

Fairway "Face-lifter" Saves Seattle \$7800 a Year

By WILLIAM F. STEEDMAN

FACE-LIFTING for fairways has become a much simpler operation through the use of a method devised by Pierre M. (Pete) Masterson, Seattle's director of municipal golf.

An enthusiastic and capable golfer himself, Masterson has personal acquaintance with the tribulations of the player. Like others, he often has had the frustrating experience of having the reward of a good drive canceled by a bad lie in the middle of the fairway.

Playing 'em as they lie is a principal of golf Pete is willing to accept. The lie in a divot hole he can take as a torment that's part of the game. But there are bad lies that can be prevented and he believes in doing everything possible to prevent them.

The golfer, he contends, is just as much entitled to good fairways as to good greens. "A bad lie on the fairway," he says, "can be just as disastrous and undeserved as a missed putt resulting from a badly kept green."

Among the preventable causes of bad lies are those spots on fairways where the ground drops abruptly below the level of the surrounding turf. Such depressions may be caused by burrowing animals or, as frequently is the case in the Pacific Northwest, by the rotting of long-submerged tree roots.

Over such spots the mowers pass without effect, leaving holes in which the grass is long, tough and tufty. The player whose drive down the middle finishes in one of these spots will encounter a lie that is anywhere from difficult to absolutely unplayable, while his opponent's ball, no better hit, lies a foot away on perfectly groomed turf.

All kinds of efficient methods and equipment had been introduced for manicuring and upkeep of the course, but here was a fairway problem that was as old as the game itself and that was being handled by methods just as old.

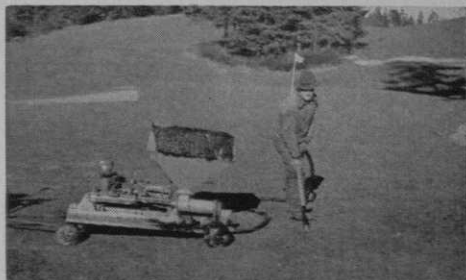
Standard practice was to cut away the sod, fill the hole with soil, tamp down firmly, replace the sod and wait for it to knit together again. Such scars sometimes took a long, long time to heal.

Losing Maintenance Battle

Surely, Masterson told himself, there must be some more efficient way of handling the problem. On Seattle's three mu-

nicipal courses the job was occupying at least four men an average of 40 days a year. And they appeared to be fighting a losing battle. Each year it seemed there were more holes than the year before.

At last Pete got an idea. Why not raise the depressed surface to the level of the surrounding fairway by forcing soil UNDER the turf by some method of injection, so as to avoid the actual cutting of



Masterson Injector forcing mud filling into fairway depression.

the turf itself and the long process of healing the scars?

His experimental equipment was an interesting adventure in improvisation. It was assembled by using the motor from an abandoned green-mower and an old pump. The device was tried out on the city's municipal courses and the results surpassed the inventor's fondest hopes.

Soil in semiliquid form was injected under the sunken turf through a nozzle. The surface was forced up to the level of the adjacent fairway in a matter of seconds. Evenness was easily obtained by making the injections from different angles. And there was the bad spot all leveled up with the surrounding ground without injury to the surface of the turf.

Further, experience showed that the turf thus raised stayed put. The injector plan produced a solid surface, packed firmly in every corner. That meant few "repeats." The machine isn't a cure-all for large depressions but it has been completely satisfactory in filling old mole and gopher runs and small declivities where tree stumps have decayed.

In actual practice Masterson has found that two men, using the new method, can fill 350 holes in an eight-hour day. By the old method four men could fill 70 holes.

Almost any type of soil can be used in the injector operation. A soil heavy in clay content appears to be particularly adaptable to the purpose. Whatever soil is used, it must be screened through a mesh of not more than half an inch.

Masterson has made important improvements on his original machine. A special feed device permits the use of a soil much more nearly solid than the mud that was used at first. The new equipment is a compact affair, weighing about 250 lbs. It is mounted on pneumatic tires that will permit its use on wet fairways without damaging the turf. A 25-ft. hose provides a range of 50 ft. as the machine moves along the fairways.

The Seattle Park Department's engineer estimates that use of the new method will save \$7,800 a year in the maintenance of the city's three municipal courses. The City Council has shown its appreciation by voting Masterson a substantial cash award for his invention.

Manufacture of the Masterson injector has been started by the Turf Services Co. of Snohomish, Wash. A number of the machines are in active use on a rental basis. The rental plan has been adopted in view of the fact that the work the machine is designed to accomplish is not ordinarily a year-round job.

Craigs, 41 Years Audubon Pro, Retires

BOBBOY CRAIGS, 41 years pro at Audubon CC, Louisville, Ky., and his wife, Clementine, were guests of honor at a club dinner Dec. 16 at which Bobby's retirement was officially announced.

Virtually the club's entire membership attended. Craigs and his wife were presented with a round trip ticket to visit the old home town in Monifieth, Bobby was given a substantial pension for the rest of his life and a gold card of honorary membership in Audubon and cuff links from caddies. Mrs. Craigs was given a large framed colored photograph of Bobby. A portrait of the old pro was unveiled in the clubhouse by two of his amateur proteges, Chris Brinke and Bobby Nichols.

Charley Vittitoe and Alvey Humes spoke for the PGA and Bobby's pro graduates and presented Craigs with a traveling bag from the Kentucky PGA. Eight of Bobby's former assistants, now master pros, were present.

Col. Lee Read, with cooperation of club officials and Bill Kaiser, engineered the affair, biggest ever held for a home club pro. Telegrams from prominent pros and amateurs to Craigs decorated the club entry hall. Tommy Armour's telephone call from Delray Beach, Fla., in tribute to Craigs added hearty sentiment.

Herb Graffis, GOLFDOM editor, spoke,

naming Bobby as a beloved representative of the pioneer pros who have served splendidly in promoting the uniquely American policy of "the pursuit of happiness."

Hopkins Trophy Matches Come to La Jolla, Calif.

AFTER three successful years in Canada, where it had its premiere, the International PGA team matches between the U. S. and Canada, for the Hopkins Trophy, will be held at La Jolla (Calif.) CC, Jan. 18 and 19.

Originated in 1952 by John Jay Hopkins, international industrialist, the Hopkins Trophy Matches will be played as a prelude to the \$15,000 Convair-San Diego Open.

The 1954 Open and PGA Champions both will be members of the US professional golf team which will defend the Hopkins Trophy.

Ed Furgol, the Open Champion, and Chick Harbert, the PGA champion, will head a team including Bob Toski, Jack Burke, Jr., Marty Furgol, Jerry Barber and Cary Middlecoff.

The Canadian team, which will be headed by Vancouver's Stan Leonard, Canadian PGA champion, will receive coveted invitations to the famous Bing Crosby tournament. As each player has his travelling expenses to and from San Diego paid, and also receives \$750, those who desire can go south early and play in the PGA sponsored events prior to the Hopkins matches.

Ryder Cup Matches, Nov. 5 and 6, At Thunderbird, Palm Springs

THUNDERBIRD Ranch & CC, Palm Springs, Calif., will be the site of the 11th Ryder Cup matches on Saturday and Sunday, Nov. 5 and 6.

The British team is tentatively set to leave England around October 13, in order to permit them to play at least one match on the way to Palm Springs and allow them requisite practice time there, according to Robert Hudson, a member of the PGA National Advisory Committee, who was instrumental in arranging the matches.

While the makeup of the United States team is still in doubt until the Ryder Cup standings are compiled, the 1955 PGA champion will be an automatic member of the team.