



played shot and which permit a true roll of the ball give the player greater confidence.

Closely clipped, tight turf growing on a firm base is characteristic of many Scottish courses. Such a green is fast and requires a different type of approach. Despite the increased difficulty of approach, the green is fast and true and is seldom seriously marked by cleats or ball damage. The advantage of greens which are softer but more susceptible to injury, such as we have in the United States, is questionable.

William P. Turnesa

COURSE MAINTENANCE CENTERS ON THE PUTTING GREEN

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We would probably all agree that golf course maintenance *does* center on the putting green. So, to start off by being controversial, let's say that golf course maintenance *does not* center on the putting green! It centers on the golf course superintendent. The superintendent must have a plan and should know where his course is going. Like any progressive businessman, he must have a plan and give his program direction. Putting green improvement must start in the mind of the golf course superintendent.

Now, let's become mercenary. There isn't one of us who wouldn't like to make more money, and we can make more money. But first, we must become more valuable to our employer.

Our employers are golfers—right? And I defy you to show me a golfer who will not fall in love with an outstanding putting green. In fact, this is the golfer's weakness and, being mercenaries, we should exploit it to the highest. Let's never forget the fact that our reputation as golf course superintendents is made or lost by the putting greens we produce.

The Putting Green—that's the target; not just for today and tomorrow,

but for the professional lifetime of any superintendent. I wonder if you can identify the author of the following:

"In most parts of the country—the maintenance of a putting green in first-class condition represents the acme of accomplishment in grass culture. Good putting greens can be maintained only by constant, intelligent, and in most cases costly attention. To obtain a good putting green is one thing; to maintain it is another."

Any idea where these words came from?

Well, they are from another era; another time. Charles Piper and Russell Oakley wrote them in their book "Turf for Golf Courses," vintage 1917! In the 47 years since their writing, it's safe to say The Putting Green has wrecked the professional career of probably thousands of superintendents and perhaps as many green chairmen throughout the country. Conversely, good greens have been responsible for the "making" of all the outstanding and noted golf course superintendents today. The Putting Green can be your greatest asset. It also can be your greatest liability.

Money For Maintenance

Last year, one private 18-hole course in Southern California devoted 7,800 man hours to putting green maintenance. That's equivalent to four men on a 40-hour week working full time throughout the entire year on putting green maintenance! It represents a labor expense of \$21,000. In addition, \$7,000 was spent for material, supplies and equipment depreciation.

The total — \$28,000 — for putting green maintenance amounts to 25% of the course budget. Especially significant, however, is the fact that the 20 greens on the course account for only three acres of a total of 130 acres. So, 25% of the budget was devoted to about 2% of the total land area!

Now who will say this is not intensive agriculture! The Putting Green is the world's most expensive piece of agricultural real estate, and you are in charge of it. What a mercenary opportunity you have! In fact, what a challenge and what a great opportunity you have!

Now, any time a person is charged with such responsibilities, he is bound to have all kinds of "experts" nearby who are ready and willing to give "free" advice. Outside advice can be helpful and please don't shut it out completely. Perhaps the point can be summarized by the following quotation:

"An open mind is all very well in its way, but it ought not to be so open that there is no keeping anything in or out of it. It should be capable of shutting its doors sometimes, or it may be found a little drafty."

Today's golf course superintendent should consider outside advice, but he should check it closely as to source and motive. One should respect faith, but it is doubt that gets us an education.

A summary of this discussion of "Course Maintenance Centers on the Putting Green" would include:

1. The golf course superintendent is the important link in putting green maintenance.

2. He has an unlimited opportunity because golfers love outstanding greens.

3. Under his care is the most valuable piece of agricultural real estate in the world.

4. He is responsible for the final product, so he must choose his program and advice carefully.

Consistently outstanding putting greens are our goal. And where do they start? I believe they start in the mind of the golf course superintendent. He holds the key. And so, this closing thought:

If you think you are beaten,
you are;

If you think you dare not,
you don't;

If you want to win, but think
you can't,

It's almost a cinch you won't.
If you think you'll lose, you
are lost;

For out in the world we find
Success begins with a fellow's
will;

It's all in the state of mind.
Life's battles don't always go
To the stronger and faster
man.

But sooner or later the man
that wins;

Is the man who thinks he can.



William H. Bengueyfield