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October, 1950

Elements that Make the "Dream" Golf Course

By **ANDREW LEGAKIS**

Pro-Greenkeeper, Mapledale Country Club, Dover, Dela.

The perfect golf course for economical maintenance and the high standard expected in golf courses of today involves a balance between practice and theory. One can very easily be carried away with himself and outline the dream course that all of us so eagerly seek, work for, and rarely get.

There are quite a few things that go toward making up the perfect golf course. Greens are the most important and should be placed in fairly open locations rather than in among trees, where air circulation is cut off and light is poor. A good green should have the following characteristics: It should be fashioned so it has good surface and sub-drainage. Rolls should be gradual and not sharp so as to prevent scalping on slopes. The base should be of a sandy loam soil and about 12 inches deep. There should be plenty of cup space so that holes can be moved often to prevent areas packing and wearing out.

False economy should be avoided in top-dressing of greens. Don't use just any old soil that is laying around; this is a sure way to infest your greens with weeds, crab-grass and crow's foot. My suggestion for a good dressing is a good soil mixed with Hyper humus or peat moss and plenty of sand with whatever fertilizer you deem best in your location. A coarse sand in topdressing is going to be of more and more importance to us as time goes on. It has a tendency to keep greens open and aerated which is probably one of the most important things in keeping good roots on fine grasses.

Slopes from greens to traps should be long and drawn out and not steep and abrupt so machinery can do all of our cutting rather than having a lot of manpower wasted with scythes and sickles.

Trap Construction

Sub-drainage of traps should be a must but if sub-drainage is not possible then some other form of drainage must be devised. Traps should be contoured and shaped so they are attractive and not just holes in the ground, and to insure the least number of washouts possible.

They should have sufficient sand of the proper texture. A lot of us have often gone in for beauty of sand, rather than dura-

bility. A fine beach sand is a very pretty thing, but a few good winds will have it all blown out of your traps onto your trap-banks and fairways. My suggestion for sand would be a fine heavy wash sand, even if the color is not as attractive as a white beach sand. Keeping traps edged up and shaped and weed-free is important. I find a good weed killer is much more economical to keep traps weed-free than the old hand picking. Banks on traps should be contoured so that mowing is possible and grass around the tees can be kept neat and attractive with mowing machines.

Tees Highly Important

Tees are getting much more attention now than they did in years gone by. That's a great improvement in design and maintenance. Tees should get much the same treatment as greens and should be level so that when a golfer addresses his ball he does not find himself standing below or above the ball or with one foot lower than the other.

When a golfer starts his backswing it is most annoying for him to scrape something going back and throw his swing off. You can rest assured that if this happens whether or not it is responsible for his missing a shot, the first thing you will hear is, "These tees are lousy!" One important thing about tees is that they should be spacious so the tee markers can be moved often and keep them from being torn up. I find that a check on tees once a week with soil mixed with fine seed and a man to go around filling in the divot marks with a handful of the above mixture will accomplish wonders in keeping tees well maintained. With occasional dressings added, the tees should stay level. Tees in the past used to sit up on top of big hills or terraces with steps to climb. This is "out" in modern design. It is so much easier to have tees laid out level or on ground sloping away gently from tees so that a tractor can get everywhere around them for cutting. It looks more natural, too.

Some courses cut their tees along with their fairways. This is a time-saver, but I still like cutting my tees with a green machine set a little higher than a green cut. It really is attractive and I think worth the extra work.

There should be ball washers at every tee as every golfer likes to play a clean ball. Soap and water should be frequently changed in the washers. Having enough tee benches helps a lot. They should be placed in shady, safe spots and kept painted and repaired.

Fairways Best Grass Possible

Fairways should have a good base of soil and the finest grasses that can survive in the location. I think fairways are fast becoming a real refined acreage of grass. We have had the help of 2, 4-D in keeping out our broad leaf weeds. Killing of weeds and good fertilization has given us a lush full growth of grass. There are too many different opinions on what height grass on fairways should be cut at so I will not commit myself except to say that fairways should be trimmed neat and close enough so that a player has a chance to hit a wood shot whenever he will need one. Filling divot holes on fairways occasionally will help. An economical measure in keeping your fairways cut is to use a gang of seven units for cutting if possible. You'd be surprised how this speeds up the work.

Roughs

There has been very little attention given to roughs in the past, however, things are looking better on a lot of courses since they have been using weed killers and fertilizers on them. The day of just cutting the rough occasionally is past. A uniform weed free, well fertilized rough is coming into its own.

Woods

Woods on golf courses should be kept pruned at a high level and kept clean with some type of grass sown in them to keep them looking neat. Dead trees should be cleaned out and old stumps and branches and rubble laying around should be cleaned out.

Roads

Roads and parking spaces should be made permanent. A good job done by a contractor, such as laying down of a hard-top surface, will beat all haphazard methods of filling holes and repairing occasionally by golf course help.

Watering System

Here is a department of golf course equipment that should be well planned before being installed. Often the difference of a few thousand dollars has swayed a committee to install an inferior watering system and the club has found itself paying off dearly for labor to operate and maintain the choice of equipment. A fine example of this would be the difference in a pop-head system that can be operated very quickly and efficiently, and a hose system which takes a heap of manpower to pull around. It does not take much of an imagination to picture men setting up fairway sprinklers pulling inch and inch-and-a-

half hose from sides to center of fairways, when a down-the-center pop-head system would probably be a self-paying proposition over a period of a couple of years.

Clubhouse and Surroundings

The upkeep of shrubbery and flower beds around a clubhouse has often been a thorn in the side of many a greenkeeper. Just when things are running smoothly for him some person will always suggest that flowers should be placed here or there or a bush should be pruned or hedges should be trimmed and often the poor greenkeeper will have to pull a man off the course from a well-planned job to satisfy some member's whim. I should say the best way to keep this situation under control would be to have a gardener under the supervision of the greenkeeper, with the gardener's sole duties being to keep things neat and orderly in this department.

Equipment for Top Maintenance

In order to keep a top notch golf course I think I would require the following equipment:

- 2 Tractors
- Aerifier
- 1 set of Gang Mowers—7 units
- 1 set of Blitzers—5 units
- 1 Dump Truck
- 1 Power Sprayer with boom
- 1 10 ft. fertilizer spreader
- 1 small fertilizer spreader
- 1 Root spreader
- 1 power mobile dynamo with attachments
- 3 greens power machines
- 2 approach power machines
- 1 3-section gang mower for banks and close places
- A good supply of rakes, shovels, forks, etc.

Whipping Poles

A good work shop, a good soil shed, a good barn, all under one roof, heated and convenient for workmen. A sufficient amount of fertilizer and fungicides always should be on hand.

And you've got to have an adequate, flexible budget, or you just can't keep the course in good condition.

Pinching pennies by putting off something today may well run into dollars in the future. Clubs should have been doing their best in the past few lush years since the war to get themselves and courses in topnotch shape. If they have not and are not improving their condition now then when things tighten up it will be too late.

Manpower Most Important

I have covered what I think is a good golf course and equipment to keep the course good. Now I reach my last and most important item: manpower. As go your

(Continued on page 81)



Claude Harmon, Winged Foot CC professional on one of rare occasions giving instruction to a group. His ability to inspire confidence in his pupils enabling them to improve their own game comes with patient individual teaching.

Claude Harmon Studies the Golf Teaching Business

By LAWRENCE ROBINSON

Peggy Kirk's game went bad early this summer. She just couldn't seem to get the old swing back. So Peggy turned up at Winged Foot GC in Mamaroneck, N.Y. for an intensive rehabilitation process under Claude Harmon.

Jack Burke, Jr. is the brightest young prospect in pro golf today, virtually a cinch to make the Ryder Cup team and one of the top money winners.

When Jackie gets hitting too many into the rough he hustles off to nearby Winged Foot where he was assistant before shifting to Metropolis CC, for a lesson from Claude — whom he calls "Pro—ey."

But Peggy and Jack are adept and experienced to the degree that they need only the expert tuition of finishing school. The hundreds who are 80-, 90- and 100-and-over shooters who come to Harmon for the sessions that bring them delighting improvements in their scores really represent the most convincing exhibits of Claude's success at the very difficult and fundamental part of a club professional's job; the ability to improve scores and by improving

scores give the pupil more enjoyment from the game.

The fact is that Claude has a teacher's touch. Not only an outstanding golfer himself, who probably could grab a big bundle on the tournament circuit if he didn't have two such remunerative posts as Winged Foot in the summer and Seminole in the winter, Harmon has the knack of telling others how to do it.

It isn't all pure sagacity, nor does he have a little secret which changes dubs into champions. He inspires confidence in his pupils, and has teaching adaptability which enables him to help his clients to improve their own stroke to gratifying proportions.

Claude Harmon is a Florida kid who grew up in Orlando and was a top youngster in a highly competitive area. His game originally was self-taught, and he has made a lot of changes since 1937, principally on advice from his onetime boss at Winged Foot — his close friend Craig Wood.

Claude didn't pick up the game which makes him a topnotcher, and a former Masters Champion (1947) with any ease.

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He had to work for everything he has in the way of a swing, and work hard. It wasn't any fun at all.

But in the process of revamping, he learned a great deal about the mechanics of golf and got a sort of self-administered Masters' degree which is paying off now. This experience also taught him to understand the problems of his pupils and to appreciate the best means of helping others.

To understand his development as a teacher, let's take up Harmon's history. A good golfer in 1937, Harmon continued to improve his game after turning pro and going to work in Chicago. But he was far from satisfied. He just couldn't seem to score consistently.

Then he moved to Winged Foot as assistant to Wood. That was in 1942. Wood, who held the U. S. Open title longer than any other golfer, (he won it in 1941 and it wasn't played for again until 1946), is a keen tutor, too.

Wood Revises Harmon's Swing

He set to work remodeling Harmon's swing, emphasizing the so-called "closed face" theory, which really means getting the clubface squarely at the ball at impact, and persuaded Claude to try it.

On his own, while working on Craig's style, Harmon decided to change his grip, from the generally-used overlapping to the rare interlocking. Claude believed he was not improving rapidly enough because his left thumb along the shaft, demanded unqualifiedly in the overlapping grip, caused his arm muscles to tighten up all the way to his shoulder.

He found he could get complete freedom at the top of the swing using the interlocking grip. It was difficult to do, and Harmon spent many a tedious hour on the practice tee apparently getting nowhere. But he finally mastered it, and with it the art of busting par.

Nevertheless, Claude does not readily recommend to pupils they change to his method of holding the club. If he believes they have the kind of swing which will adapt to the interlocking grip, he recommends but doesn't demand.

"I don't say every golfer should change by a long shot. A lot depends on the player. Temperament, knowledge of the mechanics of the swing and the amount of practice a player can give must determine this," declares Claude.

Make Pupils Know Their Faults

"But if any of my pupils want to change, I can show them how and it doesn't take as long as you might think. But always remember this—once you start it, keep at it. Trying to change back will ruin both grips, or at least the swing that goes with it," he adds.

Claude also believes the way to help a golfer improve his game is to make him

conscious of his swing faults. There is no mechanical method of doing this and the tutor must have infinite patience, more perhaps than the pupil.

Claude has one unchangeable formula, the position of the ball in relation to the left foot. He is convinced every shot, except the putt, should be played with the ball in a line with the inside of the left foot.

"The right foot is the one to move to adjust to the distance of the club," Harmon adds. "But you can't go far wrong if you standardize your left foot position."

From there the Winged Foot pro proceeds according to his evaluation of the client. If he believes the pupil can absorb the detailed niceties of the Craig Wood swing, which involves grooving the backswing to an outside arc with careful attention to the position of the club (closed) at the top of the swing, he will go ahead. If not, then he will proceed on the theory of improving the swing the client has developed.

Some of the things Harmon does with his pupils cannot be set down on paper. They include a keen analysis of the mental side and an appreciation of just how much the player can absorb.

For instance, two winters ago at Seminole veteran Johnny DeForest, former British Amateur champion, just couldn't get out of traps in championship style. DeForest, by no means a player you can talk to and expect results, had to be shown.

So Harmon's lesson in sand shot play consisted mainly of demonstration, of showing the Briton just how to use the proper technique. In a half hour, Claude had Johnny laying shots stiff.

It was typical of Harmon that, while going through his teaching routine and talking while he swung, he holed out several of his shots.

Body Action Prime Feature

"The first thing I look for in a golfer who feels hopeless about his game is his body action," says Claude of his teaching.

"If I see him taking a peculiar twist, or playing with too much rigidity, I aim more to halt this than to fix up his swing. As a matter of fact, when you overcome the body faults his swing usually will step up its efficiency as if by magic."

Claude says once he has a pupil set on his grip, his main thought from then on is to eliminate consciousness of use of the hands. He believes the body, arms and feet are the important factors from there on; that spontaneous, natural unison of action by these components will insure proper hand action.

None of this is startling or deviates from methods and policies of other master golf instructors. But Claude has the ability to



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teach it forcefully without bringing his pupils to befuddlement. That is always the basis of sound teaching.

Harmon is convinced teaching is an individual to individual proposition, that group instruction except to youngsters, is not practical with adult golfers who have played much. He bases this on an experience at Winged Foot when he first took over as head pro.

Trying to give the members a well-rounded job, Claude inaugurated the stunt of picking up a foursome on the first tee each Sunday morning and another in the afternoon and playing a round with them. He offered advice freely, without charge, and was genuinely concerned with helping members improve their games by instruction while in the course of playing a round.

After a couple of Sundays of this, Claude noticed a certain coldness and a grudging consent from sundry groups when he asked to join them.

To his amazement he discovered the players resented him because they felt uncomfortable and played wretchedly because they thought they had to do well under the eyes of their pro and were prone to press and overswing.

Since then Claude has stuck to one pupil on the practice tee or, if playing a round, making sure he wouldn't paralyze any of his fellow players. It is strange he should have to fear this, because there isn't a nicer guy to play a round of golf with than Harmon. For that matter, there isn't a nicer guy to spend a half hour with on the practice tee.

Harmon is a strong believer in protecting his pupils against the dangers of misinterpretation. In putting across the swing idea clearly through feel and mind picture and to prevent misunderstanding and implant a sound swing pattern Claude makes extensive use of motion pictures and photographs by Polaroid Land camera which stops action quick enough to show what Harmon wants the pupil to see and yields a print in a minute.

Harmon has adopted the old Chinese maxim "A picture says more than a thousand words" and finds that it helps the pupil when the pupil has been given enough basic understanding to understand the picture. Claude isn't one to talk a lesson. Too much talk by the teacher often confuses the pupil and, in many instances, encourages the pupil to talk rather than let his muscles do the listening and talking.

Like all other successful golf instructors Harmon is a canny practical psychologist. Creating the right attitude for learning he regards as important as any of the essential elements of teaching. He cites the cases of most pros getting good results from golf instruction they have received

because they have been in the right attitude for learning and have complete confidence in their instructors. A great many pupils at a club subconsciously have more interest in being taught than they have in learning. Balancing those two factors gets the pupil conditioned properly for receiving lasting results from the lessons, Harmon declares.

An important phase of his entire instruction plan is that of fully acquainting his assistants with his general and detailed instruction ideas, supervising assistant's instruction of members so the entire instruction work is unified and coordinated and discussing with his assistants the teaching problems that confront them.

Caddie Minimum Wages Proposed in New York State

Eastern New York Golf Assn. is drafting proposed minimum wage scale for caddies to be submitted to Edward Corsi, Industrial Commissioner of N. Y., following the appearance of Pierce Hull Russell, attorney representing the golf organization, on Sept. 11 at Albany discussing the basic minimum rates proposed by the state board.

The entire proposal set forth by the board was:

"\$1 per bag for each round of 9 holes or less.

"\$2 per bag for each round of 10 holes to 18 holes."

As Russell pointed out the proposed scale is an over-simplification of the situation. Currently in Eastern N. Y. rates for Class B caddies are about half the proposed rate and slightly more than half for Class A caddies. Under the proposed scale a caddie would get \$2 for carrying double one hole or \$4 for carrying double 10 holes.

Eastern N. Y. caddies this year made from \$10 to \$25 a week.

Increase in caddie rates, golfers declare, would result in considerable reduction in caddie earnings as many golfers would use carts. The proposed rates would cut caddie earnings for their own use and as contributions to family budgets and would diminish golf's efforts to provide supervised healthy light work in offsetting juvenile delinquency.

BIGGEST TURF CONFERENCE!

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The 1950 score card shows that you've made this the Hagen line's greatest year—*by a wide margin*. When you see our new '51 line, as you will soon, I'm confident you'll agree it's the finest we've ever built—and in a class all by itself. This line is *your* line. Its trade-mark—my name—is pledged to you and will be found *only* in pro shops. And I'd like to remind you, too, that this trade-mark is much more than my personal endorsement. It's a long established mark that says to your customers, "This is *the Ultra* in golf equipment" . . . a trade-mark that promises to be an even greater pro shop asset in 1951 than it has been this year. So again, thanks fellows for a banner year.

YOURS FOR PRO-ONLY SALES

Walter Hagen



George Lake, chairman, PGA Junior Golf Program tells the 197 golfers attending the 5th annual Jaycee National Junior Tournament their faults and weaknesses, stresses the merit of consistent practice in his frank talk before nearly 500 golfers, Jaycees and friends at banquet held in Student Union Building on Iowa State College campus.

Jaycees Make National Event Big Week for Junior Golfers

By MARSHALL TOWNSEND

Championship trophies of the USJCC National Junior Amateur Golf Tournament have gone South this year, for the first time in the five-year history of the competition sponsored by the United States Junior Chamber of Commerce. Eddie Merrins, a trim little 18-year-old golfer from Meridian, Mississippi, who had previously won the 1950 Magnolia State Amateur championship, personally saw to it that the traveling trophy—now christened the Terry Boykin Memorial Trophy—came "home."

At Ames, Iowa, Merrins came through to win the title over Gay Brewer, Lexington, Kentucky, 1-up on 36 over the Iowa State College course. The little 140-pound Eddie was playing his heart out to "do it for Terry." Boykin's name was in the 1950 tournament only on the Championship trophy. He was killed in an automobile crash while returning from the 1949 Championship in Houston, Texas, with Merrins and three other Mississippi boys.

Eddie's determination was coupled with a quiet vow—and a pledge to himself. As a result, the trophy he won at Ames is going to go to Terry Boykin's widowed mother at Laurel, Mississippi. The Terry Boykin Trophy itself will pass along to the 1951 Champion next year, but Eddie

also won the 1950 individual trophy for permanent possession. He still will be eligible by 17 days to defend his championship next year.

A field of 197 contestants representing 145 towns from 39 states and the District of Columbia—the largest ever—had won the right to enter this year's championship play, August 13 through 19, by surviving local and state tournaments which had attracted nearly 20,000 entrants. Contestants had to be under 19 years of age as of July 15.

California took at least a share of honors to another section of the country, however, as it captured the Team Championship for the third year in a row with a 595 total for its low four men.

Contestants rolled into Ames and into the hands of Ames Jaycees' hospitality beginning Friday, August 11, and were allowed two practice rounds during Saturday and Sunday. The putting greens and driving practice got a heavy additional workout, and some of the contenders also kept in form by matching strokes over the Homewood golf course and the Ames Golf and Country Club links.

Johnny Revolta, former PGA champion, took center stage Sunday afternoon for the first scheduled event—a clinic for the juniors, but with spectators also permit-