



# DR. FRED V. GRAU

## ANSWERS TO TURF QUESTIONS

### IN APPRECIATION

With the kind permission and the understanding of GOLFDOM, this editorial will be a personal one.

Frankly, I cannot recall the date on which I got my first check from Herb and Joe Graffis for writing the Q & A column for GOLFDOM. I'm sure it was more than 25 years ago. I shall always consider the Turf Roundups of 1950 to '51 to '52 as some of the best pieces I've done.

During times of personal sorrow and tragedy, it was not easy to continue the writing. But even when I was flat on my back in the hospital during the summer of 1960, I managed to keep writing with the help of my wonderfully attentive family and with reassurances from colleagues and readers.

Now, as I write this in preparation for an early July deadline, I am preparing for another memorable event, which will occur (will have occurred when you read this) on July 7, in the West Chapel of the University of Maryland Memorial Chapel. It is a small informal, family ceremony performed by Dr. O. Thomas Miles, Emmanuel Presbyterian Church of McLean, Va. Frances Kimball Holyoke was a good friend and a favorite dancing partner at the University of Nebraska affairs during 1930 to 1931. We both received our degrees in 1931.

Briefly, shortly after her marriage to Mr. McCoy in 1935, I visited her in her Omaha World Herald office and did not see her again until April 30, 1973. During those years each of us married and raised families. Our respective spouses were taken by cancer: her husband in 1961, my wife in 1968.

At a dinner party held for several Nebraskans at the home of Mrs. Dail, Frances' daughter, we met again on May 2 after 38 years. At

once it was clear that the die was cast. So it is that I write this editorial, not about grass, but about sharing with all my readers the joy of beginning a new life with Frances, a daughter of true pioneer families from the Midlands.

Both of us will continue writing. She will do free-lance work; I will continue Qs & As and articles as long as there is reader interest. To all, I say "Thank you" for all the good wishes.

*Q—We notice that in the winter our Penncross greens develop a sort of mottled appearance. The mottling is strictly coloration and does not involve texture or affect the putting quality. We thought that Penncross was pure. Can you offer an explanation?* (Texas)

*A—*The cool-weather mottling of your Penncross greens is a natural expression of the dominant types that are part of the diverse population that results from the "polycross" method of production. Three vegetative parents are planted in successive rows. When these come to head, there is free cross-pollination. The entire field is harvested for seed, which is the Penncross (certified) of commerce. Out of the infinite number of cross pollinations come many types, all highly desirable for putting green turf. Some, stronger than others, tend to form "islands," which have distinctive coloration relating to one (or more) parent. This then, causes the cool-weather mottling, which has become a distinctive badge of Penncross. Now, if these "islands" developed coarse, cabbage-like texture, it would be a different story and would indicate adulteration. As long as the texture remains fine, you have nothing to worry about.

*Q—Our course has Seaside greens that are 13 years old. We feed Powder Blue, potash, iron and 16-4-8 occasionally. The grass is healthy and green. We mow at three-sixteenth to one-fourth inch, but we cannot seem to develop the tiny leaf and the fine texture we want. What can you suggest?* (Texas)

*A—*For many years, we have seen the coarse "wild" strains or types in Seaside persist and proliferate to the detriment of the quality of the putting surface. No amount of manipulation ever seems to get these types to "fine down." I would suggest over-seeding with Penncross bent three times a year using one half pound to 1,000 square feet each time. Vertical mowing just prior to seeding will reduce competition. A scarifier-seeder seems to be the best implement for introducing the Penncross seed, placing it in contact with the soil. Don't expect spectacular results. Progress will be slow but sure.

*Q—It is mid-June and we have a new putting green ready to plant. The construction methods were strictly up-to-date. We want Penn-cross, but we can't decide whether to seed now or wait until late August. What would you advise?*

(Maryland)

*A—*I think that I would take the risk and go ahead and seed the green at once. With any kind of a break in the weather and with close attention to details, you could have a putting green in play by late August. If the weather should turn against you, and you lost most of the grass, your loss would be small compared to the plus value you would gain if everything turns in your favor. □