

The rolling of the green

Attaining tournament-ready putting surfaces has become an art and science for supers

By TERRY BUCHEN

During amateur and professional men's and ladies' championships, the superintendents and grounds crews work tediously for perfection in the slightest detail to have the golf course peak out during tournament week. Perfect putting greens are the most critical.

The art of green maintenance is difficult at best but some useful tools are available, and superintendents have taken them one step further with some innovative modifications. Multiple mowing, frequent light top dressing, and rolling of the putting surface help provide firm, fast greens in ideal tournament condition.

Adding weight to a walk-behind greensmower is one example of superintendents' ingenuity. Double Eagle Club has an old "walker" that the crew uses to mow greens and tees after they are top dressed. Then it rolls greens and tees, with the reel turned off.

On the course, we felt it was important to have weights, front and rear, to counterbalance the roller when making turns. We accomplished this by building a frame out

of 1-1/2-inch metal angle irons, using them as weight trays and then adding old, used bedknives on either side of the fuel tank.

With this type of design, we can add and subtract the weight we feel is needed on any given day. The rear bedknives weigh about three pounds and are from a five-gang lightweight fairway mower.

The front bedknives weigh about 1-1/2 pounds and are from walk-behind greensmowers. They are secured with 3/8-inch all-thread and the bedknives are stacked in an alternating type pattern. We are able to add up to 100 pounds on each weight tray and we can add some bricks to the front grass catcher for additional weight.

The front roller also is changed to the particular conditions of the day as we use a weihle roller most of the time but occasionally use a solid roller. The weight assembly is easily removed with three bolts on either side.

Bob Alonzi, superintendent at Winged Foot Golf Club in New York, uses a similar-type mower with a single frame on either side and a series of "lead"-type weights mounted horizontally over the top of the



Adding weight to rolling devices is one trick being perfected among superintendents.

Photo by Terry Buchen

engine. He has had excellent results for the many major championships held at his club.

Mike McBride, superintendent at the Muirfield Village Golf Club, has another excellent idea. The front reel on a walk-behind greensmower is removed and a large-diameter pipe is mounted in place, filled full of melted-down "lead," providing heavy weight concentrating on the front roller part of the mower.

This has proved successful for maintaining tournament conditions year round, plus beneficial during The Memorial Tournament on the PGA Tour, held annually in Ohio, McBride said.

The 1990s have brought a new type greens roller that is showing good results on tournament-caliber courses throughout the United States. A riding-type roller is newly on the market that rolls from side to side instead of the conventional forward/backward motion. It has two steering rollers that are 4-1/2 inches in diameter and one drive roller that is 6-1/2 inches in diameter.

The Speed Roller weighs 465 pounds. Another 300 pounds may be added by filling the drive roller with water. The standard rollers are made of steel nickel clad, with stainless steel rollers as an option. The rollers are 38 inches wide, are

powered by a 5.5-horsepower Honda engine, has a hydrostatic-type transmission, and is almost twice as fast as using a walk-behind greensmower type roller because of its width and because the turnabouts on the greens edge are virtually eliminated.

The Speed Roller is manufactured in Gasport, N.Y., by Friend Manufacturing Corp., which has been in business since 1895 and has made some durable golf course sprayers used frequently today. For further information, contact The Turf Keeper, Inc., P.O. Box 529 Honeoye Falls, N.Y. 14472; 716-624-4221.

A similar roller is also available from Australia that is being distributed through Woodbay Enterprises in the Phoenix area, (telephone 800-661-4942). It is called the Smooth Roll.

"We are really excited about the results we are seeing with these side-by-side new rollers on the market that superintendents are using when hosting one of our events," said Allan MacCurrach, senior agronomist for the PGA Tour, who is a former superintendent.

"We are seeing Stimpmeter speed increases of around one to 1-1/2 feet after using either one of these new type implements," observed Dennis Leger, assistant agronomist for the PGA Tour and a well-respected former superintendent.

With Naiad, you'll see greener greens, lush fairways, fewer dry spots...



...and a whole new level of appreciation.

It takes hard work and long hours of nurturing to keep your course in peak condition. So isn't it great to know that Naiad has wetting agent products that can make your job easier and a lot more rewarding.

Our knowledgeable field specialists have been walking the course with superintendents like you for more than 15 years. When it comes to water management, we know the problems and the solutions. Whether you're concerned about standing water, dry spots, water conservation or how to make your fertilizer and chemical

programs more efficient, you can count on Naiad to help you turn in a winning performance season after season.

So when they start awarding trophies for lush fairways, greener greens and greater course playability — Naiad users will come in first every time.

For more information, call us at 1-800-541-6662.

Naiad

Wetting Agent • The Obvious Choice
5627 Stoneridge Dr., Suite 316 • Pleasanton, California 94588

Gaines retires from UGeorgia, but will continue his work at Tifton Lab

T. Powell Gaines has retired from the University of Georgia Coastal Plain Experiment Station at Tifton after more than 26 years as a research chemist in the Agronomy Department.

He will continue his work as owner and president of the Tifton Physical Soil Testing Laboratory, Inc., which he founded in 1976.

A native of Elberton, Ga., Gaines received a bachelor's degree in chemistry in 1961 from the University of Georgia and was director of the Soil and Plant Analysis Laboratory for more than 15 years.

During his career at the Experiment Station, Gaines published more than 170 scientific publications with 95 co-authors.

He developed and published 32 chemical methods for soil and plant analysis, wrote two chemical method handbooks on soil and plant analysis, and received more than 2,000 reprint requests from over 100

foreign countries for copies of his publications.

A certified professional chemist, Gaines was selected a fellow in both the Association of Official Analytical Chemists and the American Institute of Chemists.

He is a member of the American Society of Agronomy, Tobacco Chemists Research Conference, Tobacco Workers' Conference, and American Peanut Research and Education Society.

He is also a member of the Council on Soil Testing and Plant Analysis and is listed in Who's Who in the South and Southwest, Who's Who in Science and Engineering, Who's Who in Georgia, and the American Men and Women in Science.



T. Powell Gaines