

Watering Systems Help Pull Great Plains Courses Through

Drought and the invasion of grasshoppers that took such a heavy toll in the farmlands and forests across vast areas of northwestern U. S. and the great plains this summer left their marks on golf courses in these regions, but few if any were hit to the extent that they had to suspend play or go out of business. The greatest damage, of course, was done at smaller courses where there are no irrigation installations.

Reporting on the situation in the vicinity of Rapid City, S. D., Cal Polsean, Sr., supt. at Arrowhead CC there, says that due to the lack of rain between January and June the rough at his course remained brown throughout the spring and summer months, and tees, greens and fairways came around only because the Arrowhead pumping system was able to supply them with approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ million gallons of water a day. Rainfall for the first six months of the year amounted to less than $4\frac{1}{2}$ ins. and in June, normally the wettest month of the year, only .75 ins. of rain fell.

Here's Where It Hurt

Polsean points out that most of the courses in the hills surrounding Rapid City do not have watering systems and it was pretty much of a struggle for them to survive in June, July and August. Grass on the fairways at these locations never did turn green and by July courses in the area generally had a threadbare look. However, the southwestern part of South Dakota was spared the grasshopper invasion.

Ev Anderson, supt. at Jolly Acres CC, also in Rapid City, reports approximately the same conditions as Polsean. Jolly Acres is deep in the drought area but is able to buy water from the Pactole Dam. Through mid-August fairways and greens at this club were in excellent shape. Anderson formerly was at Tomahawk CC in Deadwood, about 50 miles north of Rapid City, and says that his old club also came through the hot months in fine style. Play in the entire region, he notes, has increased considerably in 1961, continuing a trend that started at least five or six years ago.

Farther north, in Bismarck, N. D., it has been necessary to use twice as much water this season as in any year since the end of World War II to keep courses



Zeke Avila (center) pres. of Southern Calif. GCSA accepts checks from Lyle Tripp (l), representing Yorba Linda CC, and Bud Oakley, pro, representing Palos Verdes CC, for the chapter's research and educational fund. Southern Calif. supts. have a nine-point program aimed at providing education for members and future greenmasters and for providing improved playing conditions for golfers. Donations to research and education are helping GCSA realize its goal.

in playable condition. And, as in other parts of the central plains region, clubs that do not have irrigation systems have been hard pressed to keep fairways, greens and tees from suffering damage that may be hard to repair. Carl Reff, supt. at Apple Creek CC in Bismarck, states that his club is one of those that is fortunate enough to have a good watering system and that by mid-August the course's condition compared favorably with that in other years. "But," adds Reff, "it took an amazing amount of water to keep it up to standard." Agriculturally, about 90 per cent of North Dakota has been hard hit by drought damage and every county in the state has received some kind of "disaster area" relief. Most of the damage in South Dakota has been confined to the northern portion of the state.

In Colorado, according to Phil Hirsch, supt. at the LaJunta GC, golf courses came through the hot weather months in what amounted to almost normal shape, although rainfall was much less than normal. Once again, there was great dependence on watering systems. Hirsch points out that grasshoppers are something of a problem every year in the southeastern part of Colorado and that this year's incursion probably was not much worse than in other years. He adds that Colorado grasshoppers are well trained. "They always seem to feed on weeds and foliage bordering our course and don't seem to bother the playing area," Hirsch observes.