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## Team Concept Introduced Into Golf Course Maintenance

by Fernando Fernandez, Green Acres C.C.

As briefly as I can, I will try to explain in detail how we, here at Green Acres C.C., have had good success using a revolutionary way, "THE TEAM CONCEPT", of doing Golf Course maintenance:

### OVERVIEW

- ★ Why and how we got involved with the Team Concept
- ★ What is needed to get the Team Concept started.
- ★ Benefits from the Team Concept.
- ★ Potential challenges with the Team Concept.

### OUTLINE

#### History.

The role management played in the decision.  
 Demands from membership.  
 Read an article in G.C.M.  
 Needed more equipment.  
 Synergy and team theories.  
 Got employees motivated.  
 Educating of employees.  
 Employees off on different days of the week.  
 Some employees had to work split shifts.  
 Fourth Year.

### ★ Why and how we got involved with the Team Concept:

#### History:

Four years ago, our golf course maintenance crew was composed of fourteen employees during the Spring and Fall months, and sixteen employees during the Summer months. We were working 50 to 60 hours per week, and on weekends we would split the crew, half of them would work on Saturdays and the rest would work on Sundays alternating every other week. At times some of our employees worked seven days.

#### The role management played in the decision:

Management stepped in and enforced the rule: Not one employee of Green Acres C.C. would be permitted to work seven days straight or more, without taking a twenty four hour rest, and suggested we take total man hours worked during an average week during the season and divide it by forty hours. This would give us the number of employees needed to work with. This setup would give us more employees to work with but consequently allowing less overtime. One other thing we were told is that the Club Managers Association of America recommended, for high maintenance golf courses, to have one employee per hole, not including the Mechanic, Assistant, and the Superintendent.


#### Demands from our Membership:


The ever increasing demand for higher quality golf course conditions were putting the pressure on us to have the golf course maintained every day as if it were a tournament day, from Tuesday through Sunday. They wanted us to mow greens on the weekends with walkers and to mow fairways, tees, approaches, soil and seed tees, soil and seed fairways, etc.

(continued page 15)

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(Team Concept continued)

Read an article on Golf Course Management:

Approximately four years ago I read an article in *Golf Course Management* magazine describing how a Superintendent has solved many problems with detail work by dividing the golf course into sections and giving the sectional responsibility to one individual. It sounded like a good idea to us. On the first year we started by dividing our golf course into equal sections paying a lot of attention to the fact that every employee would get the same number of greens, tees, fairways, sand banks, banks, ponds, trees, etc. so that it would be fair for everyone involved and assigned one employee to each section.

Needed more equipment:

The first thing we noticed was that we needed more equipment. Every employee was going to need equipment to work with. I knew that was going to be a challenge because I had read in the *Golf Course Management* article stating something to that effect. To alleviate the situation we grouped two adjacent sections into teams.

Synergy and team theories:

In the second and third years we learned synergy and team theories. Synergy is the concept that the value of an entity is more than just the sum of its separate components. It applied to us in the following ways: If one employee can perform five tasks in a given time period, you could assume that two employees working independently would perform ten tasks in the same period. However, if we combine the two employees, into a team doing the tasks together, then we find that by helping each other they can complete eleven or even twelve tasks in the same period. We found that by assigning teams to various sections of the course, and letting them do every single task required to maintain that section, the work was being done much more efficiently. This left more time available for detail work and grooming, resulting in a much improved golf course.

Getting employees motivated:

Almost immediately we saw good results. As soon as we assigned the teams their own section to work on, and said to them that this is your section and everything that happens here is because you did it or did not do it. It is your responsibility from start to finish. It is up to you whether your section is the best maintained in the course or the worst. It is all up to you. The results were tremendous. There was competition galore between the teams. Every team was trying to outdo the others. We could not keep ropes and stakes for traffic control for our golf course members before, now they were putting traffic control between themselves so that members of one team would not traffic through and wear out the other team's sections.

Educating our employees:

One of the challenges we knew we were going to encounter was to cross-train and educate every employee to do every operation needed on the golf course. We were no longer going to have special employees doing something that only they could do, everyone had to be educated and trained to do just about every operation needed.

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## Upcoming Events — Mark Your Calendar

**July 11** — MAGCS meeting at Steeplechase G.C.

**July 17** — NWIGSCA, Summer Golf Day at Lake Carroll G.C.

**July 24** — John Deere Golf Tournament at Orchard Valley G.C.

**July 25** — Midwest Regional Turf Field Day, Agronomy Research Center, West Lafayette

**August 5** — MAGCS Family Picnic and Ball Game, Kane County Cougars

**August 17** — Michigan Turfgrass Field Day, Hancock Turfgrass Research Center, MSU, East Lansing, MI

**August 21** — MAGCS meeting at Hughes Creek G.C.

**September 25** — MAGCS meeting at Prairie Landing G.C.

**October 12** — MAGCS meeting at Sportsman G.C.

**October 14** — MAGCS Fall Dinner Dance at Aurora C.C.

**November 9** MAGCS Clinic & Annual meeting at Medinah C.C.

**November 27-29** — NCTE at Pheasant Run Resort, St. Charles, IL

Since we are going to be changing the name of our newsletter, I hope you will take some serious thought and come up with a name that will last as long as "The Bull Sheet." Think of a name that will relate to the maintenance and upkeep of a golf course, a name that won't be confused with the golf profession side or the clubhouse area, a name that states that this is our profession and ours alone. I'm excited that a new name will give us a better identity and a new look. As much as I like the present name due to its catchiness and name recognition, a person has no idea whose newsletter it is. Now is the time to make this change. Send in those post cards with your suggested name.

Ken Lapp will be hosting the 92nd Motorola Western Open at Cog Hill Country Club in Lemont for the fifth consecutive year. Tournament week begins July 3rd and official play starts July 6th through July 9th.

Roger Stewart will be hosting the 5th Ameritech Senior Open at Stonebridge Country Club in Aurora. Tournament week begins on July 24th and official play starts July 27th through July 30th. This will be the last time the Senior Open will take place at Stonebridge. Best wishes to Ken and Roger for smooth tournaments and fair weather. We know both events will be great successes.

A and B members may now provide a complimentary issue of the **Bull Sheet** to a designated club official! This new service is designed to help Superintendents gain positive public relations. This will expose your Green Chairman or Club Official to our industry as they are with Golf Pros or Club Managers. If you are an interested A or B member only, please send a written request to our editor, Fred Opperman. To avoid confusion, personal names will not be used. I've provided an example of an ideal request:

Fred Opperman:

Please send a copy of the **Bull Sheet** to Green Chairman/Village President/Club Owner of ABC Golf Club.

The following is the correct address:

Green Chairman/Village President/Club Owner  
ABC Golf Club  
123 Elm Street  
Anytown, IL 60666.

Peter Leuzinger had a great write-up in the "Daily Herald" in early June. That is the kind of PR that is needed for the general public to see. Most local papers are looking for the very same kind of article. All it takes sometimes is a phone call and an invitation for lunch or a tour of the course. Also read Tod Hopphan's article on page 9.

Harold Frederickson is looking for an assistant at Edgewood Valley G.C. Please call 708/246-0278.

Our good friend and poet, Ken Zanzig, has been having some health problems. Ken has Parkinson's disease. He is presently living in California near his daughter. Please take the time to drop him a card and a note. His address is 1219 Belle Road, Calimesa, CA 92320.

Marlin McManus at Pinnacle C.C. is looking for an assistant. Pinnacle is near the Quad City area in Illinois. Call 309/787-2674.

The July "Midwest Breezes" can't be complete without a report on the great "Fox River Canoe Race" that two of our members have been participating in for a number of years. Dan Murray and Joel Purpur this year cut 60 minutes off their previous time a year ago. Dan states that they are just getting better. For all of you who know Dan, it isn't that. It must have been: (1) higher water, (2) wind at their back, (3) Dan finally paddled this year. My guess is it's all three!

Only in the Chicago area: A spring that wasn't, a sun that hardly shown, a rain that seldom stopped, the soil that never seemed to dry, a soil that never warmed up, a month of May with only 1, 80 degree day. 90 degrees one day and a high of 55 the next. The bentgrass that wouldn't grow and the bluegrass that wouldn't stop.





(Team Concept continued)

Employees off on different days of the week:

Because we are doing regular maintenance during the week and also during the weekends, we were going to need a full crew all the time, including on Saturdays and Sundays. To remedy that challenge we gave our employees (one member of each team) a day off on a different day of the week. Two employees are off every day of the week, that gives us the opportunity to have a full crew at all times including weekends.

Some employees had to work split shifts:

Because of the nature of some of the jobs involved we had to have some of our teams work split shifts — four hours in the morning and four hours in the evening.

**★What is needed to get the Team Concept started:**

- 1-) Divide the course into equal sections. (must be equal).
- 2-) Give an equal section as a responsibility to one employee.
- 3-) Group adjacent sections into teams.
- 4-) Make sure you have enough tools and equipment for all of your teams.
- 5-) Get the teams motivated.
- 6-) Train and educate your employees.
- 7-) Forget old ways of doing things and be ready for change.

**★Benefits from the Team Concept:**

- 1-) Less overtime.
- 2-) No one has work seven continuous days.
- 3-) Organization. Do not have to be putting out fires anymore.
- 4-) Problems with detail work eliminated.
- 5-) A golf course that presents itself evenly throughout at all times.

**★Potential challenges with the Team Concept:**

- 1-) Not every employee fits into the team concept. Must find good, responsible, self starting employees.
- 2-) The competition between teams may get intense. Must keep control over it so it does not turn destructive. A little competition is good, but destructive competition is not.
- 3-) Nonstop training and educating of your employees.
- 4-) Must have a lot of patience.

Fourth year:

We have had such good results using this system that this year (our fourth year using this system) we are planning to expand the system even more. This year we are planning to do 100% of golf course maintenance using the Team Concept.

If you have any questions or comments please feel free to call us at 708/291-2232.

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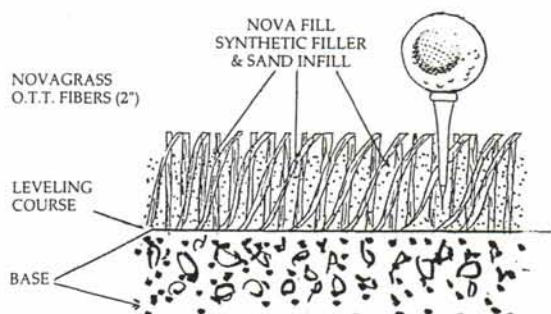


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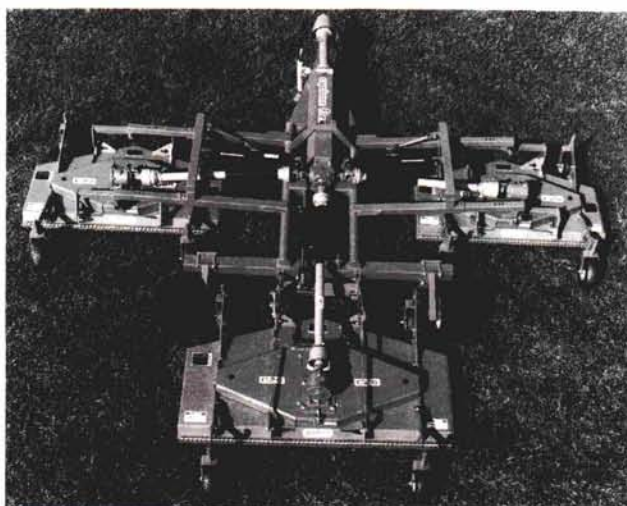
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