

Introducing Wampanoag

A new course lying at the foot of Talcott Mountain, near Hartford, Conn. How hard work and experience brings results.

By WM. E. BALL, Greenkeeper

FELLOW greenkeepers, meet Wampanoag, a new golf course on which construction started July 1, 1924, and was opened for play—at least nine holes were—in May 1925.

Wampanoag is located in the township of West Hartford, Conn., on a 200-acre tract among the foothills of Talcott mountain, which makes a grand western skyline and adds greatly to the scenic beauty of the course. The ground is mostly rolling, with about one-third swamp, the rest clay slopes and gravel knolls with rock outcropping aplenty. Some of the rough tracts were heavily wooded; the swamp land (much of it impassable until drained) was covered with bogs and a dense growth of everything not wanted.

There were a few old fields on the slopes that were not hard to work.

Tractors, dynamite and the clearing gangs were much in evidence at the start. Soon however, the outlines of a golf course began to appear and in September the first nine holes were seeded to fescue, blue grass and red top, that being the formula recommended by the golf course engineer in charge. Red fescue was used mostly on banks of traps.

Grass on greens and tees was cut high three times in October, top-dressed in November with a humus mixture and left for the winter.

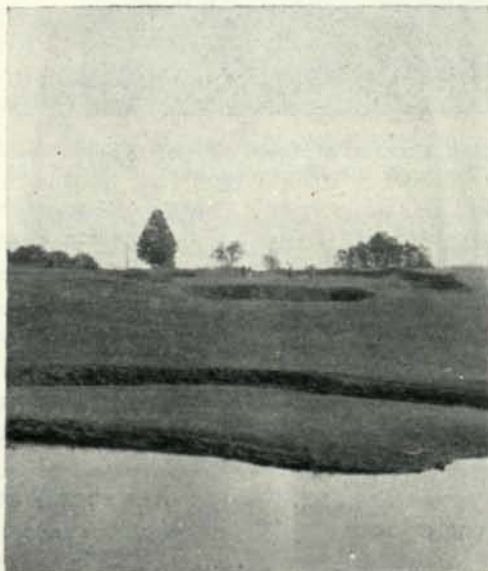
The first nine holes of course were opened for play the following May (1925) and no one who has not been through the experience can realize the driving gruelling work that was done to make it possible. We were fortunate in having a Donald Ross working plan, which—as a whole—has been carried out in spite of the shortcomings of construction agencies which circumstances sometimes make it hard to combat.

Second Nine Seeded in September, 1925

The second nine was seeded in September, 1925 and the entire course opened for play in May, 1926.

It has been quite a problem to keep pace with the wear on the new seeding but on the whole the greens have all shown a gradual improvement.

I can only give a general idea of the course in this article, suffice it to say that all of the greens are built



No. 9 Green at Wampanoag

Author's Note

I came to Wampanoag from the Hartford City Park department (at the start of construction) where I had been employed for the previous sixteen years in general construction and maintenance work, which included the building of an 18-hole municipal golf course, numerous tennis courts, bowling greens, baseball diamonds, playgrounds and other work along those lines. Thus I was able to bring to the job a little practical construction experience added to what I had already gained, especially in the three years preceding my connection with the Hartford Park department, which were spent on construction, maintenance and supervision of the grounds at the Jamestown Exposition at Norfolk, Va., under the very able direction of Warren H. Manning, landscape architect of Boston, Mass.

with a slightly rolling undulating surface, no two being of the same design. The general idea was for a sporty course. All greens have a stone or gravel underlayer to insure drainage.

At each topdressing for the past year, I have given all the greens a light seeding with creeping bent. After experimenting with several kinds in a special seed bed this seemed to hold up as well as anything I have found so far. We also use the bent plugs from nursery wherever needed so that we are in hopes to have all good bent greens in time, which I am convinced give the best wear and the best appearance with the least care of any known grass that can be used in this climate.

There are several courses in this section where the bent stolons have been used with good results. We built a practice green last April, planted it to stolons and opened it to play July 4th. It has stood up well in spite of an excess ant population, supplemented by a family of super-vigorous moles.

Brown Patch Hit us Bad

Brown patch hit us bad last season during the humid weather of July and August, with sporadic outbreaks in September. We had fourteen greens hit in one night in July,

which meant some stirring to check. We used Uspulun with good results, but where ground was badly affected, especially by the small brown patch, it took a good application of Semesan well washed in to check it. We found that the greens which were protected by woods, especially on the south were more susceptible to the brown patch than those in the open. With the exception of two out of the fourteen greens affected, the grass roots were not killed by the fungus and came back green in a few days after applying a light top dressing and a good application of Ammo Phos in liquid form, applied with a hand sprinkling cart.

We also used the sprinkling cart for the Semesan on greens where a large area was affected. Where only a few spots appeared, the sixteen quart sprinkling can did the business.

We also found that the liquid Ammo Phos and Ammo Sulph brought a large number of worms to the surface that were ready to go out of business. So you see, the greens at Wampanoag are *not* always green.

We have no green less than one hundred feet in diameter and from that up; number sixteen being one hundred feet wide and two hundred feet in length.

There are twenty-nine tees on the course, most of them large and all varying in shape and size. These with one hundred and one traps and nine mounds make quite an item in upkeep. Our fairways are ample and so far we have been able to keep them in good shape with one five unit mower.

Woodland Stream Furnishes Water Supply

We are fortunate in having a lasting stream of clear spring water which winds through the entire length of the grounds, making plenty of water hazards. There is one spot in particular which has unusual natural beauty, where the water falls over the rocks down through a ravine at the foot of the sixteenth tee (see illustration with bridge at head of falls). About the centre of the course, where swamp conditions were the worst, an excavation was made for an artificial lake covering about two acres, this is fed by the aforesaid stream.

We also excavated a large lagoon in front of both the ninth and eighteenth greens, to make additional water hazards, and—to say they have met all expectations as to hazards is putting it mildly.

The lake and lagoons have added much to the beauty of the grounds and when the shore planting is completed, it will be a great addition. The material from the excavations was all used in filling in fairways on each side of the lake, so that in this part of the work (at least) we really accomplished two things at once.

The stream had a few trout in it when we began work and has since been stocked with fingerlings, which are getting large enough to look quite tempting.

Bridges of Rustic Construction

Of course, with this stream, the question of bridges came up and at my suggestion to the Chairman of the Green Committee for rustic construction, I was told to go ahead and see what could be done. Most of the help was laid off about December 1st, with the exception of the outfit that had the contract for excavating the lagoons. This was at the beginning of the winter in 1924. With two picked laborers we began work on the bridges, selecting and cutting our own material in the wooded portions of the course between fairways and—with the exception of some of the oak planking for flooring, all material—mostly white oak and elm—was obtained on the course.

In the three following months we put in twelve bridges, which sufficed for the first nine holes and included three permanent traffic bridges for use in construction of the second nine the following season. The traffic bridges were all sixteen feet wide (built to accommodate the five unit fairway mower) and from twenty to twenty-four feet long.

The following winter, with the same two men, we completed the bridges, twenty-one in all. No

two rail designs are alike and each one was designed as we proceeded with the work. They are very attractive and fit in well with the general landscape scheme of the course and—best of all—the members seem to be pleased with them. On one of the longest of the footbridges, we worked the name of the club into the rail design, in rustic letters one foot in diameter (see picture.)

Kewanee Water System Used

We use the Kewanee system for forcing the water over the course. There are two electric-controlled pumps driven by two seven and one-half horsepower motors which require a minimum of care. Each pump has a

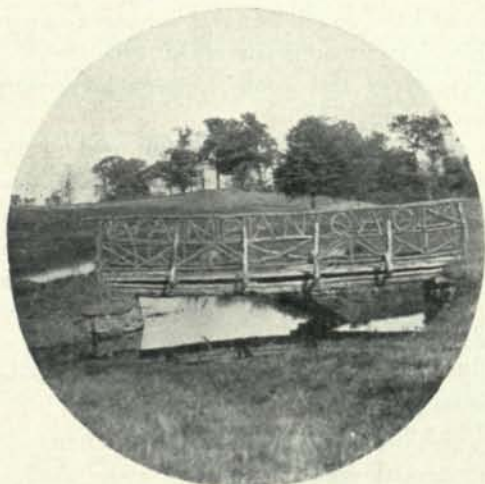


A Lasting Stream of Clear Water Runs Through the Entire Course

capacity of one hundred and eighty gallons per minute.

All water is pumped into and delivered from a pressure tank of seven thousand gallons capacity, whence it is delivered to all parts of the course through four 3-inch main lines. With the use of "Y" connections at openings, we are able to use a battery of twenty streams at a time in all sections of the course without decreasing pressure, which holds up under the automatic control at from seventy to eighty pounds at all times.

At regular intervals the small tractor with cart attached moves equipment and men to the different locations, which enables one or two men—as the case may be—to water a large area in a reasonably short length of time. When we are through watering, the



The Author and Two Men Cut Timber and Built Twenty-one Rustic Bridges at Wampanoag

hose and sprinklers (we use all double Rotary) are brought to the storehouse, the same as all other equipment. Keeping the hose from exposure to sun when not in use will save the life of the rubber more than enough to pay for the small amount of extra work in caring for it.

Good Mechanic is Most Important

One of the most important things—to my mind—in the upkeep of a golf course is to have a good all-around mechanic and a well equipped workshop, which means that no equipment is out of order for any great length of time. During the past winter, all equipment and machinery was thoroughly overhauled, cleaned, repaired, painted when necessary, and reassembled ready for the playing season.

We were fortunate in having an old farm house on the course which was placed at my disposal. With a few alterations (all of which we did in stormy weather with our own men) we have arranged a good store room, paint shop, seed room, tool room, workshop with heat and a convenient office with open fireplace. The old open wood shed adjoining the house we floored and closed in with rolling doors, giving us a good three-car

garage. One of the farm barns which had a good slate roof and was well timbered, was moved to a central location near the pumphouse, for storage of the more bulky equipment.

Re-modelled Barn Provides Ample Storage

During the past winter, we have remodelled the barn on the inside to fit our requirements, putting in heavy overhead floor, which gives us an ample storage building for all time. We have also built a shed at one end of the above building, large enough to house one of the heavy tractors that was used in construction work on the course. It is pretty well shot, but still in the ring. The wheels were practically out of commission, but by taking them off and setting the remains on a solid foundation, we have power for a Rotary screen and circular saw for cutting wood, all under cover.

One of the countless places where our all-around mechanic fits in is in getting this unit of the course in operation and I assure you he is one of the busiest men in my crew. His activities include anything from repairing a mouse trap to adjusting a motor all of which he does with equal credit to himself and honor to the fraternity.

Greenkeeping is Complicated and Serious Matter

It seems to me that greenkeeping, if looked at in the proper light, is one of the most complicated and serious matters in connection with golfing. However the benefits of and pleasure in a well-managed clubhouse cannot be overestimated. A good professional can do wonders to make his course popular and harmonize the activities of the club, but to the greenkeeper comes the multitude of detail that is not realized by the average player. However, let me say right here that if this detail is not attended to, the same average player will notice it mighty quick.

We are very fortunate in having as Chairman of the Green Committee a broadminded man, who knows golf and golf courses (from long experience) throughout the United States and Canada, a man who makes his wants known and expects results, but leaves the detail of labor, supplies and execution of the work largely up to me. I think any greenkeeper reading this article will agree with me that it is a pleasure to work with a man of this make up.

In closing I want to say that I believe that greenkeeping should be considered and recognized as a profession by itself. There is no end to the problems that are constantly arising and to my mind this magazine is the best medium we have ever had for solving them.

The good that will be derived in the future from its mutual insurance proposition cannot be overestimated.

It is up to every greenkeeper to support it as a unit and appreciate its support to help us to be a united self-respecting body of men in one of the most popular, solid and growing recreational institutions of the country.