

THE INVISIBLE DAMAGE

Each year the Golf Course Superintendent is faced with the problem of restricting play on his course as the frost is leaving the greens. Greens are soft and foot prints show up readily as the anxious golfer plays his first round of golf.

Not too many years ago golf courses were "Closed" to play during this period of time. As membership dues began to climb more and more pressure was put on the Superintendent not to "Close" the course. So he did the next best thing. He placed the pins on the approach of the green on what is called a temporary green. This appeased some of the golfers but not all of them. The next attempt to keep the golfer happy was to place the pin on the extreme front edge of the green so as to avoid as much footprinting on the green as possible.

Now the Superintendent is being asked to place the cups in their normal position on the green and never "Close" the course again. This is fine, but the memberships of these clubs should be informed by the Superintendents what the consequences might be. First, there is the visible damage to the green, this being the obvious footprinting. Now, depending on how soft the green is will depend on how deep the prints and how long it will take to level out again. We all know that they will all eventually disappear, or at least it will appear that way to the golfer. The greens normally will be bumpy for two or three weeks but very seldom longer than this.

Here is where the "invisible damage" comes in. When the greens are soft, because of frost in the soil, we have a condition where minute soil particles are actually suspended in a soil that is supersaturated. This being due to the fact that the excess moisture cannot penetrate through the frozen barrier. When this soft soil is compressed by someone walking on it, it becomes compacted. This compaction is permanent, or at least until it is frozen again or aerified or spiked. The last two methods of eleviating the compaction are certainly not complete.

If weather conditions become adverse later on in the year, the compaction will take its toll. True, the member has long forgotten this footprinting because he no longer can see it, but the fact remains the condition is still there. Often times these conditions never cause trouble, but each year we hear of cases that can be traced directly back to the early golf on soft greens. If the memberships are informed of the penalty they may have to pay by early golf, perhaps they may think twice before teeing off when the greens are too soft.

During the last educational portion of the April meeting the subject of Knotweed control and its ramifications were discussed. Bill Saielli, Superintendent of Indian Hill Country Club stated that he has had good results with Sodium Arsenite at the rate of 2 lbs. per acre. Bill Stupple also uses 2 lbs. per acre while spot treating. This may have to be repeated a week to 10 days later. Kuron and Endothal were also mentioned as possible controls for Knotweed control. These new products should be handled with great care when treating areas containing Bent Grass.

In the past it was common practice to use 2,4-D mixed with the Sodium Arsenite. In most cases this has been abandoned because of the possible damage that might occur to the Bent in the fairways. This mixing is still good practice however, where you are treating Bluegrass areas.

Bert Jannes of the Chicago Park District showed us some very interesting slides giving the details involved in rebuilding Bowling Greens at several of the City Parks here in Chicago. He also showed us some slides on Vandalism, a subject close to all of us. I guess most of us can't complain too loud after seeing some of the problems that he faces as the Superintendent of the City Golf Courses. Another problem that he presented with slides, was traffic control on his tees where he may have over 50,000 rounds of golf per year. His method of using mats is certainly worthy of consideration where one encounters similar problems. A grass tee is only used for special events.

JOE DINELLI WINS LOW GROSS!

Nineteen hardy golfers played at the last meeting and prizes were presented to the winners at the dinner in the evening. Joe Dinelli was presented the prize for Low Gross by the Chairman of the Golf Committee, Marv Gruening. Others that won in the Peoria System were: Doug Jabaay, Bob Winter, Pete Voykin and Clarence Mitchell.

Marv promises that our golf events this year will be much improved and that we should all have a lot of fun playing this year.

The next meeting will be held at the Ridge Country Club on the South Side of Chicago. This will be an afternoon of golf and a dinner meeting in the evening. Charlie Rack will be our Host. He promises to have the course ready for you hotshots.

NATIONAL NEWS

From the National Headquarters comes this report on membership.

During the month of February the total membership was 1956 members. The month of March showed the membership to be 2009, consisting of:

Class A Charter	22	Class C	43
Class AA	27	Class D	33
Class A	1403	Class E	159
Class B	227	Class F	95

This is an increase of 53 members in one month. There has been an increase of 74 new members in 1963 Help to keep this number growing. There are still a few members of the Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents that do not belong to the National.

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