

tainly have their advantages too, particularly when concerned with nitrogen availability on summer greens.

USGA Specification greens are built with 80 percent or more of sand. They were supposed to drain no matter how much water applied. Right? Wrong. The Specifications as developed by Dr. Marvin Ferguson were designed and planned to reduce the effects of soil compaction, not excess irrigation. There seems a modern misunderstanding that water may be applied indiscriminately to greens, especially sandy

greens, at any time without concern. It simply isn't true.

And so we have come full circle. Moderation is the answer. We should use the knowledge we have properly. Lime in excess can certainly cause problems. But that doesn't mean we should forget the basic uses, techniques, and value of lime.

I plead with all of you not to overlook the wisdom and experiences of the past. They are rich and valuable. Let us guard against a headlong rush to invent something new when we already have an

answer, an effective and inexpensive answer from the past.

Oliver Wendell Holmes once said:

Science is a first rate piece of furniture for a man's upper story if he has common sense on the ground floor. But if a man hasn't got plenty of good common sense, the more science he has, the worse for his decisions and those he serves.

The Noers, the Taylors, and the Fergusons have already left us a treasure of knowledge. There's magic in lime. Let's use it.

Let's See — My Rules of Golf Must Be Here, Somewhere ... It's in the Bag

by **GEORGE EBERL**
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THE TYPICAL golf bag may take on the character of a sophisticated Dempster Dumpster, a collecting point for things quaint and occasionally vile. Inside the zippered compartments you might find dried grass blades, wads of lint, and other lumps and pieces not so easy to identify, like a six-months-old half pack of crumpled cigarettes, a spike cleaner, a spike wrench, some ancient golf gloves that have attained the approximate texture of the Dead Sea Scrolls, ball-markers that were gifts from one business convention or another, and a fistful of broken or dull golf pencils (have you ever noticed that golf pencils rarely have an eraser end?). Less intense players may carry a medicinal flask, protection against inclement weather, bad scores, and/or the loneliness of life in the rough.

Of course, an assortment of wood and plastic tees are sprinkled among the



M. T. Johnson, USGA Executive Committee.

debris, including some that are broken (useful for par-3s, although one usually finds them only when preparing to hit off on a par-5, with driver in hand). For some mysterious reason, the best tees descend into the more remote crevices, just out of reach of blindly probing fingers.

The same is often true of golf balls; range balls, conspicuous by their red stripes, invariably rise to the top, leaving the player who is to tee off immediately fumbling futilely for a white, dimpled, sparkling lovely somewhere in the depths of his leather bin of unmentionables.

Old golf balls have a value, however; they are popular for teeing off where water hazards menace. It is ironic that often these same players, some of whom will pick up a sizable bill in the clubhouse without blinking an eye, carry a ball retriever in their overstuffed bag, and they will fish in a pond for a quarter



of an hour for a dilapidated ball that many would have consigned to their shagbags.

All of which brings us to the tools, the weapons of the trade. Golf clubs. Most of us, assisted by the quiet but firm intercession of the United States Golf Association and its standards of conformance for implements and balls, use clubs that differ little from each other. The underlying principle is to base performance differences between players on their abilities rather than on manufacturing.

Yet, among the largely unseen marvels that grace Golf House, USGA headquarters, in Far Hills, New Jersey, are the novel clubs that show up from time to time for possible approval and subsequent sale by their inventors. They are bizarre testimony to the golfers' tireless urge to find ways to shave

strokes off their scores; indeed, these players are a market that defies glutting.

Several of these monuments to man's ingenuity were center-stage in Phoenix, Arizona, in early February during the annual Turfgrass Conference, where M. T. Johnson, of Amarillo, Texas, talked about the odd things that show up in golf bags. A member of the USGA Executive Committee, Johnson served for a time as Chairman of the Implements and Ball Committee.

We were not on hand for his remarks, complete with slides picturing somewhat primitive sketches of peculiar, non-conforming clubs, but a sampling of clubs that failed to pass muster are even this moment within arm's reach, leaning against our wall. It is difficult to avoid furtive glances toward these weird devices; they give you the feeling that they are silently conspiring to sneak

up and do bodily harm if they're not watched closely.

If they could be measured from one to ten on an oddity scale, it is as difficult to rank them as it would be to rate human organs in a popularity poll. Where do you rank the pancreas, for example? Or the liver? Neither are terribly popular.

ALL THE CLUBS, incidentally, are putters. After all, putts comprise a large percentage of total strokes in any given round, so this element of the game is a natural target for inventive geniuses. Our favorite, probably, is an inverted "U" whose legs end in points to be bedded in the ground. Swinging from a crossbar in this inverted "U" is a putter shaft and blade that may be drawn back and released to strike the ball on a straight line.

A close second is an ingenious putter; an angled mirror is mounted atop its head. A black line is painted on the mirror. When the ball and the hole beyond are reflected directly on the line and the ball is struck on the line, the putt theoretically will fall. (We experimented, missing two of three from five feet. The ball obscured our view of the electric putting cup, which may have explained the forgettable effort.)

Yet another putter had a head that might have been an ideal eating utensil for E. T., or one of those grotesque Star Wars creatures. When the Thomas Edisons of golf clubs weren't tinkering with putter clubheads, they zeroed in on handles. One submission had a two-handed grip that resembled a tuning fork, and another had a grip that took a 90-degree turn at its apex, with the extension able to swivel freely so that one simply gripped the extension firmly and set the putter in motion.

Finally, one putter had a barrel head containing four small batteries, and, of all things, a tiny motor. According to the explanation (far too complicated to get into here), this apparatus constituted a gyroscope. The thing whirred inside the barrel head and a hammer at one end of the barrel struck the ball. It is unclear to us how the impact level was controlled according to distance from the hole. Details. If one contrives a flawless mousetrap, it is up to the trap's buyer to decide the brand of peanut butter to use as bait.

As it is, even with the decreed 14-club limit, what the world may demand one of these days is a bigger golf bag. They may already come equipped with drop-down seats, but after all, where does one put his tuna sandwiches and coolchest?