

GOLF KNOWLEDGE AN ASSET TO COURSE SUPERINTENDENT

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The importance of the Golf Course Superintendent to the golfer is often underestimated. He is to the golfer what the hotel manager is to his guest, the Commissioner of Highways is to the motorist—and perhaps to stretch the point—what the airline pilot is to his passenger. In most cases, he didn't conceive, design and construct the course—nor the pilot the plane—but each day he must present it to the golfer in its most playable form.

Did you ever stop to think why golfers literally dream of such courses as St. Andrews, Pine Valley, Augusta National, Cypress Point, Cascades, Fisher's Island, Pinehurst No. 2, Pebble Beach, Oakland Hills, Baltusrol and Oakmont? Because they are great and classic courses. But why? They are all beautiful, and mostly long and testing. Each is a course in which the designer has done a unique job of combining God-given land beauty with marvelous placement and design of the components which make up the course. The designer, in every case, has used his terrain to the very best advantage in setting off the features for these components. Each course has such an attachment to its locale that, miraculously transplanted elsewhere, it would be completely out of keeping with its new surroundings.

Hazards Add Flavor

The greatness of these and other courses is in their general setting and in their hazards as well as greens, fairways and rough. There is a paradox about hazards on these courses: though they impose their penalties with terrifying severity, they, more than perhaps any other feature, give the courses their flavor and much of their beauty.

And so the golfer does not praise or blame the Golf Course Superintendent for the inherent good and bad in a course. The average Superintendent is a profes-



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sional who has spent much time studying his vocation and must continue to keep up with the many new developments and methods. His is a frustrating existence in many ways, for he can never say "My work is done." He almost invariably fails to get funds sufficient to bring his course up to what he considers optimum condition. His problem of managing his labor and his turf are never ending.

The average golfer, on the other hand, is only vaguely aware of these problems. He is more concerned with why the tee markers were crooked on No. 13 or why that trap on No. 17 wasn't raked than with the fact that the Superintendent had to go out personally to water the ninth green at midnight to keep from losing it.

Make no mistake about it: with the golfer, "it's the little things that count." How then can the Golf Course Superintendent deal with these little things? How can he know the mind of his golfers and serve up his course on a day-to-day basis in "apple-pie" order?

He might do this by following five

pieces of advice which are admittedly a little extreme and perhaps might not always be taken literally or might even be modified as circumstances dictate.

The Superintendent should:

1. Play his course once per week the year round. If he is not now a golfer, he should become one!
2. Put himself in the position each week where he can be criticized by his golfers.
3. Be an expert on the Rules of Golf.
4. Know thoroughly that portion of the USGA Golf Handicap System booklet which pertains to course management, course rating procedure, and the mechanics of handicaps.
5. Be insulted when his players play "winter rules."

It might be well to enlarge on the above somewhat deliberately extreme statements.

1. **The Golf Course Superintendent should be a golfer.**

This will give him a chance on a regular basis to see his course from the standpoint of the golfer. It will also give him a chance to see it in a leisurely way in the company of other golfers. It will have the collateral advantage of having the Superintendent become well acquainted with a broad cross-section of the players in his club. In being a regular golfer, the Superintendent should have the continuing encouragement of club authorities.

2. **The Superintendent should periodically subject himself to criticism.**

Merely playing once a week is not enough. He should perhaps stay near the first tee awhile on Saturday morning or at some other time when there is heavy play. It will keep him from being a mystery man. Here he can hear suggestions and complaints and accept or answer them. This contact with the membership can have a great effect on selling the program of the Green Committee.

This procedure should not, in any way, be considered going over the head of the Golf Committee Chairman. In practically every club

there is a problem of rotation of authority pertaining to golf. The Golf Course Superintendent is, hopefully, a permanent professional employee. He must be loyal to a succession of bosses who are doing the job as an avocation. To be continuously effective, the Superintendent must be a tactful person. It is most important that he maintain close communication with a hard core of men of good will who know something about turf and the many problems he faces. Few Golf Chairmen will begrudge him these contacts as long as he continues to take his orders from constituted authority only.

3. **The Superintendent should be a Rules Expert.**

Before he can really be well rounded in his job, he must know the Rules of Golf, especially as they relate to the golf course. He must deal with such problems as boundary fences, stakes, ground under repair, ditches, the marking of obstructions, etc. By his attention to these matters, the Superintendent determines to a considerable extent the ease of interpretation of the Rules on his course.

4. **The Superintendent should know thoroughly the USGA Golf Handicap System.**

Although a great majority of Golf Course Superintendents do a very creditable job, there are few indeed who understand how to balance the placement of tees and holes according to the USGA Handicap System. The course rating, too, requires the cooperation of the Superintendent. In fact, the whole handicap system in a club can be put in serious jeopardy without his cooperation.

5. **The Superintendent should be insulted when his members play "winter rules."**

A prime Rule of Golf is that you play the course as you find it. As Mr. Richard S. Tufts, former President of the United States Golf Association, has said:

"Allowing a player to move a ball permits him to gain many ad-

vantages aside from improving his lie. He may improve the line of flight, obtain a better stance when his ball is near a depression or a hazard, or be able to remove a loose impediment which he could not otherwise lift without moving his ball. In other words, any modification of the Rules makes golf a different game.

"Furthermore, there is a certain pride and satisfaction in doing a thing right. Observance of the Rules may present greater problems in the play of certain shots, but the acceptance of the challenge is sure to increase the skill and ability of the player. Golf has always meant more to those who play the game right."

In the winter of 1960-'61, the author decided to follow these wise words, come what may. Living in an area where golf is played avidly the year round, though freezing weather and snow are frequent, he nevertheless played weekly and (with the exception of one round, in a pro-amateur tournament) never once used "winter rules." Rarely did he suffer any disadvantage when he was unable to get his foursome to "play them as they lie." This was true on a variety of courses, some of which might be considered to be "in bad shape." Though his poor record was in no way enhanced, it was certainly not harmed by his observance of the Rules.

It is easy to find in every club a hard core of golfers who, with a little persuasion, are willing to try abiding by the Rules. Surely members of national, state and local golf governing bodies should set the example.

It is a good question whether the Golf Course Superintendent can control his players to the extent that they do not play "winter rules," even if he gives them a perfect course. But there will be a hard core of these men in each club. And if all courses are in good shape, it may be that we will live to see the day when golf will be played in this country as it is meant to be played. When that day does come, much praise will be due the Golf Course Superintendent. How will he be able to reach this point? This is where he must employ every ounce of persuasion, ability, prudence and wise use of the money he has available to get results.

USGA FILM LIBRARY

"Second World Amateur Team Championship for Eisenhower Trophy" is a 17 minute film in full color of the competition at the Merion GC last fall which was won by the United States team. Ex-President Eisenhower is shown receiving the American and the Australian teams at the White House.

"Famous Golf Courses: Scotland," is an 18-minute film in full color. Famous holes were photographed at Troon, Prestwick, Carnoustie, St. Andrews, North Berwick and Muirfield.

"Walker Cup Highlights," is a 16-minute film tracing the early history and play for the first international golf trophy. Bob Jones, Francis Ouimet and other Walker Cup stars are shown. The latter half of the film is in color.

"St. Andrews, Cradle Of Golf," is a 14-minute, full color, 16mm travelogue of historic St. Andrews, Scotland, its Old Course and the Royal and Ancient Golf Club clubhouse.

"First World Amateur Team Championship for Eisenhower Trophy," is a 14-minute, full color, 16mm film of the first World Amateur Team Championship at St. Andrews. Twenty-nine countries compete for the Eisenhower Trophy.

"On the Green," a 17-minute, full color, 16mm presentation filmed at the Mid-Ocean Club, Bermuda, illustrates correct procedures under the Rules of Golf governing situations arising on the putting green.

"Golf's Longest Hour," a 16mm full color production of 17½ minutes, depicts the closing stages of the 1956 Open Championship. Filmed at the beautiful Oak Hill Country Club, Rochester, N.Y., it shows the eventual winner, Cary Middlecoff, set a target at which Ben Hogan, Julius Boros and Ted Kroll strive in vain to beat.

"Play Them As They Lie," a 16mm color production of 16½ minutes in which Johnny Farrell, Open Champion of 1928, acts as intermediary between Wilbur Mulligan, a beginner of unimpeachable integrity, and Joshua P. Slve, a past master in the art of breaking the Rules. The film was made at the Baltusrol Golf Club, Springfield, N. J., where Farrell is professional.

"Great Moments in Golf," lets the viewer see the many interesting exhibits in "Golf House," USGA headquarters in New York, and re-live golf triumphs of the past with many of the game's immortals. The film is a 16mm black and white production and runs 28 minutes.

"The Rules of Golf—Etiquette" stresses the importance of etiquette by portrayal of various violations of the code in the course of a family four-ball match. Ben Hogan appears in several scenes, and Robert T. Jones, Jr., makes the introductory statement. A 16mm color production of 17½ minutes.

The distribution of prints is handled by National Educational Films, Inc., 723 7th Ave., New York 19, N. Y., which produced the films in cooperation with the USGA. The rental is \$20 per film; \$35 for two; \$50 for three; \$60 for four and \$70 for five, in combination at the same time, including the cost of shipping prints to the renter.