

## USGA

### And Some Things Do Change

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January, 1996

Last month's article examined a number of subjects, from Dr. Alister Mackenzie's book, *The Spirit of St. Andrews*, that seem to have not changed over the years. As a follow up I thought it may be interesting to take a look at some things that have changed in golf course maintenance.

The popularity of golf has changed and the amount of play courses now receive is phenomenal. I doubt if at the time George Thomas designed Riviera, or Mackenzie built Pasatiempo, they ever intended their greens to support anything in excess of thirty to thirty-five thousand rounds a year. (Maybe not even that many.) To my knowledge both receive somewhere near two times this amount, a reason for more aeration.

People's attitudes have changed. Golfers

expect a higher level of maintenance on a daily basis (due to the influence of television.) The public is concerned about what it takes to keep golf courses green. More regulations govern maintenance operations than ever before and along with this the educational requirements for superintendents have risen.

Pest pressure has changed, and this may be related to several of the "old standby" chemicals being removed from the market place. New products are more pest specific and less broad spectrum in nature. Weak diseases that were not considered a consequence 15 years ago now surface on a more regular basis. The Black Turfgrass Ataenius has become a resident in Palm Springs and is now moving into other areas of Southern California.

Mowing heights have changed and some place complete blame on the Stimpmeter. Yes, this device had an influence, but I don't think it was the sole catalyst. If you think

back about 1978 there were no such things as "super thin" or "tournament" bed knives. Back then, without grinding the bottom of a bed knife, there was no physical way to adjust a mower less than 3/16". So don't place all the blame on the Stimpmeter — some creative mechanic helped with this one. While we are on the subject, equipment has most definitely changed. Rarely does one see a ground-driven gang mower on a fairway, *light-weight* is the buzzword now. Riding aerators, high pressure water injection, deep tine machines and core harvesters have changed cultivation programs. Electric equipment is now being developed to respond to noise ordinances and residential development courses. (It's funny that everyone wants to live on the course but no one wants to listen to you maintain it.) Computers are common in the superintendent's office for record keeping

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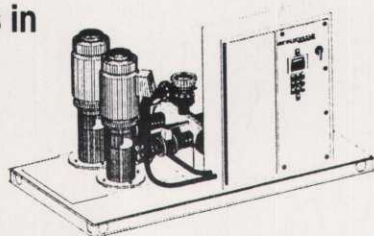
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