holes where balls could come to rest in an unplayable lie. We then looked at the greens from various angles to make sure that there were no branches overhanging any green which would unfairly interfere with an approach shot played from a drive which was slightly off the line. Branches in close proximity to traps were also eliminated so as not to interfere with the back swing. I mention these few examples to show how carefully we went into detail.

Certain changes were made on the course during the past few years but please do not misunderstand me—these changes were not made for a large tournament, but were made to meet up with the times. The long flight of the new golf balls was one reason. Another—the demand for accuracy on the course. All meant that the standard of golf today is materially higher than ten years ago. To keep within an average labor cost we had to eliminate and make additions where necessary to keep up with the trends.

Tournament Tees

When a club is having a large tournament, naturally it wants the course to play long. Length seems to be a big factor and some clubs have gone to great expense by building new back tees. They are used, at the most, a very few times,

because the average player cannot get enjoyment out of the back-breaking drives he should get, but seldom does. There is, of course, this angle—that the clubs with these back tees are fortunate to have all this spare land, but with the way things have been, the up-keep must cost something. It is the cost that clubs now think of first. So at The Country Club, the tees are where they have been for years, except that one or two were moved right or left for a better line of play. We could not lengthen the course on account of our boundary lines, but even had we the room to do this we would not, as we could see other ways and means of tightening the course to make one play real golf and still have our upkeep at the same cost. Our tees during the season of 1934 had the same treatment as other years. That is, they were fertilized and top-dressed twice and cut two or three times each week.

During the National Amateur, each tee was roped off fan-shaped, allowing the player plenty of room and protecting the spectators from a pulled or pushed tee shot. Tees were roped off a few days before the start of the tournament and remained so until the last day. In roping off the tees we used 800 iron stakes and 12,000 ft. of rope, which is purchased by the club holding the tournament from the club that had the last tournament. During the week, section men were responsible to have these ropes in a tight and neat condition. Tee markers were changed whenever the wear and tear demanded a move. The average plate position on each tee was from half way on the tee to the back.

Handling Fairways and Rough

Fairways and the rough have a lot to do with making your course play hard. Not many years back most fairways were cut with a nice long line generally quite straight, as wide near the green as it was near the tee, and often with a nice spread of fairway all around the green.

On a public course this naturally would be fine, but for a real test of skill by

allowing width where it is needed and making all our approaches very narrow we have demanded more accuracy from the player. In some places we have cut new lines altogether on a fairway so as to make some traps which we did not care to move come into play. In one case, a perfectly straight hole was cut so as to make a slight dog leg to use traps built years ago, and the rough along this particular hole is such that you will want to follow the fairway. It is not only to make the course harder to play, but the appearance of a winding fairway leading up to a bottle neck green makes one feel a little more golf-minded.

Our rough we have cleaned the past few years so that we cut most of it by tractor, but it has meant a lot of work in moving stumps and rocks, tiling, open drainage ditches, covering ledges, filling bad holes and limbing trees where needed, so with any large tournament coming along, a four- or five-week growth of the rough requires more skill from the expert player than the average shallow trap. Of course with a gallery around, after a few days it is pretty well trampled.

In the fall of 1933 we concentrated on the weak spots in fairways, and with the fairway watering system installed that fall, 1934 showed a big improvement in the turf. Fairways had their fertilization and were cut two or three times each week. The only unusual thing about fairways the past season was the running of a white line in the rough on three holes. Two of these lines were for the marshals to keep the gallery behind, the other was an out of bounds line where before we only had stakes.

During the tournament our fairway cutting was done early and late—that is, starting early in the morning, both tractors cutting with seven units would start, one on number one, the other on number two hole and keep going forward until play had caught up. They would then jump to the 17th and 18th fairway and work back until stopped by play. Fairways left uncut were finished later that day, and at no time was there any night cutting of fairways, tees or greens.

Reduce Traps

It used to be said if you had a lot of traps you must have a hard golf course, but we all feel quite differently about it now, so we have been filling traps all over the championship course. In 1929 we had

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By this time Penfolds are very desirable store items because their prices have never been cut. The stores want them—and as a couple told us—they're going to get them. We therefore urge every pro not to resell Penfolds to strangers — no matter how alluring the offer.

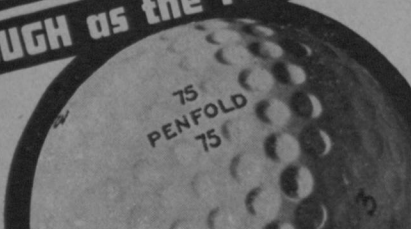
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185 and we now have 111, and we are still considering eliminating a few more. Some of these filled traps were old cross bunkers and many of them were never used. The old traps were pretty much the same shape, usually with a nice even edge. Today our traps are of all shapes and sizes, and most of them are with the steep face towards the green, and with a grass tongue cut in somewhere along the face to eliminate the player walking up the face of the trap and leaving foot marks. We did not eliminate these traps for the National Amateur, but for the benefit of our members and to save on our upkeep. We were particular about the depth of sand in each trap, and this was hauled in the previous winter.

Greens Are Smaller

The greens at The Country Club up to a few years ago were quite large, but we have reduced the number of square feet on the putting surface by pulling traps in closer, rounding square corners and curving straight lines, so that when you play a shot to the green you think where you would like to be, not just shoot away and figure you will be near enough. Surely it does give the better golfer a chance to come through. The past season our greens were treated as in other years, no more, or no less food, nor did they have any special attention.

During the National Amateur, greens were cut every morning. During this tournament they were cut at the same height we had been cutting all season, as we feel often when the height of cut is changed up or down it invariably leads to trouble of some kind. To help out with the gallery we laid out large white lines around each green. These lines were six inches wide, and during the one week of play we used one and one-half tons of whitening. It was a problem to keep these lines showing clearly as we had considerable wet weather, so it meant going over them a number of times. We hauled the whitening, whitewash buckets, brushes and water around the course by truck. These lines were well out from the greens, keeping outside of the surrounding traps, and the circle was large enough so a large gathering had room to witness the play on or around the green.

Placing cups at a championship is generally the duty of the chairman of the Championship committee of the USGA, but due to the fact that our green-chairman was associated with the USGA, this

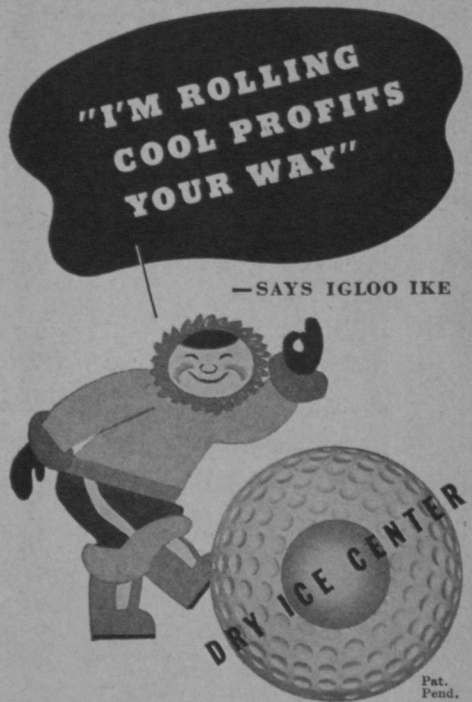
duty was left to him. We therefore studied carefully the contours of each green so as to be sure that the cup was placed in as fair a position as possible, constantly bearing in mind that we did not want any contestant to feel that the cup had been placed in an unfair or tricky position. You will probably all be interested to learn that even with a playing field of over 180 contestants and persistent rains, the location of these cups were unchanged the entire tournament, with the exception of one change on five greens and one of these changes was made necessary on account of a player having to use his niblick on an imbedded ball. Our caddies being well trained were extremely careful in removing and replacing the pin, thereby avoiding injury to the rim of the cups.

Other Joys and Sorrows

There are numerous unexpected things in any large tournament which come up. In one case we had a young lady who dropped a ring through a man-hole cover into a catch basin. While the large crowd around the home green looked on, four men had to bucket out the contents of the catch basin and after a time we were fortunate in finding the ring.

The score board must be in some desirable place, where all can see, so this, naturally, must be roped off. Around the course were eight telephone booths which had to be trucked out and in, and numerous other details while not large, did take time. One thing which is always an eyesore is the litter of papers and bottles left around, so we had a caddie with a bag over his shoulder and spiked stick on the go all the time. The workmen were also instructed to help on this clean-up. We feel we have a mighty fine crew at our club, and these men are interested in seeing things done for the best, not only in a large tournament, but right through any golf season, and we have been very fortunate in being able to keep these men over a period of years.

Where you are apt to have a few large tournaments I think the chairman of the golf committee should be a man who is actually interested in the golfing end of the club as well as the financial end. He should not be satisfied to sit back and say "Carry on," but be on his toes all the time and see some of the work actually done. Then he would realize what a man can be expected to do. My chairman, Mr. Pierce, is of this type, on his toes all the time—and on mine, too—which, I think it



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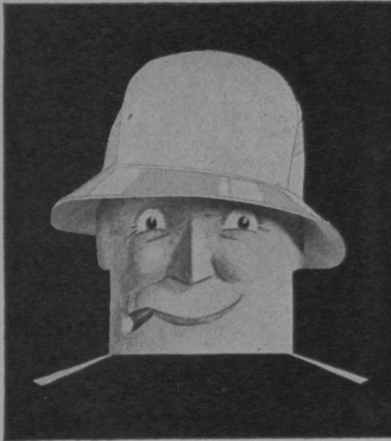
Pros who know a good thing when they see it are freezing onto the Dry Ice Center Ball as the hottest sales opportunity of the year.

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is as it should be. It surely is good protection.

Then your crew on the course: In my mind, you have got to understand human nature a little and you surely have to have a heart. Things do not always go right and often flying off the handle makes more trouble than a few seconds of thought. My crew has worked well and I appreciate it.

Now comes the point of being satisfied with the conditions on a course. I never have been, and never will be satisfied. You have heard people say after a tournament "Well, your worries are over now." To me that sounds like "hokum," or else they do not understand the ways of a golf course. There is always plenty to worry about.

SELLING THE CLUB

**Succeeds By Learning
What Market Wants,
Supplying It**

A VERY direct way of looking at the selling problem of golf clubs has been responsible for the Fenimore CC (New York district) emerging from the depression safe and sound and confident of a marvelous 1935 season.

Harry Hirschfeld, a quiet, competent gentleman who fought in the trenches as Fenimore's green-chairman and now is chairman of its executive committee, told a GOLFDOM correspondent the answer to Fenimore's success in this brief advice; "See what your members want and sell them the knowledge that you have provided everything they want." This pretty well simplifies the problem of club operation because the members don't want a deficit.

Here are some of the things Fenimore provided: a nine-hole course, where women can play Saturdays, Sundays and holidays, in addition to the club's championship 18-hole plant which has a one-man fairway watering system; an outdoor swimming pool, winter sports, tennis courts, a solarium exclusively for men, an outdoor dancing floor having adjacent dining facilities for 700, talking motion pictures Sunday nights, and free group golf lessons for women and children.

There also is a solarium and game room exclusively for women at Fenimore.

A small charge added on each caddie fee will pay off the cost of the Fenimore



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