

# Give Your Assistant a Chance

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I CAME to the Detroit District Oct. 1, 1920. Previous to that date I had spent eight years and seven months at the Glen View Golf Club, Golf, Ill. Since coming to Oakland Hills Country Club, we have had the Western Open in 1922, and the National Open in 1924.

This article I hope may be a help to some of the younger and possibly a few older greenkeepers. It may be used more as guide for the less experienced greenkeepers. I have followed the same system for the past fifteen years and it has worked out very well.

## *Working Force*

An eighteen hole golf course, which is in fairly good condition, can be kept in first class shape with eleven men. Divide the men as follows: six men for greens and tees; two men for bunkers, mounds, etc.; one man for cutting fairways, with tractor; one man for cutting rough; one man to act as your assistant. Some greenkeepers think they don't need an assistant but I believe it is a very good thing to have someone who takes an interest in the work and whom you can trust. Get to know your men, then pick out the kind of man who you know will give you a square deal, pay him a little more and train him to your way of doing things; then in case of sickness or a vacation, you need have no worry as to how the work is being carried on; at the same time you are making a greenkeeper for some club. Good greenkeepers are scarce.

## *General Work*

Each man takes care of three greens and the tees in the vicinity of his greens. He cuts, rolls, waters, fertilizes and weeds the greens. The first duty in the spring, when you can get on the greens is topdressing with compost. One or two yards per green according to the size, mixed with thirty to fifty pounds of sulphate ammonia. Spread on and rub in with a steel mat and follow with a good rolling. I usually topdress every four or six weeks and use the same amount; but I sometimes vary with a dressing of good sharp sand; especially if the greens are composed of heavy soil. A sanding two or three times during the season will do them a world of good; because it works into the soil making it more porous, giving the grass roots a chance to spread out and go down after moisture and also letting the water penetrate deeper; besides forming a good cushion, trueing up the greens, therefore making good putting. I usually go over them every two weeks with about twenty-five to thirty pounds of sulphate of ammonia. A good way to put it on is to



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have a water barrel sprinkler, dissolving five pounds in each barrel then going over the greens. If you haven't a water barrel sprinkler, get a Cyclone Grass Seeder and put it on with that, following with a good heavy watering.

## *Care of Putting Greens*

During the growing season we mow every day and roll three times a week. After each man has finished mowing or rolling his greens, he mows his tees, if they need it; using the same type of machine and cutting the tees nearly as closely as the greens. My men are usually through mowing, watering or rolling about noon; so they have half a day to pull weeds, fill up holes punched in greens by landing balls, or touching up poor spots if there are any.

## *Morning Watering*

Now, we come to a very important thing on a golf course. Plenty of water is very essential. I used to water at night but gave up the idea several years ago, as it is so hard to get a man who will stick to it and still do a good job. It is a very monotonous job, and it is very hard to see much of the green at one time; which resulted in many places on the greens not getting any water. Each man waters each of his greens for about three-quarters of an hour, with a one inch hose and large spray nozzle, with about thirty to fifty pounds of



pressure. When he is through his last green, his first one is dry enough to cut. When watering the greens give them a soaking so that the water will soak down about four or five inches. Do not sprinkle greens lightly in the daytime because when the sun comes out or the wind blows it will just dry up without any benefit to the greens at all. There have been a lot of comments on daytime watering, some say it is harmful; but I think it a good idea if done right. I base my conclusions on the fact that after a rain storm in the daytime, that lasts about a half hour, it works wonders with the course, so why shouldn't watering by men in the daytime be of the same value? I have thirty-six holes and all of the greens are watered in this manner. Watering takes place at the beginning of the day's work. Then we use bamboo poles and rub any moisture or dew off before cutting.

#### **Seeding**

Seeding should be done in the fall for the best results; say about September first, although lots of clubs are using vegetative creeping bent, especially in their new greens. I have eighteen greens which were planted by the vegetative method. They were planted September 1923 and were ready for play in June 1924, and they were in first class condition. But this type of green I'll leave for someone else to explain.

#### **Keep Your Bunkers Clean**

I keep two men busy working on bunkers, keeping them clean and raked, mounds and edges of pits trimmed. I made two drags by taking two pieces of wood 2 inches by 6 inches by 2 feet. These were driven full of spikes and hung together by hinges, and a piece of rope attached to each end. Two men can drag the bottom of a good many pits in a day. They also carry along a rake, to rake the sides of the pits. This is done every day on my course to 103 pits on the south course and 84 pits on the north course.

#### **Spring Fertilizing of Fairways**

Fairways are usually cut by tractor power, with five cutting units either pulled or pushed, and you should not let the grass on the fairways get too long. Any thin places on your fairways should be run over with a disc harrow. The disc should be set nearly straight so as

not to tear out too much grass; then such places should be seeded and topdressed, chain harrowed and rolled. It is a good idea to go over such places after the season has closed, with a good dressing of manure and the following year will see quite a change for the better. It is also a good idea to fertilize in the early spring. I use Activated Sludge, new name, Milorganite, at the rate of seven hundred pounds to the acre. It is the best fertilizer I have found and it is very cheap, costing \$22.50 a ton f.o.b., Milwaukee. The greenkeepers around the Detroit district who have used it are well pleased with the results it brings about.

#### **Rough Needs More Attention**

The rough we cut with a tractor and three cutting units and it is kept down pretty close, so as to speed up the play. When the rough is long, balls get lost easily and lost balls mean slow play, and slow play on a much played course is unsatisfactory, so keep your rough down.

#### **Choose a Good Assistant**

The assistant greenkeeper should know enough to go around and change the holes; of course he must be shown how, but after being shown how he should be made to do it, as it gives him practice and at the same time he can see that the men are doing the right thing; also he will be able to see places on the course that need attention. He should be given every kind of work to do and when he becomes adept at his work it will help you and may also be the means of getting himself a place of his own.

#### **No Two Courses Alike**

Do not think that all courses are the same; because they are not. There is a difference in courses, even though they may only be a few miles apart. One course may be very sandy, another a little heavier, another might be heavy soil, another clay. Each one needs different treatment and if you don't know how, ask some of your fellow greenkeepers; they will be glad to help you. Remember that we are never so wise that we know it all; that every day there are hints which might be of great help to us, so pay attention when you are talking with another greenkeeper and he may tell you something you never dreamed of before.

## **ONWARD!**

**Forever more the greenkeepers  
Of the good old U. S. A.  
Will march with those of Canada  
Along Life's broad fairway.**

**In serried ranks, with steady gaze  
Fixed on the goal ahead,  
Behind them lies Uncertainty,  
Before them Truth instead.**

**The standard bearer holds aloft  
Two flags that blend as one,  
For Uncle Sam and Canada  
Have this great work begun.**

**And Character shall pave the way,  
And Helpfulness shall be  
A light to guide the footsteps  
Of this great Fraternity.**