# The Story Course Cost Records Must Tell

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*(GCSA Paper)*

Every newspaper, magazine, or trade paper today carries news dealing with labor management and cost controls. The colleges have recognized, for quite some time, that there is a vast field for men who can properly cope with these problems and are trying to learn what they can and teach what they can learn.

Records are a "must" today to keep the politicians busy with tax reports and all other red tape. Most clubs keep adequate records to satisfy the tax people, but for the most part, it seems, there is not the proper breakdown to give the course superintendent and a chairman the picture they want. Good records are a good picture, too, in fact the best you can have.

Every club knows, of course, what they have spent at the end of the fiscal year and can base a budget on that lump sum figure.

There are many, however, who don't know what the money was used for. They don't stop to consider that labor has gone up so much and that fertilizers and chemicals have reached the figures they have. As an example, when I built Meridian Hills CC, labor was 25 cents to 40 cents per hour and it was good labor. Teams with driver and equipment were paid 75 cents per hour.

Everyone knows that labor gets much higher prices today. Wouldn't it be interesting to know how many hours were used to do a specific job—by hand—in the 1920's and 30's and how many today? I have such a record and it is very interesting. While on this subject it might be surprising to learn that some equipment doesn't save money, or to put it another way, too much motorized equipment can become costly because of machinery maintenance costs. That's another very good reason for records that tell you where you are going. (If you are approaching 10% of inventory for maintenance you had better check.)

### Men Understand Costs

There is another thing that good cost records can do. There is always someone around a club wanting changes made—traps added and removed, tees rebuilt, trees planted, etc. Records will show what additions cost to make in the first place and to maintain once they are done.

If men working on a course know you are keeping a record of how long it takes each one to cut greens, rake traps, roll tennis courts, etc., each will, most of the time, do his part to keep up, if he is worth keeping.

There are so many ways that records actually help that it seems unnecessary to enumerate them. The real value of records is, in my estimation, the good they do the superintendent. Sure, they are extra work, and when you are busy and perhaps worried about turf disease, you question the time consumed.

Let's admit right here that too many superintendents watch their courses like hawks but don't keep up on their records, or know what was spent for which. When you are having trouble it is very comforting to be able to tell your directors that such and such a bad spell cost so many dollars for labor and chemicals. A wind storm cost so much. A dry spell cost so much, etc.

One other thing records do for the superintendent is it keeps him thinking straight. Mathematics is one factor that has been proved through the ages to compel straight thinking. You may be downright sore at your chairman, or the pro or anyone else, but if you take an hour or two and make up a report, I guarantee you will forget you are mad, or your report will not be correct.

Here is also a good place to admit that men who carry the responsibility that a golf superintendent does should have someone to do the records for the business he runs. It is my opinion that if the superintendent would show his club a good record system, the club would gladly pay someone to keep the books or at least make out the reports.

The actual work of keeping basic records should not be such a burden if you set up or select a system that is easy to keep. One that is a burden won't be properly kept anyway so it would be useless.

### Costs in Labor Relations

The keeping of records can affect the superintendent just like anything on the

course affects the laborers doing the work.

The men who do golf work do it for the most part because they like it. That is true of labor or the superintendent. This being true, it would seem that in both cases that fair treatment of the superintendent by his club and he in turn giving his men their just due, would pay off in a well kept course. Everyone who works expects and should get recognition for work well done at a fair price. He will work better if he is made a part of the whole scheme of things. He should know the cost of what he does in relation to the other jobs and duties at the club.

This last matter has caused trouble at clubs. Men working on the course don't get paid as much as the bartender or get his tips or Christmas presents. They learn what the bartender gets, and they know what he has to learn to do his job in comparison to theirs. This is just an example of what is meant by fair treatment and knowing the overall picture.

I had planned to cite actual figures of savings made by having work done by power, locating equipment at handy places on the course, bonus systems etc., but since each club has a different problem, I doubt that my conditions would benefit other superintendents. This fact leads to this thought: Since every club has different problems it is unfair for one club to say that its traps cost so much and the other club's traps cost more or less. This has always been a problem because in the manufacture of, say, bolts, they are so hard, have a certain tensile strength, have a certain size, and cost so much per, but no two courses have the same terrain, same number of traps, same size of greens, or are the same distances from labor supply.

### Study Labor Factors

There are so many factors involved in golf course cost control and labor control that it would seem to be a good policy for the superintendent to make a list of the advantages or disadvantages he has, nearness to labor, comparative cost of his scale against factory help, working conditions, possible bonus system, year-round work, vacation, pensions after so many years work, amount of training necessary to have a good man, the varied skills a good man needs, and last and most important, the superintendent's attitude toward his labor. (Be fair on the last one, it's a toughie.)

To bring a personal touch in here; what about a man who has worked for a club for 25, 30, or 40 years — even though he is a laborer, is he not entitled to a pension? It is a problem that I believe if properly handled by the club would pay big dividends. We have it at my club—the problem, not the answer.

Not too long ago we were known as greenkeepers. Not too bad a title I thought. Now we are known as superintendents. It is my humble opinion that the only difference is the fact that golf has become a business, and business keeps records. Now to go further, if the superintendents will show their club record systems, some of them anyway, I think we will become golf course managers with the pay and prestige that would go with that title.

## Sodium Arsenite Control Method for Poa Annua

By PAUL E. WEISS
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*(GCSA Paper)*

Poa annua control with sodium arsenite really works on our course. Because of its poisonous nature it will always be a material for turf experts and not for the general public.

My method of killing the seed of crabgrass with little injury to the permanent grasses, works well with poa annua.

The long seeding period of poa annua makes it more difficult to control than crabgrass. Two or three treatments are sufficient for crabgrass but poa annua requires four or five treatments. We have eliminated crabgrass as a problem on our course, except in unsprayed areas, and in 1950 we started on poa annua using the one pound per acre treatment. We have learned how and when to use sodium arsenite and in April and May of 1951 we sprayed greens, tees and fairways with two applications of sodium arsenite, about three weeks apart. We seem to have cut down the poa annua population considerably but several years must elapse before proof is definite.

The development of I.P.C. by Jesse D. Stokes of UCLA seems to have wonderful possibilities. His method is to eliminate the plant before seed develops which is better than trying to kill the seed.

Leonard Strong of Saucon Valley CC, removed the poa annua seed mechanically in 1951. He let the seed heads develop, then cut short and removed the clippings with leaf sweepers. I saw three truck loads, mostly seed heads and stems, removed from one fairway and about 75 truckloads were removed from the course. The trucks were 1½ ton capacity with three foot sideboards. The wonderful condition of Saucon Valley fairways during the National Amateur championship, was testimony to Leonard's fine methods.

The greatest difficulty in poa annua treatment is that it must be done at the busiest time of the year and when golfers most resent any interference with play. If poa annua seed remains viable in the soil as long as crabgrass seed, we can look forward to fighting these pests for years to come. Like fleas on a dog, they will keep us from becoming too complacent.