

Responsibility Is Big Measure of Superintendent's Worth

By JAMES E. THOMAS

Much has been said and written about the golf course superintendent's lack of recognition: that he is the forgotten man of golf. This all may be true to some extent, but it is not a condition beyond correction and the situation is improving.

At present golf course superintendents are much too content with the pleasure derived from being happy in their chosen calling. This attitude is back-firing, and preventing the proper growth and expansion of course maintenance as a profession.

Something is lacking; we have the knowledge, skill and experience, but are not doing a very good job of selling ourselves. We turfmen have not been active enough in telling our golfing friends of the contributions superintendents have made in the last decade for better golf playing conditions. We have been so wrapped up in our work, that we have failed to advertise our accomplishments.

The time has come for the man responsible for the course to become better acquainted with the general golfing public. He should no longer brood over his obscurity, nor should he worry about club officials not fully recognizing his ability, or failing to realize and understand the important problems involved in modern turf maintenance.

The depression years and World War II seem to have brought about a change in the operation and management of the nation's golf clubs. In this new shift, the number of inactive members have decreased and there is more golf participation. The perpetual foursomes of old appear to have vanished with the times. This has brought about a clash in viewpoints between the old guard and the newcomers.

Blame, Same As Usual

The veterans were well versed and steeped in their golfing lore, and were very much interested in lowering their individual handicaps, while the newer members are concerned mainly with winning from their opponents. But always, everyone expects perfect playing conditions at all times. If that objective is not reached, the superintendent is the man who receives the blame.

Club organizations are no longer one-man affairs. Their financial structures

are sounder, so certain wealthy members, or club angels no longer have to bear the burden of paying deficits and keeping the ship afloat. This means that key employees do not have to cater to the whims of the certain few in power in order to hold their posts. Job security now more than ever rests in efficiency and the ability to show results.

The situation now existing at most clubs is that members pay dues to come and play golf, and not to assume heavy worries and responsibilities as officials. They are as a rule active business men who wish and desire to enjoy the pleasures of their clubhouse and course without being burdened to any great extent with its business management.

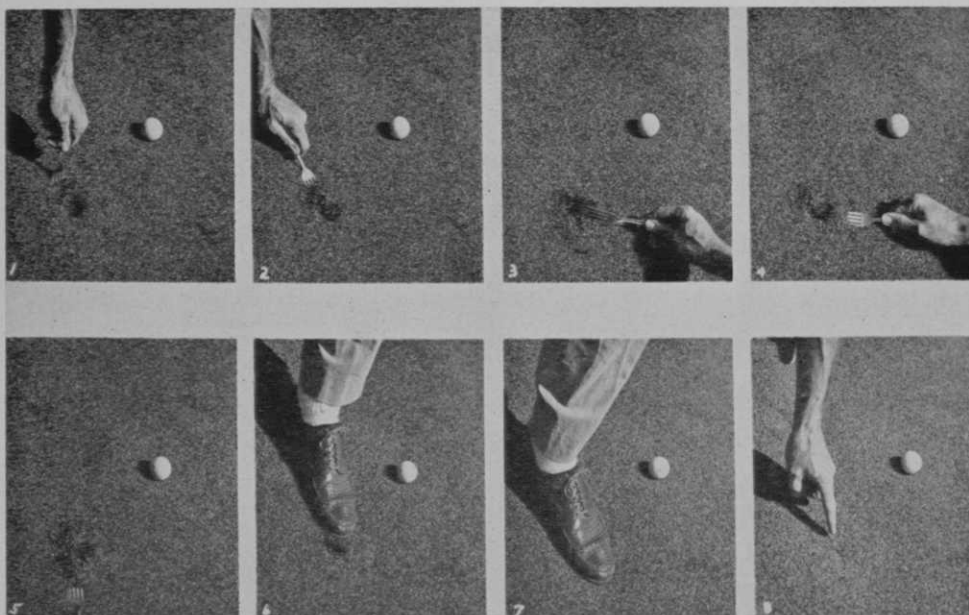
Must Assume Responsibility

So they endeavor to meet this condition by securing competent subordinates and entrusting them with the details of administration and operation. These aides must be prepared to take over much of the responsibility of their chairman's duties, and act as his right hand at all times.

It is very often the case that a newly appointed Green-committee knows very little about the running of a golf course and must depend solely upon the knowledge and ability of the course superintendent for the successful operation of the golf plant, as a result; this job is one of the most important of the club.

As a contrast; the old time green-chairman at the fortunate clubs considered his assignment as a hobby, he was content to remain in office indefinitely. "The growing of two blades of grass, where one grew before, afforded him as much pleasure as a round of golf." He was more or less familiar with golf design and upkeep. He was the green-keeper's friend, and fully understood his problems.

Years ago those in attendance at turf lectures were mostly Green-committee chairmen and club officials who were interested in the betterment of their golf property. The average greenkeeper of those days was seldom seen at such a gathering. His only knowledge of what took place came to him in the form of an order that was neither explained, or discussed. He was often just considered a



Photos from Bill Lyons, Courtesy Firestone Tire & Rubber Co.

EDUCATION IN GREENS CARE

At the Firestone course at Akron, O., caddies and members are shown by these pictures how to correct ball marks in greens. The approach shot "shell holes" are costly to repair by the maintenance force and with limited course labor the depressions don't often get levelled but remain to ruin putting. Course supts. say members and caddies must have ball dent repair on greens added to the divot replacement and trap footprint removal education campaigns if courses are to be kept in good condition without increasing maintenance expense appreciably. Issuing sturdy forks to caddies and having them return them before they're paid will be standard practice at first class clubs, the supts. say. That means the supts. and caddie-masters will share another job in caddie education. Eventually supts. forecast, somebody will be making a short-handled sturdy fork players will carry in the ball pockets of their bags or hand to their caddies for ball dent repairing.

part of the course maintenance machinery.

Conditions have changed since those days, turf authorities now take their messages directly to the man responsible for the growing of the grass. They realize that the experience of the practical man on the job is useful and valuable to them in their research work, as he furnishes the final proving grounds. Together a strong co-operating team has been formed, and from it has come many worthwhile accomplishments in better turf development.

The crew foreman of yesterday now bears the title of greenkeeping superintendent. He goes to school, attends annual college short courses, and turf conferences, so as to better fit himself for his vocation. He has a knowledge of chemistry, botany, soils, drainage, and other kindred subjects as they pertain to the growing of good golf turf. As a rule he is a very enthusiastic person, very much in love with his work, and always

eager to find out what is new. Often it is an old story that he has heard many times before; yet when told in different words, its meaning is better understood, and is seen in a newer and clearer light.

Golfers of today will provide the money for operation, but they shun the thought of the thankless task of supervision. They choose to leave that responsibility to their employees as much as possible, yet, it is very important that the club officers in charge have the knowledge of what modern golf course upkeep involves, if this does not exist, the property suffers in more ways than one, inexperienced management can destroy overnight years of constructive work and achievement.

The Green-chairman's Job

The unseasoned and newly appointed Green-committee cannot resultfully discuss modern course maintenance and costs as they exist today. The subject is a complex and technical one that is ever-changing, and requires much study, plan-

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RESPONSIBILITY IS MEASURE

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ning and research if capably handled.

This is where the experienced and successful course superintendent must step in, identify and prove his worth by selling himself to the membership at large. This can be done in the following manner; by planning a long range program of upkeep and improvement with the aid of his chairman and other interested parties, impressing the club president with the need of appointing a well qualified chairman who will explain to both directors and members what the superintendent is trying to do, and how they can help. The superintendent must be ahead of his chairman by always being alert and correcting mad conditions before they are brought to the chairman's attention.

MEL CARRIER WITH CADDY-ROLL

Mel Carrier is resigning from Sauganash CC, Three Rivers, Mich., where he's been pro-supt. 16 years, to become Eastern representative for Caddy Roll rental bag carts. Carrier has been 27 years in pro golf and course maintenance and is a

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BRISTOL GLASS-SHAFTED CLUBS TESTED AT DUNEDIN

Tom Higgins of Horton-Bristol Mfg. Co. had a glass-shafted driver and 5-iron that many of the senior pros and amateurs were testing at the PGA National course in January. The shaft looks clumsy in the test models but performs very well, according to those who used the experimental models. Possibility is that if anything's done with the glass shaft it will be made to hickory shaft lines. Several players said they had a satisfactory feeling of the ball staying on

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