

Superintendent's Job Is Far Bigger than Greenkeeping

By LEONARD STRONG

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During a short course in Turf Management, a query from the question-box was: "What are the qualifications of a greenkeeper?" I was called upon to give my opinion. I am sure I overrated the qualifications at that time, so I'd now like to clarify my answer to the question.

The qualifications of a greenkeeper are simply the ability to cut, pole, weed or water a green and to assist in topdressing same. I would engage as a greenkeeper anyone with that amount of knowledge. However, if the question had been: "What are the qualifications of a golf course superintendent?" (or perhaps the title might better be "golf course manager") my answer would be this:

A golf course superintendent is one who can take complete charge of a golf course—grounds, trees, shrubs and flowers on the club property. He should have some ability in landscaping as well as knowledge of the cultural practices needed to grow these various plants. That means he must have considerable knowledge of agronomy and agricultural chemistry.

He should have some knowledge of golf course construction; either to supervise the work himself or to look after the club's interests when such work is done by an outside contractor or architect.

He must be a good bookkeeper; able to make up a budget and payroll, keep inventory and give a comprehensive report of all major work done on the course during the year, which may be entered into the club's yearly records.

Must Be Businessman

He must be a good businessman; able to purchase equipment and materials. He must have the executive ability and the personality to meet with the board of governors as a competent and trusted advisor. He should be recognized as an official at all times when he is on the course with the workmen.

He must have broad shoulders and a pleasant disposition to withstand the criticism of a player when shots are missed and the alibi is "there is something wrong with the green," etc. He must be a willing listener—willing to listen to reports of what fine shape John Jones' course is always in.

During the playing season he should arise several times every night to check with the

heavens as to whether there is going to be enough rain or too much. He must remain in the good graces of God because so much of the golf course superintendent's success depends upon His help.

Each year the superintendent must be prepared to meet the new chairman, appointed at the annual meeting. (There are a few cases where the same chairman is appointed.) He must and he does respect the intelligence of this gentleman, but the new chairman cannot be expected to know all the methods of good golf course maintenance. Yet by the end of the year some mutual understanding has been reached and this official begins to realize he knows "less and less about more and more" as far as a golf course is concerned. By this time it is again, "Meet the new chairman."

Although 95% of golf course work should be done in the daytime, we are expected to plan so that the workmen are not around when play is in progress. If any men are there, they must stand still while the shots are being made, which is almost every five or ten minutes—and do not lose sight of the fact that play is usually from 8:00 A.M. until 8:00 or 9:00 P.M. That is a superman's job for sure.

The superintendent must be a good manager of labor. He must be one who can hire the ordinary type of labor and on short notice teach such workmen the art of cutting the greens, topdressing, fertilizing, etc. I say "art" because carelessness or mistakes can be mighty costly in this type of work.

Teach Again Next Year

By late fall the hired laborer has acquired the skills pertaining to his particular job, but now the time has come for you to say: "That's all for now, bub, come around again in the spring and I will put you back on the payroll." The fact that this man has to eat during the winter leads him to find another job, so you start in the spring with a practically new crew. Some clubs do maintain a skeleton crew through the winter. That's smart.

If a man is successful in all the above, he not only qualifies as a golf course superintendent but also proves himself to be the most important individual hired by any golf club. Almost everyone knows a new member or prospective member's first



MIKE AT THE MIKE ON SILVER ANNIVERSARY

Mike Murra's 25th anniversary as pro at Wichita (Ks.) CC was celebrated nearly on Mike's 50th birthday. Dave Truffelli, Crestview CC pro who arrived in Wichita the same day as Murra, Tex Consolver and other pros and their wives joined with Wichita CC members who tossed the surprise party for Mike, also tossed gifts including a pile of silver dollars. Mrs. Murra is at Mike's left.

interest is in what kind of golf course there is. Watch the pride of a member when showing his guests around the golf course. Later, guests are taken into the clubhouse and meet the manager and to the pro shop and meet the pro. Chances are they may never meet the man responsible for the condition of the course—the "greenkeeper."

I have been told there is a lot in a name. Maybe that accounts for the fact that the "greenkeeper" is so much in the background. Even most dictionaries do not recognize the existence of a "greenkeeper." Every year at our turf conferences, outsiders look at our identification badges and say: "Greenkeeping Superintendent? What's that?" Titles do mean something. Years ago the club steward became the club manager, the golf clubmaker became golf professional. Now change "greenkeeper" to golf course superintendent.

Fortunately I am in a position to say that there are exceptions to the above statements and I know of some cases where the golf course superintendent, the professional and the manager are recognized as having the same status.

There are many instances where the term "greenkeeper" is applied to the men actually working on the course in place of the name laborer—which is as it should be. It is quite obvious a distinction should be made between the man in charge and the laborers. In making that distinction let it be befitting the position the superintendent

holds as the No. 1 man at any golf club, as the course without a doubt is the No. 1 item.

Chances are I have left unsaid a lot of things pertaining to the above. If I have, fellows, why not voice your opinions?

Montana-Wyo. Meet Learns Turf Helped By Skim Milk Powder

Experiments conducted by the Department of Horticulture of the Montana Agricultural Experiment Station have indicated considerable benefit to a variety of horticultural plants by soil applications of small quantities of skim milk, Dr. V. E. Iverson, Prof. of Horticulture, told greenkeepers and officials attending the Montana-Wyoming Turf Assn. spring meeting held at the Butte CC, April 16-17.

He said, "with vegetables, skim milk treatment was found to produce the following results: 1. Larger, more fibrous root systems, 2. Larger stems and taller plants with greater leaf areas, 3. Increased early and total yields.

"In 1950 preliminary experiments were conducted to determine the effects of skim milk powder applied at the rate of one pound per 100 square feet, on turf grasses. The results of this small preliminary test indicated the following benefits to a Kenutcky blue grass mixture, and, to a lesser extent, a mixture of colonial bent and creeping fescue: 1. Better color, 2. Increased top development, 3. More fibrous root development.

"Due to the size and limited scope of this