

New Course Maintenance

An Architect Looks at—

- Mowing Practices
- Moisture Problems
- Fertilization Programs

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IN WORKING with several supts. who have brought recently constructed courses into play, I have become increasingly aware of several recurring problems unlike those encountered in maintenance of established turf. For those who are operating new courses, individual holes or greens, it might be helpful to outline methods others have used successfully in meeting a few of these problems.

It is fundamental that the sooner regular mowing with a greenmower starts, the sooner the grass will form a putting turf. Allowing new bent to grow tall results in a matted condition as does continued cutting with a machine other than a greenmower. Indeed, some supts. have been most successful in using a greenmower at the initial mowing of seeded or stolonized greens although it may appear that it is actually damaging the grass at the time.

Mow Regularly

Regularity in mowing is of utmost importance. During growing seasons at least four clippings weekly are necessary. It frequently has been observed that if the new grass is left uncut for several days and then cut, development of the new grass is seriously retarded. This is probably why new greens opened early for play and mowed regularly sometimes fill in quicker than those not opened and mowed less frequently.

It is my observation that the superb new Pennncross, if not maintained at a low height of cut in initial stages, takes on an entirely different and inferior character at maturity despite subsequent care. Some of the reported "fluffing" of Pennncross is perhaps due to infrequent mowing in post-seedling stages.

Exception to Close Mowing

Despite the greatest of care in mowing and in other ways, we sometimes see one or more stubborn greens that do not seem

to form turf. Some probable causes of this on stolonized greens are: (1) the stolons were not fresh when planted; (2) old nursery stock was used; and (3) the green was planted late in the season after growth was finished. When this poor turf condition results often it can be remedied by merely raising the height of cut about $\frac{1}{8}$ in. John Cornman recommended this for a course in New York State after other practices had failed. Results were astonishing. I have since seen this simple expedient work wonders on other stubborn greens. This remedy was, however, only expedient after the green had failed to respond to the close mowing recommended above. In other words, higher cutting apparently had to be preceded by close mowing.

Sogginess on Sodded Greens

On recently sodded greens where topsoil has been thoroughly prepared in relation to sand admixture, we may observe dangerous sogginess in rainy periods. This may be caused by the soil in the sod layer being of a slightly different texture than that of the prepared topsoil with the result that moisture does not pass freely from the sod to the lower layer. One or two winters of frost will take care of this condition but since it is dangerous in hot humid weather it should be relieved by aeration. Three or four aerifications, spaced about a week apart, should relieve the condition, but during this period syringing with water is of importance to save the sod. Several supts. have reported that wetting agents will also reduce sogginess.

Sogginess may be aggravated by the presence of trees that shade the green or cut off circulation. Then a choice has to be made between trees or the grass. On new courses it is best to remove the trees before putting the layouts in play due to member resistance to tree removal.

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As in the case of greens, the sooner new fairways are mowed the better. If mowing is early at playing heights the permanent grasses apparently adjust themselves to the height of cut. On the other hand, if there is delay in mowing, or if cut too high, those strains not suited to lower clipping heights predominate. Then, when lowered to playing heights, these strains are replaced by poa annua, clover and other weeds.

Fertilizing New Fairways

Fairway turf, the first season after seeding, responds to heavy fertilizer applications. For the first season a minimum of 3 or 4 lbs. of actual nitrogen is needed per 1,000 sq. ft. along with other elements. Greater amounts are even better. Frequency of application varies with type of fertilizer used. One program particularly effective involves fertilizing while the young grass is still dormant in late March. A second application should be made in early May, a third in early June and finally a fourth in September. Care must be taken to avoid burning tender, young grass. With new grasses rarely do two courses offer identical problems.

Course Vandalism One of Topics at Minnesota GCSA Meeting

Minnesota GCSA held its annual turf clinic and conference at the Normandy Hotel in Minneapolis, Feb. 24-26. The conference was marked by two rather unusual features. Two women, Jane McKinnon and Mrs. Grace Graham, were among the speakers, and the afternoon session of the 25th was devoted almost entirely to a discussion of course vandalism. Miss McKinnon spoke on the subject of landscaping and Mrs. Graham, chmn. of the state ladies' rules committee, discussed the woman's impression of golf. The vandalism roster included an attorney, and an official of the Minneapolis police dept.

One session was also devoted to the operation and maintenance of recreational facilities other than golf at country clubs. Supts. who spoke at the meeting included Roy Nelson of Ravisloe, Homewood, Ill. and Jack Kolb of Minikhada in Minneapolis. Agronomists on the program included Charles Wilson of Milwaukee Sewerage; Marvin H. Ferguson and James Holmes of the USGA green section; James Watson of Toro; and Leon Snyder and Richard Stadtherer of the University of Minnesota.