

Parker, plus plastic, puts end to encroaching

BY PETER BLAIS

Ask 100 people what they'd most like to do on a sweltering, mid-August Dallas afternoon and it's doubtful any would choose to get down on hands and knees and clip fairway grass around a green with a pocket knife.

That type of tedious work is an expensive and time-consuming proposition. But until last April it was the only dependable way to stop fairway grass from encroaching onto the greens at Dallas Country Club.

That's when superintendent Scott Parker installed a plastic liner he'd developed around the edge of one of his greens. The liner comes in 10-foot sections, is 5/8-inch wide and four inches deep. Running a regular, manual sidewalk edger through the track, he was able to keep the offending bermudagrass off his bentgrass putting surface all summer.

The system proved so effective, Parker encircled two more of his own greens and convinced superintendents at several other courses to test it. Encouraged with the results, Parker has begun marketing his greens encroachment device through the Arlington, Texas firm Sports Turf Supply.

"It's working just fantastic," said Bruce Hospes, superintendent at Southern Trace CC in Shreveport, La. "We've got it around two greens now and this summer we're doing the remaining 16."

The total cost of that job should run Hospes in the vicinity of \$10,000. Parker believes that's a small price to pay compared to the time and effort involved in trimming by hand, the price of similar products (as much as \$50,000) currently on the market, or (heaven forbid) the cost of ripping up and replacing sod.

"The problem with encroachment is you



Scott Parker with his greens encroachment device

don't see its effects for six or seven years. It happens so gradually that you don't really notice it until it's too late. Then you have to gas it, remove the old sod, and replace it. At \$1.25 per square foot, that's about \$4,000

for the sod alone to replace a 30-inch strip around an average green. That's not even counting the labor and gas," said Parker.

Parker speaks from a decade's experience. After graduating from Mississippi State University in 1981, he went to work as assistant superintendent at Dallas' Brookhaven CC until 1984. He served another three years as assistant at Dallas CC before getting his first head job at Southern Trace.

After a year in Shreveport, he returned to Dallas CC where he has been the head superintendent since 1988.

Parker developed his device as an alternative to chemicals used to discourage the growth of encroaching fairway grasses.

"They've had varying degrees of success. But they don't work on everything," he said.

That left hand trimming as Parker's only option. But since no two people trim exactly the same way, the shape of the greens changed with different trimmers, he explained.

"What we needed was something permanent we could put in the ground," said Parker. "I went to several different plastic companies and gave them my idea. I finally came up with a local company that made a dye for me and produced about 200 feet to try out. We put it in last April. It's worked well. And except for the people who do the trimming, no one knows it's there."

The top of the plastic strips are placed a cleat-length below the ground so golfers won't trip or balls be redirected. The liner extends another four inches into the turf so the fairway grass can't grow underneath and onto the green.

Parker recently developed connectors that will snap onto and firmly connect the ends of the 10-foot plastic liners.

"If they don't butt perfectly, it's possible the bermudagrass could grow through the

opening. That's something he'll have to correct," said Hospes.

Once the connectors are available, Parker said he'll have an inexpensive, easy-to-install product that should take two course workers about three weeks to put in on 18 holes. Plans are to market the device to bentgrass courses throughout the South and Southwest.

If you have a solution to a problem, or an innovation, or a "funny-thing-happened" story to share with other superintendents, we will pay \$50 for the story or idea. Just write to: *Golf Course News*, P.O. Box 997, Yarmouth, Maine, 04096, or call Mark Leslie at 207-846-0600.

ON THE GREEN

Ad Index

RS #	Advertiser	Page
159	Anderson Instruments	37
104	Ciba-Geigy	6-7
115	Ciba-Geigy	18-19
120	Ciba-Geigy	27
116	Club Car	22
151	Continental Bridge	37
107	Cushman	11
110	Cushman	2
155	Environmental Constr.	37
111	Expoconsult	14
108	Fermenta	12
125	Glenmac	31
150	Golf 2000 Pavers	37
112	Golf 2000 Pavers	15
154	Precision Tool Co.	37
106	Goossen Industries	10
133	Green Care	29
113	Hoechst-Roussel	16
132	Jacobsen	40
105	John Deere	8-9
121	Lebanon Total Turf Care	28
127	Lofts Seed	33
157	Markers, Inc.	37
153	Master of the Links	37
129	Melex	39
114	Mitsubishi	17
117	Neogen	23
118	O.M. Scott	24-25
160	Page Com	38
122	Page Com	31
101	Par Aide	13
123	Plantstar Inc.	12
158	Precision Tool Co.	37
156	Precision Tool Co.	37
102	Rhone-Poulenc	3
126	Rhone-Poulenc	32
128	Rhone-Poulenc	34-35
124	Roseman Mfg.	15
109	Salsco	13
140	Southern Concrete	30
119	Standard Golf	26
161	Syntennico	38
103	Toro Comm'l. Prod.	4-5
131	USA 2-Way	13
152	Warehouse Radio	37
163	Willadsen Scale Models	38
162	Yard Edge	38

Golf Course Marketplace

Clearly Affordable Two-Way Radios By Motorola Radius

- LOW COST: RADIOS START AT \$235.00
- UP TO THREE-YEAR WARRANTY
- IMMEDIATE DELIVERY
- TRADE-INS ACCEPTED
- FREE TWO-WEEK TRIAL
- VARIABLE POWER MODELS AVAILABLE

1-800-527-1670

*Actual trade-in allowance depends on make and model of unit being traded in.

PAGECOM

Page-Com, Inc. 10935 Alder Circle, Dallas, Texas 75238 (214) 348-0382

For free information circle #160

ENGRAVED YARDAGE LABELS FOR SPRINKLER HEADS



- Bright colors
- Fasteners included
- Orders quickly shipped UPS

CALL FOR FREE SAMPLE KIT

1-800-284-YARD

THE YARD EDGE GOLF CO.

P.O. Box 13159

Wichita, KS 67213

For free information circle #162

"NOVATEE"

The **NOVATEE** is a combination of specially manufactured **synthetic grass** of commercial quality. Its patented design, featuring top dressing imbedded between the fibers, allows golfers to tee up just like on natural grass.



The **NOVATEE** is the state-of-the-art synthetic tee surface for all courses & driving ranges.

Dealer inquiries requested.

PO/CP 533 CSL
Montreal, PQ., Can. H4V 2Z1
514/486-1696
Fax 514/486-9927

SyntenniCo Inc.

For free information circle #161

willadsen scale models

Custom Models for the Golf Industry

555 whitehall street s.w.
atlanta, ga. 30303 (404) 658-1704

For free information circle #163