

Growing Traffic Calls for Better Maintenance Routine Planning

By **JAMES E. THOMAS**

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Expanding golf activity continually confronts supts. with the problem of performing their daily maintenance chores with the least possible interference to play. Supts. do not want to cause their members any more inconvenience than necessary. Yet, if a course is to be kept in good playing condition, somewhere in the picture time must be provided for routine maintenance. Much of what is recurring work has to be performed daily during the active growing season. This also happens to be the time of the year when play is heaviest.

Should our courses cease to be groomed to the ultimate of perfection, the pleasure of playing over them no longer affords enjoyment. The upkeep of tees, greens, and fairways is constantly with us; grassy swards have to be mowed, watered, and fertilized or else they soon deteriorate in appearance, quality and playability. The ever growing popularity of the game confronts the behind-the-scenes operator with the question of how to meet the challenge and still keep operations functioning smoothly?

Start With Member Relations

Good public relations in golf club management is more important today than ever before. You may ask the question, what bearing does this have on the maintenance of a course? Without it, the going can be very tough. It definitely has a place in the picture. To the supt. a good member relations program is just as important as having a well groomed course. It can spell either success or failure. A very necessary part of the picture is a close working relationship between the club mgr., professional and the supt.

A job well done should be a supt's goal at all times and should be the first step toward the establishment of a good program for course upkeep. It is one of the tools for the promotion of good relations and gains us respect and recognition from the golfers. This makes the path a bit smoother and easier for us to explain the whys and

wherefores of those necessary little work details which occasionally interfere with a player's round of golf.

Lights on Equipment

How do we perform our work in the face of competition from heavy play? It is simply a matter of where do we go from here? Some of the answers are to equip our machinery, such as mowers, tractors, and trucks, with flood lights and do the work in the evening after play is over. Some of the courses in the East are doing this.

Another idea is to start the day's work in the pre dawn hours. The plan appears to have much merit. Tee and fairway watering could be done in the evening after play is over. This could be followed by the watering of greens and their aprons around 3 or 4 a.m. The next operation could be the raking of sandtraps and the changing of putting green cups. As dawn was breaking, all mowing operations could start. Work interferes somewhat with play. Likewise, golfers slow down workmen, causing them to lose much valuable time. A complement to the success of the plan could be a fixed opening hour for the starting of play. But it would have to be enforced. All of this means that some thought and study must be given to the planning of our work, and the supervision of play. A complete understanding of maintenance knowhow is no longer the prime requisite required for the conditioning of our courses. There are many other component parts in the picture: i.e., too many players and too few available courses. Over-saturation now exists at many courses and the remedy is not an easy one.

Many older clubs throughout the country are burdened with play which is far too heavy for the facilities they started with many years ago. On such courses we find many tees and greens that are too small to stand up under the traffic of heavy play. Here there are too few available locations for the setting of tee markers and the changing of cups. The necessity of using old tee and cup positions over and over, and too soon again after their original placement puts them back

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Also discussing revolutionary, new tire are Desert Inn CC Golf Director, Howard Capps (right) and Frank Catania, President of Catalina Rentals, which has 100 Golf Cars at the famous desert resort course.



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Plan Maintenance Routine

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in use before they have had a chance to mend. This is ideal for the building of soil compaction. Larger tees and greens are in order for this new area of golf play.

Expansion Pains

Golf is in a boom period. We all want to see it grow. This rapid and growing era of play is producing acute pains of expansion which is taxing playing facilities of our courses to their limits. Suitable property close to cities is not always available. Yet, the building of more courses is the logical answer. Perhaps playing memberships could be limited to a normal and comfortable capacity of play for the average layout. Where this is not possible or feasible an alternative plan must be found.

Golf courses that were built 15 or 20 years ago need to be redesigned so as to better accommodate the patronage they are now receiving. Tees and greens need to be larger, unnecessary trapping should be avoided. All hand labor should be reduced to a minimum. This means the establishment of easy grades that will permit machine operation. Equipment must be kept in a good state of repair and not be allowed to become obsolete; there should

be plenty of it, and it must be up-to-date. Water systems must be adequate to meet all requirements and demands placed on their installations.

Officials Responsibility

To sum up the picture: Club officials must begin to realize that the length of time required to keep courses properly groomed is of the utmost importance if existing playing requirements are to be met. The supt., if he is to keep pace with the times, must practice some foresight and ingenuity. His relations with the club membership need to be kept in a constant state of good repair. He has to successfully live with his fellow dept. heads, fully realizing that he should try to help them and expecting, in return, assistance from them.

Mascaro Heads PTC

Tom Mascaro of West Point Products Corp. has been elected pres. of the Pennsylvania Turfgrass Council. He succeeds Joseph Gackenbach, who takes over the duties of treas. Vp is Paul Leix, supt. at Allegheny CC, Pittsburgh, and secy. is H. B. Musser, professor emeritus of Penn State University