

Wisconsin Turf Symposium

NEW DEAL FOR AN OLD COURSE



Some golf courses age beautifully and require little corrective surgery over the years to withstand the assaults of the modern game and equipment. But most need help through architectural change.

Over 150 golf course superintendents gathered last month in Milwaukee for the 10th annual Wisconsin Golf Turf Symposium which was organized to help superintendents at courses contemplating change soon. The mix of superintendents included some looking for nuts-and-bolts answers to questions that soon will be asked them as they get into a rebuilding program at their course; to some interested mostly in how programs are run at some of the bigger courses around the country. Many speakers were superintendents at these older, established clubs. The seminars touched off discussion both formally and informally, and most went away with something to help them at their own course when change is needed.

Golf course architect Robert Trent Jones started the three-day conference off with slides and his general philosophy of golf course design. The rest of the seminars dealt with getting a reconstruction program off the ground, the importance of involving the superintendent in course changes or construction, and the importance of an experienced golf course contractor working with a set of detailed specifications understood by all involved in the project.

Jack Allis, green committee chairman at the Country Club of Milwaukee, explained it is important to inform the members of what is going on with any changes in the course, and to communicate with them throughout the course of the job. National Golf Foundation consultant Fred Stewart also stressed this point because there are inevitably delays due to weather, financing, etc., and these delays can be a major irritation to club members.

Stewart and Jaames L. Holmes, president of The Green Makers, Bryan, Texas, said there are no short

Richard E. Valentine, superintendent at Merion Golf Club, Ardmore, Pa., reported on installation of a \$123,000 automatic irrigation system recently installed at his club with nine miles of pipe.

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cuts to construction. "Drainage is the most important factor in building greens," Holmes said, "if you don't do it right the first time, you simply have to go back and do it again later. There are no ways to cut corners."

Holmes said of his specialty, greens, "It would be nice to just heap up a pile of dirt and grow grass and start putting, but we can't do that any more; we have raised standards so high that now we have to have superior drainage to satisfy." Holmes' formula for greens includes about 16 inches of top mix that will compact down to about 12 inches. He said the top mix should be any material that will infiltrate four to 12 inches per hour. He then recommends a two-inch sand layer, four inches of pea gravel and then perforated drainage tile surrounded by gravel for the best green drainage.

Herschel Martin, superin-

tendent at Ridgeway Country Club, Memphis, Tenn., explained when the greens at his club were first built, compaction figures and percolation rates were explained informally to course owners, not held to, and the greens were not good enough when built. He said his greens were so hard he needed a sledgehammer to pound his cup-cutter into the green, and that golf spikes would not penetrate the green. "The club's golf committee paid off the architect, cancelled his bond, then started to complain to me." The architect later had to rebuild the greens when it was proved they did not meet United States Green Section specifications.

Martin, Stewart and James L. Johns, superintendent at Lake Park Country Club, Germantown, Wis., agreed that it is important to have definite specifications spelled out in black-and-white before work begins. Johns is currently embroiled in a lawsuit between the owner and archi-

tect of Lake Park. He has been called as a witness in the lawsuit, and said it is very hard to defend the owner's position when "you only have two pages of loose specifications to work from in court." Johns said the specifications contract is an insurance policy to the club and should lay out in detail exactly what is to be done, what materials should be used and when the responsibility of the architect, contractor, superintendent and owner begins and ends.

"Many owners and architects think the superintendent is not needed until grass begins to grow on the course, but this is not true any more," Johns said. "Today's superintendent is aware of the pitfalls that can result from faulty construction and is intelligent enough to head off future maintenance problems at the design and construction phase." And that was one of the reasons for the turf symposium in the first place. □

JUNK YARD *(from page 18)*

"In the past, we've spent lots of time and money just cutting through the vines and brambles so employees could remove needed parts from cars in the yard," he says. "Herbicides have helped us minimize that problem."

Nolan faces many of the same problems but he has more land (60 acres) for his "rose garden" near Effingham. He points out, "This large tract allows me to organize my 1,500 cars in a 20-acre section. However, it also increases my need for excellent weed and grass control. I'm convinced an annual program of herbicides is the best way to go."

Herbicides are available in farm supply stores and most areas have custom applicators who will put them on. However, Palmer and Nolan elected to handle the application themselves. Palmer borrowed a neighbor's sprayer and gun, while Nolan built a sprayer from pieces of "junk".

If Nolan has his way, his dream of a "rose garden" will become a reality to lots of people in the near future. □



Clean yard results from use of bromacil weeds killer around and under salvage autos. Mike Nolan's yard is laid out by row according to automobile make.