

Sometimes Simple Is The Best Answer For Water Use

Jamestown Country Club
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Issue

The 2014 U.S. Men's and Women's Opens at Pinehurst Number 2 gave golfers in the United States an opportunity to consider whether golf courses really need to be wall-to-wall green. As the cost of water, fertilizer and labor continues to rise, maintaining wall-to-wall green conditions becomes increasingly unsustainable. Many golf courses have closed their doors or been forced to take drastic measures to reel in the high cost of golf course maintenance. Jamestown Country Club has remained economically viable during these difficult times because it never bought into the wall-to-wall green concept. The course opened for play in 1963 and the club decided early on that they would focus course maintenance on the primary playing areas "down the middle" of the course.

Action

Jamestown Country Club uses several key strategies to manage their resources and budget efficiently. They do not irrigate the majority of the rough on the golf course. They also keep



Selective tree removal and root pruning can save water and improve turf conditions by reducing root competition. Tree planting should be done carefully, keeping the full size of the tree and its root system in mind.

fairway mowing heights higher than what is found at many other golf courses in order to limit *Poa annua* invasion and allow Kentucky bluegrass to dominate the fairways. Kentucky bluegrass is better adapted to the harsh summers and winters in North Dakota, making it more sustainable to maintain. Selective tree removal near the primary playing areas is done to reduce tree root competition and improve turf health.

Results

The efforts to conserve water and resources at Jamestown Country Club have been very successful. Focusing their irrigation on the primary playing areas uses far less water than maintaining wall-to-wall green conditions. It also means less area requires intensive maintenance, helping to keep the staff requirement in line with their budget. Favoring Kentucky bluegrass over *Poa annua* in the fairways saves water and limits damage from the extreme heat and cold that is common to the area. Selective tree removal has saved water and improved turf conditions by reducing tree root competition, especially around greens. The success of all these efforts shows that a simple approach can yield excellent results.