

# Walking or Riding Greensmowers For Putting Greens?

By Wayne Otto

It was decided by the green committee and approved by the board of directors last fall that we would go back to using the walking greensmower on putting greens in 1990. The greens at Ozaukee Country Club are quite large (averaging 6,000 square feet), so we planned on using at least four mowers and possibly five on certain days.

The total cash outlay for six putting green mowers would be in excess of \$20,000.00, about the same cost as two riding mowers. I had anticipated the man-hours to increase from 40 to 80 hours per week which would not increase the budget too much. At \$5.50/hour, it would amount to an added cost of \$220.00 each week, which only would add one full-time person to our crew. However, since we were looking for people to work about three hours a day, we thought we would need three or four additional people. This didn't originally seem like it would be too difficult to accomplish. All winter we eagerly looked forward to the upcoming golf season.

My first step in early March was to place an ad in the "help wanted" section of a couple of local newspapers,

which said, **ATTENTION: Housewives, semi-retirees or anyone interested in getting paid for a 5-7 mile walk every day in the early morning on a beautiful golf course, please call.**

My thought was to get some hard-working personnel who would pay attention to detail and not need too much supervision. Hopefully, these same people would return year after year, rather than as in past years having students who we would train and most likely only see for a couple of years at the most. We had many female and male applicants.

I was very pleased with the response and thought that we had solved our normal early season help problems. Unfortunately, it didn't turn out exactly as I had planned.

First of all, there was much more training involved than I remembered. Before we could get the productivity that we needed, we had to spend several weeks of practicing and, even then, some mower operators had trouble mowing a green without leaving strips of uncut grass.

Our tees at OCC are mowed with two or three walking greensmowers. If we

were to mow greens with walking mowers, we would need an additional five mowers. I could see that we were going to need at least eight people walking greens and tees on certain days. Taking into consideration the fact that there would be people taking days off and "no shows", we felt that at least 10 to 12 people needed to be trained to operate walking greensmowers.

In contrast, by using the riding greensmower on greens, walking the perimeter (clean-up cut) on greens, mowing tees with walking greensmowers, and using a walking greensmower for collars, we only needed to train about six to eight people, so we opted to use the riding mowers.

What about the future? I think the idea of finding crew members that would return year after year was a good one which would solve a lot of problems. However, this first year did not go as we anticipated. We plan to continue to use the riding mowers until we can adequately train the number of crew members we need to implement our program of using walking mowers.



## Schwab, Monroe Country Club Team Win John Deere Tourney!

By Monroe S. Miller

On July 23, Monroe Country Club and J.W. Turf (the distributor of John Deere Turf equipment for the southern half of Wisconsin and northern Illinois) played host to Wisconsin's first ever John Deere Scramble Golf Championship. This will surely become an annual event in Wisconsin. It teams up the club golf course superintendent, president, golf pro and clubhouse manager in a scramble best ball event. The superintendent, president, and clubhouse manager play a scramble, and the pro plays his ball straight. Then you take the best ball of the two on each hole.

Local knowledge may have played a role on this beautiful July day when host team of golf course superintendent Tom Schwab, professional Mike Muranyi, clubhouse manager John

Van Blarcum, and president Curt Schwerin led the field of 18 teams with a combined score of 53. Other factors that may have played a role are Muranyi's shooting of a course record 62 and Schwab's sloppy chip shot into the hole on #18. As the winning team, the foursome earned the option of competing in November in La Quinta, California. Each also won a \$200 gift certificate.

The second place team was Oakwood Country Club from Franklin. Superintendent Steve Bailey said they had a great time and were knocking them in from all over the green. Their score of 55 earned them \$120 each.

In third place, led by golf course superintendent Tom Schaller, was Northbrook Country Club of Luxemburg. They carded a 56 and each earned \$80.

In the individual pro competition Muranyi came out on top with a 62 and earned \$350. Billy Brown of DellView in Wisconsin Dells was second with 67.

Monroe Country Club was proud to host this first John Deere Scramble. Everyone enjoyed the excellent playing conditions of the golf course. The team format was a nice way for the superintendent, pro, clubhouse manager and president to get out and enjoy a round of golf together. This tournament is sure to grow to become a big part of Wisconsin golf, especially with such gracious hosts as J.W. Turf.

There is one more winner to announce: J.W. Turf donated \$50 for each team entered to the O.J. NOER CENTER for TURFGRASS RESEARCH. This generosity moves the NOER CENTER \$900 closer to reality.