



“The Rest of the Story”: The Advent of Fairway Fungicide Spray-Control Programs

As I watched television coverage of the recent U.S. Open golf tournament at Olympia Fields C.C., where our good friend and super golf course superintendent Dave Ward is in charge, I was truly impressed with the excellence of the conditioning throughout the course.

The close-mowed fairways of 3/8" (or possibly less) especially caught my fancy as I reminisced 43 years ago to 1960, when golf fairway maintenance made a giant step in progress to give today's golfers the terrific, smooth and manicured fairway turf they are playing on today.

Allow me to fill you in on some details that I feel will interest you and remind you that our Midwest GCSA has a reputation of having contributed considerably to the technological advances and improvements in our profession over the years.

In 1958, as the superintendent at Beverly C.C., I was involved with some practical field research for the control of crabgrass in fairways and rough areas. At that time, we did not have specific chemical controls for crabgrass in general use. The Cleary Chemical Company of New Jersey and their research chemist, Dr. Paul Sartoretto, introduced me to a new chemical product named PMAS (phenyl-mercury-acetate-soluble).

We applied to some test plots on both rough and fairway as a start. In brief, we were able to eradicate the crabgrass, but more important, we noticed a complete control of the dreaded “dollar spot” disease in the fairway.

The following spring, of 1959, I had moved to the Bob O'Link

Golf Club in Highland Park, IL. By 1960, we were experiencing a very hot and humid season and dollar spot disease was rampant on fairways at most of our local clubs. So I got back to the Cleary Co. and Dr. Sartoretto for help.

We planned a program for control and sprayed all fairways using PMAS. The results were phenomenally successful and thus began the practice of fairway fungicide spray-control programs. It is also of interest to note that in 1960, fairways of bentgrass and *Poa annua* were mowed at a height of 1/2" to 1-1/4" and disease could render very poor lies and unhappy golfers.

We used the three-nozzle boom on the sprayer that we had developed at Beverly C.C. with about a 25-30' spread with this new 3' boom attached to the front of the tractor.

The results of this program were near-perfect and a new era for greenkeeping had arrived, even though some supers felt the cost would be prohibitive. But the golfers were delighted.

While we were working on this project of dollar spot control, my good friend Sherwood Moore, a classmate at the University of Massachusetts turf program and superintendent at the famed Winged Foot C.C. in New York, was also working on the same pro-

ject with Dr. Sartoretto and had achieved identical results. That is the history of the beginning of fairway fungicide programs for all bentgrass/*Poa annua* fairways.

A sideline to the preceding narrative was a phone call I received during that summer of 1960 from the staff of the famous radio personality, Mr. Paul Harvey. Evidently he had played at Bob O'Link and was impressed with our (at the time) disease-free fairways, and he wanted to do a story on the details. After I gave them the details of our program, he used our experience on his “The Rest of the Story” national radio broadcast. And now you too know the rest of the story of a practice that has become standard operating procedure to this day for most fairway turf disease problems.

Another sideline: on the day after Mr. Harvey's presentation, I had a phone call from an a retired superintendent friend who was living in Phoenix, AZ. He had heard Paul Harvey's story on the radio and wanted to let me know. My caller was Leo Feser, one of our renowned superintendents, formerly from the Woodhill C.C. in Minnesota.

Mr. Harvey, incidentally, is a member of Oak Park C.C., where superintendent Al Fierst does such a fine job.

