

MONDAY - COURSE MAINTENANCY DAY

For the past twenty or more years, Mondays have been termed Golf Course Maintenance Day for many Chicago area golf courses. Westmoreland has practiced this program since the early '50s.

Much of our golf course maintenance program is geared around Mondays. We strive to and take pride in doing all work that would tie up any tees, fairways or greens on Mondays so that interference to members and guests during the other six days is at a minimum.

One might ask what is done Mondays that cannot be done with members around. Twenty-two (22) Mondays a year we fertilize greens, tees or fairways. Once or twice a year we aerify greens and tees. During drought conditions we catch up water on Mondays, tree removal around tees and greens occur on Mondays and fairways are cross-cut on Mondays. All of these operations are necessary and in one way or another would cause interference or inconvenience to golfers. Also, the grounds crew is allowed to work much more efficiently on Mondays, because we are not stopping our machines to wait for golfers to play a ball.

Fertilizing takes time and care. When fertilizing greens, tees or fairways, it is always our practice to water in the fertilizer. If not, the salt content of the fertilizer could burn or discolor the turf. When fertilizing, each green is closed for 30 to 45 minutes so that the fertilizer is thoroughly watered in. One green at a time.

Aerifying is another culture practice that completely takes greens or tees out of play. From start to finish a green is out of play for six (6) hours during the aerifying process. On these days the golf course is closed to everyone. Progress has been made in this operation over the years though. Ten years ago, it took 2 to 3 Mondays to aerify 18 greens. Today with newer machinery and better relations with neighboring superintendents, we can aerify 18 greens in 1 day.

During drought periods our irrigation pumps have operated for 24 hours on Mondays. During the other nights we try to apply just enough water to carry the turf through the day, striving to avoid creating wet spots. On Mondays we triple our watering time and attempt to catch up the moisture lost during the week and fairways are wet for a number of hours after watering. With our system it takes 9 hours to give fairways 1 hour of water or about 1/4 inch, 2 hours for tees and greens and 1 hour for approaches. 14 hours to thoroughly water everything. Often on our peat fairways we will repeat the process to prevent the peat from drying out. It is not unusual for our irrigation pumps to operate 24 hours on Mondays.

To open the golf course on Mondays would naturally upset our golf course maintenance program. But the biggest inconvenience would be to our members and their guests. Where we now strive to do our maintenance work that would interfere with the game of golf on Mondays, by opening the course on Mondays we would be forced to interfere. Our efficiency would be limited, due to working around golfers and chances are what we now do on Mondays would have to be carried over into Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays.

If we open on Mondays, we would have to alter our maintenance program to mow greens, we never cut greens on Mondays. This would take 9 man hours away from us. Our catch up watering on Mondays would have to be eliminated and this would mean wetter fairways during the mornings every day of the week, because we would have to increase our nightly watering rates. This also would cause more compaction due to carts on wetter fairways. In the long run, our turf quality and golf course playing condition would suffer if we were to open every Monday.

In summarizing, as far as opening the golf course on Mondays from the golf course maintenance view, the biggest inconvenience would be to our members and their guests. We would still have to perform our maintenance operations, but the pride the grounds crew has had in maintaining the golf course with the least possible interference to our members and their guests would be lost.

Submitted by: Julius Albaugh, Grounds Supt.

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