

Preparing A Course for Championship Play

By MALCOLM McLAREN and EDWARD B. CASEY

McLaren's remarks are based on conditioning Canterbury for the 1946 National Open and Casey's notes refer to the work he did at Baltusrol for the 1946 National Amateur.

By MAL. McLAREN

Supt., Oakwood CC, Cleveland, O.

One of the most important operations in preparing for a golf tournament is the fertilizing program. Most clubs are notified a year in advance of holding national championships and can plan on doing some fertilizing the preceding fall, along with weed control work.

In the spring the usual program for greens and tees is used. This consists of an application of fertilizer in April, May and June. These applications should be made to bring one about 10 days to 2 weeks ahead of the tournament. This would have the fertilizer working at its peak during the days of tournament play. An extra application can be applied to the tees about 2 weeks before the tournament starts. Caution should be taken with chemical fertilizers so there will be no possibility of burn.

Fairways should be fertilized with the same thought of having them at the top of condition during the tournament.

If there has been much weed eradication done in the rough it's a good idea to spot fertilize the thin areas to make the rough all about the same texture.

Consideration should be given to the lawns around the clubhouse in order to have them looking nice and have grass food there to enable the plants to recover after the beating taken from gallery traffic.

Check Cutting Lines

Cutting lines should be checked on fairways and tees. This is very important. Many a hole is ruined by having a fairway cut away off line, or a tee line facing one way and the line of play being in another direction. Checking these lines is a good habit to get into whether you have a tournament or not.

The rough around greens should be given special attention. One of the things a player fears most is when he is just off or over the apron of a green and in long grass. A 5-in. rough around the rest of the course is a fair penalty and the player should expect at least this much trouble if

he is in the rough. After the first day the gallery usually has most of the rough trampled down.

Marking all hazards with white lines is a big job and may not seem important but it is. Don't think that because a creek is away off line it does not have to be marked. Mark all water hazards on the course and headaches will be saved later.

Sometimes you may be able to get a



Storage space, shop and facilities for supt. and staff are located in Canterbury's maintenance building.

crew from a city traffic department and the power sprayer they use for marking traffic lanes will do a very good job. A line also can be made with this machine in front of greens where marshals can halt the galleries.

Out-of-bounds stakes should be checked and painted. Signs should be placed to show ends of boundaries.

Working Program

Greens are cut every day before play. Ball indentations are lifted and smoothed out. Fairways and tees are cut late the day before the tournament begins and cut each day after play has finished. Extra



Maintenance garage at Canterbury.



Yard front of Oakwood equipment building.

mowers are borrowed from neighboring clubs and this work can be done in 3 or 4 hours. Cutting every day may not seem necessary but this makes sure of your fairways and tees being neat at all times.

Bunkers are checked to see that there is plenty of sand in them. The tile and surface drainage also should be checked to make sure that no casual water will stay in bunkers in case of heavy rain during play. Bunkers are raked every day. A crew is kept on during the day to rake out footprints and lift balls during play.

Greenkeepers from the local association are stationed at each green to assist marshals and see that workmen perform assigned duties. These greenkeepers help direct the galleries around the greens and bunkers. They are on the alert for anything that may go wrong and send for help if needed. At Canterbury we had many compliments for the tournament committee on the expert cooperation of members of the Cleveland District greenkeepers' organization.

Placing of Ropes

When placing ropes to control galleries each green and tee should be studied carefully in order to place the ropes to best advantage. Tees should be given special attention to make sure that the ropes are well back so the crowd will be prevented from getting in the line of any shots.

Try to avoid bottlenecks between greens and tees where the crowd will be confined to a narrow path. Everyone watching a golf match always is in a hurry and will jump the ropes if the gallery is held back too much.

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By EDW. B. CASEY

Supt., Baltusrol GC, Springfield, N.J.

Success in providing excellent playing conditions for a tournament depends on the superintendent's willingness to apply in his program the knowledge and data that other superintendents and turf research men have made available, as well as using carefully everything he has learned from his own experience with the course at which the event is being played.

Preparatory work for major tournaments differs very little in fundamentals from what we have to do every day. But the tournament responsibility is so big and broad and has so much bearing on the nation-wide reputation of the tournament club that the superintendent is compelled to review and possibly revise his practices. Especially the turf and everything contributing to its support must be thoroughly considered and an overall plan with components assembled in order of necessity and importance, must be established.

This program must tie in with everyday course maintenance in such a way that normal maintenance will not be disturbed yet the overall condition of the course be preserved and improved so tournament time will find playing conditions at their very best.

We must set for ourselves a course of action which will assure maximum good results from all favorable factors and a minimum of bad results from unfavorable factors which may exist or develop.

Labor, the biggest item in our control work and the greatest possibility for losses, is the personal factor we must train to work intelligently, to have clear perception of what is to be done, to develop initiative and in general to regard the championship as a demonstration of the course maintenance staff's own championship calibre.

Survey Recurring Troubles

A survey of recurring troubles is most necessary. This survey must include all construction defects, drainage problems, and areas of greens and fairways likely to go bad when the going gets tough.

Mindful of these problems which we know may crop up we either can make a special effort to correct the causes or at least to minimize the results which we cannot possibly or practically correct.

Where necessary we must plan drainage projects to prevent soggy conditions in event of rainy spells and to thin out trees which pocket and smother certain areas in muggy weather.

We must be constantly on the alert to forestall serious results from unavoidable elements such as excessive temperatures and humidity, excessive or insufficient moisture, and invasions of insects or diseases. We must accept the ever-present threat of these troublesome factors and keep our planning and efforts so flexible we can meet each problem with practical and timely solution. We must roll with the punch and move in and out as the breaks develop.

We should carry on operations such as

(Continued on page 103)

Melflex in New Plant

W. L. "Bert" Warford, pres., and Wilson Brooks, sales mgr., of Melflex Products Company, Akron, O., joined with their office and production staffs in playing proud hosts at a housewarming April 5th, celebrating the opening of the modern new Melflex home. Formerly at 415 Wheeler Lane, the new plant is located at 410 S. Broadway where both space and facilities have been multiplied to meet the greatly increased demand for the company's widely used line of underfoot safety-surfacing for golf clubs.

WINDIAL FOR CLUBS—The "Windial" Indicator, part of a new wind indicating system recently developed by the Friez Instrument Division of Bendix Aviation Corp., Baltimore, Maryland, may be placed in the clubroom or course supt's office and tells the wind speed in miles per hour and direction in degrees of the compass. The "Windial" system combines into one instrument a wind vane and a propeller type anemometer of advanced design. This instrument is placed outdoors in the unobstructed flow of the wind and transmits wind speed and direction electrically to the indoor indicator. It plugs into any standard 115-volt A. C. outlet. The two indirectly illuminated dials of modern design give continuous indications of every gust and lull and change in direction of the wind.

Preparing for Tourneys

(Continued from page 60)

renovation of traps, aeration of greens by forking or drilling, checking pH and plant nutrient supply by occasional soil analyses, preventing turf matting by good cutting practices and grooming, adjusting and sharpening mowers to assure efficient operation, and in general make our good housekeeping perfect.

Sighting of any detail of the program or oversight in planning the program thoroughly in advance will result in an accumulation of pre-tournament work that could far overtax the physical ability of the superintendent and his men.

The greenkeeping supt. must see his course, his planning, his men and his results through the eyes of qualified observers as a check on his own expert close-up knowledge of the work to be done and the objective of perfect playing conditions.

The supt. should bear in mind that his Association, the Green Section and all others interested in the progress of turf culture and the men in this profession are behind him to help in the many problems of conditioning a golf course for tournaments.

May, 1947



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