Kennett Square Goes from Manual Operation to Power

New Screen Reduces Preparation Cost

By PAUL WELDIN, Jr.
Golf Course Supt., Kennett Square (Pa.) G & CC

Until this spring, the final step in preparing topdressing at Kennett Square was by the old, time-consuming manual screening method. Along with the majority of supts., we had never liked this inefficient and untidy operation and finally determined to do something about it. Fortunately, just at this time a new power vibrating screen was introduced by the Royer people. Since the new machine met all our requirements and also fit our budget, we bought it and put it to work. We noted a three-way improvement in our topdressing operation.

Primarily because the power screen's elevated conveyor discharges finished topdressing high enough and far enough for direct stockpiling, it greatly speeds an operation and substantially reduces our costs. Last year our time records showed a preparation cost for manual screening of $7 to $10 per yard; this year, the power screen has cut this cost to slightly under $4 per yard, an average saving of around $5 per yard.

In a manual screening operation there is inevitably some spilling and mingling of screened and unscreened materials. This results in a noticeable loss of quality in the finished topdressing. In years past this led to two kinds of headaches: occasional complaints from members who showed us "stone collections" gathered from pebbles on the greens; and occasionally clogged spreaders despite frequent cleanings during use. The power screen has completely eliminated both problems.

We have also noticed that the power screen produces a more homogeneous top dressing due to the mixing action of the vibrating screens and the elevating conveyor. The vigorous vibration of the power screen also allows us to use a finer mesh screen cloth than is possible with a manual screen and thus allows us to produce a finer topdressing when wanted.

From the supt's point of view, the most convenient feature of the power screen is its speed. It so greatly accelerates screening and so radically reduces set-up and clean-up time that the operation can now be done on a moment's notice whenever a lull in the maintenance schedule or an unexpected rain makes an hour or two available. In contrast, manual screening so ties up men, work space and equipment that the superintendent must carefully schedule it ahead of time in the interest of economical use of facilities.