

Creeping Bent Fairways Need Rough Treatment

By O. J. NOER

The turf on the best watered fairways in the North is all, or in large part, bent grass. Eventually the creeping types predominate and may become the only kind of permanent grass. Then frequent close cutting is necessary to keep a tight turf which is pleasing to play.

For fifteen years the watered bent fairways at Milwaukee Country Club were among the best on this continent. Except during the World War, they were cut three times a week at one-half inch or less, and were fertilized generously each fall.

During a bad hot spell in August, 1947, localized dry spots developed in the turf on sloping fairways facing the south. The spots were exactly like similar ones so common on many greens with heavily matted turf. The grass turned blue first, and showed footprints badly. Withering and death followed, leaving ugly spots. Examination disclosed a heavy surface mat of turf, with an accumulation of partially decayed stems and leaves of one-half to one inch thickness. The root system was very shallow and very inadequate in amount. Wilting occurred despite an adequate quantity of soil moisture below the top inch or so. Roots were too shallow and capillary movement upwards too slow for grass to use it. Light watering before noon and again in mid-afternoon would have kept the grass green and prevented loss of turf. Frequent light daytime watering was impossible because of the acreage involved, and the inability of the old water system to apply water quickly over large areas.

Fairways started to become green in the spring of 1948, but then the grass on the slopes facing into the direction of the prevailing winds turned brown and looked very dead. There was very little snow; the weather was dry and windy with no rain until late May or early June. It was a bad spring for evergreens also, they were severely windburned. The turf was still without a deep and extensive enough root

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(1) Localized dry spot injury on a watered creeping bent fairway, facing South. The turf was heavily matted and shallow rooted. (2) Each September these creeping bent fairways are aerified to thin the mat and to promote the penetration of air and water into the soil. Aerification develops a deeper root system. (3) The surface of the fairway looks like this immediately after aerifying. (4) Soon after aerifying, a West Point Links Mat is used in the opposite direction to crumble the soil plugs. The crumbled soil acts as a top-dressing.

