

Today we are suggesting the establishment of new mowing patterns and heights that reduce the acreage which must be cut frequently. This is in line with the time tested philosophy of the Scots who developed the game from its early beginnings to the game we recognize today. Golf will gradually move back to a more "natural" game; one which takes advantage of native materials and relies less on wall-to-wall turf.

Reducing the acreage that must be mowed frequently results in fewer manpower hours, less new equipment being required, and reduced costs for water, electric power, fertilizer, chemicals, and other maintenance requirements.

On existing courses, indiscriminate changes in mowing patterns without taking into account the aesthetic and strategic factors would be risky at best. The golf course architect, superintendent, and golf professional can present a team recommendation that will take into consideration all of the facets of the game.

By returning roughs to the game we encourage the golfer to sharpen his skills. We suggest an intermediate rough, also, which would be a minor, but effective, penalty of perhaps a half stroke. This intermediate rough might extend from ten feet to fifty feet from the edge of the fairway depending upon the strategy of the hole. It could be allowed to run for 100 to 150 yards in front of the teeing areas, and at the green it could be allowed to surround the traps and the green itself with the exception of a mowed collar area.

Fairways would basically be located in the landing areas of par-4 and par-5 holes with the lengths, widths and outlines being determined to serve golfers of varying abilities. Strategic mowing patterns can be used on straight-away holes as well as on doglegs.

Heights of cut obviously will vary depending upon the types of grass, growing conditions, the amount of play the course receives, and geographic locations. Value judgments will be needed.

Intermediate roughs should be composed of a wide variety of native grasses that are adapted to less maintenance, water, and fertilizer. Perhaps some of these grasses have been forced out over the years. Any changes on existing courses are not something which we should expect to be done suddenly, but would be carried out over a period of years.

Deep roughs of native grasses should be established beyond the intermediate roughs. Neither the intermediate or deep rough needs to be irrigated extensively; only enough to keep the native grasses established.

It becomes evident that programming of the irrigation system must be revised on existing courses to deliver the water patterns required. Irrigation design on new courses will be done in an entirely different manner than the wall-to-wall method.

Those of us who have seen and studied the old Scottish courses from St. Andrews to Muirfield, Troon, and Dornich are excited that golf course architecture appears to be returning to the past. It probably will not complete the cycle, and in fact, I do not think we want to go that far. But I do think the game will become more interesting as we sharpen our skills to the requirements of target golf.

Jack Snyder, President
American Society of Golf Course Architects

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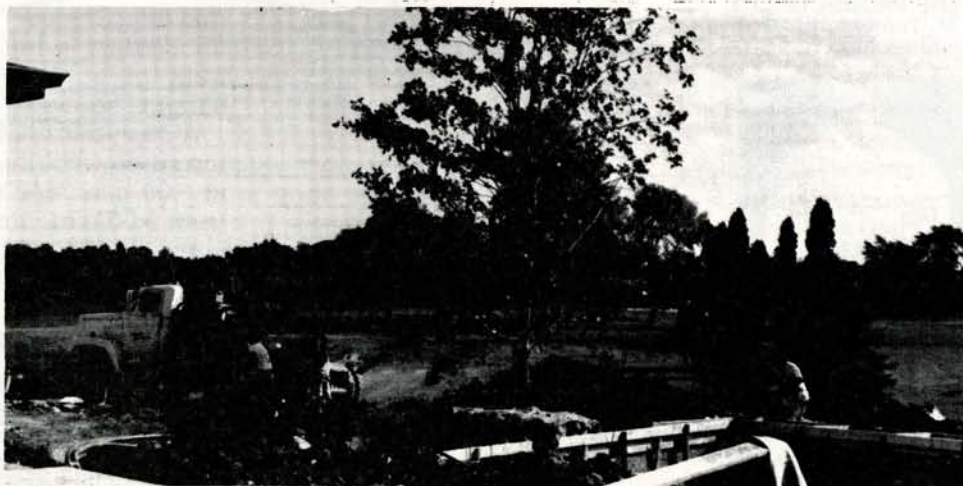
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