

A New Manpower Source

By Kenneth H. Freeland

Today, many high schools are providing Work Experience or Work Study Programs for students with academic learning problems. These students, termed in many states as "Educable Mentally Handicapped or Retarded" are placed in "Special Classes" with specially certified teachers in work oriented programs.

These students progress through a developmental type program and as they successfully complete their half day in school and half day on-the-job phase of job experience, they are placed in the community as full-time employees under the supervision of the school on new types of work experience until graduation. On this level, Teacher-Coordinators prepare these more mature students for various work positions and correlate their school work accordingly to help insure job success.

One aspect of job placement which is proving beneficial to all concerned is that of a golf course maintenance worker. A year ago in the Western New York area, a group of boys from one of these classes was placed on a trial-working basis through the cooperation of two progressive and energetic golf course superintendents, Norman Leising of the Country Club of Buffalo, Williamsville, New York, and John Stellrecht of the Lancaster Country Club, Lancaster, New York.

Prior to placement, the tasks of the golf course worker were analyzed and discussed in the classroom. Emphasis was given to a general knowledge of golf and of safety precautions of the work. These preliminaries were neces-

sary because only a small percentage of the boys had played golf, knew about the game or about golf courses in general.

A training guideline was prepared with the participating superintendents and was incorporated into the pre-placement phase of the program. Training for specific tasks, such as cutting greens, aprons, tees and the like, was left to the discretion of the respective superintendents in charge. Each superintendent had his own particular techniques and methods he wanted his workers to follow.

Periodically, the student's progress was evaluated by the superintendent through a job rating form supplied by the Teacher-Coordinator. Weak areas in the student's reports were brought to the attention of the Teacher-Coordinator with hopes of improving these areas. Reports were good to excellent and problems were few.

The results were most rewarding. All students placed completed the eight-month season commendably and all were asked to return to their respective duties this spring. Some of the boys have since taken full-time jobs in industry. However, a majority of the boys have returned to their jobs. New students from other classes have been placed with the same successful results. The demand for workers has increased to the point that other superintendents are contacting the schools for the services of these boys. Each day more boys are placed.

With additional students entering the field, a recent interview was held separately with the participating super-

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intendents. Possibly some questions prevailing in the reader's mind may be answered by the following comments:

Superintendent Leising reported: "I was really impressed at the rate the boys learned their jobs. They seemed to take great pride in their work and responsibilities. To me, the quality of their work was indeed satisfactory in all regards. They completed their work on schedule with no problems."

In comparing them to teenagers from the regular grades who were employed in the past, he added, "There appeared to be no physical difference in these boys. They were strong and willing to work. They got along well with the other staff members and appeared to mix well, although they were quiet. They were polite, and they worked much harder and took a greater interest in the job."

Superintendent Stellrecht had this to say: "As far as work habits are concerned, these boys were on par with any others I have had in the past. The majority of the boys, after gaining the needed confidence in themselves, really took to the job. I was particularly delighted at the way some of the boys mastered the tee mowers. Some of the boys could handle the tractor with great skill and caution. The quality of their work was even better than some college boys I've employed here."

Both superintendents agreed that the boys took excellent care of tools and equipment and many of those employed possessed the necessary qualities for holding the job: punctuality, good attendance, trustworthiness, cleanliness, persistence, and the ability to take criticism.

At this point, the advantages of such a program must be brought forth for the superintendent. There are some distinct advantages, indeed. The pre-employment stage, the evaluation

method and the supervisory assistance, if needed, have been discussed. In addition to this, Teacher-Cordinators can arrange working papers, transportation, and can supply these students long before the school term ends in June. It is also possible in many states, in cooperation with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, to secure training funds for this phase of instruction. This organization will help pay the wages of the student until he is fully trained to the satisfaction of the superintendent.

Most important, many of these students are more likely to succeed on the job than the regular worker who is between jobs or just putting his time

COMING EVENTS

January 11-13

Nebraska Turfgrass Conference
Nebraska Center for Continuing Education
Lincoln, Nebraska

January 24-25

Virginia Turfgrass Conference
Hotel John Marshall
Richmond, Virginia

January 27

United States Golf Association
Green Section Conference
Biltmore Hotel
New York, N. Y.

February 5-10

GCSAA International Turfgrass Conference
The New Washington Hilton
Washington, D.C.

February 20-23

Turfgrass Conference
Pennsylvania State University
University Park, Pa.

February 27-28

Southern Turfgrass Conference
Hotel Penbody
Memphis, Tenn.

March 6

Golf Management Seminar
Denver, Colorado

March 6-8

Midwest Regional Turf Conference
Purdue University
Lafayette, Indiana

March 9-10

Turf Conference
University of Massachusetts
Amherst, Mass.

March 13-14

Iowa Turf Conference
Savery Hotel
Des Moines, Iowa

March 15-16

Michigan Turfgrass Conference
Kellogg Center
Michigan State University
East Lansing, Michigan

in until payday. Many workers become bored with the everyday, routine tasks. The majority of these students can sustain the daily diet of the same work.

Superintendent Leising best summed it up when he said: "After being on the course for a month or so, these boys showed more interest in connection with their duties. The regulars, I know, get bored with the routine; but these boys, once they had their confidence, found a real challenge in the daily work to be done."

Moreover, these students in their school preparation through the years receive added emphasis in the fundamentals for getting and holding a job. The regular high school student receives little of this type of instruction in his curriculum. It is a known fact that more people lose jobs not because they don't possess the desirable skills to perform the job but because they can't get along with fellow employees or their employer. These students, however, are well drilled in this aspect.

In addition to this, there is a strong possibility that once trained, many of these boys will stay on the job permanently after graduation. How many of your regulars are getting along in age? It is an advantage to have de-

pendable replacements available. Many of these students are well suited for this type of labor; many enjoy working outdoors and no doubt find a real sense of security in this type of work, perhaps for a lifetime.

Foremost is the public relations advantage offered the superintendent. We are all aware that our club members in general are involved in various types of charitable and philanthropic projects. Many are aware of what is going on in the field of education for all handicapped youth and they are interested.

The members I have talked with, whether they fit this category or not, were deeply impressed by the work of their superintendents in this program. In short, the word travels fast and the personal image of the superintendent must grow in the process for the tremendous contribution he is making to his school system, his community, and his fellow man.

A phone call or a visit to your local school system will get the machinery in motion. Show the following training guideline to the Teacher-Coordinator. I am sure you will be welcomed and he will be willing to incorporate this phase of valuable work experience into his program.

TRAINING GUIDELINE FOR GOLF COURSE WORKER

For Educable Mentally Handicapped Adolescents

By Norman Leising, John Stelrecht, and Kenneth Freeland

I. General Knowledge

1. History, purpose and etiquette of golf.
2. Importance of grooming and care of course to members.
3. Courtesy to be shown members while working.
4. Working hours, overtime, and wages.
5. Advantages and disadvantages of job.
6. Outlook of job for the future.
7. Role and responsibility of the Golf Course Superintendent.
8. Terms used on the job: markers, rough, apron, aeration, etc.

II. General Equipment Maintenance

1. Servicing tractors and trucks.
2. Knowledge of routine service on small gas engines.
3. Knowledge of maintenance of large equipment.
4. Knowledge of sharpening cutting blades.
5. Painting.
6. General repair work.
7. Cleaning equipment.

III. Work on Greens

1. Importance of good greens to members.