



## WHO DECIDES ON GREEN SPEED?

By Monroe S. Miller

Although somewhat less fervent than a few years ago, green speed is still a favorite topic of conversation among golfers, at green committee meetings and among golf course superintendents. Green speed (or the lack of it) has fostered the reputation of some superintendents ("His greens are really slick") and caused the downfall of some others ("He lost half his greens last summer — cut them too close.")

It's an important subject since half the game's scoring (ideally) is done on the putting greens. They usually are the most important features on a golf course and, after a round of golf, commonly spark the most comments from players. Speed is one of the important components of a putting green, probably the single most important trait. Arguments swirl around the discussions about what the speed should be.

So, it seemed natural to ask a simple question of a random group of Wisconsin golf course superintendents: "Who determines the speed of the greens of your golf course — 1) the players, 2) the green committee/green committee chairman or 3) you (course superintendent)?"

Bob Erdahl and I put the question to 44 of the golf course superintendents who attended the Wisconsin Turfgrass Association Winter Turfgrass Con-

ference in early January. The WTA program, curiously, included an excellent lecture by Dr. Don White (University of Minnesota turfgrass faculty member) entitled "ULTRA FAST GREENS — THE PRICE YOU PAY".

Here is how the question "who determines the speed of the greens on your golf course?" was answered:

1. Players — 0
2. Green Committee/Green Committee Chairman — 12
3. Golf Course Superintendent — 32

Are you as surprised by the results as I am? It's worth reporting that many superintendents added that they set green speed themselves, but in response to player wishes, demands, whining and complaints. Hindsight tells me to interpret those remarks to mean we could have worded the question better or asked only the question without offering any answers.

Regardless of any of that, I think one can safely conclude that we do have a lot to say about how fast our greens are. In turn, it follows we should pay a lot of attention to Dr. White's advice given on January 10th on the risks we run trying to provide ultra fast greens (stimpmeter reading of 9.0' or more) on a daily basis.

This is another article for another day.

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