



CUTTING CUPS

By Monroe S. Miller

Cutting cups isn't something Wisconsin golf course superintendents normally think about in February or March.

Maybe the reason I came up with the following questions about cutting cups is a subconscious pining for spring.

The conscious reason, however, is my personal belief that pin placement and cup cutting might be the most important thing we do, day in and day out.

A well cut cup, placed according to rules and guidelines (USGA and local) speak volumes. All good golf course superintendents handle this fairly straight forward job properly.

I know that we are pretty fussy about the task at our golf course. Employees new to this job are given good training on what is expected of them. No excuses for sloppy execution are accepted.

Some employees loath this task, and for the life of me I cannot figure out why. Over the years, I am sure, some have intentionally done poor work just to be relieved of it. What they don't know is that the reassignment WILL be a miserable job.

One year we had a fellow who only cut 8 of the 9 cups he was responsible for, skipping a different one each day!

The questions here were asked at the Wisconsin/Milorganite Hospitality room in the Marriott on Friday, January 29th. I did catch a few other WGCSA members elsewhere during the week. There were so many members at the hotel I felt like a bee in honey. So many WGCSA people in one place at the same time. Surveying is an easy task in such circumstances.

I discovered, almost immediately, that there are as many different approaches to this job as there are people surveyed, none obviously better than another.

Rather, different techniques reflected differences in superintendents, their golf courses and the golf audience served by them.

For your edification, here are the results of the cup cutting survey.

1. How often do you cut new cups on your golf course greens?
 - a. three times a week 1
 - b. four times a week 6
 - c. five times a week 3
 - d. six times a week 15
 - e. every day 15

The six days a week category almost exclusively included those who move pins every day but Monday.

2. What type of cutting implement do you use?
 - a. lever action 34
 - b. foot action 4
 - c. hammer action 2

3. What kind of pattern do you use—random or repeated?
 - a. random 25
 - b. repeated 15

4. Who decides the specific placement site (other than for tournaments)?
 - a. golf course superintendent 2
 - b. assistant gcs 3
 - c. green committee chairman 1
 - d. cup cutter 34

5. What method do you use for actual cutting?
 - a. one-cut 3
 - b. two-cut 32
 - c. three-cut 5

6. Do you topdress the plug?
 - a. yes 12
 - b. no 28

7. Do you water the plug?
 - a. yes 24
 - b. no 16

8. Who actually cuts the cups?
 - a. golf course superintendent 1
 - b. assistant gcs 13
 - c. permanent cup cutter 10
 - d. qualified, trained crew members 17

9. How many holes does each person cut?
 - a. 27 holes 1
 - b. 18 holes 25
 - c. 9 holes 13
 - d. 3 holes 1

10. Do other responsibilities of the cup cutter include:
 - a. moving tee blocks? 29
 - b. checking ballwashers? 27
 - c. servicing shelters? 18
 - d. emptying course trash containers? 26
 - e. repair ball marks? 4
 - f. taking care of water coolers? 11

How many would like to meet the three guys who get the hole cut with a single shot? They must be gorillas! 🦍

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