

Fee Courses, Golf's Topsy, Show Organization Need

By HERB GRAFFIS

AMONG THE others being shown some of adversity's alleged sweet uses are the daily fee courses. The necessity of taking an appraisal of assets, operating methods and opportunities has been forced on these courses to the extent that the advisability of collective enterprise is appearing to the fee course owners.

What these owners can do to promote the game and their own profits when, as and if they ever go together after their general problems warrants some action.

GOLFDOM's survey of the 1931 season showed, as of Nov. 15, the following division of courses in the U. S.:

Private clubs	4,448
Daily fee	700
Municipal	543

There are no figures now available on the investment in daily fee golf plants, or the business they handle annually, but it is obvious that the fee business is a substantial part of the golf field.

Unfortunately, there are a number of daily fee courses that are owned by men who got in on a boom market and with the idea that "everybody plays golf." They have learned plenty in taking their baptism of fire and not the least of the lessons they have learned is that golf, like everything else, has to be sold these days. The customers don't gallop wildly to crowd through the gates, with the exception of week end play, which is one of those "feast or famine" matters. They also have learned that Old Man Interest just keeps rolling along.

With the overhead a lot of them have and the necessity of vigorous business promotion, there is reason for the fee course owners to begin a market development campaign. They have a fine selling story to tell, but the telling is being done in isolated cases only.

Prospects are fine—but not without some problems, as the growth of public golf may cut into the fee course development in a way that involves a delicate matter of ethics. In the Chicago district 717,194 rounds were played on the eight 18-hole and the two 9-hole park and forest pre-

serve courses at prices lower than the fee courses could offer. This is a volume that would mean good profits to the fee courses that are paying heavy taxes and it brings up a subject that public and fee course men could debate to a draw from now on.

The 5-day week is here with increased possibilities for sales of golf. This calls for prompt action.

Selling Is Neglected

Some of the men who have come into fee course business from private club and hotel operation have expressed surprise at the general neglect of fee course business development. They wonder, in view of the casual way in which a good part of fee course sales promoting is done, that there is any volume of play at all. Price cutting, rather than advertising or skilled personal solicitation of business, has been the recourse when play slumped.

One of the newcomers to the fee course business is C. H. Garard, manager of the White Pines layout (Chicago district). Garard formerly was manager of Barrington Hills C. C., one of the de luxe private clubs in the district and has other club experience and a hotel business career as his background.

The White Pines establishment opened last summer and even though the course was in play before turf conditions were satisfactory, there was the usual Sunday lineup of players who could not get on for a few hours. In making an effort to find out just what could be done to take care of these people so they wouldn't become disinterested and so they might invest some more play money, Garard sought information from other fee course owners. With the exception of a fee course owners' association in Chicago, there was no place to go for the answers, except to individuals.

Says Garard: "Certainly this problem of handling waiting players is one that all fee courses in metropolitan districts have to puzzle them. Why is it that there isn't a report available on the methods being employed by leading operators? How much of an investment in a swimming pool would be justified? How big should the

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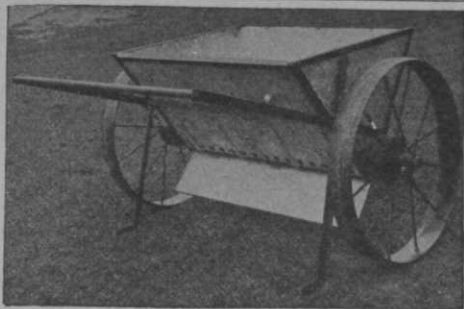
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practice putting green be? How should its use be handled? These and a number of other details ought to be available in a business as big as daily-fee golf is today.

"Standard contract forms for tournaments, group promotion efforts, tournaments, etc., all should be matters of collective interest, and although these details are simply points that come to mind casually, they show how all of us in the business are missing something by not working together."

Revive Association Talk

A mild effort was made to form a national fee course owners' association two years ago during a golf show at Chicago. There was wide-spread interest in the venture, but the absence of some one who could and would volunteer to undertake the large amount of work involved in forming the proposed association choked the enterprise in its crib. Then too, the boys were feeling quite independent and certain of doing better with the lone wolf technique, which is nothing unusual in a new business. Now the signals seem to call for a concerted business development effort and an exchange of information for the common good.

Lately GOLFDOM has been getting and answering requests for much financial, operating and sales promoting information concerning fee courses. Some of the requests have asked if there is a national fee course organization. There isn't one, brothers, but it looks like there should be and GOLFDOM will be pleased to see what the fee course owners have to write on this business of getting together.

GREENS SUBSOIL

Structure and Fertilization for Good, Permanent Turf

By WM. H. TUCKER
Golf Architect and Engineer

IN ORDER TO secure good, permanent golf turf there are certain fundamentals that must be understood just as there are basic fundamentals that must be understood and mastered before one can develop a good golf swing. In agrostology, the art of growing turf, the fundamentals come under 6 groupings: substructure,

drainage, topsoil texture, internal respiration, percolation and sanitation.

The substructure must be healthy, underdrained if necessary, to permit slow percolation and aeration and to conserve moisture. The top 6 inches of the surface should be fine and granular in texture so that the subsoil understructure may carry out its mission of soil sanitation. Fine turf-forming grasses will not adapt themselves to any kind of soil, therefore the soil surface must be adapted to the type of grass desired. If the surface soil is right but the substructure is wrong, it will be only a matter of time until the trouble reflects upon the one responsible for the original construction.

Because timothy, blue grass and clover are successfully grown in the vicinity is no sign that a green can be made upon the natural soil as quickly as one newly seeded on the properly constructed green or of equal quality. These grasses are not desired and if this error is made it will be many years before a fine turf is produced. It is not so much grass that is needed for a fine green but a good turf. Grass will grow almost anywhere, but it takes intelligent construction to produce a desirable turf.

Time a Factor

Therefore the subsoils must work in conjunction with the surface soils to favor and produce the kind of grasses desired. At least one or two months must be allowed for the soils to perform their functions, the grass seeds to develop and to nurse the young plants so that they will mature into a turf of fineness and color with dense, creeping roots. With proper construction and suitable soils only two grasses are necessary in some states; in others three varieties are needed for the ideal putting green.

An ideal green, when established, should receive at intervals a very mild compost dressing and must not be overfed; neither should forcing chemicals be used unless advised by an expert who knows positively what he desires to bring about. An organic dressing composed of humus, sheep manure, sea sand and good light loam, finely screened, will take care of the average good green.

The correct grasses of a putting green turf are not rapid growers and must be given water and sufficient time to develop their creeping roots. If force-fed against time there is a risk of the bents becoming coarse in texture and reverting into

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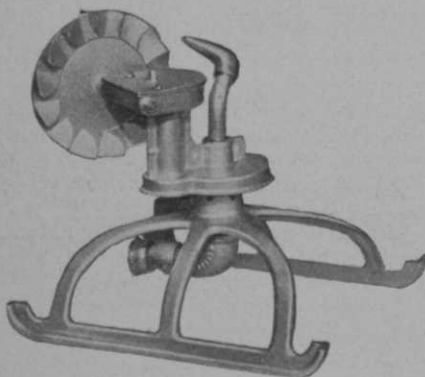
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agrostis vulgaris, and once these bents are forced into a premature growth due to overfertilization, this fertilization must continue or they rapidly decline. I believe in a mealy organic dressing, very mild, a little at a time but often. This forces the grass to work for their sustenance and encourages them to go down, which they will do if time is allowed them to mature and the soil structure and moisture conditions are correct. In addition, proper substructure combined with correct surface soil texture eliminates the possibilities to a great degree of surface soil troubles, such as surface mildew, black mould, aldehyde, and acidity due to the setting in of sodium or calcium carbonate, the contents or residues of some fertilizer, which in a good free percolating soil structure will leach away.

Poor Construction Is Permanent

On a great many poorly constructed putting greens these surface conditions are liable to prevail in some of these forms. When such conditions exist there is nothing to do but tile, spike open or break up the soil structure to permit air space and to treat continually to prevent the further cohesion of the surface soil.

It must not be construed that, even if the original construction and soil conditions were perfect and the green ideal, it will not be subject to similar soil trouble, for trouble can be brought about very easily by not adhering to the original quality of the surface soil texture, granulation and character. A few topdressings of clayey loam, consistently rolled, especially when wet, will soon close up the porosity of the surface soil. Internal respiration is cut off. This brings on either mildew or an aldehyde surface condition in spots. Lime hydrate or some of the phosphates are often immediately applied, possibly as the corrector; neither will, to any great extent, correct this evil but will premeditate and promote the growth of white Dutch clover, carpet grass, chickweed, pearl-wort and *poa annua*.

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Short Courses Becoming Popular as Turf Troubles Grow

TURF MISERY of last season was responsible for greater attendance than was expected at the university short courses in greenkeeping this winter. Prior to the start of the courses it was expected that the economic situation would cut down enrollment but memory of the million-dollar mysteries of 1931 maintenance apparently brought the men looking for the answers.

Revival of pro-greenkeeping was noted in the enrollments, although a couple of years ago it was thought the combination jobs were doomed.

Rutgers, the New Jersey state university, had 44 registered in the one week short course. Two advanced courses also were given, the enrollment at one being 27 and at the other, 28.

At Massachusetts State college, where Prof. Lawrence Dickinson presides over the pioneer short course in greenkeeping, 24 men took the regular course and 8 the advanced work. Due to the limited number of men accepted for the M. S. C. courses, application for enrollment in the 1933 courses already are being made.

"**C**OLUMNS were written about the whole affair (Pasadena Open). However, we failed to detect one word about the job of greenkeeping. Which ought to prove something or other, but probably does not." Thus records *Pacific Greenkeeper*.

The incident again proves one of the urgent jobs for the greenkeepers nationally is to organize and finance publicity as the P. G. A. has done. **GOLFDOM** repeats this suggestion to greenkeeper association officials.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA Greenkeepers' Assn. is buying a compound microscope as its first piece of laboratory apparatus. It hopes to be able to equip a complete turf laboratory eventually.

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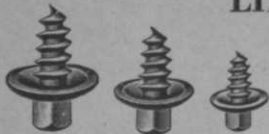
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Initiation Fee Bargain Brings New Young Blood to Clubs

ONE OF THE benefits of enforced revision of country club plans these times is the interest given to getting young men as members.

Higher priced clubs in the metropolitan districts, in some instances, used foresight by providing these young men's memberships as early as 1928. Fenimore (New York district) has had a young man's membership for three years. Price of memberships when this plan was put into effect were \$2,500. For \$100 a year a member under 35 was taken into the club. Although this was lower than interest charges on the usual initiation fee it put a lively, highly desirable class of young business men on the roster.

Older clubs, where the same foursomes had been playing together since the day the Indians were fought off the courses, have suffered because of failure to encourage enlistment of the young blood.

The attractive price to members under 35 has been employed successfully by several of the older clubs in the Chicago district and by Knollwood, one of the newer clubs that had to face the problems of distant location and high costs for a fine plant. South Bend (Ind.) C. C. is one of the clubs in the smaller metropolitan district that is contending with its membership problems by a special rate for the younger members now.

INVITATION tournament at Maketewah

C. C., Cincinnati, had feature of recreation room decorated like circus, with tan-bark on floor and side-show posters on the walls. Stunt was great hit. Emil Schmitt, manager, was responsible.

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East Palestine, O.—Swizzleboard, made by F. B. Padgett, owner of local fee course, is having steady sale among pros at courses where golfers play "marble games" or other methods to see who pays for tobacco, candy, drinks, etc. The Swizzleboard sells for \$2.50.

NIBLETT-FLANDERS JOIN REDDY TEE COMPANY

New York City—Marty Flanders and T. W. Niblett, formerly operating the Niblett-Flanders Co. and selling North British balls and overshoes and other imported golf supplies in eastern territory, have joined forces with the Reddy Tee Co., 38 E. 23d st. The combined outfit will work on the Reddy tee national business and handle the North British golf ball to pros in the 17 eastern states from Maine to Florida.

Chicago, Ill.—John H. Vestal Co., 703 S. La Salle st., golf club printer, has a new handicap system made from Rand steel visible Kardex panels. The customary type of card is used, displayed in the Kardex holder. Cards of white, buff, blue and salmon are furnished. Space required for handicap records of 250 members is about 2 ft. by 3½ ft. Initial installment cost is about 7½ cents a member. A handicap table giving medal play handicaps for courses with pars from 65 to 76 and averages from 62 to 110 is furnished with the system. A display card that should promote posting of scores also is furnished.

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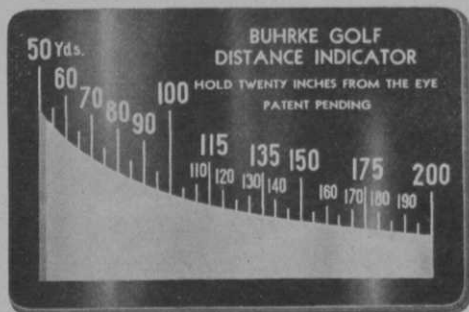
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new gadget for judging distance from the player to the hole. The device consists of a celluloid scale inserted between two pieces of glass, in the manner of "safety glass" construction. The scale is so made that when it is held 20 inches from the eye and the bottom and top of the flag touch the base and distance line of the



scale respectively, the distance to the hole is the figure shown at the flag top.

It is easy to approximate the 20-inch distance from the eye and the principle of triangulation does the rest. A variation of an inch in the distance the indicator is held from the eye means a difference of 5 feet in the distance indicated to the hole.

The Buhrke distance indicator will retail for \$1 through the pro shops, with a good margin in it for the pros.

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New York City.—Golf ball paint difficulties in manufacture and paint chipping in play have been banished by the new Spalding Top Flite ball which has a cover that is white clear through to the winding. The ball will sell at the same price as the Kroflite.

Spalding calls attention to the paintless feature as something responsible for greater distance. The company says: "When a Spalding ball comes from a Spalding mold, its marking is absolutely perfect, designed to 1/10,000 of an inch to give the utmost in distance and accuracy. Adding paint to such a ball is tampering with perfection, as no matter how accurate the paint spraying machines may be,

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New mold equipment is being used in the construction of Spalding balls for 1932. Spalding says this means their 1932 heavier ball gets up easily.

The Top Flite ball is getting a fine press and player reception and probably will have a decided effect at pro shops in maintaining high percentage of 75c ball sales in 1932.

HENRY COTTON BOOSTS YANKEE TEACHING INGENUITY

Pasadena, Calif.—Henry Cotton, sensational young English pro, whose instruction articles are being featured by English golf publications, pays tribute to an American golf instruction device in a recent issue of the *British Golf Illustrated*.

Cotton refers to the On-A-Line as "a clever invention, simplicity itself, which ensures getting the path of the clubhead right."

He advocates swinging practice without a ball to prevent distraction and endorses the On-A-Line as an assurance against "utilization of the wrong path of the swing."

The On-A-Line has been used and boosted for some time by pros in the section of its origin, California. It is made by the Bo-Cal-Bo Co., 800 S. Grand ave., Pasadena, Calif. Considerable sales have been made through pro shops for member use in home practice.

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Chicago, Ill.—Illinois Grass Co., 75 East Wacker Drive, with nurseries at Homewood, Illinois, now is prepared to supply landscape and golf architects, golf clubs, estate owners, cemeteries, parks and others with nursery grown genuine bluegrass sod.

Sod is furnished in strips 18 ins. wide and 30 ins. long, the same as Illinois' Washington strain creeping bent.

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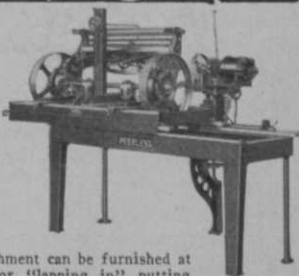
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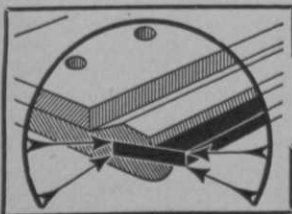
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