

## Smooth Tractor Tires Reduce Hand Labor

**The Moorings Country Club**  
**Dale Walters, CGCS, superintendent**

**Naples, Fla. 34103**

### Issue

Maintaining quality putting greens requires golf course managers to perform a variety of cultural practices on a regular basis. At The Moorings Country Club in Naples, Florida, fertilizers and topdressing are applied to the greens every two weeks. These practices were performed by two staff members using push spreaders. This process produced good results, but was time and labor intensive and had the potential to disrupt play. A tractor-mounted spreader could save time and labor, but traditional tractor tires create ruts on putting greens, limiting their use to other playing surfaces.

### Action

To solve this problem, Superintendent Dale Walters, CGCS, equipped the club's tractors with treadless tires so that a tractor could be used on putting greens without leaving any tire ruts. This would enable the maintenance staff to use tractor-mounted tools like a spreader to perform tasks faster, with less labor and less risk of disrupting play.

### Results

Equipping their tractors with smooth tires that are safe for use on greens has led to significant savings in time and labor. Practices like fertilizing and sand topdressing required two staff members when they were done using push spreaders, but now they only require one person. Using a tractor also allows the job to be completed in considerably less time, reducing any potential impacts on play. Equipping the tractors with new tires and rims did cost some money, but Mr. Walters feels that his return on investment came in less than two years with the money saved on labor.

One potential limitation of using tractor mounted spreaders is the risk that coverage will be less uniform because the machine is larger and requires more skill to control than a push spreader. However, Mr. Walters feels that once the operator understands the tractor-mounted spreader's coverage pattern the results are as good as push spreading. He has not observed any playing quality or aesthetic issues since switching to tractor-mounted spreading on greens nearly 20 years ago.



*Large, smooth tires allow tractor-mounted spreaders to be safely used on greens without leaving tire ruts.*