



GRAU'S Answers to Turf Questions

By FRED V. GRAU

There seems to be no slackening of the pace at which new golf courses are being built or at which established clubs are adding another nine or eighteen. The owners of some of the projects are more fortunate than others: their course was built right the first time by a competent architect-builder team armed with firm reliable specifications that leave no doubt as to *who* does what, how, and *who* is responsible.

What about "the others" where specifications virtually are non-existent and no one seems to be responsible. We are upset and worried about the reports from men in the field who know, who say frankly that this or that course will have to be rebuilt in a year or two after it has been opened to play. We've seen them ourselves.

For many years there has been a total failure on the part of any national organization (or international, for that matter) to attempt to correct this deplorable, costly and wasteful situation. For any individual to tackle this gargantuan dilemma is unthinkable.

Obviously the American Society of Golf Course Architects cannot correct the situation because some of the offenders are not members of the organization. It would be difficult, if not impossible, to impose restrictions and sanctions upon a non-member. It must be borne in mind, too, that some of the finest courses that do *not* have to be rebuilt are the products of architects who belong to no organization except some local superintendents associations, and the GCSAA, of course.

Can the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America see to it that every new project is done right the first

time? Obviously not, even though there has been expended great effort on its part to "Avoid Built-In Headaches" (Houston, 1960).

The superintendent of the new course is hired (usually) after the damage has been done. Then, too, even though the new superintendent has been hired to supervise construction and to eliminate errors and any deviation from specs, sometimes he cannot be effective. I've seen a capable young superintendent tearing out his hair because the owner told him to "mind his own D--- business" when he reported a flagrant deviation from specs.

Can the universities and the agronomists who prepare guide specifications be asked to be responsible? Obviously not, because they are not in a position to assume control of operations. They can help write specs when and if they are asked. Many times they are by-passed in the interests of so-called "economy."

Can the ruling body for golf, with its far-flung agronomic divisions, do anything to correct the deplorable vacuum in the system? Apparently, the answer, as we understand it, is "No, we can't help them until the club becomes a member and subscribes to the service."

Where does the National Golf Foundation Stand? This splendid group, understaffed as many organizations are, does not have the directive to police all the new projects.

At the risk of being censured for being facetious, I can't resist wondering if maybe the Boy Scouts or the 4-H Clubs could develop projects in this field.

Seriously, and this is a very serious situation, we wonder if there isn't some

Continued on page 66



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Continued from page 20

merit in considering the development of a small non-partisan unbiased group (a committee, if you please) to review all architectural and building proposals for golf with a view toward eliminating those which have no chance of success. I cannot claim this idea as my own. I wish that it were possible. A short time ago in a conversation with Eddie Ault this idea of a "Review Board" was partially developed. The savings to be realized from stopping (or revising) only a few ill-advised projects easily could support an office, a full-time director, and traveling expenses for the committee for a considerable period.

We did not have the time to develop fully the operational aspects of the "Review Board." I've presented only bare (and mostly unpleasant) facts. Do GOLFDOM readers agree with Ault and me that the idea has merit? Could it be made to work? How could it best operate? Would each of several organizations be willing to put one representative on the Board? Obviously, and intentionally, I have suggested an open-ended proposition. There must be *some* way that some group could help the deluded and those who are about to be "flim-flammed." Does anyone have a better suggestion?

Q. Our Penncross greens are only two years old and are considered "tops." About mid-March I noticed that the greens looked "dappled" or "mottled." We followed your advice and bought Blue Tag Certified Penncross seed and determined that the seals were unbroken when the bags were delivered. What is your explanation of the dappling? (Maryland)

A. Penncross bent seed is produced as a *polycross* from three vegetative parents. It is inevitable that, at certain times of the year, individual plant types will become evident in a superficial way. Cold weather develops these characteristics. Remember the vari-colored patches in the old Seaside greens; some green, some purple, some puffy, etc? You need feel no concern about the dappling. As summer approaches the vigorous growth

Continued on page 68