

Business Analysis Shows Pro Way to Better Profits

By **JERRY GLYNN**

Pro, Skycrest Country club, Prairie View, Ill.

In the office of one of my members I picked up a pamphlet that the canny and energetic George S. May sent out to interest possible clients in his company's business engineering service. The pamphlet told of the application of the May organization's services in helping a company make more money.

I am not a company but my pro business is just as important to me as the business of the Standard Oil Co. of Indiana is to the chairman of the board of that company so when I see an idea I can apply for more business I grab it. The pro often, for many reasons, has to be rather careful about letting it be known that he is making a living. For some reason we all don't seem to have put across to club officials and members the basic fact that the more money we make, the more actual cash return the club is making out of our services and the more benefit of eventual cash value the member is receiving. So we have to go about our money-making tactfully and never show bold signs of satisfaction at whatever profit we may be making on a job in which a man can very easily just break even or wind up in the red.

Consequently when I saw George's booklet about back-stage in big business I read it over quite studiously with the notion of giving my own business the sort of analysis that George's staff have given many a large enterprise. Maybe I'm kidding myself but I think that a lot of us who are in pro golf solely from the club

member service angle could make more money out of applying the May principles of business analysis than even Byron Nelson has made in May's tournaments although it would take any of us home-club pros considerably longer.

George's analysis divided business into 3 major elements: administration, operation and sales. Each of these major divisions is divided into policies, organization, personnel, facilities and methods.

Well let's see how the three major divisions apply to a pro's business.

Pro's Administrative Job

In administration first there is the matter of relation with club officials. Plenty of times we hear that the officials don't understand the pro's problems. In analyzing our own business how many times have we thought about the officials' problems, or the problems of the manager or the greenkeeper as they relate to the pro department or to the whole picture of the club? Maybe far from enough. I think I am a pretty fair pro businessman but I'll confess that plenty of times I could have saved the entire club organization some headaches and contributed something constructive to club administration had I viewed conditions from an administrative angle in determining "clear-cut, well-founded and soundly controlled plans for governing activities." Just how to discreetly pass along these observations is something else again as there are plenty of times around clubs when a pro would

Exmoor Introduces Bent Grass Into Watered Fairways

(See photos on opposite page)

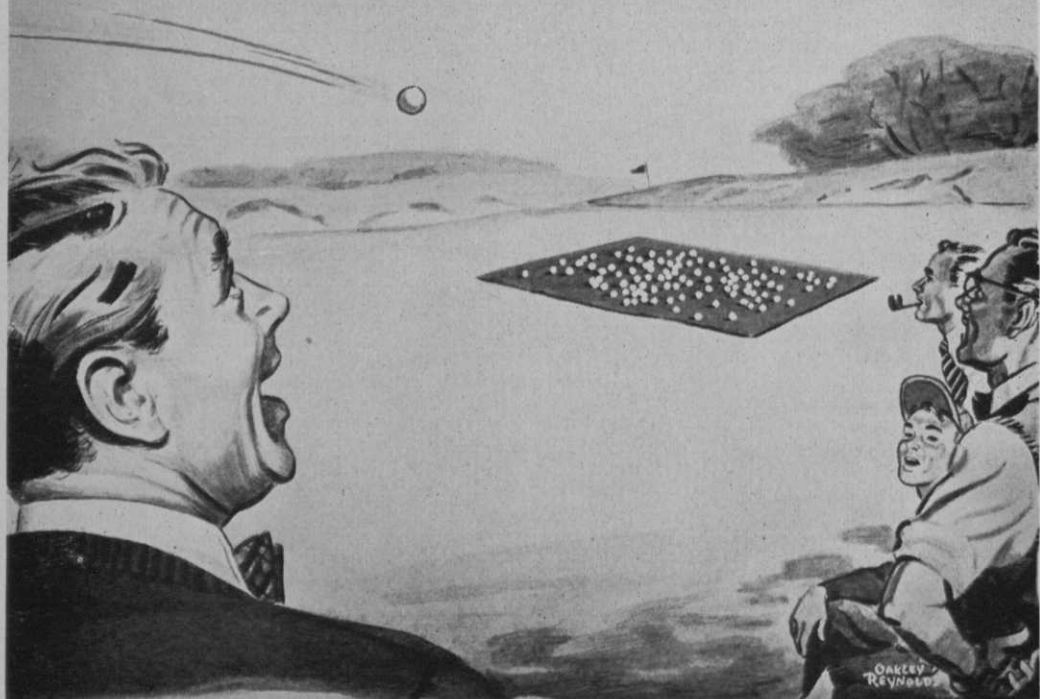
Ordinary Kentucky Blue Grass is not the answer to turf on watered fairways according to Bill Stuppel the greenkeeper at Exmoor in Highland Park, Ill. It is so badly damaged by leaf spot disease during cool wet springs that clover, knotweed and poa annua take possession.

The turf on a large part of the first fairway at Exmoor is bent grass which does not fluff or become heavily matted. Stuppel decided to test this strain on another fairway, and then he plans to use it on others if it proves satisfactory.

The pictures show the method of planting.

1. Alfalfa and grass disc seeder cut slits in the fairway. They are spaced four inches apart. Dr. Grau of the Green Section is an interested spectator.
2. A close-up of the slits.
3. Workmen planting stolons gathered from the first fairway. They were taken in the rough along the edge of the fairway.
4. A close-up showing the method of planting stolons.

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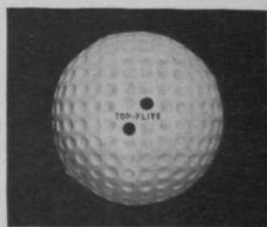
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be better off to strictly and exclusively mind his own business. But it certainly never hurts him to have for his own guidance a good administrative outlook on the entire club as well as his own department's operations.

Now about the administration of the pro department itself. Is the pro sure that his administrative capacity has been so well clarified to his staff that when he's away from the club or the shop his staff will carry on the work according to the policy and methods he himself would use?

Maybe things would be O.K. in the shop, but if he also has responsibility for the caddies how would that situation be if he were not around to keep it controlled?

Has he exhibited enough administrative ability around his shop so his boys also have acquired a sense of this part of the well-handled pro job? The test of this is for a pro to ask himself "could I recommend this lad I have developed, into a job where he could do justice to the club and be a credit to my training?" Some lads can qualify by that test and others couldn't make the grade. Not always is it because of some deficiency of the young man but actually may be caused by the lack of an example of administrative ability in the head pro.

How is the administrative ability of the pro shown in working out a payment plan for the shop staff that will supply incentives and rewards that, in good business judgment and practice also will be profitable for the pro? A poor administrator can lose money and plenty of it by mismanagement of his staff.

Getting Right Assistant

In May's booklet there is considerable emphasis on the selection and management of personnel. And that's a difficult part of the pro job. Some assistants want to have a paid vacation playing golf. Others may lose the pro more money than they make for him in the shop. Still others to whom the pro has devoted a lot of time in an effort to develop the lad as a competent instructor may turn out so far from the mark that the member who is passed to the assistant by the head pro holds it against the pro rather than condemning the assistant.

There are some great points about "facilities" in George's booklet. Well, of course, most pros who know enough to hold a first-class club job are constantly concerned about improving their sales and service facilities. Thorough analysis and judgment is required before a pro risks his own money in major revisions of a pro shop that is poorly located, too small, badly lighted and awkwardly laid-out, even if the pro believes he has a life-time job at the club. I have known pros to spend their

own money making more improvements in a shop than profits for 2 or 3 years would warrant. Some pros haven't recovered for years from injudicious investments they made in club shops.

But how to sell the idea of the improvement of pro facilities as logically a club expense? That's something calling for administrative ability, diplomacy and salesmanship.

In the May analysis of sales I see that George recommends first of all determining "proper length of line." How many pros really make a study of what their membership can absorb and how many go mainly on guess or the personality of salesmen they know?

The determination of profitable and unprofitable items is another point that May brings out. Well, how close do we watch stock so that we can make sacrifice sales of items that aren't moving and get our money back for buying some other stock on which we can make a profit and have the shop recognized as a place where popular fast-moving merchandise is always featured?

What Is Sales Par?

"Setting sales and budget quotas" and "recruiting and training" of salesmen are two other factors May's booklet mentions in analyzing a business.

Does the pro study the contents of members' bags, buying habits and possibilities of his members enough to know what his sales possibilities actually are for a season or does he just make a guess at the figure based on long habit and experience? Members and the conditions of members change. If you haven't figured out par for the sales course you really don't know how you are scoring regardless of the profit you may be making.

Do your assistants know all they should about the stock and about the members and about good pro shop selling? When you analyze your own business you may be reminded that it wouldn't do any harm to make a habit of "briefing" sessions for your assistants.

There's another good point brought out in this book of May's about "stimulation of ideas." I've had assistants give me some great and profitable idea that paid me well for getting the lad to realize that he could use his eyes, brains and imagination plenty around my shop without being thought that he was trying to run the place. If the young fellow was off on the wrong track I had a chance to discuss his idea in a friendly way with him, get him straightened out and still keep him lively in the search of ideas to better our business.

There are many other points that will occur to the thoughtful pro as calling for

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Just because he's been doing something the same way for years and giving satisfaction to his members and making a profit isn't always an indication that the methods he is using are the best. During the years some improvements may have de-

veloped. The pro can decide that only by making a complete and frank analysis of his own business, trying to look at it as a smart outsider would, in a cold and questioning way.

The hunch I got from George's advertising booklet has worked out well for me and you might give it a chance.

MORE THOUGHT NEEDED ON **TEES**

By **AL LINKOGEL**

Speaking on "Tee Maintenance" at the GSA convention, Al Linkogel, Westwood CC, St. Louis, Mo., called attention to the slighting of tee turf on the nation's courses. He pointed out that even on courses with fine greens and fairways, tees are often neglected.

"Tees, especially on short holes, are a problem on any course," stated Linkogel. "Too often tees on short holes where irons are used are smaller in size than the tees on long holes where wood clubs are played. Wherever possible small tees should be enlarged. The banks of all tees should be designed so they can be mowed with gang mowers.

"Drainage is an important part in the maintenance of the tee. Tees located in low valleys or on hillsides often suffer from seepage. A couple hundred feet of drain tile will correct that problem.

"Trees growing close to tees form a frequent problem in maintenance. Tree roots extend into the tee soil and cause the surface to become hard and the grass to grow thin. Elms, maples, poplars and cottonwoods are the worst offenders. In the majority of places a trench built between the tree and the tee to cut off the feeder roots and lined with metal will prevent roots from spreading into the tee.

"A couple years ago a certain club called me in to inspect their course. They showed me a chart of yearly soil tests of greens and fairways which revealed how often they were limed and fertilized. I mentioned I had observed that their tees were not in very good shape and asked how often they checked the soil on them. The chairman stopped for a moment and said, 'You know, we have never given that a thought.' That is true of too many of us.

"In my opinion the majority of the grasses on tees are bluegrass and bents, and because of that fact most of the problems of tee maintenance arise. Bluegrass cannot stand short cutting. Thru the crabgrass section the bluegrass becomes over-

run with crabgrass in summer and by fall the tees have become bare and in need of reseeding; a most expensive proposition.

"Some of the bent grasses seem to do fairly well, but in order to keep a good bent grass tee, a lot of maintenance is necessary. Bent grass scars easily, especially if it is not cut closely. It takes constant plugging to keep up the appearance of bent grass tees.

"Whenever it is necessary to reseed tees in the fall, it is wise to set markers off the front side of the tee and leave them there to give young seeding a chance. This is also wise in the winter months on northern courses which receive play because dormant grasses when tramped on make weak starts the following spring. It will not take much sod to sod spots where the markers were over the winter.

"It is my belief that we must look forward to newer, tougher grasses for our tees if we are to properly solve the problem of tee maintenance. Many such grasses are now in the experimental stage. One is zoysia. I have had quite a bit of experience with zoysia matrella. I first received some in the spring of 1937 from Dr. John Monteith, then Director of the Green Section. I planted it in my nursery, saw how slowly it grew and was disgusted with it. But the second year I planted some on our No. 8 tee, which was one of the worst on the course. The first year it did not look very promising, but from the second year up to the present it has been outstanding over the summer months.

"Zoysia has very tough stolons close to the surface of the soil, with wiry roots below the surface. It grows so well that neither weeds nor divots offer a serious problem in established sod. The hotter the weather, the better looks the sod. It needs little water. It is not a fast grower and will stand short cutting. Also, it grows on almost any kind of soil.

"Many players have asked me why we don't have that grass on all our tees. The

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answer is that the grass is too slow in getting started, loses color after the first killing frost, and is slow in turning green in spring. I would suggest that anybody wanting to try zoysia matrella should plant it in his nursery, properly feed it, and the second year plant the established sod on his tees."

"Perhaps the best solution," concluded Linkogel, "is to plant half of each tee in zoysia and the other half in bent grass. Then in early spring and late fall players can use the bent part of the tee and during the summer use the part planted with zoysia. In that way they would have good playing tees the year around."

SOUTHERN TURF GRASSES

By DR. G. W. BURTON

GSA Convention Address

Speaking extemporaneously at the GSA convention and using Kodachrome slides to illustrate his talk, Dr. Glenn W. Burton, Geneticist at the U. S. Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Plant Industry at the Experiment Station, Tifton, Ga., described the 6 important turf grasses suggested for the South.

BERMUDA GRASS, said Dr. Burton, originated in India. It may be propagated by either seed or sod and is distributed, adapted and used more widely than other turf grasses in the southeastern United States. On poor soils, Bermuda will not produce a weed-free turf. It requires more nitrogen to make a good sod than most southern turf grasses. Moreover, it is difficult to control and keep from spreading into areas where it is unwanted, such as flower beds. Bermuda is among the least shade-tolerant of all southern turf grasses.

Several turf selections have been developed as by-products of the hay and pasture grass breeding project at Tifton, Ga. One selection, known in the Tifton station as No. 12, offers promise as a golf green strain. Another, known as No. 3, should make better lawns and fairways than common Bermuda. Many of these will be thoroughly tested for turf purposes this year.

CARPET GRASS was originated in the western hemisphere and is usually propagated by seed. Well adapted to the Coastal Plain of the southeastern United States, it winter-kills farther north. Carpet grass

requires little fertilization and in addition, grows well on poor soil. It makes a coarse turf and must be mowed frequently to keep the heads down and avoid a ragged appearance. For turf purposes a fine leaved, shorter, seed stalked strain is needed and may possibly be developed by breeding.

CENTIPEDE GRASS, which comes from China, has been propagated heretofore by planting sprigs and sod. However, research underway at Tifton suggests that by proper management and breeding strains may be produced that can be propagated by seed. Centipede grows well on poor soils, and like Carpet grass requires little fertilization. It makes a dense sod which crowds out weeds and other grass, and does not need to be mowed as often as most other turf grasses. It tolerates modern shade and will survive the winters as far north as Greensboro, N. C. Moreover, centipede grass makes excellent lawns, fairways, and roughs.

PENSACOLA AND PARAGUAY BAHIA GRASS is usually propagated by seed. Originally from South America, it is well adapted to the Coastal Plain of the southeastern U. S., but winter-kills much farther north. Growing well on poor soil and requiring little fertilization, it makes a dense sod which crowds out weeds and other grasses. The quality of its turf is very coarse and unusually tough and hard to mow. It therefore is not suited for home lawns. Because it stands so much wear, it is highly recommended for highway shoulders, etc. The narrow leaved types, by-products of the pasture breeding program, show the most promise.

ST. AUGUSTINE GRASS, which is propagated by the planting of sprigs or stolons, tolerates heavy shade, but is otherwise inferior to other turf grasses. It winter-kills north of the Coastal Plain in the Gulf states. The drawbacks of St. Augustine grass are its requirement for more fertilizer and its need for better soil than both carpet and centipede grass. In addition, it is very susceptible to chinch bug attack, a fault that can be overcome by selective breeding.

ZOYSIA MATRELLA OR MANILA GRASS, an oriental grass, has been propagated by planting sprigs, but may be propagated by seed if seed-producing strains can be developed. Indications from preliminary results indicate such strains can be produced.

Zoysia has both fine texture and good color. It makes a dense weed-free sod on good soils when it is well fertilized. It also tolerates dense shade and more frost than other grasses. Principal weaknesses of zoysia are its slowness of growth and the high cost of its establishment from sprigs.



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