

## The Benefits Of Eliminating Intermediate Rough

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### Issue

For many years, Crag Burn Golf Club maintained an area of intermediate rough between the fairway and primary rough. However, the club began to question whether this practice was worthwhile. The intermediate rough detracted from the visual definition between fairways and roughs because the height-of-cut difference was very subtle. In addition, the playability benefits were limited because Crag Burn has wide fairways and does not maintain deep primary rough. From an agronomic standpoint, it was difficult to maintain good turf quality and playability in the intermediate rough because the height of cut was too high for fairway grasses and too low for rough species. Lastly, maintaining three separate heights of cut required more labor and a specialized mower.

### Action

Crag Burn decided to eliminate the intermediate rough and convert those areas to primary rough. To offset any playability impacts, the mowing height of the primary rough was lowered from 2.5 inches to 2.0 inches. This would ensure that balls settling at the margin



*Eliminating intermediate rough can save time and resources, improve playing conditions and enhance overall aesthetics.*

between fairway and rough could still be easily struck. The lower height of cut in the rough would also improve overall playability and pace of play.

## Results

Eliminating the intermediate rough at Crag Burn has been very successful. From an aesthetic standpoint, the change created a more clearly defined edge between the fairway and rough. This makes it easier for golfers to see the margins of the fairway and to focus on their target. The aesthetic change was well received by golfers. Eliminating the intermediate rough also saved labor and resources that could then be reallocated to other areas of the golf course. Mowing the intermediate rough three times per week required an average of 15 labor hours. Over the course of the 20 week golf season in Buffalo, nearly 300 labor hours would be spent mowing the intermediate rough. Now those resources can be used to maintain primary playing areas or for golf course improvement projects. Removing the intermediate rough also eliminated the need for a separate mower that was set to mow only those areas. This reduced maintenance costs and made a piece of equipment available for other activities. Lastly, the agronomic problems associated with maintaining turf at an intermediate height have been eliminated, improving both playability and turf health.

To learn more about the benefits of eliminating intermediate rough, read the article “[A Waste of Time and Resources.](#)”