

"The" Country Club Catches Up on Its Course Work

IN New England when you say "The" country club to the old timers in big time golf you mean The Country Club of Brookline, Mass., home of 6 USGA presidents; Laurence Curtis, pres. in 1897 and '98 and the second president of the USGA; W. B. Thomas, 1899-1900 president; G. Herbert Windeler, 1903-04 president; Herbert Jaques, Sr., 1909-10 president; Herbert Jaques, Jr., 1933-34 president, and Harold W. Pierce, 1940-41 president. The club was host to the National Open of 1913 that Francis Ouimet won and so doing sparked the interest of millions of American kids in golf; to the National Amateur championships of 1910, 1922 and 1934, and the Women's Nationals of 1902 and 1941.

With a background like that a club is bound to have a bit of difficulty in effecting changes required to keep its course modernized. Some older members want it to stay as it has been in history; others of its veterans and the newer blood want it to keep in the van of the parade. The latter group wins, as the reputed conservatism and cold-bloodedness of the down east Yankees is just as far from the general truth as most other old gags.

Now, although postwar conditions haven't allowed The Country Club of Brookline the labor, equipment and supplies it wants to complete its planned job of reasserting its leadership, the task has been advancing rapidly under the direction of Hal Pierce who has been green chairman for 21 years and Howard D. Farrant, expert Greenkeeper.

Part of the work is that of bringing back into play the extra 9 holes the club built in 1927. Due to wartime shortages those 9 holes were let go to seed. The green contours had to be corrected. Some of them had decided humps over huge stones that were not blasted out because it was thought the job would be too costly. The bent was an unsatisfactory strain that died during the wartime abandonment of the short course. Weeds replaced the bent. In recontouring and reconstructing the greens a rototiller was used on some of the greens but it was found that this work was getting the soil in such good condition that the ploughed-under weed seeds were quick to sprout. So, instead of continuing with that method which would require preliminary weed seed treatment or weed control treatment of the new greens, they spaded out the remaining greens and then reseeded them.

A ledge is being blasted out from in front of a green to make the green visible from the approach area.

All fairway and rough areas on The Country Club 18 and 9 hole courses are being treated with 2,4-D as the weed situation really got away when there wasn't enough wartime labor to permit Tarrant to continue this part of the battle for superb course maintenance.

Changes in Design

The tee on the 17th hole of the championship course has been moved, making the hole more of a dogleg and reducing, to a large extent, the danger from a slice from the 16th tee.

When Pierce became green chairman he realized that there were too many traps on the championship course. More than 100 traps have been filled in. There are 81 traps remaining and the course is a far better combination of a championship course and one for the typical member player than it was when the trap maintenance bills took a severe bite out of the budget.

Pierce notes that a steady improvement of average golfers in use of the sand wedge and the near-perfection the better players display in use of this club have dictated considerable revision in location, design and construction of traps and have made the thick rough more of a baffling hazard than the sand.

He relates that this season a number of members asked that the rough around the greens be cut shorter. Others were not in favor of easing of shots required when the approaches went slightly astray. The point of rough close to greens is a sore one with pros in championship play. They declare the uncertainty of making the required recovery shots is too heavy a penalty for missing the green by a few inches. The rebuttal to that of course is that the champion shouldn't miss by a few inches. But in view of the plea Pierce and Tarrant cut down the greens rough border as it'll be easy to get back if, as and when the trend swings in favor of it. Greens watering that hits this rough does make it pretty thick for playing a delicate shot with any degree of confidence and, some say, skill.

Herb Jaques, son of the first Brookline member to be an USGA president, and the first of the USGA pioneer officials' sons to head the association, is Brookline's president this year.