

Preparing for a Championship

by M. G. MILLER, Green Committee Chairman, Baltusrol Golf Club, Springfield, N. J.

Planning for the 1967 United States Open Championship began in January, 1964, when the USGA accepted the invitation of Baltusrol Golf Club to be the host club.

The first step was the selection of a General Chairman, and, in turn, the three Vice-Chairmen and the Chairmen of the various committees. Then followed the appointment of the members of the 22 committees, such as promotion, tickets, parking, gallery, scoring and grounds, and outlining their respective responsibilities. About 225 male members and nearly the same number of the women are on the committees.

The second step was to find out what jobs had to be done. The position was similar to that of the youngster in French class. Asked how the work was coming, the youngster replied: "In most classes I have trouble with the answers, but here I can't even understand the questions."

Fortunately, the Baltusrol committees had an opportunity to observe the arrangements at Congressional Country Club, Washington, D.C.; Bellerive Country Club, St. Louis; and Olympic Country Club, San Francisco, host clubs at the three previous Opens.

After these observations, the committee divided the preparation of the course into 14 parts, as follows:

Grounds

Baltusrol is endeavoring to provide playing conditions as nearly perfect as possible: to provide a course of tees, fairways, bunkers, and greens, where every shot can be made under fair and favorable conditions.

But the extreme drought of the last five years left its mark, particularly on the sides of the bunkers which could not be irrigated. This condition resulted in a plan to undertake quite an extensive program of bunker renovation. Also, Baltusrol initiated an intensive program of thatching and aerating greens in the fall of 1965, and of fertilizing the fairways and adjacent rough in 1965 and 1966.

Tees

The only change which the USGA suggested for the entire course was the construction of a new tee for the seventh hole. Ordinarily, the seventh plays as a par-5 of 490 yards and there

are two good tees for this hole. However, USGA representatives decided that it would be a better test of golf played as a par-4 of 470 yards, requiring a drive over the bunkers on the right side of the fairway. Consequently, one of the tees was extended forward about 30 yards to achieve this and accent the dog-leg character of the hole. One other change has been made in the par. The 469-yard first hole will be rated as a par-4; club members play it as a par-5. Thus, the course will have a par of 70 and will play at 7,022 yards.

The committee decided that another tee on the 16th would improve this hole. It ordinarily plays at either 174 or 200 yards, but the removal of a defective pine tree permitted the construction of a new rear tee. The hole now plays at a challenging 214 yards to an island green within encircling bunkers.

Five of the tees which extend the course to 7,022 yards for championships are rarely played by the members and they were not in as good condition as the others. The best way to restore them was through resodding from the Baltusrol nursery. This program was completed last year.

Fairways

Ordinarily, the fairways are cut to about $\frac{5}{8}$ inch and the bordering rough to about two inches. Some fairways are quite wide, but for this Championship they probably will be narrowed to about 35 to 40 yards at the drive zone by allowing the grass to grow to the two-inch to four-inch height desired for the rough. The USGA will delineate the fairway boundaries in April so that a cutting program will achieve the desired results by early June.

Staking Hazards

A lake at the fourth hole and brooks crossing or bordering several others call for staking several water hazards and lateral hazards. No out-of-bounds staking is necessary, but a fence on parts of six holes marks the boundary. Of course appropriate staking will be required at any "ground under repair" condition.

Bridges

There are about 20 locations where small bridges cross brooks. These have been satis-

factory for normal use, but when studied from the standpoint of heavy play and 25,000 spectators a day, many appeared unsatisfactory if not unsafe. Consequently, a number of the plank crossings were rebuilt and others were replaced with concrete pipe.

Shelters

For the last several years the occasions when players had to seek shelter from the rain have been so very rare that the shelters were almost forgotten. Normal wear, together with the thoughtlessness of some boys who last winter removed shingles and board siding to build fires while they skated on the lakes, left some of these in sorry condition. All of the shelters have been rebuilt and repainted.

Tents

The number of tents required to house necessary services during an Open is unbelievably large. To determine what was needed, each committee was asked to list the number, size and type it required. About 18 to 20 are needed, exclusive of those of the food concessionaires, who supply their own. The largest is the one for the working press. It is to house 225 men with typewriters on desks, an interview room where the writers may question the players, a Western Union facility, a scoreboard, and two dark-rooms. This tent will be 90' x 120' and will have a wooden floor. The club provides the typewriters and desks.

One other large tent is needed for additional clubhouse-type dining facilities, since space in the clubhouse is not adequate. This tent will accommodate about 200 persons who will be served by a caterer. A similar facility will be installed in a large equipment barn, which is well out on the course and readily accessible to a large number of spectators.

Approximately 15 additional tents of various sizes will serve particular functions, such as for the starter at No. 1 tee, for public information, for medical and first aid headquarters, for scorers, caddies, marshals, transportation, security forces, and others. They will be located most advantageously for their respective functions near the clubhouse and at various other spots around the course.

Sanitary Facilities

Provision of an adequate number of temporary sanitary facilities at proper locations is necessary because normal facilities are woefully inadequate for such crowds. About 70 indi-

vidual portable units are being rented and they will be located in multiples in identifiable but inconspicuous spots as much as possible.

Parking and Traffic

Parking 10,000 to 12,000 cars daily develops into quite a problem at a course that has two parking lots which are large enough only for members who normally use the club. A large field which was used for parking when the Open was last held at Baltusrol in 1954 now is a residential development. Additional areas are being designated on all available space and it is expected to use the rough and 14 of the 18 fairways of the Upper Course for parking. Fences will be installed to mark the areas and protect the greens and tees. Because direction of traffic and parking the cars is a specialized function, it will be handled by a concessionaire who has the necessary special skills. The concessionaire will collect the parking fee at the entrance gate, direct the traffic, and provide area attendants and tow truck service. All this will be under the overall direction of our committees.

Roads

Service roads throughout the two courses are limited but adequate for ordinary golf course operation and maintenance. However, the coarse crushed stone surfaces are not suitable for parking and the other traffic that probably will be imposed on them during this week. They may be improved by adding a smaller screen crushed stone and a suitable bituminous binder to hold the stone in place. This could reduce dust resulting from the increased traffic.

Fencing

The direction of traffic, the delineation of parking areas, and the protection of greens and tees not involved in the Championship call for the use of fencing. Several kinds were considered, but the four-foot high snow fence seems most suitable. It is being rented from a highway authority. At least 15,000 lineal feet, and possibly 20,000 feet, is required. It is a sizeable job to obtain, erect immediately before the Championship so as to limit interference to use of the course, and to remove when play has ended.

Also, some additional club boundary fencing is required. While a large part of the club's 540 acres is enclosed with a six foot high chain link fence, about 1 1/3 miles is not protected. One mile of this is in a heavily wooded area bounded

by a stone quarry and a fence is not required there. But additional fence will be installed for protection and privacy along the 1/3 mile alongside a public highway. Fencing of this section previously has been desirable but not necessary; now it is required for the control of admissions.

Water for Lakes

A lake on the fourth hole constitutes a beauty spot and makes this 194-yard hole challenging, since the lake extends to the edge of the green. This lake is fed by a spring and in recent summers the level has dropped occasionally because of both the drought and leaks resulting from an occasional incursion of muskrats. The job here has been to curb the animals and to plug all possible leaks while hoping that rains will be adequate.

Spectator Ropes

Roping entire fairways from tee to green was an innovation at Baltusrol for the 1954 Open Championship. This practice proved so satisfactory that the USGA purchased the rope and used the system at all subsequent Open Championships. Baltusrol will be roped again. The club has outlined procedures for driving metal stakes and for stringing about 42,000 feet of rope. Special crossing signs will be erected at designated points where the gallery is permitted to cross the fairways. All this work must be done in the last few days preceding the practice days so that the stakes will not interfere with mowing operations.

Trash

It is an old American custom to discard paper and other refuse at the immediate point

where it becomes useless. Baltusrol will try to encourage the spectators to deposit such trash in 250 containers which will be located strategically around the course. These containers will hold plastic bag liners for easy handling. However, recognizing that some people may be careless, it will be necessary to employ a clean-up squad to cover the entire course and collect the scattered refuse. The cleanup and collection from the containers must be accomplished each evening after play has ended.

Several additional activities are necessary in preparing for an event as important as the Open:

1. Arrangements must be made to supply electric power to several locations for the concessionaire, caterer and television.
2. Security forces must protect the course 24 hours a day before and during the Championship.
3. Additional lines and cables for communications and television must be placed.
4. Platforms or towers at six locations for photographers must be erected.
5. The clothing size of the workers who will be raking traps and doing other work on the course must be estimated so that they will be suitably garbed.

Conclusion

Preparing for a championship entails more than providing a good golf course. Initially, Baltusrol had about 40 months to do the job. Most of that time was used to study the needs, plan, make arrangements and schedule—and now only a short time is left in which to complete the many things that must be done. The Open is played in four days; it took more than three years to get ready.

Selling the Idea

by E. L. MEISTER, JR., Green Committee Chairman, Kirtland Country Club, Willoughby, Ohio

Golf course changes or innovations, if they are to be digested easily and without criticism by the membership, must start many years in advance of the actual work.

First, it is important that the chairman of the green committee be someone conversant with golf and who has the confidence of the membership. If the green committee chairman has a reputation as a fine competitive golfer, changes in golf course design will be accepted more easily. Changes also must be practical and

worth doing. It is important to establish a long-range plan for the development of the course. This plan should be implemented by a golf architect, who can present his proposals and suggestions in written form. The membership will accept recommendations of this type much more easily than those coming from other members or from green chairmen.

At Kirkland Country Club it was obvious that certain changes had to be made in the golf course to bring it up-to-date. The club employed