

# One Man Two Courses Many Challenges

Cool season bluegrass and  
warm season bermuda  
require  
year-round skill from veteran  
superintendent Bob Shields

WHEN PEOPLE ask me what I do for a living, I just tell 'em I go to the country club every day," says L. R. (Bob) Shields, golf course superintendent of the Woodmont County Club, Rockville, Maryland.

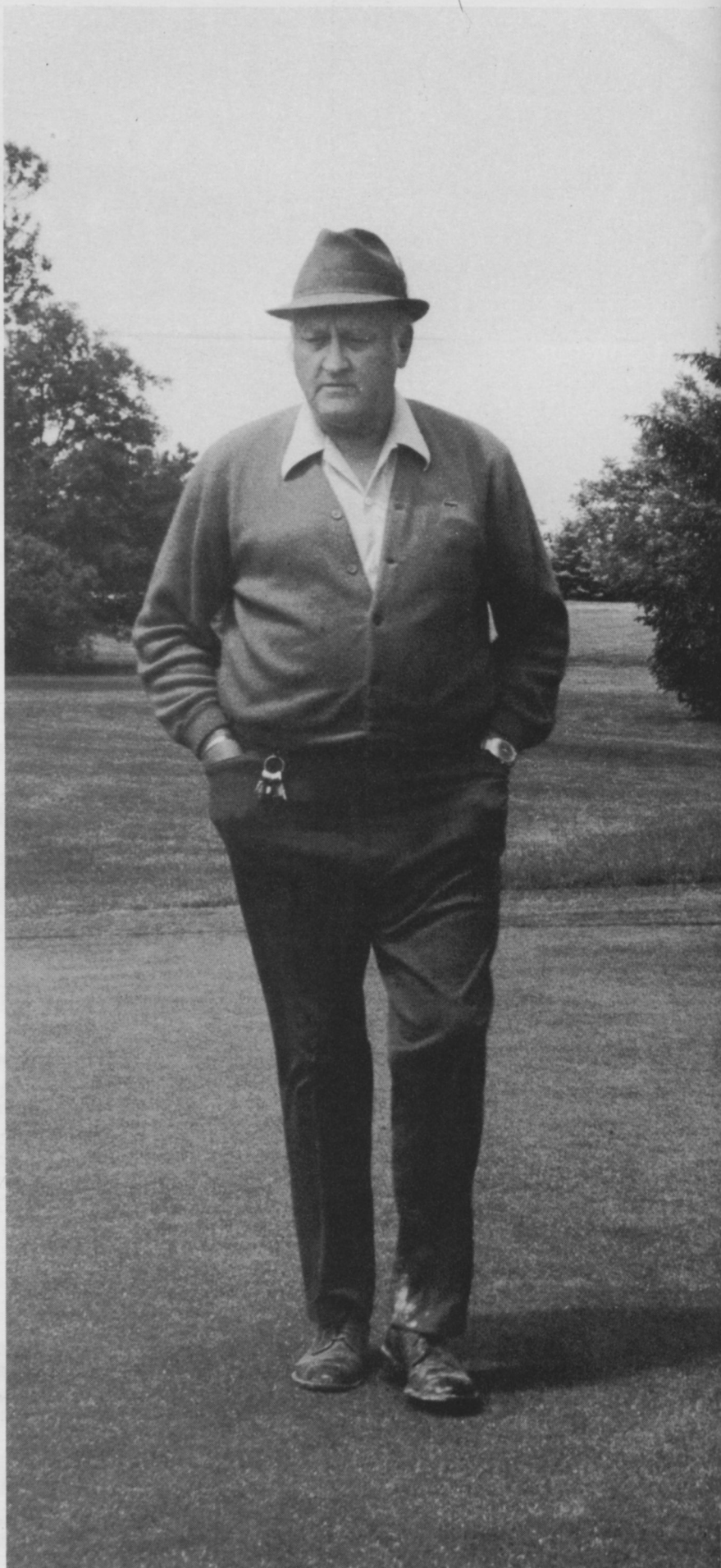
But the 25-year veteran of golf course management—and 1965 president of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America — doesn't go to the club to play. "Golf isn't a game to me," he adds. "In fact, I gave it up some years ago. Now golf is my work, and fishing and flying are my recreation."

Managing two 18-hole courses and a crew of 18 (plus two part-timers) is work enough for anybody. But the outdoor living, the variety of jobs involved, and continuing challenges have made it the ideal job for Shields. Apparently, the feeling runs in the family; his son, Glenn, plans to follow Shields into golf course management.

Woodmont's location—right on the borderline of north and south—adds to the challenge. The climate is less than ideal for either warm season or cool season grasses; although both can be grown, neither thrives all year long.

## BLUEGRASS AND BERMUDA

To compensate for this, Woodmont  
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Superintendent Bob Shields and son Glenn (l) discuss construction of a new green on Woodmont's north course. Glenn is working as his father's assistant while majoring in turfgrass management at the University of Maryland.

has bluegrass fairways and tees on its north course and bermuda grass on the south course. "The bluegrass goes dormant during the summer," Shields explains, "while the bermuda grass is just greening up in June and July.

Because of the reduced amount of play—and because the ground gets a little soft—we close the southern course during the winter."

Indicative of the tricky climatic conditions, the U3 bermuda grass variety on the south course finally succumbed to winterkill in 1963 after six seasons of struggle. The search for a hardier replacement led Shields to try P16 last year.

"The P16 has been looking good," Shields says. "It came through the winter in good shape. But this was a mild winter, so we may not know for sure for another year."

Greens on both courses consist of bentgrass. Arlington and Congressional bents were the original plantings but all greens have since been overseeded with Pencross many times.

Shields ranks turfgrass management as a favorite part of his job. So having two different courses to manage suits him just fine.

#### DISEASE CONTROL IMPORTANT

The greatest similarity in managing the two courses is probably in the area of disease control. But the close cutting required and the increasing numbers of players make it a top priority item.

"We cut the bermuda-fairways at 1/2 inch and the bluegrass at 3/4 inch," Shields explains. "That's

really too short to cut bluegrass, but the players demand it. All we can do to counteract the close cutting is water the grass, but the lower cut causes stress and weakens the plants. This brings on other problems for us to contend with."

Long experience combined with good results at controlling diseases on greens has made Shields confident that he can control fairway disease problems, too.

"The development of locally systemic fungicides have eliminated a lot of our problems," he says. "Combined with the cool weather, they helped minimize our disease problems last year. And the fact that many products are water-soluble makes for improved control as well as easier application."

#### EXPERIENCE BREEDS INSTINCT

Experience breeds a kind of instinct for disease control, the Woodmont superintendent believes.

"Sometimes, I apply a treatment when I can just 'feel' a disease is imminent," he says.

"Basically, though, we follow a four-season preventive spray schedule combined with frequent spot checks of the growing turf. Most superintendents follow the preventive approach.

Utilizing the locally systemic fungicide, Acti-dione, he alternates with other similar fungicides to minimize any chance of developing resistance. Shields' year-round spray program has shown good results in warding off diseases like dollarspot, leafspot, rust and others.

"The use of fungicides and

good-quality, well-maintained spraying equipment can eliminate a lot of disease problems," he notes.

The hot days of summer are the time when fungicide application becomes critical. "A fungicide is required when the temperature gets above 85 degrees," Shields explains. "We start spraying as soon as we expect the weather to begin getting hot and continue to spray at seven to ten day intervals the rest of the summer for disease control on greens."

Spray applications are normally scheduled for Thursday. "That way, if it rains Thursday, we can still get on the course on Friday and apply a fungicide to help protect the turf over the weekend," he says. "Your greens can suffer badly if a problem develops during the weekend."

#### MANAGEMENT DIFFERS

Growing two types of grasses requires special guidance for employees who may not be familiar with the different practices required. Mowers are set at the appropriate height for each course and each machine is clearly marked to avoid confusion on the part of the operator. (Editor's Note: That's a management technique other superintendents may want to adopt.)

Weeds are as great a nuisance as disease, but Shields has found standard herbicides effective for most weed problems—with the exception of *Poa annua*. Recently he's been testing tricalcium arsenate for *Poa annua* control of bluegrass fairways. "It's tricky stuff because a little too much will injure bluegrass, too," he says. "But we've gotten pretty good results in our tests so far."

Fertilizer management requires separate treatments for each course. "On the north course, the bluegrass, we apply nitrogen, phosphorous, and potassium in early spring and fall," he explains. "The greatest amount goes on in the fall, during the cool weather.

"We apply some phosphorous on the bermuda fairways in spring and fall, but the bulk of the fertilizer—mostly nitrogen—is applied in the summer when the grass is actively growing. We're trying to minimize the phosphorous applications on both courses, since we believe it encourages *Poa annua* growth."

#### SUPERVISION IS IMPORTANT

Aerification and irrigation practices also differ for each course. The southern course's bermuda grass is aerified in the summer, and is less dependent on irrigation. The blue-

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## ONE MAN, TWO COURSES

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grass course is aerified in the early spring and fall and needs irrigation to nurture it through droughts.

"For most turfgrass operations, you just have to tell the crew exactly what to do each time, and then supervise," Shields says. His son Glenn helps lighten the load in this regard, since he's helping finance a college degree in turfgrass management by working as his father's assistant.

Variety is the spice of life, Shields agrees. Electricity, plumbing, record keeping—and turfgrass management—are just a few of the areas he gets involved in while keeping the Woodmont grounds attractive and functional for club members. Having two courses with different management needs just adds a little more challenge to the job.

## Cleary's 3336 Turf Fungicide Receives New EPA Label

Cleary's 3336 Turf Fungicide has now received registrations from the Environmental Protection Agency

for the control of 7 major diseases. They are: dollar spot, copper spot, brown patch, red thread, Helminthosporium, Fusarium roseum and pythium.

While the registration provides for all areas of the golf course, the versatility of Cleary's 3336 is unique in that many golf course superintendents report excellent results and superior color on fairways as well as greens and tees.

The manufacturer claims the new fungicide is well suited as an all-season fungicide. Packaged in 2 lb. bags.

More information is available on Cleary's 3336 from W. A. Cleary Corporation, P.O. Box 10, Somerset, N.J. 08873.

## Parker Sweeper Company Publishes New Catalogue

The Parker Sweeper Company has just published its 1973 catalog of lawn care equipment. The full-color catalog offers complete details and photographs of Parker's extensive line of lawn sweepers, vacuums, blowers, and power rakes.

The 1973 catalog with detailed

specs on the entire line of Parker Lawn Care Equipment can be obtained free simply by writing to the Parker Sweeper Company, Box 720, Springfield, Ohio 45501.

## Norfolk And Western RR To Promote Greenbelt

The Norfolk and Western Railway has announced plans to begin establishment of a "green belt" around its coal piers, in Sandusky, Ohio. The effort will improve the environment and beautify the Lake Erie waterfront.

Working with local soil conservation officials of Erie county, Ohio, staff members of the Pocahontas Land Corp., an NW subsidiary, will plant Austrian pines north of Monroe Street near Mills Creek.

The "green belt" is a part of the railroad's continuing ecology program. Earlier this year the 14-state carrier planted several thousand trees and seeded embankments in Norfolk, Va. Similar projects are being planned at other locations across the NW's 7,600-mile system.

The pines are being purchased from Barnes Nursery and Garden Center of Huron, O.

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