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# Sewer Rodding Takes Debris Out of Lines at Oak Park Club

By WES UPDEGRAF

Supt., Oak Park (Ill.) CC

When you're responsible for maintaining a golf course, clogged sewers are not just a temporary nuisance, but a serious problem. The longer you let them go, the worse they get. Unfortunately, however, most of us are not sewer experts and when we have sewer problems, we don't know how to take care of them. And, so, we tend to put them off until tomorrow or next week, and eventually wind up replacing several hundred feet of sewer line.



Updegraf

This is foolish, as we found at Oak Park. There are firms which specialize in contract sewer cleaning. They do an expert job for surprisingly little money.

### Pockets Build Up

For several years, we had a drainage problem on the fairways between what are now our 6th and 7th holes. They were each rain and water pockets began to dot the course.

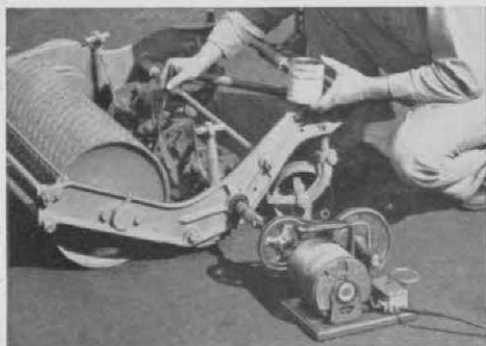
At first this flooding would shut down our course for only 24 hours or so. The members accepted this without too much grumbling. But when these shutdown periods stretched to two, three and four days after each rain, the complaints increased. Since we normally accommodate about 75 golfers on a typical week day, and about 150 on Saturday and Sundays, we had to do something.

### Grass Loses Color

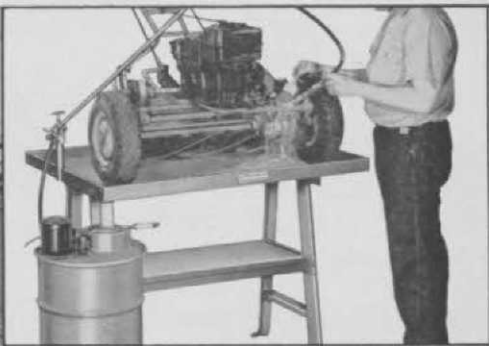
In addition, our grass was becoming discolored because of the excess water. We knew we were faced with sod spoilage if the water pools were allowed to stand for any length of time.

At first we tried to rod the sewer lines manually, but they were so packed with mud and roots that we couldn't pene-

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trate them. More powerful equipment was needed. We called on National Power Rodding Corp., a nationally-known sewer-cleaning firm which has its headquarters in Chicago.

This firm made an inspection of our sewer system and found that the lines which were causing the trouble included roughly 2,500 feet of 6- to 12-inch concrete pipe running from the fairway to an outfall in the Des Plaines River. We contracted with National Power to handle the work and it moved its equipment in a few days later.

Sewers up to 10 inches in diameter were rodded and brushed by huge rodding machines. Huge masses of tree roots and muck were removed.

## Line Completely Plugged

The biggest problem, however, was the 12 inch pipe. In one 522-foot stretch, the tree roots were so thick that they had completely plugged the line. In another 505-foot section near the outfall. Large accumulations of rock, bricks and roots proved to be too much for the rodding machine to handle. Bucket machines were brought in to remove this material.

These machines, powered by 25 horsepower engines, were set in place at ad-

jacent manholes. A specially-designed bucket was lowered into one manhole and drawn through the clogged line toward another. On the forward pass, the jaws of the bucket opened to scoop up the debris in the line. On the pullback, the jaws closed, carrying the debris back out of the line. With a combination of trained crews and powerful equipment, the entire job was completed in four days.

Opening up our sewers immediately improved the drainage in the fairways and water saturation no longer causes long shutdowns. In addition, the sewer cleaning netted us some unexpected gains.

## Blueprint Supplied

National Power supplied us with a blueprint of the sewer lines which they cleaned, pointing out defective or potentially defective areas. As a result, we were able to plan our preventive maintenance work in advance to forestall potentially expensive emergencies.

For example, the cleaning had revealed that one section of sewer line had a reverse pitch. Water was trapped in a sort of valley, standing about a foot and a half deep in one manhole. This allowed silt to settle in the bottom of the line at that point and block it.

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At another point, the contractor located a manhole buried eight inches under a concrete roadway. To add to this, they found that two lengths of 10-inch pipe had been added to 12-inch pipe at the outfall in order to extend it. The smaller pipe acted as a bottleneck, constricting the sewage flow and catching debris. These two lengths were removed by the contractor, and we have since replaced them with 12-inch pipe.

### Wide Open Joints

Many courses, like ours, are several decades old and are increasingly plagued with drainage problems. For instance, in the old days drainage tile was often laid with open joints. This supposedly allowed for additional soil drainage. The unfortunate result was that open joints permitted roots, sand and silt to enter, followed inevitably by a blockage of the pipe. Periodic power rodding of these lines is necessary to keep them open and eliminate backup.

Finally, periodic cleaning can save a golf club money by extending the life of its sewers. With present replacement costs for new sewers running up to \$8 a foot, it makes sense to pay a sixteenth of that amount to keep the old sewers working at full capacity. This is what we have done at Oak Park. It has paid off in a better-looking course, happier players, and reduced maintenance costs.

### Jones Gets Hagen Award

Presentation of the 1962 Walter Hagen Award to Bob Jones was made at the Masters tournament. The presentation was made by Dr. S. Leonard Simpson, chairman of S. Simpson Ltd., donor-sponsor of the trophy. The award is made to persons considered to have done the most for Anglo-American golf. The first award, fittingly enough, went to Hagen. Jones' Grand Slam came in 1930, the year he retired from competitive golf at the age of 28. In all, he won 13 major championships between 1923 and 1930. He was a founder of the Masters, which was first played in 1934.

Shackamaxon G & CC, Scotch Plains, N. J., which is making a "comeback," was host to N.Y. metropolitan golf writers in April as a forerunner to creating new interest in the club. Owner Philip J. Levin, who recently hired Jimmy Thomson as pro, plans to spend \$250,000 in improving the clubhouse and course.