

Detroit District Surveys Maintenance Operations

EVERY golf club has the problem of maintaining satisfactory playing conditions for its members throughout the playing season.

Successful accomplishment of this objective depends largely upon sympathetic cooperation between the Green Chairman and the Green Superintendent. The latter cannot operate alone. No matter how competent he might be, he must have the necessary help, equipment and supplies to do a good job.

The Board of Directors naturally expects the Chairman to look after the needs of his department. But frequent changes in the chairmanship too often give the Superintendent a boss who is completely inexperienced in maintenance requirements.

Most club members are only interested in results and have no knowledge or appreciation of what is required to establish and maintain the kinds and quality of grasses essential to a good golf course. Consequently, there is a tendency to economize on the course in the belief that the grass will take care of itself and needs only watering and mowing. When this happens, the course invariably deteriorates.

Naturally, clubs have to be operated

within their means. All cannot afford to maintain their courses in championship condition. However, the cost of adequate care is not prohibitive. A neglected course, sooner or later requires a restoration operation that is apt to be more costly than the fertilizers and other materials that would have kept it in good condition. Neglect is not only most costly in the long run but it deprives the members of the satisfactory playing conditions they might have had.

Of course, if a club's major interest is something other than golf, that is a different matter but if directors imagine they can stint on maintenance and still have a good golf course they are sadly mistaken. It is important to recognize that golf courses get vastly heavier play than formerly and consequently require correspondingly more care.

To help clubs with their planning, your Detroit District Golf Assn. Green Section committee strives to promote a better understanding of the essentials that are indicated by experience and research. In our annual reports, we give a summary of the maintenance operations of the District clubs.

We undertake to help those that ask for assistance to obtain information or

Men who have nation-wide acquaintance with course maintenance often comment in high endorsement on the functioning of the Detroit District Golf Assn. Green Committee under the chairmanship of Charles G. Chapman.

The coordination between superintendents, green chairmen and other officials of clubs, that has been achieved in the Detroit district is reflected in a high standard of course condition and efficient use of money available.

Continued campaigning to get clubs to participate in supplying data for the DDGA Green Section annual reports is showing results as the accompanying abridged 1954 report discloses.

Figures of labor rates and superintendents' salaries are given in the DDGA report to its member clubs but omitted in this abridgement. It has been GOLFDOM's experience that publication of such figures, affected strongly by local conditions, misleads as often as it helps in situations where conditions differ and fully informed consideration is not given the financial data.

Maintenance cost percentage studies made under L. S. Dickinson's direction and GOLFDOM sponsorship at Amherst some years ago, and the basic maintenance cost survey outline prepared by the Midwest Assn. of Golf Course Superintendents, are the only work that has been done on the fundamentals of comparing maintenance costs.

advice from the specialists that are best qualified to deal with their specific problems. In addition to our efforts, which are largely of a liaison character, we and the Green Section of the USGA contribute financially to the turf research program at Michigan State College. From this source, we obtain invaluable information and advice based on growing conditions in our climate.

Lands Supts.' Association

Another local asset, which deserves greater appreciation, is the activity of the Michigan and Border Cities Golf Superintendents' Assn. This organization whose membership is largely composed of member clubs' superintendents, on its own initiative, meets every two weeks during the season. While its meetings are partly social, they are invariably featured with addresses by specialists in soil and turf matters. They also have open discussions of current problems during which experiences are exchanged. One meeting is always devoted to an equipment display and another a visit to the experimental turf plots of Michigan State College at East Lansing. Anyone who has attended any of these meetings knows that they are extremely beneficial.

The summary, in our annual report, of the maintenance information supplied by a majority of the member clubs records data by which any club can readily compare its performance with that of the majority. No attempt is made to set up fixed standards because conditions differ and all clubs cannot afford equal expenditures. It should be apparent, however, that those who give their courses maximum care do so because they find it desirable.

It is urged that particular attention be given to the data relating to use of fertilizers. The amounts reported used on fairways do not appear to be excessive in any instance. However, the small amounts some clubs used would seem to be little better than none. On the other hand, some of the amounts used on greens do appear to be excessive and applications too frequent. Even though fertilizer is not too expensive, it should not be wasted. It should be used in suitable amounts at the times it will benefit the grass most. Too much is as bad as too little.

In our Michigan climate, with its cold late springs, some of us question the advisability of nitrogen feedings as early as March and April.

The information is taken from reports

received from 32 member clubs relating to their course maintenance during the 1954 season. One club has 36 holes, 30 have 18 holes and 1 nine holes. (All averages in these reports are based on 18 holes.)

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES BY MONTHS:

	High	Low	Average
January	8	1	2.1
February	8	1	2.3
March	8	1	3.7
April	12	3	6.2
May	15	4	8.0
June	20	4	9.2
July	20	4	9.2
August	20	4	9.0
September	18	4	8.0
October	18	2	6.5
November	11	1	4.0
December	8	1	2.8

(The club reporting more than 15 employees from June through October had considerable repair work due to course alterations. Normally, their maximum would be about 15. Consequently, the averages shown above are somewhat higher than normal).

FAIRWAYS

Kinds of Grasses: Mostly a mixture of Kentucky Bluegrass and Bent. Some Fescue and Red Top in combination with other grasses and all a proportion of Poa Annua.

Times Cut per Week: All but two cut at least twice. Most cut 2 to 3 times. One 3 to 4 times and 2 only once.

Cutting Height: $\frac{1}{2}$ in. to $1\frac{1}{4}$ in., average $\frac{3}{8}$ in. (Those having a preponderance of Bent cut lower than those having mostly Kentucky Bluegrass).

Fertilizer Use: In totals for the entire season, eight clubs used from 45 to 60 tons; six from 24 to 40 tons, ten from 15 to 20 tons and eight from 3 to 12 tons.

Eleven clubs fertilized both spring and fall; two spring, fall and summer; one spring and summer; one summer and fall; eight spring only; six fall only and two did not state when.

For Weed Control: 30 clubs used 2,4-D. **Results:** 27 Good and 3 Fair. 17 used Sodium Arsenite. **Results:** 13 Good and 4 Fair.

12 Clubs reported crab grass. **For Remedies:** 6 used Sodium Arsenite, 1 Potassium Cyanate, 1 Tat-C-Lect, 1 PMAS and Sodium Arsenite, 1 S.S. Weedkiller and 1 Crab-Not. One club reported only close clipping before seeds matured.

Fairways Watered: 25 Yes, 7 No. Six clubs used sprinkler equipment with fixed outlets, 16 used movable sprinklers and 2 used both.

Sources of Water Supply: 7 City, 11 wells and 14 lake or stream.

Fairways Seeded: 11 Yes. **Kinds:** 4 Kentucky Bluegrass, 1 Merion Bluegrass, 6 Astoria Bent, 1 Highland Bent, 2 Redtop, 2 Fescue and 1 Seaside bent. (In 5 cases, two kinds of seeds were used).

Fairways Cultivated or Spiked: 18 Yes. 10 once (9 in Fall and 1 in Summer), 7 both Spring and Fall and 1 three times.

Type of Cultivating Devices Used: 11 used West Point Aerifier, 2 Soilaire, 4 Disc and 1 Mechanical earthworm. One club used a spiker (kind not specified) and several used Maple Lane Spikers in addition to their other types of cultivators.

Only two clubs reported using any Lime.

GREENS

Kind of Grass: All Bent Grasses. Mostly C-50 Washington. Two clubs report Friendship, three C-1 Arlington, two C-19 Congressional, six Mixed Bents (kinds not specified), four Seaside and one Pennlu. (Many Bent greens reported infested with *Poa Annua*).

How Often Mowed during Week: 5 Seven times, 12 six times, 10 five times, 3 four times and 2 did not specify.

Cutting Height: 3/16 in. to 7/16 in. Average ¼ in.

Devices used to eliminate grain or matted conditions: 19 clubs used the Verti-Cut and 8 used brushes or combs. 7 used only brushes and combs and 5 did not use anything.

Cultivated or Spiked: 31 Yes. **Type of Cultivator used:** 22 clubs used West Point Aerifier, 3 Motoraire, 4 Turferator and several used Maple Lane Spiker in addition to other devices.

Times Watered per Week: Eleven daily, six 4 to 6 times, five 3 times, two twice, seven as needed, and one no report. Thirteen watered in the morning, fourteen at night, four both and one no report.

Times Fertilized a Season: Most clubs reported fertilizing their greens approximately every 4 weeks during our 7 month season.

For first applications in Spring and last in Fall, some used formulas containing little or no nitrogen such as 3-9-18, 2-12-12 and 0-20-20 at the rate of 20 lbs. The usual application for dry fertilizers

such as Milorganite, 10-6-4 and 6-10-4 was from 20 to 30 lbs. One club reported using 30 to 40 lbs. and one 34 to 66 lbs.

Liquids: Ammonium Sulphate, Liqua Vita, Nu Green (Urea) and 5-10-5. The majority used ammonium sulphate from time to time when quick nitrogen stimulation was desired. Rate; 1 to 4 lbs. Average 2 lbs.

Principal Diseases: 13 Brown Patch, 22 Dollar Spot, 7 Helminthosporium, 2 Snow Mold and 4 no trouble this year.

Fungicides Used: All clubs but one used fungicides both for prevention and control of diseases.

Insecticides: 20 clubs used Chlordane and 4 also used arsenate of lead. 2 used only arsenate of lead. 1 used Chlordane, D.D.T. and Lindane. 1 used Black Leaf 40 and 6 used none. 2 did not specify.

MISCELLANEOUS

Grass Nurseries: 21 Yes and 11 No. Size: 700 sq. ft. to 60,000 sq. ft.

Grasses in Nurseries: The following types of Bent:

Twelve Washington C-50
Seven Arlington C-1
Six Congressional C-19
Three Toronto C-15
One Cohasey C-7
One Collins C-27
One Old Orchard C-52
One Pennlu

One club had a plot of C-1 and C-19 mixed and one a mixture of C-1, C-19 and C-27.

Types of Mowers used on Roughs: Those cutting at 3 in. or less used fairway mowers with raised blades. For higher cuts, Worthington Blitz and sickle-bar mowers were used.

Height of Cut: 1½ in. to 4½ in. Average 2½ in.

Kind of Sand in Traps: (As reported) 13, Sharp, 4 Mason or Builders sand, 4 Lake sand, 4 Washed, 3 Fine, 2 Coarse, 1 Torpedo and 1 did not specify.

Philadelphia Association of Golf Course Supts. will celebrate its 30th birthday Sept. 20 at Whitemarsh CC. The association was organized at Whitemarsh, with Frank Chapman, sec. Philadelphia Golf Assn. assisting the supts. Chapman, Burt Musser and Charles Hallowell will be guests of honor at the anniversary dinner along with the district's chairmen. Herb Graffis, GOLFDOM editor, will be guest speaker.