

By PETER BLAIS

Completely enclosed reel grinders that eliminate dust, noise and many safety hazards associated with traditional reel grinding machines are beginning to show up in golf course maintenance centers.

"They are the neatest things to come along in the past five years in the grinder area," said Paul Vermeulen, a U.S. Golf Association Green Section agronomist in the Mid-Continent region. "I've only seen a couple so far, but I think we'll see many more."

## Rough-mowing pull-behind gains more supporters

By PETER BLAIS

The Articulator, a pull-behind rotary mower designed specifically for mowing roughs, is gaining popularity among superintendents.

The main difference between the Articulator and other wide-area rotary mowers, is that it uses seven independently articulating heads to float over severe contours. The 21-inch decks (about a third the width of other fixed-deck, rotary rough mowers) reportedly give the same cut as would seven, small push mowers, according to Jeff Laskowski, president of LasTec Inc., which manufactures the Articulator.

"The Articulator is one of many rotary mowers available for roughs," said U.S. Golf Association agronomist Paul Vermuelen. "It meets a special niche market because it goes over contours better than larger decks."

The Articulator cuts grass to precise lengths of between 1 to 5 inches in 10-foot-wide swaths. It distributes grass evenly and works better in wet grass. And there is no scalping. It is used primarily in roughs, although they work well in fairways if the course gets behind in its mowing or on wet grass gone wild from heavy rains.

The X-Series Articulators represent LasTec's third generation of floating rotary mowers. The 1,250-pound units are more productive, automatically fold for transport, are more accurate, have stronger frames, are 300 pounds lighter, come with larger tires to reduce compaction, and have an improved drive system that transfers more power to the blades than older units.

And they are easy to maintain. "A blind guy with a belt sander can keep the blades sharp," Laskowski said.

About 1,000 of the units, which sell for \$13,000, are in operation worldwide.

LasTec is developing a self-powered unit that will be available with three to nine decks that is better able to maneuver around trees and in close to greens and tees.

GOLF COURSE NEWS

## It's a quieter shop with enclosed reel grinders

Dave Pellerin, equipment technician at Portland (Maine) Country Club, said "With OSHA (Occupational Health and Safety Administration) saying it isn't safe to have your shirt sleeve dangling into the machinery or dust flying through the air, you're probably going to see more of those enclosed machines." Pellerin said he would consider asking the club for one if he didn't have the luxury of a sealed-off room dedicated solely to his 1990 Foley United open-air unit.

Foley is among the firms manufacturing enclosed grinders. Foley introduced the AccuMaster in mid-1994. A simple computerized control and automatic indexing of the reel for relief grinding allows the mechanic to perform other tasks while grinding. It can reproduce any reel configuration. An overhead hoist built into the grinder protects the operator from back strain and injury.

"It's doing very well in the golf market," said Foley Vice Presi-

dent Jim Letourneau.

Ransomes offers its Supreme System, an enclosed precision reel grinder with an optional bed knife attachment. The cast-iron design has 2-inch diameter precision ground rails to ensure stability and accuracy. The self-contained cooling system and fully enclosed canopy reduce noise and dust levels. It grinds reels in-frame with universal mounting systems or out-of-frame with bearing adapters. The automatic in-feed system allows for preset-

ting the amount and duration of in-feed. The unit grinds reels up to 36 inches long.

"We've sold quite a few to golf courses in the past few years," said Ransomes Mark Beelek. "They complement our other items nicely."

Neary Manufacturing Inc. has three different enclosures to go around its units, including one of its most recent developments, a completely self-contained rotary blade grinding work station with an integral, two-stage vacuum for dust control. It also has built-in, blade-balancing capabilities and a valve stem grinding guide.



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