

MAY, 1942

## HOW THOSE ON 'FIRING LINE' WILL MEET 1942 MAINTENANCE PROBLEMS

Resourcefulness and foresight of golf course superintendents is registering strong as this season gets well under way with the toughest problems of maintenance looming.

Planning to keep the turf healthy with budgets that generally would be inadequate even with last year's lower wage scale is taxing the ingenuity of the course maintenance experts. Added to the turf problem is the task of grooming the courses so ball loss will be kept at a minimum.

Some of the outstanding practical authorities in course maintenance work tell how they're planning and working to provide pleasant and economical golfing facilities for the player who keeps himself in good wartime physical and mental condition.

By **NORMAN JOHNSON**

*Medinah Country Club, Medinah, Illinois*

The greenkeeper will have many problems to work out in order to keep within his budget, which in many cases has been severely slashed. In thoughtful rationing of our budgets we concentrate on two subjects: preservation of our equipment and tools, and the elimination of non-essential or costly operations during wartime.

Because of priorities on most of our equipment and tools, extra precaution must be observed as to machine care and operation. All of our heavy out-door equipment was re-painted this winter to insure us added protection from the weather and to lengthen the life of the machine. Time will be an important factor among all of us as the days go by. We must see how much borrowed time we can add to the equipment that we now possess.

Last fall, my grounds committee went over our courses with me and viewed the situation at close range. Through their cooperation and foresight solution of many

of the prime problems of reducing costs of operation without lowering the standard of maintenance to any noticeable degree was begun last year.

It was decided to eliminate various traps that were either obsolete or a headache to the higher handicap players—who constitute the majority of any golf club's membership. We believe that these changes will not only solve some of our maintenance problems but will also help to increase play among those members who come out to the club purely for the relaxation and enjoyment of the game.

Our mowing operations for the coming season should show some saving on labor costs. We are practically 100 per cent mechanized and if we are not rationed in gas or oil we will go through the year without too much trouble unless labor becomes a serious problem.

In the past we have been topdressing our greens several times during the playing season. This practice will be cut down to a certain degree and applied to greens only if they become bumpy. We intend to cut greens at slightly under

one-quarter inch and will eliminate one or 2 days a week on mowing operations. We will apply more of a stagger method on our three courses. In the past we had 3 crews but will try to operate with 2 during the emergency, if at all possible.

Watering practices will not be discontinued on greens or tees. We will spot-water on fairways wherever it is needed. If the play is light during the week days I intend to start this operation early in the morning and continue on through that part of the day, thereby eliminating the use of night men who are very hard to get now-a-days.

Fairway mowing will be lessened to perhaps twice a week, if we can get by with it at cutting 1½ inch. Some fairways will be narrowed, which will increase the rough area and we do not expect to gain any saving there but will concentrate more on the rough so as to save, perhaps, on lost balls.

#### Fertilize As Usual

Fertilization of greens and tees will be carried on as usual but the fairway feeding program is out for this spring at least, and although it may cause a noticeable lowering of turf standard, I believe that the increase in height of the turf in our mowing operations this year will off-set this to some extent for a certain period but will not be a substitute for food altogether.

Due to restrictions on mercury, our treatments for brown-patch will have to be watched very carefully. In my case, a check treatment will be observed, except in a serious situation, where the preventive method will be used during the season. Power sprayer is used for this operation, which has been a big saving for us during the last few years.

Cooperation between the players and workmen for the duration will mean a great deal to all of us concerned in golf. We are emphasizing this strongly wherever we have signs on the grounds, by painting them red, white and blue so as to impress upon them (members) just how they can help our grounds department in many little things. The locker room will also carry notices on the bulletin board of the twelve ways to help cut our maintenance costs during this economic period and if they are carried out in true faith, it surely will be a blessing to golf in the years to come.

By EDWARD W. CASEY

*Wykagyl Country Club, New Rochelle, N. Y.*

I have more territory to cover with less men and my headache is what to cut out and when. Since I cannot cover everything in the customary manner, the minor items (whatever they are) must be sacrificed to whatever extent necessary.

About the only plan I have in mind is to make my gang a more closely knit unit, to make it, in the war language of today, a task force, and to chip off it the necessary labor hours to do the sideline jobs. The plan is to fix wooden frames into our dump truck to carry machines, tools and men to the jobs, thereby cutting out as much unproductive time as possible.

This idea is old to most fellows, but I think it will be worked more diligently now than before. It will, of necessity, have to be modified as the season progresses but the basic idea should be held.

Many water hazards such as lakes and ponds can be dried up to a mere trickle, but right-of-way drainage brooks are something else. Most brooks have hard bottoms and balls are easily found and retrieved.

#### Has 'Problem' Brook

Our problem brook divides our fifth and sixth fairways, which are located on a peat deposit. There is no hard bottom to the brook, but many feet of wet muck, water and organic matter. Golf balls just disappear. Since golf balls are driven into this brook from two teeing areas we are experimenting to try to solidify somewhat the soft bottom, to stop balls from sinking. To date, we have dammed the brook and put in a 75 ft. test strip by mixing cement with the top four inches of soft mud or matter. The results are better than I expected and I believe we will go ahead and finish 600 lineal feet of brook, 5 feet wide at the bottom.

One bag of cement (1 cubic foot) mixed in 12 to 14 cubic feet of material cut in 4 to 6 inches has given good results in our test strip. Where the consistency of the soft matter is very light we will mix the cement into 10 cubic feet of material.

This job will cost us about 13 cents a square foot and approximately \$400.00 for the complete job. This equals the cost of 470 eighty-five-cent golf balls, which I think is within reason. If the job lasts



Approximately 60 greensmen attended the annual Iowa State College greenkeepers short course March 3-4 at Ames. Prof. S. W. Edgecombe, in charge of the greens course and extension horticulturist at the college for many years and who recently assumed position at the University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Can., is shown at extreme right in back row. Prof. H. L. Lantz, who is continuing the fine turf research work at ISC, is shown sixth from left in front row.

2 years someone will be saving money and golf balls.

What will happen to the cement job in the winter? I do not know. Analyzing the situation, it appears we will have a semi-solid slab resting on a soft, flexible support; expansion and contraction are unrestricted, with running water present through the winter. With these factors in mind, I do not expect any excessive winter damage to the job.

The experiment looks very good to me; it gives a solid, clean bottom to an otherwise black, soft-bottom brook.

The idea comes from a member of the club, a construction engineer, D. MacNamee, member of the board of governors.

\* \*

#### By W. H. JOHNSON

*Griffith Park Municipal Courses, Los Angeles, Calif.*

It will be hard for us to economize further at Griffith Park as our play is much heavier now than in previous years. Our main saving revolves around our watering of the courses. The golf superintendent has had to sacrifice condition of courses to satisfy the demand of golfers for soft greens. I think that cutting down on watering will benefit the golf courses, save labor, electricity, and fertilizer, so, by less watering we won't leach out so much of the elements in the soil. Fungicides, also, will be saved, for if you keep your greens soggy all the time they will develop fungus.

The usual demand of golfers is to have the greens soggy so as to hold the ball, whereas, if the golfer would play the shot to hold and not depend on the green you will have healthier greens. A good green requires as much air as water, and by keeping your greens toward the dry side, rather than wet all the time, they will be more friable and less coagulated.

On the fairways we have cut out one watering a week, thereby cutting down

on our water bill and mowing. We mow fairways twice a week. At the first of the week we come in from edges and go within 200 yards of tees; last of the week we mow everything. Mow mounds on traps and grassy swales every two weeks instead of once a week, making grassy swales in some of our traps, thereby saving sand, and hand labor of raking traps.

\* \*

#### By WILLIAM SLACK

*U. of Mich. GC, Ann Arbor, Mich.*

Our biggest maintenance problem will be getting help. I have at present 5 men. My usual crew has been 11 in the past. How I can keep this place anything like what it has been in the past with 5 men is going to be a headache. Three of the 5 men never worked on a golf course before.

I have decided to mow the fairways, starting about 75 yards from the tee, which will save about 3 hours. As the tees are all fairly low I am going to mow them with the fairway units at the same time as I mow the fairways, which will save more time. Some of the traps have been filled up and seeded. The remainder will be raked about 3 times a week instead of 7. The greens are all mowed by power and it will be impossible to save time there unless they are mowed smaller and less often. I will mow them every other day and cut out Sunday work, which will save considerable time.

The rough will be mowed with fairway units at about 2 inches when necessary. The fairways I am afraid will not be watered when we are short of help. The fairways will be mowed twice a week, saving both gas and wear on the equipment. Fortunately, I am blessed with good equipment and it is well taken care of, being overhauled and painted during winter months. That is, in my

opinion, money well spent, as I have at the present time a tractor and a set of fairway mowers which have been in use for 12 years.

What I think is smart is to have on hand the most essential spare parts for the equipment in case of breakdowns. It now is hard to say if I will be able to have the hoses out at night, when not in use. There is risk of them being stolen, but I probably will take the chance, as it would be quite costly to have to haul them in to the shed every day. I have also been considering using two tractors and units on fairways and getting them mowed in 7 hours, to see if I could save anything. Early in the season there is very little saving, but by fall I probably will have figured out lots of ways to save.

Our greatest cost in time and money is the greens. They have a total area of 160,000 sq. ft. and to have to mow them every day, besides having to water them and do the many other things that have to be done to them, such as fertilizing, applying chemicals, etc., costs plenty.

\* \*

#### By NELSON MONICAL

*Westfield CC, Le Roy, O.*

We operators of small nine-hole courses with a minimum of labor long ago reduced our maintenance practices to a sharply economical basis.

This winter in looking over the problems for the coming year, keeping in mind the present standard of our course, I found we could reduce our costs a little by cutting greens only 4 times a week, giving the time saved to odd jobs which usually required some overtime.

On our course where we have watered fairways I noticed that in seeding with a mixture of bluegrass—red top and a small percentage of bent I ended up with about 95% bent so am eliminating the bluegrass and red top seed in all future planting.

Our present one evening suggested that all existing equipment be put in shape to last as long as possible. Now all of mine is painted, repaired and I expect no trouble for 2 years.

During the overhauling of the mowers, I looked at those bed knives—twice—left them on for another possible half year's wear, oiled up the new ones, stored them away. Lord only knows if we will ever be able to buy any more.

Along our creek and in the farm lands above us I noticed some native bent grass.

In places it had gotten out into the fairways during floods and it looked mighty good. So two years ago I laid a tee down on a short hole with some of the stolons and it proved very satisfactory, recovering very quickly from divot holes. Last fall I put down 2 more. On one other tee I tried cutting the grass very close, treated with sodium arsenite to check the clover, and retard the grass, then topdressed heavily and planted the same stolons. This spring the tee looks like it soon would be all bent and with very little cost.

Maybe everyone is not so fortunate in having such grass so handy, but it certainly is going to save me some money both in seed and growing stolons.

Having a Board with a little foresight certainly saves one a lot of worries. I made some recommendations last fall and early winter, and my shed is now well supplied.

\* \*

#### By ROBERT F. POLLOCK

*Llanerch CC, Manoa, Pa.*

First, golf will have the wage problem. We will have to raise the wages of the help so they will receive a satisfactory income and be genuinely interested in the work on the golf course. With this in mind and the fact we will have to run the course with three less men, less mowing at our course is imminent.

In eliminating some of the work on the greens, we shall cut fewer times, perhaps a trifle higher, and use less fertilizer, therefore eliminating some of the watering. Less watering and less fertilizing may mean to some extent less fungus. Less brown patch will mean less mercury which in turn will mean less expense and labor.

With curtailment of gas in the East, we will have to cut the fairways fewer times. I intend to rake the traps once or twice a week instead of every day. So, I believe, with the program I have planned, I will be able to run this year with fewer men, pay them more, and still keep within this year's budget.

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#### By ROBERT LEE MITCHELL

*The Edison Club, Rexford, N. Y.*

I believe that preventing ball loss will be of primary importance to all greenkeepers this year, for without golf balls there can be no golf. Prevention or reduction of lost balls can be accomplished primarily (at least in my case where we

*(Continued on Page 41)*



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### Shots From The

'Firing Line' (Continued from Page 12) have no water holes) by better and more mowing of the roughs.

In the past we have mowed roughs with a 5-unit fairway mower having the height of cut up as high as possible. In all areas such as corners, around trees and in ditches where the 5-units and tractor could not go, we have mowed by hand, using a scythe.

Last year we bought a Worthington tractor with a sickle bar attachment on side. By using this outfit in addition to our 5-unit gang we were able to reduce our scythe mowing by at least 80%—in addition to mowing oftener and better. There are many makes of tractors with a sickle bar attachment on side. I feel that an attachment on the side of tractor is better than a trailing unit, as it gets into corners and ditches where a trailing type of unit can not go.

In addition to the above we have a lost ball problem during the dandelion season on both roughs and fairways when the white seed-heads of dandelions look from a short distance like a golf ball. Several years ago we tried out drags made of wire (woven) fencing with a 12-inch mesh. We

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made these drags 12 feet by 15 feet, fastening the wire to 3 planks (front, middle and back). When these drags were pulled at a good rate of speed behind either tractor or truck they snapped off the blossoms. Because of the size and speed, by using two of them, we were able to keep the dandelion blossoms snapped off before they turned white. We found it necessary to cover the dandelion areas every day during the blossoming season. While the above is not either a prevention or cure for dandelions, it does prevent lost balls in dandelions.

Besides the better mowing and keeping down of dandelion heads we have trimmed out underbrush in several areas.

While none of the above are new, startling, or revolutionary, they do accomplish what I feel is of primary importance now and for the duration—reduction of lost golf balls.

(Continued on next page)

## By ORVAL DECKER

*Janesville (Wis.) CC.*

Our course is located in the Wisconsin dairy region, and as we have pasture land adjoining our fence line on about three-fourths of our course, we are doing one thing which I think will reduce our labor. Cooperating with the adjoining land owners, we are raising our wire fences about one foot above the ground level. The cattle grazing on the other side keep the fence line clear about a foot on our side, enabling us to use power equipment up to the fences, doing away with a lot of expensive hand labor.

We use reel type mowers on all of our roughs, saving time and doing a much better job.

Also we have the greensmen rake traps and other small jobs around the greens. This eliminates the need for a man to travel the same route to do these jobs and does not add much to the time required to mow greens.

We have added 2 mowers to our fairway gang and have reduced mowing time for fairways by about 4 hours, with about the same cost for gas and oil, also saving wear on our tires.

We are trying out a few other things in regard to topdressing and watering, with expectation of saving during the season.

\* \* \*

Orville R. Belknap, of the Country Club of Lincoln, Neb., expects to save labor this year by mowing all tees and banks around the greens with the tractor and a 5-gang fairway mower. Previously, this mowing was done with hand mowing.

\* \* \*

## By HAROLD STODOLA

*Keller Park, St. Paul, Minn.*

We have used more paint this year than any other spring. The pro-shop is spic and span, full of pleasant pictures, and everything makes for a cheerful atmosphere. The clubhouse is bright and clean and the help is unusually congenial. All the golf course equipment is natural green and white. Everything shines around the place.

We hope to get the players used to a drier course. The traps are untouched

●  
Applications of organic fertilizers on greens followed by topdressing with compost is the most beneficial method. Loss due to wind, washing, or machine pick-up is minimized, and a more even feeding period is obtained.—CKB.

and we have a local rule that the lie in a trap can be improved with the head of the club. The roughs will be kept cut down with the fairway mowers. You will be able to see the ball but most of the time will have to use an iron to get out.

We are completely motorized and the equipment is in fine condition. We plan to keep it that way and are stressing strongly the care of equipment.

We aim for a clean, dry, streamlined golf course.

The outstanding thing to me at our golf course is the spirit of the employees. Their creed seems to be cheerfulness and health. They want the golfer to get all he can out of the game because maintaining health is our patriotic duty.

\* \* \*

## RAY H. GERBER

*Glen Oak CC, Glen Ellyn, Ill.*

Wartime maintenance economy should start at the barn, because the equipment we now have may have to last us for several years. This can be taken care of by giving it the best of care. Proper lubrication should head the list. If you do not know the proper lubricant to use in your equipment, consult the manufacturer, and he will be glad to furnish you with this information.

Be sure all gaskets and grease retainers are in good condition. They not only keep the grease in, but help keep the dirt out. All repairing and adjusting should be done by an experienced man, as we can not afford to take chances at a time like this.

Most clubs are going to be using power equipment this year, and with a good percentage of the help inexperienced it is going to be a problem.

In the past years I have always mowed the greens with hand mowers; this year I am going to cut them with power mowers. This will not only cut the cost of mowing, but also cost of brushing, as a brush can be attached and both operations can be done at one time.

I also feel that no topdressing will be necessary, as our greens have sufficient good top soil, and frequent brushing will do away with any runners that may occur. This will also help cut our maintenance cost.

The roughs will be cut shorter and more often with a three gang set of mowers. One will be able to cut in closer around traps, tees, and greens, which in the past

*Golfdom*

have been mowed by hand or a small power mower.

Players could help cut the maintenance cost by seeing that all foot prints are smoothed out of the sand traps, by not dragging their spiked shoes on the greens, and by not marking their balls on the green with anything that will leave a mark; also, by using a tee pin on all tees, not taking practice swings on the tees, and by replacing all divots.

Our fairways will not be cut as short as in the past, for by doing this they will not require as much water to keep them soft and green. Our tee plugging will be cut to a minimum. The divots will be filled with seed and topdressing, except on short holes where we will continue to plug.

The work for the men should be laid out as far in advance as possible, and each man should be given the type work he is most fitted for. Do not have more men on one job than is absolutely necessary. Keep this in mind, and the job will be done for less money.

\* \* \*

**JOHN S. McCOY**

*Ohio State U. GCs, Columbus*

We are doing less work on the courses—doing it with less labor and most of it less reliable than formerly. At present we are cutting greens on one course entirely by power; not by choice, but by necessity. The condition of the greens is not as good as on the other course, which is hand cut, and requires more brushing to keep the greens from matting. If we hadn't been cutting corners previously I don't know how we could meet present conditions.

## Remote Control Tourney Offers \$4,500 in Bonds and Stamps

THE third Annual Remote Control handicap golf tournament, sponsored by the Indemnity Insurance Company of North America, will offer prizes of \$4500 of War Savings Bonds and Stamps. There will be more awards this year—558 all told—ranging from \$100 U. S. War Savings Bonds to smaller denomination U. S. War Savings Stamps.

In addition to players' prizes, there will be special prizes for pros, to be apportioned according to the number of players entered from their respective clubs or playing on their individual club courses.

This year's tournament, which is the largest of its kind held anywhere in the world, will be played simultaneously all over the country on Saturday, June 13. Those who cannot play on that date because of bad weather or for some other reason, will be privileged to play on the following day. As usual, there will be no entry fees and men and women golfers everywhere are invited to take part in the tournament as guests of Indemnity agents in their territories. Special guests will include men and women golfers now serving in the Nation's armed forces.

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