

Reel Maintenance

BY JOE ONDO, CGCS

Greensmower reels are checked twice a week and lapped once a week during the bermuda growing season. Reels are checked and lapped every other day for the first two weeks after seed has germinated and twice a week after seed is up and going good.

Our mechanic usually mows nine greens twice a week. We feel it gives him a chance to see how the mower is performing that week, and we can use him to fill in for someone who is sick or on vacation at certain times of the year.

Being a public golf course, we don't do much extra topdressing other than at aerification time, which we usually do three times — in the late spring, early summer and fall.

After topdressing, reels are usually

raised 1/16 inch and greens are skipped for a couple of days, until they are mowed again and lowered back, usually, to 5/32" after about a week. Instead of topdressing, greens are verticut lightly more often (every week to ten days) or greens are double cut two or three times a week.

We are not looking for fast speeds, just smooth and consistent ones for our customers.

All these practices are during transition, summer, and into the fall before overseeding. Any grinding for green and tee-mowers is usually done about a week after topdressing or a week before overseeding dates.

Greens (5/32") are mowed daily except after topdressing and the first week of overseeding. Tees (7/16") are mowed three times a week. Fairways (3/4") are

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mowed three times a week during spring until Primo is sprayed, then we go to twice a week during late spring, summer and fall, and back to three times until daylight savings ends.

At that time it is usually done once a week to clean up divots until springtime.

The rough and banks are usually mowed once a week at 1 1/4". Bunkers, fences and the clubhouse area is Flymo work weekly.

Lakes and canals are done about every three weeks unless Primo is used. Then it is on an as needed basis.

Heights of cut pretty much stay the same on a yearly basis except the greens, which are raised to 1/4" during seeding and gradually lowered until we reach 5/32".

We have two Toro Greensmasters and two Jacobsen Greensking IVs for tees, collars, approaches, some small par 3 fairways, the practice area and the clubhouse area. One Toro Hydraulic Seven Gang is used for fairways—we can change height of cut quickly and mow banks and

some rough if needed when we get behind.

There's one Toro Parkmaster Seven Gang with ground driven reels for roughs and banks. We feel that we don't have enough bunkers (22) and miscellaneous areas for a trim mower, so Flymos and string trimmers do all that work.

We have four full-time employees, one part-time (20 hours per week), one mechanic and one landscape person, plus myself, on our crew. Everyone is mowing or changing cups on Monday, Wednesday and Friday so Tuesday and Thursday are days we use to spike, verticut, spray, fertilize and do other maintenance work.

Every full-time person usually has to work one day on the weekend unless we need more for a shotgun start or special tournament.

After morning work, bunker work, Flymo work, mowing banks and roughs is done from #18 backwards, so we only bother one group of players at a time. This schedule gives the mechanic time in the morning to do maintenance on the

big equipment and the afternoon time for the smaller pieces.

Clippings are caught on greens and tees, collars and approaches and scattered in the rough. Fairways that leave clippings early are usually removed later, or the operator starts later in the morning. This is not a problem when we use Primo.

The green mowing pattern is changed daily, while tees, collars, approaches and par 3 overseeded areas are striped during the season. Fairways are not striped but changed from right-to-left to left-to-right every other time.

If all we had to do was fertilize and mow grass here at Winter Pines, it wouldn't be too bad with our crew. But throw in all the curve balls Mother Nature has in store for us at times, and it can get pretty hectic. As with any operation, we have made changes and fine-tuned our schedule during the 17 1/2 years I've been here, and we will continue to do so in the years to come.

'Detailing' the golf course

BY LARRY DREW
AND RON SCHURK

Willoughby, G.C.

Two men are assigned to course grooming. They are the "detailers." One tends the front nine, one the back nine, and they team up to care for the driving range.

Each man has a golf cart equipped with a sand bucket for divots, a weedeater, loppers, pruning shears, hedge clippers, a blower, a machete, a weedpuller, a rake and a ten-gallon spray tank.

They also pull a small trailer to collect debris, etc.



Fully equipped Detail cart with long time employee, Larry Drew. Photo by Kevin Downing.