

## The Putting Green

Various aspects of the Putting Green were dealt with during the day-long Educational Program of the United States Golf Association's Green Section at the Biltmore Hotel in New York on January 24, 1964. The meeting was conducted on a lively note under the able chairmanship of Henry H. Russell, Chairman of the USGA Green Section Committee. Mr. Russell was assisted by Bill Gove of Miami, a widely-known sales consultant. Abstracts of remarks made by various speakers are presented here.

### IMPORTANCE OF THE PUTTING GREEN IN THE GAME

WILLIAM P. TURNESA, former USGA and British Amateur Champion

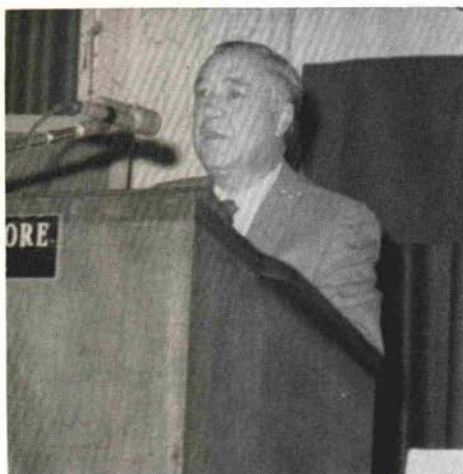
The putting green is the focal point of the game. In a perfect round of golf, 18 strokes are played from the tee, 18 from the fairway and 36 from the putting surface. Actually, most rounds of par or under are attained because the player used fewer than 36 putts.

Putting is a skill that may be gained by the high handicap golfer as well as by the scratch player. It would appear that the putting green serves to remove some of the advantage of highly skilled golfers over those of lesser capabilities. It is the approach shots

which tend to accent the differences in golfing skill.

It has been said that tournaments are won or lost on the putting green and an analysis of scoring frequently indicates that the winner did take fewer putts. However, the fewer putts are quite likely to be the result of skillful approaches, which get the ball close enough to the hole to permit holing out with one putt.

It is also true that lower scores have come about as a result of better putting surfaces. Greens that hold a well-



played shot and which permit a true roll of the ball give the player greater confidence.

Closely clipped, tight turf growing on a firm base is characteristic of many Scottish courses. Such a green is fast and requires a different type of approach. Despite the increased difficulty of approach, the green is fast and true and is seldom seriously marked by cleats or ball damage. The advantage of greens which are softer but more susceptible to injury, such as we have in the United States, is questionable.

*William P. Turnesa*

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## **COURSE MAINTENANCE CENTERS ON THE PUTTING GREEN**

W. H. BENGUEFIELD, Western Director, USGA Green Section

We would probably all agree that golf course maintenance *does* center on the putting green. So, to start off by being controversial, let's say that golf course maintenance *does not* center on the putting green! It centers on the golf course superintendent. The superintendent must have a plan and should know where his course is going. Like any progressive businessman, he must have a plan and give his program direction. Putting green improvement must start in the mind of the golf course superintendent.

Now, let's become mercenary. There isn't one of us who wouldn't like to make more money, and we can make more money. But first, we must become more valuable to our employer.

Our employers are golfers—right? And I defy you to show me a golfer who will not fall in love with an outstanding putting green. In fact, this is the golfer's weakness and, being mercenaries, we should exploit it to the highest. Let's never forget the fact that our reputation as golf course superintendents is made or lost by the putting greens we produce.

The Putting Green—that's the target; not just for today and tomorrow,

but for the professional lifetime of any superintendent. I wonder if you can identify the author of the following:

"In most parts of the country—the maintenance of a putting green in first-class condition represents the acme of accomplishment in grass culture. Good putting greens can be maintained only by constant, intelligent, and in most cases costly attention. To obtain a good putting green is one thing; to maintain it is another."

Any idea where these words came from?

Well, they are from another era; another time. Charles Piper and Russell Oakley wrote them in their book "Turf for Golf Courses," vintage 1917! In the 47 years since their writing, it's safe to say The Putting Green has wrecked the professional career of probably thousands of superintendents and perhaps as many green chairmen throughout the country. Conversely, good greens have been responsible for the "making" of all the outstanding and noted golf course superintendents today. The Putting Green can be your greatest asset. It also can be your greatest liability.