



CHARTER

Mid-Atlantic Newsletter



PUBLISHED BY:

Mid-Atlantic Association of Golf Course Superintendents to aid in the Advancement of the
Golf Course Superintendent through Education and Merit

Volume XXXI

November 1978

Number 11

November Meeting

The November meeting of MAAGCS will be held at Washington Golf and Country Club on November 14th 1978. This is the regular second Tuesday of the month meeting.

Lee Dieter has been at Washington Golf since 1961. Seventeen years at our club is a feat in itself, but Lee has managed to improve his golf course every year in

one way or another. Lee has built 13 tees and 3 greens with a sand and peat mix and maintains them in Penncross. Lee has also been one of our leading ryegrass enthusiasts. Lee has different fairways in Citation, Pennfire and Monhalten and is comparing results to arrive at his best variety. This year Lee has seeded in some Yorktown. Lee is also having the new KCS irrigation system installed. He has invited all of us to stop in and take a look at it. One of the most outstanding additions to Washington Golf has been the yearly landscaping that Lee has done every year. Washington Golf is by far one of the most beautifully landscaped golf courses in the area.

Lee has been involved in both Mid-Atlantic and National Superintendents Association. Lee has held every office in the Mid-Atlantic and has been Newsletter Editor. Lee also served on the certification committee of the National from 1970 through 1976.

The Dieters, Lee and Rita, have four sons Mike 17, Chris 12, Fred 11 and Mark 4.

The club asks that our golfers tee it up before 12:00 noon or after 1:30 in the afternoon so members have three mid-day tee times. Lunch is available at the club. Cocktails will be served at 5:30 and dinner will be served at 6:30.

Directions to the club: From the Virginia Beltway 495 take the Route 123 exit towards McLean. Go about 2 miles, turn right on Old Dominion Drive (Rt. 309). Continue on into Arlington. The second light after entering is Rock Spring Road, turn left and the club parking is 1/2 block down on the right.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Fellow Members:

Our next meeting is being held on our regular second Tuesday of the month November 14 at Lee Dieter's Washington Golf and Country Club. Come out and enjoy Washington's golf and Lee's hospitality.

We're close to the end of another year and I wish I could say it was a good year for the MAAGCS but you and I both know differently. We had a couple of real fine and well attended meetings but overall I would say interest and participation sunk to a new low. I'm sure you all have your reasons for your lack of interest and participation, but I wonder if you are ready for the end result. By this I mean the collapse of your association. The three dozen or so active members of the association aren't going to be able to maintain their interest, participation and enthusiasm without your input.

Yours for finer turf for better golf.

Bill Emerson

Ladies' Night and Fiftieth Anniversary

On November 11th the MAAGCS will celebrate its 50th anniversary with a Dinner and Dance preceded by a cocktail hour. The affair will be held at the Turf Valley Country Club in Ellicott City, Maryland.

As you all know by now the Mid-Atlantic will be in its 50th year in 1979. We decided to celebrate in a grand

(continued on page 2)

Avoid the Temptation of Sand Topdressing

John R. Hall, III
Extension Specialist, Turf

Many golf course superintendents are observing with great interest the experimental practice of frequent sand topdressing of golf greens. The cheaper cost of straight sand topdressing is certainly tempting when compared with some of our more commonly used topdressing materials. The choice of a topdressing mixture is no less important to the quality of a putting green than the choice of soil mixtures for new green construction. Bad decisions in either instance can lead to golf greens which are costly to manage at best or impossible to keep alive in the summer, at worst. The most expensively constructed greens, utilizing mixes specified by laboratory tests can be ruined by the improper choice of topdressing material.

Topdressing of bentgrass greens has as its primary function the "truing" of greens by stabilizing the puffy thatch layer that normally develops in a bentgrass turf. It has come to be realized that topdressing also encourages stolon rooting aids, in thatch decomposition, stimulates new shoot growth, provides microorganisms antagonistic to parasitic fungi and provides nutrients to the turf. In winter overseeding of bermuda it serves to improve seed-soil contact and enhance germination. In vegetative establishment with stolons or sprigs, it aids in rooting. In northern climates topdressing is utilized to protect against winter desiccation. In situations where the existing greens soil is inadequate, frequent, heavy topdressing is utilized to actually "rebuild" or modify the existing golf green soil.

John Madison and William B. Davis of the University of California have conducted topdressing research utilizing sand materials common to the west coast and produced desirable results. The University of California guidelines suggest utilizing sand particles between 0.25 and 1.0 mm in diameter and using 1/9 cubic yard of topdressing per 1000 sq. ft. of green (about 1/30" thick) at each topdressing.¹ Topdressing frequency is dependent upon the growth rate of the bentgrass, but for calculation purposes, three week intervals between topdressings appear to be normal in their region.

Pesticides, nutrients and bentgrass seed are added to the topdressing as pressures dictate. The system is apparently working well under California's environmental conditions.

There are several areas of concern that come to mind when one contemplates a change in topdressing mixtures from the traditional sand-soil-peat or weblite-soil-peat to straight sand. Some of the more obvious questions arise from our current observation of sand-peat greens and from what we know to be the characteristics of sand as a growing medium. We must assume that the end result of long term use of the light, frequent sand topdressing is a bentgrass green growing in a layer of sand. Straight sand or sand-peat mixtures have been noted to exhibit the following characteristics:

- 1) excessive water infiltration
- 2) excessive nutrient leaching
- 3) lower microbial activity
- 4) hydrophobic drying
- 5) lack of moisture reservoir
- 6) susceptibility to layering

(continued on page 4)

National Tournament Team Results

The qualifying for our team that we will send to the National Tournament has been going on now for three months. The scores for qualifying were shot at Loudon Golf and Country, Indian Springs and Hunt Valley. The best two gross scores were used and the two best scores will be our team. If the top four players are unable to attend, the alternates will be sent in their place. The results are as follows:

1st	Paul O'Leary	76-75 - 151
2nd	Jack Montecaluo	75-82 - 157
3rd	Ken Braun	79-82 - 161
4th	David Kroll	81-81 - 162
5th	Bill Emerson	76-86 - 162
6th	Bob Orazi	83-79 - 162
7th	Ron Hall	78-85 - 163

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Sand Topdressing

(continued from page 3)

Excessive water infiltration - The idea of improving water infiltration rates with sand topdressing is valid but one must ask where is the water going? If the 2 or 3 inch layer of sand is finally achieved after 5 or 6 years of sand topdressing, it is likely the rapidly infiltrating water is going to build up at the interface between the newly applied sand and the old soil. Will this zone become anaerobic causing death of roots in midsummer? Obviously, this is not a problem in western states where rainfall seldom exceeds 8 inches per year and irrigation is the primary source of water. On the east coast, however, we receive 40 to 55 inches of rainfall per year and it often comes in excessive spurts. Our two most popular topdressing mixtures (70% sand-20% peat-10% soil and 65% weblite-15% soil-20% peat) are providing infiltration rates around 8" per hour. A sample lab analysis of a straight sand with 95.8% of the particles between 0.25 to 1.0 mm, 1.5% silt and 0.3% clay exhibited an infiltration rate of 88.7" per hour. On the east coast where water is provided in uncontrollable amounts perhaps we are better off not having the infiltration that would come with a 3" layer of sand on top of an existing greens mixture with a considerably slower infiltration rate. Our excessive moisture is now moving off primarily as surface drainage. In situations where surface drainage is inadequate, sand topdressing is not going to solve the problem.

(continued on page 5)

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LEE DIETER

We understand that Lee Dieter has suffered from an appendicitis attack. Lee was back on the job within a week, which goes to show you can't keep a good man down. Judging from this picture Lee seems to be doing well, but the lion has gastritis.

□ ~ □ □

We hope that all of you Superintendents and your ladies will make plans to attend the 50th anniversary celebration at Turf Valley Country Club. This is the 50th anniversary of MAAGCS and Ben Stagg assures me that this will be a great night.

Sand Topdressing

(continued from page 4)

Excessive nutrient leaching in the straight sand greens and sand-peat greens is consistently necessitating higher nitrogen and potassium fertilization levels except in those cases where undecomposed organic matter is used and nitrogen is released. Is building greens that require more nitrogen a move in the right direction, if we consider current and future fertilizer prices? The 1973-74 fertilizer-food shortage just gave us a "pre-shock" of things to come.

Lower microbial activity - Sand greens are likely to be less active microbiologically than mixtures containing soil. It's possible that urea formaldehyde products will be utilized with less efficiency on sand greens because of the requirement for microbiological breakdown of urea formaldehyde to plant utilizable nitrogen forms. Will thatch layers decompose slower with sand topdressing than with a mixture containing microbiologically active soil?

Hydrophobic drying has been a problem on some sand-peat greens. The formulation of water repelling organic layers on sand particles in sand-peat mixes that have been allowed to dry out have created considerable headaches. The rewetting of these hydrophobic areas is extremely difficult and has led to death of the bentgrass in some instances. Can we safely assume this won't happen in sand greens? It does not appear to be happening in conventional and sand-soil-peat greens.

A lack of moisture reservoir in sand and sand-peat greens is a serious concern. Water delivery systems, as advanced as they are, still leave a lot to be desired in a 3 to 5 MPH breeze. With a sand or sand-peat green one literally has no margin of error. The sand green requires constant "babysitting" to insure uniform distribution and continued replenishment of the small moisture reservoir held by the sand.

Susceptibility to layering - Two things are certain—no two golf course superintendents will run a golf course the same way and very few will stay at any one golf course more than 20 years. This creates a potential for changes in topdressing mixtures that could be lethal, especially if a sand topdressing program has been used. If a new superintendent feels the sand topdressed greens are too droughty and switches to any topdressing that holds moisture under a greater tension than the layer of topdressed sand, a false water table effect is created. The new topdressing that holds more water at a greater tension will not release it into the sand layer until enough pressure (water) is present to release the water into the larger pore spaces of the sand layer. This same problem could arise on sand-peat greens where topdressing containing soil is utilized. Percolation through this interface will likely get worse with time as the soil topdressing layer gets thicker because it will tend to retain more moisture and the false water table depth will increase. Once the layer is deeper than the aeration tines, the only sure solution is to rebuild the green.

Obviously there are a lot of unanswered questions with regard to the use of sand topdressing. Common sense tells us that if you currently have a topdressing mixture that works—don't change. Once you switch to sand topdressing, there is no turning back without considerable cost—agronomically and possibly financially.

Developing a topdressing mixture that has the right capillary and non-capillary pore space, infiltration rate, moisture retention, pH and bulk density is not an easy matter. It requires laboratory tests that are quite complicated. Commercially prepared topdressing mixtures meeting USGA specifications and complying with VPI&SU greens mixture recommendations are available. Yes, they do cost more than sand—but in the long run the cost of commercially prepared topdressing is inexpensive when compared with the costs associated with reconstructing a green or maintaining a green that has been abused with bad topdressing practices.

REFERENCES:

¹Madison, J. H. and Davis, William B., 1977. *Problems or Progress*. Tee 2 Green Corp., 1212 W. 8th Street, Kansas City, Missouri, pp. 16.

Get the Most Out of Conferences

Conference and trade shows, such as GCSAA's International Turfgrass Conference and Show, offer an important opportunity for you to invest a small amount of time and money for a large return. Most professionals believe that occasional opportunities to educate themselves are central to their ability to provide continuing good service to their employers. This is especially applicable to golf course superintendents, whose responsibilities are expanding rapidly.

Learning opportunities come in several forms at a meeting such as GCSAA's. There is the chance to benefit from the knowledge of experts; the more concrete learning afforded by the chance to examine new equipment and products; and the benefit derived from associating with other superintendents.

Attending intensive education sessions can make conferees feel as if they're trying to drink from a fire hose—so much is coming so fast that it's difficult to absorb anything. The best way to overcome this problem is to plan ahead. Select your program of educational sessions carefully, considering the value that each topic has for your problems and situation.

Take plenty of notes—they help you keep organized—but be sure you're not so busy writing things down that you forget to listen. If conference proceedings or

(continued on page 7)

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Dates to Remember

NOVEMBER 14th

Washington Golf and Country Club

DECEMBER 12th

Annapolis Naval Academy
Election Meeting

JANUARY 7th-11th

Turfgrass '79
Baltimore Hilton

JANUARY 23rd-24th

Virginia Turfgrass Conference
Williamsburg, Virginia

FEBRUARY 4th-9th

GCSAA 50th International Turfgrass Conference and Show.

Conferences

(continued from page 6)

recordings of the sessions are available, take advantage of them.

Trade shows offer an opportunity to observe a wide variety of equipment and supplies in a relatively short period of time. It's possible to "comparison shop" among many equipment manufacturers. Whether you have a specific need to fill or are "just looking," you will benefit from the time you spend on the exhibit hall floor.

If you own or can borrow a camera, consider taking one along to photograph items that you are interested in. Photographs of informative posters can save you time by keeping you from copying down information. Don't be hesitant to discuss your requirements with the sales representatives on the floor—they are there to inform you. They may also have descriptive brochures you can take home with you.

Meeting strangers at a conference need not be difficult. All you have to do is be willing to introduce yourself to those around you at a meeting or in an elevator, for example. Have a ready supply of small talk about the weather or sports ready to ease the first few minutes of conversation. There is a rapport that develops quickly in these kinds of encounters which can lead to valuable exchanges of information.

Look for the new attendee and pay special attention to him. If he feels lonely or isolated, chances are he won't return next year. If that happens, he loses and so do you.

Education, exhibits, exchanges with fellow conferees—they are three important aspects of attending a conference. Each is valuable, and each is part of the investment you make of your time and money when you attend a conference.

1978 Memorial Tournament: Now History

All those superintendents who attended the annual Memorial Tournament at Hunt Valley agreed the course and club were fantastic. We would like to thank Bob Orazi and his staff for the chance to play their very well groomed golf course. We would also like to thank John Haines and his fine Pro Shop staff for the very helpful and professional manner that we were taken care of. Last and certainly not least we thank Ken Braun for another fine and smoothly run tournament. The winners were:

Low Net Class A & B

- 1st Mike MacKenzie
- 2nd Wayne Evans
- 3rd Grant Pensinger
- 4th Jack Montecaluo
- 5th Ben Stagg

Low Gross Class A & B

- 1st Paul O'Leary 75
- 2nd Ron Hall 78
- 3rd Bob Orazi 79
- 4th David Kroll 81
- 5th Ken Braun 82

Class D

- Low Gross, Gary Bare, 91
- Low Net, Bill Nevs, 98-21 = 77

High Score - Russ Bull "many"

Class E

- Low Gross, Tom Comalli, 75
- Low Net, Tom Harris, 112-27 = 85

Closest to the Hole

- #4 - Walter Elseroad
- #12 - Steve Fowler

Longest Drive -Earl Mason

Congratulations to all of our winners.

40 Million Incompetents

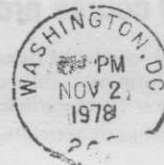
A study released by the United States Office of Education last October gave us the shocking information that 40 million adults have barely the minimum competence required to be effective citizens, consumers or wage earners, Mr. Leo Cherne said.

Fifteen million Americans are unable to address an envelope well enough to assure that the Postal Service could deliver it. Nearly 17 million are unable to make out a personal check correctly enough for a bank to process. More than one out of every four adults, if given a drug store receipt which lists the purchases and the total spent, are unable to figure out the correct change that they should get after paying with a twenty dollar bill. And, incidentally, 11 percent of those who hold professional or managerial jobs are among the functionally incompetent.

Mid-Atlantic Newsletter

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Published monthly by the Mid-Atlantic Association of Golf Course Superintendents to aid in the advancement of the golf course superintendent through education and merit.
Subscription rate for non-members: \$5.00 per year.