

## Director's Column



### “For Tomorrow, Next Week, Next Month, Next Year, & Beyond”

by Al Fierst, Oak Park C.C.

It's been discussed numerous times over the past years; the subject continually arising regarding the direction of the “Midwest” both for now and what's ahead. Everyone agreed that the direction was vague at best and could use a conceptual format by which to direct the MAGCS. During his presidency, Mike Nass appointed a committee to explore and develop a conceptual format of objectives, and criteria for the Association. His directive was clear and to the point, a long range plan was necessary to give the MAGCS a sense of direction and purpose through ensuing administrations. This long range set of criteria would serve as a backbone, albeit a flexible one, for the MAGCS to gauge itself and it's progress as the long term objectives are addressed.

The long range plan was conceptualized through a series of brainstorming sessions in 1988. Topics were discussed between committee members and evaluated for incorporation into the long range proposal. Subjects varied widely, ranging from complex issues of finance to easier but equally important issues of MAGCS image and professional alliances. The committee members were adamant in their feeling that the long range proposals were essential to the continued growth of the “Midwest” and the image of the golf course Superintendent.

The Long Range Planning Committee (LRPC) shall continue in 1989. The intent is to formalize and develop the concepts offered to the membership and begin to see these implemented. Before we can fully realize some of these projections and goals however, the individual membership of the Midwest should let the LRPC know what ideas might be of importance to the future of our Association and how those thoughts might be incorporated into the association's future. The intention is to provide a viable guideline of planning points for a better, more efficient, more responsive MAGCS. So let us know how you feel and ask to be informed about the status of the LRPC. Give and share your thoughts and concerns about what the future holds. Help us provide the long term directives that will make the MAGCS the Association you choose it to be.

## Lightweight Fairway Mower Comparison

by David Blumquist, Naperville C.C.

We are right in the middle of yet another innovation in golf course management. Golf Course Superintendents have always mowed fairways with lightweight mowers, but it wasn't until the early 80s that lightweight mowing of every fairway on a regular basis became commonplace.

Equipment manufacturers wanted to make sure we were serious, so they waited to research and develop a practical cutting unit. This is why, early on, private or more “well to do” clubs were the only participants. Early lightweight fairway mowers were primarily Toro GM-3s or 84s, Jacobsen Greensking, Ransomes 180, among others. These were not made for fairway use at that time, thus it was an expensive proposition.

Within the last three years the introduction of several machines have made lightweight mowing practical for public courses that strive for private club conditions. Finally, equipment suppliers have caught on. Suddenly we are faced with another problem, which one is correct for each specific application? Previously, cost was a minor consideration because there wasn't much out there. As something became available we bought it. This will likely change as within a year, all major manufacturers should have a lightweight 5 gang available.

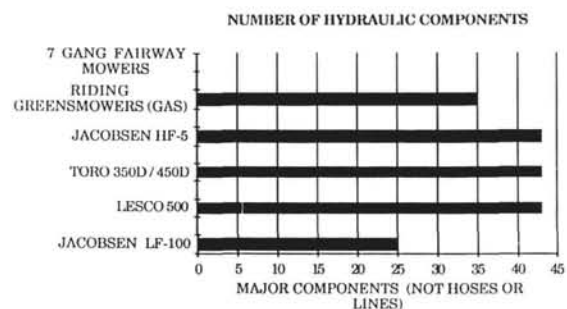
The current mowers in the Chicago area can be divided into 3 categories: Triplexes, light 5 gangs, heavy 5 gangs.

Triplexes — the following are the most popular: Toro GM3, GM3000, Toro 216 Reelmaster, Jacobsen Greensking, Lesco 300.

It is estimated that there are over 100 Triplexes in use on fairways today, with a 2 to 1 ratio of Toro vs. all others. Today's newer models are much better suited for fairway use. The frames are constructed sturdier and they are much more comfortable to operate. The Diesel engine has been incorporated to extend mower life.

Lightweight 5 gangs — the only lightweight 5 gang that has been in use is the Lesco 500. Lesco estimates there are 66 units in the Chicago area. When the first 500 came out, there were several questions: would service be adequate, and are they durable? Here at Naperville Country Club we've had no problems with service or parts delivery, in fact Lesco has proven to be as fast or faster than other local suppliers. A Chicago area distribution center should help cut mailing costs on parts. After two seasons we see no extraordinary wear on our two units, in fact we've recently purchased a third unit. Their new diesel model boasts extended longevity.

At last years GCSAA Conference in Houston, Jacobsen introduced the LF-100. Besides utilizing a proven engine and drive assembly, they've added a new hydraulic system with fewer components (see graph #1). As of December 5, 1988, Illinois Lawn claims 63 commitments for this relatively untested unit.



(continued on page 4)

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If the price doesn't escalate, and it survives the first couple seasons better than its predecessor, the HF-5, this new mower could see extensive use.

Toro is in the process of developing a lightweight 5 gang. Look for a prototype in Anaheim.

Heavy 5 gangs — the most popular of these are the Toro 350 and 450 Reelmaster and Jacobsen's HF-5. These units seem to perform better on Bluegrass fairways. Toros are very popular in the southern United States. Jacobsen's version is beginning to be replaced by other mowers. Some courses still use them, however the newer models are slowly but surely making the once popular HF-5 obsolete.

The future of lightweight fairway mowing appears promising. Competition by manufacturers will help keep price down and quality up. The Superintendent will have a choice of which unit performs best on his fairways. One problem inherent with lightweight mowing is the intense maintenance required on the reel units. It would appear as though this is something that isn't going to change soon, although it is a topic of research by some manufacturers. One must understand that even the best reel design is destined to be pushed beyond its capabilities. Mowing time alone is not the only increase when changing from larger gangs to lightweight mowers. The mechanical operation is also pushed beyond its' limits, thus many Superintendents have added a second mechanic.

Chart #2 addresses 5 issues: Width of cut, mowing speed, weight, reel type, and frequency of clip. The first category is self explanatory.

Mowing speed of a particular unit can be deceiving because that speed may not be possible on all layouts due to terrain inconsistencies, or operator skill. Machine weight is a factor that is not as clear cut as it would seem. Many things should be considered, for example: tire area on turf; distribution of weight; down pressure on reels that relieves down pressure on tires. No one seems to have concise research in this area.

Frequency of clip or the distance the cutting unit travels between two successive shear points. This should equal the desired cutting height with a 20% variance. The key here is to understand that if the frequency falls below the mowing height, it becomes necessary to mow more often because that mower won't be able to gather grass as fast as it cuts it.

Literature cited:

Gary Shampeny, The Toro Co., "Lightweight Fairway Mowing: Quality of Cut"

Charts provided by Illinois Lawn Inc.

	WIDTH	MOW SPEED	WEIGHT	MOWERS	FREQ/CLIP
JACOBSEN LF-100	100"	5 MPH	1950	5 - 22" 7BL	.45 @ 5mph
LESCO 500	100"	3.5 MPH	1575	5 - 22" 9BL	.25 @ 3.5mph
TORO 350D / 450D	138"	5 MPH	3590	5 - 30" 7BL	.75 @ 5mph
JACOBSEN HF-5	133"	4.5 MPH	2475	5 - 30" 10BL	.5 @ 4.5mph
RIDING GREENSMOWERS (GAS)	60"	3.8 MPH	1150	3 - 22" 9BL	.25 @ 3.8mph
7 GANG FAIRWAY MOWERS	175"	4.5 MPH	6000	7 - 30" 10BL	.6 @ 4.5mph

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