

Little Future for Fairways Of Bluegrass, USGA Says

There is not much of a future for bluegrasses on golf course fairways, in the mid-Atlantic region of the country at least, according to Holman M. Griffin, former director of that region for the United States Golf Association Green Section, now with the National Golf Foundation.

At least with the bluegrass strains now available, the disease *Fusarium roseum* is a major problem along with insects such as *Ataenius spretulus* and others, he said as part of a panel discussion at the Section's annual conference on golf turf management earlier this year in New York.

Stanley J. Zontek, USGA director, "There is no doubt we do have problems with bluegrasses. Bluegrass is being forced to grow at too low a cutting height with too much nitrogen, too much water and maybe not enough other good maintenance practices, such as liming and aeration. But the researchers are continually trying to improve bluegrass strains, to improve disease controls and to develop better insecticides. I think there is a

great future for bluegrass progress simply by sorting out the tremendous amount of information already available on diseases, insects, etc."

Carl Schwartzkopf, USGA director, said, "In the mid-continent, the failure of bluegrass has always probably been due more to cutting height than anything else. The superintendent is being forced to cut bluegrasses too short, and this places undue physiological stress on the plant. There is also the tendency for some to overwater in order to maintain *Poa annua* during the summer.

"Unfortunately, many golfers believe green is good and brown is bad. When everyone realizes the capabilities and management requirements of bluegrass, I think bluegrass will probably do very well. I have played bluegrass fairways that were cut at 7/16 inch. When I mention this to some people, they simply shake their heads in disbelief. But those bluegrass fairways were so dense, it was almost like hitting a ball off Bermudagrass fairway turf. They were excellent. But we simply do not have bluegrasses available today that will very long survive the 3/4 inch or less height of cut."

National director Al Radko said, "I do not think we should allow bluegrasses to be knocked out of the turf manager's box. Today, there are a number of excellent bluegrasses being developed by researchers like Dr. Joseph Duich of Penn State and Dr. Reed Funk of Rutgers. These bluegrasses will one day be equal to our other good grasses for fairway turf. They will survive a height of cut desired by most golfers. We are definitely working our way down to this point."

California Superintendent Takes on GCSAA Bylaws

There is a biased situation in the membership bylaws of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, according to a letter published in a recent newsletter of the Southern California Chapter of that association.

"There are many young, professional people in the field who have much to offer the GCSAA, but without association voting rights their voices cannot be heard," the

unsigned letter said. "The membership laws are blind to professionalism. The bylaws stress quantity and negate quality. According to these regulations, as long as one puts in his time as a superintendent or assistant he can attain class A and B membership.

"I must point out at this time that I am by no means criticizing the vast majority of reputable superintendents," it continues.

He said the quality of the golf course where a person puts in his "time" has nothing to do with his membership classification. He suggests that as an example, if he had foregone his university education and had rather accepted a position at a pitch-and-putt, nine-hole sand course, by now he would be a class A member instead of a class F member.

He proposes that substantial experience credit be allowed persons with an applicable degree, and that a person with a four-year degree be permitted to take the certification exam upon graduation. Certification could be given after a few years of experience as a superintendent.

"If major changes cannot be made in our bylaws, perhaps it is time for a Professional Golf Superintendents Association," he said.

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