

Snead's "Natural Golf" Is Clear Pictured Teaching

NNATURAL Golf, by Sam Snead, published by A. S. Barnes & Co., 232 Madison ave., New York 16. Price \$3.

Sam writes in this book that he's never taken a golf lesson in his life, by which he means never a formal lesson. He's learned plenty from his own experiences and watching others. He certainly has learned a lot about teaching from his hitches at White Sulphur and playing with many amateurs of various degrees of proficiency.

Sam, and Tom Shehan, who wrote the book with him, turned out an excellent, understandable standard work on golf instruction. The photographs of dramatic moments in Snead's career are especially interesting and informative as they describe clearly the details of making the shot that's pictured. "The "Questions and Answers" are another very helpful part of a book that is filled with sound instruction.

Many of the news illustrations show trouble shots. They'll be valuable to the average golfer who is in trouble a lot.

Thatch in Fairway Turf

By PAUL WEISS

(GCSA Talk)

At the Lehigh CC we have no thatch problem on putting greens cut at $\frac{1}{4}$ in. or less. Severe raking at least once each spring and removal of clippings prevent any mat formation. The same is true to a lesser extent of our bent grass tees, approaches and collars, cut at $\frac{3}{8}$ in. Clippings are removed from these areas and they are raked occasionally. Dr. John F. Cornman published a very comprehensive paper on this subject in July-August 1952 Golf Course Reporter. Warren Bidwell in March 1952 GOLFDOM discussed thatch control with aerifying, fertilizing and liming.

Many clubs during the past several years have been renovating fairways and seeding bent grasses. In a few years these clubs will have the same thatch problem that we have at Lehigh. It is the biggest maintenance problem on the course. In 1946 and 1947 we renovated our fairways and seeded with a mixture of Colonial and Highland bent. By 1950 we had fairways which looked like putting greens cut at $\frac{1}{2}$ in. They were so tight that clippings would remain on the surface, like hay,

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and therein lies the basis of our thatch problem.

The dried grass clippings work their way down into the turf and form an impenetrable layer which sheds water like roofing paper. We have been aerifying fairways at least twice yearly since 1947 and while aerification has been a great help it is not the complete solution.

With the help of the Mascaro boys we devised rakes to precede each fairway mower, similar to the Flexicomb, but much more severe. These rakes bring an enormous amount of material to the surface but we have not yet found an efficient method of removing this material and eventually it goes back into the turf. We are in need of a vacuum type machine which will pick up grass clippings and deposit them in a cart or truck for removal. There are leaf pulverizers which will do the job but the initial cost of a fairway-size machine is prohibitive.

I will list some of the factors contributing to our thatch problems at Lehigh:

SEEDING—In 1946 and 1947 we seeded with the so-called upright bents hoping to avoid the problems of creeping bent. Today our fairways are largely creeping bent. Why this transition has taken place I don't know but I would like to find out. We used nothing but the best certified blue tag seed available. We have several acres of Merion blue which now is over two years old. Last Fall a severe attack of rust almost completely defoliated our Merion blue. We are experimenting with zoysia and Bermuda and combination grasses. Perhaps a selection of these grasses may prove to be the ultimate grass for fairways.

FERTILIZATION—We feed our turf sparingly, trying to keep it tough instead of tender. I feel that heavier feeding would add to our problem of removing clippings which remain on the surface.

WATERING—Our system is 26 years old and totally inadequate for "quick" watering. We never start to water until the turf needs watering and it takes about two weeks, operating travelling sprinklers 24 hours daily, to water our fairways adequately. More frequent watering would no doubt alleviate our thatch problem by washing the clippings into the soil where they would disintegrate. We then would be watering not to improve the turf but to get rid of the grass clippings.

SPRAYING—We used sodium arsenite, at one pound per acre, on our fairways over a period of seven years for crabgrass and poa annua control. We know that chemical sprays are detrimental to the humus-forming bacteria, therefore are a contributing factor in the formation of thatch.

MOWING—We cut our fairways three times weekly during the growing season with the mowers set as low as possible.

Prevention and elimination of thatch in turf is possible but not practical with the same treatment we use on our greens. We have developed a method of severe raking and have aerified at every opportunity. These treatments have broken up the thatch to the extent that water and fertilizer can reach the soil but we still have thatch. The newly-developed thatch mower does a wonderful job of breaking up thatch and brings a tremendous amount of undecayed material to the surface. We have tried this machine and it really works but we would look silly trying to de-thatch 30 acres of fairways with a machine that is 18 in. wide and we would still have the problem of getting



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rid of material brought to the surface.

If you don't have thatch I hope you never get it but, like the seven year itch, when you get it, brother, you know it. I have several men who have been with me from 15 to 25 years and who know every blade of grass on our course. They have a slogan, "Our fairways are bent and our backs are bending." But our members love the short-cut turf and I suppose we are stuck with it.

SWINGING AROUND GOLF

(Continued from page 23)

Vernon, Ia., building clubhouse . . . Glendale CC, Seattle, Wash., to enlarge from 9 to 18 holes . . . Jack Gage succeeds Al Demaret as pro at Ojai (Calif.) Valley CC in summer . . . Al will return from Edgewater CC, Chicago, pro post to Ojai job for winters.

Amarillo (Tex.) sports writers went all out in paying tribute to George Aulbach who switched from Amarillo CC pro job where he's been 12 years to become pro at Golferest CC, Houston, Tex. . . . Writers said George has been tireless and highly productive promoter of golf not only in the Panhandle but all of Texas . . . Writers and club members lauded Aulbach as ideal club pro.

Cute stunt by Eddie Susalla, associate pro at Thunderbird Ranch & CC, Palm Springs, Calif. when his pretty wife Jeanie, presented him with a son . . . Instead of cigars Eddie passed out Dots with "It's A Boy" printed on them . . . Jockeys Eddie Arcaro and Johnny Longden and horse owner W. W. Naylor, to build 18-hole course on Naylor's ranch near Riverside, Calif.

A. Otto Moss and Frank B. Hanover, owners of Circle J Ranch, Newhall, Calif., to have 18-hole course designed by Wm. P. Bell and Son . . . Grangeville (Ida.) GC to enlarge and modernize course . . . Larry Rouse, son of Charley, old-timer in Chicago dist. golf, appointed Navy's pro at Key West (Fla.) GC . . . Larry was an asst. to Jules Platte at Knollwood Club (Chicago dist.) before joining the navy.

Tommy Bolt got fine publicity for pro golf when he disqualified himself for the 19th place tie at Colonial Invitation and returned \$275 prize money . . . Bolt saw in papers he'd been credited with 76 in final round instead of the 77 he shot . . . Scoring error occurred on 17th and nobody noticed it . . . Bolt was the only one to discover it . . . Don't suppose Tommy will get as much publicity for returning the check as he has when he's tossed a

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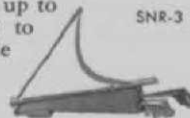
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