

Write a Check List of Fall and Winter Course Work

By KENT BRADLEY

When I was in charge of golf courses, like many another man responsible for course condition, I'd get swamped with work that prevented following the organized procedure I desired. Weather, finances and labor availability make the superintendent's job of planning a difficult one and too often his plans are subject to change without notice.

Yet, when another spring would come around and there was urgent necessity—or regret—for undone work I'd always resolve never again would I work without some sort of a plan on paper. Eventually I got around to it. My check list of fall and winter inspection and work helped me to do a better job of taking work in order of importance and undoubtedly gave my officials a clearer view of what was needed and how definitely I saw the requirements. I might also say that the check list procedure relieved me of the embarrassing necessity of making alibis. I was on record with the check-up in writing.

With the list before me I had done all work possible for me to do that had been approved. If my recommendations hadn't been approved I was in the clear and possibly my judgment was better regarded next season.

Since I got into the course equipment and supply business and continuously compare notes with superintendents and with their chairmen I see more than ever before the wisdom of planning work to a definite check list.

Some years ago I prepared for GOLF-DOM a check list of fall and winter work that continues to stand up as a help for superintendents, Green-chairmen and other officials. I've made some slight revisions in it, and the references to equipment needs and budget figures have to be considered in the light of uncertain conditions, but you can see for yourself that there's more than plenty for the course maintenance department of northern and central clubs to do in the next few months.

The check list:

1. Your chairman will appreciate a report from you on what equipment and supplies the course must have next season and another list of present equipment and supplies that are out of date, inefficient, and in line for replacement. Don't hold

back on a single item you'd like to have; some of it you may not be able to get even if you have the money. Later you can sit down with the chairman and blue pencil the non-essentials, budget considered.

2. As soon as possible, tour your entire course with your chairman and make a survey of the course's fertilizer, seed and chemical requirements. You probably know by heart what is needed where, but your chairman doesn't; so take him to the needy areas and show him.

3. Fall and winter are good times to lower the gradient of the mounds alongside fairway traps so that they can be mowed by fairway units rather than by hand mowers. Labor saving in seasons to come will more than pay for the cost of reconstruction.

4. As a source of self-education, write your state agricultural experiment station, and to the Dept. of Agriculture in Washington. Ask both for a list of publications available on turf culture, insect pests, bird protection and any other subjects in which you are interested. These lists are free, and the publications are generally free or not more than 10¢ each in a few cases.

5. Winter-kill and snow mold are preventable, and late fall and early winter, before the snows come, is the time to save yourself a lot of turf repair work next spring.

6. Just as soon as possible, check over every piece of machinery you have for worn parts. Make a list of these parts and submit them to your chairman for O.K.; and then see that the orders for these parts are mailed to the manufacturers or supply dealer soon, so the parts will be on hand when you give their winter overhaul and re-assembly.

7. Is your maintenance shed arranged for maximum efficiency? Has everything a place and is everything in its place? Nothing easily liftable should be leaned against a wall or stored on the floor or in the corner. Put hooks, shelves, and racks for such equipment.

8. Porch and lawn furniture need a thorough going over during the winter. Wooden pieces need tightening and painting; metal furniture will probably need some straightening and then paint.

9. Ball washers need an annual over-

haul. Replace worn brushes and paddles, give the containers a new coat of paint, and don't forget the posts on which the washers are mounted. Check prices; it is sometimes smarter to buy new washers than to repair old ones.

10. Go over the clubhouse, inside and out, with the club manager and determine what repairs, improvements and maintenance work you and your crew can do this winter. Painting, plumbing repairs and minor construction jobs are well within the ability of the club's staff to do itself.

11. Yardage markers, out of bounds signs, tee plates and other signs about the course should be brought in for overhaul, replacement, repainting and re-lettering. Take up with your chairman whether more signs or markers are needed. If you use the permanent, metal type, get his O.K. to order them.

12. If your chairman isn't sympathetic to the idea, talk to the chairman of the women's golf committee and ask her to raise a small fund with which to buy crushed grain and suet for the winter birds. A bale or two of straw opened up and thrown haphazard over a patch of low bushes will form an ideal refuge and windbreak to protect the birds against winter storms. The birds will repay you by devouring countless thousands of hibernating insects and insect eggs.

13. It is often easier to repair bridges in the winter while the water is frozen, so that you can get underneath the bridge planking and work on a solid surface. New supports are easier to install when there is no surface water to grope through.

14. If you are planning extensions to your watering system, especially mid-fairway snap valves, lay the pipe on the surface of the ground, coupled and in position, during the winter. In the spring when the ground thaws, the pipe is already to be buried and the ends connected to your present system. (That was in the first check list. You're lucky if you can get pipe now. Investigate new pipe material.)

15. On cold days when the ground is frozen and there is little or no snow on the course, concentrate on hauling, such as sand to traps, crushed stone for road fill and logs for firewood in the clubhouse. Wheeled vehicles can run over turf with minimum damage at such times.

16. The banks of your waterways need an annual inspection. You'll find many spots where reinforcement is advisable, and cold, clear weather is the time to do such work.

17. Before the start of the winter season, prepare a list of all the jobs that lie ahead for you and go over it with your chairman. Get his authorization for such expenses as will be incurred before he gets tied up with the holiday rush and his own business.

18. You'll probably find plenty of fence repairs waiting for attention after a season's play. Do a thorough job; makeshift repairs often mean more work on the fence in mid-season, when you need your men for regular course duties. Late fall is a good time for new fence placement.

19. Assuming that you keep your copies of GOLFDOM, and other turf publications, winter is the time to keep your reference file, or to bring it up to date if you have started one in the past. Buy a loose leaf binder and insert a sheet for every letter of the alphabet. Whenever an article appears you may want to refer to in the future, write the title of the article, the name of the magazine, the issue and the page in its alphabetical order in your binder. You probably will not be able to keep your whole crew through the winter. But you still want to hold your men for next year. A thoughtful move is to ask your chairman to send a letter to the entire membership asking them to advise you when odd-jobs come up around the members' homes. In this way you can help your men to earn a living through the lay-off months. (That's from the first check list, too. Now if you let good men go you probably won't get them back.)

21. Time can profitably be spent reconditioning and sharpening the many small tools in the maintenance barn. This applies not only to carpenter's tools, but also to shovels, rakes, scythes, hole cutters and the like.

22. If your mowers seem to need only minor repairs, tackle the job yourself; but if a considerable overhaul is in order, ask your golf course supply dealer to quote on the job. He is better equipped to put the mowers in perfect shape, and his charges are not out of line. If the dealer is to do the job, get your mowers to him early; don't wait until spring, when he'll be jammed up with repair work.

23. Sprinklers need a complete inspection: some may need replacement. Scale should be cleaned out, worn parts replaced, and after reassembling, do a paint job.

24. Shortly after the first of the year, the various universities and agricultural schools will be opening their course maintenance short courses. Plan to attend a course. The last minute information that you will acquire will make you much more valuable to the club. For this reason, your chairman is shortsighted if he neglects

your expenses while at the short course in his greens budget. (Most clubs do this now.)

25. Bring in the tee-benches from the course, singly or all at once. Each bench needs first a good scouring, then careful inspection of all the planks, braces, bolts and other parts for needed repairs. Replace worn parts, then paint the bench with good paint. Remember the bench has to stand all next season in every sort of weather; good paint is an economy.

26. If you plan any landscaping work involving the shifting of shrubs and the small trees, winter is the time to do this. The earth-ball method is foolproof if the ground is frozen; a lot more work if attempted at any other time of the year.

27. Among the course equipment which should be gone over, don't overlook the bird houses. Take them down, replace rotted wood and repaint early this winter. Then put the houses out to weather, as the birds will not nest in freshly painted houses.

28. Late fall and early winter is a good time to visit the woodland areas bordering the fairways of your course with the object of clearing the underbrush so that next season's golfers will have less difficulty finding off-line shots. But where practical, leave the underbrush as a bird refuge.

29. Winter is the time to put the shop bench in complete working order. Take an inventory of your small shop tools. Have you enough wrenches, screwdrivers, hammers, drills, files and saws? How's your supply of nails, bolts, washers, cotter's and emery cloth? How about shellac, glue, turpentine, oil, kerosene, grease and alcohol?

30. In any discussion that you have with your chairman concerning the need for new machinery, keep constantly in your mind and in his the fact that worn-out or outmoded equipment takes its toll in added upkeep costs (and may be impossible to replace while defense manufacturing needs are high).

31. It is far easier to convince the green-committee that the putting greens need improvement than to sell it on the fact that your fairways need attention. If a general fairway feeding program is simply not in the cards, get an O.K. to make a test feeding on a limited fairway area. A year from now, the results will do the rest of the selling.

32. What is it costing you to pump water? Your pumps may be woefully inefficient compared with late improved models. You can obtain operating cost figures from pump manufacturers to compare with your own equipment's drag and soon determine how much of a new pump's purchase price can be saved the

first year (if you can still get the pump you need).

Other points to be checked probably will occur to you. But put them all down in black and white. Give the original to the chairman and keep a carbon yourself. When you've made up your own list the chairman or other officials probably will add some construction work to be done; especially since the heavy play of recent years has revealed the inadequacy of tee area at many short holes.

Your drainage system probably is getting clogged up in spots and your water system may need repairs before it's almost impossible to get repairs.

You'll probably be reminded of walk, parking space, driveway construction and repairs.

By the time you and the club officials get through compiling a check list in black and white the list will look long enough to be quite impressive as a reminder of the superintendent's vast and important work. You may wish that you were in charge of a course in the Arctic where the winter is long enough to allow you to get all the work done.

Lift Ban on Course, Range, Clubhouse Construction

Restrictions on new construction and alteration of golf courses, clubhouses and golf ranges have been lifted by the government under US. Dept. of Commerce National Production Authority amended order M-4A.

The amended order prohibits such construction or alteration if the job requirements exceed 2 tons of carbon steel, 200 pounds of copper, or any aluminum, alloy or stainless steel.

Builders of the golf projects or other projects covered by the amended order M-4A may not use self-authorization procedure for the acquisition of controlled materials.

Commencement of construction of any building, structure or project for a golf club or range is prohibited if the completion of the job will require the use of more controlled materials than stated above, unless exception or adjustment is granted under Section 8 of NPA Order M-4A.

Copies of Order M-4A, Controlled Material Plan Regulations 1 and 6, Direction 1 (procedure for obtaining small quantities of materials for use in construction projects), and construction projects forms for authorizing starting of construction may be secured from Dept. of Commerce field offices in most major cities or from Dept. of Commerce, NPA Facilities and Construction Bureau, Washington 25, DC.