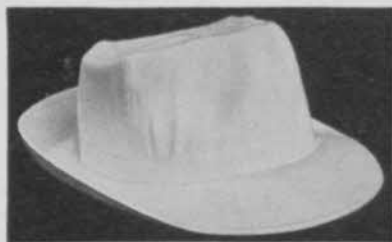


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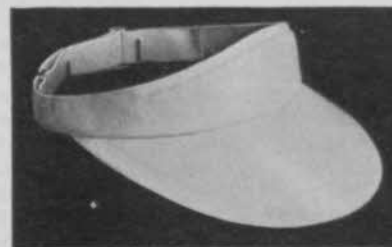
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Good Base = Good Green

By Robert Trent Jones

POOR turf can spoil the greatest golf course ever built. This is an axiom that I never allow myself to forget when building a new course. Great emphasis therefore should be placed upon the conditions which make good turf possible, the most important of which is the proper foundation.

Different theories have been offered during the years as to the best way to obtain a good foundation for golf greens. Our method is based primarily upon the application of common sense, by observing the manner in which Nature works under ideal conditions and in striving to emulate her by creating the conditions under which she works best.

We find from the study of geology and agronomy that soils have two extremities, extremely light sand and extremely heavy clay, neither of which is ideal for the purposes of developing and maintaining the grasses which are best suited for good turf from the golfer's point of view. The light sands release excess water rapidly, while the heavy clays allow little or no penetration. The ideal type of soil for golf courses is somewhere in between these two extremities mentioned. It should be one which is open enough to allow the penetration of liquids without allowing too much waste through leaching. Then the soil should be porous enough to encourage a deep root growth for the development and maintenance of a sturdy turf and it should be fertile enough with the addition of routine feedings to develop the type of plant life necessary for the maintenance of a fine turf through the years.

Test for Proper Mixing

When a soil is mixed properly it should react to this simple test: pick up a handful, crush it in the fist and the soil should feel like a springy ball. When the hand is opened and slight pressure is applied by the other hand to the surface of the molded dirt, it will crumble into its original form.

As to our procedure for obtaining this ideal type of soil, it naturally varies. Every different site has different type soils. Some sites have several types of soil within the boundaries of the proposed course. Should the site have either the ideal soil or a mixture of soil, sand, and humus that will

make the ideal soil, so much the better. If the proper ingredients are not present, one or more of the missing ingredients must be imported from the nearest possible locale.

Starting the operation as a whole after the green is molded, we lay out a drainage system according to the contours of the green as determined by the design. The drainage system depth in our courses is generally about 15 to 18 inches, sometimes more, depending upon the character of the subsoil. After laying the tile the trenches are filled with small stone, usually available from the waste in the fairway rakings, to within 6 or 8 inches of the surface of the molded green. Because the drainage system follows the low contours, the slopes of the green run toward the drainage system. This is done to assure a quick run-off from excess rains or over-watering.

Tells Topsoil Contents

After the drainage system is in and the surface smoothed, the topsoil is chosen and mixed either through a grinder type topsoil mixer or the belt type mixer in a ratio of two of soil and one of sand or whatever proportion is deemed necessary after a study of existing conditions. In the top 2 inch layer we incorporate in the topsoil a small portion of humus which acts as a mulch and assists in retaining the moisture so desirable for the growth of new grasses. This humus can be either a peat moss or a cultivated peat from a peat bog, ground through the compost mixture so that it is incorporated in the topsoil homogeneously. We generally use approximately one bale per thousand square feet of surface covered throughout the final 2 inches of topsoil layer.

The question of economy which is always vital either in construction or maintenance is one which must be considered. Recently, when building a new course for Cornell University, we had on the property soil, which when put through a belt type mixer with some sand added, would have been ideal. However, the university, through its department of grounds, was and had been purchasing topsoil of a relatively good quality from a local nurseryman at a price lower than that for which we could mix our own due to the fact that his plant was set up for large scale opera-

tion. The soil however was slightly heavier than that which we wanted for golf greens.

Therefore we developed a new procedure in this particular case for obtaining our ideal soil in the most economical way. We took the purchased topsoil and spread out a portion of it and then put a fine layer of sand on it, and then spread out another portion of topsoil, continuing to alternate in this manner. Then we took a tiller which spun blades at 2,000 revolutions a minute and which mixed the ingredients thoroughly, quickly, and economically. After this was done we applied peat moss and also the fertilizer which we were incorporating in the topsoil, set the machine for the upper 2 inch surface, and, running the machine in the opposite direction, mixed these ingredients. The result was extremely pleasing as the topsoil was ideal in its consistency and the new grass got off to a fine start.

Our theory therefore really rests on the principle of having a uniformly good quality of topsoil throughout the area in which we wish to control the plant life, tying it into the design of the drainage system which also is a controlling factor of the quality of the turf.

Our contention is that we obtain a thicker, heavier, more resilient turf that will withstand play and react better to the shots, and that the open quality of the soil together with air drainage and the elimination of excess water creates conditions which aid the plant in fighting the usual plant diseases with which all green superintendents are constantly coping.

Pro's New Job Is to Get More Golfers

HIRING a promotional manager whose job it is to go out and bring in more golfers than would be gotten by the usual method of waiting for the business to come to you, is a recent move made by the Baerwood GCse, Jenkintown, Pa., an 18-hole daily-fee layout. Business



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Pictured at a recent A. G. Spalding & Bros. advance golf meeting at the Spalding factory in Chicopee, Mass., are (left to right) Mat Kiernan, John Miller, and Walter Roberts, all of Spalding's golf division. Plans and policies for the coming season were discussed at the meeting.

wasn't so good last year at Baederwood, so named as Baederwood promotional manager is Jimmy D'Angelo, also pro at the course, who takes on the job and some extra income the job assures, with the idea of getting all the old business back and as much new business as possible.

While D'Angelo has been doing a fine job on his pro position during his 9 years at Baederwood, and doing more than the usual amount of promotion work to keep business up, the Baederwood management figured it would be a good investment to take even more advantage of Jimmy's ability as a publicity man, to bring in new players. D'Angelo is chairman of the publicity committee of the Philadelphia Sec-

tion PGA, and is a member of the national PGA publicity committee. So the new appointment is right down Jimmy's 'alley'.

The Baederwood course is the layout formerly used by the Huntingdon Valley CC. It was purchased by real estate men in 1926, and started as a semi-public course in 1928. The syndicate had plans to dispose of it for real estate development, but the depression came along about then and prevented this from happening. The mortgage holder foreclosed in 1937, and the course has been operating since under his direction.

1940 looms big in the present Baederwood setup. A new greenkeeper, James W. Bolton, formerly with the Atlantic City (N.J.) CC and the Berkshire CC,

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Golf Manufacturers, Wholesalers, Publishers, and others who serve the golf trade find that it pays in dollars and cents, to locate their offices and display rooms in the LYTTON BUILDING . . . a modern 18-story structure located at State Street and Jackson Boulevard, in the heart of Chicago's loop.

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** Evans Fairway Hoe will aerate and cultivate your turf at rate of 40 acres a day with a tractor.*



Reading, Pa., has been hired, and considerable money has been spent for new machinery and on course improvements. Extensive work is also being done on the clubhouse, a paint job being applied inside and out, and refurbishing done where needed. All in all, things are looking very much on the up at Baederwood, and with Jimmy D'Angelo's promotional talents being put to some overtime work on his new job, the course operators are confident their biggest year is just ahead.

Penn State Bulletins Tell Greenkeeper's Problems

PENNSYLVANIA State College continuously extends its practical work in course maintenance. One of its latest activities is that of sending to the state's greenkeepers, bulletins that may be posted on club bulletin boards to acquaint members with the greenkeepers' problems.

The current Penn State Bulletin over

the signature of H. B. Musser, professor of agronomy, reads:

Do You Want to Play Sissy Golf?
(Bulletin No. 1—Green-Chairmen
Headaches)

O. B. Keeler, writing in the March, 1940, issue of *Golfing* (read it), quotes Gene Sarazen as follows:

"Talk about sissy golf—this American practice of facing greens to the shot and soaking them to a soft and receptive texture is the sissiest phase of golf today, and the thief of skill and real ability and smartness, in playing the game. A typical American green will hold anything, including a ball that comes up there with nothing on it but the paint."

It's not only all of this, but an over-soaked green also is often the main cause of poor turf during the heart of the playing season. Grass roots need air. Saturated soil—no air, no air—dead roots, dead roots—poor grass, poor grass—lousy putting surface. Who is to blame? Your greenkeeper knows all this. You won't let him use his best judgment in watering because you insist that any kind of a shot to the green must hold.

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(Continued from Page 18)

in these two clubs are so close that no distortion can be laid to that factor but from there on the differences are definite and determinable. B is a busy metropolitan course with over 20,000 counted rounds of golf per year. C has a short season with a limited play amounting to a little over one fourth that of B. Course B has over ten acres more of fairway than has C. B has as much rough to cut as it has fairway while C's rough is not more than one-fifth its fairway acreage. B has at least three times the tee area that C has and the terrain of B is such that all maintenance operations will carry a high percentage of unavoidable non-productive labor hours. These few variations appear to put course C directly on the spot. The unreliability of unsupported figures.

Course C carries a large electricity charge for buildings on the property and for pumping water whereas B has no such charge. Water for B is purchased from a municipality and is carried as a general and overhead expense of the club as a whole. It is possible to segregate this water cost of B but it has never been handled in that way. What little electricity is directly chargeable to B course is impossible to determine because there is one common meter for the entire club. Deductions from B may be made for fairly extensive grounds and gardens, for tennis courts and house service that C does not have, but C does carry appreciable costs for golf house and caddie camp that club B separates into specific departments and rightfully does not consider them to be course maintenance costs.

Why are these variations? Only because the accounting systems were originally set up that way and the respective accountants did not view the problem from the cost accounting angle. Since it is not intended that the respective operating efficiencies of these example courses is to be compared, no further points of variance will be given and we will move on to Club A. Here, too, rates of pay do not vary sufficiently to distort the picture.

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Club A has less play than club B and more than club C. Of the three it has the mildest terrain and the design is such that the flow of labor should be very efficient. Tee area on A will approach B. Other areas are more nearly comparable with C but the cost appears to be the highest of all three. When we look behind the figures in an attempt to clear out this obvious inequality we find that A's \$17,373 is not solely maintenance cost, but is the total cost of operating the entire golf club.

The above is sufficient to demonstrate that with only the most superficial search behind the figures we arrive at chaos as far as sound comparisons between these three clubs are concerned.

What are the figures presented at the end of the year from which the officers must make their determinations and set up policies? Incidentally these figures will probably be the ones from which comparisons will be made. Club A remains at \$17,373. B has for a figure, \$14,337. C comes up with \$15,647. What has happened now? No black magic or sleight of hand, just the variations in application of insurance, taxes and depreciation. A, because of a peculiar set-up, does not include any of these fixed charges. B adds only a very modest depreciation charge. C slaps on all three. Simple, isn't it? Simply impossible to make intelligent or accurate comparisons. We are right back to January, 1922. "Golf Is Costing Too Much." Opinion! Hardly fact.

It is not too difficult to arrive at the reason for this lack of uniformity in accounting methods and practices. Many clubs operate under the direct supervision of accounting firms. Others have accounting systems set up for them but operate them with their own clerical staffs with only a periodic check and audit. Still other clubs operate under a Topsy system that has "just growed" from the days when the Treasurer's check book was the

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Golf club officials are interested, in the main, in final and complete figures only. How or where the individual items that go to make up the grand total come from, interests them little or not at all. That interesting and informative work is left to others to whom it is just another job in the daily grind and who know or care less about the correctness or accuracy of setting up charges as regards their effect on the production costs of the various departments. Whatever department head's OK appears on the charge, to that department it goes without question.

Depreciation is handled in weird and various ways, not the least ingenious being one sure-fire system of all bills for materials and supplies totalling \$50 or over being set up in the depreciation account and all those less than that amount being charged to current expense. This practice helped current expense for several years until annual depreciation for golf course equipment climbed to the astounding figure of \$6,000; then came the day of reckoning. There was a reason for this, to be sure. The club was prosperous and this department offered an easy place to write up costs so that profit, as shown in the consolidated statement for the members, was little or nothing.

'Boiling-down' Hurts Effectiveness

To return to the consolidated report and club officials. Obviously these men who are giving of their time cannot be expected to wade through a mass of detail. They must have their figures boiled down and condensed and from these figures conclusions are drawn and policies are set up. Unfortunately this boiling down is apt to be so thorough and complete that all that can be readily deduced from such statements is that the club has operated either at a profit or a loss. The how or why is not apparent from the figures. From such statements usually comes renewed belief that "Golf Is Costing Too Much" and orders come forth to cut down on the operating cost of the golf course. Nothing concrete. Nothing constructive. Just, "Hew to the line, let the chips fall where they may."

Another practice often noted of department heads is that when doubt arises over just which department shall absorb the cost of a particular job, they say, "What difference does it make; it all comes out of the same pocket?" There are many operations about a club where there is an overlap and the charge for this sort of work

should be prorated among departments, but because this type of work is usually done by the golf maintenance department the entire charge is made against that department. If such a practice is questioned the matter is dismissed with "it all comes out of the same pocket," and the cost of golf is written up some more.

When we attempt to look behind the scenes at "depreciation" we find this to be a highly explosive little joker. When costs are studied from actual operation figures this item, that can put the figures completely out of focus, is not present. In the consolidated report of the type required by club officials, depreciation can and does throw the comparative picture completely out of line. There are as many different ways of computing depreciation as there are varieties of bent grass. Thus, information at hand indicates these rates: 6 2/3%; 20%; 25%; and just a plucked-from-the-thin-air amount. To go behind the amounts arrived at from these rates and attempting to reconcile the figures with the physical equipment on which the depreciation has been taken is hopeless and justifies, more than a little, the "plucked from the thin air figure." All too often the greenkeeper will be told that depreciation comes under the heading of "policy" and that policy is definitely and distinctly outside his province. It is forbidden ground.

Lack of Interest in Accounting

Why this chaos persists in the field of cost accounting for golf courses seems to boil down to a lack of interest on the part of key employees and committeemen. It has been much easier to take a firm stand that "it can't be done" rather than to even attempt a beginning at finding out. Why this is so is most confusing. It appears that all interested officials and employees should welcome the determining of a cost level or norm. Officials will be better equipped to make policy decisions and surely those who are responsible for production results will be working from a much firmer foundation than they now are.

It will be wise to interpolate here that it is recognized that many clubs have cost keeping methods that they believe to be quite adequate. It is not intended to indicate in any way that this is not so, as far as a particular club is concerned, but are their records fairly comparable with those of any other club? If as investigation seems to prove such records are not comparable how then is it possible to say



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that, "Golf Is Costing Too Much." Are our cost records just accumulations of figures or do they fulfill the real test of accounting, arriving at figures that mean something. Accounting has been defined thusly, "Accountancy is not the practice of dealing with figures as such but is the combining and breaking up of figures into forms that carry definite indications to interested people." Is that the case in the field of golf course accounting?

How Can Norm Be Developed?

Undoubtedly if one has progressed this far the question will be asked how can a norm be developed, and more than likely the question will be self-answered as being an absurd, ridiculous idea impossible of being developed. Perhaps it is but no one has ever demonstrated that a norm for golf maintenance cost cannot be established and until such an attempt is made no one can say with any foundation of fact that such a thing is impossible. According to the dictionary a norm as applied to statistics is a "quantitative standard determined by the average median, or other measure, of the central tendency among varying individuals of a type or species." It is a standard arrived at by determining the average and must not be confused with "standardized maintenance." No one is necessarily expected to hit this average right on the head but it does offer a fixed point from which to start when studying, in our case, "Golf Is Costing Too Much."

Such an average will give governing boards and other club officials something concrete to base determinations upon. Whether a club is above or below the average will then be determined by conditions peculiar to a specific club. Whether a club can afford higher standards of maintenance or must expect and accept—with emphasis on the accept—lower standards of maintenance than the average because anything else is beyond a club's financial ability.

Before making final suggestions let us return to Heald's work with percentages.

It is quite evident that Heald was soon convinced that an approach to dollars and cents comparison was impossible due to the wide variations in the figures collected by him. His concept of percentage as means of expression was plausible and the results were interesting and informative but unfortunately did not present the picture in a light that was clear to club officials. To greenkeepers, Heald's figures were both interesting and challenging and

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