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## Supt's. "Day Off" Is Busy Day Thinking for Club

By **HERB GRAFFIS**

**F**EW men are busier than a successful golf course superintendent on his day off. Monday meetings of golf course superintendent associations all over the country are pretty much the same, as near as I have been able to learn.

The superintendents generally have to go through a schedule of routine or emergency work starting early in the morning before they set forth for the meetings. Then at the meetings, where they have planned to have sociable visits, maybe play a round and look over the host's course, and sometimes listen to a talk after dinner, they discuss course maintenance problems and answers more than during any other day of the week.

A supt. will be playing in a foursome with pals of his in his profession and as he is lining up a putt he will point to an area on the green and say, "Hey, boys, look at this."

Then another member of the foursome will remark, "I had a few touches of that on one of my greens and I . . ." and he'll proceed to talk about cause, treatment, cure and prevention.

Having seen such cases many times I've had the hunch that if club officials knew what happened on the superintendent's day off they'd pay the superintendent for going to the meetings at other courses and that there'd be eager bidding among host clubs for the privilege and value of receiving golf course superintendents' meetings.

I thought I'd be able to see superintendents relax when they were at a recent picnic of the Midwest Golf Course Supts.'

Assn. at a Libertyville, Ill., park. The fellows' wives, sons, daughters and grandchildren were there. There were games, races, horseshoe-pitching, swimming and prizes. But a golf course superintendent doesn't seem to be able to stand much of being away from his business, so the men would get together in small groups between, or during, the picnic events and compare notes on their work.

### Watering Is Major Subject

And here are a few of the things they talked about:

First in interest and, obviously, importance was watering practice.

Listening to various superintendents, many of whom have inspected courses and studied operations in most districts of the U. S., there was heard, repeatedly, statements to the effect that correct watering is the most difficult job in maintenance, and the watering required by weather and soil conditions is the part of the maintenance task that most severely tests the genius and luck of the superintendent.

A number of cases were cited of overlap in fairway water distribution being the cause of dollar spot attacks along the middles of fairways. Outside of the bad appearance of these attacks, several supts. were inclined to regard them somewhat as disguised benefits as they thinned out matted bent. On greens the attacks are a more serious matter. Close mowing, heavy traffic and lack of adequate fertilization, make the dollar spot damage from over-watering a grave risk.

Superintendents at de luxe courses smiled through the tears of their own troubles as they referred to some excellent greens at country-town courses where there wasn't enough water to allow over-watering, and at heavily played public courses where traffic wouldn't permit much watering of greens. When greens at these sparsely watered courses went off color, or cloudbursts and hot, humid weather knocked the greens out, or poa annua went out, players at those courses were inclined to regard the damage as an act of God and didn't blame the supt.

Also helping to ease the situation at these courses where greens are lightly watered is the fact that fairways there generally are unwatered and the contrast between greens and fairway color isn't conspicuous.

#### Water System Modernization

Fairway and greens hoseless watering systems have been a tremendous boon to golf in increasing play, reducing labor costs and, notwithstanding perils of excessive watering, improving course condition. But now there's been so much learning about watering a great many of the watering systems need modernization. The most common fault in the system is inadequate size of piping, the superintendents said. They add that the irrigation engineers know this but the cost factor prevents correct installations. The superintendents added they seldom could do anything about correcting this as the decision on cost was made by officials, not by superintendents.

What club officials and members don't appreciate about golf course watering is that it has to be done at the right time and in the right amount, and is governed greatly by drainage. At most of the first class courses in the Chicago district fairway watering is needed about every three days in the summer. Then, the superintendents agree, it should be done on all 18 fairways at the same time. The rain does it that way. When the fairway is watered the second day after a rain it's too wet. Or if water is applied to a fairway or green five hours too late the damage of delay may be extensive. With the necessity of keeping poa annua through the summer the importance of correctly timed watering to the proper extent is emphasized. Cases were related of sun cooking turf when the grass was watered only a few hours before it was dry enough to need moisture.

But despite the delicate problem of

watering, the superintendents said they'd much sooner have a dry summer so they could control the weather than a summer with intermittent rains.

Scattered showers drive the superintendents gray-headed. One course may get a cloudburst and another course ten miles away won't have a drop of water. The rain complicates the maintenance program and condition and players will wonder at the difference in condition of the two courses and blame the superintendent whose course shows damage from the thunder shower and boiling weather.

During this discussion several superintendents referred to a course they'd seen where moisture oozed up when one walked on the greens. They said they hesitated to mention this indication of over-watering to a competent superintendent because of the possibility of an early morning downpour that day.

#### Attitude Toward Advice

That brought up the interesting subject of how frankly to talk to each other about the other fellow's work. "We don't want to get too touchily 'ethical', like some doctors, about our profession," one highly successful superintendent said. "The main reason we do well on our jobs is because we can handle problems. Anybody can take care of a course where and when there are no problems. Like anybody else in this puzzling, worrying business, I have made mistakes in thinking and guessing for the right answer to some of my problems. Anybody — whether it is some young fellow in the business or an old-timer at a little old 9-hole course — who can suggest something that might make

#### THE OLD TOOL HOUSE

By John L. Counsell  
Supt., Salem Country Club,  
Peabody, Mass.

*Still stands the old tool house by the  
side of the road,*

*Like a patriarch tattered and worn,  
With a roof that is wrinkled and  
walls that are bowed,*

*Awaiting the Judgment morn.*

*The storms of New England have  
dealt it cruel blows*

*But will it surrender? Never!  
Around it the junk pile mountainous  
grows*

*For the old shack will be there  
forever.*



## WGA OFFICIALS OK INTERNATIONAL AMATEUR FOUR-BALL FOR 1954

A tournament was born when officials of Western Golf Association and the Highland G&CC of Indianapolis got together for final arrangements on the International Amateur Four-Ball Championship of WGA, to be inaugurated at Highland from June 25 to July 1, 1954. Discussing the championship are, clockwise from foreground: Norb Schaefer, president of Meridian Country Club, Indianapolis; Robert R. Walker of South Bend, WGA vice president; Milton Woodard of Chicago, WGA executive vice president; J. I. Cummings, Indianapolis; W. F. Souder, Indianapolis; Harold A. Moore of Chicago, WGA treasurer; E. S. Pulliam, Indianapolis; Stanley J. McGiveran of Toledo, WGA president, and Charles Johnson, Indianapolis.

my work better and easier, is my friend.

"Let him mention it to me and we'll discuss it and see who's right or wrong. He won't hurt my feelings. This work of course maintenance is growing so fast that any superintendent who doesn't show a real welcome to another fellow's idea that costs nothing, but may or may not be worth a lot, is standing in his own light."

The fellows got talking about how much ideas have been worth to their clubs and to superintendents. One veteran superintendent who has an eager, alert, studious temperament said:

"This work is getting harder every year. Even with more and better fairway, green and rough mowers, improved irrigation, better disease control, better drainage, aerification and more scientific and on-the-job know-how, most superintendents are working harder now than they ever did before. We would have been absolutely lost and wrecked in health and spirit if it hadn't been that we have benefited so much from exchanging ideas.

"Now many superintendents have to do

a lot of construction and modernization work along with maintenance work. That adds greatly to the job, especially when the construction work isn't all done in the out-of-play season as it should be, weather permitting. Then, too, we're short of competent help.

"Look around at this picnic. On their days off most of the fellows did more than a normal day's work at their courses before they could get loose. This is a 10-day-a-week job. On watering, for instance; that can't be delayed when it's needed. The fellow who takes Sunday, Monday or the Fourth of July off, where water is needed on his greens or fairways, won't have his course the way his members want it.

"And now play is heavier than ever before. Women take their husbands to suburban stations in the morning, then come right over to play golf. You're trying to water to save poa annua, trying to trim traps, do some mowing, and the women raise hell at being interfered with by course work. Being a married man

*(Continued on page 56)*

# Nothing else will do!

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"First," he said, "I do not want a club-maker or player as an assistant to the extent that playing golf comes first with him. I want an assistant to aid me in my business, and I'll give him every opportunity to gain that experience which will prime him for a club job of his own.

"Second, I feel that in time a man should be given two years' credit towards PGA membership if two years are spent in school studying salesmanship, bookkeeping and accounting, psychology and public speaking. Then the PGA candidate has the foundation for not only properly learning and teaching golf but for mastering all other phases of the golf business, and there certainly are many of them other than the knack of hitting a ball into a hole.

"In golf, as in every other business, the customer is of supreme importance and an assistant who learns how to serve the customer best is working in the best possible way for the pro who employs him.

"Pro golf is exacting but satisfying and rewarding work. It requires considerably more training, study and diligence than many a young man who seeks an assistant's job realizes. The kid may think that an assistant's job consists of having a lot of time for playing golf. What he has in mind amounts to getting paid for being a member of a club.

"Sad to relate, such jobs don't exist."

### SUPT'S. "DAY OFF"

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myself, I bow to the inevitable, but it certainly is running up our labor costs and handicapping our efforts to get work done on time.

"And what some of the women will kick about makes you want to bust out crying. We had a heavy rain one night and women morning golfers who got started later than some others complained loudly about dirty tee towels.

"Oh, well, I guess if I didn't like it I wouldn't be in this business."

Among other subjects discussed by these superintendents on their days off were how Merion blue and zoysia are doing in the midwest. So far, consensus is that they're doing O.K. when put in bare spots where there is no competitive grass but not so well when introduced among other grasses. Experience has been rather satisfactory with zoysia taking hold and spreading when introduced as stolons, but getting practically nowhere when introduced as plugs. The fellows are not sure

about the zoysia color factor yet but after seeing the use of green spray at Pine Valley during the Golf Course Superintendents' Assn. convention, they are confident they've seen the right answer to temporary coloring that is satisfactory to players until nature does its work.

The main handicap on Merion blue, so Midwestern supts. have observed, is that recommended seeding rate is far too light. With heavier seeding growth is good and ultimate economy and service of Merion blue is pleasing. These superintendents also have found that recommended rate of application of fungicides often is too late for real economy and results and have done some highly satisfactory and economical work in applying heavier doses.

An interesting point on labor came up as the superintendents discussed a policy John Coghill put in force at Silver Lake, his fee course. John gets as added summer labor high school and college lads who want to play golf. In addition to their pay for course work they are allowed to play free. By having lads who are strong for golf seeing the importance and results of correct work John recruits excellent labor. If the lads don't do their work O.K., they don't get to play free. There always are applicants for vacancies on the staff.

After a day of many, many chats such as have been mentioned the superintendents gather their families and go back to their clubs. As the crowd breaks up the superintendents say, "It does a fellow good to get away from his work for a day."

Whether they really get away from work is questionable, but there's no doubt that the value of these assemblies to the clubs whose superintendents are present is far more than the clubs ever realize.

### Teachers to Finance PGA Seniors' Championship

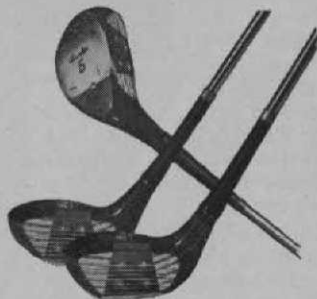
The 1954 Seniors' PGA championship at PGA National course, Dunedin, Fla., Jan. 28-31, will have William Teacher & Sons, Lt., Glasgow, Scotland, putting up \$5,000 as prize money, paying travel and expenses at Dunedin of 30 sectional qualifiers for the event, and paying expenses of the winner to the 1954 British Open.

Under the Teachers' deal which was arranged by Fred Corcoran, PGA Tournament director, PGA seniors who do not qualify sectionally for the championship, still are eligible to play in the event and be eligible for the British Open trip.

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