

Bermuda in Oklahoma

By G. H. CONGER, *Greenkeeper*
Dornick Hills Country Club, Ardmore, Oklahoma

IN the spring of 1925 I started work on Dornick Hills under my father, J. Frank Conger, as tractor and truck operator, and all round handy-man. That summer I did most everything to be done on a golf course including (trying) to play golf. In October father went to Enid, Oklahoma, to take charge of the Enid Country Club. I finally got up enough nerve to ask for the job of greenkeeper, and to my surprise got it.

I still have the same Green chairman I started under, Mr. O. W. Devery. I wish to say I owe a large part of what I have accomplished to him. I do not know many Green committee chairmen, but I really believe I have one of the best in the country. If any two men need to co-operate it is surely the Green committee chairman and the greenkeeper.

We are fortunate in having one of the prettiest and sportiest courses in the southwest, but as we have to



Number eighteen at Dornick Hills, taken from clubhouse

work under a small greens budget you can imagine about what we are up against with an 18-hole course that requires a great deal of hand work and seven to eight months' growing season.

About the 20th of December, 1926, we closed our greens and made temporary greens for the first time. There was some complaint as we have year around golf here.

Starting Bermuda Along in the Spring

The 15th of March, just as the grass began to grow we weeded and mowed the greens as closely as possible. Practically skinned the greens and topdressed heavily with about two yards compost per green, forty per cent sand, forty per cent well rotted feed pen manure and

twenty per cent black soil. We have no loam, as most of our course is black gumbo.

We opened the greens the second of April, and I was very gratified to have several of the members say they had a perfect putting surface. We topdressed about every thirty days during the season, using shovels to spread the dressing as it is generally too damp to go through the distributor, and beside with undulating greens some spots need more than others.

I use a 36" stiff bristle push broom and a light cocoa mat to brush it in, then run an old mower over it to pick up the small gravel that goes through the screen, watering it by hand so as not to drift the topdressing.

Dragging With Steel Mat Keeps Grass Upright

We cut our greens every day using grass catchers dragging crosswise the cutting with a steel doormat, cutting the greens in four or more different directions. I find the steel mat helps a great deal as Bermuda grass is inclined to lie down and get jumpy on rolling greens. I find you have to keep Bermuda growing and cut it often or it will get stubby.

After our first topdressing in the spring we use about 60 per cent sand, 20 per cent manure and 20 per cent soil. I think that is a little too much manure as we had quite a few worms, but we have to economize on sand.

We have never used anything for worms, but intend to try something next spring.

We use some Ammo-Phos and Ammonium Sulphate about four times per year and it surely puts new pep into the greens.

I notice a great many greenkeepers use six greens-
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Number five at Dornick Hills, dogleg Par four, showing Number six tee at left.

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Bermuda in Oklahoma

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men. My greatest difficulty is holding good labor. Good greensmen are scarce as hens' teeth down here, and if we get a good one we have to let him go in the fall and take a chance on getting him back in the spring.

We have a very nice shop with electric driven mower grinder with emery wheel, and compost machine, as well as drill press, anvil, forge and vise, hand tools and plumbing equipment.

We have native mesquite grass on our fairways,

which is very good. We plan to plant our numbers three and six to Bermuda next spring.

Quick Development of New Greens

With Mr. Devery's help I remodeled our number eighteen green last spring and number four this spring putting Bermuda roots about every four to six inches, using a hand plow to make the furrows and cover. They were out of play only ninety days. A Bermuda green can be planted and played on in sixty days in summer, but it takes longer in spring as it won't grow up fast until hot weather. I think the vegetative method is quicker, but our method was more economical.

Southern Members, Write for this Magazine!

In conclusion I wish to say I think the NATIONAL GREENKEEPER is a very valuable magazine, especially to the men down here in the south, as we are given the opportunity to get the advice of men such as John Morley. Otherwise we would have no other source. The reason I haven't joined the National Association of Greenkeepers of America is due to my not having been a greenkeeper three years, but a farmer until 1925. It is my wish to join next spring.

I would like to hear from some of the men down south, as you know our problems are somewhat different from those in the north.

They are experimenting some at Oklahoma City Golf and Country Club with creeping bent. It came through the summer and is looking very good at this time.

Notice to Chairmen of Green Committees

The program which will be presented at the coming annual convention of the National Association of Greenkeepers of America is of vital interest to you and to your greenkeeper.

You are cordially invited to attend the meetings of February 23 and 24 at the Hotel Fort Shelby, Detroit.

The foremost golf course maintenance experts of the United States and Canada will talk on subjects of direct interest to you. Read pages 18 and 19 in this issue, and make early reservations at the Fort Shelby.