

GRAU'S ANSWERS TO TURF QUESTIONS



Early Tournament

Q. — Last spring our club (125 members) managed to buy the land we had leased for several years and started plans for grass greens. We had no money but did have several members with ambition. Farmer members brought machinery, built bunkers and hauled rocks and gravel for a base. A friend gave us peat, another hauled it from Colorado and we borrowed a mixer. Compaction tests told us to mix 2 soil, 1 coarse sand, 1 peat. We placed 8 to 10 ins. on the greens, fertilized, and planted with Seaside Sept. 1. Weather was ideal and now only a few spots about 1½ ins. in diameter have yet to fill. We got a new greens mower and this spring we topdressed, leveled, and lowered the cut until they are ready to putt on.

Ordinarily we have a tournament in June with 150 entries. We have thought we may have to delay the event. Several members are eager to start playing the greens. Is there any way that we can take a hole cutter and check the greens to tell when they are ready for play? Some of us feel that we should let the root system develop before we start playing on them. Would you tell us your opinion of the earliest possible playing date? We understand that you are a graduate of the University of Nebraska. We felt that you would have a better idea of how fast this grass would develop in central Nebraska.

A. — With the good start you have, the careful preparation of the soil mixture, the good drainage in the base and your deep concern for deep roots there should be no real reason why you should consider postponing your tournament. Maintain a good level of nitrogen to keep the grass developing strongly. Bring the height of cut down to putting level as quickly as possible without scalping. Mow the greens every day — even twice a day when they are growing rapidly. Be sure the topdressing is weed free.

Water deeply and then let the surface become rather dry between irrigations. This will help to increase root depth. A dry putting surface can take much more abuse than one that is soggy. You may start putting on the greens as soon as they are fit to play on. It will be a good idea to have them in play before the tournament — the play will be beneficial.

If you have questions about turf care, please send them to Fred Grau (right) c/o Golfdom.

Poa Annua Control

Q. "We have the problem, as many courses have, of poa annua control. Is there any method of controlling this grass, chemically or in maintenance practice?"

We have Washington bent greens, bluegrass tees and fairways, with underground irrigation on tees, greens and fairways. The course is considered in very good shape but we do have that poa annua (North Dakota)

A. No new methods of controlling Poa annua have come to light. We expect to see Poa in Washington bent. They are natural companions. Do not fight Poa in the greens. Just feed the bent generously during its best growing season.

Bluegrass turf, irrigated and cut short enough for good tees and fairways, always can be counted on to have some poa. Best control is reduced irrigation and stepped-up fertilization when bluegrass is growing at its best. Arsenicals, used regularly, can reduce poa.

Change to Bent

Q. Our club recently completed installation of a watering system. The prevalent grass on the fairways is Kentucky blue with poa annua in the greens. As is so often the case upon installation of watered fairways, the thought of seeding the fairways and greens with creeping bent has been entertained. To assure proper healthy growth, what possible method would be best for the introduction of bent? Is there a particular seed recommended to withstand severe weather exposure? (Illinois)

A. Converting from Kentucky blue to creeping bent will be very costly. Subsequent maintenance will be infinitely more expensive. To have satis-

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