

SMALLER

GREENS WILL FEATURE COURSE ARCHITECTURE

By HAROLD D. PADDOCK, Sr.

WHAT HAS the war taught us about golf course design that will be valuable to us in the course that will be created after the war?

You can be absolutely certain that we have been reminded plenty and painfully in wartime years of the relation between course design and maintenance costs. Machine maintenance has been a wartime life-saver for American golf. Why shouldn't this factor which has demonstrated its value during a period of acute labor shortage be made the most of in eliminating unnecessary costs of golf after the war?

Labor won't be as cheap as it was before the war. But whatever labor we can get we will need to use efficiently. The increased popularity of the game is going to call for first class golf at low cost. The privately-owned fee courses and the public courses that are operated with minimum political interference are going to have maintenance standards in many cases as high as the representative private club of ten years ago.

This will mean that courses will have to be designed to fit the faster and cheaper machine maintenance without sacrificing the visual and playing charm we now are inclined to believe is associated with a lot of manual maintenance work.

The first place we must look for this opportunity of economy is to the greens. There's where your greatest maintenance cost is.

Why are greens so large? Is it because a large green allows more latitude in design, while a smaller green that is an interesting valid test of skill is usually a rather difficult architectural problem? The most experienced architects and playing judges can argue that question endlessly. The answer often depends on the terrain on which the architect must lay out his course. And there's another big point to consider in course construction after the war—the nature of the site. Of course, with the recollection of wartime gas restrictions still fairly clear, the owners of

the postwar course probably would rate location as a more important element than topography.

Smaller greens also can be an important factor in offsetting the danger of excessive yardage. The great yardage doesn't make much of a handicap to the better pros. The only people the long yardage really beats are the club members who have to pay heavy taxes on the acreage before they ever step on the first tee. Shortening the ball won't be the happy answer to that. The great majority of the members only will be denied the thrill of getting an occasional long shot.

Some may say that the shorter ball will retain the comparative differences between the pros and the average players and make each good course one of championship length. But golf is a psychological game and those who appreciate that recognize the joy of the average player when he gets distance on some sun-baked, unwatered, small-town club fairway, or scores well on the resort course that greatly magnifies on its score-card the actual yardage of the holes.

Of course, the ball factor is a controlling one, but who can tell what the effect of new, resilient synthetics may be on ball length in years to come? Will it be necessary to alter courses as the ball length is altered?

Again, you come back to the merit of smaller greens as a primary feature of the entertaining and testing course. Accuracy rather than superlative power is made the distinguishing feature of a course that isn't burdened with the heavy maintenance bills of larger greens.

Mowing, watering expense, fertilization and weed treatment costs of courses that can be shorter, yet exacting, because of smaller greens, not only will be lighter to carry, but the work will be better and easier done.

In talking with Byron Nelson and Craig Wood I found that their playing

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Henry Cowen Elected President of MacGregor

★ DIRECTORS of MacGregor Golf Inc., of Dayton, have announced the election of Henry P. Cowen to the presidency of the corporation. In addition to this appointment Mr. Cowen also has been elected to the Board of Directors of Sport Products Inc., the parent manufacturing company with plants in Dayton and Cincinnati, Ohio. Previously, Mr. Cowen had been appointed General Manager. The office of president remained unfilled for thirty days in respect to Mr. Rickey's memory.

Mr. Cowen entered the sporting goods business in Cincinnati in 1930 after grad-



HENRY P. COWEN

uating from Cornell University. Beginning in the purchasing branch of the business, he progressed into the merchandising department, later becoming actively engaged in sales work throughout the Middle Western states.

In 1936 when Sport Products Inc. purchased the Crawford, McGregor and Canby Co., now known as MacGregor Golf Inc., Mr. Cowen came to Dayton as vice president and assistant general manager in a co-executive capacity with the late Mr. Rickey. For the past nine years during this association, Mr. Cowen has shared the duties and responsibilities of all the company's activities in the manufacturing and distribution of MacGregor golf clubs, golf balls, and other golf equipment.

Mr. Cowen is well known to golf professionals from coast to coast, having on various occasions visited all of the company's offices and through the company's representatives made their personal acquaintance.

Smaller Greens

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observation was in line with the architectural opinion I'd formed on smaller greens. Craig said: "We get on most of the par fives in two, and like it, because we like birdies and eagles." Byron said that many of the par fours hadn't much to recommend them except yardage. He also commented that many par threes are too long, even for the experts. In view of that comment you can imagine what an impossible problem for the average golfer are the par threes that have been stretched out to give the pros headaches.

The satisfaction the average golfer has had from cutting the rough to practically fairway length as a wartime ball-saving operation, may also be well worth retaining in the postwar course. Elimination of rough will demand more skill in trapping without carrying the trapping to punishing excess for the representative amateur golfer, and without adding to the maintenance costs.

Golf architecture has strayed rather far from nature in the effort to simulate the appearance of Scotch seaside establishments on American golf property. That has accounted for costly mistakes, many of which club officials have been reminded by the necessity of wartime maintenance labor curtailment. Emphasis on an American type of architecture, suitable to American conditions and retaining each basic principle of play, is bound to be the postwar trend in design of the many new courses that will be constructed.

★ BRITISH RENEW TOURNEYS — To celebrate Allied Victory in Europe the London Daily Mail is sponsoring a \$6,300 72-hole tournament to be played at St. Andrews, Sept. 19-21. The British expect to have more tournaments in 1946 but do not approve full renewal of tournament schedule until Japan is defeated.

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