



TIPS FROM A SUPERINTENDENT  
#4 IN A SERIES

How we meet  
the challenges  
of the desert



BY J. D. KILPATRIK, Superintendent, Desert Inn Country Club, Las Vegas, Nevada.

When I came from Palm Springs, the fact uppermost in my mind was: the grass roots are the only things keeping this course from turning back into a desert. The soil is what is known as "blow sand."

For this reason, the health of the roughs, fairways and greens is more than a matter of playability or appearance: it's vital to the existence of the course!

The rainfall around here is of little help. Last year, we had a total of less than 3 inches of precipitation. And the temperature climbs beyond 100° during the summer. The dry heat is comfortable for golfing, but torture for grass.

In addition, the Gold Cup tournament runs from October through June. This means we must keep the course in champion condition for a full nine

months. And of course, with no season on tourism out here, we have year-round play, as well.

This puts a heavy demand on the grass. So our irrigation system is probably our most important asset. For this reason, it's made of cast iron pipe. We wanted the pipe that gave us the greatest reliability; one that could stand up to our constant demands. Cast iron pipe does this for us.

Our sources for water are wells, some lake water, plus effluent. This we have to watch carefully, of course.

We're in the process of converting our sprinkler system to automatic on the fairways. The greens have had automatic control for some time now. This will free the staff for other tasks, such as fertilizing.

The grasses are C7 Cohansey on the greens, Bermuda and rye on the fairways and a mixture on the roughs. We've recently reseeded the roughs to increase the percentage of Bermuda.

All in all, I find this to be a very popular course. It's well liked by everyone who plays it. And we get them all. The professionals, the stars, the tourists from ranking PGA champions to high handicap beginners.



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