

Nematodes Won't Attend PGA Tourney

... or, at least, that's what Bill Lyons, Firestone supt., hopes after his attack on the microscopic worms that feed on turf roots

Back in the spring of 1959, officers of the Firestone CC, Akron, O. decided to redesign the 30-year old course and bring it up to championship tournament caliber. They called on Robert Trent Jones, recognized dean of course architects, and gave him a free hand in "toughening up the course." The result was 18 holes that promise to be as challenging as any in the country. Now it was up to Bill Lyons, Firestone's supt., to see that the challengers would get every possible break when they played in the 1960 PGA Championship.

From past experience Bill Lyons knew exactly what grass to plant, how to plant it and how to care for it. He also knew that at the end of two years he could expect unexplainable brown spots to appear in the putting greens. Brown spots in turf could be caused by fungus, soil insects, etc. The spots that most concerned Lyons were those caused by relatively unknown pests — nematodes. They are not new. They have plagued farmers for centuries but only recently have been identified.

Nematodes are tiny, thread-like worms that attack the roots of more than 1700

different plants. Most species are so small that they can be seen only under a microscope. Up to now they have been known mostly as agricultural pests but they are becoming recognized as a serious turf problem.

Until the late 1940s very little was known about nematodes. Farmers knew their damage as "root knot," "slow decline," "spreading decline," or simply "tired land." Since the farmer couldn't see what was going on beneath the soil, he had no idea of the nature of his enemy. More often than not, he simply rotated to another crop and planted it until it, too, began to show familiar symptoms of deterioration.

As scientists began to learn more about nematodes, they also found ways of controlling them. In the early '40s, Shell Chemical introduced D-D(R) soil fumigant, a liquid that could be injected into the soil before planting, to kill nematodes.

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In the photo at the top of the page Bill Lyons (foreground), supt. at Firestone CC, checks spraying operation on the 9th green. In background is the club's new clubhouse.

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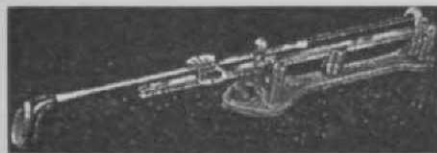
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Nematodes Out at Firestone

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Since then the material has been widely used by growers of tobacco, vegetables, small fruit, etc.

Bill Lyons had a broad agricultural background before joining the Firestone CC 18 years ago and was familiar with the nematode problem. He had seen celery yields tripled through the use of soil fumigants and suspected that some of the problems that occurred in lawns might be caused by nematodes.

Huddle with Valentine

While attending a meeting at Pennsylvania State College early in 1959, he discussed the problem of turf nematodes with Joe Valentine, supt. at Merion in Ardmore, Pa. Valentine had used a new Shell prod-



... here is the enemy

uct, Nemagon (R) soil fumigant, with excellent success. Not only did it control nematodes, but it appeared to suppress fungi as well. On the basis of these results, Lyons arranged to apply a combination of the nematocide for nematode control and dieldrin for soil insect control to all the established greens and to two new greens that had been designed by Jones. Nemagon was selected because it could be used as both a pre-planting nematocide and for treatment to existing turf without danger of injury to the plants. The material was applied with a regular 200 gal.



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tank sprayer followed by a thorough drenching of approximately 1 in. of water. Lyons got what he thinks are near 100 per cent results. |

Course Toughened

As a result of close cooperation between the architect, directors of the club and Lyons, Firestone boasts one of the finest 18 holes in the country. Jones' suggestions included two new greens, two strategically placed ponds, and enough traps to provide sand piles for an entire generation of two-year olds. The course was lengthened 600 yds. and now measures 7,165 yds.

Three holes may be long remembered: the 3rd, par 4; the 16th, par 5; and the 18th, par 4. The third measures 450 yds. with a 6,000 sq. ft. pond directly in front of the green. The sixteenth is 625 yds., has been carefully trapped, and it, too, has a pond directly in the line of approach. The eighteenth, 465 yds., is said to be one of the finest finishing holes in the country. It dog-legs to the left to a spectacular 8,500-sq. ft. green.

About \$750,000 was spent in getting Firestone CC ready for the PGA Championship. Besides making wide improvements on the course, the club installed an underground communication system, one of the first of its kind in U. S.

Golf Writer Memberships Listed Under Two Classifications

Membership in the Golf Writers Assn. of America hereafter will be under two classifications: Regular members covering full-time newspaper and press service men, regular employees of golf publications, columnists and sports editors; Associate members covering free lance writers, manufacturers' public relations staff men and others not regularly employed in writing everyday golf.

The GWAA also is considering establishment of a golf hall of fame.

Deadline for entries in the fourth annual Burke-PGA golf writing awards has been extended to Oct. 15 to include articles submitted as the result of coverage of the International Amateur team matches to be played at Merion. As in the past, \$1,000 is being put up for what are judged to be the best news and feature articles.

International Miniature

The finals of the International Miniature golf tournament, to be played Sept. 10-11, will be held in Asbury Park, N. J. and not on Atlantic City's boardwalk as stated in June Golfdom (page 46).