

Mowing by the book

Getting the greens into fine playing condition for the New season is a "manual" job at Olympia Fields.

People not familiar with course maintenance would be somewhat surprised to learn that a trainee greenkeeper is given quite thorough instruction in gripping a mower. Not so much, of course, as a neophyte golfer who is drilled in gripping a club, but a man who is going to mow greens has to develop a feel for the machine. The grip, which involves placing only the index fingers and thumbs on the mower handle, is important because it enables the operator to properly hold the blade to the turf and let it float.

Another operation that is carefully demonstrated until the trainee masters it is the turn at the end of a swath. The machine is looped when a cut is completed, and not spun on its rollers. It takes practice to do this properly or collars can be chewed up. Finally, the knack of holding a mower on a straight

line is stressed. This isn't always as easy as it looks or seems to be.

These procedures and cautions, do's and don'ts, and equipment requirements for handling several other maintenance jobs are set down in a manual that has been prepared by Oscar Miles, superintendent, Olympia Fields (Ill.) CC. The purpose of the manual is to aid in the training of new employees, but older workers benefit by occasionally checking it to see if they are carrying on in the proper continuity.

The Miles' manual is not turned over to new employees, although it is always available to them as well as those who have been around a while. The trainee is instructed from the manual by Miles or one of his two maintenance foremen, Wally Hedrick and Roger LaRochelle, each of whom is responsible for one of



Upon approaching the green, stop below bank, remove transport wheels from mower.

Remove all ball marks, moving in systematic pattern, about 10 sq. feet at a time. Press turf in from sides. Step on repaired mark.



By THOMAS CAREY

Olympia Fields' 18. If the new man is to be trained to mow greens, one of his instructors carefully goes over the green-mowing section of the manual with him. The mower is explained in some detail as to how it is assembled, how it works and what is expected of it. The next step is for Miles or one of the foremen to take the trainee out for a trial spin.

The mowing of a green is an operation that is carried out in eleven steps—or there are that many procedures and cautions that have to be taken into account when a green is mowed. At least, that is how Oscar Miles sums up the operation. Here are the leaves from Miles' manual on green mowing:

- 1) Mechanic checks mower for bed knife to reel adjustment before maintenance man removes mower from shop;
- 2) Upon approaching the green, stop

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Miles, above, finds his maintenance manual invaluable for both new employees and old.



On first longitudinal cut, aim at object on far side of green to insure straight line.

Begin mowing of green by cutting outline or perimeter cut. Then lift machine and get on line for second or interior perimeter cut.

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below bank and remove transport wheels;

3) Run mower up to short collar and turn machine off;

4) Remove all ball marks from green, moving in a systematic pattern, taking about 10 square feet of green at a time. (Ball marks are preferably repaired with a meat fork; press turf inward from sides and then step on repaired marks);

5) Start mower, engage reel and begin mowing outline or perimeter cut. After cutting first circle, lift machine and get on line for next interior perimeter cut;

6) Start cutting middle or remainder of green. Cut in direction shown on work schedule board. Aim mower at an object on the far side of the green in order to insure a straight line during the first longitudinal cut;

7) After cutting first half of green, stop mower, disengage reel and go to the opposite side of the first longitudinal cut;

8) Engage reel and proceed to cut second half of the green;

9) Disengage reel and remove mower to area where transport wheels have been dropped. Turn off mower;

10) Whip all loose clippings from green, short and long collars with whipping poles. Be very fastidious about this;

11) Put transport wheels on mower and proceed to next green site.

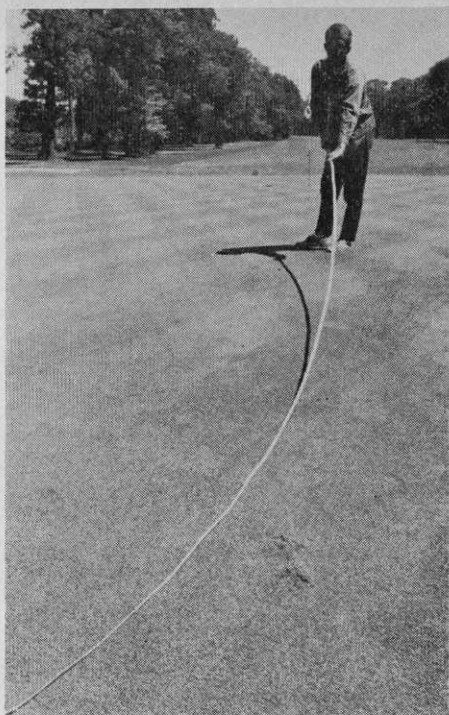
Miles' manual doesn't stop with the 11 procedures listed above. He instructs the employee to keep the following things in mind when working on greens:

A) Turn or reverse direction of mower only when off the green—on long or secondary collar. Make a wide loop to eliminate roller spin, which causes bruising of turf;

B) After mowing a green always disengage reel before going to next one;

C) If machine isn't functioning correctly, or if odd noises are detected, get help from foremen or return mower to shop for checkup;

D) When golfers approach a green on which you are working, stop machine and



Be fastidious about whipping all loose clippings from green, plus short and long collar.

turn off mower. Remember that golfers come first!

E) Don't forget safety! Do not remove any foreign material from the reel without first turning off the mower;

F) The shop foreman will assist you in cleaning and greasing the mower after it is returned to the shop. This is to be done every day! The shop mechanic is responsible for all mower settings.

The greens at Olympia Fields are cut at $5/32$ inches in the spring and fall and at $3/16$ in the summer. The first cut in the cycle is started at seven o'clock and moves toward one; the next cut starts at five and moves toward eleven; then it proceeds from three to nine; and is finished between six and twelve, when the cycle is repeated.

Besides labor turnover, says Miles, the main reason he wrote the manual was he can't devote as much time as he would like to training new men. •