

WHAT THE CONTRACTOR LEFT ME

by Allan Kress

Superintendent Parc-wood Country Club

Gentlemen, "What the Contractor Left Me" is my topic, but I think it should be "What the Contractors, Architects and Mother Nature Left Me." The reason I say contractors is because of the number of different professions required to build a country club. Some of the different contractors include the clearing contractors, golf course builder, club house builder, road builder and the utilities contractors.

Two year ago (1962) the construction of Parc-wood Country Club was started. Unfortunately the club did not have a superintendent until the golf course was ready for seeding. By then work was over six weeks behind schedule. As a small portion of the golf course was finish-graded it was planted as specified by the architect. Since work was way behind schedule I thought the seed bed was not worked-up as well as might be expected. Our greens have a very uneven soil mixture and many sharp undulations due to uneven settling. Also as the greens started to settle, all the tractor wheel marks showed up. It seems all the green settled except where the soil was compacted by the tractor. This left an inviting ridge for the greens-mower to scalp. At one time the depressions were several inches deep. The green resembled a bull's eye target with neat alternating rings of bare ground and a smaller ring of bent grass. I believe much of this trouble could have been eliminated if the top soil for the green had been mixed off the site.

Last winter was probably the worst winter possible for new turf, with record setting cold and without a snow cover. We lost 70 to 80% of our young seedlings, but I believe we can be grateful that we had a dry growing season. The reason I say this is because our course is very poorly drained, and a shower of only one-half inch of rain would leave small ponds of water for several days. There are many water pockets on the tees, fairways and in the rough areas. In many of the natural waterways a tee, green or standtrap was built blocking the natural run off. Our tees were designed to be flat as a table top. Ten of our tees have settled to the point where the middle of the tee is almost six inches lower than the outer edges. Those ten tees must be rebuilt next year.

One of the most important facilities necessary for developing turf, especially during a year such as last year, is the irrigation system. Aside from the bad winter and late planting, I would say this was the main villain for poor turf development at Parc-wood.

This last year we had 13 fairways which were not watered properly, due to improper or poor installation. In some cases the quick coupling valves were completely off the fairway or they were up to 150 feet apart, compared to the 90 foot spacing specified in the blueprints.

In summary, we had three items that hampered turf development at Parc-wood. They were:

1. Poor water drainage
2. Faulty installation of irrigation system
3. Poor seed bed preparation and growing conditions

It seems much of this could have been avoided if a qualified golf course superintendent had been hired before construction was started. This would have given the superintendent a chance to make a thorough study of the building plans and discuss with the architect problems that might be avoided before they are built in-

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