



NOER & GRAU'S

## Turf Roundup for 1958

### Weather, Water, Worry Main Ingredients in Turf Picture

By O. J. Noer

THE title weather, water and worry would have been most appropriate for the 1958 turf roundup in many parts of the U. S. and Canada. The winter was bad in most of the southeastern section and there was loss of Bermudagrass in the belt from Kansas City to Philadelphia. Some bent turf was injured by early spring desiccation. In northern Quebec Province a thaw and warm spell in late winter, followed by snow and freezing weather, caused injury to bent grass greens. During the summer heavy rains in many areas played havoc with greens. Flooding in fairways was bad enough to cause browning and more or less serious damage to the grass. New construction was delayed because of overly wet soil. In Quebec Province seeding in some new courses can't be done this fall which means a season's delay in starting play.

#### South Hard Hit

Injury to Bermudagrass and overseedings of rye for winter play was very severe throughout the South extending beyond mid-Florida. There was loss of common Bermuda and of the fine textured grasses including Tifgreen (328). On one course in Atlanta with dual greens, a covering of pine needle straw enabled Tifgreen to survive without a blemish. It was necessary to replant the uncovered ones.

Parts of two Tifgreen greens in Atlanta were overseeded with seaside bent and red top. Although the seeding rate was a trifle scant, this combination provided the best

putting surface for winter play. The bent persisted long after the rye grass in the other part of the green was gone. With care it could have survived the summer. By early summer there was very little Tifgreen in evidence in these two greens. It would not be fair to place the entire blame upon the bent grass-red top used for winter play because the same thing happened on other Tifgreens and on common Bermuda greens overseeded with rye grass.

The Seaside bent-red top combination should be a good one for use on fine textured Bermuda greens. It has performed well at El Paso CC and was good in the trial at Atlanta. The seeding rate should be 4 to 5 lbs. of Seaside and 2 to 3 lbs. of red top seed per 1,000 sq. ft. Success depends upon two or three crosswise rakings or verticutting to remove surplus grass. Close mowing with a greens mower should follow each raking or verticutting. Seed must make contact with soil and should not be placed in a mat of thatched turf where it will sprout and die. The seed should be bulked with enough dry material (sand, activated sludge, topdressing) so seeding with a cyclone seeder can be done in 3 to 4 directions. This is the way to insure uniform cover.

#### Seed Can Be Smothered

After seeding, it is advisable to topdress lightly with  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a yard of material to 5000 sq. ft. More than that may smother the small sized seed. If more dressing is needed to smooth the putting surface it should be applied after verticutting. Seeding should be on top of it. Matting, with a flexible steel mat should follow either

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method. Surfaces should be kept moist by light hand syringing until grass seedlings become well rooted. In places where damping-off is a recurring possibility it would be well to use an appropriate fungicide before seeding.

The Seaside bent-red top combination is better than either alone. Both germinate equally fast. Seaside is slower to make cover. The red top provides the putting surface during late fall and early winter. Seaside is at its best in late winter up to early summer.

There was loss of U-3 and other strains of Bermuda in the transition belt from Kansas City to Philadelphia. It created uncertainty about the wisdom of using this grass in the area. Kill was as bad in Ala., Ga. and the Carolinas. There they will not turn to something else. Partial loss during one season should not condemn any grass. That course is justified only where loss occurs every year or is likely every second to fifth year.

### **Nashville Goes to Bent**

The creeping bent grass greens at Richland CC in Nashville, Tenn. were good all year. They have been that way for 6 years. Charles Danner's novel and easy way to prevent Bermuda encroachment into bent greens with the edger on a Ryan sod cut has been described and illustrated in the "Turf Tips" of *Golfdom* (Feb., 1958, p. 32) so there is no point in repeating here. Play at Richland by members of other clubs was heavy during the spring transition period from winter grass to Bermuda. The other bent grass greens in Nashville also were good. As a result, Belle Meade decided to go all the way and switch to bent greens. When completed there will be three courses in Nashville with bent greens.

The Penncross bent greens at Cherokee in Atlanta came through the summer exceptionally well even though the top soil mix was poorly done. There was no rain of consequence during July and Aug. which was a big help to Cherokee. East Lake CC in Atlanta has started to build two bent grass greens and plans to have them ready for play in 1959. They will seed with Penncross because of its good performance at Cherokee.

At the new Royal Montreal course on Isle Bizard, Penncross was seeded on most of the greens at 1 lb. per 1000 sq. ft. They were seeded in the fall of 1957 and were ready for play in June, 1958. The cover of

turf was excellent by that time. There was a mild attack of brownpatch during the warm wet spell of weather in early Sept. The attack was not the result of over-nitrogen feeding. The greens got no fertilizer all summer. In late Sept., slight puffiness of the turf was noticeable on some of the greens which had not been put into play.

### **Gives Good Control**

Chlordane gave good control of goosegrass (silver crab) in test areas in Okla. and Ga. when used as pre-emergence herbicides in early spring. Rates in the range of 60 to 80 lbs. per acre of actual chlordane appeared best, with the heavier rate having a slight edge. At present cost of material, chlordane is not apt to be used generally on fairways. Its use could be justified on tees and in the aprons and fringes of greens.

Control of dallisgrass and crabgrass has been excellent in the South with disodium methyl arsonate, or sodium arsenite, in combination with 2,4-D. For best results the addition of a little good quality wetting agent is desirable. Some prefer a sodium dimethyl arsonate formulation for everything because there is less discoloration, despite the fact that sodium arsenite is very much cheaper. Others use sodium arsenite with 2,4-D on fairways. On greens and tees they substitute the disodium methyl arsonate combination with 2,4-D.

Sometimes weed control is attempted on Southern fairways by burning with soluble fertilizers such as ammonium nitrate or ammonium sulfate without watering in afterwards. Kill of hen bit and other winter weeds is good. But this scorched earth method is a good way to help hot weather grass-like weeds. The fertilizer defoliates the Bermuda, and before it can recover, opens the way for heavy infestation of crabgrass, goosegrass and possibly dallisgrass. The better plan is to use fertilizer for its intended purpose which is to encourage growth of desirable grasses and then apply an appropriate herbicide if needed to check or stop growth of weeds.

### **Loss in Winter**

Mention has been made of Bermuda-grass winterkill in the intermediate belt. Loss seemed most serious on tees. Even in normal winters, loss will occur wherever play on dormant Bermuda is heavy. If an alternate teeing area of cool season grass is unavailable for winter use the markers can be kept up front and worn turf re-

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placed from a nursery in late spring or early summer.

In early spring there was some desiccation injury to the bentgrass on greens and fairways in many parts of the intermediate and northern sections. After that some areas were dry and others were overly wet. The heavy, drenching rains came throughout the summer and were followed frequently by hot, humid weather. This combination played havoc.

Iron chlorosis was prevalent and especially bad following heavy rains. Frequently, injury from an iron deficiency was not suspected because ferrous sulphate applications had been routine every 10 to 14 days. In normal weather this suffices, but there can be iron chlorosis just the same after a drenching rain. Then it is wise to apply a little extra ferrous sulfate at the first sign of yellowing after a downpour.

This summer a few supts. questioned the wisdom of using wetting agents. They claimed greens remained overly wet and would not dry out after heavy rains. Controlled testing is needed before this observation can be accepted as a fact.

To be concluded in January, 1959.

## Grau's Roundup

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the search for the one that has "everything."

Seaside continues to be planted on many new courses in the face of overwhelming evidence of the superiority of many other bents.

Merion blue continues to grow in favor for tees, fairways, athletic fields and lawns in spite of its high N requirement and susceptibility to rust. The answer seems to be that Merion produces better turf and that the high fertility required is a small price to pay for perfection. Rust ceases to be a problem when Merion is adequately fertilized. Fewer mistakes are being made today by applying too much water on Merion. One sure way to bring bent and Poa into Merion turf is to overwater it. Merion deserves to be treated like a baby — "Feed it and keep it dry!"

Bermudagrasses are being planted on many areas where Bermuda once would have been considered a weed. Each year more fairways, tees and lawns are converted to Bermuda. U-3 is widespread and a favorite by virtue of its performance. Sunturf went backwards during the past