



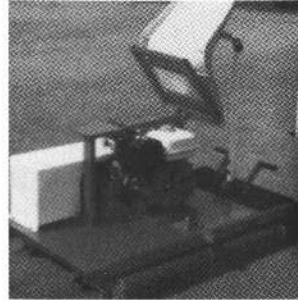
## A New Tool From Down Under

By Fred D. Opperman

*Editor's Note: Fred Opperman is the long time and highly successful editor of "The Bull Sheet", official publication of the Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents. In 1987, Fred visited Australia and happened to see a machine being used to roll bowling greens; it seems bowlers are as fussy as golfers.*

*These two articles were written by Fred and appeared in the June 1988 (Volume 42, No. 1) and the December 1988 (Volume 42, No. 7) issues respectively and are reprinted here with his permission.*

A year ago when I was visiting Australia and stopped at a golf course, I saw an interesting tool that I thought might have a use here on our putting



greens. The machine was a roller that was being used at the time on a bowling green. The bowling green that I watched this machine roll was Penn-cross cut as low as any of our golf greens. This machine was/is used daily after each mowing to help "iron" the surface. The bowlers are as fussy as

our golfers on the quality of their bowling greens and the speed of their bowls.

After returning to the states, I wrote to the company asking if their machine was used on putting greens and if anyone in the states handled this machine. It wasn't too many days, that one evening I received a long distance phone call from John Ellul of the Golf & Bowling Machinery PTY. LTD. John was enthusiastic over my inquiry and questioned me more on how the machine could or would be used in the states on putting greens. Well, this discussion and interest in this type of a roller led to many more phone calls and letters over the past eight months.

*(Continued on page 21)*

### *From one professional to another...*

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(Continued from page 20)

In early May a roller was air freighted (cost of \$2,000) to O'Hare and in a week, John Ellul followed up and came here to show the machine to me. I had John talk to Jon Jones, from Chicago Turf & Irrigation who agreed to help demo the unit this coming year and see what kind of response it may have in this area.

I was really surprised and pleased to see how well it did function on rolling our greens. The machine is different in that you sit on it facing one end and it rolls left and right. The speed of the roller is really surprising for it travels at about 4-5 miles per hour with a qualified operator at the controls. It takes about 10-12 minutes to roll a 5,000 square foot green. It would be a perfect machine for rolling the greens in the spring. The machine measures 3 feet by 2 feet and has three 4½" rollers, with one roller being the drive roller. The machine weighs just over 600 pounds (or about 43 stones, as John would say) with the weight of the operator. This machine was made special for golf putting greens by being only 3 feet long instead of the normal 5 feet used for bowling greens. I foresee the use of this machine for the final rolling of tees and greens just before seeding or sodding. Then using it after the seed is spread or after the sod has knitted and needs rolling before mowing. My main purpose was to be able to roll a green and then not cut it as low as some people are now doing. At the present, I have not had the time to check it with a stimpmeter since the deadline of *The Bull Sheet* is a month before you receive it in the mail. By the time you are reading this, I will have some test data and will write another article to bring you up to date.

If anyone is interested in seeing this machine in operation you need to talk to your local sales representative from CT&I. Any other questions you may also call me.



Ismael Estrada rolling new sod at Glen Oak C.C.

## A Belated Update on the Tool From Down Under

By Fred Opperman

Back in June I wrote about a roller that I had received from Australia that was built to roll golf greens. At that time I had promised to write a follow-up article since I didn't have much time to use the machine and get any data on it before the June issue went to press.

Well, since then I have been able to get some data when I used it to roll the greens at Glen Oak C.C. during the summer. I need to recap, I feel, somewhat on the description of this roller to refresh some people of what it is and what it can do.

The roller was designed first in Australia to roll bowling greens and it was built for that purpose. It was originally 5' long and about 18 wide, with two rollers. But the roller built for rolling golf greens is only 3' long and 2' wide with three 4½" rollers. Weight is about 600 pounds with machine and operator (more depending on the weight of the operator of course).

The machine rolls sideways to roll a green. You sit on it facing the length of the machine and it rolls left or right, depending which foot pedal you depress. It has a handle bar and two foot pedals and a throttle. That's all for controls. It is simple to operate, once one gets the hang of moving sideways. It is also surprising on how fast it travels across a green — 4 to 5 miles per hour I would think.

My thought of getting this machine was to roll the greens occasionally instead of cutting them down next to nothing and putting a great deal of stress on the plants. I found that after rolling a green I could increase the speed plus or minus about 24 inches on most readings. I was also concerned about compaction of the greens, so I borrowed a penetrometer from Jim Latham of the USGA Green Section.

The use of this instrument is all relative. One has to get the feel of it and take many readings over a period of

time to see if there is a difference. I found that it increased the compaction by about two numbers after rolling. For example, if the reading was a 7 before rolling, after rolling it showed a 9 or a 10. The next day the reading on the penetrometer was a number or two lower. Also, the stimpmeter reading had fallen off from the high of the day before, but it was still 10 to 12 inches faster than a green that had not been rolled. By the third day after rolling, the speed of the rolled greens were the same as the other greens which had not been rolled.

The uses I foresee of this machine are not just for faster greens. It can also be used during construction of greens or tees. When it comes down to the final rolling, this roller could be used before seeding or sodding and then again after seeding or sodding to roll the seed or sod for better contact with the soil. In the Spring of the year most northern courses roll their greens before cutting to smooth them out. This roller would work fine, for it is fast, doing a 5,000 square foot green in under 10 minutes. Another use would be rolling the greens after core cultivation. This rolling would help smooth the surface of the greens and return some of the speed that was lost due to core cultivation. The roller would work well on tennis courts or croquet courts just as well as it does on a golf or bowling green.

I look at this machine as just another toll in our inventory needed to keep pace with the demands of our jobs. Just as we have coring machines, turf groomers, and top dressers, a roller is another tool to be used to do a critical, required task.

If you would like more information on this machine, give me a call at (312) 858-0601 or call a Chicago Turf & Irrigation (312) 773-5555 salesperson for they are showing the machine around various courses.



Dr. Bill Daniel trying his skills at rolling a green at Glen Oak C.C.