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Henson Maples Dubious About Bent at Pinehurst

Numerous players, pros and amateurs, have made favorable comments about putting qualities of Pinehurst Bermuda greens that had been seeded with bent but Henson E. Maples, Pinehurst's supt., isn't satisfied with results.

As many courses in the south are influenced by Pinehurst methods and results, Maples' comment will be of considerable value. He tells GOLFDOM:

"Others have thought that our bent greens are a lot better than I think they are. Perhaps they played this bent in April or May when it finally did get good.

"I'm not ready to go out on a limb and claim that seeding bent instead of rye over Bermuda is the solution to our problems. We're experimenting with it and it will take a lot of work and time to find the right answer.

Heavy Fall Traffic

"Our situation at Pinehurst is different from many courses in that we have very heavy play in October and November just when seedlings are tender and are

trying to get established. Heavy traffic is severe on rye and worse on bent.

"The big trouble seems to be that bent takes so much longer than rye to become established and unless you can get this done before cold weather sets in, you won't have good greens until spring.

"Competition from Bermuda complicates the process with both rye and bent. However, it seems to hurt the bent more since it grows so slowly. The more Bermuda you can get rid of before seeding the better the rye or bent will be.

Answer: Pure Bent?

"The real answer (for the better clubs at least) may be pure bent greens if they can handle them during the hot summer. This would require that the men managing these greens be completely re-educated by learning what to do, how and when to do it.

"Even if you have trouble with bent during July and August when play probably is light, is that any worse than having poor greens during the fall and spring transition periods with Bermuda when play is heavier?

"Quite a bit of experimental work is now being done with bents in the South.

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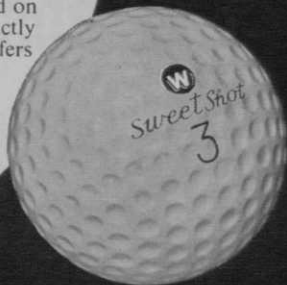
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Maybe we'll have the answer in a few years.

Astoria Does Well

"I have one green (No. 8 on No. 4 course) in Astoria bent, seeded Sept. 10, 1956. It is the best green I have from Oct. to July.

"Last fall I seeded No. 9 on No. 4 course half to Seaside and half to Penn-cross. About that time, I also seeded a green which has C1, C7, C19, Old Orchard, Nimisila, Pennlu, Penncross and combination C1 and C19 plots. Experimental greens also were put in at Athens, Ga., and Birmingham. Jim Latham of the Green Section can tell about these.

"Ellis Maples put C1 in the greens at Pine Brook CC, Winston-Salem, when he built it and they have done well.

"So you can see that we are just getting into this matter of bent. No one yet has the answer for sure and we may not find it. But we will find out what not to do.

"The main thing is that we are learning by doing, by trying out new ideas, observing and thinking.

"I wish that every course would do some experimental work. We'd probably get the answers a lot quicker."

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