

Supts. Tell Golf Club Officials Course Management Needs

For the sound management of every golf course, each official to be qualified to express judgment on any phase of course maintenance should read the authoritative observations course superintendents present in GOLFDOM's leading article this month. This informative series will be continued in future issues.

There is a far more serious situation in golf course maintenance than most club officials and nearly all golfers realize. That the situation has not developed into one that could badly injure the vast and growing appeal and business stability of golf is largely due to the little understood or appreciated work of resourceful golf course superintendents.

In the following statements the club official, Green chairman and Green committeeman gets a close-up on problems that must be understood, handled with understanding and cooperation, and to a large extent solved.

Otherwise, blame for mismanagement that may be accumulating will be on the officials who failed to inform themselves and not on the superintendents who warn of situations that require prompt, decisive action.

HERB GRAFFIS
Editor

Men Outrank Turf As Maintenance Problem

By R. L. MITCHELL

Gen. Mgr., The Edison Club, Rexford, N. Y.

At this stage of the history of golf course maintenance we are compelled to view our problems as those not of turf alone but of turf in its relation to men.

Because we develop and maintain turf for the pleasure of golfers and must have men in this work of ours we have to appreciate that our human problems and our turf problems must be kept in sound balance.

In balanced judgment of our work we are compelled to recognize that the most important problem in turf maintenance today is that of attracting and holding good employees.

Why is this problem important? Because regardless how much a person in a supervisory capacity may know of golf course maintenance or how much techni-

cal knowledge of turf growing he may have, all or at least the most of that knowledge must be used and applied through and by the staff of employees working for and under him.

For a supervisor to most successfully apply his knowledge to course operation he must have well trained, capable, interested and loyal personnel on his staff. Employees who stay only a short time, and are not interested in their job, and have no incentive to stay on the job, are not that kind of personnel.

Why does the problem exist? It is difficult and in the lower brackets almost impossible to attract and keep good employees for two reasons. The first is salaries offered in comparison with other fields. The second is lack of employee benefits such as year-around employment, vacations, sick leave, hospitalization, and pension plans.

What is the answer? First of course

is to pay competitive wages, and by that I mean competitive with similar lines of work in industry or other fields. Competitive with other clubs means nothing as they are probably facing the same problem for the same reasons.

The second is to offer year-around employment to as many employees as possible, by doing everything possible in slack season such as repairs, tree pruning, construction, etc. The third is to offer a program of employee benefits such as vacations, sick leave, pensions, etc., that is comparable to that offered in other fields. The fourth is to train and help any employee desiring it to obtain better positions either in your own organization or with other clubs. The net result desired being an attitude on the part of your personnel that working at the club is something worthwhile and not just another job to fill in until something better shows up.

Have we solved the problem at this club? No, not entirely. But we do recognize the problem, are working on it and with the active help of my club officials hope to come reasonably near to solving it in the not too distant future. I might add that the problem exists in all phases of club operation to some degree, as well as in golf course maintenance.

Dues Raise Required to Meet Increased Costs

By CARLTON E. TREAT
Supt., Montclair (N.J.) CC

You ask me what I think is the most important problem that faces golf course maintenance and my first main and continual answer is for golf clubs to raise their dues in a corresponding ratio as the operational costs and expenses have increased. If labor, machinery, supplies, etc., have increased 25 per cent or more (a pretty low figure), to put the clubs on a healthy basis the dues should be increased correspondingly. Its fighting the impossible to operate a golf course with income at a 1930-40 income with 1952 expenses.

The struggle of keeping golf courses and golf establishments going, with such an increase of labor, machinery, and material costs, has been a losing one, unless the income from dues has risen also. If this struggle has not lost valuable employees, it surely tends to make a "dead duck" of their initiative.

Too many golf courses are working their courses, clubhouse, etc., so much

overtime with outside groups in order to try to gain this extra income that the maintenance crew not only has a heavy added burden but often is crowded out on its routine work.

How many superintendents have been dying to get at some real improvements on their courses but are continually set back by lack of funds, lack of labor and time in which to do it.

Outside parties may bring in needed income but don't lose sight of the fact that they also bring added expense; a dollars and cents expense, and the "expense" of dissatisfaction among the members.

A round of golf at any club causes maintenance expense but when a club has an "office" or "company" golfing party, the expense of a round of golf goes up. Mainly for the reason that these players are not interested in the course, as such, they invariably have a number of "hackers" in the group, want added play areas for quoits, softball, and what not. Their round of golf costs the club a good deal more than the cost of a member's round.

Golf clubs will not be on a sane basis until they get their dues more in line with the increased cost of operation.

It seems to me, therefore, that the most important problem facing golf course maintenance today is to have most clubs increase their dues. It's a tough job to operate a club on dues of the 1930-40 period against 1952 costs. If a golf club is worth anything it should be worth its keep!

Please understand I am not speaking of any one particular club but wholly of golf clubs, in general, in my study of greenkeeping problems over the years.

Employee Relations Require Officials' Study

By JAMES REID
Brook Lea CC, Rochester, N. Y.

Attention to the technical problems of course maintenance and progress in that respect have been so much greater than action given to the problem of golf course manpower that the situation is paradoxical in a business conducted for and by sportsmen.

The factories with higher wages, extra payment for overtime, bonuses, share the profits, golf courses for employees and other rewards greater than those received by golf course employees have put golf course superintendents up against a stone

wall. The condition has been further aggravated by the demand that costs of golf be kept low. For the past several years superintendents have been told that "next year things will be different." The officials certainly were right about 1952. Things were "different" and a nightmare in trying to get competent, trustworthy golf course help.

To maintain a golf course on a basis that takes advantage of the advance in scientific knowledge of turf requires help having acquaintance with and interest in course care.

The "good old days" when the condition of golf courses was not so good are gone, financially. In too many cases the superintendents' salaries have not kept pace with inflation and the changes of club directorates have prevented correction of this serious flaw in management.

It is essential to keep a grounds crew on the payroll the year around with their services being wisely used for clubhouse and course work. When club officials study what it costs to have jobs done by outside labor that won't work for the wages paid grounds crews there is bound to be a year-around plan of work for the club's men.

Club officials have to give more consideration to the entire picture of labor relations so employees feel they are an appreciated part of the organization and that the club has the welfare of the employees at heart. With the labor situation being nation-wide in its serious aspect at golf clubs it seems plain that the club officials will have to devise some general welfare plan that will be an inducement to getting and holding good men for course maintenance.

Unless that is done the progress that has been made in course maintenance methods will be offset and the over-all picture of improvement in condition and true thrift in operating expense will be nothing about which club officials can boast.

Responsibility Is Key Word In Course Management

By W. I. JONES

Supt., Monongahela Valley CC, Monongahela, Pa.

Responsibility is the key word in a successful management plan for a golf course. The superintendent qualified to accept full responsibility, and who is given that responsibility and the salary that good business dictates for competent

management of an expensive plant, is a good businessman working for good businessmen.

There are times when club officials hold an underpaid superintendent operating with an inadequate budget and an excess of bosses accountable for the shortcomings in course condition. But the basic cause of the trouble is failure of officials to apply at the club the same policies which make their private businesses successful.

A Good Chairman Is First Maintenance "Must"

By A. WARD CORNWALL

Supt., Lochmoor Club, Grosse Pointe, Mich.

Without any hesitation I'll say that the green chairman is the most important factor in golf course maintenance today. The most competent golf course superintendent is of limited value to his club if he hasn't a first class chairman. And a superintendent of moderate ability can develop and show fine results if he's got the sort of a chairman who can help him.

I'll outline my ideas of the qualifications of a good chairman and what, in my opinion, he is entitled to expect from a good superintendent.

The chairman has to be a man who reserves judgment until he knows the facts. He has to be, sometimes, a thick-skinned fellow because he must hear complaints from members. The petty ones he will handle according to his knowledge of the personalities involved and the controlling conditions on the course. The important complaints the chairman will pass on to his superintendent.

The chairman need not be an expert on fine turf. He can leave that to his superintendent, but he should have a general idea of the problems involved so he can answer questions of the board and of other members.

He certainly must have a clear idea of the money requirements of course work and be the Number One man in getting the budget required to keep the course in the best condition the club can afford, and in getting money needed for men, equipment and material that will provide the most efficient operation.

He will insist that the superintendent assume all responsibility for supervising the course. He will go over general policy matters with the superintendent but if the chairman has to spend several

(Continued on page 79)

Superintendents Name Golf Course Development Group

Malcolm McLaren, pres. Golf Course Supts.' Assn., has named Wm. H. Johnson, supt., Griffith Park Courses at Los Angeles, chmn. of the association's Golf Course Development committee. With Johnson on the committee are Sherwood A. Moore, Hollywood GC, Deal, N. J.; Robert M. Williams, Beverly CC, Chicago; Charles Danner, Richland GC, Nashville, Tenn., and Agar M. Brown, GCSA sec., St. Charles, Ill.

The committee will work with the PGA's committee of Graham Ross and Lou Bola, and with the National Golf Foundation, in aiding those who are interested in establishing new golf courses.

SUPTS. TELL OFFICIALS

(Continued from page 29)

hours a week planning work for his man he'd better decide whether he is wrong in taking on too much detail or whether he needs a new superintendent to handle the planning and management of the work.

The chairman will expect that his superintendent has good working knowledge of soils, agronomy, botany, forestry, en-

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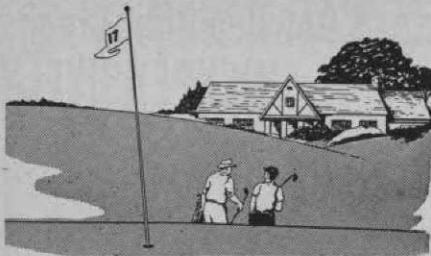
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tomology, plumbing, mechanics, labor training, direction and supervision, golf, landscaping, course maintenance chemicals, fertilizers, and hydraulics, and good sound business sense.

He will expect his superintendent to be a leader of men and to attend to his own personal grooming so he can be distinguished from the laborers on the course and will look as a man in charge of a big investment should look.

The chairman also can expect that his superintendent be ambitious, have high pride in his work and keep in close studious touch with the developments in his profession.

The superintendent might well be expected to play golf on his own course once in a while so he may see the course from the player's viewpoint.

(More of these sound, course management principles and authoritative observations by the men most qualified to report will be presented in the March issue of GOLFDOM.)

Jack Mackie, Pro Pioneer, Dies

Jack Mackie, 74, a founder of the PGA, and in the capacities of sec. and treas. of the pro association long a constructive factor in pro golf, died Jan. 13, at Inwood, L. I., N. Y. He suffered a stroke three years ago and steadily declined.

Mackie was born at Earl's Ferry, Scotland, and came to the U. S. in 1899 to build and be pro at Roseville, N. J. Following that work he became pro at Yountakah, N. J. and at Dunwoodie in the NY Met dist. prior to becoming pro at Inwood CC on Long Island where he remained 32 years until his retirement several years ago.

He is survived by his widow, a son, Jack,

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