



Approach to 18th green with clubhouse in background at San Antonio CC.

Semi-Sod Method of Planting Hybrid Bermudagrass

Experiment at San Antonio CC Advances Tifgreen Growth by Two Weeks

By **Tod Menefee & Joseph S. Finger**

THERE is some question as to whether the semi-sod method of planting hybrid Bermuda, described below, is absolutely new. It certainly isn't prevalent or discussed in areas where grass is propagated by sprigs or stolons. The method was first suggested by Tod Menefee, pro-supt. at San Antonio CC during the recent remodeling of all greens and conversion to Tifgreen (328) there.

After preparation of the usual seed-bed, a sod cutter, such as a Ryan, is used instead of a vertical cutting mower which is usually used to obtain sprigs containing one or more joints. The cutter is set so that it just skims the ground of the nursery plot. This action more or less "tears" out sprigs which are quite similar to those obtained by vertical cutting. These sprigs are sacked for use in the usual manner. The sod cutter is then lowered until it cuts slabs of soil from $\frac{1}{4}$ in. to $\frac{3}{8}$ in. thick. This we call "semi-sod." It contains some sprigs with joints which survived the first cutting, but in addition it contains roots in nursery soil.

Slabs Over Seedbed

These semi-sod slabs are broken up into convenient sizes, either by hand or mechanical means. Slabs from 2 to 4 sq. ins. are ideal. The slabs are spread over the seed-bed of the green in sufficient quantity to cover about 5 to 10 per cent of the putting surface. If desired, the sprigs from the first cutting may also be spread over the surface.

The green is then topdressed with a

Pro-Supt. Ted Menefee (left) holds sample of semi-sod removed from strip. Architect Joe Finger holds ordinary sprigs from first cutting.





Closeup of a typical semi-sod slab.



Semi-sod and ordinary sprigs after three weeks growth. Area below pencil was planted by semi-sod method.

high sand content topping material using a mechanical spreader set to give about 3/16 ins. depth. This heavier topping is justified in greater livability of sprigs, and to even the surface irregularities caused by the slabs of semi-sod. The usual practice of watering thru the establishment stage is followed.

Increases Turf "Take"

Semi-sod, because of its already developed root system, advances growth by an estimated two weeks. It sends out runners sooner and thereby covers faster. Over twice as much grass lives when semi-sod is used than when sprigs alone are used. In areas where "gully-washers" are encountered, it is sometimes necessary to replant greens which have been sprigged in the usual manner, but not when semi-sod is used. Most seed beds contain high

organic content for moisture and nutrient absorption and to make the greens hold a shot during the first year. Watering is heavy to keep sprigs from drying out. So conditions are ripe for fungus attack on weak-rooted sprigs. The semi-sod sprigs are much more capable of resisting attack, as was actually proved in the San Antonio CC planting. Sometimes planting of new or remodeled greens is delayed until the growing season for Tifgreen is nearly over. Here two weeks can make a difference between a good base turf for winter or nothing but a spotted mess.

The nice part of it is that your nursery plot comes right back. Just top dress heavily, fertilize, and get ready for another cutting in about three weeks.

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Renner with USGA

Robert C. (Bob) Renner, formerly tournament director for the ladies PGA, was named a tournament executive by the USGA, taking over his new post Sept. 1. He will work, primarily on preparations for eight national championships and four international team events sponsored by the association. Renner, onetime assistant sports editor of a Ft. Wayne, Ind., newspaper, makes his home in Pontiac, Mich.