



The GRASS ROOTS wins
1988 Harry C. Eckhoff Award
From the National Golf Foundation!

See story on page 42.



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PUTTING GREEN MANAGEMENT

The Wisconsin Survey

By Robert J. Erdahl

Part One

There can be no doubt in the mind of any WGCSA member that a golf course putting green is one of the most intensively cultivated agricultural environments in existence today. We, as golf course superintendents, have at our disposal a dazzling arsenal of technological tools to control the performance of the turfgrasses growing in each of our 18 (27 in my case) micro-climates called putting greens. Before we suffer from a technological overdose, however, let us not forget that our profession is one part science and one part art/instinct, and the latter can not be taught. It is the efficient blending of technology and art/instinct into a workable putting green management program that is the mark of a successful golf course superintendent.

Given the overwhelming importance of putting greens, each of us carefully formulates a management program based on our acquired knowledge, our practical experience, and our countless efforts of trial and error. Our management programs, however, do not remain static from year to year for there is no such thing as maintaining the status quo in putting green management. Stand on last year's successes or repeat last year's management program and your neighboring golf course is liable to knock your socks off! We are employed in a dynamic profession that is constantly influenced by the latest innovations in equipment, irrigation, pesticides and fertilizers.

In order to keep pace with all of the changes, we participate in professional organizations such as WGCSA, GCSAA and WTA; we keep abreast of the latest university research; we read all the turfgrass publications we can lay our hands on and most important of all, we keep in touch with our peers. Without a doubt, a good one-on-one conversation with a fellow WGCSA member is the best way for me to gain valuable insight into one of my management problems.

It seemed logical, then, that an attempt to tap the cumulative knowledge of the WSGCA on the subject of putting green management would yield a wealth of information that could form the basis for an article in this publication. With this idea as a starting point, I developed a survey on putting green management and sent it out to 30 members of WGCSA. With 25 responses, I received

enough information for two articles; but more about that a little later.

The survey contained questions about fertilization, cultural practices such as mowing, topdressing and aerifying, disease control, *Poa annua* control, irrigation practices and specialized problems such as the black layer problem and C-15 bacterial wilt. In addition, the survey asked for background information such as age of the putting greens, type of soil mix, pH, bentgrass to *Poa annua* ratio, bentgrass species, membership demands and management goals. It was not a scientific poll with a plus or minus five percent error factor. Rather, it was a simple attempt to examine where the science/art of putting green management is today in the State of Wisconsin and perhaps draw some conclusions about the future. The superintendents chosen to receive the survey represented a cross-section of golf courses in Wisconsin. Geographically, they ranged from Green Bay to La Crosse and from Wausau to Racine. Economically, they included both daily fee golf courses and private country clubs. The overall emphasis was to poll a diverse enough number of golf courses so that the results would have real significance to all WGCSA members.

As I previously mentioned, the enormous amount of in-

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