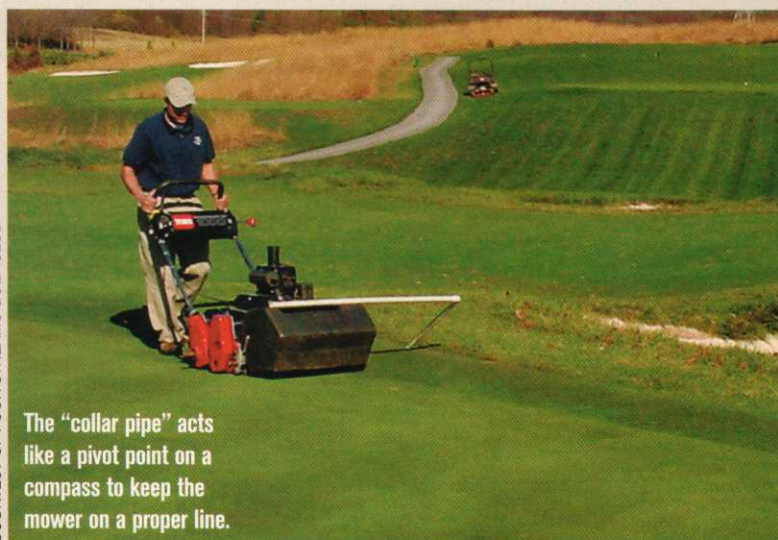


# So Much for Scalping

Superintendent, former assistant invent “collar pipe” to correct common maintenance headache

BY MARK LESLIE



COURTESY OF FOUR STREAMS GOLF CLUB

The “collar pipe” acts like a pivot point on a compass to keep the mower on a proper line.

### Problem

Scalped greens damage grass, arouse angry comments from golfers and create myriad headaches for superintendents.

### Solution

Create a “collar pipe” that guides the mower around the edge of the green like a guide on a table saw. The device has eliminated scalping at Four Streams Golf Club, according to the superintendent.

**W**ith visions of table-saw guides dancing in their heads, certified superintendent Ray Viera and his former assistant Rob Larsen brainstormed their way to eliminating scalping and “moving greens” at Four Streams Golf Club in Beallsville, Md.

“All superintendents have scalped collars, and we have completely eliminated that,” Viera says.

Choosing a walk-behind greens mower that would be dedicated to the cleanup cut on all the greens, Viera and Larsen, who now works for LESCO, drilled a series of holes on top of the clippings basket and attached what they call the collar pipe.

The thinking that they needed something that would stick out like a guide on a table saw fostered the idea. The L-shaped

collar pipe has a 90-degree joint, so that it hangs out 30 inches from the roller on the mower and points to the outside edge of the collar.

As long as the downward pipe is lined up with the outside of the collar, Viera says a green can’t be scalped. “It eliminates narrowing of collars and any other cutting problems associated with an operator who does not do the same pass each time,” he adds.

The collar pipe, which can pivot and reverse directions, makes a perfect circle, Viera says, adding: “It’s like the pivot point on a compass. As long as you have the pipe lined up, you can’t stray from that orbit. Sometimes you see a triangular cut of grass in the cleanup, but we never have that here anymore.”

Noting that operators normally “free-hand” the cleanup cuts so that they’re never the same, Viera says another key besides the dedicated mower is a dedicated person on that mower.

“This type of innovation enables us to design the bunkers and other features closer to the putting surface,” says Steve Smyers, the architect of Four Streams. “This allows these features to fit more in context with one another and also allows for the development of greater strategy and risk-reward.”

Asked how they got the idea, Viera replies, “Out of necessity.”

Perhaps the old saying — “necessity is the mother of invention” — is true. ■

*Leslie is a freelance writer from Monmouth, Maine.*