

Superintendent's Headaches Never Disappear

*There are always
trace elements of
migraine due to turf
and labor deficiencies
and uncooperative weather*

Mention the word headache, within earshot of a supt. and you strike not only a sensitive but a responsive nerve. "Don't get us talking about our troubles," says one weathered turfman, "unless you're prepared to stay for lunch and, for that matter, maybe dinner. We have so many of them that most of us take a kind of perverse pride in them. We wouldn't know what to do if we didn't have them."

Numerous as they are, though, green-masters generally concede that their headaches continue to fall into three main classifications — those that stem from labor; those that have their roots in the soil and turf; and those that are caused by outside influences, such as weather.

Three veteran supts., recently queried by Golfdom as to new developments or new discoveries on the headache frontier, agreed that nobody has invented any troubles that haven't been previously encountered. But the old ones are still doing business at the same old stand and, if anything, they've multiplied.

Two of the three turfmen, Ray Gerber of Glen Oak CC in Glen Ellyn, Ill., and James A. Reid of the Suburban Club in Pikesville, Md., blame most of their woes on the labor situation. Burt R. Anderson of Augusta (Me.) CC says he'd be taking the coward's way out if he were to accuse the golfers, which sometimes is a temptation, but to be completely honest he has to concede that the weather easily out-prints them.

"To give you an example," says Burt,

"we were hit with four inches of snow last Oct. 26. It went away and came back a few times between that date and Christmas. But by the end of January our course ordinarily looks like the original ice-cap. It's usually late May or early June before all the holes at Augusta are ready for play."

Soil Hard to Dent

Anderson traces the source of Augusta's trouble to impermeable soil. Agronomists agree with him that perhaps 30 to 40 per cent of the course is covered with soil that has little or no penetrative quality. In recent years, the U. S. Soil Conservation Service has helped Burt attack the problem. Waterways and diversion ditches have been dug, drains opened and tile lines put in, but it is going to take a few more years and a considerable cash outlay before the entire course is reclaimed.

Subpar soil of this nature, of course, results in poor drainage. Every year a good deal of Augusta's fairway turf is lost because of spring sogginess and it is replenished with nothing more promising than annual bluegrass and knotweed. The latter is tolerated because it beats bare earth.

Those Maine Winters

A supt. can go along with this condition, says Anderson, hoping in time to correct it. But when he has subnormal drainage combined with Maine winters to contend with, that is something else. Alternate rain and snow and freezing and thawing through November and December usually give a good start on an ice

layer by the first of the year. Thirty days later greens and for that matter, practically the entire course, are locked in ice.

With circulation shut off from above, there has to be good drainage if the greens are to have a chance of surviving. Perhaps one of three putting surfaces at the Maine club don't have this quality. Having endured the ice condition for a number of years, Anderson feels that bentgrass tolerates having the air shut off during the winter and the waterlogging that comes with the spring thaw, much better than annual bluegrass. At least, the greens that are predominantly bent snap back much quicker, according to his observations.

Theory on Winterkill

Experience and observations have prompted another theory that Anderson feels should be considered by supts. in the Northern climes. "When the frost leaves the ground," he says, "the ice layer separates from the turf and starts to weaken or break up in spots. From this time until the snow departs is a critical period. If the ground is impermeable, or nearly so, water fills the space between the ice and earth and smothers the turf. If the soil can be penetrated, water passes off, allowing the air to circulate in this void and enabling the grass to survive. If at all possible," the Maine greenmaster concludes, "the ice should be removed from the greens during the critical period."

The last statement, of course, brings up the question of "How are you going to remove the ice?" That is one that has stumped the experts for a long time. There is no effective ice removal equipment available today and even if there were, getting it to the greensites would pose a difficult transportation problem. Until thawing conditions set in, it is almost impossible to get rid of the ice sheets that cover the greens.

About a year ago, Burt Anderson suggested to the local sheriff, a member of Augusta's green committee, that perhaps a gang of county prisoners could be brought out to the club and put to work removing ice from the greens.

"That," the sheriff rejoined, "probably would be classed as cruel and inhuman treatment. We'd never get away with it."

"I guess maybe he's right," Anderson agrees.

"I suppose," says the Augusta supt., putting his finger on the source of his headaches, "it all goes back to the weather. In time, we may get our drainage problem licked, notwithstanding Maine's



Fred J. D. MacKay (center), who has done so much for golf in Virginia since coming to the U.S. from Scotland 60 years ago, was cited by the Central Virginia Turfgrass Assn. in recognition of his service to the game. Dick Amidon (l), past president of the association, is seen presenting a silver bowl to Fred. At right is Alan Brodie, another native of Scotland who was a pro at Virginia clubs for many years. MacKay has played golf since 1887 but his age still is classed as Confidential.

impermeable soil. But the weather! What can we do about it? Import some from Florida in the depths of the winter? That's a thought."

The Labor Problem

In going into the labor situation, Ray Gerber looks at it from an overall viewpoint, while Jim Reid cites some specific cases in examining it, adding that these are typical of what a supt. has to repeatedly put up with, whether he's in the business for three or 30 years.

"In our locality," observes Ray Gerber, "it's almost impossible, except by accident, to get reliable men under prevailing conditions. Turnover is much too high and almost constant training of new men takes too much of our time. It may be necessary very soon for clubs to provide living quarters for maintenance department employees, as they do for others, if they are going to attract the right kind of help."

As for traffic, playing conditions and such things, Gerber says they aren't changing, but have changed. Many club officails don't realize it or recognize it, but the verb in this case is in the past tense. To back up this assertion, the Glen Ellyn turfman points to increased play throughout the day due to the clubs getting larger, to constantly swelling women's activity, and to the demands that increasingly turf wise golfers are making for what amounts

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to near-perfect course conditions.

"Every man's suddenly a turf expert," Gerber laughs. "And the women aren't far behind. I have no quarrel with that," Ray continues. "I'm paid to provide the best possible playing conditions. If I am able to deliver, people who recognize good maintenance appreciate it. If they didn't know a well maintained course from one that is poorly kept, whatever hard work I put in would go unnoticed.

"The new demand, though," the Glen Ellyn greenmaster goes on, "calls for the hiring of men who are not only capable of but willing to give a supt. a good day's work. To get these kind of employees means that more money is going to have to be paid in salaries and fringe benefits and, as I have suggested before, for providing some kind of housing arrangements. The trend to night maintenance, made necessary by the great increase in play, makes it imperative that we get the best men available."

Gerber clarifies the last remark by explaining that daytime maintenance with its many labor problems is bad enough. But the headaches, or perhaps the double-barrelled migraine is a better term, that will be encountered if it is necessary to switch completely to nightwork will multiply many times. The employee who just barely gets by in the daytime is going to be a constant source of trouble when he starts working on the night side.

Cites Case Histories

Jim Reid, the Maryland supt. who has distinguished himself as a speaker at several GCSA national conventions, cites two case histories in emphasizing the labor problem. He adds that if it were to stop at this number, he would be well satisfied. The trouble is, though, it goes on recurring, the monotony being tempered only by slight variations in the way in which employees prove to be inadequate.

Reid concedes that he presents the extremes in these histories, both of which will be immediately recognized by supts. everywhere as ones they could write, but at least they are fair examples.

Tough, Smart, Undependable

Jim refers to the main character in Case No. 1 as Jenkins. Jenkins was an almost perfect physical specimen. He wasn't unintelligent, by any means. He proved this by inventing fantastic excuses for not reporting for work on days after payday.

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For strength, nobody could touch Jenkins. He could lift the front end of an automobile with little exertion. He knew equipment and how to use it. His personality was good, but he was completely undependable.

Why was he kept on the payroll? When he worked he was easily the best man around. To keep Jenkins in line, it was necessary to deny him the privilege of working. If he came late too often, or missed too many days, he was sent home for a couple of days. If one thing made an impression on Jenkins, it was economic pressure. He couldn't afford too many payless days.

Given to Tears

In Case No. 2, Reid presents a fellow by the name of Harry. Harry had been on the payroll for 20 years. For sentimental reasons, the club insisted on keeping him on the job. Harry wasn't very smart. He stumbled through the day, never seeing anything except what he had been given specific instructions to do. He would stand holding a shovel from starting to quitting time unless told to do something else. When he was told that he had made a mistake or hadn't done a job the right way he would cry like a baby. But the next day all would be forgotten and Harry would go right on making the same old mistakes.

"In between these fellows," says Jim Reid, "I have had all kinds — those who don't follow instructions when it comes to cutting, syringing or treating greens,

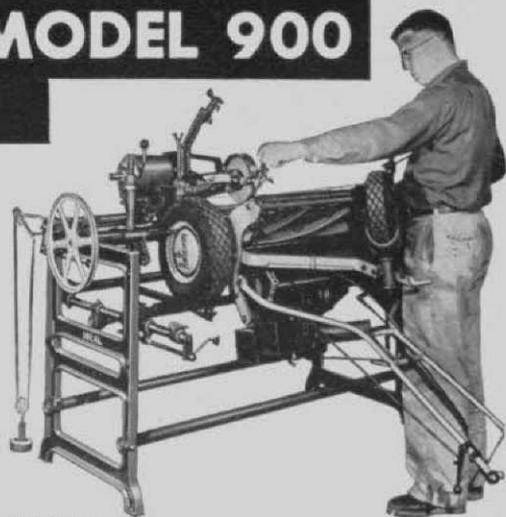
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fellows who wreck expensive equipment, men who are obstinate, etc., etc., etc. You look back on some of them and laugh at their antics, but remembering the headaches they caused you, you aren't so sure that you are amused."

32 Men Earn \$20,000 or More on 1962 Tourney Circuit

Final tabulations of 1962 PGA tour statistics shows that 32 players collected in excess of \$20,000 in official winnings. Eleven others topped the \$15,000 mark and a total of 50 men earned more than \$12,000. Nearly \$2,000,000 were shared in a record breaking year for the traveling troupe.

Arnold Palmer, the player of the year in 1962, won seven approved tournaments in amassing his \$81,448, which put him at the top of the money heap. He played 85 rounds and averaged 70.27 strokes per 18 holes to lead in the Vardon Trophy competition. Bill Casper, Jr., Gene Littler, Dave Ragan and Tony Lema were Arnold's closest pursuers in this division. Twenty-one men who played 80 rounds or more finished the season with stroke averages under 72.

Swinging Around Golf

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One of the honored pro pioneer names is on the pro roster again with Jack Mackie now being the pro at Westview CC, Miami . . . His father, Jack, Sr., was pres. (1920) and treas. (1923, 1928-39) of the PGA and for many years prior to his death, pro at Inwood CC in the NY Met dist. . . Dan and Isaac, uncles of Jack, Jr., were pros at top clubs in the NY Met area years ago . . . Four new courses designed by Harold Paddock, sr. will open this year . . . Griffiths Park, 18-hole semi-private that Paddock built south of Akron for Jack Griffiths, will open in spring . . . First 9 built for Joseph De Meritt at Morenci, Mich., due to open in spring . . . To be opened this summer are the 27 at Lima, O., built for Joseph Dugan and the Hinckley Hills CC 18 in Cleveland, O., district built for James Krush and associates.

Tony Longo goes to Kutscher's CC, Monticello, N. Y. as pro from Glen Oak CC, Clark Summit, Pa. . . In the winter, Longo is pro-mgr. of Lochraven CC, Tampa, Fla. . . Open second 9 of Columbia G&CC, Hudson, N. Y., this spring . . . Hal Purdy designed it . . . Eddie Brown