

"How I prepared the course for the Western Open"

BY TED WOHRLE,

Superintendent, Beverly CC, Chicago, Illinois,
site of the 1967 Western Open,
tells about the special preparations
needed for the big tournament.





July, 1966

I knew full well that the Western Open was coming to Beverly in one short year. Working with the grounds committee, we felt a drastic renovation of the fairways on the front nine was needed. At this time we decided to get rid of the *Poa annua* that had given us problems for thirty years. We engaged a Purdue professor, Dr. Bill Daniel, to consult with us regarding a vegetation killer.

Creeping bentgrass

We discovered that once most of the *Poa annua* had been destroyed, the bentgrass grew in dramatically, filling in from what had been a 5% portion up to nearly 85% of the total grass. A carefully planned program of watering assisted greatly in this job. Our cast iron pipe irrigation system performed with complete satisfaction.

Spring, 1967

By this time, everything looked healthy. The weather was cooperating, the grass was growing in beautifully. We were proceeding nicely on schedule. And then . . .

Disaster!

A tornado smashed through the south side of Chicago, destroying property throughout Oak Lawn, Evergreen Park and Beverly CC. Thirty-one huge oak trees were torn out by the roots. The entire pro shop, cart house, caddie house and other structures were flattened. A half-mile of fence was also damaged.

The long haul back

All our efforts were put into removing debris, repairing damage to greens, tees and trees. Seven large trees were used to replace those lost. With maintenance

procedures and fertilizer schedules interrupted, we were now a full 3 weeks behind our *normal* schedule! Bringing in extra crews, new construction was begun on the destroyed buildings, the fence was repaired, and things began to get back into shape.

Summer—the homestretch

With the weather at last cooperating, we began to put the finishing touches on the grounds; edging and power raking the sand traps, daily mowing of greens to the suggested height, keeping the rough trimmed until a week before the tournament began, and more.

The equipment

In the middle of July, the WGA van arrived with the equipment. Some five miles of rope, 2000 stakes, leader board signs, telephone equipment, direction signs, snow fence. Much of this had to be cleaned and painted by our staff.

One week to go

The stakes were down, the rope was strung; TV, telephone and electrical cable has been placed in the ground and in trenches. We handled this ourselves. Over 5000 feet of TV cable was placed in the ground to accommodate the 11 cameras required for the color coverage. Stands had to be erected, plus portable toilets; trunk routes had to be mapped.

Water system

Our decision to install cast iron pipe for our water system has paid off. With the traffic conditions our course undergoes during a tournament like the Western Open, pipe that can handle excessive external load is a must. Also, during any kind of reworking, the ease with which the system can be tapped and altered makes it a real saving.

The big day—August 3

Two major breakdowns kept us up all night the last night—the clutch on our only dump truck, and the 100 hp irrigation motor. I'm proud to say that despite our problems, we've been able to keep the course open to members right up to the Day. We'll have our hands full this week, keeping the grounds in repair. And once the tournament is over, we'll have to correct the damage done by the trucks, the crowds; the trenches will have to be filled, the practice tee will need reseeding. But within a week to ten days, we should be almost back to normal. Almost.

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