

Effects Of Several Cultural Practices On Green Speed

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The title "Greenkeeper" has been shunned in our country and changed to "Golf Course Superintendent" to more fully encompass the demands of the position. Yet the most common link Golf Course Superintendents are judged upon is the playability of their greens. The golf course green is the only area that a low budget public golf course may be equal or superior to a country club with an unlimited budget.

Due to professional demand, Michigan State launched a greens rolling study to probe the short and long term effects of rollers on greens. The study was initiated in September 1993 on a six-year mature Penn Links green. The green was constructed on an 80:20 mix and has been maintained at a 5/32" cutting height since establishment. Other cultural practices include topdressing every three weeks and aerification twice annually. For the study to have interest for superintendents of varying budgets, we determined to use different cutting heights, mowing practices, and rollers.

Treatments in the study are as follows:

- Rolled 3x/week Olathe maintained @ 5/32" height of cut
- Rolled 3x/week Jacobsen maintained @ 5/32" height of cut
- Double cut 6x/week at 5/32" height of cut
- Rolled 5x/week Jacobsen maintained @ 5/32" height of cut
- Rolled 3x/week Jacobsen maintained @ 3/16" height of cut
- Check plot (i.e. not rolled) maintained @ 5/32" height of cut.

The objectives of the MSU greens rolling study are to evaluate and/or establish:

1. The differences between green speed per treatment.
2. The duration of rolling effects and double cutting on green speed.
3. The effect each treatment has on surface quality.
4. The impact the treatments have on the physical properties of the soil.
5. What is an excessive rolling frequency.

Many publications have been written on greens rolling since its rebirth several years ago. Many of the claims seem believable and many sound like a sales pitch from P.T. Barnum. On this stop we will discuss many of those claims and we will focus on the effect cutting height and rolling have on green speed.