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Much has been written and/or anticipated about course conditioning for a USGA Championship. Course conditioning is the prime concern of the Green Section's eight agronomists who cover the entire country and work with golf clubs and all aspects of fine turfgrass management. When a course is selected for a USGA event, the Green Section Regional Director in that area is immediately notified. This normally is two years in advance of the tournament date. From that time on, visits are arranged with the Tournament Chairman, the Chairman of the Green Committee, and the Golf Course Superintendent. During the course of the two years, several on the site visits are made and close contact is kept with the course superintendent by phone or mail in order to devise the very best program possible for the National Championship for that specific course.

Every visit to a golf course is a stimulating experience. It is a study in techniques and management that are intricate and exacting and no two superintendents' programs are exactly alike. Therefore, it is a very delicate thing to make recommendations of any kind without considering the long term effects on the total program, on the course and upon the grasses involved. Most people know generally what the requirements for tournament play involve—close-cropped grasses throughout except in non-target areas; greens that are fast and firm, meticulously groomed tees and fairways. Before making any recommendations, however, a thorough study of the course is first made. This includes a thorough discussion with the superintendent about all conditions observed during inspection of the course and his total management program. Once this is completed, then recommendations are discussed and the championship direction is decided upon with all agronomic considerations involved. After all, when the tournament is over, the course should be returned to the membership in as good or better condition that it was before the championship was scheduled. Please note: THE GREEN SECTION AGRONOMISTS MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS, they don't dictate the terms of management changes! For example, "Do you think you could safely condition greens to reduce the height of cut 1/32 to the area of 5/32 inch"? "Would you double-cut greens beginning with the practice round and throughout the tournament"? "Could you reduce the height of cut on fairways 1/8 to 1/4 inch during the entire competition"? "Would you contour this fairway slightly"? "Would you change your fertilizer program or water management program to insure firmer and tighter playing conditions"? It is a "give and take" process to assure that nothing is done that will cause the slightest turf injury.

Most courses today are beautifully groomed so the changes involved are very slight and subtle differences from the norm. Surprisingly, many of the changes are retained because once a championship is played on a course, golfers remember every stroke and want to test their skills against the performance of favorite contestants. "Let me see now, Arnie drove the ball here...hah! I'm only 10 yards behind him...not bad for a once a week golfer, eh"! That drive is conversational fodder for father for a long time thereafter! Of course, no mention is made that "Pops" played the white tees!

This article is designed to let you know what to

expect should your club be selected to entertain a USGA Championship. It's a fun and learning experience for everyone involved. We of the Green Section staff always look forward to the challenge with anticipation, to the pleasure of working out intricate management problems on the site with the golf course superintendent, and to making friends with new people in this great game of golf.





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### HOW'S YOUR TURF IQ?

1. Name eight factors that influence turfgrass disease.

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 \_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_

2. Infections to turfgrass are caused by four things, name them.

\_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_

3. Now name five non-infectious or non-transmittal diseases to turfgrass.

\_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_

4. Name and spell correctly the disease which has the following symptoms: Irregularly shaped patches of blighted grass ranging from a few inches up to 2 feet in diameter, over-all coloration is usually first a purplish green, which rapidly fades to light brown. The main diagnostic feature is a dark purplish "smoke ring" which may border the diseased area.

Answers to the above questions will be found on another page.