

# Learning About the Job of A Green-Chairman

By A GREEN GREEN-CHAIRMAN

For 20 years I've been an active member of a very good golf club and until this year I'd never been an official of that club. I had two good reasons for avoiding an official position at my club. One was that I wanted to play golf and get away from responsibility. The other reason was that I'm in a business that has golf clubs among its customers and I didn't want to be in the situation of being regarded as having any influence on the club's purchases. Furthermore, I didn't want to be in the middle if the club happened to buy something that didn't satisfy.

But finally my leisurely luck ran out. Other fellows at the club told me I'd been taking things too easily too long and I had to do some work at the club. So, against my will, I was given the responsibility of becoming green chairman.

Then suddenly it dawned upon me that although I have known hundreds of green chairmen I didn't know precisely what the duties of a green chairman should be. It seemed to me, upon reviewing the work of green chairmen I know and have known, that I'd never seen or heard a green chairman's duties specifically set forth.

I'd seen some green chairmen who, in my opinion, had done too much. They acted as though the course were their private property. They destroyed the initiative of the greenkeeper and gave him headaches in trying to get, manage and keep labor that had two bosses; the chairman and the greenkeeper. I'd also seen chairmen who'd done too little. They'd neither acquainted the board with the greenkeeper's problems and needs, nor had they acquainted the greenkeeper with what the board and members wanted and the financial condition of the club, nor had they paid any particular attention to the status of the budget.

## What to Do As Chairman?

Then, also, I'd seen chairmen who were too much on the fence. These men would sit in board meetings when decisions were made to give the greenkeeper some hell that he may or may not have needed. After that they'd hear the greenkeeper's side of the case and might be sold on the board being wrong or uninformed. And these chairmen would do nothing decisive. They'd wait around for their terms to expire, hoping that time would take care of everything.

As I recalled these cases and wondered what I could do that would be best for the club and my own reputation and conscience as a successful businessman it struck me that a simple business table of organization should be applied. What that amounted to was that I — if the club were a business corporation — would be vice president in charge of the outside plant and the greenkeeper would be the superintendent of that part of the club's plant.

I would be responsible for policy and the superintendent would be responsible for the operations, outside the clubhouse and on the course and the rest of the grounds.

If the operations weren't performed naturally I would have to share the responsibility with the superintendent of our plant. And that is no light load at a golf club; this kind of a summer especially. We read of government-designated "disaster" areas where weather conditions have made diligent and usually successful farmers and stockmen eligible for government loans. But it never occurs to a golfer that his course may be in a "disaster" area and suffer in condition because of causes beyond the control of the most expert and vigilant greenkeeper. The members and officials know so little about the complex problems of maintaining good golf turf that when anything on the course goes wrong it is the greenkeeper's fault.

Consequently, with heat and humidity this summer having been worse on golf turf than in almost any season I can remember some greenkeepers have given up in despair and gone to easier jobs. Others have been fired after years of service in keeping their courses in good condition. This isn't the tragedy it might be for the greenkeeper and his family. There seldom is any difficulty in getting a job that pays better than that of a greenkeeper who must know enough about mechanics, engineering, hydraulics, turf and tree and landscaping work to have a number of other jobs welcoming him.

## The Club Is the Loser

The worst loss is that suffered by the club that leaps to the conclusion that it might be the man rather than other conditions that account for the poor condition of the course. It is the green-chairman's fault if everything about course

condition in a bad season is blamed on a man who is doing his competent best and has had good results in previous years. There is far more reason for discharging a greenkeeper who doesn't have the outside plant kept attractive and tidy, despite shortage of men and demand for emergency work, than there is to fire the man for what possibly is caused by bad drainage, bad soil, costly "economy" in fertilizer, pest and fungicide treatments, or unsuitable strains of grass.

The green chairman can't be expected to know much about the technicalities of golf course maintenance. That part of the business has advanced too far and too fast to still be within the scope of a man who may have a green chairman's position for a year or two. The green chairman should have a general idea of this technical phase of turf maintenance and he can get it from GOLFDOM's pages although he'll see some articles on turf maintenance which are far over his head but which are plain to the modern superintendent of a golf course.

On some of the most common troubles, poa annua, the course superintendent and the turf scientists of the agricultural experiment stations and schools and of the

USGA Green Section are still looking for the answers.

An entire session of the golf course superintendents' national conference this year was devoted to poa annua elimination and prevention. The most successful practical men in course maintenance and the most authoritative scientists told of their experience, works, tests, research and hunches and after all the testimony was in it was obvious that poa annua control is to be attained some time in the future and by a method the experts aren't sure of now. In view of such a problem baffling the specialists in course maintenance is it logical to believe that the chairman can unerringly dictate the solution?

#### Keeping Members Informed

Fortunately in the golf course factory experiments can be made in limited areas but, again, the whole job is at the mercy of the weather. It's been my observation that the chairman does well for his club when he encourages the greenkeeper to make a few experiments or "pilot" operations with a view to extending the work if the closely watched experimental work is successful.

One of the functions of the chairman is

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### CLIFF DEMING GIVES YOU TWO IDEAS



Cliff Deming, supt., Loyal Oak GC, Barberton, O., passes along to others responsible for course maintenance two ideas he uses for first class maintenance and economy. At the left is a 30 in. sq. hose box with 4 in. concrete walls and a 4 in. drain and coarse slag on the floor of the box. The box tops are flush with the ground and the mower readily goes over them without damage. At the right is Deming's device for poling or brushing greens. Two bamboo poles are lashed together and two loops of  $\frac{3}{4}$  in. rope are dragged behind. The two ropes do a good job of knocking off the dew and worm casts and all Loyal Oak's 27 greens can be handled inexpensively and with highly satisfactory results before play gets heavy.

to advise the members of such experiments. It's good sales psychology. The members get the idea that maintenance is a scientific job and that the cures for their bellyaches about details of course condition are not just grabbed out of the bag.

Before I became chairman I often noticed that at many clubs members may complain about matters of grooming that are easily corrected, about as much as they did about course conditions. A curious thing, in some instances, was that the members themselves were primarily responsible for the sources of the complaints, particularly about untidiness in scattering paper and bottles. We are rather lucky with our members and caddies apparently being above the average in neatness. That saves labor cost, but regardless of cost and man shortage if a first class club's grounds aren't kept attractively groomed in every detail it is a reflection on all the work of the greenkeeper and the chairman.

If I, or any other green chairman could do just one thing—get members and their caddies to rake footprints smooth—we would be miracle men. But we can't. That is an endless job that wastes hundreds of dollars a year for the average first-class club.

At the beginning of the year it's the duty of the chairman and the superintendent to see that the traps are in good condition. From that time on most of that job is the duty of the players and their caddies.

Last year maintenance of our 115 traps cost \$3600. This year we put rakes in every one of our traps; two rakes in some of the larger traps. The 14-tooth rakes cost us \$13.20 a dozen. Their use has saved hundreds of dollars in trap maintenance and man hours needed for work elsewhere.

#### **Lack of Planning Costly**

Many times, I have noted the lack of planning of work that should have been laid out as the program of the course superintendent and the chairman who is the course vice president.

The budget, which controls all the work, has to be elastic in a season such as many clubs have experienced this year. Cost of emergency work may prevent going through with work that was planned. This is where the chairman's judgment as the authority on policy must be sound, and the decisions made with foresight after thorough discussion with the superintendent. It's not to the chairman's credit if he is responsible for neglect of work that will eventually have to be done at much greater expense, and after the course has suffered badly.

Our own program, typical of the sort that applies to good clubs, was submitted

to the board in a general outline and thoroughly discussed. It was drawn up after inspection tours of the course and talks with the superintendent.

I give this program, omitting the name of our superintendent and our club. I don't want to identify myself or our club for the reason that I don't want to get into any controversy with chairmen or superintendents, or appear as though I am setting myself up as an authority on what a chairman should do to handle his responsibility correctly. I am having enough to do as the liaison man between the members, the board and the superintendent.

#### **Year's Work Outlined**

Our program, which may give you some ideas:

1. Hire a tree expert on a contract basis to trim and treat the worthwhile trees on the course. To root-feed with highly concentrated liquid fertilizer with our own machine and men. A decision on this should be forthcoming and the amount of the allotment determined as readily as possible because most important tree work is done during the winter months.

2. Full consideration is being given to the drainage problem on Nos. 1, 2, 3, 12, and 16 fairways. I do not anticipate any expenses on this, except the usual labor and a few tile lines as the cause of our trouble was found by our greenkeeper. Tree roots were in the tile lines and are now removed.

3. The flower bed and shrubbery on the south side of the clubhouse should be eliminated entirely and sodded, and it is suggested that the flower bed be placed in the area back of 18 tee, back of 17 green, and in such a position that the beautiful flowers may be seen from the clubhouse and various vantage points on the course. The flower bed will not interfere in any way with play and the maintenance will be virtually nil. The shrubbery will be used in the back of our greenkeeper's home in order to act as a screen for a back yard. It is suggested also that shrubbery be placed around the pump house, at the side of 11 green.

4. It is proposed and suggested for consideration that the following improvements be done on the holes as follows:

(1) Revet the sand traps around the greens, and eliminate any scallops now present that might interfere with a power sand rake which we suggest buying. This power rake is an attachment for our present tractor and will save an enormous amount of hand labor. We have over 100 sand traps and that they can be power raked in from three to four hours with a tractor. We suggest also that rakes be

*(Continued on page 62)*

more and more 'golf shape' (apologies to all ships at sea). And as each additional request for a tournament or club date comes in and is assigned, we know that this is going to be a bigger and better season than ever. But, we'd like to know that our old friends are going to be here too. How about you, friend? Have you made your plans and reservation yet? We've got some choice dates for some choice people. Let's hear from you . . . soon.

Walter S. Wallace

P. S. You won't know the place this year. Everything but that old 'homey' atmosphere is changed . . . and out at the first tee there's a spanking new Pro Shop that carries everything for us 'Pill Pushers' . . . W. W.

p. p. s. I'm enclosing a handy reference sheet with all particulars to make it easy to make your decision . . . and the phone number is INteroceen 8-9607

At least 5,000 of these pieces, together with a detailed fact sheet, are sent out at the end of March every year to produce what Wallace calls "a gratifying number of replies": Because the club has never used "cold" sales calls to obtain tournament business, this mailing is an important factor in promotion.

Upon receipt of a telephone or mailed order, the club sends the prospect a confirmation letter telling him that a specific date is being held for his outing. The prospect has only to sign the contract to complete the booking. Then, after the outing, Wallace makes sure that the customer receives a letter of thanks ". . . we're glad you came and we hope you come back again . . ."

Dear Sir:

This is a 'bread and butter' letter.

But it is one about which we are entirely sincere. We were real happy to have your group out here the other day. It is groups such as yours that are our 'bread and butter' and we want you to be sure that any time you come to Cherry Hills the welcome mat is out and our entire staff is ready and eager to serve you.

As you may have gathered, during your visit here, Cherry Hills is a multi-purpose country club. Our facilities have been carefully designed to accommodate golf tournaments, dances, banquets and other forms of group entertainment and enterprise. If, therefore, your group has occasion to put on any function of this nature, why not give us a call (the number is INteroceen 8-9607) and see what we can do for you.

Once again let me say on behalf of the club and its entire staff — we're glad you came and we hope you come back again, soon and many more times thereafter. It is a pleasure to serve you.

Walter S. Wallace  
for Cherry Hills

Supplementing this three-stage direct mail program, Cherry Hills makes use of newspapers and radio. Small ads are placed in two metropolitan papers on days preceding holidays and up to five spot announcements per day introduce time signals on a local Hammond station.

Wallace, now in his 17th season in the golf course business, his 13th as a manager, is proud of the repeat business he has seen in his 6 years at Cherry Hills. A number of his tournament accounts have returned for 4 and 5 years, and he cited a steel company in this category whose 700-player outings are "one of my oldest and biggest accounts."

"Incidentally," he added, "it was my Chicago classified directory ad that brought in those steel people in the first place. A group of 85 golfers from a branch office of Coca-Cola came to me recently the same way."

Other firms and groups that play their annual tournaments at Cherry Hills are Sinclair, Standard Oil of Indiana, Acme Steel, Republic Steel, Santa Fe, Rock Island, Elks and Masonic Lodges, and medical and dental societies.

As a man who oversees the golfing pleasures of so many people, Wallace has little time for recreation himself. The business end of the game has kept him off the course for the last 7 years, but he can take pride that he "stopped while he was ahead". That is, he was a 73-74 golfer when he took over Cherry Hills.

## LEARNING ABOUT JOB

(Continued from page 32)

placed at all strategic sand traps and that raked by caddies or members be enforced at all times.

(2) Eliminate shrubbery now planted 200 yards out from tee on left of 2 fairway. These are a nuisance and of no value in the playing of the game. In speaking of directions—left and right in identifying traps is given by facing the green from the direction of the tee. Around 2 green, bring the left trap closer to the bunker, on the right reduce the trap to about one-fourth its size and face the side along the green. Seed or sod the balance of the trap. On 2 revet sand traps around green.

(3) Trim and revet traps.

(4) Revet sand traps around green.

(5) Same as 4. Clean shrubbery along left fairway along the ditch.

(6) Eliminate far trap on right. Narrow fairway on left of 6 to green.

(7) Eliminate sand trap on left of tee and face sand trap on right. Around green face both sand traps and revet.

(8) Eliminate most of sand traps on



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right. Thin out shrubbery on left of green.

(9) Trim all traps and re-vert those near greens.

(10) Clean up trap. There has been some discussion that some of the traps on the right from 10 tee be eliminated because of interference with ladies' driving. I mention this for discussion of the board. Eliminate dead trees on right of 10 green.

(11) Clean up trap and eliminate one on far right.

(12) Eliminate scallops on trap on right. Clean and re-vert traps around green.

(13) Clean up traps.

(14) Move trap on right of green forward and closer to green.

(15) Clean up traps.

(16) Eliminate most of trap in back of green in connection with work on 2 hole.

(17) Clean up all traps.

(18) Dig mud hole out in front of green so that the lake comes up to the edge of the bank. Trim the sand trap and re-vert so ball can not be putted out of traps.

5. Suggestion is made that an electric out-door clock be placed on the chimney of club-house facing 10 tee.

6. All dead trees should be taken down.

7. In conjunction with the house committee we should have at the 5th tee up-to-date rest rooms with facilities for barbecues on special days.

8. Under new construction we would suggest for consideration an auxiliary tee on 5 that would change the play of the hole, the tee to be close to the present ditch away from the shelter house. Another improvement would be an alternate tee on 9, by eliminating one old tree. A beautiful tee could be made, improving the hole considerably without any additional cost except our own labor.

9. In the way of new equipment I am informed that we will need two additional power mowers and 2,000 feet of 1 in. water hose, one tractor power rake and a few sundry supplies. I have not had time to study the proportionate labor expenses that go into the budget as compared to other items and charges, but do hope to have this information by the time the above items come up for discussion.

In addition we will try as an experiment, and on such holes as are feasible, placing 200 yard markers from the center of the tees, and we will also put a distinguishing marker 150 yards from the green, and if this idea is popular and acceptable, we may later plant an ever-

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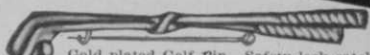
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green in the place of the stake.

We have in mind doing all work and improvements as far as possible with our own equipment.

Other suggestions that should have consideration are: fixing up the help quarters at the dormitory, repair and repaint some sections of the fence, put in a hot air furnace in the pro shop and eliminate the dangerous open flame gas heater, establish a pumping system for our deep well and have it piped to the caddy house and to the 10th tee.

#### CARLON HAS INFORMATION FOLDER

The Carlon Products Corp., Cleveland 5, Ohio, makers of Carlon Flexible Plastic Pipe and fittings for golf course irrigation, have a new folder which gives index charts on working pressures, weight per foot, and normal shipping lengths for the various pipe sizes. Another index gives specifications on the plastic fittings. Weighing only  $\frac{1}{8}$  as much as steel pipe, Carlon can be handled without special rigging and can be curved to follow irregular surface contours above or below frost level. It is guaranteed against rot, rust and electrolytic corrosion. Further information may be obtained by writing the company.

A. G. Spalding & Bros., Inc., again sponsors play-by-broadcast of the U. S. L. T. A. National Tennis Championships at Forest Hills, Sept. 6 and 7 via a special coast-to-coast hookup. The national broadcast marks the 9th consecutive year Spalding has sponsored this colorful event which climaxes the tennis season each year.

#### TESTS SHOW BUILT-IN PROTECTION FOR "ATHLETE'S FOOT" POSSIBLE

Built-in protection against catching "athlete's foot" around swimming pools, locker rooms, and showers by adding fungi-destroying materials, such as copper

compounds, to the regular portland-cement concrete used in these structures, may soon be a reality; according to Biologist Radcliffe F. Robinson of Battelle Institute, Columbus, Ohio.

"Our investigations have shown that concrete containing 10 per cent copper acetoarsenite can be very effective in preventing the growth of the mold, 'epidermophyton interdigitale'. This mold is known to be among the causes of athlete's foot."

Leaching tests indicate the exact life of the fungicidal copper compound in showers and around swimming pools, where it is subjected to leaching or washing away by large quantities of water, should remain fungicidal for two or three years, and possibly for a much longer time.

The pleasing light green color of the copper acetoarsenite would eliminate the necessity of painting. In several years, this feature in itself could pay for the cost of the copper additive, Mr. Robinson points out.

E. R. Bowman, pro-manager, Valdespino GC, El Paso, Texas is entering the golf accessory and course equipment supply business covering the West Texas, New Mexico and Arizona territory. Bowman is seeking distributorship for a line of golf bags, shoes, sportswear and other sundries. Manufacturers interested in representation in this area can reach Bowman at P. O. Box 3337, Station A, El Paso.

#### MacGREGOR MERCHANDISE FOLDER PRO SALES STIMULATOR

Special merchandise folders made available to professionals in the Spring by the MacGregor Golf Co. received such popular reception additional supplies had to be made available to take care of requests. Used as inserts in monthly mailings to club members, placed in lockers and used as pro shop hand-out pieces, pros report the folders have resulted in "plus" sales.

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