

ate, has been on golf courses virtually his whole life. As a five-year-old boy, his backyard and playground was Hershey (Pa.) Country Club. He was superintendent at Fountainhead Country Club in Hagerstown, Pa., for 13 years before coming to Congressional. He has easily adapt-

ed to his current surroundings.

"We have 500 acres I can roam around on," he says. "It's difficult to hide in your own world any more as a golf course superintendent, anyway.

"The exposure I have with a different cross-section of people is something I

value very much. In a normal job, you don't get to meet doctors, lawyers and senators.

"You get a nice, crisp day when the sky is blue, the grass is green...there's nothing like it."

—Jerry Roche

Management practices, not turf species, are key at this 'course of a different texture'

'Zoysia...a good grass for both high and low handicappers...has a kind of bounce to it,' says Dick Stuntz.

■ What might work for one golf course superintendent might not work for another. Likewise, what might work for maintaining one type of turfgrass might not work for another.

Alvamar Country Club in Lawrence, Kansas, is perhaps the prime example of this golf course truism. There, superintendent Dick Stuntz maintains zoysiagrass fairways and Cohansy bentgrass greens, two highly unusual grasses for this part of mid-America.

Yet, using state-of-the-art management practices, Stuntz has shaped Alvamar's 18 country club holes into one of the finest and most-honored courses in the nation.

"Alvamar has had zoysia fairways and tees since its inception in 1968," notes Stuntz, "so it was a major concern to change the grasses I was tending when I came here in 1983." He credits his zoysia education to Roger Knoll, the superintendent at Old Warson in St. Louis. "I took a zoysia lesson from him," Stuntz says. "It took some time and work."

The most difficult aspect of having zoysia is not its maintenance but its establishment—from sprigs, not seed or sod. Yet the positives—at least here, 30 miles west of Kansas City—far outweigh the negatives.

"Zoysia has a kind of bounce to it," Stuntz says, ticking off a number of favorable characteristics. "Its dormant play is much better than bermudagrass. It's got a golden dormant color. It's a good grass for both high and low handicap players because it's coarser and the ball sits right



Dick Stuntz likes the look and feel of zoysiagrass tees and fairways, and Cohansy bentgrass greens. The golf ball easily sits upright on the zoysia (right).



up on top of it."

Cohansy is, Stuntz says, "a very sensitive bentgrass." It is finer-bladed and more upright, and it has a more consistent texture than Pennncross, the accepted industry standard, Stuntz observes. Though Cohansy is highly pythium-tolerant, pesticides mixed from emulsifiable concentrates (ECs) will damage it, he continues.

The zoysia fairways and tees are mowed at 7/16ths of an inch. The Cohansy bentgrass greens are mowed at 6/64ths of an inch to provide stimpmeter readings approaching 10, even for the Kansas Open, which has been played at Alvamar since 1975.

"The demand for faster greens has made our profession more of a profession," Stuntz says. "It's all relative, but the expectation of the golfer from 1967 until today is like two different ballgames. If this course were maintained like courses of the early to middle 1970s, I'd get run out of town."

He blames televised golf tournaments and the advent of the stimpmeter, which can quantitatively measure green speed, for golfers wanting faster green speeds.

This demand has necessitated lower cutting heights, which in turn causes an increase in *Poa annua* infestation. Stuntz's answer to poa encroachment might be applications of Scott's TGR, a turfgrass growth regulator that has shown in university tests to affect poa.

"But Cohansy is very sensitive, and Scott's TGR is touchy stuff," the veteran superintendent notes. "So I'm going to be right there when we do the mixing and applications."

The Alvamar complex (which also features an 18-hole public course with another 18 holes on the drawing board) maintains a three-acre Cohansy nursery.

Owner/president Bob Billings, who played basketball at the University of Kansas with Wilt Chamberlain, keeps communication lines open—out of necessity. One of the country club's members is David Robinson of the NBA's San Antonio Spurs, who owns a home along one fairway. He and other basketball stars, like Chicago's Michael Jordan, play some of the 30,000 rounds at Alvamar each season. And the adjacent public course plays host

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to an additional 45,000 rounds annually.

"I get five compliments for every one complaint," notes Stuntz, a 1975 Iowa State University graduate. "I focus on the negative and try to figure out how to correct the complaints. You can accomplish all your agronomic objectives and still lose your job if you don't communicate."

—Jerry Roche

An opinion: green speed kills

To the editor:

I would like to reply to Jim Prusa's article which appeared in your August issue.

Jim says "the best superintendents set very high standards for themselves and demand the same from those around them." This is very true and typifies the qualities of the golf course superintendent. He or she is very dedicated, strives for the best playing conditions, and is very much a professional.

However, I strongly disagree with the statement Jim made when he said, "Let's stop searching for ways to lower our standards." Let's define what the standards are!

When the standards are excessive speed on greens which relate to mowing heights of 1/10th of an inch or less, then I feel that the standards are wrong. What is happening is that many of the golfers expect day-to-day conditions at our courses to be like those at a major PGA tournament. This relates to conditions which bring about a decline in the quality of turf found on the greens: thin turf, algae, ball marks and old cup plugs not healing, disease, and an increase in labor to hand-water and "babysit" all the greens. Even the USGA Green Section is preaching the evils of excessive green speed.

The quality of playing conditions on golf courses has greatly improved in the past decade due to the professionalism of the golf course superintendent. I am very confident that these conditions will remain at the highest level in the future.

However, common sense still has to prevail when the expectations of the golfers reach a point which relate to the decline and health of the turf. As one golf course superintendent related, "Speed kills—the green or the golf course superintendent, or both."

—Dave Fearis, CGCS
Blue Hills Country Club
Kansas City, Mo.

WHAT'S NEW IN COURSE MAINTENANCE

Wastewater symposium in Newport Beach, Calif.

FAR HILLS, N.J.—The USGA, in cooperation with four other golf organizations, will co-sponsor a Golf Course Wastewater Symposium on March 4-5 at the Newport Beach (Calif.) Marriott Hotel.

Effluent water from sewage treatment plants and wastewater from other sources have been playing an increasingly important role in golf course irrigation, as the use of potable water for irrigation comes under public scrutiny. The Wastewater Symposium will bring together turf managers, engineers, agronomists, architects, manufacturers and others.

For more information, contact Dr. Michael Kenna (405-743-3900) or Dr. Kimberly Erusha (908-234-2300) at the USGA.

Other sponsors are the American Society of Golf Course Architects, the Golf Course Builders Association of America, the National Golf Foundation and the GCSAA.

Hurdzan notes irrigation changes in greens design

COLUMBUS, Ohio—Golf course architect Mike Hurdzan sees some changes in golf course design on the horizon.

"It appears that there will be more irrigation around greens using two or three systems of sprinkler heads," he notes. "Instead of one sprinkler which applies water uniformly over a circle, the trend now is to recognize that greens have different water requirements than their surrounding collars, aprons or banks."

"Therefore, where construction budgets permit, one set of sprinklers is installed to water the putting surface, and another to supplement or separately water the non-putting areas around the greens. And in some instances, a third set of small lawn heads just to water green mounds."

This evolution is thought to have begun by Eb Steinger at Pine Valley about 20 years ago. It spread to Augusta National and "now is becoming commonplace on even modest budget public facilities," Hurdzan says.

Mechanics must know turf game

FAR HILLS, N.J.—Mechanics who work on golf course equipment must know the turf business, according to Tim Moraghan, agronomist for championships for the USGA Green Section.

Writing in "Hole Notes," Moraghan says "not just anyone should be assigned the responsibility of repairing and adjusting a cutting unit."

Moraghan says golf course mechanics must have a well-rounded understanding of his job, including:

- an understanding of the principles of mowing and its effect on the turfgrass;
- a basic knowledge of putting green agronomics;
- a "golfer's eye" and realizing the premium placed on putting quality; and
- conscientiousness and pride in the results.

"Your mechanic must have a thorough understanding of what will occur if the greens aren't up to speed," Moraghan notes.

Rutgers conducts turf schools

NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J.—Cook College of Rutgers University is offering three special turf schools next month: an advanced turfgrass management symposium (Feb. 8-9), a clinic on site analysis and modification (Feb. 17 and 24) and "Advanced Management Program for Golf Course Leaders (Feb. 22-26).

For more information, call (908) 932-9271 or write Office of Continuing Professional Education, Cook College, P.O. Box 231, New Brunswick, N.J. 08903-0231. For information via fax, transmit to (908) 932-8726.