



Rolling Greens At Westmoor

By Jerry Kershasky

CAUTION!
MAY CAUSE EXTREME BALL ROLL
AND
PHYSICAL DAMAGE TO THE SOIL

*Rollin', Rollin', Rollin'.....n
Keep those doggies rollin'.....n
Rawhi.....de.*

Nope. Nope, that's not it; let's try it again, from the top.

*Rolling, Rolling, Rollin'.....g
Keep that golf ball rollin'.....g
"Super"hi.....de.*

*We need it rolling faster
No matter if the weather's wet
or dr.....y*

*Rolling, Rolling, Rollin'.....g
Stimp it out above 10 fee.....t
"Super"hi.....de.*

Okay, do you get it? If you are old enough to have actually watched the TV show "Rawhide", or if you saw the movie "The Blues Brothers", and caught the part when they were playing a gig in the country western bar and sang the theme song from Rawhide, you may recall the melody. And if you do, you will be able to sing my verses, which I always sing when I'm out rolling my greens to pick up that extra 6 inches to a foot of speed. If you don't sing the song, you won't get as much speed out of your rolling. Real cowboys, I mean real superintendents always sing in the saddl... Cushman!

By now, 1994, you all have probably read articles on, or listened to talks given by Dr. Jim Beard and others on what to expect from greens rolled with heavy rolling implements. So what I am about to tell you is most likely what you have already heard, only now it will be coming from one of your "good ol' boys" from WESconsin. Or is that WISconsin? Forgive me—my pronunciation is still running afoul with Rose Bowlitis.

Anyway, we started rolling greens at Westmoor back in the mid-to late 1970s to quicken the pace for some of our Club events. At the time, we borrowed some dandy heavy cast iron rollers. They were arranged in a three gang frame and wide enough to cover the tire tracks of the Cushman truckster we pulled them with. We borrowed them from Jack Soderberg, the "Master of Speed" back in the 1970s when he was golf course superintendent at Merrill Hills. These rollers produced a smooth surface and quickened the ball speed by about one foot. They were great, but no one produced them anymore and the rollers that were on the market at the time did not hold a candle to those old cast iron rollers.

So, we built our own "Tri-rollers" out of 20" PVC pipe filled with concrete. We matched the weight and size of the old cast iron rollers and, not surprisingly, we matched the results. Roll the green, pick up a foot of speed.

We continued to roll for only major Club events. Then in 1982 we hosted the Wisconsin State Open Golf Tournament at Westmoor. Jack Daughterty was my assistant at the time and was about to start his second year in the Turf Program at Penn State. He thought stimping the greens from the spring season through the tournament would be a good school project, so we did that. We started rolling the greens for the tournament along with double mowing about six days before the event. Prior to these procedures, the greens stimped out at 9 feet. As we progressed with the double mowing and rolling, we achieved a final speed of 10'8" to 11' the day of the tournament. Back in 1982, that was pretty fast and several of the players thought it was too fast. But the majority of the contestants like the speed.

After the event was over, we found that our members liked the increased speed. They wanted us to provide it more frequently. We started rolling more frequently and built another set

of tri-rollers so we could get done faster and beat the play. About the only problem we had with our setup was that we needed to have very experienced people driving the Cushman—one slip of the clutch or too much speed on a turn would result in more damage than good.

We continued to search for a better roller, one that any crew member could operate with little chance for error and yet fast enough to stay ahead of early play. We were also looking for an economical way to accomplish the task.

Two years ago we found such a roller. Individual rollers mount on the cutting frame members of a triplex greens mower. You've probably seen them by now, either at trade shows or in magazine ads. They are easy to use, and any staff person can operate them. The triplex mowers have good transport speed and you can roll a green as fast as you can mow it.

The speed you pick up depends on several factors: weather (higher humidity results in less speed pick up in both cool and warm temperatures), season (you won't gain as much speed in late May through June as you will after July 5th), and frequency (one rolling should net 6 inches to a foot whereas a double rolling should net 8 inches to one foot 2 inches. You start losing the full effect of rolling after about 16 hours, and no difference in rolled areas versus non-rolled areas seems to exist after 48 hours.

Similar results have been noted by others testing out the rolling of greens. You can get all that information by subscribing to the Turfgrass Information File (TGIF) at 517-353-7209. But they will not tell you the final magical ingredient needed to achieve those last few inches of speed.

Yup, you guessed it; get that melody down!

*Rolling, Rolling, Rollin'.....g
Keep that golf ball rollin'.....g!* 🍷