

**SAND TOPDRESSING**  
**Jerry Cyr**  
**Hudson Mills Golf Course**  
**Huron Clinton Metropolitan Authority**  
**Dexter, MI**

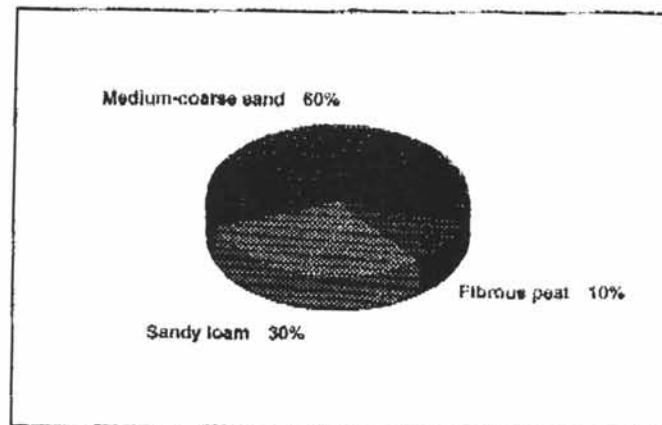
**HCMA Background**

Hudson Mills Golf Course opened for play in April, 1990. The course is one of seven regulation golf courses managed by the Huron Clinton Metropolitan Authority (HCMA).

HCMA is a regional park authority offering many recreational activities including picnicking, swimming, boating, hiking, nature activities, and golfing at their regulation courses as well as two 18 hole par three golf courses. HCMA encompasses the five counties surrounding the greater Detroit area: Livingston, Macomb, Oakland, Washtenaw, and Wayne.

**Hudson Mills Putting Greens**

The putting greens at Hudson Mills GC were constructed of 12 to 14 inches of root zone mix comprised of 60% medium-coarse sand, 30% sandy loam, and 10% fibrous peat.



The root zone mix sits above the subsoil which consists of a coarse sand mix. Drain tile (four inches) is recessed in the subgrade with three to four inches of pea pebble covering it.

With the exception of the initial grow in period of the putting greens at Hudson Mills GC, sand topdressing and core aerification are not part of normal cultural practices. We believe that certain criteria should be met to substantiate the necessity for sand topdressing or core aerification.

The root zone mix at Hudson Mills GC is very sandy and percolates well. The addition of sandy loam and fibrous peat to the greens mix increases the water and nutrient holding capacity. These greens do not have the additional two to four inch layer of coarse sand and four inches of pea pebble. These components are recommended in constructing a U.S.G.A. specified putting green. The two to four inches of coarse sand creates a "perched" water table enabling the root zone mix to hold more water for a longer duration.

Thatch accumulation in the putting greens is managed through daily power grooming, verticutting, and controlled fertilization. These factors also assist in maintaining a smooth putting surface. Winter desiccation has not been a problem at Hudson Mills GC.

#### **Conclusion**

Certain criteria should be examined prior to establishing a topdressing program. Uniformity and consistency of topdressing material is imperative if sand topdressing is necessary. Inconsistent material can cause layering between soil textures. This condition can disrupt the movement of air and water, creating an unsatisfactory root zone medium. The putting greens at Hudson Mills GC have not been topdressed or aerified since the initial "grow in" period.