

Get the most from equipment and men and . . .

Anticipate Disease Problems

IT'S common knowledge among those who enjoy the game of golf, that you don't drive near putting greens with electric golf cars, you don't set your club-laden bag on the closely clipped turf, nor do you use any golf club on the greens except the putter. If you spend your leisure time trying to conquer that sport at Oglebay Parks relatively young Speidel Golf Course, the same rules hold for the tees; except you are not limited to just the putter. The tees at Speidel are identical to the greens, and both receive the same care and attention as part of golf director Ed Murphy's disease and weed control preventive program.

"I have a young course," explained Murphy, "and want to keep it as disease and weed-free as possible. I must anticipate problems."

"It costs extra money for the two or three additional sprayings, but I don't have any blemishes on my trees, greens or fairways except for the ball marks and divots people fail to repair," he added.

As golf director for the Wheeling, West Virginia Park Commission, Murphy oversees all golf-related activities taking place on the par-3 course, and the Crispin Golf Center (another 18-hole course) in addition to his role as superintendent of the Speidel course. His disease and weed control programs have already registered results with Speidel's first LPGA event — the Wheeling Classic played last July.

"My observation on being a good superintendent," Murphy says, "is to get the most out of my men and equipment. I constantly supervise and take a real personal interest in the grass."

The Robert Trent Jones designed course has quite a variety of grasses. The greens and tees on the public course are all Penncross and are kept clipped at 3/16" to 5/32" for general use.

Baron, Fylking and Pennstar cover the automatically irrigated fairways. The perennial rye grasses, Pennfine and Manhattan, were added after a USGA suggestion because they are excellent for wear under the heavy traffic conditions found at most tournaments.

"I'm trying to develop first class fairways," the superintendent explains, "to go along with the nice tees and greens we have here."

"That's why it's so important to have a good disease and weed control program, because there are really three seasons of weeds that occur during the regular golfing season. First, we get common crab in the early spring, during mid-summer it pops up again, and then in the late fall *Poa annua* hits us. With the extra couple sprayings of pre-emergence herbicides, we keep the level of material at an effective rate for best control."

The fertilizers, herbicides and fungicides he uses for his turf maintenance program are as varied as the type grass seed found on the turf itself. The fertilizer, herbicide, and fungicide applications all go hand in hand, but because of the fertilizer program and the excellent pH count, Murphy's weed population is kept at a minimum.

The first three years the course was in operation, soil tests were taken annually and a count of seven was always the result. In fact, fairways 6, 7, 8, are constructed right over limestone. Magnesium and calcium counts were also excessive according to Murphy.

Therefore, he uses a low phosphate grade of fertilizer on the greens and applies it every two weeks. Iron is added during the Fall and Spring, and occasionally throughout the rest of the season. "The reason we fertilize so often," he says, "is because our green con-

struction is 75 percent sand and 25 percent peat, so they're very porous."

Greens and tees are kept healthy with a number of fungicide and insecticide combinations. Daconil 2787®, Dyrene, Tersan 1991, Dexon, and Diazinon and certain combinations of these fungicides, all contribute to the fine condition of the turf. "I always try fungicide combinations in my nursery before I apply it to the turf," explains Murphy. "One combination I really like is Daconil 2787 and Tersan 1991. I've found Diamond Shamrock's Daconil 2787 compatible with almost anything. It's also a liquid so I have no problems with nozzles clogging up and slowing down my spraying. I just follow the label instructions."

With the weed population on the fairways at a minimum the superintendent has found that regular applications of Dacthal® pre-emergent herbicide beginning the first week of May, have contributed significantly in eliminating common crab, goosegrass, and have a large effect in reducing the *Poa annua* infestation in the late fall.

"If you're going to develop a first class course, you must be willing to spend the extra few dollars for additional sprayings to keep the material at an effective level," he emphasized, "you can't hope to 'get by' any other way. That's the key to a good preventive program."

As the 17-year biology teacher and coach, turned golf director indicated, "to be a good superintendent, you must take a real personal interest in the grass." Judging from his complete disease and weed prevention program, Speidel's Ed Murphy obviously does, and is the reason Oglebay Parks newest course is rapidly developing into one of the best in the area. □