
WANTED—Course in perfect condition. Roomy, well kept tees; lush, divot & weed-free fairways; true, dense, if difficult, greens; etc., etc., etc. What do you have? Joe Golfer.

"Perfect" Course: It's Sum of Artistry, Simple Beauty, Sweat, Ample Budget

ONE of the many things that complicate a supt's job is lack of agreement on what constitutes "perfect" condition at a golf course.

What one player may regard as "perfect" won't be satisfactory to another. A condition that will please one set of officials and represent a miracle of achievement for the budget available, won't be acceptable to officials the next year.

And, to make the situation more perplexing is the fact that what was "perfect" several years back won't do at all now.

So, to get "perfect" condition defined, GOLFDOM queried a number of outstanding supts, whose ideas of the ideal golf course follow.

One of the perennially young "old masters" of course maintenance takes the view that perfection never can be achieved in conditioning a golf course.

Frank H. Wilson, supt., Charles River CC, Newton Center, Mass., says:

Starting with the supposition that a golfer is never off his game and the fault lies with the course, the perfect condition is out.

Second: To a superintendent his course is never in perfect condition. If he thinks it is he had better quit.

Third: Nature is exceedingly temperamental and good breaks are necessary to accomplish this theoretical perfect condition.

Fourth: A course in perfect condition for what? A national tournament or member play?

Fifth: The question would be better worded "What maintenance practices are necessary to produce a golf course in perfect condition."

Sixth: GOLFDOM is not large enough to cover the subject. Nevertheless here goes, let's play the course:

Tees should be large with more than one tee to a hole. The surface should be smooth and free from depressions. The turf should be of wear-resistant strains of grasses cut slightly shorter than the fairway; about 1/2 in. and well covered.

The tee surface should be soft enough to take a tee peg readily but firm enough to give a solid stance.

Turf should be free from weeds and mechanical blemishes. The markers should be placed at least 12 ft. apart.

Having played our tee shot we are now looking down the fairway the outline of which is pleasingly contoured, with sufficient width from the 150 to the 250 yd. marks to allow for a well hit shot. The

More on This Subject in January GOLFDOM

In this symposium one group of course maintenance authorities gives its ideas on the "perfect" golf course.

In the next issue of GOLFDOM — January, 1957 — there will be presented the expressions of other noted experts in course maintenance, among them T. M. Baumgardner of Sea Island, Ga., Don McKay of the Hartford (Conn.) CC, Gerald M. Dearie of Medinah Country Club, and E. L. Queen of the Wichita (Ks.) CC.

turf in the fairway is of sufficient density to hold the ball up well and is free from weeds, clover and divots. The surface of the fairway is free of depressions which give unfair lies. The turf is smoothly cut at a height suitable for play for the particular turf grasses.

Having hooked our ball from the tee into the rough it is readily found due to the fact that it is planted to suitable turf grasses which penalize the next shot, without holding up play.

Our next shot is into a trap. The trap has 7 in. of loose, sharp sand, free of small rocks or pebbles and is well raked. The back of the trap is free from holes and is planted to turf grasses similar to those growing in the rough. The trap is large with room to swing but difficult enough to penalize the shot.

We have now exploded our ball onto the

green. The green putts true. The turf is dense without nap and is free from ball marks, weeds, disease scars and animal and mechanical injuries. The surface is resilient enough to hold shots without foot marking. The cup is well placed and well cut. The height of cut is such that the player does not have the jitters but putts with confidence. The turf is dark green as color plays a large part in the judgment of the golfer.

Now, having played the course, we quit with the closing thought that much more could be written and that the supt. should remember that in striving for a perfect golf course condition he should prepare it for the player's sake and not for the turf's sake.

* * *

Perfection Beyond Technicalities

Harry Meusel, supt. of the Yale course at New Haven, Conn., in outlining the specifications of a "perfect" course, balances the technical and aesthetic factors in a manner that will get supts. and chairmen thinking. Here are some of his thoughts:

The artistic and good general grooming phases of maintenance are too often neglected. In our observation of golf clubs over many years and in all parts of the country the failure to seize every opportunity to make a pleasing picture of courses and clubhouse grounds is serious, extensive and inexcusable. Particularly at smaller clubs is there neglect in presenting the course and clubhouse grounds in their best dress.

Harry Meusel continues:

A golf course is made and maintained for the golfer. The degree of success can be measured by how much the course gives the golfer what he seeks — consciously and unconsciously. Golf is more than sport alone. The game provides an abundance of aesthetic enjoyment and relaxation from tension. Among its potential contributions are: (1) moderate exercise; (2) fresh air (with sunshine when possible); (3) greenness; (4) Nature made comfortable; and (5) the asset of beauty, wherein I believe lies a clue to perfection.

Perfection goes beyond the technical problems of maintenance. One can hardly consider such a thing as perfect maintenance, considering the many uncertainties of the profession — weather, disease, labor, money. Despite all these uncertainties, good maintenance is possible, and I will go so far as to say that a golf course in perfect condition is often possible. But we cannot expect a course to perfectly satis-

fy a golfer's desires if it is not maintained at its best. Therefore, I shall begin with my specifications for a well maintained course:

Greens are of first importance, because the play centers on the greens. They should be: (1) smooth to the ball; (2) soft to the sole; (3) green to the eye; and (4) capable of holding a shot with no excessive bounce.

The tees are of next importance, as they start the game, often setting the mood. They should be large enough that the golfer does not have a feeling of being restricted in his movements. Good color, low cut, ease of inserting a wooden tee are all requisites for good tees.

Fairways are next to be considered, for they comprise the bulk of the course. They should have a uniform height of cut, and uniform density. A thick turf is most desirable.

Banks and rough should also be uniformly cut. One can hardly call a course in perfect condition, if the rough is 2 in. high on one hole and 2 ft. high on another.

Traps should be soft and well-sanded, raked and with no unplayable lips.

There should be general uniformity throughout the entire course. The greens should be uniform with one another, and likewise, the tees and fairways should be uniform. This uniformity should be carried out even to the roughs.

The appearance of a course is often neglected, though the practical maintenance is duly attended to. A golf course in perfect condition is one with all potentialities realized. These potentialities may exist in views; good grooming techniques; wooded areas; landscaping; and unique tests to the golfer, such as water holes.

If a course doesn't offer views or other scenic beauty, open up and develop these places for the golfer's aesthetic enjoyment. The areas surrounding the greens should be groomed to their best. A green with a tangle of brush, a dead tree, or sparse grass around it will not look like much, regardless of its condition. If there is woodland, underbrush and low branches should be cleared. There should be a flowing uniformity throughout the course, with strong points emphasized and weaknesses improved as much as possible.

The first impression a golfer gets is at the entrance of the golf course. His second impression is often of the clubhouse. All too often these two very important places are sadly neglected — almost entirely over-looked as features of the course. They should be properly landscaped. Land-

scaping also should be used unobtrusively throughout the course.

Two courses in perfect condition will not be equal. Each course has its individual characteristics; and some courses have far greater potential than others. Some courses are limited in area, and some are monotonous in terrain; others provide scenic panorama, or individual character to each hole. A course with low potential might be brought into perfect condition, with no possibility of becoming an outstanding course — yet it will be thoroughly satisfying in itself.

My opinion of a golf course in perfect condition is a course at its individual best. It is carefully and properly maintained, with its individual potentialities fully developed.

* * *

Six Essentials of Perfection

Ford Goodrich, supt. Flint (Mich.) GC, believes in simplifying to the attainable elements of perfection of golf course maintenance. He says the specifications of a course in perfect condition would be:

Freedom from weeds.

Greens uniform in color and texture; cut $\frac{1}{4}$ in.

Fairways of good color and thick enough to give the ball a perfect lie.

Roughs cut to 3 in.

Traps clean and well-raked.

All trees and shrubs well trimmed.

* * *

Near Enough to Keep 'Em Happy

Howard H. (Pop) Beckett, widely known and successful supt. of the Capital City Club, Atlanta, Ga., is of the opinion that a hundred golfers would define perfect maintenance a hundred different ways but all of them would be kept happy in Georgia when:

Greens get special care and grooming and are cut $\frac{1}{4}$ in. or $\frac{3}{16}$.

Fringes get cut at 1 in. once or twice a week.

Fairways are cut at 1 in. once or twice a week (depending on weather).

Rough is cut once or twice a month at 3 to 4 in. (governed by weather).

Traps are raked twice a week (depends on amount of play) and all growth and loose impediments are cleaned out and banks are cut at least once a month (also dependent on weather).

Fees are cut twice a week at 1 in. and the banks trimmed once a month (more or less according to weather).

Markers are changed twice a week or



SCARECAT — The supt. of the St. Cloud (France) CC used a collection of odds and ends to rig up 18 scarecats which kept the crows off his greens last summer.

oftener (according to amount of play) and cups are changed often and placed in fair locations.

The whole course should be cleaned in spring and fall; trees trimmed, dead material picked up, shrubs and undergrowth cleaned out and the course put in such condition that the player can find his ball and play his shot.

Perfect condition, adds Beckett, depends on management, labor and equipment. "Unless a club has an elastic budget and management that knows what the most desirable playing conditions are and can move in any emergency to attain and maintain such conditions, perfect playing conditions are entirely a matter of luck."

* * *

Eye Appeal A Prime Factor

Marion Mendenhall, supt. of grounds, Kenwood CC, Cincinnati, O., where weather seldom is especially favorable to maintenance of perfection on a golf course, believes that course condition is primarily appraised by the eyes. Marion remarks:

Webster lists perfect as "without defect or blemish." Because of the number of items involved I don't think there will ever be a perfect golf course. We all remember a few years ago when we saw a well groomed course and thought it was near perfect. But in the same condition today it would not be considered so.

I have come to the conclusion that when we say a course is in perfect condition we mean it appeals to the eye. I believe that eye appeal is far more important than the actual playing qualities of the turf. As an example a green with 57 varieties of bent will never look as nice as a green of one good bent and yet the putting condition could be equal.

Before we can have a course in near

perfect condition I think 5 important items are needed.

1 The course must be designed by an architect who is an artist as well as being a practical man.

2 Weather conditions must be most favorable.

3 The supt. must be an industrious, intelligent man.

4 Budget must be more than adequate.

5 Green chairman must be aggressive, course employees of the highest caliber.

I think the perfect course must have all greens of the same kind of bent and it must be aggressive, fine-leaved and have a pleasing contrasting color with the surrounding turf area. The greens must be so constructed and maintained that they will hold a properly hit ball without being kept saturated. The height of cut and growth should be such that a ball can be stroked firmly for there is nothing so bad as a skiddy green where even the good pro is afraid to touch the ball. With a well fed green I think $\frac{3}{16}$ in. cut is about right.

The perfect tee must be large, level and planted with an aggressive grass (bent or Bermuda). It must receive about the same treatment as the greens and cut at $\frac{1}{4}$ in. high with no nap or sponginess.

Fairways should be cut at $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ in. and be very thick but not nappy. Weather conditions and the budget control the condition of the fairways. With adequate budget over a period of years all fairways could be near perfect.

I think that rough should be thick and cut at a height so that it will give about a half stroke penalty. Weather and soil condition of course would govern the height of cut.

Of course it takes years and a good budget to get a course in near perfect condition for the development of trees and improvement of soil conditions and turf takes time.

I think what we are shooting for is a well landscaped, well groomed turfed area. Eye appeal is what we seek.

* * *

Taylor Boyd, supt., The Camargo Club, Cincinnati, a club nationally famed for its condition, believes that "perfection" in a golf course is when the condition and beauty of the course contribute most to the player's enjoyment. He declares that even tournament golf should be fun.

Says Boyd:

The standard of a well maintained course should be very simple.

The tees should be firm with the grass

cut at $\frac{1}{2}$ in. so that the player has control of a shot. Fluffy, soft tees are bad.

Turf on the fairway should be cut short so that the ball sets up and gives the player a good lie and again has control of the shot.

Traps should be raked smooth and the sand firm — not hard — but not so light and loose that a high shot explodes a crater in the sand.

Greens should be firm and fast — not hard and slick. A player should expect a putt to stop on any slope and not continue to roll of its own momentum.

The rough in close — say 20 yds. — should cost the player a half-stroke. The outer or deep rough should be very severe.

A course should not be tricked up for even a tournament as exacting as a national championship. Such a tourney is to prove who is the best player under the conditions his fellow golfers find normally. In some instances all a tournament proved was who was luckiest or had the most trick shots.

Perfection Is An Art

Gordon Brinkworth, supt., Olympia Fields (Ill.) CC, like Mendenhall and Boyd, is one of a family long and well known for successful work in golf course maintenance.

Gordon brings out the point that will be appreciated by superintendents and experienced chairmen: You can't have nearly perfect maintenance unless your budget is ample to take care of every detail. Even then Nature may defeat the effort toward perfection.

Brinkworth comments:

In my opinion a perfectly conditioned golf course is non-existent.

There are many of us who strive for perfection and sometimes feel we are within its reach only to have it snatched out from under us by Mother Nature or some other factor.

A perfect green is often achieved but to put together 18 of them all on one golf course is rarely accomplished, and the greens are the paramount consideration in rating any golf course.

Money determines the standard and calibre of condition, therefore I would have to say that there are several degrees of perfection to consider with the absolute as goal.

Coupled with 18 uncontaminated, uniform greens, should be 18 level, uniformly turfed tees, plus fairways that provide conditions that allow a ball a certain amount

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Neumann's

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LEATHER GRIPS

in eye-fetching two-tones and multi-colors are setting the style on 1957 golf clubs.

Ideal in feel, these grand Leather Grips go to the country's leading club makers direct from the NEUMANN TANNERY — known throughout the world for the best in leathers.

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HOBOKEN, NEW JERSEY

"Perfect" Course

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of roll after playing a shot, also dense enough turf to allow a player favorable lies consistently throughout a full round.

With the big three mentioned above achieved, grooming in various degrees is attempted according to money available. Topographical factors such as trees, creeks, contours, lakes and rivers are all items that can be a thing of beauty or an eyesore, dependent on what expense has been utilized to improve them.

Dense but clean rough is another very important factor to consider when judging the condition of a course, especially when competitive tournaments are to be considered. Traps should be rated for the depth of sand as well as the texture.

There are other minor things to be included in the production of a perfect golf course but I have covered what I think are the most important considerations in calibrating or rating any golf course.

Trying to describe my points in rating a golf course is like trying to describe my Utopia, I have always been a perfectionist more or less and in so being might not make a suitable superintendent for a club that is too economy-minded, and this would apply in reverse, a superintendent economy-minded could never be a perfectionist. I explain this to try to illustrate in words that anyone economically-minded cannot recognize perfection or could never create perfection. This requires an artist. An artist would have trouble to balance a budget.

* * *

Equipment Is "Must" For Perfection

Pete Coval, supt., Ft. Wayne (Ind.) CC remarks:

Maintenance has moved closer to practical perfection with the improvement of chemical and machine aids but labor cost still is from 67 to 75 per cent of the budget on a watered-fairway course that is very well maintained.

Training and keeping competent and conscientious men is the most exacting part of the many parts of the superintendent's work in trying to maintain a perfect course. No matter how good the chemicals and machines are the men who use them on the course continue to be most important.

We have six tractors, three fairway mower outfits, a 5-gang and a 3-gang rough mower, two sprayers (200 gal. and 100 gal.) eight green mowers, three tee and border mowers, two aerifiers, two leaf mulchers,

a dump truck and a 1/2 ton pick-up truck and several other items of power equipment. We maintain all our equipment and overhaul it as needed.

Without a budget that is adequate for machinery, fertilizer and chemicals — as well as for labor — there isn't much chance of getting close to maintenance perfection.

Ohio Field Day on TV

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terest to most of the group. The turf fungicides Scutl, Acti-dione Ferrated, Kromad and Cadminate were tested on 18 bentgrass varieties and mixtures for the eradication of a well established outbreak of dollarspot.

Three applications of all four fungicides at 10-day intervals were sufficient to bring dollarspot under control on the most susceptible varieties of bentgrasses.

A group of twenty fungicides and mixtures of them were applied on Old Orchard bentgrass as eradicants for dollarspot.

After three treatments, the most effective reduction in amount of dollarspot was recorded for the inorganic and organic mercurials, two cadmium formulations, and a fungicide containing cadmium, chromium, thiuram, and an organic dyestuff.

Belle Meade Pro Shop

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upward, some of Lindner's merchandising ideas bear quoting.

"Wide use of personalized balls has been one of the biggest factors in maintaining a high degree of ball sales and customer satisfaction," Lindner says. As most pros report a ball sales decrease for 1956 this fact warrants looking into. "Another merchandising habit that has been profitable, especially at Christmas, has been tie sales," Lindner continues. "We limit our stock to reps, foulards and a few solid knits; the members feel they make ideal presents and our volume last year was really surprising.

"We try to make the customer feel that he can order almost anything here he would expect to find in the finest store in Nashville," is the way the Belle Meade pro summarized his merchandising philosophy.

One of the pros in the Nashville area pretty well summed up the BM operation. "There isn't anything in large city department stores you can't get at Henry's — and chances are he'll make it look better."

STOP BALL MARKS ON GREENS



ACTUAL SIZE

Provide your golfers with this inexpensive tool and have 200 to 400 men and women help maintain those beautiful and expensive greens. Our many repeat orders prove that this little tool has a definite place on all golf courses. This tool can be used as a shoe horn—to clean dirt from spikes and upper soles of shoes; also clean scoring from club heads.

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Ten percent of order in small individual envelopes with printed directions.
Extra envelopes one cent each.

Ten dollars for imprinting name of firm or club. Limit of 26 letters and spaces for upper; 29 for lower line.

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with this handy DIVOT FIXER

No need for Green Chairmen or Golf Course Superintendents to continually shoulder the blame for greens having those ugly ball marks.