

SEPTEMBER, 1942

Greensmen Tell of Duties in War

Prominent Superintendents Tell How Problems
Are Met and Licked Thru Careful Planning

Careful Schedules Get Our Work Done

By KENT C. BRADLEY,

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FOR the duration and some time after, before the post war golf boom, many clubs, especially the private ones in outlying areas are going to have one hell of a maintenance problem. Maintenance is in 4 parts, Membership, Money, Men, and Material. The first 2 need not be dwelled upon herein, as that's a club executive board problem. Workmen—labor—largely is a local problem for each club. This year we have made 2 increases—the first from 50 to 60c per hour last spring, and starting September 1, a blanket increase of 5c per hour—regular men to get 65c, and “helpers” 55c. We have 6 regular men and 4 helpers. Starting the year, we had 5 regular men, put on the sixth very early in spring, finished up all “winter work,” then started routine. As season advanced and work increased, we put on older caddies, and as school let out, local boys.

When school starts, we plan to give these kids work after school, say from 4 to 8 p.m.—all day Saturday, cleaning up “accumulated work” of the week. By keeping the regular men on main jobs—watering, matting greens, mowing, and hole changing—and saving the “trimming” work, trap raking, leaf raking, compost making, etc. We can hold things under control. A “regular” man in such times takes charge of a “task force”—to use a Navy expression—and regular men take the task force in charge in their respective upkeep sections. On special jobs, as topdressing, etc., the foreman takes them out. Thus we have 2 age groups of workers, those 40 or more in age (up to 58 at present) and those from 16 to 20 years old . . . “men and boys.” It seems to work out swell. The older guys seem to prefer to instruct kids much younger than themselves and they break them in easier without squabbles, than they would from men of their own or near ages. The kids are the age where an older man has “parental” influence over them. Trouble brews when 2 kids, or 2 older men are teamed up. I'm dwelling on this, as it is a problem that I learned to solve the hard way—by experience. The

older man can be directed to work for quality, while the kids make up the quantity. Healthy competition results between 2 men forming a section team. The older men in charge of sections keep after their kid helpers so their sections compare favorably with the others. A little practical applied psychology on the greenkeeper's part goes a long way to attain results.

The other problem is the private club that can't get labor either for lack of funds, or lack of available men. The old system of having members pay less dues, if they put in an equal value of work, may have to do in such cases . . . but then it's a matter of time before they drop out of doing this. Obviously the greenkeeper can't do all the jobs alone, and it's only prolonging the agony of club survival. Power machinery helps a lot, and each club should have at least one power greens mower if it expects to survive. Here, we are cutting down size of greens; that size is governed by one or two swaths around the inside bank or "collar" using a triplex mower, which runs around twice a week, or 3 times if growth is rapid. If fertilization is watched carefully, applied on schedule, and according to weather, growth is kept more even, which helps make for even-scheduled mowing.

Mowing Moves on Schedule

Mondays here, we start out (27 holes and practice field)—one tractor to mow all fairways, lawns, and paths from tees thru first 100 yds. of rough. The job is finished Tuesday afternoon, using 7 units. The other tractor takes 3 units out, cuts tees, collars and approaches with units cutting slightly lower than fairways. Then the driver makes up a set of 5 units, set at rough height, cuts all rough (starting around 2 p.m.) and cuts to 4:30, then all day Tuesday, takes out the triplex Wednesday a.m. and cuts tees only, then goes back to cutting rough Wednesday at 12:30 to 4:30, and finishes up Thursday a.m. or afternoon,—the latter if rain slows him down. Tractor drivers have rain clothing with them and keep going unless it is a deluge.

Wednesday no fairways are cut unless rain delays work Monday or Tuesday. In this case, if Wednesday is free for the fairway man, he uses his tractor on tees, and lets the rough mowers get ahead on cutting. Thursday the tractor man on fairways starts out again, finishing up early Friday. Friday a.m. the rough tractor is

again used on tees and collars. The second fairway mowing of the week does not cover lawn cutting, practice field, and other areas not subject to bulk of play.

Thus we have a regular schedule, keeping machines in use as much as possible, but not unnecessarily. We even gain time often so that one driver can go on other work—picking up grass clippings, etc. or running power mowers in "odd corners," or taking over a special task force, if foreman is busy spraying greens, or fertilizing, for instance. Full crew is kept busy 6 days a week.

This year we worked differently than last year, changed because of lessons learned then. Last year we worked differently than previously. Now we have things down to the minimum of lost motion, and yet have retained our upkeep standards to "grade B".

Members Accept Lower Standards

Lately we have tried lowering standards gradually to see the reaction—by doing it gradually, no notice was taken of it, and if need be I think we could lower to "grade C" on some things and get away with it, and not lose patronage next year. Despite wage increases, and material costs, I think we are ahead of last year's income. Our play volume this year tops all.

As to material, rubber hose needs be nursed along. We always keep ours in ventilated boxes, locked when not in actual use. Already our hose is 6 years old on the average. I expect it to last another 6 years, with care.

We leaded our fairways last spring, and finding it not economically practical to do rough also, expect to do some reseedling this fall, but it would not cost anyway near the lead price, even if we have to do this for several years. Tees and greens have been treated also, and while this year the Jap beetle infestation has reached its peak (apparently), since we can't get anymore lead, I'm not losing any sleep over it. Many of our trees have been denuded of foliage, but with the rains new leaves are sprouting.

"Mineral" nitrogen, whether natural or synthetic, may be reserved only for farm crops, and demands will be made for the organics in commercial mixes, and even these may have to be rationed to clubs, as there are already heavy demands for them. Phosphates and potash while not so much in demand for turf are essential,—lime is plentiful, but shipments may be delayed

due to transportation. The wise thing to do is buy what can be ordered now and hope for shipments to be made in time.

If any mineral nitrogen is available or on hand, it should best be used to break down compost materials. Club garbage, some weeds, cut before they go to seed or get "woody," grass clippings, tree leaves raked up and piled before they dry out too brittle, and local peats should be considered as compost ingredients. They should be piled now, with only a little top soil to hasten decay, then increased in bulk with sands of right grade before freezing. This material while low in fertility compared to commercial materials, will have to do, even tho bulkier, and costing more to handle.

Hold Men Through Winter

It is economical to keep the main crewmen working thru the year so they will be available for the next season, but fall and winter work should also justify the expense of carrying these men on the pay roll.

For example, some courses built on stony ground find that stones frost-heave over the winter, and altho they do eventually settle as the season progresses, they do not all return beneath the surface. Such stones that stay exposed are a financial liability. They cause damage to mower knives, wheels and rollers; may cause a player to break a club if he takes a divot from turf just covering a stone. A ball landing on an exposed stone may be deflected off into the rough or woods where it gets lost for good, or ties up play while it is being sought.

Painting, repairs or alterations in the clubhouse and other buildings is best done in the slack golf season. The water-mixt casein paints are quickly applied, and require little if any skill. While wet, the paint looks streaky, but the better grades of paste or powder paints level off in drying which takes little time. These paints are inexpensive, and are highly satisfactory in rooms not subject to shower steaming or cooking grease mists. They come in many colors, and have good light reflecting value, which means less consumption of illumination electricity. This is a job that can be done on stormy days, and done yearly, keeps a freshness in the appearance of the rooms.

Trees and shrubbery on the grounds are an asset, best maintained by pruning, treating bark bruises and cavities in



These sports trophies were turned in to be sold to raise funds for war materials. Chairman Clarence Low (right) of WPB's New York Salvage committee, and Holcombe Ward (left) Pres. of the U. S. Lawn Tennis Assn., head of the sports committee which secured the trophies, inspect the haul to be converted to win the world's title from the Axis.

dormant months. The Greenbrook C.C., Caldwell, N. J., has a good scheme for adding to grounds planting. Before ground freezes, holes are dug and fertilized and fill soil is brought under cover. Members buy evergreen trees, balled and tubbed from nearby nursery "overgrown stock." After New Year's Day, these trees are brought to the club, the grounds crew plants them and each tree is marked with a sign bearing the donor's name. There is some cultural loss, but a gain in trees that do live, nonetheless.

Here's My Fall Check List

By RAY H. GERBER

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AS the golfing season in the Chicago district is drawing to a close I believe most golf clubs have a much better feeling than when the season started.

A good percentage of the clubs are reporting their play as good as last year. Some others are ahead of last year, but the contrary is the situation with clubs in the out-lying districts.

Here at Glen Oak the golfing picture is much brighter than early last spring. Our play is as good as last year's. If there should be a gas rationing, there should be no need for us to worry as the electric train stops at our ninth tee. This will make transportation very convenient. So our plans for the coming year are going to be about the same as in the past.

I am going to try and do as much of