



FAIRWAYS AND THE ROUGH

Various aspects of Fairways And The Rough were dealt with during the day-long Conference on Golf Course Management of the United States Golf Association's Green Section at the Biltmore Hotel in New York City on January 29, 1965. The chairman of the meeting was Henry H. Russell, of Miami, Fla., Chairman of the USGA Green Section Committee. Abstracts of remarks made by various speakers are presented here.

IN THE FAIRWAY

WILLIAM C. CAMPBELL, 1964 USGA Amateur Champion

The primary concern of the golfer is that he be able to strike the ball cleanly. This implies that the grass must be mowed reasonably short.

Many professional golfers as well as amateurs swing in such a way that the clubhead travels in a flattened arc through the hitting area. There is much less chance for an error that would result in "blading" the ball or of striking the ground behind the ball. Such tactics are ill-suited to playing from high grass. When the ball nestles in the grass, a flattened swing through

the hitting area causes grass leaves to be caught on the face of the club prior to its striking the ball. The result may be a slowed swing, or a turned clubhead. If grass adheres to the face of the club, a poorly controlled shot may result.

When playing from higher cut grass on fairways, the player must adjust his swing so that grass will not be caught between the clubface and the ball. This means hitting down on the ball at a steeper angle. A slight error can, in such a case, cause "blading" of

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the ball or hitting behind it.

Rolling fairways which cause the player to make adjustments in his stance may affect a player's choice of club or the way he plays a shot. Such uneven stances are, however, a legitimate part of the game and the player should learn to make the necessary adjustments when playing on sloping terrain.

Rain, wind, or a combination of these factors cause the golfer to compensate. Rain and the resultant soft ground cuts down on the roll of the ball on fairways and the "heavy" moist air reduces distance in flight. Ordinarily

shots played from wet grass cannot be controlled so well. Wet grass is more likely to stick to the clubface. On the other hand, shots played to the green usually stop better.

Wind causes the player to attempt low shots which will be less affected. A low, controlled shot is very difficult to play from high grass. The most preferred fairway turf then is one which will support the ball so that it may be struck cleanly. The ball can be better controlled under all conditions. Tall grass creates uncertainty in the mind of the golfer and small errors in his swing are magnified.

IN THE ROUGH

DR. RAY KEEN, Professor of Horticulture, Kansas State University, and DR. MARVIN H. FERGUSON, Mid-Continent Director, USGA Green Section.

The rough is an area that is frequently neglected in golf course maintenance. The golfer who strays into the rough expects to find something less than good golfing conditions and therefore the natural vegetation is most often used.

Despite the fact that the rough is hopefully avoided and is considered a low maintenance area, the nature of this vegetation contributes significantly to the character of the golf course. Outstanding examples are Pine Valley, Clementon, N. J., where the golfer whose ball goes in the rough may be confronted with sand, shrubby vegetation, pine trees or even swamp land; Prairie Dunes, Hutchinson, Kans., where roughs consist of dunes covered with tall native grasses, forbs and yucca; Southern Hills, Tulsa, Okla., where scattered trees exist in the roughs but where the chief problem is posed by the native bermudagrass; if it is not mowed frequently, it creates a serious handicap to the golfer.

The nature of roughs also leaves a distinct impression upon the spectator.

Who can forget Augusta National when the blossoms of azaleas and camellias color the wooded roughs? Likewise, Chet Mendenhall's introduction of trees into the roughs at Mission Hills in Kansas provides a pleasing and ever-changing background for the game.

If you agree that the rough is important to the character of a course then we should make the point that the rough deserves more attention than it receives in the matter of long-term planning. The planting of trees and shrubs can be done during the "off season" when labor and time for supervision is available. The establishment of even a few trees and shrubs each year can change the appearance of a golf course in a few years.

Whenever a club embarks upon a tree and shrub planting program, there are a few guidelines which must be followed:

1. The plants must be well enough adapted to the environment to thrive without special care. Native plants probably should comprise most of the planting.