

Underwood & Underwood

World's Best Putter—At Arlington, Putting Machine for Testing Suitability of Various Grasses for Putting-green turf. Pendulum Imparts Same Amount of Power to Each Putt. A. S. Dahl Is Operator Here

or washed onto the turf then we will have gone a long way toward lessening the weed problem in fine turf.

Steaming the Topdressing

The treatment of topdressing by means of live steam for the purpose of killing the weed seeds present therein is having considerable vogue in various sections of the country at the present time. It was very minutely discussed at the 1928 meeting of the Green Section in New York. The discussion brought out the fact that there were a few strong adherents of the method and many who questioned whether it would pay to inaugurate the steaming system.

There is no doubt that the proper steaming of topdressing will kill all weed seeds present therein and to that extent will lessen the weed problem on turf topdressed with the steamed compost but there are other aspects of the problem which should be thoroughly considered before embarking on a steaming campaign.

In the first place before you begin topdressing with this steamed, weed-seed free soil it will be necessary to take out all the weed growth already present in the turf to be topdressed for the plain and simple reason that this steamed soil will have no effect whatever on the weeds already present and established. Now it is relatively easy to take out dandelion, goose grass. plantain, etc., but as anyone knows it is not quite so easy to make a clean job of the chickweed, crab grass, fennel and other weed growths of a matted and patchlike growth.

Furthermore after you have begun your system of topdressing with steamed weed-seed-free topdressing, how about all the weed seeds that are going to blow and wash onto the green. The steamed topsoil won't kill these new arrivals. Rather they will germinate and grow just as usual. So that in the last analysis the steaming of top-dressing helps somewhat in the handling of weeds but it only covers about one-third of the problem, leaving the other two-thirds as wide open as ever.

Carbon Disulfide Method

The laborious process of steaming all topdressing often costs much money and it is doubtful if the labor and cost involved is always justified. Had I been satisfied of the wisdom and advisability of treating topdressing for the control of weed seeds I would long ago have published the details of a method of treating this material with carbon disulfide whereby all the weed seeds are killed and the soil freed of adverse bacteria and fungi. The cost of treating topdressing by the carbon disulfide method is reasonable. The fact that it might not pay to treat topdressing in

this way has caused me to withhold the details of the method as there are always a lot of novice green committee chairmen who will jump at any new method and involve themselves, their greenkeepers and their clubs in a lot of useless expense and trouble.

In fact the smug complacency if not utter indifference with which the average golf club turns over a quarter of a million dollars' worth of golf course to the machinations and tender mercies of the newly-elected, novice green-committee chairman is to me the most astounding of suburban phenomena. Apparently the ability to fill teeth so the fillings will stay in more or less permanently, to make money in the coal and lumber business, to be able to cut off a leg or remove an appendix, or what not, are often considered to constitute an admirable and complete training for the growing and preservation of fine turf.

The mental condition of some newly elected chairmen is a most interesting study from the psychological standpoint. In the first place, as Disraeli said of Gladstone, "He is inflated with the exuberance of his own pomposity," or in plain Americanese—all swelled up like a poisoned pup. His attitude or studied pose of pseudo patronizing tolerance toward the seasoned greenkeeper is maddening to behold.

The problem of the hard-headed greencommittee chairman will require a great deal of research before it is solved. Fortunately the weed problem is not quite so complicated.

Correct and Incorrect Fertilizers

The fine turf grasses need only certain fertilizers for their best growth. As a general rule an adequate supply of well rotted manure together with available nitrogen in the form of ammonium sulfate, synthetic urea, etc., are all that is required. The rotted manure contains sufficient phosphorus and potash for the modest needs of fine turf. Under the circumstances the application of potash and phosphate fertilizers results in no appreciable benefit to the turf but on the other hand does set up a soil condition very favorable to the growth of weeds, for the plain and simple reason that most weeds make a better growth when potash and phosphorous are present in the soil in abundance. Consequently when such fertilizers as acid phosphate, sulfate of potash, bone meal, etc., are applied to turf, as is still the common practice on many golf

courses, the weeds benefit decidedly more than does the grass. The continued use of this type of fertilizers invariably results in a good stand of clover in the greens together with ever-increasing patches of such matted weeds as chickweed. Lime, either applied as such or inadvertently as an ingredient of sand, or soil in the top-dressing, also stimulates weed growth while its effect on the fine turf grasses is the exact opposite.

Under the circumstances it is highly advisable to have a care in mapping out a program of fertilizer application. There is absolutely nothing gained by the application of unnecessary fertilizers with the subsequent expensive necessity of removing the resulting undue weed growth.

Watering

Fine turf is very shallow rooted as grown on the present day golf green whereas the weeds are as a general rule relatively deep rooted. In some cases they are tap rooted. Under the circumstances they can withstand a greater degree of soil surface dryness than can the shallow rooted grasses.

Careless and indifferent watering consequently gives the weed content of a green the edge every time. If the surface soil of a green is allowed to dry out unduly it can of course be brought back by careful watering but the grass is given a decided check during the process, a check from which it recovers much more slowly than do the weeds.

The philosophers tell us that the wages of sin are death. In greenkeeping the wages of such sins as carelessness, ignorance and indifference in the management of fine turf are invariably an abnormal amount of weed growth in the greens.

It may be stated almost as an axiom that regardless of all the methods employed in controlling weeds some hand weeding will be necessary as a sort of "mopping up" process. This is the case because no method or combination of methods will give 100% weed control. Since this hand weeding is necessary to a certain extent it would seem advisable to use common sense in the management of the operation and to so conduct the operation that the most good is obtained for the money expended.

With most clubs the weeding of the greens is made a sort of annual event and occurs when the crab grass begins to give indication of taking the green body and soul. Aside from this annual weeding they do very little weeding during the balance of the growing season. This is a fundamental mistake in fine turf management and can only result in poor and thin turf.

Instead of one grand orgy of hand weeding at the height of weed growth the operation should be made an important part of the routine work throughout the growing season. As a result of this early weeding the fine grass has its own way and, provided proper fertilization and top-dressing is practiced, the turf will be thick and heavy by the time crab grass begins to make its appearance. Under the circumstances the soil surface will be crowded with fine grass and the crab grass and other seasonal weeds will have greater difficulty in getting established.

In the last analysis the weed control problem is intimately bound up with every other phase of turf management, and as stated above mistakes in the handling of turf hurts the grass and gives the weeds the edge.

What I have said above may sound to a certain extent like old stuff. Old it may be but nevertheless it is true. I have taken the opportunity of repeating these seeming platitudes because they must still be borne in mind by the greenkeeper even if he institutes the use of arsenate of lead on his course as a means of controlling the great bulk of weed growth by methods which I shall describe in October GOLF-DOM. The chemical will control many of the most noxious weeds in fine turf but not all of them, hence good turf management is an essential adjunct to its use.

Questions GREENKEEPING Answers

Here Are Some Answers to Problems They Put Up to Us. Ask If We Can Help You. The Service Is Free

Editor, GOLFDOM,

I shall appreciate your suggestions as to the proper treatment of our fairways which are becoming badly infested with dandelions and other weeds. The weeds seem to be getting the best of the grass which is becoming thinner and thinner. The soil is a rather heavy clay with a little black loam on top. The soil is so heavy that the ground becomes unusually hard in dry weather.

Five or six years ago all of the fairways were given an application of crushed lime rock with an idea of softening them. At the same time, or perhaps prior to the lime rock application, they were treated with bone meal but I do not believe they have had any fertilizer within the past five years. It is difficult for us to obtain any except commercial fertilizer.

R. L. W. (Illinois).

Reply

This is a condition of relatively long standing caused, first, by the application of lime and bone meal, both of which encourage weed growth and do not stimulate the grass, and second, soil poverty due to lack of proper soil fertilization over an extended period.

A situation of this sort cannot be corrected quickly or cheaply and the club must be prepared to spend considerable money in order to get those fairways back into shape.

Annual topdressing with manure supplemented with ammonium sulfate three times a year, spring, summer and early fall, 150 pounds per application per acre would work wonders on this course in a few years and if the blue grass did not work in of its own accord the soil would then be in shape so that a seeding applied in early fall would catch. It is useless to apply seed until there is something there to feed it.

In the absence of manure would suggest a combination of milorganite, cotton seed meal and ammonium sulfate.

B. R. LEACH.

Treatment of Bermuda Editor, GOLFDOM,

Sir:

I notice quite a lot of information in your magazine which I think ought to be valuable to every greenkeeper, especially to those using creeping bent or blue grass for their fairways and greens.

But, consider by case down here in Florida, where we use nothing but Bermuda grass wherever it will possibly grow.

Should I attempt to use the same treatment described for exterminating crab grass, such as amonium sulphate and arsenate of lead? Will these materials do my Bermuda grass good and the crab grass harm?

I should like very much to see some discussion of the condition.

W. T. B.

Answer-

In reply would advise that as yet I do not have very much information on the effect of arsenate of lead on Bermuda grass, but hope to have this information soon as many greenkeepers in the South are experimenting with the chemical on Bermuda.

From what I have heard so far the chemical does not seem to impair established stands of Bermuda but does check the seed appreciably when germinating. Would suggest that you give the chemical a trial in a small way on a small portion of one of your greens or on Bermuda grass not in actual play, and would be pleased to hear from you as regards your results at any time.

B. R. LEACH.

A Poa Annua Problem Editor, GOLFDOM, Sir:

One of our greens is two years old. It is raised green built on fairly level ground with 18 inches raise to the back. Seeded; red top 30 per cent, bent 10 per cent, fescue 60 per cent. Seeded in the fall; coming fine the first year. The following spring pea annua set in and practically covered it. We asked advice and were told to burn it off and put on one inch of top soil and that would kill all the pea annua.

We seeded down last fall fescue, red top and a little bent. It looked good this spring and then more Poa annua set in. Some bare patches showed so we plugged with bent and the bent plugs are doing better. Now the question is, if we cut that green very short in the fall, even with a lot of Poa annua on it, and put 100 pounds bent seed, and top dressed, would the bent crowd the other out? Just what would you do?

J. M. (Mass.).

Answer-

Would advise that there are only two methods of cleaning up Poa annua from a green. The first method consists of taking it out by hand which, is fine in theory, but not so fine in practice. The second method involves the use of arsenate of lead since Poa annua does not flourish in a green so treated, whereas the chemical stimulates the growth of the bent grasses.

In the case of your green I would topdress immediately with your regular topdressing, mixing arsenate of lead with it, so that the turf will receive 5 pounds of the chemical to each 1,000 square feet of surface. Or, if you wish you can topdress as usual and then mix the arsenate of lead with sufficient quantity of moist sand and scatter it over the green on top of the topdressing. This will take the punch out of the Poa annua and give the bent all the chance it needs.

With regard to putting on 100 pounds of bent seed would advise that this depends entirely on how much bent grass there is already present in the green. If you think the bent grass is very thin and not capable of making a thick surface after the Poa annua fades out of the picture then I would seed with bent and do it immediately since the fall season in your lattitude is short and the newly germinated bent requires all the time it can get in the fall to get a toe-hold. If you think there is sufficient bent grass already on the green so that, with a little nursing. it will fill in the green as the Poa annua goes out then I would not apply any seed. As a general rule I do not think it pays to seed bent with other grass seed such as red top and fescue. These latter grasses are much quicker and stronger in germinating and have a tendency to crowd out the weaker bent seedlings. A year after seeding, as the red top and fescue die out, as they invariably do, there is not sufficient bent in the green to crowd in and fill up the empty spaces and as a result the Poa annua takes hold and the first thing you know you have a Poa annua green.

Would suggest that the next green you rehabilitate, that you seed the 20th of August with bent seed alone, using no redtop or fescue. Then if you have any trouble with Poa annua give the green a treatment of arsenate of lead as detailed above.

KNOW Cost Per Member

It Answers "Who Pays"

By O. S. G.

H AVING received and read GOLFDOM each month for the past year, it is with rather a sheepish feeling that 1 write you enclosing \$5.00 to cover the cost of those issues.

If you think this is not sufficient, please send your bill as our club has saved hundreds, if not thousands, of dollars and I have received an inestimable amount of information from the practical business articles in addition to that given in the business advertisements. Every issue has contained vital information and many systems for economical maintenance of the course as well as the clubhouse; right now I am thinking of the water system layouts and information given in your June and July issues. The data on eradication of worms, June beetles and grubs is worth hundreds of dollars to every golf club while your last article on seed was to my mind one of the most important as effecting turf maintenance expense.

However, your articles in the July and August issues, entitled "Who Pays," prompted or rather re-enforced my determination to write you on the value of this magazine to officials of golf clubs who have the interest of their clubs uppermost on the practical and financial angles insofar as it effects each individual member of the golf club.

Thinking it might be of interest to other club officials, I wish to give you the figures obtained at our club which data I have gathered since reading your July issue.

I shall attempt to analyze conditions in our club in respect to "Who Pays" article and since I have been on the directorates of five clubs for the past fifteen years, I feel that I have been privileged to obtain an insight which has not been accorded to the average member.

Warns Against Being Too "Cold"

Undoubtedly many of the readers of the July article feel that the manner in which the first author proceeded to distribute the information he gathered was rather cold, candid and grasping; also that he was undiplomatic and could in no manner create within non-spending members a

pleasant inclination to increase their expenditures in the house. It was rather an audacious manner and it appeared to some as having been inspired by an intense desire for personal aggrandizement or that some selfish motive were involved. However, since the private golf club is not operated for profit the employes are the only recipients of monetary remuneration and the article and action explained was in my mind superinduced (as he stated) by an extremely large number of non-spenders who placed their club in a very undesirable financial condition.

All in all I believe this article if published in the player magazines or even in the daily newspapers would do wonders toward awakening within the minds of 50% of the golf players cognizance of the fact that golf clubs can exist and become more attractive only if and when each and every individual recognizes his own place in the club and performs his duty in the promotion of a kindly social feeling, general interest in club's financial status and patronizes the various departments of the club whether or not he makes use of the golf course.

It stands to reason and is nothing more nor less than good common sense to say that the clubhouse must receive the patronage of the members if that club is to overcome the overhead necessary to a well-managed institution and it should not be expected that 25% or 30% of the membership should enjoy these privileges while 75% do not avail themselves of this exclusive service which has been placed there for them.

Cost Per Member Illuminating

In your August issue a comment on "Who Pays?" from New York gave the house overhead as \$24,000.00, representing salaries and meals, plus \$11,000.00 miscellaneous expenses and depreciation which we must admit is exceptionally low for clubs in a metropolitan area, but, on the other hand, it is high for other sections of the country and particularly those districts where wages, food and rents are materially lower. It seems to me, then, that these

Per Member

figures should be based on cost per member to arrive at a proportionate cost and the yearly membership cost, inasmuch as these memberships are priced according to the facilities of the club, wealth of the membership and local conditions. The fact, however, remains that both articles on "Who Pays?" are the absolute truth, although the first situation mentioned might have been handled in a more diplomatic manner.

Personally, the writer is exceedingly interested in the subject matter and would be pleased to have you continue the publication of such articles as you may receive from interested golf officials. Further-I believe it would be of untold value if the president or house chairman would have these articles published in their own local papers for the enlightenment of all golf players. Now I shall give the figures at the club of which I am president and show why it has been necessary for us to levy assessments.

Our club has 350 members and we are sorry to find that in checking records we have about the same proportion of nonspenders and poor spenders as was quoted in your July issue, but the following data here gives our yearly expenses without regard to patronage; in other words, our club is obliged to spend this amount of money yearly. While our dues are \$175.00 per member, it has been necessary to levy assessments. It requires a patronage of \$21.00 per month or \$150.00 per member per year to make our clubhouse operation break even. These figures have been taken from our books in such a manner as to show the actual cost of the various divisions of expense and then proportioned against the dues of the individual member. I believe the table will explain itself sufficiently and not require additional words. These figures give operating expense in dollars and percentage on each member's yearly dues:

Costs Per Member

As I said before, the cost of operation and the amount of yearly dues will vary in sections or localities throughout the country and for this reason I figured the percentage against the yearly dues and I am now suggesting the same table of figures to be made up at other clubs in which I am interested to ascertain how their percentages work out with ours. Further, I have proposed that this data be forwarded to the membership that they may know the reason for a closer check on the operation of these clubs.

	A SA MISHINGS
Mortgage interest	\$10.40 or 6.0% 4.35 or 2.5%
Fire insurance	23.40 or 13.4%
Tornado and liability insur-	
ance	2.90 or 1.6%
Golf course maintenance	57.25 or 32.7%
Locker room salaries and	
laundry	15.10 or 9.0%
Clubhouse and dining room	
salaries and board	51.45 or $29.4%$
Clubhouse miscellaneous ex-	
penses	5.80 or 3.2%
Office salaries and board	11.25 or 6.3%
Postage and stationery	6.00 or 3.4%
Heat, light, power	12.90 or 7.3%
Depreciation and repairs on	
buildings and clubhouse	21.15 or 12.0%

From the above you will see that it is costing us \$221.95 per member or 126.8% of the dues.

Some Bound to Kick

I have been studying the situation as it affects the individual member and attempting to work out a plan to secure the whole-hearted cooperation without antagonizing the members who have not contributed their just proportionate share of patronage to overcome the expense, and while I believe the system adopted by the writer of your first article was a little crude, I question the possibility of devising a plan which will secure this full patronage without hurting someone's feelings.

A request is not sufficient to induce many of our members to patronize the clubhouse and while we have had no complaints on food or service, the patronage is not there simply because it is not there, and reduction of rates would not bring us additional patronage. Our dance attendance is always very poor; our golf course is crowded Saturdays and Sundays, but there is very little play during the week; in fact we are serving only 25 to 40 lunches and 18 to 25 dinners during each weekday while on the other two days and holidays we will serve 75 to 100 lunches and as many dinners; at the same time we have about 50% more players on the course than we serve in the dining room.

Glancing back to the expense tabulation, we notice that \$57.25 or 32.6% of the dues is taken up in clubhouse expense. Now the only possible item on this schedule which can be reduced is clubhouse expense and it would be reduced if members would patronize the dining room because we have



no

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this expense whether or not the members dine at the house and the more patronage given the smaller becomes the proportionate operating expense because there will be some profit made from the food served, hence the cost of operation per member will be reduced.

Bigger Memberships Help

One of the baffling details of this problem of the non-supporting member concerns the member who belongs to several golf clubs. It obviously is hopeless and unjust to expect him to patronize each of the clubs to which he belongs at the same rate as might be expected from the member whose golf club membership is confined to one club. There is no need of penalizing him because he usually is a very velcome fellow in the fold, and although he has the means and temperament to be a "jiner" he only has one pair of legs and one stomach.

It seems to me that if there are many of such members in a club that the only answer is for a club to increase the size of its active membership so the right balance may be maintained.

Helping the Help

Golffoom is the first and only magazine I have ever read which gave me an insight into the possibilities of the earning power of the pro and the facts as related by you are bound to alter the attitude and create an interest on the part of the members in the livelihood possibilities of their professional when the players have learned the true status of his situation. The pro at every club should certainly appreciate the information you have given him in the management of his business and for the enlightenment or interest you have created in the minds of the club officials in respect to the professional.

It is natural to suppose also that every greenkeeper is heartily encouraging the publication of Golfdom, inasmuch as many of your articles and advertisements are teaching more economical and more satisfactory ways to maintain his course, and now, since your "Who Pays?" article has awakened the house chairmen to the possibility of ascertaining the true status of their club membership, the house managers have every reason to contribute articles as well as other support to further your publication.

Our officials will appreciate reading any letters on this subject matter which you care to publish and we are of the opinion that there must be some three or four thousand other golf club officials who would be interested in such data as you might obtain.

We congratulate you on your magazine. We have long needed a magazine of its kind working in the interest of better methods for golf clubs.

"Tell the Members" Is Vital Phase of Plan

CLUB activities concerned with the problem of the non-supporting member has brought to light that one of the general defects in club administrations is that the financial condition of the club se dom is known to the members until the annual meetings, when it is too late to make any changes in the situation.

One of the metropolitan district clubs, in its campaign to stir the non-supporting member into life, is sending the following letter to its members:

To the Members of -

Your board of directors has the responsibility of sensing and executing the wishes of the membership. The building program, completed in the spring, was in response to the expressed direction of the members' meeting of last fall. The service provided in the club-house is consistent with the more adequate plant. The board believes that the membership is satisfied with the improved facilities and service.

Under such circumstances, the lack of increased patronage on the part of the membership is both disappointing and not easily explained. A careful analysis of the house accounts of all members—excluding therefrom payments of dues, transfer fees and subscriptions, but including all other payments—discloses for the months of May, June and July the following:

- 1. Over one-half of the membership has contributed only one-quarter of the revenue for an average of \$29.33 per month per member and his family.
- 2. Approximately two-thirds of the membership have averaged \$36.00 per month per member and his family.
- 3. The remaining one-third of the membership has contributed \$58.8% of the revenue for an average of \$100.33

Bent Grass Seed

Is Bent Just Bent To

We have just finished harvesting the best crop of Bent seed that I have ever had. When we started to harvest the latter part of July we had many orders on hand and the first part of August we delivered to a number of golf clubs seed that was actually growing in the field the week before they received it on their course.

You? Remember that you can produce a Creeping DON'T RUN Bent turf by THE RISK planting seed for OF GETTING from one-third to one-half the cost of the expensive, laborious job of planting the slips, runners or stolons.

My price for CREEPING BENT seed is \$2 per lb, in 100-lb, lots to 500-lb, lots: 500lb. lots or more \$1.85 per lb.

Don't confuse my Creeping Bent seed with so-called German Creeping Bent seed. My Creeping Bent seed is from fields that were planted with seed produced from selected varieties of stolons planted in nursery rows and hand cultivated and hand harvested.

By purchasing seed direct from the farms where it grows you will be assured of a native grown, winter hardy Bent that is acclimated to our severe eastern and northern OF FOREIGN climate. ORIGIN

> My price for RHODE IS-LAND BENT seed is \$1 per FROM ITS 1b. in 100 to NATIVE 1000 lb. lots: HOME 1000 lb. WINTER lots or HARDY more, SEED 90c per THAT WAS 1b. GROWING IN THE

> > FIELDS

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FEW WEEKS

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DIRECT

Two-thirds of the members have contributed less than their share of the operating revenue necessary to meet operating expenses. The burden of giving adequate support to the club activities has fallen on one-third of the membership.

Bad weather has, without doubt, been a major deterrent to patronage of the club; it cannot, however, be given all of the blame. If other factors, in your opinion, have contributed or if there are now any reasons for restricted interest, your constructive criticism and suggestions will be welcomed. They may be directed to the undersigned secretary of the club, for reference to the appropriate committee chairman.

Some seven or eight weeks remain. The situation here brought to your attention may be ameliorated if appropriate response is made to the clear import of this letter.

By order of the board of directors.

Is Monthly Minimum Charge Legal?

Editor, Golfdom, Chicago.

Sir:

I have discussed with several people the matter of eliminating most annual deficits through developing larger house business, and have had suggested that the only practical solution would be a billing of \$50.00 per month in advance for six months commencing May 1st, with tickets to be charged against the billing with the privilege of accumulating through the season; in other words, a seasonal charge of \$300.00 billed monthly. A procedure of this kind would not only provide a volume of house business

which would either eliminate the annual deficit or go very far in that direction and would automatically provide a working capital for carrying the accounts receivable.

There is some question of the legality of this procedure from the standpoint of confiscation of the member's interest.

My own suggestion was that golf shop tickets would not be included, and one director made the suggestion that caddie tickets also should be eliminated. Every one to whom I have suggested this matter has agreed to it for himself. Some are concerned about the hulabaloo which the inactive members would make, and, of course, the inactive members are the ones the plan is after.

A plan of this kind might be put over if an early start were made as the directors of many clubs are thinking along the lines of getting action from the inactive members.

> Very truly yours, C. T. (Chicago).

Golf Ball Manufacturers Form Association

INE of the makers of golf balls recently completed the organization of the Golf Ball Manufacturers' Association, having as its purposes placing the golf ball manufacturing industry on a sound, economic basis; adoption of a code of ethics and establishment of such confidences between manufacturers of golf balls as shall tend to maintain a high standard of fairness in competition. The new organization also aims to bring into the industry good fellowship and eliminate all unfair trade practices; to provide a reasonable exchange of credit confidences; and to work as a group with the U.S.G.A. on all matters having to do with the standardization of golf balls.

The companies forming the association are: Burke Golf Co., Dunlop Tire & Rubber Co., Huntingdon Mfg. Co., A. G. Spalding & Bros., St. Mungo Mfg. Co., Silvertown Co. (represented by John Wanamaker), United States Rubber Co., Wilson-Western Sporting Goods Co., Worthington Ball Co.

L. W. Crandall of Burke Golf Co. was elected president, the other officers being: Vice-president, R. B. Caverly of Huntingdon Mfg. Co.; and secretary and treasurer, E. C. Conlin of United States Rubber Co.