

## Stop 1

### **Historical Look at Putting Green Mowing Heights and Green Rolling**

Dr. Thomas A. Nikolai and Tim Vanloo  
Department of Crop and Soil Sciences

Michigan State University is quickly approaching its sesquicentennial. That's right; in 2005 MSU will be 150 years old. In honor of this event this stop commemorates the turfgrass maintenance practices of mowing height and green rolling.

The oldest reported mowing height I have ever come across was when A.J. Hood of Detroit Golf Club noted that he mowed his greens at  $\frac{3}{8}$ <sup>th</sup> of an inch in 1922. By 1930, due to improved green mowers introduced during the roaring 20s, mowing heights were as tight as  $\frac{3}{16}$  of an inch. Today, both because we can and because of a quest for increased green speeds, an average putting green mowing height is now around  $\frac{1}{8}$ <sup>th</sup> of an inch.

Lightweight green rolling is a practice that may actually be older than green mowing. Research conducted in the 1990s at MSU has indicated numerous benefits of lightweight rolling. A frequently asked question as a result of the 1990 research has been, "Are their differences between the different roller types on the market?" In an attempt to answer this question the Michigan Turfgrass Foundation has funded research to look at the effect of five different roller types on green speed and turfgrass quality. Those plots are mowed six days per week and rolled every other day.

In this demonstration plot we will discuss the effects of mowing height and rolling on green speed and the impact they have on the turfgrass plant. At this station there are plots mowed at  $\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $\frac{3}{16}$ ,  $\frac{5}{32}$ , and  $\frac{1}{8}$  of an inch both rolled and not rolled. Also at this location will be five rollers that are currently on the market. Stop by and join in on the discussion.