

Looking Ahead to Postwar Course Maintenance

By HERB GRAFFIS

WHETHER OR NOT the expected tremendous influx of new players booms golf after the war it's certain there is going to be a buying and construction boom for the game's present players.

Maintenance machinery buying is the No. 1 item in the plans. In numerous instances now, clubs are borrowing equipment from their neighbors. Club members don't realize that but the greenkeepers' fraternity certainly does. The greenkeepers have professional application of the Three Musketeers' policy of, "All for One, and One for All," that is a highly valuable asset to golf. It has meant real cash during wartime especially and has accounted for preservation of a wartime maintenance standard far better than anticipated in 1942.

Notwithstanding inability to make course maintenance machinery during the war there have been some marked advances in postwar course equipment design and construction assured by the wartime work of equipment manufacturers. They've done considerable work on airport maintenance machinery and on other equipment. In this work the urgent necessity of making drastic changes for fast and rugged service, the government's financing and engineering aid, and other factors have accounted for advances that will be reflected in postwar equipment.

Although there has been talk of some radical departures in equipment design, such as power applied directly from the motor to the cutting units, rather than by traction, the authorities declare that design after the war will be fundamentally along the lines of prewar models. And certainly in view of the severe tests the prewar equipment has passed in serv-

ing longer than its expected life, the buyer will get value in this equipment. The revolutionary designs, if, as and when introduced, will need some years of field testing under actual working conditions before their acceptability is demonstrated. The situation in course maintenance equipment is about the same as it is in the automobile and printing press field. Considerable change is looked for, but not expected, as a general thing during the first few years after V-J Day.

One place where soundly operated clubs expect to make postwar investments is in modern and adequately equipped equipment barns and sheds. Wartime experience with machinery maintenance and repair problems has impressed on club officials that they should have listened and acted favorably on greenkeepers' repeated pleas for more equipment in the barns.

One of the things about a good shop in the equipment barn that has paid off richly is the opportunity provided for constructing ingenious practical equipment. I have discussed with superintendents and green-chairmen items of home-made leaf-raking, trap-raking, and greens aerating equipment that have effected labor savings which each season have accounted for several years' interest charges on the investment in the barn and its machinery.

It has occurred to quite a few that the equipment barn itself instead of being a plain shed set in the neighborhood of attractive club buildings, could be made to fit into the architectural scheme of the whole layout, and without much additional cost. Too late club officials, in numerous instances, have been reminded of the wisdom of automatic fire protection in the equipment barn.

Although I know of no case in which

it has been done, I have heard several club officials say that they have considered a postwar equipment barn which will have a winter-sports clubroom under the same roof. Their idea is that some work of repairing equipment, course or clubhouse furniture, or some other job usually is going on in the equipment barn all through the winter. Consequently, the heating and watchman requirements might as well be centered in the barn rather than opening the whole clubhouse for the use mainly of members' youngsters.

Skeet and trapshooting during the winter probably will come back strong after the war. Skating and hockey have been picking up favor steadily, with the growing popularity of figure skating and professional and amateur hockey. So the possibilities of a large, pleasantly appointed room with buffet meals, and toilet facilities, as an extension of a modern and good-looking equipment and supply warehouse and shop, may be a winter sport operating answer at some clubs.

Businessmen on war work have become more keenly conscious than ever before of opportunities of revising methods. They have been applying this policy to their golf clubs. The head of a large war plant told me recently that golf clubs had thoughtlessly neglected their bottlenecks—their short holes.

"At the short hole tees," he said, "there seldom are enough benches for the players who collect at the bottlenecks. And it is surprising how many short tees are without shade. The lack of relaxing facilities makes the player uncomfortable. Instead of getting keen enjoyment out of the hole that he would stand a chance of playing in par, he gets impatient and embarrassed by having other impatient players watching him. So he hurries along and messes up the hole.

"What would help at short hole tees, is a small area of putting green turf with a cup or two sunk in it, so waiting players could practice putting. Just enough green strip so fellows could have their interest engaged, and not too much to add heavily to the maintenance problem."

Maybe there's something to the idea.

After the war there's going to be a restoration of the rough which has been cut at most courses during wartime to reduce losing balls. Some greenkeepers believe that wartime cutting of rough has diminished the fairway weed problem considerably. But what the average club member is going to say about having to hack his way out of tall grass again is anybody's guess.

Already there are indications that the wartime rules of giving a ball a preferred lie on the fairway have lost their charm. The average wartime golfer has lost the knack of hitting down into the ball and has acquired a scooping sort of a swing. Each shot must be almost like it's teed up or the man with an 18 or higher handicap doesn't know how to make it. Consequently golf has become a different game than it was when the ball was played as it came to rest. That wartime rule probably had more of an effect on the average player's game than a long ball would have under normal playing conditions. Some district associations have begun to campaign for the abandonment of the wartime preferred lie rule. It won't be easy to break players of the habit.

But the return to normal playing regulations is going to again cause greenkeepers concern about length of fairway cutting for play, as well as for turf maintenance.

There's no data available yet on any

(Continued on Page 44)

FAIRWAY AMMUNITION FOR NAVY AND MARINE VETS



Hospitalized vets stationed at Great Lakes Naval Station are going for golf in a big way, aided by the Ill. PGA's lively program of furnishing instruction and equipment. Photo shows, left to right: Seaman 2nd Class Lloyd Frahn, wounded in the Philippines; Alec Pirie, Onwentsia; Alex Cunningham, Ill. PGA president; Eddie Bush, Oak Park; Byron Hareke, Twin Orchard; Commodore Robert R. M. Emmet; Capt. D. J. Wharton; Marine Sgt. Donald North, wounded at Iwo Jima; John Revolta, Evanston; Jack Hutchison, Glen View; Harry Adams, St. Charles, Chairman Ill. PGA Rehabilitation Committee, and Jimmy Hines, Chicago, Cunningham, representing the Ill. PGA, and The Tribune golf school is unloading the ammunition. *(Chicago Tribune Photo)*

Postwar Maintenance

(Continued from Page 12)

change in maintenance conditions that might be governed by the synthetic ball. At this time very few of the balls have reached the public. The uniformed men are getting what balls are being made. Now there is a lively revival of discussion about the standard ball, with some possibility of the USGA and the R&A getting together on a worldwide standard. Against a worldwide standard are the factors of cost of new ball-making equipment and different atmospheric conditions in the U. S. and in the British isles.

Greenkeepers have said that in cases of alarm at the prospect of the stars in competition getting too much distance, courses can be made to play much longer by longer cutting and heavier watering. This, some greenkeepers declare, would handle the length factor easier than reducing further the length of the ball that 90 per cent of the golfers can't hit well enough to get any impressive distance. Greenkeepers who are pretty fair golfers when they have time to play, doubt the capacity of equipment legislation to control scoring to provide tests of ability. They say the job could be done easier by conditioning of courses to exacting tournament standards. These greenkeepers say that failure of the legislation is disclosed by the illegal marking of iron club faces used by numerous tournament players during the war.

The interesting thought has been advanced that variation in course conditions could be quite easily provided and would supply exacting tests of the mas-

tery of the competing golfers.

Variation in speed of greens, fairway lengths, rough close to the greens, trapping and texture of sand, and other items, would appraise the golfing judgment and shot-making versatility of the competing golfers and would most certainly determine the true champion, so these greenkeepers say.

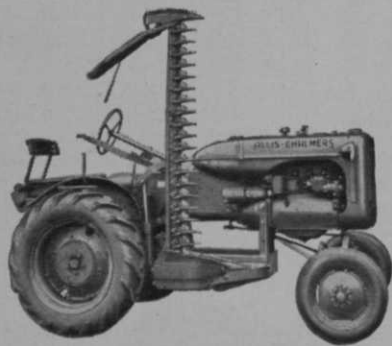
But what has been the policy of the past 15 years, according to these greenkeepers, is to have the entire course groomed to the complete satisfaction of the tournament stars. And the tournament stars, being human beings, are going to insist on conditions that make play easier for them rather than severely testing. The stars stampede the greenchairmen and get what they (the stars) want.

Otherwise, the tournament players will say the course is in poor condition, and the chairmen will be heart-broken. These greenkeepers say the tournament courses are the same for one player as for another, and anyone who can't make shots required has no license for complaint. Placement of the cups alone will do as much to control tournament scoring as expensive experiments with the ball, these greenkeepers stoutly aver.

But, again, it's doubtful that you'll see the experiment of deliberate course control of tournament scoring made to its fullest extent after the war. Now that's only one of the many subjects greenkeepers and club officials are discussing when they manage to get a little time for talking about how the golf course is going to be a few years after the war ends.

All Purpose Mower

★ This is the new heavy duty, general purpose mower for golf maintenance and similar service recently announced by the Tractor Division of Allis-Chalmers Mfg.



Allis-Chalmers' Model B Tractor

Co., Milwaukee, Wis. Mounted as a unit on a Model "B" Allis-Chalmers tractor, the mower has a variety of travel speeds for all conditions, and possesses unusual stability for operations on extreme slopes and difficult angles.

Its five foot heavy duty cutter bar, within full view of the operator, smoothly and easily raises and lowers by a power hydraulic lift. The inner shoe is located outside the rear wheels and can be raised a distance of twelve inches by a conveniently located hand lever. The sickle performs in a range of positions from 45 degrees below horizontal to 60 degrees above, tailoring it for cutting slopes and banks, hedges and shoulders. To insure protection for the sickle when obstructions are accidentally encountered, the belt drive slippage provides a safety relief and eliminates any possible damage. The mower design leaves the drawbar open enabling the tractor to pull gang-mowers or other equipment.