

Revisiting The Maples Method of Measuring Putting Greens

By MARK LESLIE

LAWRENCEVILLE, Ga. — Tried and true. Timeless and universal. The Maples Method of Measuring Greens, unveiled to superintendents three decades ago, deserves an encore introduction to superintendents everywhere.

Developed by superintendent Palmer Maples Jr., the measurement system provides a way to determine the size of putting surfaces in order to figure how much pesticide, fertilizer or other materials to apply.

"It's timeless," Maples said from Summit Chase Country Club here — some 31 years after he first developed the measuring method out of necessity. He had taken a job at Charlotte (N.C.) Country Club, where there were no scale drawings of the greens or the locations of sprinkler heads and other helpful information.

"There are other methods but not a better method," Maples said. "It is universally helpful to superintendents if they don't have scale drawings of their greens."

At Charlotte CC, Maples needed to know the area of the greens for material applications "and also have a scale drawing of the greens so that I could plot out the drainage. If we ever wanted to change the greens, I could know how many square feet we were adding. And if I had to move the sprinkler around, it could be used for that."

With scale drawings in hand, he and the club professional could also make such decisions as cup placements for tournaments or other events

The Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) published the Maples Method when former GCSAA President Maples was director of education.

The method is easy and accurate, requiring only a two-foot square of plywood, a 100-foot tape and graph paper:

- A 12-inch circle is drawn on the board and marked at 10-degree intervals. A small screw in the center acts as a measuring point. Four small nails through the corners of the board hold it in place at the center of the green. The 0-degree mark should point toward the rear of the green and the 180-degree mark toward the fairway.

- The tape is placed on the center screw and a measure is made to the edge of the green over the 0-degree mark and recorded. Next, a measure is made over the 10-degree mark to the end of the green and recorded. Repeat this procedure at each 10-degree mark.

- When all 36 measurements are recorded, add them, divide the total by 36, then square that figure (multiply the number by itself).

- Multiply this figure by 3.1416 (pi) and the result is the total square feet.

This method works well for greens that are mostly circular in shape, Maples said, adding that a mathematician suggested a different method on greens that are oblong or kidney-shaped. In that case, rather than adding the 36 measurements, Maples said to square each one as it is taken, then add all the squares up, divide by 36 and multiply that figure by 3.1416.

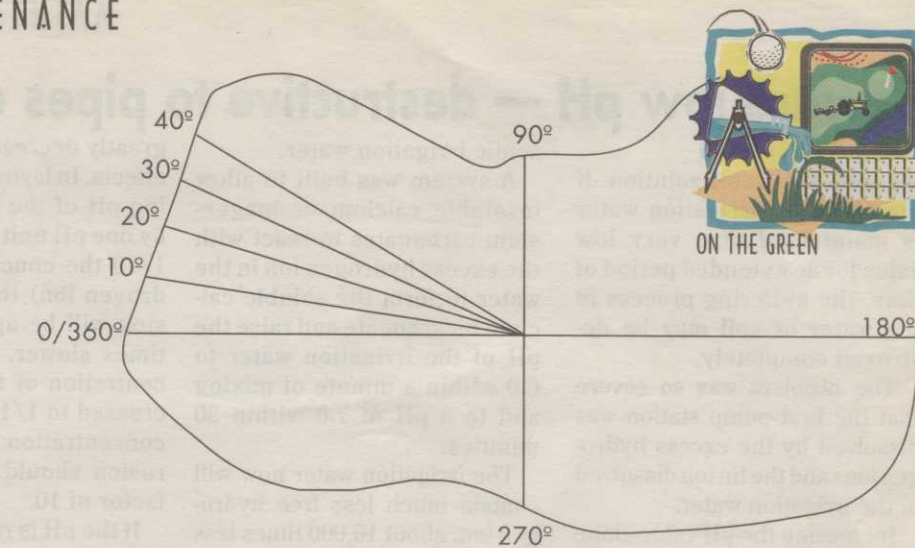
Maples said he has tried other techniques, notably using a rolling measur-

ing tape and walking around the green with it to get the circumference and tabulate the area from that. "For some reason, it won't work," he said.

Meanwhile, superintendents will want to place their measurements on graph paper using a scale of, say, 1 inch equals 10 feet.

The method ultimately helps the superintendent better use materials and personnel, Maples said.

"If we over-apply certain materials, not only is there wasted product, but there is the potential of injury to the permanent turf," he said. "If we apply too little prod-



uct, we don't get good results and additional applications have to be made.

"In the case of pre-emergent material, once you pass the right time of application,

you cannot make an adjustment. Therefore, the exact amount must be applied at the exact time. The same situation may exist when seed is being applied."



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