

Ride or walk mow greens? The answer is usually contained in one simple question: Can you afford to walk mow?

Walk mowing is better for greens in many respects. The quality of cut is superior to that of a triplex mower. Walk mowers don't have hydraulics. Compaction is decreased since walk mowers weigh much less than triplex mowers. The smaller size of the walking unit allows it to follow the contours of the greens surface closer. Also, walk mowers cost substantially less per unit.

But, do you have the necessary labor and resources to use walk mowers on your course?

Walk mowers typically cut about 15,000 feet per hour compared to 30,000 feet per hour by triplex mowers. These times represent all factors of loading, mowing and transporting. It will take twice as long to walk mow as ride mow with the same number of operators. To get the same amount done in the same amount of time, you will need twice the number of operators.

Ask yourself, also, if you will have the course ready for play on time if you use a walk mower. Is it possible for all of your first-round tasks to be completed ahead of play? A major consideration here is the rate at which golfers tee off, including occasions when golfers tee off at multiple sites simultaneously or employ shot-gun starts.

But, basically, walk mowing comes down to resources.

Walk mowing a typical golf course with 120,000 square feet of greens at a pay rate of \$7 per hour will increase mowing green costs about \$10,500 a year. Another problem is finding extra employees willing to work only three hours a day in the morning. Therefore, you need to increase the number of positions on staff. Using this concept at an 18-hole facility with a start on both

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Fore! Here come fake greens!

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Software to track budgets

Walk mowing offers advantages if you can afford it

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tees with the \$7 pay rate, the actual increase in labor costs will approach \$29,000 a year.

Consider all the factors when choosing the type of mower for your course. Do your homework. You are the best judge of which method of mowing will work best on your course. **LM**

[SUPERS ON COURSE]

The Jim Ager Memorial Junior Golf Course in Lincoln, Neb., will undergo a much needed facelift this month thanks to local superintendents and industry suppliers.

The Nebraska Golf Course Superintendents Association and some of its members are building a practice green for the 33-year-old course. The course is one of a handful of "junior" golf courses in the U.S. It hosts nearly 35,000 rounds per year for children ages 7-15.

The new green will triple the area used for lessons and warm ups. It is designed by Nebraska golf course architect Grand Wencil. Construction will be supervised by a crew from builder Landscapes Unlimited, Inc., Lincoln. The Nebraska Student Chapter of the GCSAA, and Lincoln-area superintendents and crews will do the work.

The Ager Golf Course is almost totally focused on the needs of junior golfers, from preferred starting times and "Juniors Only" tournaments to an extensive lesson program.