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*in a class
of their own*

BRUCE JAMIESON is the Director of Agronomy for the PGA European Tour

* * *

In an interview
with John
Lelean on the
Algarve he
discusses the
Tour's plans for
tournament
courses

QUESTION...What is your role as the PGA European Tour Director of Agronomy?

ANSWER...It is rather a hard question to answer. Part of my role is to co-ordinate the direction of the tour, relating to the presentation of golf courses. Apart from organising and co-ordinating this conference, my role is to visit clubs involved with tournament events where there is a need to raise the standards over and above what they can normally achieve, not that I am the only person able to do that. Richard Stillwell our greenkeeping consultant is probably the best person to do that on a short term basis.

We used to look for a height of cut, but this is now recognised as totally impracticable as certain grasses will not survive the strain of being cut below 3mm. The height of cut has very little relevance to the speed of the green. (As Barry Carter told the conference he cut to 1.25mm and produced a stipmeter reading of 13 feet.) At Valderama for the Volvo Masters, the cut was 3.25mm to achieve a reading of 11.1 on the first day of practice of the tournament, to 11.2 on the final day. Weather conditions, fertilizer applications, underlying thatch, verticutting, the new machinery and cultural practices all play a significant part in the production of green speeds for the three days of a tournament.

QUESTION...How many staff do you have as Director of Agronomy?

ANSWER...That's easy, there is Richard and Roger Stillwell as consultant greenkeepers, Lesley Kilpin, my secretary and me. Through the season, we visit most tournament courses to give advice when necessary.

QUESTION...This is a relatively new appointment for you Bruce, what was your previous position?

ANSWER...I was a Tournament Administrator, concentrating on the rules exclusively for six months and now could discuss the rules of golf with anybody. The rules are laid down by the R & A, but they are subject to interpretation.

Later I became interested in banner-ing, sighting of TV camera points and the many other aspects involved in presenting a tournament and from there, with my experience in greenkeeping, became involved in the course presentation document, issued as a guide to greenstaff. The guide has been in existence for many years, though it has been updated on numerous occasions. I am now re-writing it.

QUESTION...How much in advance of a tournament would you make the initial visit to a course?

ANSWER...Let's take for example Las Brisas where they will be staging the Mediterranean Open in March this year. We have used the course before for the World Cup, but I will be going in January, because they had eight and a half inches of rain in one day, which turned a lovely golf course with a river running through, to a river the width of the course. It was so bad that our scoreboard Volvo truck is still stuck up to its axles on the side of the practice ground.

QUESTION...Have you found a shortage of equipment on tournament courses?

ANSWER...Certainly not on the Continent, where the equipment is very up to date and at a high standard and they have the people to use it. All tournament courses are well equipped with all the necessary grass cutting machinery, they appreciate the need for the correct maintenance. I usually inspect machinery as part and parcel of the advisory visit.

QUESTION...What involvement do you have with pre-tournament maintenance programmes?

ANSWER...Well I have worked out long and short term programmes for golf courses for the past eight years prior to joining the Tour.

If a course is in good conditions it can be brought to tournament standard within four weeks.

QUESTION...Returning to the course presentation document you mentioned you were updating, what are the major changes you may be contemplating?

ANSWER...One of the big changes will relate to the previous stipulated height of cut. Now we will be recommending a stipmeter greenspeed of between 9 1/2 to 10 1/2 feet. We will be aiming for a similar speed from the practice round to the final day.

Fertiliser applications a week or so prior to the event can lead to a growth flush, particularly if it rains. This can lead to a much slower greenspeed during the afternoon.

On the final day, the best players go out last in the afternoon and they are entitled to an examination paper at least equal to those who tee off earlier. We will now recommend that fertilisers should not be applied less than four weeks before a tournament.

QUESTION...What sort of complaints do you receive from tournament golfers?

PROFILE



Bruce Jamieson is the Director of Agronomy for the PGA European Tour. The son of the professional at Turnberry, his life has been dominated by the game of golf since he first caddied at the age of 12. He worked on the course as a part time greenkeeper until leaving school at 17, with not unreasonable academic qualifications and then decided that the life he wanted was a career in turf management, with a leaning towards golf.

Taking the art of greenkeeping seriously, he obtained the three stage levels of his City and Guild Certificate at Elmwood College, most with distinctions.

In October 1979 he joined the greenstaff at Sunningdale for seven months, before returning to Turnberry as second assistant, moving on to Powfoot as Head Greenkeeper in November 1980.

With a desire to broaden his horizons still further, Bruce "emigrated" to South Wales in January 1983 to take the position of Course Manager at Royal Porthcawl, where his thirst for knowledge motivated him into further studies of turf culture as well as Employment Law and Industrial Relations, through the Institute of Industrial Management.

During this time he also became an examiner for the NPTC in the use of Pesticides on golf courses.

The Welsh club recognizing his drive to gain experience also allowed him the scope to expand his knowledge through project work with other courses in South Wales, an opportunity for which he holds Royal Porthcawl in high regard. At the end of June 1988 he joined the administration staff of the PGA Tour, after preparing his course for the Amateur Championships. Last July he was appointed to his present position of Director of Agronomy.

Aged 32, married for eight years, he lives near Basingstoke, but spends much of his working life away from home, flying, driving and putting in up to 14 hours a day during the three days of a tournament.

ANSWER...They make exactly the same complaints as any golfer, amateur or professional. If we have a specific complaint from a number of players then obviously we will take the matter up.

QUESTION...What new courses will be played this year?

ANSWER...Well, one will be St. Mellion, the championship course designed by Jack Nicklaus, where I have already been and met David Webb, Roy Battishall and the course owners Hermon and Martin Bond.

At a 9.30am general discussion with the staging manager Richard Brown, we talked about crowd movement from the 7th to the 9th fairway round the back of the eighth green and the need for a path construction.

"You want it", said Martin Bond "and you shall have it". By 2.00pm, two JCB's operated by real experts, were on the course digging out the pathway. This is the sort of commitment that the PGA European Tour appreciate. It does not affect the design or playability of the course.

We also have the Catalan Open in Catalonia this year which although just in France straddles the border with Spain.

Other new venues are likely to be announced shortly, though we are reluctant to take on any new venues which do not come up to scratch, which is one of the reasons for this gathering at Penina.

QUESTION...Do you insist on the closure of a course prior to the start of an event?

ANSWER...Not at all. It is up to the course management how they organise their tournament preparation. We know some like Woburn, Valderrama, Turnberry and Quinto do Lago where they close the course prior to the event. Quinto do Lago has 3 sets of 9 holes, and this enables them to close down 9 holes at a time for maintenance.

QUESTION...Is there a likelihood of the PGA Tour building their own courses similar to the development in the USA by the USPGA Tour?

ANSWER...Yes, we have plans afoot for developments in England and Spain. We hope to develop European Tour Clubs in each of the countries where the Tour visits. We envisage that these will be designed and constructed with our members, sponsors and spectators in mind. It is our intention that these new venues become the backbone of Tour venues over the next two decades.

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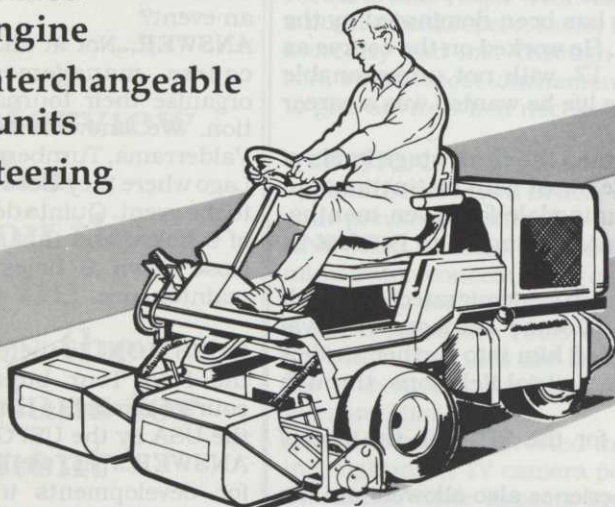
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GREENSTAR Liquid Iron
GREEN KLEEN Oil spill treatment
TURFACE Soil amendment

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TOPICAL TURF TIPS

The Golf Course problem page, gives expert advice to management problems

QUESTION

We have a number of "rights of way" across our golf course, used mainly by ramblers, joggers and dog walkers. It would not be so bad if they kept to the path, but so many seem to think they have a right to wander all over the course. The dog owners in particular view an open fairway as the moment to let the animal off the leash.

Is there any action we can take?

ANSWER

Not a lot. The law of trespass is hardly enforceable as it has to be proved that damage is caused, such as destroying growing crops. This would be virtually impossible to sustain in a court of law relating to walking on grass.

It would be possible to take out an injunction on a persistent offender such as a jogger who regularly runs off the path through golfers on a Sunday morning, but it is expensive and it only applies to the person you take action against. If his mates take up the cudgels against the club, you are back where you started.

To minimise the problem, mark the paths with tape or arrows set in the turf, mow out a path strip where it crosses a fairway and site some appropriate notices at entrance points. It is a matter of learning to live with the neighbours.

QUESTION

Following a very dry summer, earthworms have emerged in huge

numbers on parts of the fairway and this is particularly noticeable where we have cut out some temporary greens on approaches and aprons. Total chemical control is very expensive, is there any other method we can use to stop worm casting?

ANSWER

A question published in the October issue referred to worms in a query relating to the use of chlordane. This product can still be used on golf greens for the next two years, but is banned for large scale areas such as fairways.

Experimental work at the Sports Turf Research Institute has shown that an application of sulphate of iron at a rate of between 4 and 8 g/sq.m has inhibited earthworm casting for 2 to 3 weeks. Worms do not like an acidified turf and the sulphate of iron has shown it is a way to keep them away from the surface.

Not only are worm castings unsightly, but they are the ideal medium as a seed bed for weeds. Not to take action now could produce other problems later in the year.

QUESTION

As the course manager for a municipal golf course could I query the answer you gave in September regarding the "grandfather clause" relating to the spraying of chemicals. I sent the staff on a chemical spraying course this year only to find that it had been conducted by people who

were not certified to give the instruction. This resulted in a certificate of attendance only and not a certificate of competence. As they were all born before 31st December 1964, can they continue back-pack and tractor mounted spraying?

ANSWER

We stick by the original answer that those over 25 can spray, but they must be supervised by a certificate holder. That is within sight and sound and under the certificate holder's personal supervision.

An attendance at a course, even one deemed to be given by those not certified to teach, is better than no course at all. The Pesticide Legislation Act, like so many government guidelines is open to differing interpretations. The crunch comes if one of your uncertified staff has an accident, either to himself, another, or the environment. Unless you are fire-proof and can prove it, the results can be expensive or maybe even criminal.

Ignorance of the law is not a defence. As for being innocent until proved guilty - forget it. Our advice is ensure that you fully understand your obligations under the Act and have complied with all the recommendations.

Address your queries to:- The Editor, The Golf Course, 129a High Street, Dovercourt, Harwich, Essex. CO12 3AX

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Fertilizers for golf courses

ICI DEVELOP LONGLIFE

When any company introduces a new range of fertilizers to the sports, amenity and landscape market it usually generates a level of interest, however when that company is ICI, one of the worlds largest companies, that interest must attract major attention. So it was when in 1988 ICI Professional Products acquired the marketing rights for the Longlife range of turf fertilizers. The Longlife range has changed significantly in terms of analysis since ICI took over the marketing role from their subsidiary company SAI. As the needs of the grass plant changes in light of new cultivars, management practices and increased wear and tear on the turf, fertilizer suppliers must adapt the analysis of their fertilizer to suit these changes. ICI technical staff reviewed current research and soil analysis data from a wide range of turf situations, whilst seeking the views of experienced greenkeepers and groundsmen.

The result of these investigations has enabled ICI to bring together a range of products to suit all these different needs. In particular ICI identified the need for a zero phosphate fertilizer and this is why Finegreen NK is a key part of their fine turf range.

The Longlife range now consists of four products for fine turf and four for sports fields. All the products contain in addition to the nutrients shown, a combination of trace elements derived from seaweed, which provides a range of organic nutrients.

"One of the major reasons why the Longlife range has made such an impact in the UK market is the incorporation of the unique nitrification inhibitor Didin" states Patrick Goldsworthy, ICI's Products Technical Manager. "Nitrogen in the soil is subject to a number of transformations: one of the key processes is nitrification. This involves the relatively rapid oxidation of ammonium (eg ammonium sulphate) into nitrate by soil bacteria. In the absence of a nitrification inhibitor, grass will use nitrate as its prime nitrogen source. However, the grass plant can absorb nitrogen in both the nitrate and ammonium forms; but the ammonium form, which is less prone to leaching, is used more slowly by the grass plant resulting in a reduced flush and a longer period of growth.

By including the nitrification inhibitor 'Didin' in their fertilizers ICI ensure

FERTILIZERS FOR GOLF COURSES

The sensible use of fertilizers to counter wear from an increasing number of rounds of golf throughout the winter and summer is a part of the cultural work programme for every golf course.

Scientific soil analysis, must be an essential preliminary to any fertilizer application scheme, regardless of the overall claims or recommendations of any supplier.

The established companies all offer such a service, mostly without charge and there is also an independent laboratory testing service through the STRI, also free to contributing members.

The Golf Course has invited a number of leading firms supplying fertilizers to golf courses to contribute details of the latest developments in this field.

that the majority of nitrogen present in the rooting zone is in the ammonium form. This results in a prolonged feed from one application and a more efficient use of nitrogen due to less leaching.

Both IBDU and Didin were available, but we considered that Didin offered many advantages over IBDU.

Didin activity is temperature dependant. As temperature rises and the turf grows more rapidly. Didin releases nitrogen over a period which parallels the growth patterns of the plant. Didin is economically priced, which allows Longlife to be extremely competitive not only against IBDU slow release products, but also when com-

pared with standard conventional fertilizers. It also significantly reduces nitrate leaching.

Research into the activity of Didin is continuing. Originally developed by SKW Trotsberg of West Germany, large user trials in agriculture within the UK and exhaustive laboratory tests on nitrate leaching have been undertaken. Didin is under a long term trials programme at the Sports Turf Research Institute and preliminary results have shown significant differences with comparable products, included in the trials.

The granule itself is of high quality with excellent spreadability. Both the size of the granule and its quick breakdown (due to its organic-based formulation) will ensure minimal mower pickup. An additional benefit is that the mini-granules will not blow away as can be the case with powder fertilizers. Companies like ICI are continually watching what is happening at grass root level. Quality and evenness of application is as important as the quality of the product. There is an increasing need for high quality spreaders and the greenkeeper should be prepared to pay extra for the best spreader that performs the task and lasts, rather than "buy today throw away tomorrow", current practice.

There will be a general need for more nitrogen as increased wear and tear takes its toll on turf regeneration and as sand green construction takes place. However, this nitrogen release must be controlled by inhibitors such as 'Didin'.

Nitrate leaching will also have a high profile in the turf industry following concerns expressed by the "green" movement 'Didin' reduces leaching.



FISONS PUT WIMBLEDON EXPERIENCE TO GOOD USE

This spring will be the first opportunity for greenkeepers to try the new Fisons Greenmaster Zero Phosphate fine turf fertilizer. This product was developed and first used at the most famous area of fine turf in the world. The all England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club, Wimbledon.

Following this venture, Fisons Horticulture and Wimbledon have reached agreement to recognise the product's origins across the whole turfcare range. The need for a fertilizer of this particular formulation (14.0.7) at Wimbledon was established during discussions between Fisons Professional Horticulture turfcare adviser, Keith McKee, and the head groundsman, Jim Thorn. Between them, they developed a renovation programme to bring the courts back to their former quality after the problems of the 1988 championships.

Fisons first manufactured the 14.0.7 fertilizer as a special order for Wimbledon. Seeing its successful performance publicly confirmed by the extremely good playing quality of the courts during the 1989 championship. Now Fisons are making it available to the rest of the industry.

The introduction of Greenmaster Zero



Phosphate brings the number of formulations in the range of seven. This increases the flexibility of the Greenmaster range in use and further helps meet the needs of the professional turf manager.

Answering questions at a recent Turfcare Seminar Keith McKee returned to the thorny question of slow release fertilizers.

He said, Fisons Levington Research Station has carried out more research in connection with fine turf into the product IBDU (isobutylidene diurea) than anybody else in the country.

Work first started in 1967 and during

trials, interesting points have arisen. The size of the IBDU granule was very important. If it is too large, it gets mown off and if too small, it releases too quickly. This is why the granule size in Fisons Greenmaster Super N is 0.6-1.7 mm, not too large and not too small.

Fertilizers containing 100% IBDU has a very slow start up rate. In fact, it can appear for some weeks that no fertilizer has been applied at all.

He added that very small amounts of IBDU in a mix are really a waste of money as they serve no useful purpose. "Our trials and experience show

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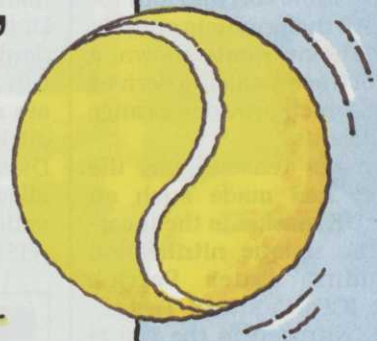
Last year the All England Lawn Tennis & Croquet Club Wimbledon chose the two newest members of the Greenmaster team for the Wimbledon championship courts. The application of Zero Phosphate for turf preparation pre-tournament and Turf Tonic as a late summer feeding afterwards has proved an ideal combination, highly commended by Jim Thorn, Head Groundsman.

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