

(Left) Dry spring caused this green at Milwaukee's Lincoln Park GC to split open. (Center) Bargain Seaside used for overseeding Florida Bermuda green wasn't a bargain. Weeds flourished, as you can see. (Right) Polyfilm cover produced lush turf at Brynwood in Milwaukee but spring cold spell injured it.

### Looking Back on '61

# Keeping Ahead of Golfers Pushed Maintenance Crews to the Limit

By C. G. WILSON

There was no recession in the wear and tear on golf turf in 1961. Play increased to the saturation point. Supts. everywhere asked not what to do, but "when can we get the job done?"

Art Twombly at New York's James Baird State Park used three tractors with fairway gangs operating in tandem to stay ahead of the thundering herds of golfers. In Milwaukee, two greens on every hole are being contemplated for a new county course. So-called "temporaries" are commonplace on most courses there. However, someone will have to coin a new word for these secondary greens. They

are far from temporary. Maintained like regular greens, play can be switched to them at a moment's notice.

#### Private Clubs Pressed

Even the private clubs were finding it increasingly difficult to stay ahead of play. Vanishing from the American scene is Monday's day of turf rest. It has been usurped by caddies, policemen, etc., as well as the regular member who finds more leisure time to enjoy his game. In some respects this has increased private club turf problems so that they are more numerous than at daily fee courses. Turf supplier, C. O. Borgmeier, George A. Davis, Inc., Chicago, estimates machinery operation at 50 percent of efficiency due

to the private club golfer's insistence on quiet and no distractions from labor while playing. Naturally this occurred while the same golfer was fussing about the high cost of course upkeep. Meanwhile his public counterpart was dodging sprinklers and putting out while the mower was cutting the green, and taking it in stride.

Impressive as the figures are, new course construction is not solving the traffic headaches now, nor is it expected to in the future. Possibly the answer is a holiday for turf in the growing season. One nine at a time could be closed on 18-hole links. Smaller clubs could stagger their days of rest with neighboring courses where guest privileges could be exchanged.

### Secondary Tees, Greens?

Short of this, permanent secondary greens and tees will find increasing favor on private and public courses alike; or maintenance after dark will receive more than lip service. Incidentally, this has been done successfully on some courses entertaining major golf tournaments.



Wilson

It is possible that greenmasters at future turf meetings will be as interested in tractor lights, dew removal and wet grass cutting, as they are today in horsepower, draw bar pull and the frequency of cut. Certainly turf experts everywhere will be discussing the merits of preventing compaction as they now talk about prevention of disease. Many now rightly think the two are related. Compaction from traffic influences disease as well as weeds, availability of nutrients and other turf problems.

All problems turfwise are influenced primarily by weather. This brings us to a detailed description of what happened to golf turf in 1961.

While growing conditions were generally good in the Midwest, they were good only for bents and bluegrasses until late summer. The poor Kansas City supt. who had renovated fairways and planted Bermuda experienced nothing but grief until the weather warmed.

### Arctic vs. Tropical

Transplanting a shrub from the north to the south side of a clubhouse is equivalent to a 200 mile journey due south,

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## GCSA's 33rd Turf Conference May Break All Records

There are already indications that the GCSA's 33rd international turf conference and show, to be held in Miami Beach, Jan. 29-Feb. 2, 1962, will be the best attended meeting in history. Various GCSA sections throughout the country say that they will have larger delegations at the conference than ever before. Exhibitors' space, according to Gene S. Nutter, executive dir. of GCSA, is selling very well. The exhibit will be staged in the Napoleon Room of the Deauville Hotel, site of the turf show, and it encompasses the largest area of open floor space the GCS ever has offered equipment and supply manufacturers.

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according to the Kansas State agronomist, Ray Keen. Although the actual distance is only a few feet, the climatic change is drastic. Such is the case on every course. The grass in turf areas facing north is growing under near polar conditions. On the other side of the hill, heat from the southern sun is adding 4 to 6 weeks to the growing season.

Many southern courses will be overseeding winter grass greens as this issue of Golfdom comes off the press. Several will be using a mixture of bent, domestic rye and poa trivialis with or without fescue and Kentucky blue grass. Bent is too slow in becoming established when used alone. Rye is good initially, but fades rapidly with hot weather in the spring. Pennlawn fescue, when used alone, was only satisfactory the first of two winters at East Lake in Atlanta. It has not been good either year at Sea Island, also in Georgia. Farther north, it has been very good in Schmidt's trials in Norfolk and Blacksburg, Va. Poa trivialis has been outstanding among the individual grasses in our trials, but performs even better in mixtures.

### It Wasn't a Bargain

One thing sure, clubs that bought bargain, non-certified Seaside bent last fall will pay the added price for certified seed this year. The rosette type weed present in the bargain seed was costly to get rid of and displeased the vacationing golfer.

Spring kill problems were intense in some areas. The Eastern seaboard had

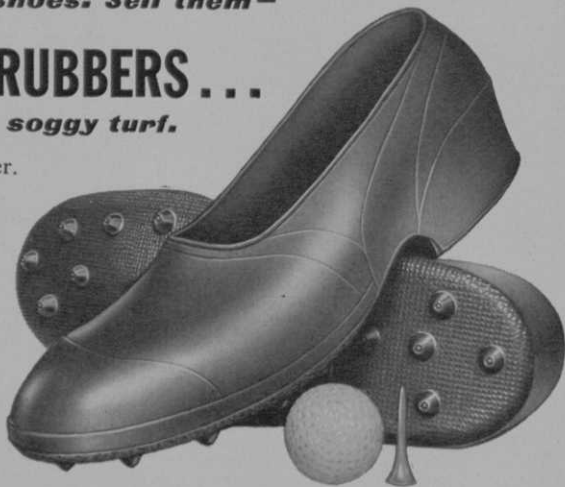
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### **Ground Crews Have to Hustle**

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unprecedented snow. When this vanished in the spring, disease was rampant especially on those courses where no thought was given to snowmold treatment the previous fall. Fortunately, the Toronto area that has been plagued with so many winter problems in recent years, escaped widespread injury in 1961. Supts. there were quick to credit revised maintenance practices which included syringing greens daily as the snow melted off. It is worthwhile in their opinion even though the water lines must be drained each night to prevent freezing and possible breakage.

#### **Fire Wagon Treatment**

Tom Johnson, Lachute CC, Quebec, is envied by fellow supts. for his easy method of "showering off" a green. Owner Gilbert Ayres' new fire truck is constantly on guard against desiccation each spring.

Jim Watson's results in using plastic to cover dormant turf during the winter was so striking in 1959-60 that others tried it in 1960-61. At Kern Park in Milwaukee, Ray Greiten, cooperating with the Sewerage Commission, established plots on a ground area flooded each winter for ice skating. Before placing the

polyfilm, some plots were fertilized, seeded and treated with fungicide. Other areas were also planted but not covered. The only turf to come through the winter was in the covered areas.

But at Brynwood CC the results were not good. Excessive growth took place and the cold spell that followed the first cutting killed the succulent grass.

#### **Tests Show Some Promise**

In the Toronto area the tests showed promise. Early greening and frost removal was good although covered areas seemed sadly in need of nitrogen six weeks after unveiling. In Montreal one course established plots on a putting green in May, shortly before the first hot weather hit. A weekend with 90 deg. days wasn't good. When the plots were uncovered, the grass was dead.

All of this points to the importance of adequate testing. Results from one year's trials in one location should never be considered conclusive.

Spring deadspot or winter dieback, in Bermuda, was prevalent again this year in the central plains area. It is also becoming quite commonplace in mid-Atlantic states. Work at Oklahoma A & M indicates the insecticide, Dieldrin, is helpful in controlling this pest, but the bug

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or disease responsible for the trouble hasn't been identified. Some of the A & M work also shows that nutrition may be a factor. Observations in Tulsa would bear this out. Meadowbrook CC's fairways there have been severely hit while nearby Southern Hills has experienced no difficulty with this problem.

A dry, cold spring was the major complaint in the northern tier of the central states. This caused grass puffing in some cases and subsequent scalping. On one course no trouble occurred where greens had been aerified. Those that were missed due to the pressure of other work were hard hit by mower damage.

#### **Turf Protection Emphasized**

Increasing emphasis was placed on turf protection in 1961. Fairway spraying with fungicides, iron and crabgrass killer was becoming the rule rather than the exception. The trend to lighter more frequent feeding on all turf continued. Jack Ormand at Canoebrook, Summit, N. J., fertilized fairways every two weeks during the summer months. Jack, along with others, is using the rotary or broadcast type of spreader. He finds the savings in time permits more frequent fertilizing, and controlled release of plant food.

This summer we questioned Dr. Love at Wisconsin about the seeming increase in the plant's need for iron. He believes lack of air may be responsible and is investigating different oxygen levels in nutrient solutions. His work is sponsored by the Noer Foundation. Extra air may cut down on the need for iron. If this proves to be the case, it will add to the evidence that compaction is, indeed, our most critical problem.

#### **Increase in Salinity**

Southern California had its customary trouble with hot weather and lack of moisture. The moisture situation was the most critical problem. Salinity increased because of poor quality water and the lack of drainage. In fact, the use of tile covered with a gravel blanket before topsoil is added is important to those areas where salts will accumulate. There is no better way to stop the capillary movement of salts to the surface. It also permits occasional excess watering to leach the soluble chlorides and sulphates from the soil.

Turf problems will always be with us. Research is our only hope to stay ahead of them. We are indeed fortunate that so much is being done today that will answer tomorrow's problems.