

"THE SAND TOPDRESSING EXPRESS: (AN OPINION)"

After careful consideration and discussion with a few of my peers, I feel it is relevant to offer an opinion concerning the current trend towards sand topdressing of greens and tees. When I first came to the Chicagoland area 13 years ago, I had some very definite ideas about golf course agronomics, design, construction and playability. Many of these ideas have been fulfilled, but not all of them have proven successful. With a bit more experience and definitely more conservative viewpoint, I would like to express to you my real concern about the sand topdressing programs now underway. I am not convinced that this current trend is of long-term value to our Chicagoland golf courses.

I have played numerous courses that have converted and the "playability" seems to be quite good. The ability of a shot to hold seems adequate, and the "splash of sand" can be visualized on a 100 yard wedge shot. The greens putt true, although I am not certain that the improvement is substantial. The recovery from ballmarks and smoothness seem to be advantages -- to what degree has never been accurately measured, however. The immediate results favor the program and it appears that each golf course superintendent is weighing the pros and cons of this new maintenance practice.

I am going to wait for at least 10 years before I embark on this procedure. I am concerned about; (1) the hydrophobic sand principle, (2) the 5 to 10 years root development, and (3) the penchant for excellence that I adhere to, but am most concerned about. The first two items will be evaluated as the years pass; however, sand topdressing is a significant example of the desire for excellence and I seriously question the cost/benefits of the program. I thought the greens were perfect the last two seasons that I played there. I respect the golf superintendent at the club and I hope in years to come, that no problems develop.

My Basic Question Is: "What are the current putting conditions and will the change to sand measurably improve putting quality?" I feel the old 1-1-1 ratio of topdressing has produced some of the finest golf greens in the United States and that this ratio remains excellent for **Chicagoland**. It seems that there are other ways to improve putting quality (e.g., frequent verticutting). Remember the surface era in the 1960's -- just as many soil structures were ruined as were improved. The frequent turnover of superintendents with different agronomic philosophies complicates the problem by potentially changing the topdressing specifications and creating stratified soil structures. This may be followed by recommendations to rebuild to correct problems created over 20 years by different golf superintendents with no one singularly at fault.

In my 13 years in the area, I have successfully managed greens with the following ratios of topsoil mix:

- (1) 1 Part Sand, 1 Part Peat, 1 Part Soil Ratio
- (2) 60% Sand, 20% Soil, 20% Peat Ratio
- (3) 99% Sand by Weight, 1% Peat by Weight Ratio
- (4) Greens with combinations of the above with amendments added over the years

All of these topsoil combinations can be used to grow quality turfgrass in this area, but not necessarily quality putting or playing surfaces. I differentiate here because a good looking turf does not necessarily provide a high quality putting surface that meets the criteria of any one golfer much less the golfing public as a whole.

Yes, I am concerned. This written effort on my part is not intended to nor does it begin to adequately detail a very con-

troversial and complex subject, but as a progressive member of the golf business, I have relieved a need to express a concerned and conservative view point.

Timothy J. Miles, Supt.
Div. of Golf and Property, Northbrook Park Dist.

"PROFESSIONAL NEEDS" --- UPCOMING DECADE AND BEYOND

The Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents and Chicagoland Golf Course Superintendents Association jointly endorse the selection of Paul Boizelle, CGCS by the G.C.S.A.A. Nominating Committee as a candidate for Vice President. Paul is a member of good standing in both associations and also active in many golf associations serving the Chicago area.

Paul has 32 years of vast experience in the turfgrass industry. Thirty of those years were spent on the east coast (New Jersey) working to develop a golf course for its membership and also working to develop the image and respect of the Golf Course Superintendent. One could easily get the impression that LEADERSHIP and ORGANIZATION come naturally to Paul. The truth is, Paul puts a lot of time, planning, communications, and DEDICATION into his goals and objectives. The latter probably being most important. Paul does not use the words; if, as possible, could be, or suppose. He works hard in seeking information in order to obtain desired results. He does not have to make up reasons, when serving on a committee, for not getting job assignments completed. Instead he completes his assignments with greater expectations than one could anticipate.

Having served as Director of G.C.S.A.A. the past two years, Paul is well prepared to become the next Vice President. He has met the challenges assigned to him by the Presidents with success. He is committed in addressing the Golf Course Superintendent's day to day professional needs and the needs that will arise in this decade and beyond. Some of Paul's beliefs pertaining to the future of G.C.S.A.A. are strong public relations with allied associations, dynamic education programs, improving the certification system, and most important a greater image.

Over the years, if Paul was not busy doing something with the turfgrass industry or serving on a committee his personal time at home was most exciting. Along with his lovely and supporting wife Jeanne, both were able to bring up four children and give special-attention to five grandchildren. One of Paul's greatest achievements for serving the community is that he was a Scout Master for thirty years. Paul and Jeanne have always been very active in civic and community groups. Their interests could be summed up as being pleasurable and most rewarding when looking back at the past.

The club members at the Onwentsia Club has encouraged Supt. Paul to continue with his work on the National Board and have wished him great success in the upcoming election for Vice President. Paul has the desire and inspiration to continue as a member of the G.C.S.A.A. Executive Committee, but most important contributes LEADERSHIP and DEDICATION. A vote for Paul Boizelle, CGCS is a vote for a candidate who listens, with sincerity, to suggestions and ideas that come from association members.

Len Berg

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