

UNITED STATES GOLF ASSOCIATION
GREEN SECTION
WESTERN OFFICE



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Western Turfletter

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PROGRESSIVE SUPERINTENDENTS MAKE THEIR OWN HAPPY HOLIDAYS

At the start of the holiday season our progressive superintendents gave thanks on November 25 for a successful year. On December 25 they look forward to Santa's presents in the form of more where-with-all to do a better maintenance job, and by January 1 their resolution for better turf to further enhance the golfer's enjoyment of his game will have been incorporated into a turf improvement program. For such a satisfactory holiday season to be forthcoming, the wise superintendent long ago escaped from the realm of wishful desire. To do this he embarked on a program of advance planning, supported by accurate records and demonstrations, to show his club officials why certain turf management jobs were necessary; the results to be expected from suggested work; and what it would cost the club to do the job.

Club Officials' Viewpoint

Running a golf plant is indeed big business. When one considers clubhouse facilities like the restaurant, bar, pool, and building up-keep and repair, as well as the golf course proper, it is easy to appreciate that the individual club operation is far larger than the average size business in the country. Thus, club officials must run things on a business like basis. They should never consider the course proper as a savings bank but they are entitled to see that funds are properly expended, and they must have justification before they can approve of new projects. Progressive superintendents realize this fact, and give their clubs full dollar value by showing "why it should be done and what it will cost". If your club doesn't fall in this category it may, in the words of the old adage, be "penny wise and pound foolish".

According to Taylor Boyd, Superintendent, Camargo Club, Madeira, Ohio, accurate records not only will give the superintendent useful ammunition to show the need for maintenance jobs, but in addition will show the superintendent where he can get more productive work from his present labor force. This, of course, has been the history of the value of record keeping since time immemorial.

The Golfer Has The Last Word

In the final analysis it is the individual dues or fee paying golfer that has the last word to say when it comes to budget matters. No golfer, whether he spends \$10 or \$50 a month for the pleasure of playing the game, enjoys seeing an increase in expenditures without knowing what benefits will be derived therefrom. At almost any club it is impossible to ask for and receive (without justification) a budget increase in order to, say, treat the teeing areas like the greens. Such a request immediately places the golfer in a defensive attitude and temporarily, at least, he feels that the tees are reasonably good even though deep in his heart he knows they are actually abominable throughout much of the playing season.

The progressive superintendent's answer to this quite natural feeling on the part of all golfers is not to sit back and wish for more help or additional fertilizer, but rather to aggressively strive for what he needs. The ideal way to accomplish this end is to realize that our bosses, the golfers, will always have an "I'm from Missouri - show me" attitude. As an example, it is doubtful if any of us would be driving our present car on the say so of the manufacturer. We had to talk about it, drive it and see it before we made up our minds to part with our hard earned cash. In the same manner golfers will buy a turf improvement program once they have been shown through demonstration what can be accomplished.

Demonstration Worked on Tees -- Northern California

Art Bell, Golf Professional, California Golf Club, long has concurred with the Green Section in their dislike of high-cut and under-fertilized tees. As a good golfer Art much preferred to tee up on bare ground rather than in shaggy grass, and noticed that members did the same with the result that teeing areas were extremely poor. In cooperation with Duke Duchi, Golf Course Superintendent, they lowered the height-of-cut to about 3/8-inch and carried on a stronger fertilizing program. The results have generated so much enthusiasm that it is now well within the realm of possibility for California Golf Club to mow tees with green mowers, eliminate tree root competition, and establish a nursery of an improved vigorous bentgrass to repair divots in 1955.

Demonstration Worked on Fairways -- Southern California

At Los Angeles Country Club golfers for many years objected to their combination weedy turf of crabgrass for summer play and fennel, daisy and dichondra to shoot from during the winter months. Even though player complaints were frequent and vociferous nothing was appropriated on the budget to correct the condition until Bill Beresford, Golf Course Superintendent, established one acre tests plots on a typical fairway area using recognized herbicides followed by fertilizer to strengthen the desired turf species. This demonstration convinced the membership what could be accomplished, and Bill was given the green light to proceed on an over all fairway improvement program.

26TH NATIONAL TURFGRASS CONFERENCE

While on the subject of budgets, we feel it worthwhile to mention a general inertia on the part of most western clubs to see that their superintendents are kept abreast of the latest developments in the field of golf turfgrass management. This indeed is unfortunate because it is the club that suffers from failure to budget sufficient funds to assure their superintendents attendance at turfgrass conferences.

On January 16 through 21, 1955, the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America is holding its 26th National Turfgrass Conference and Show at the Hotel Jefferson in St. Louis. The entire week will be devoted to attending lectures covering the field of turfgrass management, inspecting machinery and educational exhibits, and visiting golf courses in the area. This GCSA annual meeting is the only conference in the country that is concerned with turf strictly as it applies to golf. Thus, a golfer from any club represented benefits directly from its activities.

The Green Section's Regional Directors always attend, participate on the program and have an educational exhibit at the national conference. The clubs that send their superintendents will be amply repaid in better turf for better golf in 1955.

DOES IMPROVING YOUR LIE HELP THE TURF?

It is not in our province to say whether or not some winter rules help the golfer, although we would imagine that a critical study on the subject might indicate that "improving your lie" would fail to show a significant lowering of the golfer's handicap. The USGA, of course, does not recognize this winter rule, and in our travels we find that many clubs employ it with the thought in mind that direct benefit will accrue to saving the turf.

In the words of Mr. R. S. Tufts, Vice-President, USGA, and President of Pinehurst, Inc., "We have the feeling that winter rules result in the player picking out the best piece of turf and cutting it to pieces, which does more damage than if the divot had been taken where his ball lies". Mr. Tufts goes on to state that on certain days winter rules may help to preserve the course, and that the opinion the golf course superintendent should always be carefully considered.

The Green Section believes that this slant on possible harm to the turf is worth mentioning. Quite a few courses, where golf is played as a year around game, make it a habit to post a winter rule sign on #1 tee for as long as four months during the year. This cannot be sanctioned to save the turf, and certainly is contrary to the basic concept of "playing the ball as it lies".

TO SAVE WATER - STOP LEAKS

"Water leaking from a faucet in a stream the size of a common pin wastes 150 gallons a day. A leak of one drop per second wastes four gallons per day". From Timely Turf Topics - August 1942.

WESTERN TURFLETTER

While on the subject of budgets, we feel it worthwhile to mention a general feature of the part of your report which is that their expenditures are four percent of the total available in the field of golf business management. This figure is not unusual because it is the only one that will allow us to budget sufficient funds to make their expenditures comparable to other business enterprises.

On January 18 through 21, 1954, the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America is holding its 24th National Convention and Show at the Hotel Jefferson in St. Louis, Mo. The convention will be a most interesting one, covering the field of turfgrass management, including machinery and other related subjects, and will also feature the only exhibition in the country devoted entirely to golf equipment. This is a most important time for you to attend and to bring your own equipment to the show.

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This Is Your

Western Turfletter

USGA Green Section

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Mr. O. J. Moor

Milwaukee Sewerage Commission

Jones Island

Milwaukee, Wis.

Dear Mr. Moor: I am writing you to advise you that the USGA Green Section is planning to publish a new book on "The Golf Course Superintendent's Handbook" which will be available in the near future. This book will contain a wealth of information on the various aspects of golf course management, including maintenance, irrigation, and pest control. It is a must for every superintendent. The book is being published by the USGA and is available for purchase through the USGA Bookstore. The price of the book is \$10.00. If you are interested in purchasing this book, please contact the USGA Bookstore at 1700 Golf Course Road, St. Louis, Mo. 63114. We will be glad to assist you in your purchase.

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