

Major Factors in Golf Range Design and Operation

By PAUL BERTHOLY
Sandusky (O.) Golf Range

OVER the years I have been asked many hundreds of times the pertinent facts of golf range operation. You will notice that I use the word golf instead of driving in describing the range. Every golf range operator should make a strong effort to cultivate the habit of saying "golf range" instead of "driving range." The golf range is truly a member of the golf family and should be referred to in words that describe it more aptly. A golf range should offer all the shots for practice that occur on a golf course—wood shots, iron shots, trap shots, and putting—to earn the proper respect it should have as a golf range that actually improves the golfer's game rather than be regarded as just a freakish relative of golf with only an entertainment value.

The golf range that is keyed to the improvement of the golfer's game and not merely just a "Midway" attraction will stay in business and gain the respect of the golfing public. For all too often I have heard the question, "Does a golf range really help one's game?" My answer has been, "Unquestionably, yes."

Then I follow the opinion with a big, "BUT." The player willing to practice must have the proper pattern of the golf swing to practice. This is where the most important factor of golf range operation comes in, the Golf Professional.

Golf Ranges In Their Infancy

Golf ranges will gain their highest respect when they offer a definite, thorough service to the golfing public in their quest for a better golf game. The golf professional who owns and operates his own golf range not only has the opportunity of practicing his trade in the highly competitive field of professional golf, but has the wonderful chance to prove to his community that he is a sound businessman and administrator as well. One of man's most precious assets is the dignity of the human person and adding the mark of a good businessman to the enviable position of being a fine player of golf, is the compensation of "Dignity from effort," most of us would like to achieve. The golf range offers this opportunity for many aspiring professionals, to prove themselves as respected and able members of their community.

Ownership of a golf course is almost out

of the question due to prohibitive original costs and maintenance costs, but the golf range, well-managed and properly designed, can be the answer many golf professionals are seeking. I dare say that the pro will have to work much harder as a golf range owner and professional than he ever has before, but the compensating factors are well worth it.

I like to compare the present day golf range to the early days of the filling station inasmuch as I feel that the golf range business is only in its infancy. Today's filling stations are a far cry from those bygone early days of a single hand pump. I sincerely believe that a neat, well-designed golf range offering good golf balls, all types of shots, and competent golf instruction is a sound investment for the practical hard-working golf professional.

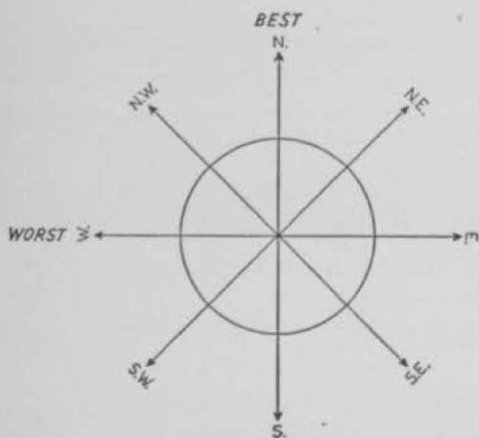
The easiest way to answer these interested golf professionals who have visited our golf range and who have written seeking information and ideas, is to start with the view a customer receives as he approaches the parking lot with the intention of sharpening up his golf game or perhaps trying it for the first time. Maximum frontage on a busy highway near a city of 75,000 or more which has golf courses with at least 36 holes is preferred. The aspiring range operator must either be a golf professional or associated with one. All of the qualifications possible will assure a better chance for success, but of course no rule is binding and great effort sometimes overcomes handicaps, but the odds are heavily stacked against non-professional guidance.

The property must be at least 200 yds. wide and 300 yds. deep, preferably level, without creeks, trees, and undue slopes. It must be well tiled allowing water from heavy rains to drain off without standing for days hampering ball retrieving. Great emphasis must be laid on the direction of the compass the tees will face. The diagram on the following page will show the best direction for the tees to face and the most undesirable in relation to the sun. Great thought must be given to sunshine affecting vision in following the flight of a golf ball.

Prepare Your Fairway Well

Great care should be taken in preparing the soil for seeding, and in the choice

of fertilizer and seed. Here the best advice you can get from a competent golf course superintendent who knows local conditions will save you money, get results faster and give you a good-looking finished job that won't require expensive maintenance. A good fairway is essential for easy and fast ball retrieving. It also



aids greatly in keeping the balls clean if the fairway has a good stand of grass for few golf balls have a paint that stands washing well, without losing a high percentage of their paint.

Signs Beckon Motorists

Attractive signs along the highway must signal to the motorist that he is ap-

proaching a golf range. Rustic signs with supports cut from young unbarked trees surrounded by evergreens make effective signs for a golf range. They are not nearly as expensive as metal signs with metal supports and are far more attractive.

An ample parking lot must be provided. Ours is of crushed stone with dimensions of 20 yds. by 60 yds. and provides ample parking for two rows of 18 cars each. In building and selecting the site for the parking lot care should be taken to see that a large 2-in. size crushed stone is first placed and the finish topping should be of about 1/2-in. stone.

A combination of both open and covered tees is recommended for an extended season. On the side of the range that has the covered tees is the best place to locate the parking lot. Located between the highway and the covered tees it will not obstruct the view from the highway of the passing motorists for the open tees must be in plain view of the prospective customers for maximum attraction.

The tee line drawn out from a portion of a 160 yd. radius circle must be at least 25 yds. back from the highway. With clubhouse placed front center, the spot that corresponds to the parking lot on the opposite front of the property affords an excellent location for a miniature course. The miniature course is an excellent combination with the range.

A two-foot ditch running parallel to the highway, and between the highway and the miniature course, gives course ample protection from careless motorists.



Making the Layout

A stake driven in the ground equidistant from the sides of the property 160 yds. out from the proposed tee line will serve as an anchor to run the semi-circular tee pattern necessary to centralize the golf ball flight. A wire fastened to the stake and stretched tight to the tee line can trace the proper tee pattern.

Lights mounted a maximum of 3 ft. above the covered tees with a minimum of 25 ft. height for the open tees and 50 ft. between poles are more detailed on the accompanying drawing. The covered tees should be 15 ft. x 15 ft. per each tee. Rubber mats mounted on wooden platforms set in a concrete floor with a bench back of each tee completes each stall.

A 300-watt overhead bulb facing down and out toward the fairway set in a 16-in. porcelain reflector will do a splendid

er, and stationary tubs for ball washing is highly essential for good maintenance.

Ball Care

A conventional washing machine will do a fairly satisfactory ball washing job when six large terry cloth towels are kept in the suds along with the balls during the agitation. Ball rebuilding equipment should be owned and a thorough knowledge of ball construction and recovering should be acquired to eliminate this terrific profit leak in the economic wall of the golf range business. All attempts should be made to purchase good quality "seconds" from a reputable golf ball manufacturer each season and then a recovering program instituted each winter on all golf balls that are either worn smooth or those that have cuts which do not extend into the rubber thread.

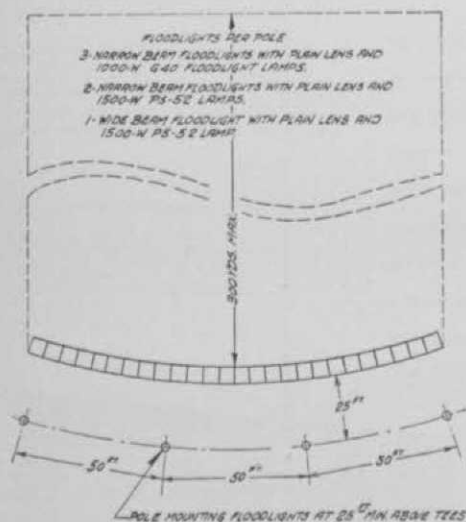
Often whether or not a range re-covers its balls means profit or loss for the fiscal year. Not all balls by far can be recovered, but a great many can and this waste must be avoided to gain a maximum chance of success in the golf range business.

Briefly we will cover the ball recovering. An army surplus potato peeler will do nicely for grinding the old cover partly off. Women can be hired to do golf ball smearing at modest cost in their homes. Hot plates, balata and a little patience will soon result in these women becoming expert at replacing the same amount of cover that has been ground off by smearing the hot balata smoothly onto the ball with a knife. Molds can be bought or made by small mold-making shops and presses for holding the molds can be made at machine shops. The best painting method is dipping. Spray painting requires expensive equipment and hand rubbing leaves little paint on the high spots and too much in the dimples. Pipe hangers that plumbers use to hang water pipes from the floor joists of houses can be cheaply had and with the points bent in facing each other, like a tweezers, will hold a ball securely while it is being dipped. As high as 2 doz. can be dipped at a time. Dipped, the balls are then hung to drip, and then are placed on drying boards which consist of tripods, formed by driving 6 penny finish nails through $\frac{1}{2}$ in. plywood boards 16 in. x 16 in.

The brush type mat manufactured by a leading brush mfg. is ideal for iron play but grass must also be supplied for a hitting ground for some die-hards. Rubber mats with rubber tees are by far the best bet for economical, neat operation of a golf range, but it is best to have grass, rubber mats and brush type mats to have a better chance of keeping more people happy.

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GOLF DRIVING RANGE FLOODLIGHTING



job of lighting the covered tees and eliminating the dark spot just a few yards in front of the covered tees.

Necessary equipment will include a five-gang mower (three-gang requires too much valuable operating time), automatic mechanical ball retriever, two hand lawnmowers, one power hand lawn mower, trimmers, assorted hand tools, etc.

The power equipment should be: One 3 hp garden tractor with sulky for pulling the retriever, one minimum 15 hp tractor or home-made doodle-bug (maybe a '36 or later Ford V-8 cut down and shortened), and at least one $\frac{1}{4}$ or $\frac{1}{2}$ horsepower electric motor for tool grinding and various other uses.

Neat public rest rooms must be provided.

A utility room having work shop with work bench and vise, running water, sew-

airmen in Alaska learning sound golf.

Convair San Diego, of which John Jay Hopkins, sponsor of the international matches in Canada and an ace angel for pro golf, is board chairman, will sponsor the 1954 San Diego Open . . . John Montague, who used to play trick golf with a rake, shovel, etc., is director of a series of 13 golf movies being made for TV showing . . . Michael M. Kane and Associates designing new clubhouse for Seneca munny course, Cleveland, O.

Biggest golf tournament program ever published—by a long way in size and advertising volume, is handsome 314 pages and cover job Birmingham (Mich.) CC put out for 35th PGA championship . . . Pres. John Calvert, Gen. Chmn. Arthur Zebedee, Program Chmn. Drew Haneline and vice chmn., Harold H. Van Horn; Publishing and Editorial Committeemen Paul Stewart and Duane A. Jones, and their associates produced best job in any sports program . . . A message from Pres. Eisenhower to "Golfers and Fellow Duffers" leads the editorial matter which includes exclusive stuff from many of the widely known golf writers.

Pros did pretty well in Father's Day sales this year . . . A lot of them circularized members with sales letters that contained appreciated suggestions . . . MacGregor Golf's Tourney Club, an annual affair at PGA championships, put on its buffet supper and come-all-ye reunion of pros at Sheraton-Cadillac hotel, Detroit, June 30.

H. H. (Babe) Moore, pro at Ellinor Village, Daytona Beach, Fla., course for past 3 years and very successful in that job, continues on it . . . Paul Hahn, trick shot star, is Ellinor Village touring pro . . . Hahn spends much of 4 winter months at Ellinor playing and working on new trick routines . . . Moore is the home club pro the year-around.

Golf swing practice record with instruction in rhythm, produced by Robert Winthrop Adams, being used effectively in class instruction . . . Alfred Tull, New York City, architect for added 9 holes at Pine Tree CC, Bridgeport, Conn. . . Clinton, Okla., course started with 6 grass greens . . . Will add 3.

Golf Course Supts. Assn. of America Educational Committee recommends that mower manufacturers establish "frequency of cut" formula—number of cuts made by a mower traveling at X speed for a given distance . . . Committee also sug-

gests employment of an agronomist by the association be considered.

Pete Perelli, formerly asst. to John Battini at Olympic Club (SF) now pro at Santa Rosa (Calif.) GC . . . Cyclones, flash floods and hail storms damaged golf courses in Ohio, Ontario and New England last month . . . 8 holes ruined by flash flood at Chedoke GC, Hamilton, Ont. . . Hail stones almost as big as golf balls severely marked greens in Cleveland . . . Hail stone pits had to be repaired by hand . . . Tree damage severe from heavy winds at some New England courses.

Alex B. Ritchie, 63, pro at Evansville (Ind.) CC in summer and at Palm Beach CC in winter, died at Evansville June 14 after a long illness . . . He was born in Scotland and came to the U. S. in his youth and 35 years ago became asst. to the late Arthur Fenn at Palm Beach . . . Alex was widely known and admired as a fine gentleman professional and an admirable representative of the game's Scottish-American pioneers.

Golf in Australia says publicity given betting on McWilliam's Wines tournament is giving golfers considerable concern . . . "Deplorable and not in keeping with the real spirit of the game," Australian golfers commented on the development that put pros in the same class with the pugs and the bang-tails . . . Golf Illustrated of London says slow play in tournaments has become infectious and has seriously slowed down play at clubs.

U. S. Senior Golf Assn. will send a team to the R&A's 200th anniversary party at St. Andrews in 1954 . . . Myron Barrett succeeds A. J. Chapman as pro at Wheeling (W. Va.) CC . . . Chappie has been Wheeling pro for 33 years and is retiring . . . Chapman came to the U. S. from England in 1913 as pro at Parkersburg, W. Va. . . Almost every golfer in West Virginia knows him and loves him.

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MAJOR FACTORS IN GOLF

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The pro-shop should be self-service with the cash-register at the entrance.

Upon entering the clerk shows the customer the price information, asks what the customer has decided on, collects the money and then lets the customer help himself both to the club and balls which are prominently and neatly shelved for the customer's convenience on his way out to the tees.

Then after you have provided all of these facilities and service plus a little

hospitality some unreasonable customer may give you trouble. Working for the public is tough, but it is only that 1 per cent that makes it so. So, do the best you can bearing in mind that, there is that 1 per cent that you never will be able to please. If you please the rest you are doing a fine job and a fine service for golf and building yourself a profitable business.

ARCHITECT, GLASSMAN TEAM

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Upon entering or leaving the shop, one has to pass the "Point of Sale" — where buyer, product and seller meet. Here is where I have placed a glass show case with "impulse" items such as balls, gloves, caps, socks and sportswear.

An old closet door in the shop became a most important item for the ladies — when we covered it with a 34 in. x 68 in. full length polished plate glass mirror. They love it and admit it — the men golfers love it too, but won't admit it.

Was such a project expensive?

Within six months, I'll be able to produce figures that will prove by my increased sales in the remodeled pro shop that buying "light" instead of lighting fixtures is sound business and good merchandising.

What is most important is that this "Hole in One" affords my members a friendly, bright and modern pro shop — a most pleasant meeting place for them at all times.

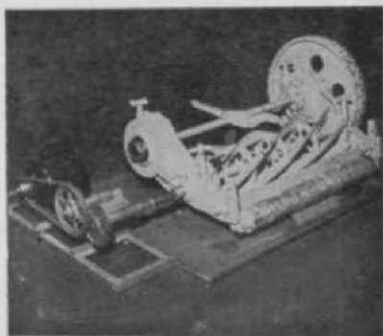
N. E. SUPTS. TELL OFFICIALS

(Continued from page 27)

labor hours, and dollar distribution. Superintendents have absorbed some of the cost by their own efforts and professional improvement. A 14-hour workday is not uncommon among superintendents.

These costs, unrecognized by the player and not met by club officials, accumulate to the limits of tolerance of the grass

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