



View of Wichita (Kans.) C.C. showing practice green, golf shop and clubhouse in background.

# Greenkeeper's Wartime Work Worked Wonders at Wichita

By **TED GREEN**

A standout story typical of the achievements of greenkeepers working under adverse conditions of wartime is that of the improvement effected at the Wichita (Kan.) CC by W. E. (Wess) Updegraff. After the four years he's been on the job the club's members marvel at the improvement in condition of the course. The course was quite badly run down when Updegraff came on the job, and now, according to the members and the club's pro and its manager, it'll stack up with any in the state for condition.

There haven't been many days when Updegraff wasn't at work on the course during the playing seasons and for weeks prior and after play is active. Considerable of the work he's had to do himself but he has been able to train some new help to assist him and his regulars in giving the course a grooming that has been subject of state-wide comment.

Wichita gets some rather tough extremes of weather and when it does get

hot there it's said that the local chickens laid their eggs fried.

Updegraff tells of high spots of the work he's done in developing good turf on the course:

"The fairways had all been planted in Bermuda in 1938. In the spring of 1942 all of them were dead. It was so late in the season that nothing could be planted but Bermuda. We planted all of the fairways at the rate of 50 lbs. per acre. With the help of about 20 boys weeding fairways we got a fairly good start before fall.

"September 1, 1942 we started a 3 year program of seeding all fairways at the rate of 50 lbs. per acre. This we did the first week of September each year of 1942-'43-'44. The first year 30 lbs. of blue grass, 10 lbs. of bent and 10 lbs. of red top were sown also. We got an almost complete coverage that fall. The Bermuda was extremely heavy in some places, but after the first frost the other grasses came up. The second and third year we

discontinued the use of bent and red top.

"We fertilized with Milorganite at the rate of 750 lbs. per acre, each spring and fall. At this time we feel that we have very good fairways. They have a very heavy stand of Bermuda and blue grass evenly mixed. Beginning in 1942 and up to and including this year we have mowed them 1 1/4 in. high. This summer we are mowing them one inch high.

"During July and August we raise them again to 1 1/4 in. high. I might add that we only water when they need it and then very heavy and let them dry before watering again. We do not water during July and August.

"The work we had planned, and that we are now doing, was slowed down during the war as labor was almost impossible to get. Our greens were extremely large. We cut from 200 to 500 sq. ft. off each green. The greens now average 6000 sq. ft. This fall we are going to mow them back out; not as large as they were but large enough to provide more putting and cup space.

"This year the fairways are mowed 3 times a week, while during the war we never mowed more than twice a week.

"We are mowing all rough every 2 weeks, whereas we only mowed 4 rounds around each fairway with a 5-unit gang mower. Once a year we hired a team to mow and rake the part uncut. We mow the tees on Tuesday and Friday with a 3-unit fairway mower. Greens are mowed on the mornings of Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday. Traps are raked all over once a week, and the tracks are taken out each day.

"We are planning to tile some of our greens that have poor drainage. We also have about 2000 ft. of water pipes that we plan to replace.

"The tees are all Bermuda which must be covered each fall to keep from winter killing. This is very expensive as we have 2 or 3 for each hole and straw is almost impossible to get. We are starting this fall to drill blue grass in the tees and have a mixture of blue grass and Bermuda through the winter to make them ready for use in the early spring.

"I would like to give credit where it is due for the splendid cooperation of the Green chairman, Carl Evans, and the club pro, Mike Murra. The success of any greenkeeper depends on the cooperation of both these men, and I couldn't ask for two finer team-mates.

"Carl Evans, my chairman, was appointed as such in 1942 when I came to Wichita, and is still holding that office. He has always been ready at any time to talk with me, and has given me his com-

plete backing in my work. It is a pleasure to work with such an understanding and helpful person. Evans plays a good game of golf and is deeply interested in our course.

"Mike Murra, who has been pro at the club for 20 years has certainly been a lot of help to us. He is at the club about 14 hours every day, and is on the lesson tee most of the time, but always takes time to explain to the members what we are doing and why. Fellow greenkeepers know what that means to us.

"This is the sort of a set-up where the greenkeeper is inspired to really do better than his best and work his head, arms and legs off to get results, because the appreciation of members and officials and the encouragement and assistance given by Mike Murra, the pro, and J. C. Rader, the manager, and the office staff, give a man the feeling that they know what he's up against in trying to give them all a course of which they can be proud."

## Some Pointers On Tee Design

By William B. Langford

Artificial earthwork on golf courses should be blended into adjoining terrain so as to become an indistinguishable part of it. Grading must be done with a bold hand and an eye appreciative of harmonious slopes. Jiggly bumps, hard angles and straight lines fight with nature and are disfiguring eyesores.

On many courses, where hazards and greens are beautifully streamlined and natural, the tees are rectangular monstrosities that not only materially detract from an otherwise pleasing landscape, but are also tiring to climb and expensive to maintain.

Tees are built up to promote visibility and to provide a dry level surface; they should not be any higher than is just necessary to accomplish these objectives. Tees which are too much elevated will be too dry and, unless constructed with a bulldozer and compacted, are apt to become uneven from settlement. The level tee surface is a hard thing to disguise and, if very high, almost impossible to blend into the natural warp.

Of course, a tee must be perfectly level, its side slopes should be drawn out to permit mowing by power equipment, and it should not be rectangular. A shapeless tee outline can be made to fit its surroundings, a rectangular one never can be. A shapeless tee doesn't face anywhere; the golfer playing from it orients himself to his target, as he should—not to the straight line marking the front of the tee, which may not be at right angles to the line on which he desires to play.