



One Day at Augusta

by Rob Schultz

Some of the first words I heard when I entered Augusta National for the first time a few weeks ago were, "They spray paint the greens and they put dye in the water."

So what?

Let's demean Augusta some more. On the surface, it's not that tough because it has wide, expansive fairways and reachable par-5s. It's also famous for its crotchety directors and a maintenance budget the size of the American deficit.

Once again: So what?

Paint, dye and dollars are not what Augusta National is all about. Augusta National is about ambience and tradition. It's about Bobby Jones and Gene Sarazen and Arnold Palmer and Jack Nicklaus. The footprints from the greatest golfers the world has ever known are nestled in every corner of the place. It's about azaleas and magnolias, Amen Corner and Rae's Creek, Eisenhower's Tree and Jones Cabin.

As a first-timer to Augusta with a one-day pass thanks to a great group of golf course superintendents from Wisconsin, I had nine hours to suck in as much history as I could muster while watching the present day's greatest golfers try to tame a monster. I left Augusta in a daze; I wondered if I saw enough, I etched into my memory banks the smell of a thousand azaleas in full bloom and the sight of those skyscraping pines behind the 10th green as well as the beauty of Amen Corner.

My eyes never stopped dancing as I trudged over Augusta's many hills, which is another aspect of the course that television can't capture. One minute I'd marvel at the perfectly manicured fairways and greens, the next I'd stare at those majestic pines.

Augusta is so expansive that I actually stood alone at times—such as when I walked aside the fifth fairway—and wondered what Bobby Jones was thinking about when he and Alister Mackenzie designed that hole. But I snapped out of my daze when Ray

Floyd knocked a shot within a few feet of the flag at a nearby green and the roar of approval from the huge gallery echoed through the trees. I scurried over toward the noise just in time to watch Floyd drop in a birdie putt at the par-3 6th hole.

Another Augusta roar.

One minute later it was so quiet that the only sounds I could hear were the melodic warblings from some Cardinals peering down from those pines. I walked away from the gallery and, in just a few yards, I was alone again. That is why Augusta is so special to me. Where else in this world of sports do the competitors take a back seat to the site itself?

For a Masters first-timer with any sense of history or love of golf, Augusta National is overwhelming. During the hours and days that followed my trip, I almost regretted promising that I'd write about my experience there because my head was flooded with so many thoughts that I couldn't sift through them all to express how I really felt.

What sticks in my mind so vividly now are those final few minutes before I left. I remember looking at my watch and noticing that I had to leave in 45 minutes. What had I missed? Where else could I go? Time passed too quickly. As Friday's round concluded and most everyone was heading toward their cars, I journeyed to the par-3 course and marveled at the beauty and serenity that surrounded a place that was just a few 100 yards from the big course. I peaked inside the Eisenhower and Jones cabin. Then I walked down the 10th hole, turned the corner of the dogleg and took one last look at the green that seems to serve as an altar for those beautiful pines surrounding it.

Even though I had been walking or standing for more than eight hours, adrenaline made my legs stronger. That seemed strange because one day earlier I had walked 18 holes at my flat, home course and tired by the 12th hole.

As I made my final tour, Augusta was

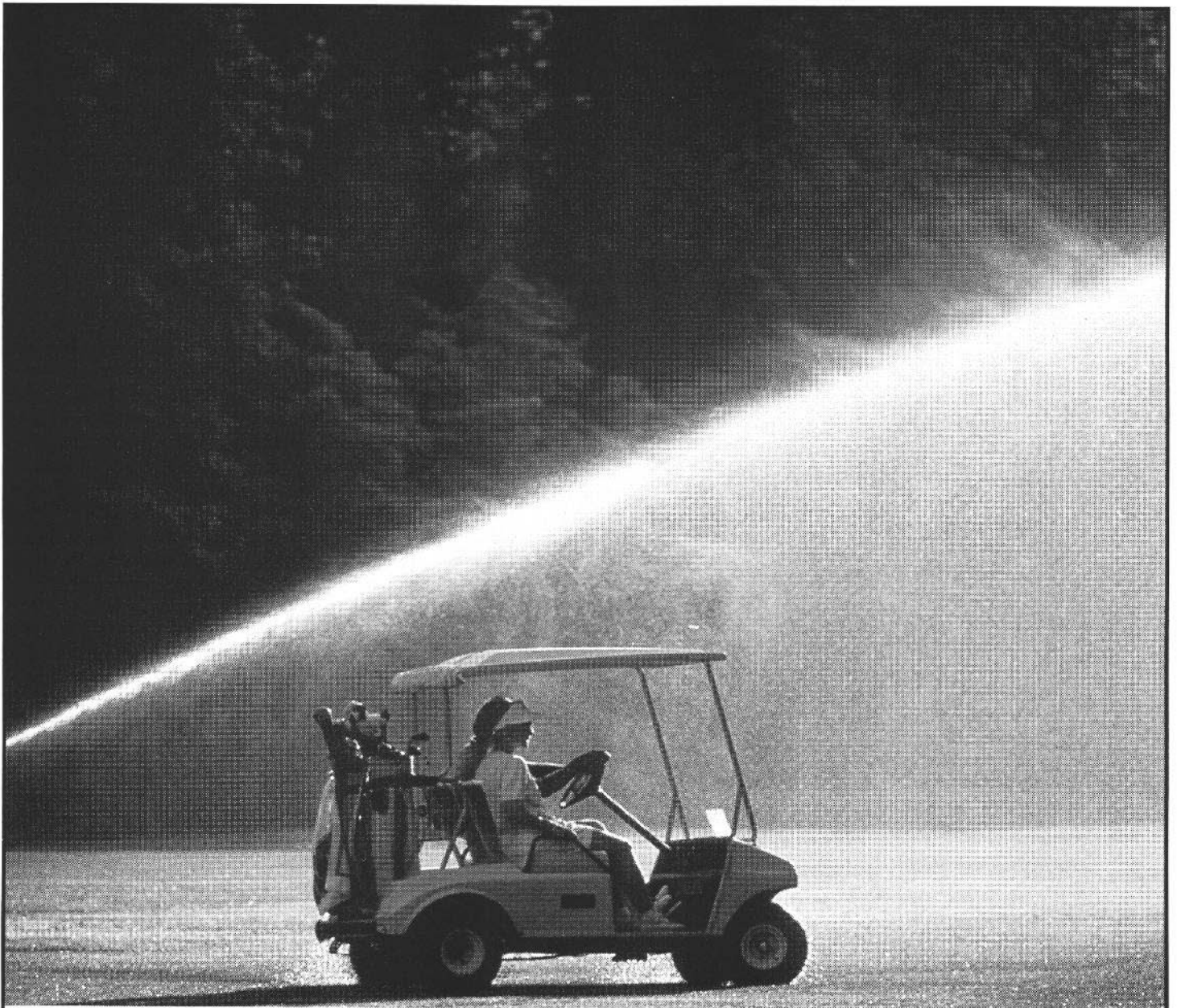
at its best. The sun had begun to set behind the trees and long shadows enveloped the fairways. A slight breeze cooled the warm spring air and provided one more sniff of the pines and azaleas. Crows squawked anxiously at the thought of having the place all to themselves again.

I rounded Amen Corner and thought of all the history that surrounded golf's greatest three holes. On this day I watched Palmer and Nicklaus play there and as I stood between the 12th and 13th holes I replayed those moments one more time. I remembered how the gallery bellowed its approval when Palmer pulled out his 3-wood after a long wait in the 13th fairway and gunned for the green in two. Standing just a few yards behind Palmer, I watched his ball—framed in the foreground by Palmer in his unique finishing position and in the background by the pines and azaleas—sail toward its final destination on the green. I didn't think I'd ever see a site that could duplicate that, but moments later Nicklaus smoked a 2-iron to the green and made eagle.

Slowly, and totally alone now, I walked up the steps next to the pond guarding the 16th green and headed out of the course. I turned around one last time and gave a mental salute to the grounds I had always dreamed of walking one day. That day had arrived with extremely high expectations and every one of them had been met and then some.

Say what you want about Augusta. Go ahead, rip away about its dyed water and spray-painted greens. It can handle it. It just sits there in all its splendor and chuckles ... if it bothers to listen in the first place. I feel sorry for those who feel they must find some criticism of Augusta. They are missing out on a real treat because if you go there to watch and listen for all its beauty, history and tradition, the course welcomes you with open arms.

The hug I received from Augusta was a feeling I'll cherish forever.



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GOLF COURSE FEVER

By Pat Norton

Right now I'm parked in front of the television set watching the Tournament Players Championship and I'm starting to shake. Pretty soon I'll be sweating and eventually mumbling to myself. I'm looking at that beautiful TPC course at Sawgrass—challenging Pete Dye design, lots of water and Florida sunshine so warm I can feel the heat coming right through the TV set.

Now I'm starting to drool. I get out my note pad and feverishly begin taking notes. My ten month old son, Tommy, looks up at me as if to say, "what's wrong with you, Pops?"

Well, I'll tell you what's wrong, friends. I'm getting a bad case of the "fever". The only difference is that for myself and thousands of other "turf addicts", this is not the normal fever. This strain is known as "golf course fever".

Type G, or common "golf fever", is the affliction affecting millions of Americans each spring. It builds slowly, with symptoms worsening as network coverage of the PGA Tour progresses during the months of March and April.

Symptoms of this fever include constant talk of golf, impulsive buying of golf equipment, and endless visits to the local PGA professional. If the superintendent has the misfortune to be present when these fever stricken souls wander into the golf shop, things usu-

ally go from bad to worse.

Then begins the litany of innocent, misguided questions: When will the course be opening? How much winter-kill did we have on the golf course? What about these new prices and policies for 1992?

My personal favorites are the left field suggestions for improvement of the golf course. Recently a member asked me if we could build a practice green and sand bunker area.

"Great idea," I said.

Then she asked if we could remove a target green to enhance vision from the range tees.

"Not a great idea," I said.

The conversation ended when I suggested that she approach the managing owner of Cedar Creek with her ideas. If he approves any funding, I'll eat my hat. These suggestions are always so simple in their minds.

Type T fever, or "golf course fever", is much more rare, but no less intense. Its symptoms do include the shaking, sweating, mumbling and drooling mentioned earlier. Similarly, it is characterized by wild thoughts of course modifications and improvements triggered by the visual feast of Augusta National seen at its most pristine. These thoughts tend to build into a virtual improvement frenzy, each idea better, and more ex-

pensive, than the previous one. This fever continues all spring, sometimes raging, sometimes smoldering, in one's mind.

Type T fever differs in that I couldn't care less who wins the weekly tour event. I'm glued to the tube to see the golf course, not the golfing. Show me those mowing patterns, those retaining walls and the exotic plantings. Give me a gander at those greens and fairways from the MetLife blimp—that's what we Type T sufferers want to see.

And who the heck cares about playing golf at this exciting time of the year, anyway? Playing golf in the spring only serves to ruin the experience of being out on the course and enjoying it!

As springtime warms into summer, Type T fever begins to cool off. Real world limitations, namely money and weather, bring on the realization that it's not all possible this year. Some of these great ideas may never be implemented. Improvements, especially on a public golf course, always need to be justified.

Solace is taken in the projects that do come to fruition. Small improvements become huge, at least in the superintendent's mind. Ideas fade into obscurity as other priorities emerge.

Better, improved variations of these ideas will reemerge when the fever begins to heat up again. Next spring.

Answers to the WISCONSIN GOLF COURSE QUIZ from page 30.

1. *False.* About 5% of Wisconsin soils are organic (peat or muck). Amendments generally aren't available because of a lack of economic incentive in the past to develop the harvest, preparation, packaging, storage and marketing facilities. Although that can change, the reality is that wetlands and bogs are likely to become even more difficult to develop, either for agricultural or commercial purposes.
2. 70 pounds! No wonder peat is a favored amendment for what is normally very droughty-sand.
3. Silt.
4. Nitrogen is not part of a routine soil test.
5. 6.5.
6. Antigo silt loam.
7. Muck.
8. Perched water table.
9. About one third of the soil area of Wisconsin comes from glacial outwash sand and gravel, and another one third of the soil area of the state comes from glacial till loam. This says a lot about the influence of ice on our soils!
10. A *gimmee*—O. J. Noer of Stoughton, Wisconsin.

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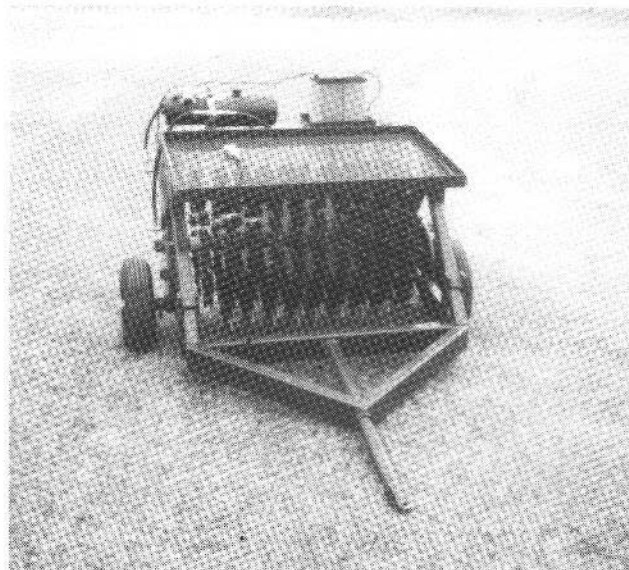
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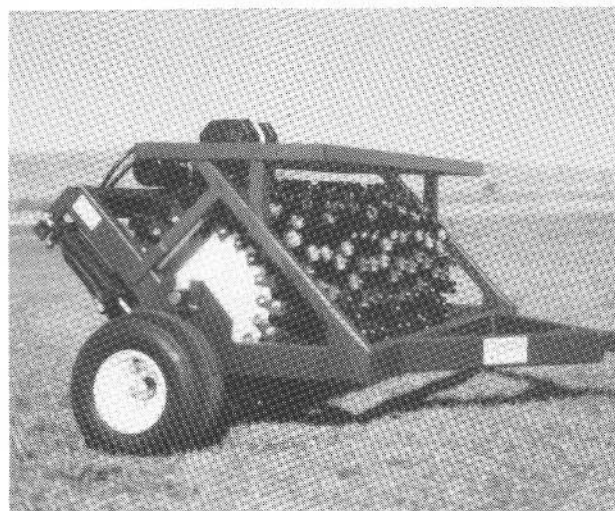
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First UW Turf Graduate Found Greener Grass With O.M. Scott

By Lori Ward Bocher

He tried. He really did try. Three different times in his life Jerry O'Donnell chose to live in Wisconsin. But the opportunities at O.M. Scott and Sons Co. were too great to pass up, so Wisconsin never became his permanent home.

"I liked it in Wisconsin," said the Vice President of Sales for the Professional Business Group at O.M. Scott. "I still do. I get back two or three times a year to visit in-laws and friends and for my annual deer hunting trip."

He also likes the golf courses in Wisconsin. "I think they rank right at the top—from a design standpoint, but particularly from the maintenance standpoint," Jerry said. "That's due to the quality of superintendents in Wisconsin. They care about their courses and they do an excellent job of presenting a well-manicured and playable golf course."

Even though he didn't stay in Wisconsin, O'Donnell was part of its turf industry for several years. In fact, he was the first to receive both B.S. and M.S. degrees in soil science with a turf emphasis from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

But it was turf of a different kind—the gridiron—that brought this Illinois native to Wisconsin in the first place. After graduating from Riverdale High School



in Port Byron, Illinois in 1959, O'Donnell was offered a full scholarship to play football at the UW. At 6'3" and 208 pounds, he was a tackle and a place kicker. But he saw very little play.

One of the stories going around about Jerry is that, during a televised game, his kickoff went out of bounds. "That's true," he confirmed. "That was against the University of Illinois. They didn't have such a hot team that year, which meant we got pretty far down on the scrub list. I was fortunate enough to get in to do the kickoff."

Even though Jerry was at Wisconsin during the Rose Bowl years (teams of 1959 and 1963), he was never really a part of the Rose Bowl teams. "My freshman year was a Rose Bowl year, but freshmen were not eligible at that time," he explained. "And then what would have been my senior year, the year I didn't play, they went to the Rose Bowl again."

Off the football field, Jerry was a typical student who wasn't sure what his major would be. "When I originally started looking for a major my interests were in conservation, wildlife management, forestry or something of that nature," he recalled. "But the university didn't have a degree in that area at the time."

"So they assigned me to Dr. Love in the soils department as a soils major," he continued. "That was one of the most fortunate things that ever happened to me. He was a great influence on my education and on me personally."

Dr. Love's value as an advisor became especially apparent after Jerry left the soils department to try an education major for a year. "I had another advisor who, for the most part, didn't know me from Adam and didn't seem to want to know me," Jerry recalled. "Dr. Love cared about us as students and as people—not just as students who would bother him."

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Jim Love steered him toward taking the course work that he needed—not just the courses that were easy. And he eventually steered Jerry into the turf program. “It was a very new program at that time, not really official,” Jerry said.

“In the spring of 1963, Dr. Love got me involved with Roger Larson, the superintendent at Maple Bluff, to work for the summer just to get a feel for whether I was interested,” he recalled. “That’s where I got started in turf.”

After getting his B.S. degree, Jerry immediately went to work on his masters. “I was fortunate to have a fellowship from the O.J. Noer Research Foundation,” he said. “That helped a lot. I worked two years—one as a teaching assistant and the other as a research assistant.” His thesis was a rooting study using radioactive phosphorus on bluegrass.

“I guess I had a good time all through college,” Jerry said. “I enjoyed the experience totally. But the people I got to know were the most special. Roger Larson, Bill Eckert, Pete Miller and some of the other fellows who were involved in the program became life-long friends.”

(Roger Larson went from Maple Bluff to Pebble Beach. Bill Eckert was at Maple Bluff after Larson and before Tom Harrison. And Pete Miller was superintendent at Nakoma before moving to Firestone in Akron, Ohio.)

When he finished his thesis in the fall of 1966, it was time to look for a job. “I wanted to be a golf course superintendent, but at that time I was more interested in getting a job,” Jerry recalled. “I was contacted by O.M. Scott Co. Reluctantly, I flew to Ohio to interview. I say reluctantly because my image of Scotts was negative at the time. I viewed them as producing that high-priced turf fertilizer that home owners were forced to buy.

“But I was willing to listen to what they had to say,” he continued. “Needless to say, I was impressed with the organization and with what they were doing. It was early in the development of their professional sales division.”

So O’Donnell left Wisconsin for the first of three times to accept the position of technical representative for O.M. Scott in northeastern Ohio. For the next year and a half he sold fertilizer and chemicals for golf courses and parks.

“Then I got a call from Pete Miller asking me if I was interested in becoming the superintendent at Nakoma in Madison. He had just accepted the job at Firestone,” Jerry explained. “I left Scotts for three reasons.

“One, I was frustrated, not sure if I was doing the job as effectively as I could. Two, I had wanted to be a superintendent and here was the opportunity. Three, my wife’s family was in Madison, our second child was on the way, and we had a lot of friends in Madison. So moving back held a lot of interest.”

That was early in 1968, and O’Donnell was Nakoma superintendent for the next five years. “For three or four years during that period I had a secondary responsibility of taking care of Blackhawk, too,” Jerry pointed out. “It was a unique arrangement between the two clubs. I worked for Nakoma, but they sold my services to Blackhawk.”

While at Nakoma, O’Donnell was an active member of WGCSA and served as vice president for a brief term. “My heart has always stayed with the guys in Wisconsin even though I’ve been moving around,” he said. “It’s always great to get a chance to meet and visit with them. I appreciate the support they’ve given me.”

Early in 1973, Jerry returned to O.M. Scott as a technical sales representative covering the state of Wisconsin. “In

the five years I was at Nakoma, Scotts made a lot of changes,” he explained. “The Professional Business Group became an official part of the company and grew very rapidly. The products improved significantly, met the needs of the market better.

“Plus, they gave me a chance to come back to the company and stay living where I was,” Jerry continued. “It was very tempting because I had enjoyed the part of the job that involved visiting lots of golf courses. I enjoyed working with people and trying to help them solve their problems.

“It was not an easy decision to leave Nakoma, but I looked at it as a new opportunity,” he added.

Jerry spent five years as the technical rep in Wisconsin. “There was a lot of learning and training along the way, which was one of the things that had been missing the first time I worked for

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Scotts," he said. "With the training, I became much more comfortable with the job of selling."

It also helped that he had been a golf course superintendent himself. "It gave me a good understanding of what their jobs were," Jerry said. "And, having worked in Wisconsin, I was familiar with a lot of the superintendents and they knew me. I didn't have to come in and prove who I was."

In 1978, O'Donnell was offered a position as Scott's Regional Sales Manager for New England and New York. "That also was a hard decision because I liked it in Wisconsin," he recalled. "But I felt I knew my job very well, and I was ready for a new challenge."

After two years away from Wisconsin, O'Donnell had a chance to return as Regional Sales Manager for 10 states in Midwest. "Again, it was hard to resist, so I accepted."

But his return to Wisconsin was short lived. Two years later, in 1982, his boss asked him to move to the home office in Marysville, Ohio, and take his position as National Sales Manager. "It was a real struggle because the position he was offering me was two levels above where I was," Jerry recalled. "It meant

that my former boss (area manager) would then be working for me."

Never one to turn down a new opportunity, O'Donnell accepted the position. Later he was promoted to Vice President of Sales for the Professional Business Group which sells directly to parks, lawn care companies, schools, golf courses—any professional user of turf products.

The job involves about 30 percent travel time—meeting with the sales force, working with major customers and calling on other customers. "We want to understand what's going on in the marketplace, to get a feeling for what all of our customers are interested in and how we're meeting those needs," Jerry said.

The turf industry as a whole is healthy, O'Donnell believes. "The major challenge is coping with and working with environmental issues," he said. "Working with people so they understand the value of turf to the environment, so they understand healthy turf isn't a detriment, so they understand that the vast majority of fertilizers and chemicals are safe when used responsibly."

Since about 60 percent of the O.M. Scott professional market is with golf

courses, Jerry still has a close tie to the golf industry. And he believes growth is here to stay. "When you look at 300 to 350 golf courses being added nationally each year, the net growth rate has been around 1 percent," he pointed out.

"That rate of growth has to continue or be greater," Jerry added. "The demographic situation shows baby boomers as a bulge in the population, and they're approaching the stage in their lives when they have the time and money for golf. The golf population appears to be growing at a rate faster than the number of courses."

Jerry himself plays golf when he gets a chance—every other week, or so. He also enjoys taking care of the house and lawn. And he looks forward to his annual deer hunting trips to Wisconsin.

His wife, Joanne, is also a UW graduate. They have two grown children: Jon, an electrical engineer; and Joni, a recent mathematics graduate who works at Price Waterhouse in St. Louis.

"We built a new house this past summer on a small lake. We're looking forward to finishing up the lawn and yard work so we can get a boat and spend some time on the water," Jerry concluded.

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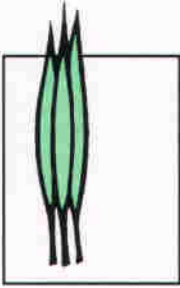
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Noer Facility Chosen as Site for National Tall Fescue Test

by Tom Salaiz

The National Turfgrass Evaluation Program (NTEP) policy committee has chosen U.W.-Madison as one of the locations for the upcoming National Tall Fescue Test. The exact number of entries is not known until seed arrives from seed companies in August. We are expecting 90-100 entries. Plans are to seed the study in late August or early September depending on when the seed arrives from NTEP.

The maintenance regime planned for our evaluation involves mowing at 2.5", nitrogen fertilization at 4 lbs/M/S, and irrigation to prevent stress. The cultivars will be evaluated for color, quality, rate of establishment, winter injury, and disease incidence.

As you know, tall fescue is a coarse textured, bunch-type, cool season turfgrass with uses ranging from sports fields to roadsides. Its coarse leaf texture limits its use to lower maintenance areas. The bunch type growth habit of tall fescue also limits its use in blends with other finer leaved turfgrasses such as Kentucky bluegrass. Tall fescue is adapted to a wide range of soil conditions and has good heat and drought tolerance compared to other cool season turfgrasses, but has relatively poor low temperature hardiness.

By looking at the number of entries expected in the trial, one can see that considerable work is being done to improve tall fescue with respect to leaf texture, rhizome development, and low temperature hardiness. Participation in this trial will reveal those improved cultivars adapted to Southern Wisconsin and hopefully will reveal those cultivars suited to blending.

MISSION STATEMENT DEVELOPED FOR NOER FACILITY

Mission statements have been developed for several of the outlying Agricultural Research Stations to help guide research and education activities at these stations. Such a mission statement was developed for the Noer Facility

cooperatively by Chuck Koval—Entomology, Marsh Finner—Director of Ag. Research Stations, Wayne Kussow—Soils, Tom Salaiz—Manager of Noer Facility, and Gayle Worf—Plant Pathology, with input from Craig Grau—Plant Pathology, and the turfgrass industry. The mission statement reads as follows:

Preamble

Turfgrasses add to quality of life by virtue of their social, economic, and environmental value, as well as their recreational applications. Turfgrass culture is a major state industry. Annual expenditures on turfgrass establishment and maintenance approximate the market value of corn grown in the state and the acreage of turf maintained ranks fifth among all crops grown. The future growth of the turfgrass industry is assured by continual expansion of the service-oriented sector of the U.S. economy.

Mission

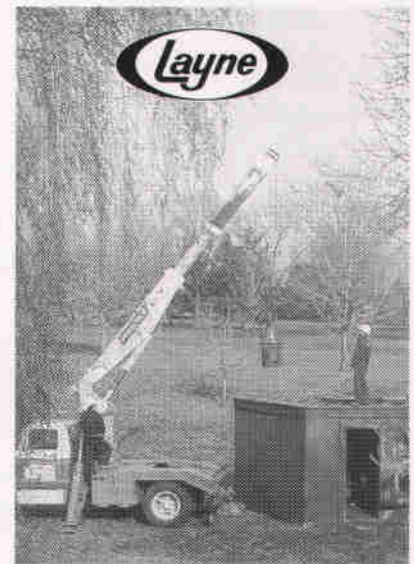
The O.J. Noer Turfgrass Research and Education Facility is dedicated to the testing, development, and promotion of turfgrasses and turfgrass management technologies. The facility will provide the physical base necessary to conduct high quality research and offer educational opportunities.

Goals

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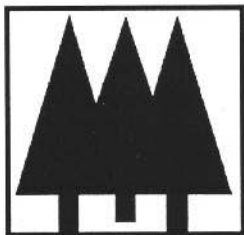
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Spring Turfgrass Management

By Dan Barrett, Superintendent
Trout Lake Golf Course

Spring in the northwoods always seems to bring with it many of the same occurrences. The bald eagles return to their nesting areas and search open waters for the catch of the day. Black bears, hungry from hibernation, scavenge for food in trash cans and dumpsters until buds and berries become abundant. Grouse drumming can be heard in the distance in preparation of their mating season. The deer, moving out of winter herding grounds, become more visible every day. These natural beauties are a prelude to what may be a northern golf course superintendent's greatest frustration and challenge—dealing with winter turf damage and spring renovation.

On average in the Woodruff area this time of year, we are coming out of a winter that has dumped 90 inches of snowfall on the golf course over 140 days. This is accompanied by some freezing rains anytime during our snow cover period. With this type of winter conditions, *Poa annua* populations seldom reach spring without snowmold or ice damage.

Dean Musbach stated in his last article that golfers do not hold superintendents accountable for winter damage. We are more frequently being evaluated by owners and green committees on how fast we can bring these damaged areas back to a quality playing condition. This is due to the increased demand by vacationing golfers for better playing conditions. No longer is there that thinking, "don't worry, it will grow back by July". That was my owner's thinking when I moved to the northwoods four years ago.

This change in thinking has many northern superintendents asking and arguing hard in board meetings for the tools we need to renovate turf in the spring. The tools are seed, fertilizer, equipment and labor.

Seed selection for different areas on our golf courses is becoming very important. The new improved varieties of bluegrasses, ryegrasses and fine fes-

cues need to be evaluated and then chosen for our specific situations. Soil type, fertility requirements, disease resistance, wear tolerance and the most important of all—winter hardiness—are factors which are considered when formulating blends.

The improved varieties of fine fescues are becoming more popular in seed blends for fairways and roughs in the north. They seem to be better suited to our needs because of their low fertility requirements, good winter hardiness, ability to withstand lower mowing heights and tolerance of fairly acid, infertile, dry soils. The percentage of ryegrass in a mixture is now being lowered to make room for the fescues. Many fairways are being maintained on sandy loam soils and do not receive more than two and one-half lbs. N/M during the year. Lime and gypsum applications are also being incorporated into maintenance programs. Soil tests on fairways have often shown low levels of calcium and magnesium in these soils. pH values could be found as low as 3.8 in extreme cases only a few years ago.

The decision on what to seed into tees differs among northern superintendents. Some are staying with bluegrass and ryegrass blends trying to successfully compete the *Poa annua* that was lost over winter. Others are trying to convert their tee areas over to bentgrass using aerification, slit seeding and growth regulators. These superintendents would prefer total reconstruction of the tees to bentgrass. This is costly, time consuming and inconvenient to golfers.

Topdressers, overseeders, green covers and better aerification equipment are being found in more maintenance facilities in the northwoods. Use of the light polyethylene green cover is becoming an important tool in late April and early May for warming soil temperatures. Cool night air temperatures lasting into June often do not allow soil temperatures to be warm enough for overseeding until the fourth week of

May on uncovered areas. Soil temperatures have been recorded 10 to 12 degrees warmer at the beginning of May on covered areas. This allows golf course superintendents to overseed greens and tees three to four weeks earlier than without the use of covers.

The most important renovation work in the spring takes place on the putting greens. Specific work has varied among superintendents depending upon the extent of damage. It is not uncommon to hear reports of turf losses on greens in the 50% to 80% range. In these cases, extensive work must be done and we must be prepared. One important factor is clear. Everyone using covers feels their degree of success when overseeding was higher on covered versus uncovered areas. They stress care must be taken in the management of the covers. The microclimate created under the covers is good for seedling development but it is also ideal for disease development. Earlier fungicide applications need to be made, especially for damping off.

Owners and board members are giving many superintendents these tools to work with for renovation. But the most important tool we need from them is additional labor. Our growing season for turfgrass in the northwoods does not begin until the second half of May. Prior to the incorporation of spring renovation, college students were an excellent source for grounds crew labor. Spring renovation and the use of greens covers to start the growing season earlier creates a need for longer term labor. Board members are often reluctant to increase labor expenses, which are already the highest expense in our operational budget. Factors affecting tourism in the northwoods (the economy and fishing bag limits, for example) make revenue projection difficult for public courses.

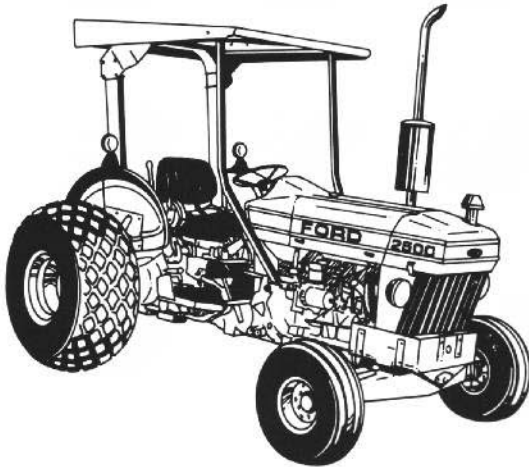
Winter turf damage in the northwoods has us all concerned. We know it will happen. We know at this time golfers will understand. But the pressure is growing for quicker recovery of damaged areas. Cold soil temperatures in the spring and an early summer are our greatest obstacle to overcome for renovation. Our best defense against pressure for early quality turf is to continue to find ways to lessen the severity and frequency of winter damage. Many times I feel spring renovation is only putting my finger in the dike.

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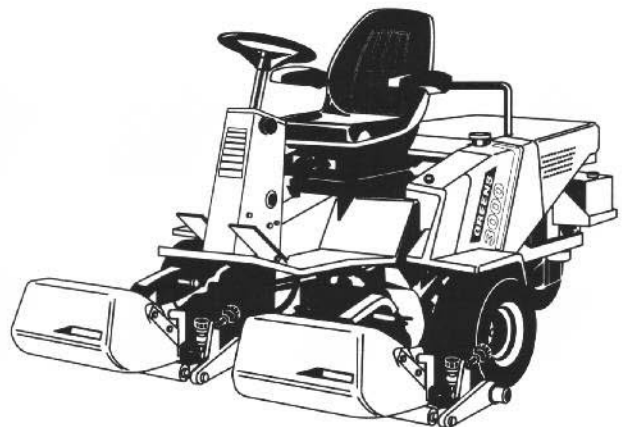
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