

Attractive Practice Area Essential to Good Club

By WILLIAM F. GORDON

ONCE a stepchild among the golf facilities at most courses, the practice field in recent years has become a darling daughter, thoughtfully provided for and much respected. At some clubs you'll find them expensively equipped and as well maintained as the course itself. At other places you'll find them helping pay off the club mortgage.

By the way of illustration, I'd like to tell you about the practice facilities at two clubs for which we're now doing work.

A few years ago, when we started work on the third nine at Saucon Valley CC, near Bethlehem, Pa., where the 1951 National Amateur championship was played, ground which formerly served as a practice field was used. And anyway, there was an obvious need for greatly enlarged practice facilities.

We took ground paralleling the No. 3 hole, not more than 100 yds. from Ralph Hutchison's pro shop, and set up a practice area about 400 by 150 yds. Thus players could hit full shots, and if they so desired, 40 could practice at the same time.

There is a regular grass tee, the full width of the strip. Incidentally, this has added utility as an experimental plot for Leonard Strong, course superintendent. Any new grasses are tested here before they are used on the course. Strong has there a 200 sq. yd. plot of B-27 (Merion Blue) — and we think it is an ideal experimental station because it gets more wear and tear than any tee on the course.

Just back of the tee area we put a pitching green and practice bunker. The green corresponds to those on the course in grass and character, and gets the same maintenance.

Saucon Valley's practice field is de luxe in every respect. Hutchison, who does all

his teaching here, has a girl attendant stationed in a freshment shed. Practice balls are obtained there. There is a telephone to the clubhouse. There is running water and lavatory facilities.

Club Range Revenue

Most clubs won't want to go to that expense. They don't have to. They can supply adequate practice facilities at low cost. Or they can even realize revenue from their practice facilities. We're now building nine holes for Bon Air CC, near York, Pa. On an unused part of the land, along a main road, we're putting in a strip of practice tees. They'll be lighted and will be operated as a driving range, open to the public. At night full shots will be hit across an idle fairway.

Some seem to have the idea that only in recent years have golf architects planned for practice areas. That is not so. I've been in this business since 1920, and have never built a course without providing a practice field. Nor do I know of any other recognized golf architect who has failed to do so.

But for a good many years, at most clubs, the practice field got little use except for lessons by the pro. There weren't as many golfers then, of course, and they didn't seem to be as much concerned about practice. Most men seemed to get to the club just in time to tee off. And many times, whenever some extra ground was needed — say for parking or a swimming pool — it was chopped off the practice field.

Practice Area Essentials

The basic requirements for a good practice field are:

1. Adequate teeing space, with room to hit a full range of shots.
2. Accessibility to the pro shop and clubhouse.
3. Pitching green and bunker, of the same characteristics as those on the course.

It's up to the club whether or not the field is lighted for night practice.

The uses of the practice field are almost unlimited, and its importance cannot be stressed too strongly. We're building a course for the brand new Indian Valley CC, near Philadelphia. The first



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thing we did was to clear a strip for the new pro, Bob Hendricks, who set up his shop in an old tack house. Thus he is developing interest among members long before the course is ready for play, and he's available to us for discussion of construction problems.

When I get to talking about practice areas, I also think of a project now being planned by Lehigh CC, near Allentown, Pa. They bought 13 acres paralleling their course and want to build a "short" course for the older members and youngsters. We've planned four par 3 holes and two par 4s. This also will be good for practice play and will help cut down congestion on the big course on heavy days.

We've designed a new public course, Fort Brewerton, in Syracuse, N. Y. There, again, there will be a line of lighted tees, along a main highway, open to the public at night when the course is not being used. So you see carefully planned practice fields not only will benefit and please the club members, but will, if needed, actually lend a helping hand financially.

Counsell, Glover, Noted Superintendents, Die

GOLF course maintenance lost two of its foremost men when John L. Counsell, supt., Salem CC, Peabody, Mass., and Willis H. Glover, supt., Fairfax (Va.) CC, died on successive days.

Counsell, 54, died at Beverly, Mass., July 29, following a brief illness. He was born in New Bedford, Mass. For 10 years he was supt., Reservation GC, Mattapoisett, Mass., prior to his 18 years at Salem CC. He was a pioneer member of the Greenkeepers' Club of Mass., being its president for two years and treasurer and director for many terms. He also was a member of the Service Section of the Massachusetts GA, and a director of the New England Turf Assn.

Counsell served two years as a director of the Golf Course Supts.' Assn.

He is survived by his widow and their daughter Marjorie.

Jack Counsell was a valued builder of golf and of his profession. He was a cheerful, helpful man. A few days before his death GOLFDOM received from him a lively letter of constructive comment on golf course equipment buildings, and with it a poem printed in August GOLFDOM. He expressed confidence that he'd soon be back

on the job and was keeping in touch with work by telephone.

Jack Counsell, like Bill Glover, died in harness.

Willis H. Glover, 49, died suddenly, July 30, after suffering a cerebral hemorrhage at the Fairfax (Va.) CC.

He came into course maintenance after graduation from Syracuse University with a bachelor of science degree in forestry. He was with Oak Hill CC, Rochester, N. Y., and Shawnee CC, Shawnee-on-Delaware, Pa., prior to coming to Fairfax in 1940 as owner's representative during construction.

He was serving his second term as a director of the Golf Course Supts.' Assn. He also had served as pres., and sec.-treas., Mid-Atlantic Assn. of Golf Course Supts. For 15 years he was on the advisory council for turf research at Pennsylvania State College. He was a member of the USGA Green Section committee.

Surviving are his widow, Mrs. Nina Glover; two sons, 1st Lt. Allison Glover, who is with US Air Force in Korea, and Donald, a student at William and Mary College; and a daughter, Marilyn, who is a student at Fairfax High School. A brother and sister also survive.

Bill Glover was one of the splendid examples of the college-trained practical scientist in turf maintenance. He was a fine worker, great friend and scholar, and a valued leader in his profession.

Counsell and Glover both were covered in the GCSA group insurance.

Muny Course Value Shows in Alameda Figures

WHEN Alameda, Calif., celebrated 25th anniversary of its municipal golf course in 1951 following figures were presented:

Course had played 1,800,000 rounds.

Golfers had paid to city as green fees \$1,023,716.61.

Initial investment was \$270,670.26, including 178 acres at \$125,920.16.

Land bought for course at about \$720 per acre now valued at more than \$5000 an acre.

Annual payroll of \$80,000, valuable asset to any city.

Course has increased value of every home in Alameda.

Course has advertised to world that Alameda's a nice place to live.