

Using Money The Best Way To Improve Courses

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In the Jacksonville, Fla., area as in all other localities, the root of most worries in golf course maintenance is money. Rarely is there a club that couldn't make effective use of more money in increasing the members' enjoyment of its course.

Despite the financial factor determining course condition there has been very little attention given to what amount should be available for course work, in comparison with club revenues, amount of play or any of the other elements that are associated with the appeal of good course condition. The usual budget policy seems to be for the wise chairman to ask for more than he and the superintendent expect, get less than they need and hope for the best.

We are always faced with a number of other problems but labor always will demand considerable attention. Some still are of the opinion that golf courses in general can be maintained with unskilled labor with satisfactory results. I have always believed that the desirable condition of a good golf course is dependable to a great extent on the quality of workmanship of its maintenance crew. A superintendent may have all the experience necessary, and be a super labor relations expert in the handling of workmen but there are other factors to be considered today.

The annual turnover in golf course labor has been exceedingly high during the past ten years. We are familiar with this condition. With greener pastures just over the hill it is quite normal for workmen to seek more lucrative employment elsewhere. When a superintendent is confronted with the problem of instructing inexperienced workmen throughout the season it makes course maintenance much more difficult. Considerable time and effort on the part of the superintendent is wasted on cheap labor and nothing is gained in budget saving nor in accomplishments. There might be some

exceptions to the rule but in most instances there is evidence of a general let-down in good grooming due to inexperience and morale of disinterested workmen.

Our aim is to make a sincere effort towards a higher wage level in order to encourage the type of labor that will be an asset to the club. Commonsense tells us that this policy is the best for all concerned and that the final analysis will indicate from experience of the past just why it is most essential to have a coordinated staff of able workmen.

Another problem closely related to labor concerns the young men who contemplate taking up the profession of course management. Again it becomes necessary to give this salary question considerable thought. We must keep abreast of what other clubs are doing about this problem in our respective districts. Living costs are constantly increasing consequently it is important that some of us consider the overall picture as it is today — not yesterday. Some of these young men have the added responsibility of families to care for therefore they are faced with the problem of either making a sacrifice, or going into another field of occupation not to their liking but because of the circumstances which prevail in some areas.

Just recently I happened to be present at a discussion concerning ways and means of establishing a "turf management course" at some state schools for young men interested in this type of work.

The results of this group discussion indicate that we have much to accomplish as a pressure group along with sound publicity covering the truth about our earning capacity as a "golf course superintendent." I mention this only for the benefit of those who are considering the occupation of golf course supervision in the future. If we are to make it look

attractive without too much glamor and blowup attached to the basic part of turf management, let it be thoroughly understood by all just what should be done by both employer and employe to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion.

It is very important to strive for a smooth working machine which in the long run will inject much of that harmony and spirit of cooperation that is so necessary for successful and economical operation of our daily tasks.

We still have many turf problems to overcome in Florida but I believe the day is not too far away when some of these will be answered. A new turf experimental garden is now being established at the University of Florida under the supervision of Dr. Gene Nutter. With the sincere cooperation of golf course superintendents in Florida, I am sure that the turf research program will bear fruit that can be digested by all who have a healthy appetite for food of that nature. Dr. Nutter has been very active during the past year in surveying the various districts in the state for whatever problems require more intensive study and research. From these observations we will eventually have a better opportunity to obtain pertinent information as a guide to accomplish various projects with more accuracy and less worry.

District superintendents' associations within the state are becoming more active. We expect to get a short course under way at Gainesville, similar to the set-up at Purdue university. This will most certainly be of much value to all and will be a central meeting place to discuss our problems each year.

Tiffine (Tifton 127) Bermuda Is Developed at Tifton

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Golf course superintendents have continually searched for a good fine textured Bermuda grass. The establishment of experimental turf plots at the Georgia Coastal Plain Experiment Station in 1947 marked the first milestone for the selection, breeding, and testing of Bermuda grass types for turf purposes. During this time over 136 types of Bermuda grasses have been tested under both golf green and fairway management. By 1949 and 1950 it was evident that a hybrid Bermuda, Tiflawn (Tifton 57 Bermuda

grass) produced at the experiment station, was superior to common seeded Bermuda grass and several selections from golf courses in the Southeast. Tiflawn, however, still fell short of the exacting requirements of the golfers for a very fine textured Bermuda. In an effort, therefore, to produce a finer textured Bermuda while still retaining desirable qualities, Tiflawn, *Cynodon dactylon*, and several other selections of common Bermuda were hybridized with a very fine-leaved disease susceptible Bermuda from South Africa—*Cynodon transvaalensis*.

Eighty-nine hybrid plants, obtained from the crosses, were planted in the field for observation in 1949. Several of the plants appeared to be inferior turf types and were discarded. The most promising hybrids, however, were planted in the experimental turf plots. Such comparative ratings as disease resistance, sod density, fineness, playing quality, weed resistance, aggressiveness, etc. over the past two years have indicated that the hybrid plant carrying the number 127 is a superior turf type. This Bermuda produced by crossing Tiflawn with South African Bermuda grass has become known as Tifton 127 turf Bermuda—Tiffine. Since it does not produce viable seed, it must be propagated vegetatively.

Tiffine has a distinctive medium green color, is aggressive, disease resistant, not injured by overseeding with ryegrass, and is much finer in texture than Tiflawn, common seeded Bermuda, or most other types of Bermuda grass used on putting greens. Small quantities of sprigs are available to golf clubs on request and have been mailed to many clubs in the Southeast. Commercial sources are also available. Observations to date indicate that Tiffine is well adapted throughout the Southeast. It is being grown satisfactorily on new greens in the coastal area and as far north as the Ohio River Valley.

Although Tiffine is a great improvement over common Bermuda for putting greens, the Bermuda grass breeding work is being continued in the hope that even better Bermudas may be found.

I dispose of some of my trade-ins by exchanging them for lost balls which the caddies have found. These balls I either sell to used ball buyers or have them re-conditioned and sell them myself.

—Chick Faltus,
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