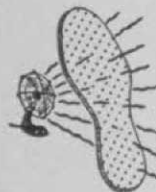


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Toughest Part of the Job

Pity the Poor Men Who Put Finishing Touch on the Course

By **ROBERT A. SIMMONS**

Golf Course Architect
Kokomo, Indiana

After many years of building and designing golf courses, I have come to the conclusion that the unsung heroes of golf are the men or committees who accept the responsibility of finishing a course after the construction people have departed.

I've seen nature throw every trick in her black book at these people and watched them work from daylight till dark overcoming the troubles they fall heir to.

I have seen droughts that have lasted for months and rains that continued until many fairways were flooded. I've seen cloudbursts wash out greens and hurricanes blow down hundreds of trees. Too often, unseasonal cold spells have frozen out newly germinated grass.

There are other handicaps for which you can't blame nature. For example, installing a water system in the desert in the summer months or through solid rock, or trying to grow grass on fairways where there is four inches of topsoil over salty sand pumped out of the ocean. I've even seen people insist that a supt. try to grow grass in the dormant season.

Complication In Watering

At Moon Valley in the desert near Phoenix, Ariz., I saw Jim Snyder, the supt., work in June, July, and August installing the most complicated, and the best, sprinkling system I have ever seen on a course. The way his course is laid out there are to be homes along each fairway. The course is watered from one property line across the rough, fairway, and opposite rough to the other property line. Every square foot of the course is watered. Three separate water lines run through each fairway. Eight and six-

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inch lines are installed down the center of the fairway, and four-inch lines along each side.

Snyder's job was further complicated by the kind of pipe that was used. It was a concrete pipe with a steel jacket around it. It is an excellent pipe but caused fitting problems. Whenever a cut had to be made, the steel jacket had to be cut so the pipe would be the correct length. Then it had to be welded together again before being dropped into place.

I completed construction of Cypress Lake CC course in Fort Meyers, Fla., the last week in April and a committee took over the responsibility of installing the water system and seeding and putting the

finishing touches on the course.

Trenches Had to be Blasted

Installing this system was complicated by outcroppings of rock and made necessary the use of dynamite in digging every foot of the fairway trenches. This, of course took much time. Rock was blown all over the course and had to be cleaned up. This being the growing season in Florida, weeds took over before the water could be turned on. Ormand Bermuda was planted on the fairways, and Tifton 328 on the greens, but before planting could be started, the weeds had to be cut and cleaned out. This did much damage to contours that had to be repaired and delayed further the finishing of the



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the Cypress Lake course.

That wasn't the end of the trouble. As the work was completed, hurricane Donna came blowing around the southern tip of Florida and turned north up the west coast. The core of the hurricane blew directly over the course. Hundreds of trees were blown down and several fairways were flooded. After the water receded and the debris cleaned up the dormant season was coming on. But after much hard work and perseverance the job was completed, grass was grown and the course was ready for play for the winter season.

At the Royal Montreal GC we had only one problem but a serious one. We were building a 45 hole golf course and had promised to get it built and seeded

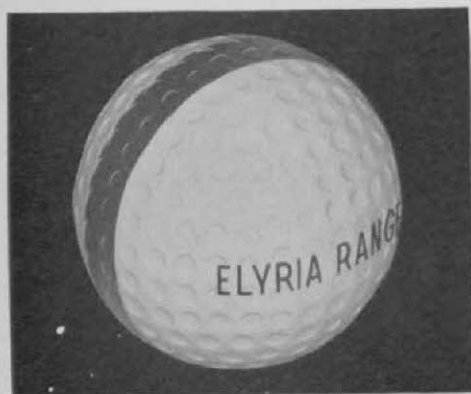
in one short Canadian summer. We had every piece of equipment that we could possibly use, all of the manpower we could keep busy and all the material we could get. I was in charge of all earth-moving and shaping of greens, tees, bunkers and contouring. The water system was being installed by the Atlas Co. of Montreal. Harry Owens, the course supt. who has been at Royal Montreal for 38 years, was in charge of all topsoiling, preparation of fairways, fertilizing and seeding.

At one time during construction we had 34 pieces of bulldozer type equipment working, and counting trucks, pumps, tractors, stone pickers, we had a total of 150 pieces of motorized equipment in action.

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ing of a hole, Atlas would come along with the water and Harry would follow with the topsoil. As quickly as the water could be turned on, he would do the seeding. All topsoil for the greens was prepared and stored in a central pile. When it was hauled to the green site, Harry had it dumped off to the side and hauled on with wheelbarrows when necessary. Grading was by hand.

The fairways there were so full of stones it was nearly impossible to take a step without stepping on one and the only way to get them clean was to pick the stones by hand. More than 100 men handpicked them from a single fairway at a time, and then went over it as many as five times picking up every stone down to the size of a marble.

Topsoil Four Miles Away

We built the Lyford Cay course at Nassau in the Bahamas on solid rock. All greens, bunkers, contours, etc., were built out of the rock. The only topsoil on the island had to be hauled four miles to cover the entire course. I did all the finishing of this course and actually did most of it three times. Just as I finished seeding in January, 1958, we had an unseasonal hurricane and got four inches of rain in two hours. We had anticipated heavy rainfall and had dug four-foot-deep conversion ditches at the bottom of the hill to catch the water coming down and take it around the golf course and out to sea. But there was too much rain in such a short time and it ran over the ditches and flooded the golf course and washed most of the soil and seed out to sea. We had just completed the work again and on March 10 we had a three-inch rain in 25 minutes. Soil and seed were gone again.

When I was halfway finished with the seeding the next time, Jim Yancey came over as supt. and I turned the job over to him and caught the next plane to Florida. Water at Lyford Cay is furnished by windmills pumping into a reservoir and from there it is pumped to the course. It always is in short supply. Yancy personally supervised the sprinkling 24 hours a day, directing the moving of the sprinklers and the length of time that they were kept at each location. In just a few short months the course was being recognized as the finest in that part of the world, thanks to Jim's care in the post building period.