



Mid-Atlantic Association of Golf Course Superintendents NEWSLETTER



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LAYTONSVILLE GOLF COURSE — APRIL 11 MEETING SITE

Laytonsville Golf Course, one of the three public golf courses owned and operated by the Montgomery County Revenue Authority, is the site for the April meeting of our association. Our host for the day is our Treasurer, Nick Vance, CGCS. Nick has been working at the course since the Spring of 1975 when he went to work as Assistant Superintendent under Terry Loibl. Two years later, when Terry moved back to his home in North Dakota, Nick assumed the duties as Superintendent at the Laytonsville course.

In 1980 Nick married Karen, both had children from previous marriages. Nick's two children, Deborah Annette Hall and Jeffery Scott Vance are both on their own now. Debbie is 26 years old, is married and lives in Frederick, Maryland. She is the accounting supervisor for NCS Inc. in Rockville, MD and currently working on her BA in financial management at Hood College. Jeff is now 23 years old and lives in Montgomery Village. He is working at National Applicators, as a drywall contractor and after a two year break he's planning on returning to college this fall. After two semesters of business he is planning on getting back into the turf industry. Karen's daughter, Traci Lynn Menapace and her husband Marty live in Silver Spring where Traci works for a real estate appraiser part time and attends Montgomery College. The Menapaces presented Karen and Nick with their first grandchild, Philip Joseph, last June.

Last Summer Nick, Karen and Jeffery Hunter, the last of the children still at home (Karen's son), moved to Columbia, Maryland where Jeff is a freshman at Hammond High School. He is on the school golf team and has become very interested in drama. Karen is the book-keeper-office manager for Sambuco's Food Services Inc. in Ellicott City, Maryland. Although Nick still loves to play golf and bowls one night a week in the winter months, his favorite pastime is boating. He and Karen have become avid boaters and both enjoy getting away on their boat whenever they can.

Laytonsville Golf Course was designed by Roger Peacock and built by Robert L.



Nick Vance, CGCS, Our Host

Elder. The course was open June 9, 1973. Originally the golf course was a short par 70 layout with two short par fives, one on each nine. The greens were seeded with Penncross Bentgrass, the tees and fairways were seeded with Bluegrass and the roughs were Tall Fescue and Bluegrass mixed. The original irrigation system had Griswold controls and Skinner UR 5 sprinkler heads on the greens and tees only.

In 1977 the twelfth hole was changed from a 410 yard par four to a 498 par five. About 100 yards of swamp and trees were cleared to make room for the new tee. The fourteenth hole was then changed from a 412 yard par five to a 390 yard par four. New back tees were also added on 4, 5, 9, and 11. These tees were added to give the golfers a little more variety. The white and blue tees on the original layout were too close together on most of the holes.

In 1983 the Griswold controls were replaced with a Rainbird MCS3 Master and 6 1230 satellites. Most of this work was done in house by the maintenance staff. The satellites were wired by our good friend and fellow superintendent at International Town and C.C., Steve Nash. Steve was working with Nick at the time.

The greens at Laytonsville average about 8,000 sq. feet. They are cut daily at 7/32 and get between 3½ and 4 pounds of Nitrogen per year. Scotts Goose-Crab Control has been used for the last three years and last fall TGR was applied for the first time. They are aerated and top-dressed twice each year. The last two times they have been aerified with a Verti-drain machine with ¾" hollow tines.

The fairways and tees have been overseeded the past five years with a perennial ryegrass blend. They are mowed three times a week at 13/16 of an inch and receive 1½ to 2 pounds of Nitrogen each year. There still is no water in the fairways but Nick is planning on starting on this project this summer. The tees are mowed three times a week at ½ inch and get between 2 and 3 pounds of N. per season.

At this writing the golf course is in the middle of a big renovation project. The fifteenth hole is a short par three, but it is all carry over a pond. The front of the green had settled so much that there was about a 27 degree drop from the back to the front of the green. If you were able to get the ball to stay on the green from the tee, there was still almost no way to keep it on the green if you missed the putt. Since the course is public and plays over 60,000 rounds per year some thing had to be done to correct the situation and improve play. On October 15 the original sod was cut from the green and placed in sand bunkers on the course. Then a six foot wall made of treated 6x6's was built in front of the green. The soil on the back of the green was then cut down and moved to the front. Then two new bunkers were cut into each side of the green. That soil was also used to build up the front of the green. About 80 tons of topdressing was then incorporated into the soil with a large tiller. Drainage tile
(Continued and Directions on page 3)

RESERVATIONS
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Facts and Fallacies of Fast Greens

by James T. Snow
Director, Northeastern Region
USGA Green Section

In retrospect, the introduction of the Stimpmeter by the USGA in 1976 foreshadowed major changes for the way golf courses are maintained and for the way the game itself is played. By enabling golf course superintendents to easily determine the speed of greens, the Stimpmeter has greatly expanded our understanding of how maintenance practices can be manipulated to control green speed. As a result, golfers at every level throughout the country are enjoying faster, truer putting surfaces on a day to day basis than ever before.

While their greens have been fast and smooth, however, the road that the superintendent has been forced to accommodate these changes has occasionally been slow and bumpy. Interested but uninformed golfers and club officials have placed heavy pressure on the superintendent to produce consistently ultra-fast greens on their courses, testing the limits of the health of the turf and sometimes pushing it over the edge. Along the way, rumors and misinformation have pervaded every locker room with respect to how fast the greens should be, how to get them that way, and what might happen if they're pushed too hard.



One of the indisputable facts today is that greens are generally faster than they were only a few years ago. A national survey done by the USGA Green Section in 1976 showed that the average green rolled approximately 6 feet 6 inches according to the Stimpmeter, whereas the average green today is probably closer to 8 feet. It's also a fact that most golfers have short memories. Though greens today are faster than ever, complaints about slow greens are more common than ever.

So how fast is fast? In my view, the following offers a reasonable perspective on the subject.

Fast for regular play - 8' to 9'

A reasonable range - 7'6" to 9'

Ultra-fast for regular play - above 9'

An unreasonable range - above 9' at all times

Due to the vagaries of the weather and other circumstances, it is impossible to maintain a precise green speed throughout the year, but maintaining speeds between 7'6" and 9' should be feasible. Speeds greater than 9' should be established only for special occasions. Trying to keep green speeds above 9' at all times, as desired by some golfers, often results in serious problems and should be avoided.

PAYING THE PIPER

Achieving fast greens has been well studied and involves proper mower maintenance and adjustment along with the manipulation of cultural factors such as fertilization, irrigation, topdressing, verticutting, rolling, etc. To achieve ultra-fast greens, all of these programs must be pushed to the limit. In the process, extreme stress is placed on the turf and jeopardizes its very survival during periods of difficult weather. If a goal of maintaining fast or ultra-fast greens throughout the season is ever to be achieved, then a real effort must be made to control or minimize other stress factors as much as possible. These include:

- poor drainage
- moisture stress due to a poor irrigation system or improper irrigation practices
- soil compaction
- diseases, insects, and nematodes
- unreasonable traffic (e.g. play during bad weather winter play, etc.)
- tree effects (shade, root competition, poor air circulation)

Despite efforts to control these stress factors, however, following through with all of the practices necessary to produce consistently fast or ultra-fast greens can thin and weaken the turf to such an extent that many undesirable consequences can occur. Among the problems observed:

- establishment of moss and algae
- encroachment of crabgrass, goosegrass and other weeds
- proliferation of summer patch, take-all patch and other difficult to control stress related diseases

Trying to maintain consistently ultra-fast greens means always living on the edge of disaster, and once golfers become used to these fast greens, they expect them to be that way all of the time. The superintendent is then locked into a maintenance program which at best will make him a nervous wreck, but which ultimately could spell disaster. In the end, the piper will be paid!

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Try to keep the speed of your greens in the reasonable range of 7'6" to 9'. Aim for the 8' to 9' range if you wish, but recognize that green speeds will vary from day to day and season to season.
- Avoid getting caught up in the race for ultra-fast greens, striving for speeds of 9'6" only on very special occasions, if at all.

- Explain to your club officials about the potential consequences of trying to maintain consistently ultra-fast greens.
- Be on the lookout for the symptoms of weakness noted earlier, and be prepared to compromise your green speed goals in an effort to strengthen the turf.

In the long run, the game of golf will be best served by taking a reasonable approach to managing green speeds, avoiding the excesses which can only result in dead grass and unhappy golfers.

Long Island Golf Course Superintendents Association, May 1987 Newsletter.

LAYTONSVILLE (Continued from page 1)

was then put into the green and bunkers. The green was then rolled and the sod was taken from the bunkers where it had been kept and laid on the green. The green was then rolled, topdressed, and covered with a thermal blanket for the winter. This work, along with their regular duties, was accomplished by Nick, his assistant Tom Ritter, and a three man crew. Weather permitting the green will be open this spring.

The program for the day at Laytonsville will be: Lunch - 11:30 to 1:00, Golf - 1:00 to 6:00 (lunch and carts will be free for those who make reservations before Friday, April 7), Cocktails - 6:00 to 7:00, Dinner - 7:00, Meeting - 8:00. The cost of the dinner will be \$20.00.

Guest Speaker: Dr. Peter Dernoeden, will be the speaker for the evening. His topic "Using Acclaim" will focus on the total effects of this new post-emergence herbicide. As you all know, Dr. Dernoeden is part of the Agronomy Department at the University of Maryland, and works primarily in the area of weed and disease control in turf.

Directions to the course for golf: From Virginia take 270 North to Shady Grove Road, turn right on Shady Grove Road for 3.8 miles to dead end (Muncaster Mill Road). Turn left on Muncaster Mill Road for one mile, then turn right on Rt. 124 for 2.7 miles to Warfield Road. Turn right on Warfield Road to the course, 1/2 on the right. From Maryland take 70 west to Rt. 29 South. Take 29 South to Rt. 108 West. Stay on Rt. 108 for 21.4 miles (past Olney, Rt. 97, and past blinking amber light at Fieldcrest Road). Turn left on Dorsey Road to course 1/2 on the left.

Directions to the restaurant for dinner and meeting: From the course turn left on Warfield Road 2.3 miles to Goshen Road. Turn left on Goshen Road 1/2 mile to Wightman Road, right on Wightman Road. 1/2 mile to Montgomery Village Avenue. 3.2 miles on Montgomery Village Avenue to the Holiday Inn on the right. From 270 take Rt. 124 (Gaithersburg exit) 1/2 mile to Rt. 355. The Holiday Inn will be on your left at this intersection.