

Purchasing and Caring for Tools and Equipment

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"A dull razor gives a poor shave."

If greens committees would enlarge a bit on that fact, the saying might apply to golf courses with "dull razor" equipment and tools, resulting in a "poor shave" for the course in general. Next to an efficient crew of workmen, the greatest asset to a greenkeeper is efficient equipment. A workman may be well trained and industrious, but with poor tools his daily work is of no greater value than that of a poor workman with good tools.

In purchasing equipment for Woodhill there are four points that I always take into consideration: quality, service, repairs and cost.

Of these points I consider quality the most essential, for with tools of quality there is little trouble with service and repairs. While visiting a manufacturing plant a short time ago I saw a wonderful demonstration of quality. The firm is building a new type of cutting unit for power mowers. Fortunately, I happened to call while this machine was being tested. The cutting unit was placed in a large box, constructed with glass on one side to afford a view of what was happening within. The cutting blade had been removed, and the wheels were supported by two belts, which moved in opposite directions at a speed comparable to that of a machine mowing grass. A mixture of iron filings, sawdust and dirt was shoveled into the box. The wheels and reel revolved in the mixture, forming a cloud of moving dust in the box. The machine had been running for many hours before it was taken out and opened. I watched the opening of the gear case with intense interest, for I thought the gears would be badly worn by such severe treatment. To my great surprise, not a bit of the dust had entered the gear case; the oil was as fresh and clean as though it had not been used. That manufacturer tested his machine for quality, and his product stood the test.

Second in importance to quality is service. Every greenkeeper has to "sweat blood," as when, in the middle of the cutting season, a mower or other piece of equipment breaks or becomes otherwise disabled. How soon can the machine be fixed? The answer depends largely on the kind of service the manufacturer or dealer can render. To send to New York for a casting for my tractor would mean that the golfers would have to play in hay fields before the machine could be put back in running order. Our tool man can mend or repair an ordinary break, but he can't make a casting. Therefore, I buy with the idea of quick service on broken parts, or even new machines.

Repairs and cost go hand in hand. Both are dependent on quality. Repairs are always costly, not to mention the inconvenience they incur. To pay ten dollars more for the original machine is better than to pay twenty for repairs. Manufacturers base the cost of a machine on quality and workmanship. I prefer to pay ten dollars for ten dollars' worth of quality rather than seven dollars for five dollars' worth. It is up to the purchaser to use his best judgment, and it is wise to remember that the golf

club wants to keep up the grounds three or four years in the future as well as at the present.

I doubt whether the average golfer knows or cares how much money his club has invested in tools and equipment, but the greenkeeper and the greens committee ought to know. An inventory once or twice a year, with every article justly depreciated, would open the eyes of many of the men who foot the bills, for maintenance of a high-standard golf course means money invested in tools and equipment.

It should be part of the responsibility of the greenkeeper to know his tools, their value, age, use, and place where they are kept. At Woodhill I find that workmen are apt to leave tools where they work the last hour of the day, taking for granted that they will return the next day. But maybe he doesn't come to work the next day. Then it is a question as to where he "ducked" the tools he had been using. It would require a host of guardian angels to keep track of tools if this policy were permitted. I have found it to be of advantage to the club to allow the men to cease work fifteen minutes earlier in the evening in order to give them time to clean and put their tools in the proper places.

We are fortunate to have all of our equipment under one roof. Horses, tractor, mowers, shovels, rakes, in fact all of the essentials to upkeep, are kept in the big barn. There is a place for everything; and it has become a matter of educating the workmen to bring in their tools and put them in the right place. We have a very small loss due to mislaid tools, though it is very difficult to bring that loss to nothing.

A barn man has charge of the barn and everything in it. He takes care of the horses, runs the engines, pumps the water, keeps the floors clean, sees that tools are put away properly, makes repairs; in short, he is the greenkeeper's right-hand man. Only on certain occasions is it necessary for a grounds man to repair a tool. Anything in need of repair is placed on a table, and it is the duty of the barn man to keep that table clean.

There is a constant accumulation of odd bits of machinery, bolts, nuts, nails, washers and many other odds and ends which, if taken care of, lessen the cost of equipment upkeep. For the smaller of these items we have what we term a "pigeonhole rack." This is a rack built with twenty or more separate pigeonholes of various sizes. On the outside of each pigeonhole is nailed a sample of what the compartment contains. In this way these articles are kept in an orderly condition and are always in place so that no time is lost hunting for them. The larger pieces of machinery are put in our "junk room," where they are kept for future needs. This accumulation of non-essentials has proved to be of value many times, for there are many uses for such material in the construction of new machinery or the repair of the old.

Most members of golf clubs are business or professional men, but at many of the clubs I have visited I noticed a lack of systematic purchasing and maintaining of equipment, which, if tolerated in a business concern, would bankrupt any firm in less than a year. Golf maintenance is a business, and requires business methods to produce the best results.

(In submitting his article to THE BULLETIN, Mr. Feser writes us as follows: "Woodhill Country Club is situated 15 miles west of the city of Minneapolis. It is an 18-hole course, and in addition to the golf course 150 acres of farm and

pasture land are taken care of by the greenkeeper. All of our wood, fertilizer, ice, hay, and many miscellaneous articles are made on the grounds. It has often occurred to me that without a system of caring for our tools and equipment the supervision of a place of this size would be impossible for one man. We have three teams on the place belonging to the club, and in the summer time we employ from eighteen to twenty men, in addition to green-weeders. I point out these facts for your consideration in relation to what a greenkeeper thinks of tools and equipment."—EDITORS.)

Sclaffed Tees

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Wear and tear upon tee and fairway turf is somewhat increased by the well-nigh universal habit of addressing the ground behind the ball instead of addressing the ball itself. The chief cause of sclaffing is, of course, looking up instead of keeping one's head down until after the ball is struck; but an additional cause is inaccurate address, soling the club instead of placing the club-head on the level of the ball when starting the backswing.

Addressing the ground instead of the ball necessitates a vertical correction in the swing, a correction equal in each case to the height to which the ball is teed up. For an unteed ball no such vertical adjustment is needed. For a high-teed ball a vertical adjustment of as much as an inch may be required. On the other hand, if one acquires the habit of addressing the ball instead of the ground there is no vertical adjustment needed at all, whatever the lie, and the swing is simplified to just this extent, all lies being alike to the player.

To the habit of addressing the ground there are also, of course, the additional objections that soling a club is not allowed in a hazard and that soling a club in the fairway, or especially in the rough, sometimes makes the ball move, causing the loss of a stroke.

The general habit of addressing the ground instead of the ball seems in itself rather absurd, complicating the swing and making it just so much more difficult; but the reason for mentioning it in this BULLETIN is the fact that the injury to turf is appreciably greater than it would be if it were the general habit to address the ball instead of the ground back of the ball. The writer can testify from experience that a proper swing after addressing the ball itself is easier and safer than the compensated swing after addressing the ground.

New Member Clubs of the Green Section

Westchester-Biltmore Country Club, Rye, N. Y.
 Greensburg Country Club, Greensburg, Pa.
 Catawba Cliffs Golf Club, Catawba Island, Port Clinton, Ohio.
 Lakeside Country Club, Manitowoc, Wis.
 Helena Country Club, Helena, Ark.
 Eshquaguma Club, Biwabik, Minn.
 Hillcrest Country Club, Sawtelle, Calif.
 Hamilton Golf and Country Club, Hamilton, Ontario.
 Christiana Country Club, Elkhart, Ind.
 Buck Hill Golf Course, Buck Hill Falls, Pa.