

# UPDATE:

## U.S.G.A. PROGRAM AT MANKATO GOLF CLUB

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How time flies!! Seemed like only yesterday, but in reality, September of 1980 was our initial contact. So many things have transpired at our golf course that have been related to our part of the U.S.G.A. program.

To refresh you readers, our initial problem was originated by a pythium strike on the greens during that summer which was diagnosed by the U.S.G.A. as, in part, caused by too much water and too much nitrogen. When the turf agronomist visited us and told us that we would have to change, many of our members were also going to have to change. And the result was a focal point on the controversy of the smooth, firm, fast green as opposed to the lush, dark colored, soft and somewhat slower green. You all can identify with stimpmeter readings and no one is really certain today as to the merits of that instrument.

For us, this meant a compliance with the U.S.G.A. recommendation which was: 1) To develop a deep root system which could better withstand the stress of both summer and winter; and 2) To implement the cultural practices which would give us a more consistent and reliable turfgrass, yet develop and retain the resiliency to counter our heavy play.

Aerification with 5/8" tines, removal of cores and "filling the holes" with high concentrates of sand (we also used peat - anywhere from 10% to 30% of the total mix) was done in the spring and fall. Heavy overseeding with Penneagle was done twice a year. Nitrogen applications were reduced to about 1 1/2 lbs. per 1000 sq. feet per season on the greens. Watering was held to a minimum. We dropped our height of cut to 5/32", mowed with vertical units, eventually dropping our cut to 1/64", and by the summer of 1983 were rolling consistently between 10 1/2 feet and 11 1/2 on the stimpmeter. The greens were super fast,

super smooth, and except for a lack of color, were among the best conditioned greens I saw.

Needless to say, problems developed. 1) The PH level increased; 2) We became potassium deficient; 3) We had to add iron sulphate frequently; and 4) Last summer, we had to finally increase the fertility level. We also raised the cut back to 5/32" because the majority of our members couldn't handle or didn't want those "11 foot rolls" on the green.

We have also moderated our frequency of topdressing, the size of our core pulling has been reduced to the 1/2" size, and we only aerified and pulled cores once last year.

The 1985 season will see some further modification. We are planning to 1) Aerify with 1/2" tines once, pull cores and topdress; 2) 5/32" cut; 3) Vertical mowing frequently; 4) Light nitrogen feeding totaling about 2 1/4 lbs. per 1000 feet for the entire season; 5) Light, controlled watering; 6) Frequent iron feeding; 7) Spring and fall feedings of 0-0-50; 8) Spring and fall feedings of sulfur to help keep that PH reading under control; and 9) The continued overseeding as Penneale is available.

I have been immensely pleased with what the U.S.G.A. has put into our program. Their program alienated some of our members who still think that a green should "hold" that "Blue-darter" that comes in on that low trajectory from 180 yards out. However, I feel that within reason any program can be adjusted to meet the needs of the members. This has become our primary concern. No one is trying to make our course into a U.S.G.A. championship caliber course. The first and last concern is still the members. We feel that we are striving to make that come true.

## GOLF COURSE FOR SALE

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and workshop. Fully equipped with Toro  
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