

How the Experts Plan Their Tournament Operations

Comment by Fred V. Grau, Director, USGA Green Section: It is only recently that the USGA officials, when they select a course for a major tournament, usually two years in advance, are asking me as part of my official duty to visit that club, to work with the superintendent directly, and to give him the benefit of any advice that we have that might be helpful to him. We don't wish to inflict ourselves upon him, but we do visit him in a friendly way and go around with him, checking the condition of the turf, and making suggestions where possible, if they are needed.

As far as the specifications are concerned, they are not hard and fast. There is a booklet put out by the USGA which is helpful, marking those out of bounds, marking the hazards, the height of cut of the rough, which is variable, depending upon the type of grass in the rough. There is nothing said about the height of cut on the green. We agree heartily that they should be close, clean and fast. The height of the fairway depends, of course, to a large extent upon the type of grass that is there, so that there are no specifications directly on those factors.



Superintendent's Problems Of Tournament Play

By Ray Didier

Supt., Tam O'Shanter CC, Chicago

At major tournaments there are temporary grandstands to be erected, at spots such as the first tee. These grandstands can be secured from the local high school, park board, or university. All the signs are to be painted and erected, with informational direction signs for the benefit of the spectators, highway signs, both as an advertising medium and for direction purposes, signs with an arrow, signs for the parking areas, local boards, score boards; all to be painted. These signs should be placed in strategic places depending upon the purpose which they are to serve.

Then there will be the parking problem. It will be necessary to provide well-defined parking areas with firm footing for officials, members, contestants, guests and spectators. The regular club parking space normally will take care of the officials and guests, but there will be additional space needed for contestants and spectators.

If your approach has a large enough field within the club grounds, it won't be much of a problem, but if not, it may be necessary for you to contact a local landowner whose property adjoins the club and arrange for the necessary acreage for your estimated needs. The parking area should be well-manned to keep traffic under control at all times. A few cars parked in the wrong direction or in the wrong location can disrupt a large parking field for the balance of the day. We usually start the first day with a parking crew of six men, and build up an additional force to a total

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Preparing the Golf Course For Championship Play

By William Beresford

Supt., Los Angeles CC

In preparing a golf course for championship play the green superintendent at all times should have the schedule and program to be followed. Championship tournaments are generally scheduled at least a year or better ahead, which gives an opportunity to get the golf course in shape. In other words, all we have to do is to rearrange our schedule somewhat to carry out that program. In rearranging that schedule it will all depend entirely upon what time of the year that tournament is going to be held. If that tournament is going to be held in spring, certain factors will enter into it, and the same is true with the other seasons.

In preparing for a tournament we carry through with our schedule of feeding, etc., and, therefore, it is not necessary to increase the crew for that purpose. If you have the tournament in the spring of the year, which is your growing season, you can arrange your schedule for the spring, or you can arrange it for summer or fall.

I think the most important part of the golf course is the greens. You hear many, many times, "Your golf course is just as good as your superintendent," or "your greens are just as good as your golf course." If that tournament is being held the middle of the season, it will be necessary to start the fertilizing schedule ahead at least three weeks on greens, due to the colder weather. If it is going to be held in spring one can get away with possibly 16 or 17 days.

The condition of the greens is the golfer's first thought, and, therefore, we try to get our greens in first class condition. In order to do that there is a possibility we may have to topdress, providing there is time. We find many different grasses on golf courses. If we had a uniform turf it would require less grooming.

It will also be necessary to watch your mowers very closely, to see that they are in good condition. I recommend mowing for major tournaments to make your turf 3/16"; of course, in the winter months it is necessary to raise those mowers to 1/4".

To me a true green will always be on the fast side. A slow green is one generally that has a pretty heavy matted turf, and in putting most golfers like a true surface. In order to get that it is necessary to cut lower, and by cutting 3/16" you will eradicate a lot of dead green. But cutting low we have a much better putting surface and we do eliminate the grain.

As to the schedule of fertilizing, no one knows the golf course better than the superintendent. He knows his course, every inch of it, he knows the soil conditions, and he also is prepared for those climatic conditions which might prevail at that time of the year when that major tournament is being held.

Proper Timing of Work

On fairways and tees, of course, it is necessary that you carry out your program as scheduled; however, you may have to change somewhat in order to get that feeding on at least three to four weeks ahead. In other words, on putting greens, if you allow your greens to run a little too long, all at once the tournament is upon you and you get all excited. You should carry out your scheduled program of fertilization whereby your fertilizer is applied, and you are not going to get that soft growth that will not stand the traffic with heavy playing. Your grass should be fed at least three weeks ahead of that tournament, and it will be at its best during the tournament. You will have a much firmer green for putting on.

It is the same thing with tees. However, tees most of the year in this part of the country are Bermuda. You will find that you can feed at least a month ahead of any tournament and have marvelous tees. On championship courses where these tournaments are played, you have lots of tees and long tees.

On the fairways it may be necessary on some courses to carry out a program of fertilization. In order to get a balanced turf it may be necessary to spot fertilize.

See that you have proper width of fairways and proper rough. If you have Bermuda rough and you have allowed it to

grow 5 inches or more, you will have trouble. Rough on the side of your fairways should not grow more than between 4 inches and 5 inches, providing you have Bermuda. The rough around your greens should not be as dense as the rough around your fairways. That rough should be shorter, possibly 3 inches providing you have Bermuda, and 4 inches if you have other grass.

One thing that is very important is your sand traps. Heavy rains and your sand becomes compacted. Traps should be checked to find out if you have enough sand. Also loosen up to a depth of at least five inches.

All trees in the line of play should be checked and trimmed where necessary.

Train Help for Tournaments

The next point is the training and organizing of your men. Today we are more fortunate in that we have more experienced men than we had a few years ago. Those men should be trained and organized properly, so that during the tournament you will have a man stationed at every green. He will take care of all divots, he will take care of traps on the green. That requires quite a little work, and your men should be trained to handle these things carefully.

The cutting of your greens during the tournament should be done in the early morning. Those greens should be cut every day and they should all be uniform. Your fairways should be cut and your men off the fairways during play.

The next point is the roping of greens and tees to take care of the traffic problem and protect your greens. It seems to me that the public is much better educated to tournament playing than they were a few years ago. You rope a safe distance from your greens, I would say six or eight feet. Around your tees you must rope back a little further to protect them from the swinging of the club, etc.

Check all hazards. Make sure they are properly staked and all the stakes are painted white. Make sure that all boundary stakes, all signs, are properly placed and properly taken care of. By so doing you will save yourself many headaches.

In regard to the approaches to your golf course, and your clubhouse grounds, you should also include these in your program to see that all lawns are properly fertilized ahead of time so that the whole picture will tie in as one.

It is entirely up to the superintendent to see that everything runs smoothly. You have to observe your golf courses from the eyes of the golfer and the club officials. It gives the superintendent an opportunity to prove his value to his club. After all, if he has a well-groomed course, and one

that has been groomed to perfection, he is going to hit it right on the day, just the same as the grower that grows the seed. You can time your greens and the condition of your golf course for any major tournament by using the proper schedule and program. If that is carried out you have eliminated a lot of headaches, and you have made a name for yourself. The compliments which will be showered upon your Green chairman and your club officials will be much appreciated.

Address before 1949 NGA Convention

SUPERINTENDENTS' PROBLEMS

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of approximately 28 to 38 men, for the final day of the tournament. It is advisable to have ten or twelve loads of cinders, crushed stone, or materials of that type on hand in case of heavy rains. Mud holes may develop in the entrances and concentrated areas of travel. The greatest number of cars parked in any one day at the Tam O'Shanter Tournament was about 3500 to 3800.

Tournament Work Schedule

We will assume that you now have the course groomed, the grandstands, signs, score boards, erected, parking area laid out, parking crew hired and their work and hours scheduled. Each man of the ground crew has his work assigned to him. The fairways were cut last night, and the majority of the tees were cut late yesterday afternoon. You had better have all of these things done, because today is the first day of the tournament.

Incidentally, our tournaments at Tam O'Shanter always last a week. They will start on Monday and run through, including Sunday.

Well, this is the morning of the start of the tournament. You drag your weary bones out of bed at the crack of dawn, check the men to see if they are all there, and know of their proper duties. You jump into your jalopy, and start out on one of your most important daily jobs—the location of the cups on the greens. I usually drive from green to green, spot the locations of the cup with a small stick, while a greensman follows around, changing the cups and the markers.

A lot of discussion can be carried on about placing the cups on the greens. A stroke can be added to or subtracted from a player's score by the placement of the cup. I will give you three don'ts to keep in mind. (1) Don't place the cup too far forward on the green. (2) Don't place the cup too close to either side of the green. (3) Don't place the cup on a sharp knoll or a deep incline that would cause a ball putted short of the hole to stop and then roll

backwards, or a ball putted beyond the hole to slope down, then pick up speed and roll way beyond the hole.

This is one of the most ticklish subjects I have ever encountered in tournament playing, and if you ever make one of these mistakes, especially along about the incline of knolls, heaven help you.

We now come to the subject of roping greens. Bill Beresford has said some things about that, and I will still go on to say what I have here. There are several reasons why we should rope off all greens and tees:

(1) To give the contestant enough elbow room to play the game. (2) For the protection of the spectators. (3) To safeguard the golf course. Very little roping will be necessary the first day of the tournament, but as the tempo of the tournament increases, and the gallery becomes larger, it will be necessary to rope off all greens and tees; in some cases it may be necessary to rope off an entire fairway.

Two men should be assigned to the job of making the rounds each day, stretching out the stakes and restretching the ropes where they have been trampled over and knocked down by the preceding day's playing. When roping the greens keep in mind that the longer circumferences of the roped-off area, the greater the number of the people that can be accommodated with a good spot to watch the playing. When a contestant is on a green and trying to sink a 5-, 6-, 7-, or \$8000 putt, everybody would like to be in on it.

Now we still have the problem of policing the grounds during the tournament. There will be concession tents in various locations, where they sell hamburgers, hot dogs, drinks, beer, etc., each sold in a bottle or paper cup or container of some kind. Now, there are 32,000 people on your golf course, which is the greatest single day's attendance we had in the Tam O'Shanter Open. Now visualize 75 percent of them eating or drinking something, some with a bottle in one hand, some with a bottle in two. Now visualize the course after they have all gone home. It looks cluttered, doesn't it? But it really is not, as you have assigned eight to twelve men to the job constantly cleaning it up, and you will have the situation in hand at all times.

QUESTION: What luck have you had in using lime to make lines around tournaments?

DIDIER: We tried that on several occasions. The green had been completely roped off and well out. We used to draw a line with lime and circle a line crossing the fairway quite a distance back, the idea being to keep this circumference as great as possible to give a great number of people the opportunity to watch. We found