

Why Renovate or Revise?

by DR. MARVIN H. FERGUSON

On almost every golf course some areas are inferior to the rest. They may be poorly designed or poorly located, but for some reason such areas are less easily maintained. At a time when both standards of excellence and maintenance costs are rising it is important to remove the causes of this maintenance difficulty.

Inasmuch as greens require proportionally more maintenance than the rest of the course and because they are of such great importance in the play of the game, they claim attention first. Renovation may be necessitated by the presence of an inferior grass, by the presence of thatch or by surface compaction. The trouble may be an excessive amount of weeds such as *Poa annua*, crabgrass, or chickweed. Such troubles may often be eliminated by reworking the surface.

More serious problems are associated with poor drainage and poor water infiltration. The causes of these ailments may be compact soils, layered soil profiles, or improper contours. Whatever the cause of poor drainage, the condition is seldom easy to correct.

Thus, the conditions that call for the revision and renovation of greens may also exist on other areas of the course. While poor drainage on fairways may be less critical than it is on greens, and while corrective measures will obviously not involve rebuilding, the task of effecting good drainage can become a rather large undertaking.

Revision attempts which go wrong are among the saddest experiences that one may witness. One recalls the willful green committee chairman whose business is road construction. He rebuilds greens at his club contrary to the wishes of other members of the committee. Their protests, however, are limited because the chairman uses his equipment and his workmen and does the job "at no expense to the club."

But, alas, the greens are completely unsatisfactory and the next year the club has to rebuild the greens again, this time at a substantial cost to the membership.

Another sad experience involved the use of an herbicide on dandelions in a bluegrass fairway. The sprayer was a borrowed one and the previous user had left a solution of soil sterilant in the tank. The turf was ruined and more than two years elapsed before it was possible to germinate enough grass seed to reestablish the stand.

It is important, therefore, that revisions and renovation programs be undertaken only after careful and thorough planning. On most golf courses some renovating activity is done almost every year. The object of such work is either to improve playing conditions or to ease maintenance. Careful evaluation of the problem and thorough planning can lead to the accomplishment of this aim.

Modernizing for Demands of the Game

by JOHN P. ENGLISH, Member, USGA Green Section Committee

Webster tells us that to **modernize** means to **adapt to modern needs, taste or usage**.

When we apply this title and Webster's definition to a golf course, we mean to revise or remodel that golf course to meet changing conditions. These changing conditions may affect the skill with which we play, our attitudes toward the game or the tribal customs which have grown up around the game.

I can remember a perfectly frightening number of changes in golfing conditions since we

used to scoop our tees out of a sand bucket, since cross-bunkers were an accepted part of the game—and since our ladies played in skirts.

First and foremost, of course, has been the population explosion which has lifted this country from one of 62,000,000 at the turn of this century to one of nearly 200,000,000.

This has had two obvious and direct effects on golf courses.

It has brought the cities and the suburbs to our doorsteps, making it necessary for us