

Collective Buying for Golf Courses

By G. A. FARLEY

Collective buying pays. There isn't a doubt about it. For golf courses it is in its infancy, and like all healthy and intelligent infants, it has its refractory spells, which must be overcome one by one and generally by a different method each time. However, every difficulty overcome makes of it a more perfect thing, and more definitely justifies its existence.

The Green Section of The Cleveland District Golf Association, of which Mr. J. K. Bole is chairman, was inaugurated as a bureau of service to member clubs. Early in 1922 it came to Mr. Bole's attention that a number of tractors were required in the district. He therefore suggested to the clubs that thorough tests be made to determine the most suitable power unit for golf course work. These tests were conducted, manufacturers interviewed, and as a result substantial discounts were allowed on quantity orders. This saving created a demand among the clubs for better prices on other maintenance equipment and supplies, and it was found necessary to open offices in February, 1923, for the purpose of handling the business on a larger scale. Since that time it has been my pleasure to be associated with Mr. Bole in the Green Section service.

In 1922 the clubs in the Association numbered seventeen. We now have thirty-two, and as most of them place their orders through our office, the service has steadily and rapidly increased.

Wherever possible we buy direct from the manufacturers, or from manufacturers' agents, securing as a collective buying agency considerably larger discounts than can be quoted to individual clubs. Through interviews with the sales managers of local wholesale hardware and equipment dealers, we secure excellent discounts as well as quick service.

On quantity orders for material we follow the usual method of getting in bids from five or six sources, and we also contract for unloading and laying down on the courses carload lots of sand, manure, pipe, drain-tile, etc.

Perhaps one of the greatest difficulties encountered in collective buying for golf clubs is securing orders for standard equipment and supplies far enough in advance to take advantage of the market and insure delivery at the required time. This condition is improving, and we find orders coming in soon after the chairmen of the greens receive a bulletin from our office quoting price and delivery on a commodity. By means of these bulletins, giving information of various kinds relating to changes in price, shortage of supply, newly tested and approved pieces of equipment, and other matters of interest to him, each chairman is kept in close touch with the Green Section activities at a minimum expenditure of time and trouble to himself.

In order to insure success in such an enterprise the full cooperation of the chairmen and greenkeepers is most necessary. As early in the year as possible our greenkeepers submit requisitions to their chairmen covering the requirements of the coming season, recommendations are made upon request by the Green Section office, and orders placed in advance for spring delivery.

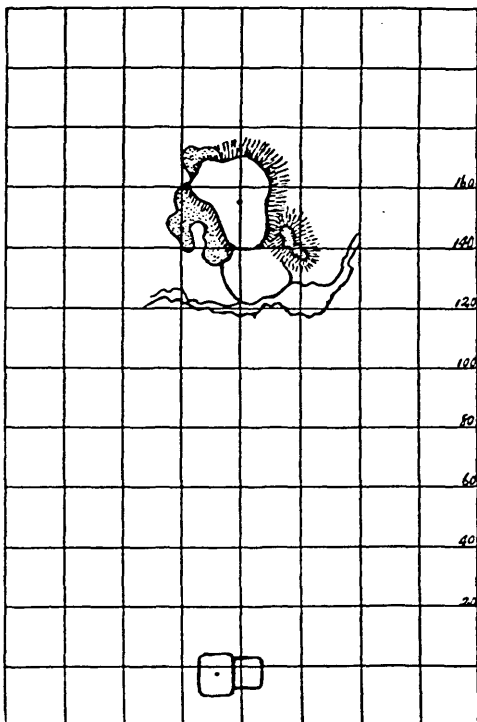
Grass seed is purchased from reputable wholesalers and recleaners, and samples from these dealers submitted in the spring are sent to the United States Golf Association Green Section for test as to purity and germination. These tests are later checked up by having samples from actual shipments into the district tested in the same way.

We receive inquiries from various parts of the country as to how we organized a Green Section and how we financed the service. Membership in this branch of our organization is at the rate of \$50 each year per nine holes. This membership is an investment on the part of the club which has in many cases shown a handsome return. During 1923 some of our clubs were saved from \$200 to more than \$900 on an original investment of \$50, and this plus the general information service available at all times. This year one of our new clubs in the process of construction has already saved more than \$1200 through the collective buying power of the Green Section.

The mission of the Green Section is to improve the courses and reduce the cost of maintenance, and any community supporting ten or more golf clubs would do well to consider the advantages of collective buying. The saving in dollars and cents is by no means the only advantage; the clubs gain far more in protection than they do in money. Manufacturers are quick to recognize a local Green Section that insists upon quality, service, and price, and those who are putting out the best on the market should be given every consideration in placing the business of such an organization.

Instructive Golf Holes, XIII

No. 17, Merion Cricket Club (West Course), Haverford, Pa. 155 yards.



A lovely green in a charming setting, illustrating golf architectural beauty to a high degree. The tee shot to the center of the green is 155 yards, over a "bonnie brae" 10 yards in front of the green. The putting sward measures about 4,500 square feet. The surface is very attractively undulated, and the bunkers are so pretty that, so it is said, most golfers do not swear if the ball lands in one.