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Editor's note: The following is a report prepared for John Ebel by his assistant as part of his training. John thought it was pretty good and thought enough of it to share it with us.

Thru the Green at Barrington Hills

**Kurt Desiderio, Ass't. Supt.
Barrington Hills Country Club**

With the New Year right around the corner, it's time to reflect back on 1984 in anticipation of what 1985 will bring. We had a very good year in 1984. The golf and the weather were great.

During 1984, we accomplished most of goals through dedicated hard work. This dedication allowed us to produce the finest golf turf to the best of our abilities. To maintain a quality golf course, we must look back to our winter maintenance procedures.

During the winter months, we were very busy performing our machinery maintenance tasks. Each piece of equipment was thoroughly cleaned, inspected, and repaired, so that down time during peak use periods was avoided. All the reel mowers were sharpened and set so that they were ready to go when the grass started to grow in the spring. The tee equipment (benches, ball washers, etc.) was also repaired and painted to look its best at the start of the golfing season.

When the equipment was finished in early March, some time was spent on shop clean-up. This involved going up in the rafters and cleaning from the top down. The whole building was scrubbed and polished paying close attention to detail. To climax the winter maintenance period, all our work was put on display during the annual open house in late March.

With open house behind us, it was time to go out on the golf course and start spring clean-up.

Our first tasks were to remove the snow fences on #5 and #2 greens, clean the skeet clay pigeons off the 18th fairway, and clean the debris from the greens and tees.

In April, the whole golf course was cleaned up to get it into playing condition for the first golf event. The skeet buildings were put back in storage for the summer and the tee equipment and practice range were set up.

We began to mow the golf course at this time. The greens were cut at 1/8" with a triplex mower. The tees and collars were also cut with triplex mowers at 5/16". The biggest change of 1984 from previous years was the way in which the fairways were mowed. The fairways were, for the most part, cut with triplex mowers at 1/2". We tried to cut through all the fairways at least once a week using greens mowers to remove the clippings. If we couldn't keep up with excessive growth, we used an 84" triplex mower to catch up. The clippings were not removed.

Mowing the fairways in this season gave us a much improved fairway turf. The turf was healthier, stronger, and more vigorous. The playability of the golf course was greatly improved, along with greater disease and weed resistancy. This mowing routine was continued throughout the entire season.

In late April, the small trees on the golf course were sprayed with dormant oil for protection from scale insects. The Elm trees were also sprayed with methoxychlor for Dutch Elm disease.

In May the greens, tees, and fairways were aerified. The greens-aire was used to aerify the greens, tees, and fairway ap-

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(Thru the Green cont'd.)

proaches. On the greens, the procedure was to remove the plugs, fertilize, overseed with penncross bent, and then topdress with sand to fill the aerifying holes. On the tees and fairways, the plugs were broken up to remove the soil. The turf was then overseeded with bentgrass and fertilized, to provide a strong, vigorous, playing surface.

The greens were topdressed two times a month during June, July, and August. This topdressing frequency led to consistently smooth and true putting surfaces.

During the year, the sand traps were edged when needed and raked daily. 120 tons of sand was put into the traps that needed to be filled.

A procedure was started on the practice tee to build up the turf and soil. The tee was aerified, overseeded, fertilized, and top dressed many times during the season. This frequent topdressing built up the low areas and helped promote faster divot repairs.

Flowers were planted throughout the season in different beds and boxes. The plantings added beauty and functioned as cart control around greens and tees. These flowers take some time and effort to maintain, but we feel that they enhance the atmosphere of the course.

The weather this summer was very moderate compared with that of a year ago. Temperatures were closer to the normal for this area of the country. Rainfall amounts were slightly under average and supplemental irrigation was needed to keep the turf healthy. During the hot dry afternoons, the greens, tees, and fairways required frequent syringing just to keep the turf alive. With our manual irrigation system, this is quite a task.

With the summer somewhat on the dry side, it gave us a good opportunity to repair and install some drainage tile.

Two new tile lines were installed in the low area of the 18th fairway. This spot has always been a problem. The new 4" perforated tile runs across the fairway and into some solid plastic pipe. The solid pipe carries the water through the rough into an existing outlet. The solid plastic pipe was used in an attempt to keep the tree roots out.

Some other tile lines on the golf course were plugged with tree roots and needed to be cleaned out. These lines included a 4" clay tile running the length of #1, #9, #10, #13, and #14. The 4" line is fairly shallow compared to the 6-10 foot depth of the 15" tile. About 1,000 ft. of tile was rodded and flushed to free the blockage. Two manholes were installed on the 15" main trunk line for easier access to the tile in the future.

This year, the turf nursery was also topdressed and reseeded with penncross bent. We had used a portion of sod in the fall of '83 for sodding our new #2 tee. The turf we used from the nursery for #2 tee is now replaced, ready for future use.

The cart path by the halfway house was also resurfaced. We blacktopped the path from the halfway house down to the shop area.

This year, the final phase of our maintenance building was completed. We razed the old building and disposed of the debris. A 40x50 ft. addition was constructed that connects with the existing shop thus completing the original plan. The new building will enable us to work more efficiently and effectively in the shop and in the field. It also enhances the general appearance of the shop area.

In late August it was decided that a new green was to be built on #17. The existing green had been in bad shape for a number of years. The green was small and the turf was thin due to poor soil, drainage, and air circulation. We have planned this project for some time. The architect plan was approved and the work began.

The old irrigation lines were isolated and shut off so the rough grading could begin. 3,500 yards of fill was then brought in to raise the area. Trees on the right hand side were trimmed so the new green would have better air circulation.

When the rough grading was completed, 1,000 ft. of 4" drain tile was installed in the new sand traps and green. The weather during this part of the project was perfect. As soon as the final grading was completed, the weather turned sour and rained quite a bit. From this point on, every day we could work on the project was a blessing.

The greens were built using modified U.S.G.A. specifications for putting green construction. Over the existing subsoil, the green consists of 5 inches of pea gravel, 2 inches sand, 300 yds. of top soil mix which consists of 70% sand and 30% peat, fertilizer, and sod.

Automatic irrigation was installed on the green and approach. 400 feet of P.V.C. pipe and 6 toro pop up heads make up the system.

Between rain showers, 4,000 yds. of sod was put down. The green was sodded in penneagle bentgrass while the approach was penncross. Surrounding rough areas we're sodding with blue grass. The new traps were then filled with 200 yards of sand.

Although the conditions were far from perfect, about 95% of the project is complete. There is much enthusiasm about this green and we hope to have it in play sometime in late spring.

Since 1968, an architect's plan for tree plantings has been followed. This fall, 16 trees were planted on various holes according to the plan. 12 more trees are scheduled for planting in the spring of 1985.

In preparation for winter, the greens, tees, and fairways were fertilized with milorganite. This dormant fertilization provides faster spring green up and healthier turf. The greens and tees were sprayed with fungicides to protect against winter turf diseases. The irrigation system was drained to prevent the freezing and cracking of lines and fittings.

Throughout the fall, the leaves were removed from the golf course and disposed of. The last of the leaves dropped late this year requiring extra effort in late November.

Upon finishing the leaf clean-up, snow fences were erected to drop snow onto some greens and tees. This extra snow cover protects these areas from winter desiccation.

The equipment is then steam cleaned and inspected in preparation of our winter maintenance procedures.

We feel we have accomplished many things in 1984. The results we achieved were worth the effort in producing a beautiful, quality golf course.

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