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Superintendent Without Grass

By STAN METSKER, superintendent, The Country Club of Colorado,
Colorado Springs

During the construction of a golf course, a golf course superintendent can make a vital contribution to its successful completion. Few superintendents go through this experience more than once or twice. It is a completely different set of responsibilities compared with the normal routine of maintaining a golf course with grass.

Ordinarily, the whole thing gets started when an owner of land makes a deal with a golf course architect. The architect may or may not also do the building. Many times there are other contractors brought into the project as sewers, water, electricity, telephones and houses are put in.

In all of the confusion of construction, many times there is only one man who will remain after all the building is done — the golf course superintendent. He is the man who must live with the results. Therefore, it makes a lot of sense to get the superintendent hired and on the job early in the construction period.

Usually, the golf course superintendent is the owner's representative on the job site. His responsibilities may include keeping track of which contractors are working each day and with how many men and what machinery. He may need to record when there is weather impairing the work. These records can be valuable if there is a time penalty in the contract. He should keep maps up to date, handle necessary invoices, and help to coordinate activities in the field with those in the owner's office.

To help control the quality of the course, the superintendent should be constantly aware of the drainage problems. He should personally have tests made of the materials used in the construction of the greens. Also, soil tests should be taken throughout the course so that fertilizer needs can be determined. According to the effect the golf course architect may want to achieve, the superintendent should help select grasses to do the job.

For example, architect Pete Dye, in an effort to emulate the Scottish effect on the Gates Course in Colorado Springs, did not want Kentucky bluegrass from fence to

fence, even though the automatic water system covered the entire area.

The irrigation system and its pumping station are the heart of the golf course. The golf course superintendent should help decide which system will do the job best and then he should see that it is installed properly. He should personally take part in the staking of the heads. During the installation, he should have the authority to control the quality of the workmanship. His intimate knowledge of the system will serve the club in good stead during the difficult months the seedlings are being nursed into being the foundations of a golf course.

The golf course superintendent can save the owners of a new course time, money and many built-in headaches if he is on the job throughout the entire construction of the new golf course. He is not an architect or a contractor, but he knows what needs to be done to make the course maintainable. He is in a position to grease the wheels of progress which can avoid expensive delays. Above all, it is only he that can make the transition from raw ground to finished golf course complete.



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