

# HERE IS THE MOST IMPORTANT FOURSOME OF ALL

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Fairway turf that has been injured by summer drought, affording poor playing conditions but not because of any neglect.



THE month when golf courses in most parts of the country are apt to appear at their worst is August. The various extreme climatic conditions of summer take severe toll among the turf grasses so that the resulting accumulated dead or injured turf is apt to be most conspicuous during this month. Common turf grasses grow more vigorously during the cooler nights of September than during the hot summer months.

August therefore is a month in which greenkeeping practices are apt to face the most severe criticism. It is the month when teamwork among those concerned with course operations is most essential. If there is some hearty cooperation between all parties concerned with course maintenance, many late summer ailments can be greatly minimized.

The foursome that governs the policies of course operations in the average American golf club consists of the greenkeeper, green-chairman, professional and club member.

The greenkeeper is the member of the foursome who finds the toughest going at any season, but particularly during the late summer. He may be caught in traps of drought or deluge, excessive heat, inadequate help or equipment, or by dozens of bits of rough going which the other members of the foursome are so little aware that they do not amount to even mental hazards. On altogether too many courses the greenkeeper has little contact with the other members of the foursome and so is unable to point out to them the extent to which these hazards may hamper his efforts.

Often, the greenkeeper has not made enough of an effort to master the best

technique for avoiding or playing out of these traps. In most cases, however, he is making a far greater effort to improve his game than is ever realized by the other members of this foursome.

## Chairman Can Make 'or Break

The green-chairman in perhaps the big majority of instances has his name placed on the entry list but it is scratched before the game even starts. In many clubs the chairman really plays the game paired with the greenkeeper. Where he plays against the greenkeeper the results are usually disappointing. In a list of the golf club beatitudes this one should be near the top:

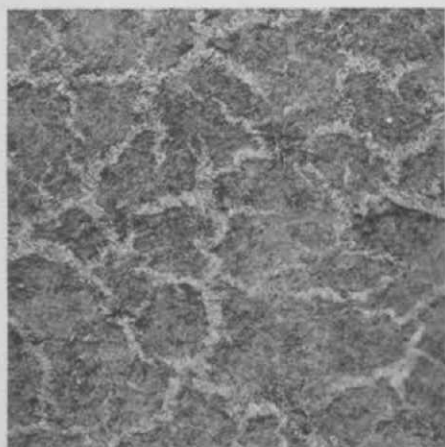
"Blessed is the club with a good green chairman—or none at all—for the course shall then be in satisfactory condition and there shall be peace among the members."

The professional is naturally very much interested in the welfare of the golf course. His income is definitely affected by the amount of play the golf course attracts. If anyone should be definitely a booster for his course it should be the professional. Unfortunately in some cases the pro seems to feel that in this foursome he should play against the greenkeeper. In other words, he seems to feel that the foursome should play a match within itself rather than as a club team. Where the pro takes this competitive attitude, the

Massachusetts greenkeepers look forward to one-day program on lawn culture during Farm and Home Week at Massachusetts State college, Amherst, July 28.

Main speakers are Lawrence S. Dickinson of Massachusetts State College, and Dr. James Tyson of Michigan State college. Subjects to be discussed during the day include: Management of Bent Grass Lawns; Lawn Grass Seed Mixtures; Seeding; Weed Control; Lawn Fertilizers, and Lawn Mowers.

odds are high that he knows little or nothing about course maintenance practices. However, if one took an actual census of clubs where the pro does have considerable information on turf maintenance, it no doubt would be found that with few exceptions he is cooperating fully with the greenkeeper and green-



A growth of black scum where a few weeks before there was a good turf of bent grass. This scum, plus the cracks and curls, makes a legitimate alibi for a missed putt.

chairman. He will offer criticism, it is true, but it is of the helpful type. He does not take an attitude of "knocking" the course and the greenkeeping methods.

The fourth member of the foursome, the club member, is that interesting individual with all the bright ideas about course maintenance. He is also the extremely useful person who pays all the bills. As a rule, he knows nothing about turf maintenance and doesn't even know he doesn't know it. As he plays around, he usually cannot resist the temptation to explain his views as to the methods of improving each shot the other members of the foursome play. It is true he could not put these improvements into effect himself but nevertheless they usually appear to have real merit to him, and must

be considered with the utmost respect. Disturbing as these suggestions may be, they need not cause damage to the course if they are not taken too seriously.

If the members of the foursome give each other moral support as well as actual help by constructive criticism, they can turn in a good season's score for their course, even though they have a few bad rounds in August or any other time when the competition against them is too great.

During late summer when turf is showing scars from various causes, our four players naturally feel dissatisfied with the condition of the course. The most dissatisfied individual is the greenkeeper and he is usually doing his best to bring the turf back as rapidly as possible. Often the best method for accomplishing this purpose is to bring about a gradual improvement with a view to avoiding any likelihood of even more severe injury if unusually adverse weather conditions develop before the favorable fall growing weather arrives.

#### Members Mean Well, But . . .

Many of the miracle remedies proposed by impatient members will do more harm than good. A big steak with all the trimmings may provide the necessary energy to a healthy but fatigued man. However, that same kind of meal might have disastrous results if the same man ate it in a hospital while he was recovering from a serious ailment. Likewise, grass may thrive on a certain diet when it is in good condition and yet be ruined by that same diet when it is struggling to recover from various injuries at a season when temperature and other climatic conditions are distinctly not to the liking of grass.

In August the advance guard of the army of returning vacationists arrives at golf clubs. Every experienced greenkeeper and greenkeeper is prepared for the greeting, "This course looks terrible. You should see the course I have been playing up north! I took the trouble to find out what they do up there to keep the grass so green. They tell me they do so-and-so and they use so-and-so. The people up there say we should do this and that. We certainly ought to try it because they certainly have lovely turf up there."

Such reformers never seem able to realize that one good reason for their taking those trips up north is because climatic conditions are more favorable there during the summer than at home. Nevertheless



Remains of what once was a fine putting surface. Damage occurred under climatic conditions not found in Northern summer resort areas.

the grass on the course has to stay at home and take the weather as it comes.

What the greenkeeper needs on such occasions is the cooperation of the pro and the green-chairman in explaining to dissatisfied club members that the greenkeeper did not deliberately injure the grass and that he is taking suitable measures to get the grass back in good condition. It might also be explained to the members that sick grass, like sick golfers, usually requires a reasonable period in which to recover from serious ailments. It certainly doesn't aid in the recovery of turf to have the green-chairman pester the greenkeeper with a long list of remedies proposed by every Tom, Dick and Harry in the club and sometimes even outsiders.

Neither does it help the club spirit to have the pro on such occasions spread among the club members his theory that "nobody can putt on these ——— greens" or that every bad shot made on the course is due to the poor condition of the course. Such loose criticism simply serves to focus attention on the poorest areas on the course and it won't be long until the members start off at the first tee with the mental hazard that they will have a poor round due to the miserable condition of their course. Neither does it take long for such adverse criticism to reach the ears of prospective members or visitors, with the net result that the professional and the club itself are the victims.

On the other hand, helpful criticism may

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Walsenburg, Colo.—Golfers returning from the National Open championship in Denver found vandals had carried away cups, markers and all other equipment from their course.

serve a useful purpose under such conditions. If the greenkeeper, chairman of the green-committee, pro and members take a fair-minded attitude and try to get the best information for improving the turf or preventing similar injuries in the future, something may develop which may prove of permanent value to the club. Full cooperation also requires of the greenkeeper a willingness to consider worthwhile suggestions from dependable sources.

He and his club do not gain from experience if he takes a defensive attitude and upholds every maintenance practice in detail. The welfare of the course requires the challenging of every maintenance practice on occasions when the turf is badly damaged. The greenkeeper himself should lead in the search for fundamental causes of the injury. He should not blindly defend his practices.

**Lake Placid Open, Aug. 26-28**—Vic Ghezzi's record winning score of 277, set in 1937, is going to be a tough one for the boys to shoot at when the third annual Lake Placid Open fixture is staged over the Lake Placid G&CC course August 26-28 for prize money totalling \$3,000.

Ghezzi's 277 was made up of two sub-par rounds of 65 and 68 and two even 72's. Gene Sarazen was runner-up last year with 281.

An entry of more than one hundred is expected by the Lake Placid committee. First-place money will be \$750, with 14 money places listed. Full information and entry blanks may be secured from H. L. Garren, executive secretary of the Lake Placid Open Golf Tournament Committee, Lake Placid, N. Y. Entries close Thursday, August 25, at 6 p. m.