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# Golfdom

THE BUSINESS JOURNAL OF GOLF

MAY, 1929

## SURVEY OF MERCHANDISING SHOWS pros in big advance AS MASTERS OF THE GOLF MARKET

By HERB GRAFFIS

At the 1928 P. G. A. meeting at Cleveland, Jack Mackie, veteran pro and P. G. A. official, handed out a good reminder to this writer and other reporters who concern themselves with the pro golf situation when he quoted the part of the Rubiyat concerning the difficulty of erasing the words put down by "the moving hand."

This warning always is in good order. It becomes especially impressive as we read the following paragraphs from an issue of a sporting goods dealer magazine a couple of years ago. The dope was wrong and a laugh to the knowing ones when it was printed; it increases in its silliness as the years go on.

Under the heading, "The Changing Golf Market," this mess of misstatement ran: "Times change. We must change with them. The baseball equipment storekeeper who thinks that the selling season is just one week long is going to be left at the post.

"Yes, times change. Right now, some golf-goods manufacturers do not want to believe it. They have been selling their outputs in past years to golf pros. While they lost considerable amounts in bad debts, many were able to show a profit on each year's cycle. Last year and the year before they didn't do so well. "The weather 'er sumpthin'."

"The fact of the matter is that the sporting goods merchants by more capable meth-

ods—have corralled over 90% of the nation's golf goods consumption.

"That's natural, because it is unnatural for a teacher of a game to be coincidentally a merchant. As golf increases in popularity, the pro has less time and less inclination to sell golf goods.

"This year some manufacturers are still chasing the pro business that—for the greater part—has permanently vanished. Meanwhile, wiser manufacturers are getting real footholds in anchored accounts—the stores."

### Truth Is Assuring

There is a sterling example of a kid whistling in a graveyard at midnight to keep from being scared to death. Even considering the vast growth in the ranks of golf beginners on the municipal and daily fee courses who might be inclined to buy cheap golf goods from the stores due to cut-price attraction, competent authorities among the leading manufacturers say that the entire golf business of the U. S. is divided about 60% for the pros and 40% for the stores. In the case of first-class golf merchandise, the percentage in the pros' favor runs between 10% and 15% higher.

The pro who is on the job and is reconciled to the fact that buying education of his members takes persistence, resourcefulness and eternal merchandising vigilance has every reason to be satisfied with

the outlook. As for the manufacturers of golf goods, there are some of them who never will make a dent in the pro market, for the pro market is too knowing. The pro has too much at stake to handle the cut-priced junk that is poured out on the department and other store markets by manufacturers whose merchandise can't get pro endorsement due to its unsatisfactory design, its poor materials and the unskilled and casual methods of making.

The real "big shots" in the golf manufacturing business are putting more emphasis on merchandising through the professional than ever before. They know the pro makes and controls the golf market.

### The Credit Situation

A thorough and impartial analysis of the credit situation in the golf goods field shows that the pro end is in better shape than the other outlets, due to the extremely high rate of mortality among the small sporting goods stores. Not only is the present satisfactory, but the condition is improving remarkably. The P. G. A., some time ago, took this credit matter in hand. The organization started out on a credit clean-up that was featured with a stiffer policy than is claimed by a whole lot of businesses that are boasting of their association's activities in credit supervision.

Inside details of the extent of this work cannot be revealed, but some evidence of the very gratifying results are obvious in the following letter from C. B. Johnson, secretary of the National Association of Golf Club Manufacturers. Mr. Johnson tells GOLFDOM:

"There has been a noticeable improvement in professional credits since the golf club association and the golf ball makers association have combined in publishing their list of delinquent accounts. The officers and members of the P. G. A. are to be congratulated upon their co-operation by the two associations named above in bringing to the attention of their members the necessity of keeping their credits in good shape with their sources of supply.

"It is not the attempt of either of these groups to bear down unnecessarily or unfairly upon any group or individual, whether they be professionals or dealers, in the matter of credit extension, but rather a desire to clarify the credit situation in the interests of the industry itself. It is quite obvious that a small percentage of indifferent professionals can affect largely the credit situation of the vast number who have appreciated the impor-


tance of keeping their credit record clean and it is the hope that with the co-operation of the P. G. A. and the individual members, as well as the state associations, they will be able to impress upon all professionals, not only of their membership but others, that better service, better prices and better business dealings all around can be accomplished through a more careful consideration of individual credit extension.

"Both the National Association of Golf Club Manufacturers and the Golf Ball Manufacturers Association are seeking constructive criticism and suggestions from the professionals as a body, not only in the credit side but also in all problems concerning the sale or purchase of golf clubs. Each professional is at liberty to write to these associations, or their own headquarters, if they are P. G. A. members, giving any suggestions they can that might correct what they may consider methods that ought to be changed and these suggestions, in turn, will be passed on to each member of the two associations.

"In brief, the object primarily is to work in closer harmony with all golf professionals."

### Why Sing Blues?

Pros have no monopoly on merchandising misery. Their problems are not the



**PRINCE GEORGE HOTEL GOLF COURT**  
where you may exercise where you dine

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*Hail! Hail! to Spring, sweet Spring  
With Golf Brides on the wing.  
Spring, Oh! Spring, when winds of morn will roam  
Away from business cares and Home Sweet Home.*

---

GOLF LESSON No. 1  
by Mr. Cliff Drake, Professional  
Instructor of the Prince George Golf School.


**THE DRIVER**

In starting your drive, the weight should be equally balanced on both feet, the right slightly advanced. The club should be started back with a slow and steady movement, left hand turning inward and under the shaft, raising the club to a horizontal position over the right shoulder, pivoting on the ball of the left foot while so doing, at the same time throwing the weight on the right foot. Start the club on the downward swing with hands and arms in unison gathering speed as you get to the ball, and carrying the club head outward after hitting the ball. This will give you the complete "follow thru" and added distance to your drive.

Cliff Drake, Instructor

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You are cordially invited to inspect the Golf Court located in the  
New England Dining Room. Open daily except Sunday.



Back of menu of hotel with indoor course features its pro and his instruction



*Photo, Underwood and Underwood*

Jack Tarrant, pro at Pasadena (Calif.) municipal course, has big classes of pupils he teaches in that city's famous "Rose-Bowl"

life-and-death matters that confront most small retailers. From the mere fact that the last couple of years has seen the pros seriously studying their merchandising has resulted in an improvement in practice, profits and promise. It seems to us the pros would be better off to put an abrupt stop on singing the blues, for actually there's no valid reason for moaning, but quite the contrary as a general thing in pro golf.

George J. Pulver, pro at the McGregor Links, Saratoga Springs, N. Y., who wrote on pro matters in April GOLFDOM, comments on the pro situation as it lines up with that of other retailers in an interesting letter which we print herewith. It is something for the boys to think about in getting set for further advance in the golf goods selling field which they plainly command today. Pulver says:

### United Front Imperative

"The evils the pro golfer is facing today are no greater, nor different, than those which nearly all retailers are, or have been at death-grips with, since the war. Our problems are quite in common with ones obtaining in other lines, whether it is distributing needles or reapers. If we are to keep our place under the sun, we must do as other retailers have had to do.

"Why all the mergers during the last few years? Why have cut-rate drug stores come into being unless to fight the Liggett and other combines, and why have individual

grocers, hardware stores, and dry-goods distributors been forced to pool their buying. If it is not to meet the competition of those chains, which represent so much wealth that their volume and cash buying enables them to cut the price to the consumer in order to get the business?

"This is the era of combines, of ceaseless striving for all available business, and the individual is being swallowed up by groups who have made themselves all-powerful by acting together. There is probably no organization so decentralized, so individually opinionated, and so remotely co-ordinated, considering their economic importance, than the professional golfers today. While they represent thousands of dollars worth of transactions, they meet infrequently, they hold no conventions to cull over their ideas, and except for an occasional gathering of delegates once a year, there is very little done to bring the members closer together.

"We must act more in concert that we may have more power, that we may create more respect, or be brushed aside by the combined, and the aggressive. We must not expect anyone to feel sentimental towards us—there exists little altruism in business today—the fittest only survive, and for one, I believe we should yield an inch only when forced to do so. Let us fight for uniform trade practices, equal discounts, and find out why golf equipment continues to filter out through secret channels to be dumped on the market by unauthorized agencies, who sell with no regards to what should constitute a fair profit taking on sales."

# FERTILIZATION PROGRAM FOR renewing fairways

## BALANCES MANY FACTORS

By O. J. NOER

**S**TARTLING improvement effected by rational feeding of poor fairways is largely responsible for the increasing interest in fairway fertilization. The folly of attempting renovation with seed alone is now generally recognized, and the scarcity of good manure is compelling the substitution of more concentrated products.

The notion that results obtainable with manure cannot be approached or equalled with any other product, while widespread, is unduly emphasized. That manure materially increases the humus content of established fairways is debatable. Fresh manure often contains 70% moisture, in which case the actual organic matter does not exceed 600 pounds per ton, and during decay on the fairways added losses occur. Furthermore, surface applications on established fairways do not penetrate into and become incorporated with the underlying soil. Building up a surface layer highly charged with organic matter and plant food seems remote, but would prove detrimental by encouraging shallower root development. It is when applied and disced into the soil prior to seeding that manure exerts its greatest effect in modifying soil structure. Even then comparatively large applications are required on heavy soils. Unless manure is well rotted, applications prevent or seriously interfere with play, and may introduce objectionable weeds.

The belief that manure exerts effects over longer periods is true, but its importance often exaggerated. Prompt improvement of poor fairways can be obtained more readily with quicker acting fertilizers. Even the lasting effects of manure can be approached with other materials by a carefully designed program.

Whether manure or a substitute is selected usually depends upon the quality of the manure and its cost, which must include the additional expense of hauling, spreading and harrowing to break down the lumps. To cover 50 acres with manure at the rate of 5 tons per acre necessitates handling a total of 250 tons. Even 1,000

pounds of concentrated fertilizer per acre involves handling only 25 tons, and does not interfere with play. Except in unusual places, the manure must be cheap and the haul short to warrant its use.

After a fairway fertilizer program is once decided upon, and the use of manure eliminated, those charged with course maintenance are usually per-

plexed with the following questions: what fertilizer to select? How much to use? When and how to apply? These are pertinent questions and may spell success or failure of any program.

The multiplicity of products available confuse even the experienced greenkeeper. It is doubtful if there is any "best" fertilizer. Each may have its advantages, and, also, disadvantages. Some give quicker results; others are superior on lighter soils, etc. Space prevents a detailed discussion of individual fertilizers. A thorough knowledge of the principles underlying fairway fertilization and the properties of the various classes of plant food products simplifies the selection of a suitable fertilizer.

### Nitrogen Most Vital

While the future may modify some practices, the fundamental principles upon which fertilization depends seem clear. Modification in procedure will accentuate desirable effects. It seems possible and probable that a system may be formulated

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*O. J. NOER, in the course of his duties as head of the Milwaukee Sewerage Commission's service bureau, has inspected in the past few years several hundred golf courses in all parts of the country. He speaks, therefore, with authoritative knowledge in this article.*

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Capuchino Golf and Country club, one of California's inviting establishments, has a natural topography that makes the going tough away from the straight and narrow

eventually which may either dispense with the necessity of fairway watering or at least greatly shorten the irrigation period in Northern humid sections, excepting sandy soils and very unusual seasons.

Of the three important fertilizer elements—nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium—the first is the most important and is usually the key to success. Nitrogen alone is subject to loss in the drainage water by leaching. It imparts dark green color and induces active vegetative growth. Consequently, need for nitrogen is easily detected. Brown color, lack of vigor and growth indicate nitrogen starvation; yet the startling effects produced by nitrogen have in some instances encouraged excessive use, producing succulent turf which cannot well withstand adversity. Correctly used, there is no plant food element which will compare with it.

Application of phosphorus, worked into the soil prior to seeding, promotes rapid root development and thus encourages more uniform coverage of turf. While soils are often low in phosphorus, surface applications on established turf unfortunately fail to effect marked improvement. Surprising as this may seem, there are two probable causes. Soluble phosphates, when applied to the soil, are precipitated or fixed as insoluble compounds. This fixation takes place rapidly and so near the surface that penetration into the soil layer where roots develop is prevented. When methods are found which will distribute phosphorus uniformly through the 3 or 4 inches of surface soil, more extensive use of phosphates may be warranted. The phosphorus contained in the older roots is liberated when they die and decay and is not lost by leaching.

This also applies to potassium. Furthermore, clippings are not removed, and as they decay, phosphorus and potassium are again released.

Soils, excepting peats, mucks, and some sands, contain much larger quantities of potassium than phosphorus. Ordinarily it becomes available in quantities sufficient to satisfy the demands of fairway turf, especially when clippings are not removed. Abundant potassium favors and encourages clover; consequently, potassium, when needed, must be applied in limited amounts, thus satisfying the demands of the turf without unduly stimulating undesirable clover.

Unquestionably, on established fairways the main dependence must be placed on nitrogen, with phosphorus and potassium playing minor roles. Consequently, fertilizers relatively high in nitrogen, with medium to low phosphorus and potassium, should be most economical and effective.

### Types of Fertilizers

Nitrogenous fertilizers can be grouped into three classes, depending upon the kind of nitrogen. These are organic nitrogen, ammonia and nitrate nitrogen. Each has specific effects.

Organic nitrogen fertilizers, as the name implies, are residues of animals or plants. Among typical products may be mentioned cotton seed meal, dry blood, milorganite, bone meal, tankage, fish scrap, poultry manure, etc. They vary widely in cost and nitrogen content. Some find favor as cattle food and consequently command higher price. Organic nitrogen cannot be assimilated by the plant roots directly. When applied to the soil, micro-organisms gradually convert the nitrogen, first to ammonia, and finally to nitrates, which is the form preferred by most plants.

The rate at which conversion takes place varies, blood and tankage breaking down very rapidly, while the action is slower with cotton seed meal, milorganite and bone. From the standpoint of "burning," these materials vary. Those which contain small amounts of water-soluble nitrogen and break down slowest are least apt to injure the turf.

Organic fertilizers usually provide for longer feeding because of the more gradual release of nitrogen, and are especially suited to sandy soils where the danger of loss of nitrogen from leaching is greatest. These materials have practically no direct effect upon soil reaction or weed control.

The two conspicuous ammonia-containing materials are sulphate of ammonia and ammo-phos. Both are water soluble, but ammonia, as such, does not leach out of the soil. The clay particles take up and hold the ammonia, but it is soon converted into nitrate by soil organisms and then may be lost. Both are extensively used on golf courses and are excellent for encouragement of rapid growth. They make the soil acid and help control clover and weeds.

Up to a few years ago sodium nitrate or Chili saltpeter was the sole nitrate nitrogen fertilizer. Now, due to rapid advance in the manufacture of synthetic nitrogen, others, such as calcium nitrate, are available. These water-soluble quick-acting materials tend to decrease soil acidity. Unless taken up by the plant, nitrates leach from the soil. Their general use on fine turf grasses has been discouraged, but they may be helpful, particularly during cooler weather.

The principle sources of phosphorus are acid phosphate, ammo-phos. and bone meal. Acid phosphates containing 16, 20 or 45% phosphoric acid are on the market. Ammo-phos. and acid phosphate are probably the best sources of phosphorus because they are most soluble. None of the phosphorus in bone is water soluble, which accounts for its slower action. As already pointed out, the big difficulty on established turf is to get the phosphorus deep enough in the soil before it precipitates.

Muriate of potash containing 50% potash is the commonly used potassium fertilizer and is a water-soluble material.

## How Much Fertilizer?

The kind of soil, condition of turf, and source of nitrogen determine the rate of fertilizer application. If drainage is adequate, impoverished soil and thin turf are often synonymous. More fertilizer is usually required to induce thin turf to spread and cover bare spots than is required to maintain an existing good sod. After good fairways are once obtained, rates can be reduced. On sandy soils, where leaching may be serious, several lighter applications are often preferable to minimize the possibility of loss. It is possible to apply larger amounts of organic fertilizers than soluble materials, such as sulphate of ammonia, which may burn. Heavy applications of the latter also encourage too rapid initial growth. Here again it is better to make several light applications. A combination of organic and water soluble nitrogen is being used in many instances. The quick-acting nitrogen promotes rapid initial growth, and the slower-acting organic nitrogen subsequently feeds the turf.

## When to Apply

Fertilizers are best applied in spring or fall, and should never be used on fairways in mid-summer, when limited rainfall prevents active turf growth. In sections where crab-grass is troublesome, heavy applications of nitrogen in the spring seem to encourage the crab-grass unduly. Possibly this can be avoided by fertilizing in the early fall just as the crab-grass begins to die. During the balance of the season, growth of the grasses will be encouraged, and the major effects of the fertilizer disappear before crab-grass germinates the next year. Even in Northern sections, fall fertilization has many ardent supporters.

The importance of uniform distribution of fertilizer cannot be over-emphasized, and is not generally appreciated. Fertilizers do not move laterally in the soil, consequently failure to obtain even distribution is apt to result in patchy turf. Localized areas, heavily fertilized, will be dark green, and corresponding unfertilized areas, thin and poor. This can be avoided by using a good fertilizer distributor. The hopper should be filled in the rough so, if fertilizer is spilled, fairway turf will not be injured or killed. Soluble fertilizer should never be applied when there is dew on the grass because injury is apt to occur, which cannot be avoided even with spreader chains.





Techny Fields Clubhouse Is Handsome and Moderate in Cost

## This Metropolitan Clubhouse Cost Only \$25,000

MANY small golf clubs, with 200 or less members, make the mistake of planning entirely too pretentious a clubhouse and discover after the building is erected that a structure half as large and far less costly would have served the needs of the members just as well. As an example of what can be done for very little money, the new clubhouse of the Techny (Ill.) Fields G. C., built last summer, is most interesting.

The building is T-shaped, one wing each for men's, women's and social requirements. A porch, 14 ft. x 50 ft., extends along the social wing, wherein are found the lounge and dining-room. In case of overflow from the dining room, food can be served on the porch.

The women's wing contains a locker-room, showers, toilets, a rest room and a dressing room for "primping."

All the conveniences of the bigger clubhouses are to be found in the men's wing, wherein are the locker-room; a grill, with a wood-burning fireplace and a pantry connected with the kitchen; showers and toilets; and a valet's room.

The club office is located in the corridor leading to the golf course, as is also the pro-shop and check-room. In addition, living quarters are provided here for the club manager, the pro, and three assistants.

An interesting feature of this layout concerns the pipes used in the general

heating system. When hot weather arrives, cool air can be forced through these pipes to every part of the clubhouse, thus giving welcome relief to the members



Techny Fields Golf Club Entry

from the scorching days that accompany each golf season.

Albert R. Martin of Chicago was the architect who drew the plans for this sterling example of a moderately priced clubhouse.

# Prompt Billing

## IS BASIS OF SATISFACTORY

# Club Financing

By CARL TRUAX

[Manager, Sunset Ridge Country Club]

THERE is no other single duty performed by the club office which so clearly demonstrates to the members the efficiency (or inefficiency) of the management—so readily creates a favorable impression for the Club Manager—so definitely facilitates financial operations—so easily “clears the desks” for getting out the monthly financial statements—as the prompt mailing of members’ monthly bills *which are correct*.

That the importance of early mailing and correct bills is not clearly appreciated is indicated by the habitual late mailings of numerous clubs—and by the numerous errors resulting in many corrections and adjustments. When club managers generally realize the outstanding importance of prompt, early, mailing of correct bills, the relation of such action to their own personal interests, and the ready adaptability of ordinary commercial billing and collection procedures to this work, club bills will be in the mails as promptly as those of any well managed commercial house.

Because social and sports clubs are essentially non-commercial in character, and because the best clubs socially are invariably those in whose operations commercialism is least apparent, it does not follow that such vital activities as billing and collecting the moneys due from members, shall be governed by any less than the best business methods, and as promptly and efficiently as similar activities of commercial business.

Further, the members’ estimate of the management must take into account such external activities as getting in the money—and this is all the more reason for making the best possible showing.

The one and only certain contact between the manager and each and every member is the monthly bill. In many clubs the manager has this contact twelve times per year—twelve opportunities an-

nually to clearly demonstrate to each member the club manager’s efficiency in this business relation, and by inference, his efficiency in the club’s general business affairs. When the bills are prompt and regular the members are impressed with the promptness and regularity of the business administration. If the bills are correct (if the bookkeeping has been accurately done) another mark is scored for the management—accuracy. If the tickets subsequently delivered to the members are in order and check with the bills rendered, the member is impressed with the efficiency of the clerical work, and lastly, if the errors are detected and adjusted before the member detects them, naturally the members’ confidence is increased by such alertness.

It is clearly to the manager’s personal advantage to get his bills out promptly and correctly.

Again, promptness and firmness in following collections and getting in the money—may occasionally—here and there meet with some objections from laggard debtors; nevertheless, the delinquent member who is firmly kept in line is the member with the greatest respect for the management.

Prompt billing clears the decks for the monthly financial statements. Nothing outside of profits satisfies the directorate so much as prompt financial statements. And nothing contributes so much to prompt reports as prompt billing which gets this onerous duty out of the way, leaving the office free to concentrate on that monthly bugbear, reports.

### Relation to Finances

The amount of working capital needed by any club is controlled by two factors (among others),—first, the payment habits of the club and second, the promptness of billing and the extent of the follow-up.