

Elements that Make the "Dream" Golf Course

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The perfect golf course for economical maintenance and the high standard expected in golf courses of today involves a balance between practice and theory. One can very easily be carried away with himself and outline the dream course that all of us so eagerly seek, work for, and rarely get.

There are quite a few things that go toward making up the perfect golf course. Greens are the most important and should be placed in fairly open locations rather than in among trees, where air circulation is cut off and light is poor. A good green should have the following characteristics: It should be fashioned so it has good surface and sub-drainage. Rolls should be gradual and not sharp so as to prevent scalping on slopes. The base should be of a sandy loam soil and about 12 inches deep. There should be plenty of cup space so that holes can be moved often to prevent areas packing and wearing out.

False economy should be avoided in top-dressing of greens. Don't use just any old soil that is laying around; this is a sure way to infest your greens with weeds, crab-grass and crow's foot. My suggestion for a good dressing is a good soil mixed with Hyper humus or peat moss and plenty of sand with whatever fertilizer you deem best in your location. A coarse sand in topdressing is going to be of more and more importance to us as time goes on. It has a tendency to keep greens open and aerated which is probably one of the most important things in keeping good roots on fine grasses.

Slopes from greens to traps should be long and drawn out and not steep and abrupt so machinery can do all of our cutting rather than having a lot of manpower wasted with scythes and sickles.

Trap Construction

Sub-drainage of traps should be a must but if sub-drainage is not possible then some other form of drainage must be devised. Traps should be contoured and shaped so they are attractive and not just holes in the ground, and to insure the least number of washouts possible.

They should have sufficient sand of the proper texture. A lot of us have often gone in for beauty of sand, rather than dura-

bility. A fine beach sand is a very pretty thing, but a few good winds will have it all blown out of your traps onto your trap-banks and fairways. My suggestion for sand would be a fine heavy wash sand, even if the color is not as attractive as a white beach sand. Keeping traps edged up and shaped and weed-free is important. I find a good weed killer is much more economical to keep traps weed-free than the old hand picking. Banks on traps should be contoured so that mowing is possible and grass around the tees can be kept neat and attractive with mowing machines.

Tees Highly Important

Tees are getting much more attention now than they did in years gone by. That's a great improvement in design and maintenance. Tees should get much the same treatment as greens and should be level so that when a golfer addresses his ball he does not find himself standing below or above the ball or with one foot lower than the other.

When a golfer starts his backswing it is most annoying for him to scrape something going back and throw his swing off. You can rest assured that if this happens whether or not it is responsible for his missing a shot, the first thing you will hear is, "These tees are lousy!" One important thing about tees is that they should be spacious so the tee markers can be moved often and keep them from being torn up. I find that a check on tees once a week with soil mixed with fine seed and a man to go around filling in the divot marks with a handful of the above mixture will accomplish wonders in keeping tees well maintained. With occasional dressings added, the tees should stay level. Tees in the past used to sit up on top of big hills or terraces with steps to climb. This is "out" in modern design. It is so much easier to have tees laid out level or on ground sloping away gently from tees so that a tractor can get everywhere around them for cutting. It looks more natural, too.

Some courses cut their tees along with their fairways. This is a time-saver, but I still like cutting my tees with a green machine set a little higher than a green cut. It really is attractive and I think worth the extra work.

There should be ball washers at every tee as every golfer likes to play a clean ball. Soap and water should be frequently changed in the washers. Having enough tee benches helps a lot. They should be placed in shady, safe spots and kept painted and repaired.

Fairways Best Grass Possible

Fairways should have a good base of soil and the finest grasses that can survive in the location. I think fairways are fast becoming a real refined acreage of grass. We have had the help of 2, 4-D in keeping out our broad leaf weeds. Killing of weeds and good fertilization has given us a lush full growth of grass. There are too many different opinions on what height grass on fairways should be cut at so I will not commit myself except to say that fairways should be trimmed neat and close enough so that a player has a chance to hit a wood shot whenever he will need one. Filling divot holes on fairways occasionally will help. An economical measure in keeping your fairways cut is to use a gang of seven units for cutting if possible. You'd be surprised how this speeds up the work.

Roughs

There has been very little attention given to roughs in the past, however, things are looking better on a lot of courses since they have been using weed killers and fertilizers on them. The day of just cutting the rough occasionally is past. A uniform weed free, well fertilized rough is coming into its own.

Woods

Woods on golf courses should be kept pruned at a high level and kept clean with some type of grass sown in them to keep them looking neat. Dead trees should be cleaned out and old stumps and branches and rubble laying around should be cleaned out.

Roads

Roads and parking spaces should be made permanent. A good job done by a contractor, such as laying down of a hard-top surface, will beat all haphazard methods of filling holes and repairing occasionally by golf course help.

Watering System

Here is a department of golf course equipment that should be well planned before being installed. Often the difference of a few thousand dollars has swayed a committee to install an inferior watering system and the club has found itself paying off dearly for labor to operate and maintain the choice of equipment. A fine example of this would be the difference in a pop-head system that can be operated very quickly and efficiently, and a hose system which takes a heap of manpower to pull around. It does not take much of an imagination to picture men setting up fairway sprinklers pulling inch and inch-and-a-

half hose from sides to center of fairways, when a down-the-center pop-head system would probably be a self-paying proposition over a period of a couple of years.

Clubhouse and Surroundings

The upkeep of shrubbery and flower beds around a clubhouse has often been a thorn in the side of many a greenkeeper. Just when things are running smoothly for him some person will always suggest that flowers should be placed here or there or a bush should be pruned or hedges should be trimmed and often the poor greenkeeper will have to pull a man off the course from a well-planned job to satisfy some member's whim. I should say the best way to keep this situation under control would be to have a gardener under the supervision of the greenkeeper, with the gardener's sole duties being to keep things neat and orderly in this department.

Equipment for Top Maintenance

In order to keep a top notch golf course I think I would require the following equipment:

- 2 Tractors
- Aerifier
- 1 set of Gang Mowers—7 units
- 1 set of Blitzers—5 units
- 1 Dump Truck
- 1 Power Sprayer with boom
- 1 10 ft. fertilizer spreader
- 1 small fertilizer spreader
- 1 Root spreader
- 1 power mobile dynamo with attachments
- 3 greens power machines
- 2 approach power machines
- 1 3-section gang mower for banks and close places
- A good supply of rakes, shovels, forks, etc.

Whipping Poles

A good work shop, a good soil shed, a good barn, all under one roof, heated and convenient for workmen. A sufficient amount of fertilizer and fungicides always should be on hand.

And you've got to have an adequate, flexible budget, or you just can't keep the course in good condition.

Pinching pennies by putting off something today may well run into dollars in the future. Clubs should have been doing their best in the past few lush years since the war to get themselves and courses in topnotch shape. If they have not and are not improving their condition now then when things tighten up it will be too late.

Manpower Most Important

I have covered what I think is a good golf course and equipment to keep the course good. Now I reach my last and most important item: manpower. As go your

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The Southeastern Turf Foundation advisory committee composed of Crawford Rainwater, Pensacola, Florida; T. M. Baumgardner, Sea Island, Georgia; M. K. Jeffers, Jr., Orangeburg, South Carolina; Howard (Pop) Beckett, Capitol City Country Club, Atlanta, Georgia; Dr. Fred V. Grau, O. J. Noer and Dr. Glenn W. Burton submitted a budget and future plans for the research center which was very favorably received by all in attendance. Since the continuation of the program now underway at Tifton depends entirely upon the contributions of clubs in the Southeast under the direct supervision of the U. S. Golf Association and in the Southern Golf Association the proposed budget and future plans, thus, becomes the life-line of "Better Turf" for the Southeast.

The budget proposed for 1951-1952 will require raising \$8,300, which everybody present thought possible. Mr. B. R. Robinson will be on a full-time basis and will be available for consultation. Clubs requesting his services for consultation are to pay his expenses plus \$25.00 per day.

It was agreed that the Southern Golf Association continue as the promoting and collecting agency for the project, with Mr. Crawford Rainwater as the responsible agent. All contributions to be made payable to the Southern Turf Foundation, the name of the receiving organization for the Southern Golf Association. A bank balance of \$3,594.87 was reported as of September 5, 1950. This included \$1,000 from the Southern Golf Association, and gifts of like amounts from Augusta National and Capital City Country Club. On the following day Mr. Charles Danner presented the Foundation with a check for \$200.00 from the Southern Turf Association in Tennessee. In making a verbal report to the group at that time, Mr. M. K. Jeffers, Jr. urged the support of everybody, and announced the decision to issue an informative bulletin on turf based upon findings from the work at Tifton. It will be published quarterly at the start.

ELEMENTS THAT MAKE

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greenkeeping superintendent and his men so goes your golf course. I will take men first and try to give a general idea what I expect of them. As much as possible, men doing golf course work should be taught to do as many of the types of work necessary that they can pick up and do efficiently. It is wonderful to have men who can cover up and fill in on jobs when someone wasn't able to turn up for a day or two. A good idea is to train your men in the spring and try to develop initiative in them so that they will go to and through their work in a routine manner and with confidence. Many a man has unjustly been accused

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when all the trouble lay in poor planning and poor judgment in giving men instructions to carry out. A man very seldom says he does not understand and will try to bluff his way through a job. This will result in some mess as a rule that will require more time to straighten up. So I say a good sound system of upkeep which is understood by the men is essential.

The Superintendent's Job

The superintendent responsible for the management of the course is the most important man on your roster of help as far as your golf course is concerned. His job is thankless. When things are good and going smooth he is praised to the sky, but let something go wrong and every one is on him like a ton of bricks. One of my chief complaints as a greenkeeper and superintendent—and you will find I am not alone in voicing this complaint—is the fact that there is often too little cooperation between greenkeeper and committee. I think that a greenkeeper should know all about his club and how it stands. There is no better way of keeping him posted than to invite him in to your meetings and giving him a first-class view of your financial position, and letting him know what is expected of him. Your letting him know what is expected of him is just as important as him letting his men know what is expected of them.

The USGA Green Section, GOLFDOM and a number of universities are doing a grand job of keeping a greenkeeper posted on new developments in upkeep of grasses. Club officials can help the man in charge of their course by seeing that he gets his subscription to GOLFDOM, paying his expenses to the nearest turf short course and to the national convention. This would be money well spent.

Pro-Greenkeeper Co-operation

There are jobs where a man acts in the capacity of a pro and greenkeeper. My version of this is that a pro to be a pro-greenkeeper today has to have an able specialist in turf work with him, a foreman who is a greenkeeper in his own right. Golf is in a terrific boom and in order to do an efficient job of running a good shop, giving lessons and keeping members' equipment stored and in good shape, plus overseeing tournaments, caddies and starters, I think a pro has his hands full. So I would say that a pro's help to a greenkeeper should be in a suggestive rather than advisory capacity. I would like to see more greenkeepers trained if it were possible. There are too few taking it up.

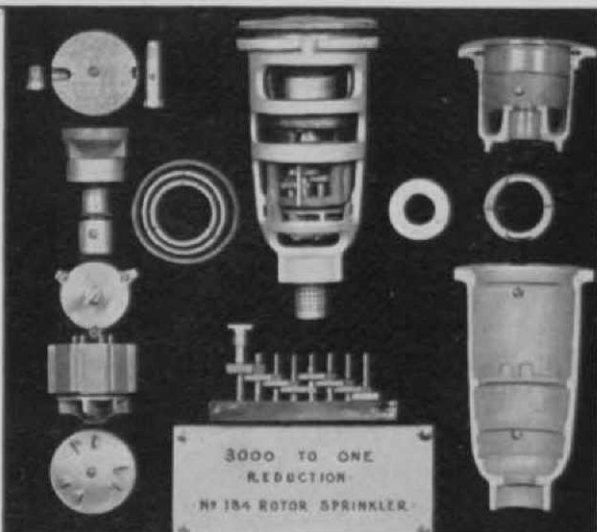
There are more and more things that can be talked about concerning the perfect course but I think I have covered what I think are essential.

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