

Builders Overlook Equipment Needs In Starting New Courses

*Letting a construction contract doesn't take care of all the costs . . .
The purchase of machinery and supplies, for example, is a
\$20,000 or \$30,000 expense that's often overlooked*

By **HERB GRAFFIS**

The most common mistake being made in new golf course construction is failure to earmark money for equipment, supplies and materials required to operate the finished course.

GOLFDOM, on several occasions, has emphasized this lack of adequate budgeting for courses being built with government financial help. There already has been some improvement in the picture since the matter has been brought to the attention of persons approving the loans as well as borrowing the money. Already, federal agencies are recommending that \$20,000 be budgeted for equipment and supplies for a new 18-hole course. That figure is a practical minimum.

The equipment budget on a first class, new 18-hole course usually runs from \$30,000 up.

Unexpected construction expenses, wash-outs, erosions, etc. resulting from adverse weather, cleaning up, repairs and revisions (usually of bunkering), drainage sys-

tem correction and extension, corrections of deficiencies in seedbed preparation and weed elimination are among the "unexpected expenses to be expected" before a new course reaches desired condition.

The unforeseen expenses, coming about the time many new course projects are running out of money, account for the shortage of equipment that is required to operate properly and thriftily. Any maintenance or finishing job, delayed because of inability to have equipment available at the right time, is going to be unduly costly when it is finally completed. Before it is done, players will be dissatisfied and membership sales campaigns slowed.

Same Mistakes Repeated

C. O. Borgmeier of George A. Davis, Inc., Chicago, a veteran of the course equipment and supply business, says: "Many mistakes that were made in the '20s are being repeated. They stem from inadequate financing and too much reliance on the continuation of boom conditions.

"Very often promoters of new courses

start with little or no knowledge of costs." Borgmeier observes. "They let a contract to a construction firm and think that takes care of everything. But equipping the course and bringing it into play calls for considerable additional expense before any revenue comes in.

"An experienced golf businessman understands what must be done and paid for. One man we know spent \$300,000 for an 18 he had built not long ago. He planned for an additional cost of \$100,000 to complete the course so it was ready for play. This contingency budget was earmarked for much reseeding and sodding, intensive maintenance for four months, finishing traps and all necessary maintenance equipment."

Owners Need Advice

Overlooking the budgeting of equipment for a new course is comparable to the case of the golfer who doesn't count his strokes — the fellow really cheats himself," Ray McMicken of B. Hayman Co., Inc. Los Angeles, observes.

McMicken continues: "The equipment deficiency problem often is as critical with inexperienced course promoters who have money as it is with new builders who aren't adequately financed. Good judgment, as well as money, is essential. The architect who satisfies his client makes good use of the equipment dealer's specialized advice which is based on knowledge of local conditions.

"When we have been able to discuss the maintenance equipment picture with course promoters and have had the supt. in on the consultation, danger of inadequate machinery and supplies have been minimized. Enough such cases can be cited to constitute a warning.

"The architect is a loser if he fails to urge sufficient equipment for correct maintenance of the job," McMicken adds. "The people who are paying for the course expect him to think ahead and know the answers. In one instance where money was no object, people who never had been involved in the building of a course received from their architect a maintenance equipment and supply budget of \$20,000. This would have been fine for an ordinary course, but this particular job was exceptional in its requirements as well as the owners' demands. The developers eventually found it necessary to spend about \$45,000 for what was needed to maintain the course. They didn't mind the money but they were unhappy about having to

wait for delivery of additional equipment."

Equipment dealers queried by GOLF-DOM say that an architect's service to new course owners should include ample information on maintenance equipment requirements. If the architect does not provide this guidance, he probably will be criticized by officials of a new course and its supt., notwithstanding the excellence of course design.

The importance of adequate equipment being recommended by the architect also is noted by Jack Krigger of J. B. Krigger & Co. "In many instances," he says, "we have found that clubs forget all about budgeting equipment. They will pay an architect and builder between \$275,000 and \$500,000 to construct an 18-hole course and then, as an afterthought, allow about \$2,500 for equipment. "That meager equipment allowance definitely hurts the club. It also hurts the architect who would like to see his work maintained in a way that does credit to him. It certainly hurts the equipment dealer."

Shortage is Common

In every part of the country dealers have noted that the shortage of maintenance equipment for new courses is the usual thing. Robert S. Rushmore of Malvese Mowers and Equipment, Inc., Long Island, N.Y., C. E. Griener of Indianapolis, Reg Perry of Turfaid, Inc., Memphis, Ross Sawtelle of Sawtelle Brothers, Danvers, Mass., B. G. Reemelin of Zaun Equipment Co., Jacksonville, Fla., W. E. Robison II, of Robison's in Kansas City, and Jerry Nash of Jacobsen Power Lawn Mower, Columbus, O., say that in the areas they serve, new clubs generally overlook budgeting for what is necessary to get their courses operating.

Ross Sawtelle says that few construction or green committees of new clubs have any idea of the equipment required to start a 9- or 18-hole course. He adds it would be very much to the advantage of all architects to be realistic about the equipment list. But not all of them are. B. E. Reemelin declares that courses often don't budget enough for equipment and sprinkler systems and by the time the course is graded and planted, there is a shortage of money. Real estate developers, who put in golf courses, are especially unlucky, unwise or ill-advised in not being informed about what it will cost to get

(Continued on page 114)

30 billion
GALLONS OF WATER

3 billion
MORE GALLONS

are evenly sprinkled over
the nation's golf courses by the

NELSON-RAIN BIRD
equipment currently in use.

will be required to operate

new **NELSON-RAIN BIRD**

equipment now being installed on the newest, most modern golf courses in America!

Not only does Nelson-Rain Bird offer you the world's most complete line of sprinkling equipment — but the world's finest!

Specify Nelson-Rain Bird and get the added advantage of 1 convenient source for all your sprinkler needs!

RAIN BIRD

The world's most
complete line
of sprinkling
equipment



For complete engineering and design information, contact your local Nelson-Rain Bird Dealer or write direct to:

IN WEST: NATIONAL RAIN BIRD SALES & ENGINEERING
P.O. Box 547 • Azusa, California

IN EAST & L. R. NELSON MFG. CO., INC. • RAINY SPRINKLER SALES DIV.
MIDWEST: 609 West Lake Street • Peoria, Illinois

basis, figuring that they are trading on a weakness that is the lot of most golfers — they are naturally fine or even great putters, but the trouble is they never have found exactly the right club. Here's a chance to give them the putter they have been looking for. Trial runs with wood and iron sets probably are more prevalent at Sunnehanna than they are at most clubs because Masterson is convinced that at least 50 per cent of his sales are made only after his customers give the equipment the 18-hole test. The soles of the woods are taped when they are put out on trial. Nothing, of course, has to be done with the irons because their brand new look can be quickly restored with cleaning and polishing.

Equipment Needs Overlooked

(Continued from page 28)

and keep a course operating in satisfactory condition, according to numerous dealers.

C. E. Griener says: "We have made up equipment lists and maintenance budgets for people intending to build courses and, in almost every instance, they were sur-

prised to find the costs more than they had expected. In some cases the prospective builders were able to find enough money to do the job. Others gave up."

Bill Robison observes: "In the past five years, many clubs and builders have been sadly disappointed by the net cost of construction plus the cost of getting the course into playable condition.

"There was not a practical estimate of the amount of equipment necessary. The repairs and maintenance required in keeping the equipment operating was overlooked and so was the cost of equipment replacement."

J. D. Baker, sales mgr. of H. V. Carter Co., Inc. points out that new people in course building often are misled by hopes of buying machinery at low prices. They don't realize that there simply isn't any way of cutting under what an experienced equipment and supply dealer recommends as minimum equipment needs.

Sound Start For A Course

Baker says that he recommends these things in getting off to a sound start with a golf course:

(1) Secure the services of an experi-

enced and thoroughly qualified course architect, particularly one who is familiar with the area and with the kind of people the course is to serve.

(2) Be sure there is an adequate water supply, and know approximately what water costs will be.

(3) Consult a course specialist who can spend enough time working with the construction and equipment committee in recommending what is necessary for a job.

(4) Attend course supts' association meetings to discuss conditions and problems and to get help in deciding what supplies and services are available.

(5) Make sure that suppliers have adequate stocks of replacement parts readily available in case of equipment breakdowns. New course maintenance can be very rough.

(6) Budget equipment needs to provide a "cushion" on greenmowers, sprinklers, hose, flags, poles, markers, etc. Always have enough so that in case a greenmower breaks down there is a spare. There should be a power mower for every three greens.

(7) Most important of all: There should

be a thoroughly experienced supt. with an adequate crew. Too many new courses have problems of too few men and underpaid supts. You get what you pay for. This is true of men as well as of equipment.

Ask Men Who Know

Orville Clapper, head of Clapper Co., West Newton, Mass., probably has been in on as many new course planning sessions as anybody in the golf equipment business. He sums up the situation as one in which the equipment men should be consulted when the course building enterprises are being organized because they can and will give needed guidance at a time when fund-raising is being planned.

Clapper and other dealers tell of new course operators being told, when they are about ready to open their courses and are nearly out of money, to borrow fairway and greenmowers and to ask for six months to a year before paying for other needed equipment and supplies, even fertilizers, fungicides and insecticides. This is not realistic advice, Clapper observes. Sometimes it is impossible to borrow equipment and credit is not always there for the asking.



Champion Electric Golfster



DeLuxe Gasoline Golfster

Introducing the **ALL NEW**

1964 Cushman Electric

Let us arrange a demonstration of the complete line of Gas and Electric Models for Fleet and Individual Owners

RENTAL FLEET SALES and SERVICE

We welcome the opportunity to advise and bid on your requirements

CHICAGOLAND CUSHMAN SALES

61 E. 23rd St., Chicago Heights, Ill.

Phone: Area 312 — 755-9300

FLORIDA CUSHMAN SALES

6031 Beach Blvd., Jacksonville, Fla.

Phone: Area 305 — 724-8712