

Lots of Moss on a Donald Ross...

By: BOB VAVREK, USGA Agronomist

This season, there's no shortage of moss on greens at golf courses designed by Donald Ross or any other architect. Perhaps the cool, wet weather this spring is partly to blame for the moss explosion seen on many recent visits. The weather patterns have not been particularly favorable for growing a deep, dense root system in putting greens, especially old, bent/Poa greens. Snow mold injury, discussed in previous updates, has recovered slowly, and bentgrass really did not start to grow vigorously until a few weeks ago. Thin turf and plenty of rain opened the door for moss encroachment.

Weak, shallow rooted turf has been watered heavily on a daily basis now that extended periods of hot weather have arrived. Over watering is partly to blame for sustaining and spreading the bumper crop of moss.

Aggressive maintenance practices on greens to produce fast green speeds during May and June were contributing factors as well. Frequent rolling operations over wet greens will compact the upper root zone and deep grooming or vertical mowing operations constantly thin out the stand of turf. You never find a significant moss problem on a dense stand of healthy turf maintained at a reasonable (5/32") height of cut.

Everyone seems to have a new cocktail for moss control. The only sure-fire aspect of the various moss control programs is that they all have been consistently inconsistent. What appears to work at one golf course does not work at another, and sometimes the results vary from green to green on the same course. Occasionally a significant amount of progress is achieved, but a few days of wet, cool weather occur and the moss is back stronger than ever.

A perplexing aspect of moss encroachment is how greens at one course can be smothered in moss, while a superintendent at nearby course (similar age, mowing heights, and maintenance practices) has never seen moss on even the thinnest, wettest green.

Raising the height of cut and a little more fertilizer during the season would shift the competitive edge to the turf. Think controlling moss is a challenge - try convincing golfers to accept greens that are anything but lightning quick for day-to-day play.

(Editor's Note: Bob Vavrek may be reached at rvavrek@usga.org or 262-797-8743.)

EUREKA SANDS

Experienced Supplier of Your Golf & Sport Turf Needs.
Specializing in:

- Blended Rootzone/Turf Mix
- Portable Blending
- Topdressing to your specifications
- Truck Delivery
- Bunker Sands/Native & Sidley "ProAngle"[®] of Ohio
- Drainage Rock
- Decorative Rock
- Bulk & Bagged Dried Sand
- Float & "Tycrop" on Site Mobility



EUREKA SANDS

Kenny Miller & Roger Odegard
Phone: 952-985-5700 & 21778 Highview Ave. S.
Fax: 952-985-4242 & Lakeville, MN 55044
email: eurekasands@aol.com