

Quicker attachment, harder blades improve reel technology

By PETER BLAIS

In the past year, mower manufacturers have introduced several innovations to their reel technology, ranging from quicker attachment systems to harder, longer-lasting blades.

Jacobsen's patented FlashAttach reel attach system allows mowing attachments to be replaced simply and quickly. It is available only on Jacobsen's new Greens King V triplex greens mower.

With FlashAttach, operators can change the 11-blade reels for greens to seven-blade reels for tees in a matter of minutes rather than the normal half hour. The same time savings are possible when changing to verticut reels, spikers and Jacobsen's QuickRoll greens rolling system.

In 30 seconds, an operator can remove the FlashAttach pin, hydraulic motor and attachment; install the new attachment; reattach the hydrau-

lic motor; and insert the FlashAttach pin. No tools are needed.

"It is a big time savings," said Bob Bittner, director of golf course operations at the Club Pelican Bay Golf Course in Naples, Fla. "The equipment is ready faster, with much shorter lag time between jobs. I haven't calculated the overall time savings — maybe 300 percent or more. I know it's significant."

FlashAttach is available exclusively with the Greens King V, which comes with either the

19-hp Kubota diesel or an 18-hp Briggs & Stratton Vanguard gas engine.

Jacobsen also has introduced the Tri-King 1900D triplex reel mower. Although it does not have the FlashAttach system, the new steering wheel, power steering and automatic three-wheel drive make it easier to operate. Tri-King features 72- and 84-inch cutting widths, with five- and 10-blade reels. Seven-blade reels will be available by mid-year.

Toro began offering new hardened reel blades on the Greensmaster 1000 greens mower in mid-1995 and will introduce it onto several other greens mowers this year, according to Helmut Ullrich, marketing manager for the company's walking greens mowers.

The new blades contain more carbon, are 13 percent harder than Toro's old blades and hold their sharpness up to twice as long as other blades, Ullrich said. They were first introduced to the Japanese market two years ago to deal with the kikuyugrass and volcanic ash that quickly wear down blades on those courses.

"They were very satisfied with the results," Ullrich said, "so we introduced them on the Greensmaster 1000 in this country this past summer. We have gotten some very positive responses from our American customers and will be doing more field research this year."

Toro has introduced two other new mower products, the Greensmaster 3200 and Reelmaster 6700-D fairway mower.

The quiet-riding Greensmaster 3200, three-wheel riding greens mower has the quietest combustion engine in the industry [74 dB(A) emission level], according to Toro. The three cutting units provide a cutting width of 59 inches. Owners can choose from eight- or 11-blade reels.

Toro claims the Reelmaster 6700-D is the industry's first riding seven-plex mower. The lightweight mower cuts up to 10 acres per hour and features seven fully interchangeable cutting units, each 22 inches wide and 7 inches in diameter. A single joystick allows operators to raise and lower any combination of five, six and seven cutting units for cutting widths of 96, 114.5 or 133 inches. Superintendents can choose from five- or 11-blade reels.

Ransomes reel mowers include the 3500 fairway mower, with six-, eight- and 11-blade reels; Greens Super 55 greens mower with an 11-blade reel; T-Plex 185 triplex with five, seven or 11 blades; Greensplex 160 greens mower with nine or 11 blades; 250 fairway mower with seven, nine or 11 blades; 300 Fairway mower with seven or 11 blades; and E-Plex electric greens mower with nine or 11 blades.

The reels for the Ransomes 300, Ransomes 250 and T-Plex 185 are interchangeable.

National Mower has introduced its Hydro 70. The triplex trim mower has belt drive to the reels and hydrostatic drive. It is very effective for grooming tees and aprons. "It's gone over very well with superintendents," said Director Stan Kinkad.

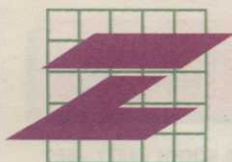
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