



*The back of the fourth green at Eugene Country Club. A slide of this view was shown and is referred to on the opposite page.*

## Eugene's Novel Approach

The following article was presented at the USGA Green Section Conference as the script to a series of color slides. The script was written and the slides prepared to show at the Eugene (Ore.) Golf and Country Club as a novel method of encouraging the members to agree to remodelling the course. It was shown at the Conference by John Zoller, the Eugene Golf and Country Club's Course Superintendent.

The script was recorded and it should be remembered that a view of the course was on the screen at all times during the presentation. Space does not permit all the slides to be reproduced within this article.

It is published here merely to demonstrate a method one club used to stimulate remodelling.

In 1924 the Eugene Golf and Country Club was developed in the present location. The wise selection of site by those who put forth the capital and the work to establish the club has resulted in one noted for its natural beauty, and particularly enjoyed for its proximity to the center of the community. Over the years the club has been enjoyed both by its members and visitors from throughout the country.

Membership has grown until there is nearly always a substantial waiting list with membership maintained at 550 members. Not only does the Eugene Golf and Country Club have a full membership, most of whom enjoy playing the

very fine course, but each member's family participates to a great degree.

The expansion of the women's program and the junior golf program in recent years points up the fact that golf is now a full family recreation. This is a tremendous change from the time when the club was founded and the male member alone enjoyed the golf course. Though this increase in play is encouraged, it does cause a number of problems.

At the time the Eugene Golf and Country Club was founded, courses were designed to handle approximately 1,200 rounds of golf monthly. Recently totals indicate that play has

risen to almost 6,000 rounds per month in peak months. The heavy play on greens and tees now over 40 years of age at five times the design level has caused excessive wear and a multitude of maintenance problems.

This high rate of play, along with the problems caused by the aging and compacting of the turf, caused your board nearly two years ago to start an evaluation of the condition of our golf course. It should be pointed out here that the basic responsibility of your board is not only to maintain the course and facilities in the best possible condition today, but to look ahead to tomorrow so as to protect the capital and recreational investment each of you has in the club.

To proceed, your board first sought the opinion of your own golf course superintendent, John Zoller, and secured his thoughts concerning the condition of the course and its future. Additionally, the matter was discussed with Wendell Wood, your professional of long standing and one fully familiar with the course. These views added to those of the green committee indicated that a problem existed and caused your board to seek experts knowledgeable in the field of golf courses, soils and grasses. William Bengeyfield, of the United States Golf Association's Green Section, was asked to visit the course and give his opinion as to whether a problem existed.

Perhaps some of you came to the membership meeting where Mr. Bengeyfield both expressed his viewpoints and answered many questions posed by those present.

At this point and after carefully evaluating the opinions of Mr. Zoller, Mr. Wood and Mr. Bengeyfield, the board concluded that a problem did exist and sought suggestions for solution. Perhaps this is the place to be a bit more specific concerning some of the problems. As an example you now see a drawing of the third green. The problems concerning this green are typical of those that exist on the majority of our greens. The green has a total area of only 3,000 square feet. Of this total, only 30 by 20 feet, or 600 square feet is usable space for cup placement when the cup is placed the recommended distance of not less than 15 feet from the edge of the green. This places all the wear, all the walking, all the cup placement in a very confined area.

Naturally this causes extreme wear, particularly during the heavy play of summer months,

and further compacts already compacted turf. The area around the green in the approach area and the bunkers on either side are not tiled properly. This causes these areas to drain poorly both summer and winter and reduces playability.

The area shown on this slide indicates the places surrounding the green that require slow and costly handwork, adding to the annual maintenance costs.

On other greens these problem areas are even greater. For instance the back sides of seven, the back of four, the back of 11, 14, 15 and 16 are examples of where old designs cause great amounts of hand labor, and, coincidentally, where the penalty for a slightly missed shot that goes over the green is extreme.

Impossible to show adequately is the condition of the grasses. As years have passed, the original grasses have been replaced by native grasses. These lack uniformity, are hard to maintain, recover slowly from the rigors of increasing play and are not good for use as greens. Greens built today under modern USGA standards eliminate the problems shown here. As mentioned, the third green is used only as an illustration . . . these problems and some similar and even greater are existent on every green on the course.

First a Canadian architect was contacted. He spent time going over the course and concurred with the opinions expressed by the others. Contact was then made with an American golf course architect. This man was retained by the board to study the course and to formulate plans for revision and modernization. The architect and his staff have since visited the course on a number of occasions and have presented a plan of modification that your board feels is workable and offers a solution to the problems at hand.

This is the background, the problems, the study by the board, the actions of the board, and now concluding with what is felt to be a feasible solution. It should be noted here that these conclusions have been arrived at after careful consideration. Committees, particularly the green committee, have worked in review of the entire situation. For a period of time your board met weekly to be certain that the proposed action is necessary and that it is a reasonable and proper solution. And your board had voted unanimously to recommend to you the following:

To follow the plan suggested by the architect for the development of 18 new greens and tees. He recommends that this be done through reversal of the golf course from tee to green.



*Approach to the 15th green; what would you do with it?*

His study of the course indicates that this is one of the few courses in the country that lends itself to this method of modification. This plan will enable almost uninterrupted play on all 18 holes during the period of renovation, keeping club revenues at approximately a normal level during the time of construction.

Another important reason for favorable consideration of this plan is to make better use of our land, recovery of four acres or more of land valued at \$25,000 per acre, more parking areas and a better location for the golf shop and practice facilities. The architect feels that all work can be confined in the period of a few months time with an entirely new and better Eugene Golf and Country Club available for full play in less than a year's time.

The natural beauty of the course will be retained with protection of the trees with which the course is endowed. Better use will be made of our terrain and water. And important to many, the redesign will in no way be an effort to develop the course to what some refer to as a championship course.

Many changes will be in favor of the higher handicappers and the lady golfers. In fact, some golf course architects feel that the course now favors the low handicapper and puts the higher handicapper and the lady golfers at severe disadvantage.

What does re-design mean? As an example, here are slides that give some indication of work done on golf courses.

[Editor's note: A series of slides followed showing courses from the Northwest and other areas. The de-

scriptions were designed to show what can be accomplished through remodelling. A few comments follow.]

*The par 3, No. 12 at Spyglass Hill illustrating the design character possible in the Par 3 holes proposed at Eugene. The green, integrally designed with a lake on the left plus the flexibility of five tiered tees, offers a multitude of variety and challenge to all classes of golfers.*

*A green at the Peachtree course showing a setting similar to that envisioned at Eugene in relation to bunkers, trees, and green surface. The generous-size green improves the overall aesthetics, offers a large target, and provides for easier maintenance.*

*This rolling green at Incline Village on Lake Tahoe is larger than those proposed at Eugene, but, nevertheless, illustrates the many pin areas possible allowing great flexibility to each hole and ease of maintenance. Wear and tear can be distributed over larger area.*

*The small green in the foreground is actually a temporary one used to accommodate daily play during remodeling on this course. Nevertheless, illustrated here is the old style small flat green, where little flexibility and considerable heavy wear make for difficult maintenance. In contrast, note the many pin areas available for variety of difficulty on the new green and also much less concentrated wear.*

Re-design will mean new and more modern bunkers, completely new greens and larger elevated tees. The greens will be developed from the ground up allowing better year-around play with better grasses and consistent putting the

year around. Larger greens will be developed to meet the requirements of today's intense play. Drainage of the entire green bunkers included to provide better play both winter and summer. And another point to be considered is the protection of your investment, the keeping of your course modern in design and in excellence of playing quality. It is almost certain that in the near future a course offering fine facilities and with full modern design will be in the area. When that time comes it is in your interest that the Eugene Golf and Country Club be capable of competing in every way and coming out as the finest course, THE course in Eugene, Oregon.

Perhaps the starting point of all the considerations was the realization that something had to be done about the sprinkling system. It has been known for a number of years that replacement of the present outdated system was necessary. Each year substantial repairs have to be made and each summer the inadequacy of the present system becomes more apparent.

The present system is what is called a single line system featuring a row of manually operated sprinklers running down the middle of each fairway. Each sprinkler covers a circle with a radius of 60 feet. Some areas along the edge of the rough are missed, some get single coverage and some double coverage. This results in dry areas, a few that are just right, and as many of you have found, areas down the middle of the fairways with too much water. This system also results in the use of large amounts of hand labor in order to keep the course in playable condition.

After study and review of available systems it is recommended that in addition to modernization of the golf course that a completely new sprinkler system be installed.

A two line system uses a far greater number of sprinklers, each covering a smaller area than the present system, but the combination gives better and more even coverage of the course. This system is automatic and reduces the labor necessary in the present operation. Better playing conditions will exist over the entire course.

These are the recommendations of your board. These conclusions were arrived at after careful study. Experts were consulted, their opinions evaluated and considered by committees. Discussion, consideration and review have all preceded recommendation. Your board feels that these conclusions have been reached with your best interest in mind.

One more step probably of interest to you is how much money will it cost and how do we pay for it. Closest possible estimates indicated that to accomplish these goals it will be necessary to spend \$485,000 for the complete modification of the golf course, the moving of the pro shop and for the new sprinkling system. Now that's a lot of money, but when placed on a pay-as-you-play plan, this total financing can be accomplished for a dues increase of \$7.80 monthly. Financing can be accomplished by borrowing the money over a period of 15 years. This amount includes the balance on our present mortgage along with sufficient funds to finance golf course modernization.

For just \$7.80 per month you can enjoy one of America's finest golf courses in the fall of 1967, yet play on the present course during construction. In conclusion, recall that your board recommends this by unanimous vote.

It is felt that these are the things that will be accomplished by your affirmative action.

1. Replacement of greens that are too small by those of adequate size, of modern design, and capable of meeting the requirement of today's play rate.

2. Greens that are not compacted, but greens with better drainage, offering more enjoyable year around play.

3. Greens built to last for years to come with uniform turf, uniformity in putting.

4. Tees—modern, larger and more level with special attention to teeing areas for the lady golfers.

5. A golf course designed for better playing enjoyment by all members regardless of handicap.

6. A golf course designed by one of the foremost golf course architects in the world.

7. Better use of our land with more adequate parking areas. Securing the use of four acres of land worth \$100,000.

8. Re-location of the pro shop adjacent to the clubhouse and practice area.

9. Finally, development of a modern golf course capable of competing with any golf course to be built in or around Eugene in the years to come.

These are the reasons that motivated board action. For a greater Eugene Golf and Country Club tomorrow your board recommends adoption of this plan tonight.