

# Two greens are better than one

*Alternate greens on each hole allow maintenance work on one green, while play proceeds on the other.*

By WILLIAM TANLER

Ala Wai has been Hawaii's most popular golf course for many years, but not because of abundant rich turf or ideal playing conditions. In fact, locally, the most common non-technical description of conditions has been "terrible."

Ala Wai owes its popularity to its location, just four or five blocks from the Royal Hawaiian Hotel near downtown Honolulu, the fact that it is available for play 365 days a year and because golf in Hawaii, as it is everywhere, is booming. Under these circumstances, Ala Wai has been subjected to an average of 400 rounds a day that add up to about 140,000 rounds a year, pressure enough to wear out any golf course.

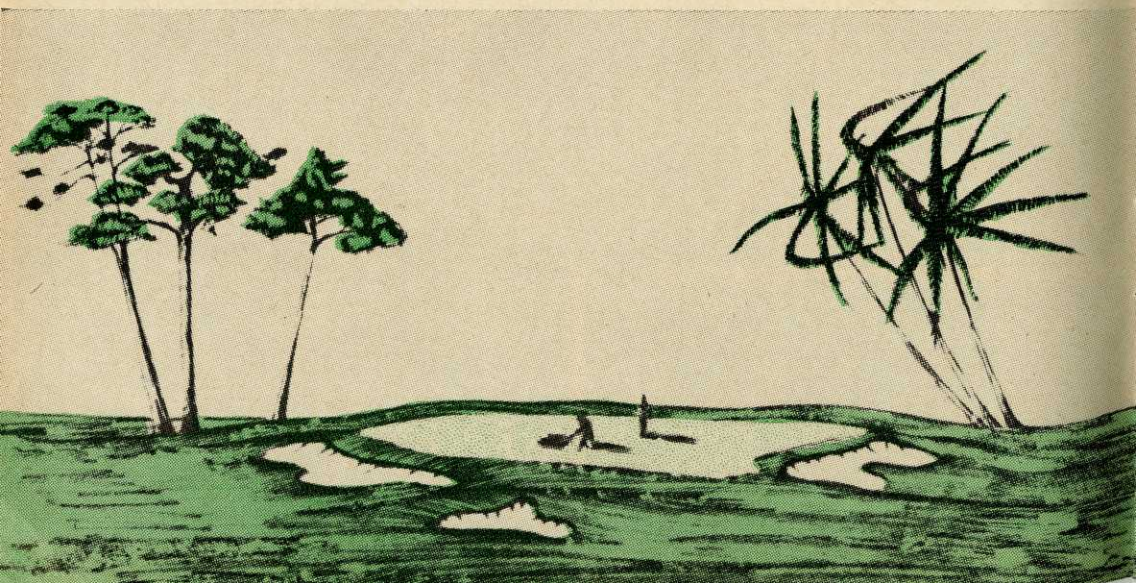
To make matters worse, course superintendent Henry O'Sullivan, responsible for maintaining Ala Wai for the parks and recreation department, was forced to depend largely on natural rain-

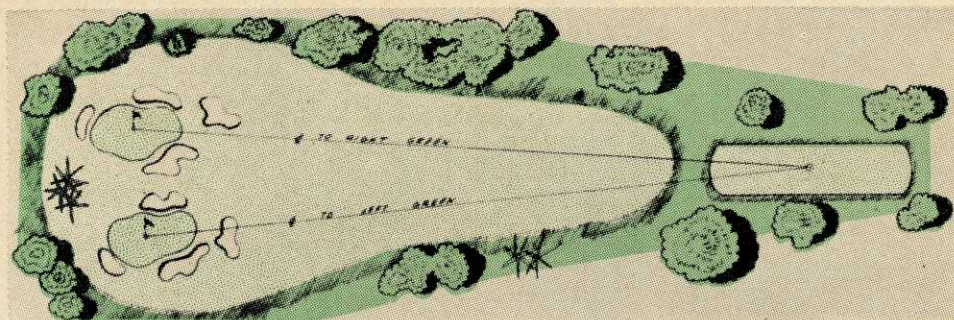
fall due to inadequate irrigation.

To the delight of Honolulu golfers, the city and county of Honolulu elected to take steps this year to give the 6,400-yard Ala Wai a face lifting. The first step was awarding a contract to Bob Baldock, a golf course architect from Fresno, California. The second step was approving Baldock's plans for Ala Wai, and the third step was the awarding of a contract that enabled reconstruction to begin in February of this year.

The key to Ala Wai's rejuvenation is Baldock's plan for easing pressure on the course by providing two greens for every hole on the 18-hole course. The concept of two greens on each hole is to enable the course crew to perform maintenance on the odd greens without slowing play and, incidentally, in less time.

The concept of two greens on every hole will undoubtedly be watched close-





*The most notable feature of Ala Wai's current renovation program is providing two greens per hole. Above, a bird's eye view of one of the holes, below, as the golfer sees it. Having two greens allows play to proceed on one green, while regular maintenance proceeds on the other.*

ly by other course superintendents facing similar problems of heavy play and little maintenance time. But the solution to Ala Wai's problems may not solve all problems that develop at courses subjected to abnormal use.

"I would guess a course would have to have 100,000 to 150,000 rounds a year to make the investment in a second set of greens practical," Baldock said. "This would make it uneconomical for courses in the north and east where there's always a short playing season."

The idea of building two greens originated in Japan, Baldock said. In fact, the course used for the recent Canada Cup in Japan, the 1966 matches at Yomiuri Country Club in Tokyo, was

played on a course equipped with double greens. There is also a public course near Tokyo using the same plan.

"The idea of using two greens in Japan is different than the idea planned for Ala Wai," Baldock said. "In Japan, they use two greens because they generally employ poor maintenance techniques and they top-dress their greens frequently. At Ala Wai, the system of two greens is being used to give the crew adequate time to perform normal, regular maintenance."

As an example, Baldock explained that on one recent trip to Ala Wai, he watched one man take almost two hours to cut one green that should have been finished in 15 minutes. "He was able to make about two passes between each

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**ALI WAI GREENS**

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group of golfers." There was little choice, Baldock pointed out, because the course was in use not only daily, but from 12 to 14 hours every day.

The idea of using two separate greens on one hole has been tried in the United States before, Baldock said, "but as far as I know, it was only on par 3 holes. It saved time on the par 3's, but the players bunched up later. I think the Ala Wai course will be the first in the United States to have separate greens on all 18 holes."

Although specific plans have not been completed as to how play on the re-designed Ala Wai course will be regulated, there are a number of possibilities. One suggestion has been to adopt two separate score cards, possibly a red card for one set of greens and a blue card for the other set. Then, of course, a local ground rule will have to be adopted to permit a free drop off any wrong green on which a stray shot lands.

"At Ala Wai," Baldock said, "there won't be any hidden greens to complicate play. The purpose of the double green system is to provide a higher quality course for the public to use, not to make it a more difficult course. The parks people don't want to slow play."

The new Ala Wai, when completed, will play about the same regardless of which individual greens are used. "In Japan," Baldock noted, "the second set of greens can be used to make the course more difficult. The two greens on each hole at Ala Wai will be about the same distance off the tees."

The schedule for alternating greens will be determined largely by the type of maintenance being performed. For example, normal cutting may make it desirable to alternate greens every day. But if the greens are being aerified, they may want to give them three or four days to recover.

Although the double green system is the most unique of the changes planned

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basic as Dr. Clark's editorial or as complicated as a club's "locker room lawyers" care to make them, but if a club lacks either it may be headed for trouble. The principles to keep in mind are:

**Policy**—Should define and support overall club purpose—should aim for the greatest good for the greatest number of members—should be consistent.

**Long Range Plans**—Should be clear and measurable. They should set specific goals and use figures and dates whenever possible — should consider both internal and external restraints, size of membership, growth of the community, budget limitations, tax problems, and future needs are examples—should include means of keeping the membership informed of any changes.

Both policy and long range plans should be reviewed periodically. We should recognize that objectives and conditions can change and act accordingly. ●

## ALA WAI GREENS

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for Ala Wai, it is only part of the larger plan to recondition the course.

In addition to the new greens, larger tees are being developed so three sets of tee markers can be used. The tees will be roughly 150 by 50 feet.

The existing tees at Ala Wai have been largely stripped of grass.

A new automatic irrigation system is another major investment that will improve golf at Ala Wai and enable the fourth step, a planned program of fertilization to be carried out knowing there will be dependable water.

The total investment in the rebuilding of Ala Wai may well top half a million dollars, thanks primarily to the abnormally high labor costs in the Islands. But the investment is justified in the opinion of the city and county in that it is necessary to maintain the high number of rounds being played at Ala Wai each year. ●

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