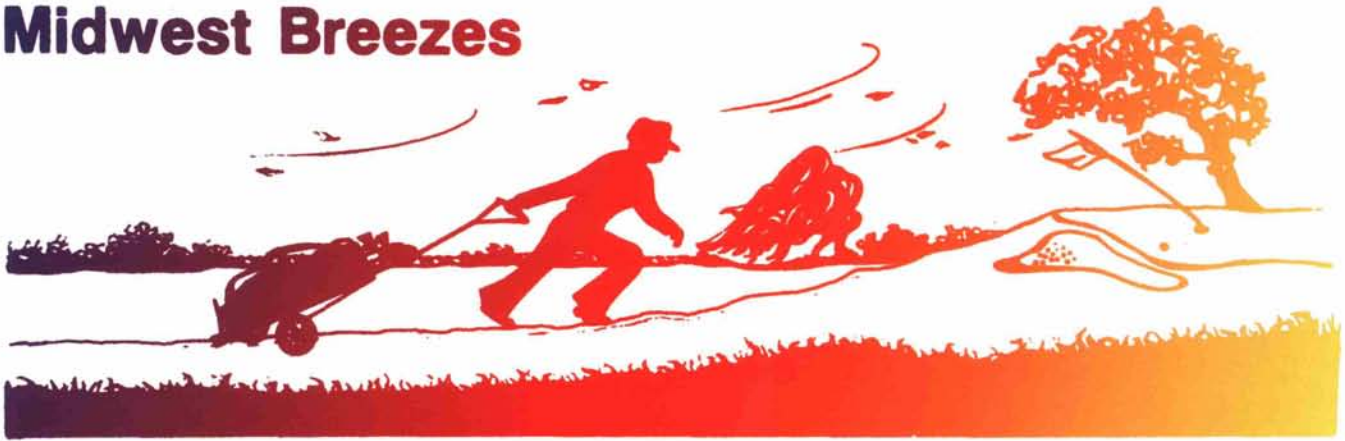


Midwest Breezes



*From time to time, I would like to profile the innovations of superintendents outside our region. For this issue, we are going north of the border. Our first stop is at **Maple Bluff Country Club in Madison Wisconsin**, where **Tom Harrison** has been the golf course superintendent for 37 years.*

Tom Harrison has a reputation for keeping things very dry at Maple Bluff Country Club. I called Tom to speak to him about his water conservation measures, but our discussion turned more toward his cultural practices, which Tom feels have the most impact on how much water his turf needs.

On greens, Tom sand topdresses with a Scott's rotary spreader every week. He has been topdressing with this method for over 30 years, using white crystalline round quartz sand, which is mined by a company called Unimin in Portage, Wisconsin. Tom discovered this material when he built a new green to USGA specifications in 1973, and this particular sand tested very well for construction. It has performed great for topdressing also; it works in very easily, is not detrimental to mowers, and because it is a hard crystalline material, it does not break down as calcareous sands may over time.

Over the years, Tom has experimented with various wetting agents, but he has gone back to managing localized dry spots with quadratine aeration and hand watering of hot spots. He holds off on watering as long as possible in the spring, and then when he does begin to use the irrigation system, he waters as little as possible with the sprinklers. He does not flush greens or water deeply. His philosophy of watering is to water lightly when he does water.

Next we go to **Kevin Rue at Detroit Country Club, Detroit Lakes, Minnesota**. Kevin rebuilt one the greens of Detroit Country Club last season using T-1 bentgrass. The green is in a shaded location where *Poa annua* has always been the predominant turf. However, the T-1 seems to have adapted very well to this green site. T-1 has a very high chlorophyll concentration in the leaves and it seems to flourish under relatively lower light intensities than the other elite bents.

Detroit Country Club, located 45 miles from Fargo, North Dakota, was built in 1916. It is an older golf course with mature trees, and the greens are mostly *Poa annua*. In 2004, Kevin began interseeding his greens with a Redixium seeder, and the Spiker Tip seeder, using T-1.

Because of its high chlorophyll content, the germination and establishment of T-1 has been very easy to observe and track. The leaves of T-1 are a much darker green than *Poa annua* and the older bents. Kevin reports that he has gained at least 10 to 20 percent T-1 bentgrass from interseeding, and the T-1 is spreading.

And we end our tour with **Steven Benson, Grand National Golf Club, Hinckley, Minnesota**. In the winter of 2005, many areas in Wisconsin and Minnesota suffered severe turf loss on predominantly *Poa annua* greens. At Grand National Golf Club in Hinckley, Minnesota, Steven Benson lost nearly all of the turf on his 17th green. The green was closed in mid-May and seeded to T-1 with a Jacobsen slit seeder in four directions. The final rate of T-1 seed was four pounds per thousand square feet. Seeding was followed by topdressing, starter fertilizer, and water. Grand National Golf Club is located nearly two miles north of Minneapolis, and it was a very cold spring in general, but even under these circumstances, the T-1 germinated in nine days under covers. On day fifteen, the green was ready for regular mowing, and the density of the T-1 was so impressive that Steven is now on a program to interseed the other greens with T-1 following his annual aeration.



Grand National Golf Club's 17th green successfully interseeded with T-1 in 2005.