

Winged Foot's New Program Produced Fine Turf

By
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SCENE of outstanding national and international golf classics, the twin courses of famous Winged Foot GC, located in Mamaroneck in suburban New York City, have had tough sledding in recent years because of lack of rain. Extraordinarily dry weather during 1953 and the two or three prior years took a heavy toll of the turf. The situation deteriorated progressively until in 1953 practically all of the fairways lost large areas of grass and in a few cases there was nothing but bare earth to play on.

It became imperative to find some practical and effective means of restoring the fairways and tees to satisfactory playing condition. After much careful study and consideration, a complete watering system was installed during the winter of 1953, and club officials decided to undertake a substantial revision of the maintenance program which had been employed in previous years.

The results of one year's experience with the new plan were summarized in the club's annual report for 1954 as follows:

"Never have the courses at Winged Foot been so pleasant to play on or to look at as they have been this year. Of course, the bringing of water to every one of our 36 holes was part of the reason—but only a part of it.

"We had to learn new techniques; introduce improved grasses; learn to get the most out of fungicides, insecticides and herbicides; learn to apply fertilizers judiciously; and acquire and efficiently use new machinery.

"How well we have succeeded is reported in a letter from the Green Section of the USGA November 5, 1954, reading: 'It was good to see the progress made at Winged Foot turfwise. The courses looked better than at any previous time I have seen them. The fairways are almost 100% free of clover and the grasses are re-

sponding nicely to the watering, aerating and fertilizing program.'"

Winged Foot has two 18-hole courses. The fairway soils, for the most part, are heavy clay.

Tests made in the fall of 1953 showed a pH averaging a little over 6.0 which is reasonably satisfactory for optimum results with grass. Soil supplies of available phosphorous, potassium and magnesium appeared to be sufficient for normal requirements. Quite obviously, the poor condition of the fairways could not be attributed to lack of lime or of the plant foods mentioned. It was assumed that to a large extent the problem might be one of controlled water supply. Accordingly, a semi-mobile system, capable of suitably watering both courses was installed during the winter.

Thus assured of a controlled water supply, it was decided to replace the seed mixture previously used with an Astoria bent variety which was considered to be well adapted to our conditions. This was seeded liberally in the fall of 1953 with an alfalfa seeder, and some hand seeding was done during the winter.

Fertilizer Program Revised

A revised fertilizer program together with a provision for systematic aeration and effective insect and disease control, was adopted for use in conjunction with the new water supply.

In contrast with previous practice consisting of fall applications of mixed fertilizer supplemented rather substantially with organic sources of nitrogen, the new program for the fairways replaced the organics with Chilean nitrate of soda applied at monthly intervals from April to October.

In April, each fairway was given an application of 500 lbs. of 5-10-10 fertilizer per acre. This was followed in April-May with a topdressing of 200 lbs. of nitrate of soda per acre. Thereafter, additional

applications of 100 lbs. per acre of nitrate of soda were made in June, July, August-September, and September-October.

Because of the high labor cost due to the long watering-in period, organic products were used on the greens during the hot summer months. Both forms of nitrogen, organic and inorganic, were used on the tees and complete fertilizer was applied in the spring and fall which was supplemented with applications of nitrate of soda at monthly intervals throughout the summer.

The results of this general program far surpassed expectations. As indicated in the excerpt from the club's Annual Report previously quoted, Winged Foot's fairways in 1954 on both of its courses were the finest in the club's long and notable history. Equally important, perhaps, is the fact that the new fertilizer program proved to be quite economical due to nitrate of soda as the source of supplementary quick-acting nitrate nitrogen.

The economy and effectiveness of this program quite possibly may be due in part to the sodium content of the nitrate. Sodium is a very soluble element; is surprisingly mobile and has a favorable effect on the pH (reaction) of the soil. This together with its unique property of maintaining availability of the soil supplies of potassium, phosphorous, calcium and magnesium, all essential to maintenance of desirable turf growth and quality, might help to account for the satisfactory results especially as regards the virtual elimination of clover from the fairways.

We realize that one tree does not make a forest nor does one year's success denote the discovery of an infallible system of turf management under any given set of conditions. We think we have good reason, however, to expect that our progress in 1955 will match that of 1954.

Lack of Training Holds Back Young Pros

JOHNNY CAPEBIANCO, Tri-State PGA veteran, comments on the assistant situation:

"A weak spot in pro business is due to lack of experience and initiative in operating a pro shop for the greatest service to its customers. The pros who worry about taking the best care of their customers don't have to worry about how they are going to come out financially.

"Too many clubswingers are becoming

pros without anyway near adequate training in pro golf business. They order for themselves instead of their customers and get off to a bad start by over-buying.

"They are not fully aware of the first essential of a clean, bright and always orderly pro shop in which there is a smiling professional and pleasant and competent assistants to greet the patrons.

"Some master professionals complain about the difficulty in getting good assistants but the fault isn't always that of the assistants. The fact is that too many assistants are expected to be on the button all the time but get paid too little.

"Examination of this condition probably would reveal that more time and thought are required for training the assistant so he can serve better, sell more and be well worth an attractive percentage of increased shop income for which his efforts are responsible. Year-around employment would help considerably. In this respect club members could help a lot by providing off-season jobs.

"What also is needed is a frank discussion, in some cases, with club officials. Members are demanding a high standard of assistant services but in a number of instances the clubs want the professionals to assume added expenses for the assistants, greater than the present and potential income of the job warrants."

George S. May Sets Dates for \$200,000 Events

GEORGE S. MAY, the Golden Boy of pro golf, has announced the dates for his \$200,000 pro tournaments at Tam O'Shanter and the amateur events.

The May money is almost one-third of the PGA entire summer schedule prize money.

The events, and prize money:

For Men Pros.

Aug. 4-5-6-7—All-American Men's Professional tournament—\$25,000.

Aug. 9-10—George S. May's Second International Cup matches—\$8,000.

Aug. 11-12-13-14—World Championship of Golf—\$150,000.

For Women Pros:

Aug. 4-5-6-7—All-American Women's Professional tournament—\$5,000.

Aug. 11-12-13-14 — World Championship—\$12,000.

For Men and Women Amateurs:

Aug. 4-5-6-7—All-American Men's Amateur and Women's Amateur Tournaments.

Aug. 11-12-13-14—World Championship.