

## Review this season to plan for next

One of the keys to our success has been a review of the past season for ways in which we can improve our over-all operating procedure.

After the busy season is over, and the results are in, both good and bad, we always take a few days—find a quiet hide-away—and armed with the records of the past season, which are still fresh in our minds, we plan for next year's operation.

It has been our experience that if we delay this review too long, events of the past year become hazy and out of focus and it becomes difficult to recall exactly what did happen.

To better organize our thinking, we break down our operation into seven general categories which we explore one by one for ways to do a better job next year:

**1) Personnel** — Were they right for the operation? In reviewing the past season, it became evident that our gross sales had fallen for no apparent reason. However, upon close examination of our personnel, we found we were top heavy with teaching and playing professionals who, mostly, did not have a flair for selling.

The next year we replaced one of these professionals with a person who was skilled in the art of merchandising as well as being skillful in the game. Our now better balanced operation moved ahead in sales that year.

**2) Merchandising** — Each year we research the market for next year's models, styles, fabrics etc., and we study new merchandising methods. The manufacturers make this study and plan their lines as much as two years ahead so that a letter to a vice president in charge of sales usually will bring an immediate and accurate description of the products they

are coming out with. We use this first hand information for future buying.

Salesmen are another good source of information. They know every trick for pushing the sales of their product. Also, a private chat with the sales manager of our area's leading stores is always profitable because they are trained in the most modern sales techniques.

**3) Teaching Programs** — Every year we up-grade our teaching programs in the simplest way. We have movies taken of us going through our teaching routine. A full staff meeting is called and attention is focused on the changes and improvements in teaching techniques and rule changes.

**4) Service To Members** — Again, movies are taken of our operation in action. The club service department is shot during the normal routine of everyday business; For example, the cleaning and storage of clubs and the handling of bags to and from the first tee and the parking lot. We also take pictures of the starters doing their job on busy days and the registration and sales staff during peak business hours and slow periods. The golf car operation comes under the eye of the camera from the car shed until the member leaves the first tee.

All the films are shown to our entire staff at a special staff meeting. Every member of the staff is encouraged to speak up when improvement can be made, regardless of which department is under the discussion. We do not permit criticism as such, but rather ask that all opinions be in the nature of constructive improvements, based on facts.

**5) Public Relations** — Our public relations program is twofold. The first is

*continued on next page*

## Pro's Rule of Seven

*continued from preceding page*

the golf staff's association with the membership, which includes proper attitude and definition of responsibility in working with all club officials and committee members.

The second is the golf staff's conduct and the impression it gives when it is away from the club. This includes scheduling of appearances at public functions, working with sports-minded groups, keeping commitments with press, radio, and television media, and participating in tournaments and exhibitions. The clue here is that we make ourselves available and known to golf-minded people.

**6) Equipment** — Must it be replaced and modernized? A search into our operating records revealed startling facts. We did not have on hand one single piece of equipment we used ten years ago. Yet, we still used some of the same basic equipment over a set period of time.

For example, our club-cleaning machines are depreciated by the straight line depreciation method and replaced with new machines. The same procedure is true of shop fixtures, furniture, carpets, etc., in fact, everything that can be depreciated and replaced.

We constantly add equipment as it proves itself in the business world. In 1946, we started using a dictaphone and updated this machine when more sophisticated equipment became available. Last year, we bought three of the most modern units available in order that every department would have its own.

Our entire operation is connected by an intercom system which now enables us to get things done in a hurry rather than our old "walk-from-pillar-to-post method." The result has shown greater efficiency. We will standardize this procedure in all future operations.

A call to your local telephone business office should result in their sending an expert out to analyze your needs and bring you up to date on various new systems that are available. Many times a

surprisingly low cost item will produce tremendous results.

Walkie-talkie sets are a must with us, and are used to great advantage where mobility is a factor. For example, our golf course superintendent is never out of touch with the pro shop regardless of his location on the course. The same is true of our golf course rangers and starters. The price of these sets is minimal when compared with the results they produce. Information about these units can be obtained from good radio or TV stores.

A final word about equipment—our motto is, "Take good care of your equipment and it will take good care of you." We also believe in modernizing equipment at every opportunity. This proved to be the economical way over a long period of time.

**7) Profit and Loss** — At the end of every quarter, our auditor and tax consultant is boss. We have our P&L figures broken down and carefully studied. This keeps us from making the same stupid mistakes all year long. Where changes are indicated, we make them.

At the end of the year, we have four separate reports to analyze, and from them, we derive our annual report. We are then able to outline the next year's financial program with utmost accuracy.

We take this same report, have copies made, and distribute them to our entire staff at our special year-end staff meeting. We then go over the figures with them in detail so that they will have a clearer picture of the operation.

This year-end review of our operations has been a constant procedure with us for many years. Every year, we discover problem areas and ways to improve them. Here are some of the problems we discovered and corrected from previous year-end staff meetings. These are again broken down into the seven general categories.

**1) Personnel** — This area was found to be satisfactory in every way except one. The exception was personal appearance of the male staff. This was corrected by our supplying each of our staff with

*continued on page 58*

---

## Swing into spring with the sales power of exclusive golf apparel by LOUISE SUGGS

---



See the fresh new group from  
our confined pro shop collection

**Representatives:**

**SULLIVAN'S GOLF SERVICE,**  
San Francisco, California  
**E. J. SMITH COMPANY,** Charlotte, N. C.  
**GOLF MART,** Birmingham, Michigan  
**GREAT LAKES GOLF BALL CO.,** Oak Lawn, Illinois  
**WINTER DOBSON,** Dallas, Texas

or write:

**LOUISE SUGGS PRO DIVISION**

David H. Smith Company, Lynn, Massachusetts

---

For more information circle number 200 on card

# The long and short of it

By CHARLES McCREA

Superintendent, Engineers CC, Roslyn Harbor, N.Y.

**While short-term planning is needed, a long-range master plan is how the super will ultimately improve the quality of the course.**

Today's golf course superintendent is faced with the problem of not only maintaining the existing course that he has, but also of improving it to keep pace with the rising standards of excellence expected on all courses.

The problem is particularly difficult at older courses that weren't built to handle today's heavy play. Physical changes and improvements must be made, but first they must be planned.

Engineers Country Club, where I am the golf course superintendent, typifies these problems. The course was built in 1915 and opened in 1917. As best I can find out, it was called Engineers because it was built by an association of engineers. The course had very limited play with small undulating greens.

The course had several changes of ownership since 1917, going from private, to semi-private to public and then back, in 1953, to a private operation again.

Our membership leased the club in 1953, and then, in 1965, motivated by a desire to make capital improvements to the club, purchased the club and the grounds surrounding.

Mr. John Jagodzinski served the club as superintendent for almost forty years prior to his retirement in 1966. He recognized all the physical problems at Engineers, but since the club did not own the

grounds, there was a reluctance to make physical improvements on someone else's property that would be left there at the expiration of the lease.

During the transition period, when John was leaving and I was coming on the job, he spent a lot of time with me going over the whole course, pointing out the problem areas and trouble spots that he had learned from experience. This first-hand knowledge has served me well in making plans for our programmed course improvements.

Twenty years ago, in the metropolitan New York area, only some of the private clubs had fairway irrigation systems. Many systems were no more sophisticated than hose and sprinklers. Now, almost all courses, private and public, have fairway irrigation systems, many of which are fully automatic. Some courses now are installing rough irrigation systems and others converting old manual single row systems to double-row automatic systems. Again, this is being done to keep pace with the rising standard of excellence among golf courses.

Some courses are maintaining tees at putting green length. Others are mowing fairways with the ten-bladed reels that leave the fairways almost as smooth as the greens. In fact, one senior superintendent, who has spent almost 65 years as-



sociated with the game of golf, said to me recently that the fairways that we played on are better than the greens of thirty years ago.

At my club, a partial rough irrigation system has been installed, tees have been enlarged, but much more needs to be done to establish and maintain the high standard of excellence desired.

The greens are physically too small to support our heavy play. They average under 4,000 square feet with some smaller than 3,000 square feet. The problem of the small size of the greens is further compounded by the fact that many of the greens are undulating and have only limited cupping areas.

We also have problems with our practice area, irrigation system, clubhouse landscaping, and golf course trapping. In fact, at times, it seems that all we have are difficult problems.

Proper planning, obviously, is the best way to overcome these problems. And this planning that we course superintendents do falls into two general categories: 1) Short term planning and 2) Long term planning.

We all have our short term plans. They can vary in size according to our wants.

They involve planning our aerification programs, planning our daily and weekly work schedules, and planning our fertilizer and fungicide programs. They can be mental notes or written instructions on the blackboard to the crew.

The important thing is that we have at least some plan of action so that we don't show up at work at seven o'clock and find ten men waiting for us and only then decide what we want to do with that eighty man hours that we have at our disposal.

As important as our short term plans

*continued on next page*



## Long and Short of It

*continued from page 35*

are in carrying out our normal maintenance, we still need other plans. Maintenance *alone* won't solve some of the problems of our courses. Some of the problems have been built into the course and others are the result of changing times and the demand for better playing conditions.

To meet the challenge of these rising demands and to correct old problems, as superintendents we should make plans to correct them. I call these long range plans at our course, a master plan for programmed course improvements.

This long term is probably just as important, though not as exciting, as the actual construction. Because in order to sell our program to the membership, we will have to show them a well conceived and well thought-out plan of action or program that will lead to a more enjoyable golf course for the members.

I've found out that members like to hear the word "program" because it again conveys this idea of advance planning, which they have to do everyday in their business life, and which they like their superintendents to do.

The intent of the master plan is to evaluate the present golf course facilities and the demands placed on them, with respect to the standard of excellence and then make the necessary suggestions to correct problem areas.

When you are formulating your master plan for improvements there are several areas that should be covered. Included in this list would be most of the areas that go to make up a golf course, such as greens, tees, fairways, traps and roughs. Also, be sure to include such things as the irrigation system, the maintenance facility, clubhouse landscaping, practice area and the plantings on the course, including the trees.

Some of these areas such as the fairways and fairway renovation can be handled financially within the normal yearly maintenance budget. However, if a ma-

jor program of burning off the fairways is done, then it should be included in the long-term master plan.

We can't establish a rigid set of standards for what every golf course should and should not have in these areas. The individual superintendent knows best what is required at his golf club. For instance, he knows how big his tees should be, what traps need modernizing so as to facilitate their maintenance and appearance, how his irrigation system can be improved, or where more trees should be planted.

By presenting these requirements in an over-all master plan, you will make your greens committee, and ultimately the over-all membership, aware of the golf conditions at your club and how they can be improved.

You can also prevent such a situation that I heard of where the club had spent \$80,000 on a watering system, and the next year, the superintendent asked for money to enlarge some of the tees. The greens chairman reminded him that the club had just spent \$80,000 on a watering system. To which the superintendent replied that the new watering system did not make the tees any larger and they were still a problem.

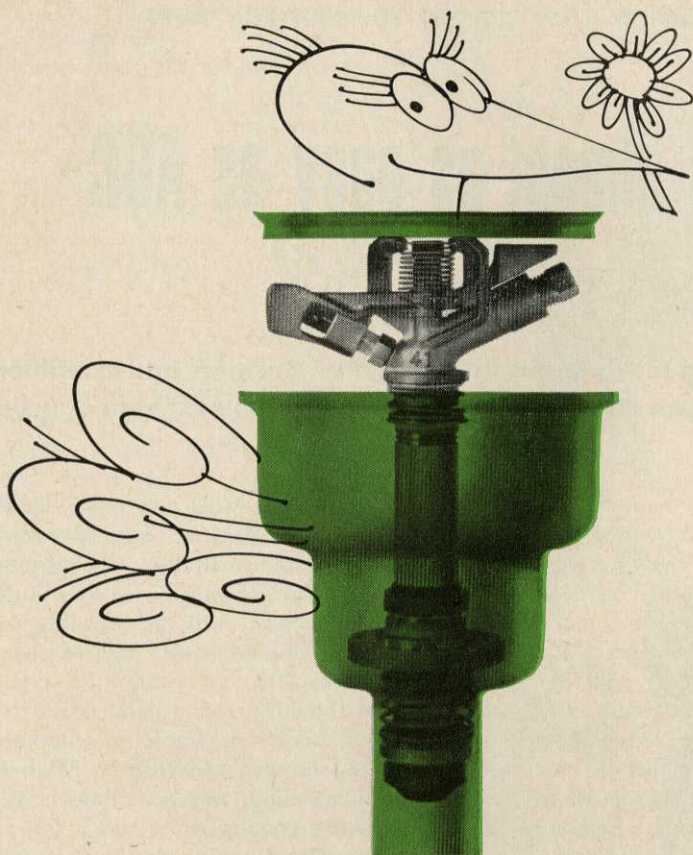
I feel that today's golf course superintendent is the best qualified individual to come up with this over-all plan. If the scope of the plan includes modification of clubhouse grounds or the irrigation system or changing the course trapping, he may want to hire the help of a professional in these fields, but, since the superintendent is charged with the responsibility of everything outside the clubhouse door, he should take an active part in initiating improvement programs.

It may well be that the club does not have the money to make capital improvements, but I think it is important that they then realize the limitations of the present course and live with them as best they can until something can be done.

*If such a plan isn't presented by the superintendent, you can be sure golf coun-*

*continued on page 54*





## THE POP-UP SANDPIPER

Unlike gear or cam-driven rotors, Rain Bird's Rotor Impact Drive sprinklers can pipe sand and dirt from well or lake water straight out again—through large water flow channels. Thus: lower maintenance costs. (Parts for field repair average less than \$1.00 per head.)

Rain Bird's positive drive Pop-Ups are also of much simpler design, with only two Teflon seals and sufficient tolerance on the riser shaft. The positive Precision-Jet arm no-splash action allows placement of these Birds alongside walks, club houses, trimmed areas and so on—they'll never splash back. The watering arc is adjustable from part

to full circle. And a tough vinyl coating protects the sprinkler.

What this bird gives you is all the usefulness of reliable Rain Bird above-the-surface sprinklers, but out of the way, underground, until the water is turned on.

Rain Bird Rotor Pop-Ups have a long, wear-free life, and the entire sprinkler assemblies inside are interchangeable. For full details on the range of Rain Bird Rotor Pop-Up heads available, call your Rain Bird distributor. Or write: Rain Bird, Glendora, California 91740 (in the West); or Rainy Sprinkler Sales, Division L.R. Nelson Manufacturing

Company Inc., 7719 North Pioneer Lane, Peoria, Illinois (in the East and Midwest).



For more information circle number 149 on card

# It's almost as easy as ABC

By JERRY MARLATT, CCM

Northmoor CC, Highland Park, Ill.

**By channeling his thoughts into Activities, Business and Conditions the manager can dig out important data vital to next year's success.**

In the fall, one is reminded of the tail gunner on a World War II bomber who stated, "I never know where I am going, but I sure know where I have been."

Yes, as the season draws to a close in a country club, the manager finds himself in complete agreement with the gunner, for it is then we finally find where we have gone, how rough the trip was, what obstacles were met in our journey, and what kind of a landing we made.

For many, 1967 was a season of rising labor costs, unusual food costs, influencing weather conditions, and in some cases resistance to rising prices.

Many of us threw up our hands in disgust as the season progressed, and in the interest of "member satisfaction" decided to give the best quality possible, employ whomever was obtainable, and raise our prices as much as members would accept.

We now find as we enter the last quarter of the year that this might have made for outward "smooth flying," while encountering anxious moments as we went along. But like some of the airlines who advertise "fly now, and pay later," there comes a time for the final accounting.

With many of these things still fresh in your mind, would not now be a good time to record your problems, obstacles, weather encounters, and equipment opera-

tions? Call it what you may, "De-Briefing," "Post-Mortem," or "Memoirs," it becomes the collecting of information which could be valuable in the future.

If you wait until the snow has fallen, get the holiday season out of the way, and complete your vacation . . . you may find this information is not fresh in your mind, has lost its impact and importance, or has escaped you entirely. With activities lessening, and becoming more of a weekend concentration, take a few moments now to gather this important data, for it might become very valuable to you in just a few more months.

This could be a simple matter and we could over-simplify it by saying: "It's as easy as A-B-C;" if you channel your thoughts into the areas of *Activities, Business, and Conditions*.

*Activity:* As you review your 1967 operations, activity becomes one of the most important points to ponder. When you prepared your budgets in 1966 for this year, what amount of activity were you expecting? Did it meet your expectations? Was it less than anticipated or just what you expected? Take the time now to go through your daily reservation book and decide if luncheon and dinner business were what you had hoped for. If they were not, determine what effected



your projections in comparison with what actually happened.

Perhaps the entertainment committee felt there had been too many parties in 1966 and members wanted more "open nights" during this year? Check now to see if lost attendance from parties was made up by member usage on these new nights, or see if parties are necessary to fully utilize the staff and facilities.

Maybe the situation was reversed in your club and you received a number of member complaints about crowded conditions on week-ends resulting from a large number of social functions.

Were too many guests present? Were those special ladies' day luncheons as heavily attended in April and May as you might have liked, or did the children coming home at noon for lunch cause them to play only nine and head for home? Did you notice an increase in attendance at functions after the kids departed for their camps?

Was your male golf confined to week-ends in the early part of the season and then suddenly jumped up during the Decoration Day to Labor Day period? Or was it the reverse, and the "boss" played during the off season, and filled in for key men in his organization as summer vacations created a need for his presence during the week?

A look at the reservation book, the guest register and the calendar may provide you with this information and notes can be taken which might help in your planning for 1968. A look at the club social calendar could also reveal some interesting facts. You might find that someone had the idea to "hold off" the social activities until Decoration Day and the members did not begin to "use" the club until the season opened socially. But you might have had an early opening party and found that they began to use the club earlier due to this "rushing of the new season."

Maybe you held a large formal dinner

*continued on next page*



## Club Managers' ABC's

*continued from preceding page*

dance the night before the qualifying round for all classes in the club championship; and found you had poor attendance? Most of your potential attendees probably had to tee off early and therefore departed earlier than normal.

You might find that a brunch went over well on the morning of a husband-wife mixed two-ball event because both ma and pa were able to eat together. Perhaps your 5 P.M. shift on Mother's Day went practically unattended where you had overflows on the 6 and 7 P.M. reservations. It is also possible you had poor attendance on the Saturday night dances prior to the three day weekends.

A trip to the pro shop may disclose that you had good car revenue in the months prior to and after school vacations. It is also possible that the pro practically "starved" for lessons until those vacations for the kids began, and then he could not handle some of them until Labor Day. Golf ball sales may have increased as the course became more crowded, and the merchandise sales had exceptional increases near Mother's Day and Father's Day.

All of these things are worthy of note, and if one makes up a *blank calendar* of what *actually happened*, forgetting what you had planned or expected to happen, you may discover some revealing facts.

Turning now to "B" we find *Business*: This is a simple matter, entailing an analysis of your daily sales in all departments. If you utilize a daily report sheet this information is practically at your fingertips. Scrutinizing a daily sales journal could cause more work, but even a monthly statement will help to find out where your business *did* or *did not come from*.

An analysis of *Business* during the summer months contributes to some degree in controlling rising labor costs and filling the labor shortage.

We all feel that summer means more business at the club; then we gear our kitchen and dining room personnel to the expectations of this increased business.

But an analysis of *what increases* our business helps in the areas mentioned.

If you do exceptional business on your Sunday night buffets, would the addition of a "mid-week" or second buffet night increase your business even more?

You may find that your breakfast business is insufficient to pay for the breakfast cook and waitresses necessary to serve it. A buffet of sweet rolls, juices on ice, melon pieces and hot coffee may be all they want, and you would use less help.

Some clubs have found that a "do-it-yourself" coffee bar with trays of sweet rolls in the locker room, utilizing an honor system for signing checks eliminates all but one person in serving the early morning golfers before he tees off.

You might also find that your business increased only because of summer facilities that are used such as cabanas, snack bars, half-way houses and the outdoor patio bar. Closer checking may reveal that you actually had a decrease in your grill and main dining rooms at luncheon time due to these facilities or that locker room buffet you serve on weekends. A similar check of your individual guest checks may reveal that the "check average" falls drastically as lighter and cooler foods appear on your menus, and while you do less dollar volume, you need more help.

Finding out "how you obtained the business" can be almost as important as "how much business" you did. Checks should be made as to breakfast, luncheon, dinner, buffet, snack bar, half-way house and other food and bar revenues so that you know where you are really doing the business.

Some departments may be just "convenience centers" for keeping the kids out of the clubhouse and are actually subsidized by the club; while your golfers may be contributing some good profits through their patronage of the half-way house which requires a minimal staff, but sells to almost everyone on the course.

"C" as in *Conditions* becomes another important and significant factor in our post-season analysis. What about the

*continued on page 56*

GOLFDOM