

What Does Players' Neglect Add to Maintenance Cost?

By LEO L. FESER

The little golfing balls are being smacked off the tees, across the fairways, into the bunkers and rough, onto the verdant greens and into the wee cups of the golf courses of America. While some golfers are becoming accustomed to taxes others are trying to make an equitable division of the take-home pay between the fun of golf and groceries. 1952 is well along the way to proving that a dollar stretcher would be a greater invention than the wheel. Golf course superintendents are not filled with glee as they look over their budgets and ponder ways and means of wrapping up increased costs of labor, supplies and equipment with those scraps of paper.

Other scraps of paper being tossed into the summer breezes by concentrating golfers as they admire the pearly paint on the ball, wrapper thrown in, will help to increase maintenance costs. So will a lot of other antics indulged in by the sweet but unthinking character who doesn't know or seem to care about the fact that that piece of paper will find temporary sanctuary in the flower bed near the first tee, or else will have to be picked up by a workman who may be paid at the rate of a buck-fifty per hour.

The awesome authorities who reluctantly pass the well-picked skeleton of a maintenance budget back to the ever-hopeful superintendent, with the ever-hopeful comment that next year will be the ever-hoped for one, seem well aware of the true economy not practised by the government. Likely the realistic chap who moved that the nine dollars for a new cup-cutter be whittled off the budget will be the first to go a full eighteen, leaning his full 220 lbs. on his putter on each green as he saves his aching haunches the strain of squatting enough to pluck his ball from the cup.

The economy-minded paragon who seconded the motion will follow in the next foursome, have his putt bobble off at a north-by-northwest angle as it finds the true depression left by the putter of his weak-haunched colleague, thereby losing two bits on the hole as he leans on his putter to lift his fourth putt from the can. Harry the supe will have his ears burning tonight. He ought to see to it that the cups are moved more often. What the hell is the difference if it does cost a buck-fifty an hour to change cups? The putting green is the most important part of the whole

golf course, and should be properly cared for! (To which we all utter a fervent Amen!)

There has been much discussion among the superintendents about a technical maintenance operation called aerifying. Seems like it does the business. But aerifying can't be properly done with any of those 14 clubs, even in the burningly ambitious hands of the taxpayer who fails to take a divot and consequently flubs one, then proceeds to cut five excellent divots demonstrating to himself with so-called practise swings. Harry the supe can quote some interesting and irrefutable statistics on divots.

Cost of Divots

Harry, the modest guy, says the average size of divots is about two inches wide and five inches long. He admits having seen larger ones. He generously allows that each golfer cuts at least 18 of these weaklings in a round of golf. That figures considerably more than a square foot of turf removed by each player, not counting practise swings. If these divots are not replaced, they not only affect lies adversely, but mowers aren't improved any when used as divot grinders. Seems to dull them. Dulling means more frequent adjustment, greater wear and a corresponding reduction in life span.

One good way to jack up maintenance costs is to insist that maintenance operations, within earshot of that remarkable shot you are about to play, must cease. That workman who is squatting idly alongside his silent, inactive mower is paid while doing it. He has a mind of his own and therefore chances are that he knows that you couldn't hit the ball if the whole countryside was as quiet as a boll weevil at work. This rather common situation multiplied by X for a period of one season would drive an efficiency expert nuts.

Our apologies. It probably wasn't you at all who insisted on one silent world every time you played a shot last year. No doubt it was the guy in the other foursome, the dope! Anyhow, it is that guy who bought to don snowshoes when mashing in and out of sand traps. But maybe he's got athlete's foot and the sand pouring in over his shoe-tops provides the abrasive material required in his pursuit of happiness. Time's awasting. Let the maintenance men fill those craters in the sand.



MORE THAN 7,000 BEAT BEN HOGAN

A total of 7,511 of the first 55,015 reported scores for National Golf Day, May 31, sponsored by Life magazine and the PGA, on basis of handicaps at their respective clubs beat Ben Hogan's par 71 shot over the Northwood course at Dallas that day. The \$1 entry fees will go to the USO and the National Golf Fund which is being established. The picture shows Tom Martin, Charles Conley, Jack Traster and John Marques paying their bucks at Fox Hills CC, Los Angeles, to the club's pro and Southern Calif. PGA pres., Harry Bassler, with Miss Robin O'Hara as cashier. There should be a bigger crowd to play with Robin. Many notables played in the nation-wide event. Gen. Omar Bradley with a net 74 and Sen. Robt. A. Taft with net 78 were among many who didn't beat Ben. Pros' kids, Diane Wilson of Kansas City and Lloyd Syron of Pontiac, Mich., were among those whose nets beat Ben's gross. Bing Crosby beat Ben with a net 69 and Sam Urzetta got a 70 in Rochester. Best score was by Andy Sword, a Dallas policeman, who got a net 64 on the Dallas Tenison Park course.

Then there is the citizen who should receive the noble prize of having hot lead poured down the back of his neck. May his tribe decrease, even though the beverage department run up an operating deficit. He is the firehouse laddy who never has time to guzzle his drink before leaving the first tee. His hurriedly emptied glass will be found on the edge of the fairway, where, if the tractor operator mowing the grass is quick on the clutch, the mess will require only five minutes and a cut finger to pick up. Good tractor operators who can save such glasses intact are worth more than a buck-fifty an hour. The unmentionable bottle tosser in the rough remains unmentionable.

The Exceptional Caddies

The generally popular opinion that caddies are human beings should remain unchallenged. Being human, they must be considered in a different light than simply animated bag carts. With a few excep-

tions they are more aware of maintenance problems than their employers, but those exceptions can and will do some remarkable things. Assuming a measure of intelligence in said employers, it is reasonable to believe that cooperation with the caddy master will pay big dividends.

The exceptions are a headache to the caddy master too. He has attempted to explain that a flag pole is not a javelin to be heaved at the putting cup. He has explained the function of a sprinkler and pointed out that such article is not in need of further scientific testing by the caddy. He has patiently explained the diversified duties and sterling qualifications of a good caddy, and has even tried to convince the kid that a golfer is also a human being, regardless of all contrary evidence. Helping the kid have faith in those teachings may also help to develop in him a sense of respect for property that will help conserve the physical assets of the club.

All of which carries us back to the budget and the problems of the golf course superintendent. Harry the supe is human, just like caddies and golfers. All he has to worry about is how to mow, fertilize and water grass. How to control some rodents, many diseases and innumerable bugs. How to cope with excessive rainfall or extreme drought, high temperature and higher humidity, windstorms and dew, break-downs and repairs, labor shortages and wage ceilings, divots and devils. Nothing could please him more than to present a well-groomed course that would meet your full approval every time you played golf.

But Harry has the same financial limitations in his operations as the players have after making payments on a house, car or television set, or even after taxes and paying for food and clothing.

Strange that golfers can't seem to realize that.

The superintendents often can't get the harsh fact that money will go just so far, across to their officials, hence it probably isn't curious that the officials can't put the message over with the members.

I wonder if anyone has ever dared estimate the cost of preventable waste entirely due to players' carelessness and thoughtlessness that is buried in golf course maintenance costs. During many years in charge of a golf course where the members were far above average in consideration for the course, yet still accounted for persistent and preventable expense, I never brought myself to estimating what we might save, if

With the increasing costs of trying to maintain golf courses up to the standards players and officials desire it may become necessary to figure out and sharply remind players just what each thoughtless performance that increases maintenance operations is costing.

World Stars Shoot for May's \$120,000 at Tam

With George S. May raising the Tam O'Shanter prize money to \$120,000 this year, the course on the northwest border of Chicago will be drawing pro stars from all over the world to compete against the American professional headliners.

Entries have been received from 17 top pros of foreign countries. Among them are Sid Brews and Bobby Locke of South Africa; Eric Brown, winner of 1952 Swiss Open; Roberto DiVicenzo and Pascual Viola of the Argentine; Juan Neri of Mexico; G. P. DeWit, Holland pro and open champion; Mario Gonzales, Brazilian and Uruguan open champion this year; Ugo Grappasonni of Italy; Hassan Hassanein, Egyptian open and match play champion; Yoshiro Hayashi, Michio Ishii, Torakichi

Nakamura and Yusei Shimamura of Japan, Flory van Donck of Belgium; Norman Von Nida of Australia and Stan Leonard, 1951 Canadian PGA champion.

The World Championship of Golf will be played Aug. 7-10.

The American members of the World Championship field will not be named until after the All-American tournaments, July 31 through Aug. 3, but will consist of the following:

The Men's Professional: The 32 leading money winners for 1951, the 22 low scorers in the 1952 All-American men's professional, and 10 professionals named by the sponsor.

The field in the women's professional section of the World Championship will consist of the 10 low professional players in the 1952 All-American women's Open, and 8 players named by the sponsor, making a total field of 18.

The field for the men's amateur section of the World Championship will consist of the 4 low amateur players in the 1952 All-American men's Amateur and 8 amateurs named by the sponsor, making a total field of 12.

The field for the women's amateur section of the World Championship of Golf will consist of the 4 low amateur players in the 1952 All-American women's Open and 8 named by the sponsor, making a total field of 12.

Cary Middlecoff won the 1951 All-American Men's Professional with a 72-hole score of 274, pocketing a first prize of \$2,250. Babe Zaharias won the All-American Women's Open with a score of 295, carrying a prize of \$1,000. Frank Stranahan won the All-American Men's Amateur with a score of 286.

The 1951 World Championship honors were divided:

MEN'S PROFESSIONAL SECTION: Ben Hogan with a score of 263 won first prize of \$12,500.

WOMEN'S PROFESSIONAL SECTION: Babe Zaharias with a score of 298 won first prize of \$2,100.

MEN'S AMATEUR SECTION: Frank Stranahan won first prize with a score of 283.

WOMEN'S AMATEUR SECTION: Martha Baker won first prize with a score of 342. Shirley Dommers scored a 334 in the Women's Amateur Section but was without status and could not accept the honor.

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