MID-ATLANTIC News Letter

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Mid-Atlantic Association of Golf Course Superintendents to aid in the Advancement of the Golf Course Superintendent through Education and Merit

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An afternoon meeting at the University of Maryland Golf Course on March 4 attracted 36 members and guests of the Mid-Atlantic.

A walking tour of the course which is not yet in play was led by Golf Coach and Physical Education Instructor, Frank Cronin, of the University staff.

Before the walk began, Frank showed us the construction work on the new club house which had progressed a little beyound the beginning foundation level and explained that for the immediate future the building would be on one level, but would be built so that more floors could be added later. He paid tribute to former football coach Jim Tatum and his successful football teams for helping raise the necessary money and for his foresight and push that helped get the golf course started.

The course construction was started in 1955 with George Cobb as architect and Frank Pierce as construction foreman. The first nine was built in 1956 and planted in September and October of that year. As we walked it was apparent that a good " take " was not obtained on the fairways and considerable wash resulted, but the greens had good cover and could be made ready for spring play.

Three holes must still be built on the back nine. The greens planted last fall have a good stand of bent and will completely cover the bare spots by the first of June, if we don't have a dry spring like we had last year. Some sprigging into the larger spots could be done any time to speed up the cover.

We found lots of low spots, plenty of mud and many fairway washouts as we walked over the course and it was apparent from the start that the subject of drainage was going to come up for plenty of discussion during the meeting. One fairway had been seeded to common bermuda and had lots of good cover. It will be interesting to see it again after it has been cut down low and given the fertilizer necessary for good bermuda. It may be well to mention that this fairway was on high ground, well drained and in open sun. Above the pond on #1 was another spot where bermuda seed had gotten off to a good start although on low ground.

The tees had not be very carefully graded during construction and many were sloping excessively which means the golfer will have either and uphill or downhill lie on many tees. The accepted standard for tees is that they be built practically level from side to side with a drop from the front to back of 6" to each 100 feet. Tees on Par 3 holes should be larger so that scars made by iron shots will have time to heal before the markers are placed in that spot again.

This Association has advocated U-3 bermuda grass for tees in open sun for many years, but little was noticeable at Maryland University. The tees were seeded to the same seed mixture as that used in the rough and judging from the lines made by the Brillion seeder, both tees and rough were seeded at the same time. This was not wise because grass suitable for rough will not tolerate the low height of cut demanded by players on tees. These tees should be planted to one of the improved bermudas this coming summer if they are in open sun.

This course, Mr. Cronin explained, had been cut through the woods with only parts of #9 and #18 fairways originally in open meadow. This fact no doubt added considerably to the cost of construction which he stated was now at $125,000. Much more cutting and thinning of pine trees along the edge of fairways is necessary before the duffer can scatter a few and still find his ball.

There were only a few fairway traps. Perhaps the architect felt that traps would not be needed because of the wooded rough on each side of the fairways. After two hours of looking over the course, the group returned to the University where Mr. Cronin had arranged the use of the Student Union Building auditorium with P.A. system, podium and everything.

The business meeting got under way at 2:45 with some late comers in attendance and with President Bob Shields presiding. Noticeably missing was the man who had been through the course construction and is now acting as superintendent, Mr. Pierce.

Our speaker for the day, Dr. John Axley of the Agronomy Department of the University was introduced by the man who arranged the program, Bob Elder. Dr. Axley gave the most understandable talk on " Trace Elements " that we have heard in a long time.

His points were brief and precise, but they made good sense. Some of them we list here : The most deficient minor element in this area - Boron - causes plants to grow foilage with an umbrella-like pattern on top. Without Boron sugar can't be transported within the plant, making storage of food in the roots impossible. Use Borax or Solubor (Polybor) at 1 lb. to acre in 1 gallon of water. Calcium deficiency is indicated by curled leaves on corn and since corn is a member of the grass family, perhaps the same would apply to our " crop ". When sulphur is needed, the plant has a yellow appearance which is hard to distinguish from iron or nitrogen deficiency. A shortage of Zinc is indicated by small leaves.

CONSTRUCTIVE SUGGESTION REPORT

The Constructive Suggestion Report at Maryland University was conducted by Ruben Hines, Sr. This feature of our meeting went very well, but was hindered by the absence of the man in charge of the golf course.

There was considerable discussion regarding drainage on fairways and to rear of some of the greens. Some of the superintendents present thought that trouble was eminent unless corrective measures were taken immediately.

GREENS

The greens were contoured in a manner that would make interesting putting from many different cup settings. These slight mounds will require careful attention tho' as they will have a tendency to dry out first. Extra water will be necessary on the humps and extra aeration will be necessary to hold it there.

To get the greens off to a good start this spring a program designed to supply a total of 7 - 8 pounds of actual nitrogen per thousand square feet during the growing season should be started at once. To reach this goal, larger amounts are applied at two week intervals during the cool months of spring and fall than during the hot summer.

To play safe a good rule to follow is - NEVER APPLY MORE THAN ONE POUND OF ACTUAL NITROGEN PER THOUSAND SQUARE FEET AT ANY ONE TIME. (Urea - form fertilizers excepted.)

There seems to be a black layer of soil near the surface on each green. This is humus or other organic material that has floated up during periods of wet weather and should be broken up. To do this, aerify deep in 4 directions with 3/4" thatch spoons this spring after the green is dry and firm and then follow with a sweeper to clean up the soil cores. Use the greensmower as a roller and go over the green as if you were mowing but do not put the reel in gear. After rolling, mow the green at the regular height of cut and topdress with a mixture made up of a higher percentage of sand than soil and organic. Repeat this operation in October. For detailed information on how to aerify write- WEST POINT LAWN PRODUCTS, WEST POINT, PA.

TEES

Tees open to sun should be planted to one of the improved bermudas. The T328 Bermuda now growing in your nursery would serve here. Sprigs or runners can be planted into cuts or slits made by shovel, mattox or ax and the soil firmed around the sprig. This method will cover in one year if the grass is cut low and fertilized every two weeks during the summer with 10# nitrate of amonia or other high nitrogen fertilizer per thousand square feet.

Every golf course needs a power sod cutter. A new cutter blade now available makes bermuda planting easy and fast with little chance of failure after the machine has done its work.

For shaded tees use a seed mixture of 70% Merion Blue, 20% F-74 fescue, 10% Astoria bent. Aerify the tee in several directions before seeding.

Some tees slope excessively from side to side. The only way to correct this oversight in construction is to completely rebuild and level up. Remember a player is entitled to three good lies on each hole - one on the tee and two on the green.

FAIRWAYS

We suggest 4" clay or 4" plastic tile in the washed out area on the fairways. The plastic tiles cost more, but are easier to handle, easier to lay with less preparation and chance of failure afterwards. When the tile has been placed in the straightened trench, cover with soil by using a small pan and then drag with the pan to finish. Seed immediately with oats at 5 pounds per thousand and at the same time sow at the same rate the same mixture that was seeded to the fairway originally.

An even less expensive way would be to level out the washed-out areas with soil in May or June and seed to bermuda grass seed.

Seepage water from the slopes to rear of #1 and #4 greens (and possibly others) will get into the greens and cause them to fail unless header trenches are cut and drain tiles installed to take care of this subsurface water.

ROUGH

We doubt if time can be found for work in the rough this spring and summer, but considerable cleaning could be done next winter. The player wants to find that new ball even if he can't hit it.

NURSERIES, COMPOST

Start a stolon nursery of the same grasses that are in the greens. Start a sod nursery for patching greens later. Prepare soil, plant and maintain the same as if it were a green. Start a compost pile and accumulate top soil for future use.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The afternoon meeting at Maryland University on March 4 turned out very good in spite of such things as chilly weather, mud and no golf. We did have a good speaker. Dr. Axley was most familar with his subject " Trace Elements " and he presented it in a way that was easy to understand.

Frank Cronin did a fine job as host and was busy making everyone welcome. He showed us around the new athletic building with its mamouth seating area and its two swimming pools, then escorted the group around the new golf course. His enthusiasim and happiness at having a golf course at Maryland after many years as a golf team coach with no course to play on was understandable to all.

This Association is happy to have a golf course at Maryland. It has always been our hope that the University of Maryland would take a greater interest in the growing of grass as other big schools have done. Penn State, Rutgers and U.C.L.A. all have large experimental turfgrass plots and now perhaps Maryland can have them too. From this University can come more experienced agronomists and it's possible to imagine that students might become interested in golf course work and become golf course superintendents later. We hope they do.

Bob Elder is to be credited with the idea of meeting at Maryland. It proved most satisfactory from our standpoint and I hope we can visit there again soon.

As President of the Association I'm wondering if we couldn't do more to help new clubs in this area during their construction period. It has always been our policy to give advice free of charge to any club asking for it. If it is impossible to have a meeting at a club to give a Constructive Suggestion Report, we send a committee to make one on receipt of request. We have done this many times, and I'm sure the present Executive Committee will continue the service.

What reason could a man in charge of a golf course possibly have for not attending a meeting of superintendents at his own course? The University lost much of the benefits to be gained from the meeting by not being represented by a superintendent.

NEXT MEETING PLACE

Fort Belvoir Officers' Golf Club, Ft. Belvoir, Va., April 1, 1958.
Golf : 12 noon, Social Period, 5 p.m., Dinner 6 p.m. - at Mc Kenzie Hall . Host - Jim Naughton is in the hospital, but may be out for the meeting. Golf Officer, Capt. Paul Harris and members of the greens committee will be on hand to greet you. Ties and jackets must be worn at this Officers' club dinner.

MID -ATLANTIC MISCELLEANOUS

Bob Scott, Jr. is at Mt. Pleasant, Baltimore. He took Howard Mc Carty's place and Howard moved to the new golf course Baltimore City is building.
Charlie Nason is out of superintendent work and is now selling chain link fences in Baltimore.
Red Hancock is working with Pat Sheridan at White Flint.

The editors hope you like the new look of this edition of your " NEWSLETTER ". Future issues will be kept brief, but an effort will be made to crowd as much useful information as possible into a fewer number of pages. Let us know how you like it.