



FEATURE CUTS

By Monroe S. Miller

What, I ask, generates more questions or more conversation among golf course superintendents than the height of cut of the various features on their golf courses? Green speed, maybe. But the height of cut issue is a favorite and one of the most interesting things to discuss and analyze.

I got to thinking about it during Field Day when I saw so many of my colleagues and friends for the first time in months (no reason to attend WGCSA summer meetings anymore). I was startled during some of those conversations that the putting green heights seemed to be creeping down again. In some instances, leaping down would be a better choice of words than creeping down.

The obvious occurred to me—ask around and find out where a lot of courses of all varieties are this year in feature cuts.

Below are the results. Interestingly, green heights were almost all given in decimals while others were the standard fractions. For consistency, I converted all heights to decimals.

GREENS	.156	.150	.145	.140	.135	.130	.125	.120	.115	.109
Private	2	3	2	2	1	1	6	1	3	1
Public	2	2								
Muni	3 (One course was cutting putting greens at .188)									

TEES	.250	.300	.313	.375	.400	.440	.470	.500	.625
Private	2	1	3	7	1	3	1	2	
Public			2			2			
Muni								2	2

COLLARS	None	.250	.313	.375	.400	.440	.500	1.250
Private		2	2	4	2	2	7	1
Public			2			2		
Muni	2				2			

APPROACHES	.313	.375	.400	.440	.500	.625	.750
Private	2	4	1	3	10		
Public			3	1			
Muni						3	1

FAIRWAYS	.440	.500	.563	.625	.750
Private	1	15	1	2	1
Public	1	3			
Muni				3	1

FAIRWAY COLLAR	1.0	1.125	1.250	1.5	N/A
Private	2	3	5	4	6
Public					4
Muni					4

PRIMARY ROUGH	1.5	1.563	2.0	2.25	2.5	2.75	3.0	3.25
Private	1	1	5	3	5	2	2	1
Public			4					
Muni	4							

From this limited survey, several things are clear to me:

1. Green heights are really getting low. Makes me wonder how some of you are sleeping on hot, humid summer nights. In the private sector, over half surveyed are cutting at an eighth of an inch or less.

2. Public courses and municipal courses fairly consistently have the higher feature cuts, indicating a response to the heavy play they receive.

3. I always assumed that collars and approaches were cut at the same height; not so.

4. Fairway heights are impressive. There should be little complaining about that from our golfing clientele.

As I was doing the SURVEY, I was wishing I'd asked the same questions ten years ago. A "then and now" comparison would have been interesting. Guess I'll do that ten years hence from this issue.

Finally, thanks to Chad Eberhardt for the help. He always comes through. 🏌️

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