

Work, Brains and Money Speed Progress of Golf in South

By HUGH MOORE

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These past 25 years have surely slipped by fast. Sometimes I believe that there will be a beautiful golf course in heaven so all of us superintendents will have something to keep us worrying, and our minds occupied. It has been a wonderful 25 years to me, and I couldn't have asked for a better life and I would not have chosen any other profession unless it might have been baseball, which I tried so hard to make as a youngster.

I haven't liked all of the men I have met in connection with golf, for I never did believe that the customer is always right, but 99 percent of them have been grand fellows.

I am sure that the biggest improvement of the last 25 years in the golf field has been construction. Back in the old days we built with mules and slip pans, and the old shovel method. Now we have bulldozers and every kind of power equipment available.

Greens are tiled, we use gravel and cinders for drainage, we have peat moss, and there is much more thought and the work is much more carefully done now than ever before. The architects building the majority of courses give more thought to what they are doing and it has become a professional business. They are continually trying to do a better job, in that way they can use each job as a recommendation for another job. To my way of thinking the architects who are designing and building courses at this time, are far ahead of the old timers. Now, of course, what helps them is the improvement in the equipment, and money which they must have for the purchasing of labor and materials. Therefore, the greens are being built properly. They are much larger than the greens of years ago, they will hold a pitch or a long shot much better. The golf courses are more appealing to the eye because of the beauty in them.

Second, and perhaps this should have been No. 1: The superintendents of golf courses in the past 25 years have improved remarkably. We have much bet-

ter equipment to work with and the National Golf Course Superintendents Association, which used to be "Greenkeepers," has done a remarkable job in educating superintendents to do work in a business-like manner, with thought and the proper care in keeping the golf course in A-1 condition.

This has been done through our lectures and talks, moving pictures, magazines, and each member trying to help the other one. I believe that there is more good fellowship and actual love amongst the members of the GCSA than in any other organization I know of. I am a charter member of this organization and it has been more helpful than anything else in the whole field of golf. I have done a lot of visiting, and a brother greenkeeper is always glad to see you.

We have much more machinery to work with and the improvements have been remarkable. One of the finest pieces of equipment ever made for a golf course is the aerifier.

When the greens get tight and there is no circulation of air to the roots, or the drainage is poor, the aerifier is the thing to start the work with, as it will correct all of these faults. Equipment of this kind, better balanced fertilizers, better fungicides, sprays, insecticides, weed killers; these are the things that have improved the golf courses and made play more enjoyable than any other for the past 25 years.

Southern Improvement Great

GOLFDOM has been a great help in the development of better golf courses. The other magazines are doing good jobs.

All the stories on the playing of golf, on the maintenance, on the various ways of the construction work, the right and the wrong, have helped tremendously.

The talks and the articles by O. J. Noer, Dr. Fred Grau, Prof. L. S. Dickinson, the turf plots at Tifton, Ga., and the hard work that Dr. Burton has put in has been a great help. He is doing a tremendous job for the south.

I have just put in nine greens of that new bermuda, called 57, at the Warner Robins Air Base course. It is a much finer texture, and I believe that it will have a much better putting surface than the average run of bermuda. I am quite sure that it won't be long in the south



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before they will find some type of bent grass that will stand the heat and humidity, and perhaps we will have a new chemical in the next few years that will take care of brown patch in our section.

The improvement thru the south in all phases, from the tee to the green, has been great. There is one more thing I would like to mention: If there ever was a field that is wide open, it is the field for better golf superintendents and more of them. There are not many all-around men. My son quit baseball and has been with me for the past four years as my assistant, and I hope some day he will take over where I leave off. It is a wonderful life with great opportunities, and with a determination to be good, a little sweat and hard work, not being too sensitive to criticism from golf players who have a bad putting touch, I do not know of a better profession. It offers plenty of outdoor life, air and sunshine. You can hear the birds sing when other people cannot. I am quite sure that the life of a superintendent, or golf course laborer, is much longer than in other lines of work.

Old Players Better?

There is one more thing that I have heard, pro and con, and that is, the players of today are better than the players of 20 to 25 years ago. I do not agree. The players of today have better equipment. The steel shaft club is a better shaft for direction and accuracy in every way. I do not think it feels as good in the hand when the ball is hit perfectly as the hickory shaft. There was more chance for error with the hickory shaft on account of the torsion. The players of today also have a wood, the wedge, the chipping or run up club and they most assuredly have better golf courses and putting surfaces than ever before. Any golfer who is capable of using a wedge can save from two or three strokes in 18 holes. I think the old timers were better shot makers. They could do more with their clubs in the way of making shots than the present day golfers. They did not have as many golf clubs, therefore, they knew how to use the ones they had better. I often wish that Bob Jones had not retired at the age of 28. I don't think that there is any golfer living, or ever lived, any better than he was. If he kept going he would have won many more tournaments. I would like to name a few who were real golfers, real shot makers and a pleasure to watch: Bob Jones, Walter Hagen, Gene Sarazen, Tommy Armour, Leo Diegel, Bill Melhorn, Willie MacFarland, Al Waltrous, Harry Cooper, MacDonald Smith, John Golden, Jock Hutchison, Jim Barnes, and right behind these came Craig Wood, Horton Smith, Denny Shute, and Bobby Cruickshank who was one of the old timers.

There is one more thing that I think has helped the present day golfers, and that is the players of today have more money. They can afford to go to tournaments, they live in better hotels, they have better roads and better cars to use. I think that some of the teachers are better today than they were years ago. I am afraid tho that some of them are giving the pupils a little too much bally hoo.

I still believe in the simple methods and the easy way of teaching, which begins with the hands, thru the left arm and the left side, head still, a good pivot, and let her go. A good grip, good left hand and left side action, and a still head are essential in golf. When I think a pupil gets to where he can understand it, the left foot and the left knee is next in importance. All good golfers play from the soles of their feet.

Concentration is something you have or you don't have. Determination and the desire to win is born in a person just the same as getting ahead in life.

Any golfer or pupil can be helped but without hard work, sweat and practice, and more practice, he can never become a real good golfer.

I know a boy in Georgia, who to my way of thinking, could have become one of the world's best golfers, but for some reason unknown to me, he quit. He had it from tee thru the green, but when he gave up, he had no game. The spirit and the desire to be the best was in Ty Cobb.

If I have made anything out of myself it is because I wanted to do it. I ran away from home when I was 11 years old. I have worked for myself ever since, and I can put all the days of my schooling together and it would not add up to six months.

What I am trying to do is to help some kid who was not born with a silver spoon. I would say that the youngsters of today are not as ambitious as they used to be. I would not call them lazy or trifling; they just have too much. The average mother and father do not live with their children enough. They do not play and pal with them enough, and they give them too much in the way of money and entertainment. I would like to say right here, that any boy or girl, man or woman, who thinks that money alone can buy a good game of golf is only kidding himself or herself. To get ahead in any walk of life, the one word is work.

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