

Course Grooming

BY KEVIN DOWNING, CGCS

Willoughby, G.C.

Years ago when I started as an assistant superintendent at Doral C.C. in Miami, one of my principal jobs was to work with the four course foremen on issues that golfers would notice.

These individuals were great people who worked closely with the crew but really didn't focus on the issues that golfers notice. Providing them with small lists to take care of the little things was part of my job as an assistant, but the philosophy has stuck with me during my years as a golf course superintendent.

Since I usually play golf at least once or twice a week, my scorecards are always filled with notes written in the margins. My rounds are usually played late in the afternoon or sometimes early on the weekends before play starts.

Most of the time I either play with one other individual or just as a solo so I can concentrate on the course conditions. The next day these notes have either been incorporated into the daily assignments or scheduled into future work programs.

This year we have implemented a new

system so that the "little issues" are handled by the same individuals. I selected two part-time people off my staff, Larry Drew and Ron Schurk, who have demonstrated tremendous initiative and awareness of our course needs.

Not every course can set aside two men for these jobs, but the concept of "attention to the details" will make each and every facility more pleasing to the members and golfers.

Clean Cut: Mowing Techniques

BY JOE DOUGHERTY

Presidential C.C.

As any golfer knows, when a putt rolls true, or when your balls sits up on the fairway or can be seen in the rough, it's generally the result of good mowing technique, courtesy of the golf course maintenance department.

Although courses differ in levels of perfection, the ultimate goal is to get the job done well enough to make play more pleasurable and appealing to the eye. The three factors that make that happen are operating ability, a good and thorough mechanic and the superintendent with the plan, vision and motivation.

"An operator is as good as his equipment," they say, but experience wins out. A person who cuts fairways on the same gang-unit for ten years can hear and see when their machine is faulty and report it to their mechanic. A new operator must be trained to think this way, be attentive



Rob Haas, superintendent of Miami Shores C. C. with a walk-mowing crew member.