

Duties of the Greenkeeper

By Frederic C. Hood

Doubtless the thought has occurred often to readers of the BULLETIN that an outline of the duties and responsibilities of the greenkeeper would be of advantage,—first, in assisting the experienced greenkeeper to define his role in the important and intricate work of golf turf maintenance, and second, in assisting the less experienced greenkeeper to see more clearly the work which is expected of him. With this in view an attempt has been made here to draw up such an outline. The subject is indeed a complex one, and the accompanying outline of duties is in no way complete and final.

It is recognized that with a 9-hole course additional duties well may be included within the scope of tasks of the greenkeeper, and that he should be eager to assist with any task laid before him; while with courses of 18 holes or more it is frequently advantageous to confine his duties and responsibilities within narrower limits. It is hoped nevertheless that the accompanying suggestions may serve in some measure to lay before the minds of our readers at least the essential features of the greenkeeper's position.

The greenkeeper should be responsible directly to only one person, the chairman of the green committee, or the general superintendent if there be one, and thus receive his authority and orders from only one person.

He should have the entire responsibility for the upkeep of the course, for the care of the tools and machines, for the selection and employment of all assistants under him, and for the efficiency, thrift, and intelligence of those employees.

He should keep, or be responsible for the keeping, in the form prescribed, accurate time cards and records of work done. These records will show where money is spent, and from these records it is possible to learn how savings can be made. He should obtain from the chairman reports showing the total costs of the work, so that he may be familiar with the expenses in the same form as they are presented to the chairman and other members of the committee. He should cooperate in carrying out the system of bookkeeping deemed desirable by the treasurer, including the preparation of payroll records, receipts of supplies, and inventories of tools, machines, and supplies on hand.

He should plan to do the work under his charge in an efficient manner and constantly endeavor to improve methods. He should encourage his men to the same ends. He should select men who will have the interests of the work at heart. He should find ways of increasing that interest, and should see that the workmen receive proper wages for their work. He should ascertain from the chairman his wishes and his policies. He should constantly endeavor to increase his own efficiency by study and investigation, reading articles on greenkeeping methods, and occasionally visiting other golf courses, conferring with other greenkeepers, thus educating himself to a degree that will enable him not only to keep the course in a condition that will be the pride of every member but also to prevent the damage that may be done by rodents, insects, fungus, weeds, defective drainage, etc. Indeed, it was to assist the greenkeeper in this respect that the BULLETIN OF THE GREEN SECTION was established, and the duties of the greenkeeper can not be fulfilled unless he studies the BULLETIN assiduously.

Compost heaps of the proper mixtures, located at convenient places

on the course, are the basis of good greenkeeping. Knowledge of the qualities of the soil, the use of fertilizers and topdressings which are free from weed seeds, and the use of the proper seed are the vital elements in efficient turf maintenance. If one general law of turf management is desired, it might well be that turf needs first of all suitable conditions for growth rather than "medicines" to correct the damage resulting from improper conditions. Generally speaking, a resort to "doctoring" for the purpose of correcting damage caused by the numerous enemies of turf, such as weeds, insects, fungous disease, etc., indicates the existence of negligence somewhere. It is a better practice to remove the cause of the damage, and, by adequate fertilizing, and by the use of soils that contain proper plant food, to enable the turf to withstand its enemies, than to resort to "doctoring" after the damage is done.

Planning of work for wet, dry, hot, cold, or sunny weather is essential. The ideal of the greenkeeper should be to train his men to understand turf upkeep in general. It is wise to give each man specific care of some job for which he can be held personally responsible; to pick one or two men for the more difficult jobs that require special judgment; to encourage pride in the work done and sense of personal responsibility; to select the work that is most important, rather than to waste valuable time, money, and energy on work that is of no avail.

The greenkeeper should learn the game, and so familiarize himself with its requirements. It thus will be much easier for him to keep his traps, bunkers, and other hazards in proper condition, because he will realize the necessity. Unless he knows the game, he is working under a handicap. Of course this does not mean that he must be a good player. He should also know the Rules of Golf of the United States Golf Association, and likewise be thoroughly familiar with the local rules. He should have on his desk at all times the current and back numbers of the *BULLETIN OF THE GREEN SECTION*, and he should study their indices.

The greenkeeper should secure the cooperation of the professional and the caddy master, so as to have their help in all matters of keeping the cups and the course in proper condition and making the play a matter of pleasure to the club members.

He should be on the lookout for turf enemies—cutworms, ants, fungus, moles, skunks, crows, the gypsy and browntail moths on the trees, earthworms, brown-patch; and when these enemies begin their work, he must know at once how to combat them.

He should not fail to consult the chairman of the green committee on all problems that arise outside of the general routine.

He should develop initiative, and endeavor to see where improvements are needed before the chairman sees them.

He must meet discouragements cheerfully.

He must be willing to give consideration to new ideas, no matter what their source.

He must know how to take orders, as well as to give orders. He must learn his job from every possible source. But, he should take orders from only one person.

With regard to his subordinates, he must never forget that intelligent persons, in either high or low positions, like a job they can call their own and in which they can take pride and show results.

To repeat, he should study, perhaps above all things else, his drainage problems. Eternal vigilance should be his watchword.

With these general considerations in mind, it may be well now to call

attention to what are perhaps the details of major importance in green-keeping.

Mowing.—In the spring, grass should be given a chance to recover. In the growing season, grass should be mowed frequently. In the fall, it should be allowed to grow a little taller as a winter protection.

Rolling.—Never roll a green when it is wet. One heavy rolling in the late spring after the grass is well started, *may* be necessary. It is much better, however, to use light rolling only, and that very sparingly. It is much better to fill up the valleys with soil, than to roll down the hills with a roller.

Watering.—This should be done when necessary, and then in the late afternoon or when the sun is not bright.

Drainage.—Lack of drainage is perhaps the cause of most turf troubles, and in the North is certain to result in winterkilling.

Traps.—If the right kind of sand is used in traps, there is no need of raking. Fine sea-sand is best for traps. It is important that the sand in traps should be visible from wherever a shot is played. It is generally best to let the sod extend about six inches over the edges of a trap.

Tees.—A tee should be large enough to render sodding unnecessary. Frequently changing markers will permit grass to sprout from the roots and thus correct any damage.

Divots.—Large divots should be sodded, but when seeded, always with seed of a creeping grass.

Tee boxes.—These should be located not on the tees but in the nearest convenient line between the preceding hole and the tee.

Cups.—The location of the cups should be changed before the green shows wear.

Fairways.—These should be mowed often enough so that the ball will not settle into the grass. Usually the longer and softer the grass, the more divots are made. It is desirable that the fairway grass should be stiff and hardy in order to hold the ball up, which prevents the taking of divots. Coarse turf should be sanded; sparse turf, lightly topdressed.

Rough.—The grass should be kept in condition permitting the easy finding of a ball. Unplayable lies should be corrected.

Outside rough.—This also should be kept clear within a reasonable distance so that a ball may be found, and unplayable lies corrected.

Compost heaps.—These are the bank account and quick capital in the upkeep of a golf course. They should be turned, sifted, and kept free of weeds, and should be located in many parts of the course, easy of access. Compost heaps of better quality should be maintained for topdressing the greens. Constant study should be made of the quality of the compost and its proper ingredients. Watch out that you don't sow weed seeds when you topdress.

Turf gardens.—It is well to have several small turf gardens from which sod may be obtained for repairing damage to greens, tees, and fairways. A turf garden should be maintained for each kind of grass represented on the course, so that uniformity will be maintained in the replacing of turf.

Seeding.—Most re-seeding is simply a waste. If grass is properly fertilized and topdressed there will be little need for re-seeding. Certainly nothing is gained by re-seeding creeping bent; and in a degree this is true for all creeping grasses.

Insecticides and fungicides.—In treating turf for earthworms, grubs, or brown-patch, much is gained by making the applications promptly upon

evidence of the first trace of these enemies. Irreparable damage is likely to result if heroic treatment is attempted when the trouble has reached an acute stage.

Care of equipment.—A neat and orderly place for keeping tools and equipment is indispensable for maintaining them in good condition. Cutting machines should be kept sharp and well oiled. A running inventory should be kept of all tools and machines. Constant inspection of all equipment is highly essential.

In general, the best preventive for weeds is good turf, and the best preventive for ill health in grass is good drainage,—drainage in the soil itself, drainage in contours, drainage on the turf, in the turf, under the turf, and surrounding the turf.

The Progress of Golf Architecture

Golf architecture involves far more than the laying out of a definite number of holes each of a virtually standardized length. That these lengths are standardized can hardly be questioned, even if the distances are only approximately equal and those decreed by what golfers think best. There is general agreement that the desirable total length of 18 holes should be between 6,000 and 6,500 yards. If one should judge from a large proportion of golf courses, the designer had no other end in view than that stated above, namely a course whose measurements approximate a standard. There is seldom any indication of originality, except of the freaky kind, and rarely any conception of landscape beauty. Apart from the relatively mathematical or mechanical features of golf course building, which any one can learn quickly, there lies the whole art, which will make or break the reputation of every golf architect. Only the sluggish mind of an easily satisfied public has blinded it to the hideousness of most of our golf courses. Sometimes the beauty of the surroundings helps to conceal the ugliness of the artificial work, though the lack of any harmony be only too obvious. Fortunately, perhaps, many architects make their artificial work concealed or half-concealed, such as blind bunkers. Otherwise its unloveliness would be too patent.

This may sound like the writing of one suffering a severe attack of indigestion. It is meant to be the expression of feeling of one who is saddened by the absence of landscape beauty in too much of the artificial constructions on golf courses. A sand bunker can be made a thing of beauty or a hideous gash. Fortunately many of the latter are built "blind." The artificial lines can be curves that fit in with those of the terrain, or they can be angular and jar every sense of harmony. After all, a golf architect worthy of the name must be an artist, painting his ideas on the face of Nature as his canvas. The painter retouches his work again and again. Too many architects make the mechanical plans and leave practically all else to the construction gang. Some indeed work on a cut-and-dried series of models, which are reproduced here, there and yonder regardless of the terrain. When you see one course built by such an architect, you can recognize at once every other course he has built. This is true not in the sense that one can learn to recognize a Corot or a Landseer, but true to actual mechanical details. There is merit in the idea that holes of proven reputation ought to be copied—especially if these replicas apply as to principles but not as to details. If however this idea is embalmed in a set of mechanical models, then there can