



Five lights, three in front, two in back, are installed on tractor for night mowing at Firestone CC. Two rear lights give check on performance. Driver is James Seigfried.

By **BILL LYONS**

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Fred V. Grau, Golfdom columnist, once quoted a learned man in one of his excellent speeches: "Good judgment," said Grau, "comes out of wisdom; wisdom comes from mistakes and having thought about them."

Some will recall disastrous errors with turf on their own courses. The year of 1949 was such a year for many of us. No matter what most of us tried, it wasn't right. That was the year that many learned not to mow wilting turf. We learned, too, the deadly effect of highly fertilized grass clippings, especially on the aprons and approaches to greens.

With the American Golf Classic now an annual August feature at Firestone, we have to make sure we have satisfactory turf for the tourney. Night maintenance is not for all golf courses — it is only for those who:

1. Have the need — because of heavy play.
2. Desire to reduce maintenance cost. (More work per man hour.)
3. Demand safer operations.
4. Would like to have more customers — happier golfers.

Big Break in Routine

Heavily played public and overcrowded private courses simply can't get all the refined maintenance jobs done on schedule. I visited a supt. in a large city who stated that they could not mow greens from

NIGHT Maintenance

Here is a report on after-dark course work following a two-year tryout . . . Much can be said in its favor, according to the writer

Thursday evening until Monday morning. Every starting time was sold out from daybreak until sundown for Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Do you have such a need? Do you recognize it?

Howard Black, pro-owner, Elms CC, Massillon, O., saw the 1961 night maintenance demonstration at the Northern Ohio GCSA meeting at Firestone. Two days later I visited his club. The first thing Howard said was, "Take a look in my barn." Every tractor was equipped with new lights. One of his drivers said: "I cut more grass last night in eight hours than I ever cut before."

Better Fairway Turf

By error and by judgment we learned to stop all summer mowing at 11 a.m. We feel that mowing turf of any kind when heat is causing stress will weaken and open it to weed invasion.

Fairways mowed in the early morning during periods of heavy dew have that "cow-pile" look. Masses of clippings are neither conducive to good maintenance, beauty nor good playing conditions.

By beginning fairway mowing at twilight there is not enough dew to cause clipping bunching. Some nights dew will appear at midnight and others at about 1:00 a.m.

It is easier to see the line of cut at night than during bright sun. The accuracy is unbelievable. The rear light

on a push type unit will actually show which unit needs adjustment.

Crisp, erect turf mows uniformly. Mowing speed is slow — three to four miles per hour. This reduces chance of "washboarding" fairways. No speedup is necessary to get caught up.

Safety alone is worthy of the effort to think yourself into this program. Thinking is harder work than doing.

Maintenance Cost Reduced

The 18 narrow championship fairways at the Firestone can be mowed in six and one-half to seven hours, using only one push type seven gang unit.

Usually the program during the growing season is to mow nine fairways each night Monday through Friday and all 18 on Saturday night. This gives my operator four to five hours per night to do other jobs such as spraying, fertilizing, liming, aerifying, watering, or maintaining equipment. My operator, by the way, takes pride in doing every operation perfectly. He is an excellent mechanic and craftsman. Sometimes we do not see each other for several nights. We leave notes for each other in the office. He has never had to call me at night in two years because of an emergency.

Other Night Jobs

Verticutting greens and tees is a good job for from sundown to 11:00 p.m. Greens are floodlighted with one or two 1500 watt generators bolted to a truck. Aerifying can be done until the dew becomes too heavy.

When spraying greens and tees with fungicide or fertilizer, we mount one 1500 watt generator on the platform of our 300 gal., 21 gpm, PTO sprayer. There probably is less risk of fertilizer burn at night.

Inasmuch as we are able to get our greens mowed every morning at daybreak ahead of the early bird golfers (many of them women), we have given up mowing greens at night except when we are verticutting. If it were a choice of mowing at night or not at all, I would mow nights.

A golfer is to be treated kindly. He is struggling with 14 clubs on a course that is cluttered with all kinds of pitfalls. Everyone seems to delight in making the game challenging or discouraging for him.

As if all this is not enough, we come along with noisy mowers, trucks, tractors, sprayers and other units moving in all top dress greens to worry him still further directions. Then we aerify, verticut and

Golf's "World Series" Scheduled for Firestone in September

Officials of the Firestone Country Club in Akron, O., who became so enamored of tournament golf after the 1960 PGA Championship was played at their course that they introduced the American Classic the following year, are going to go in for even bigger and better things on Sept. 8-9.

On those dates they are going to play host to the winners of the Masters, U.S. Open, British Open and PGA Championship in what is to be known as the "World Series of Golf." The exclusive tournament will run to only 36 holes. The first prize winner will collect \$50,000. The runnerup will receive \$15,000 while the third and fourth place finishers will be guaranteed \$5,000 apiece with the possibility that the No. 3 man may receive \$10,000.

Arnold Palmer and Jack Nicklaus, of course, have already won their tickets to the big show. NBC will telecast the play on both the 8th and 9th.

ther when putting for those bets. Are we being brutal to our best friends, our customers and guests?

Reducing daytime maintenance will be welcomed by all who play golf. Today's paying customers will soon get wise to the course that is pleasure conditioned. Less interference by laborers will mean more daily rounds. This adds up to lower maintenance cost per round. Then too, don't forget that golfers always want the best and are willing to pay just a little more for a course that is maintained for their convenience.

Only men who are genuinely interested in their work can be trusted to work alone. Interested men can be persuaded to live with this program. Bossed men can't or won't do the job.

Anyone planning a night program is cordially invited to come to Firestone CC and study the type of lights, wiring, switches, positioning, etc. In just one day a person can get all the information that has taken our crew two years of trial and error to accomplish. The most recent improvement is the new type voltage regulator with its variable charge capacity.