SUPER GCSA NEWS

OF MANITOBA

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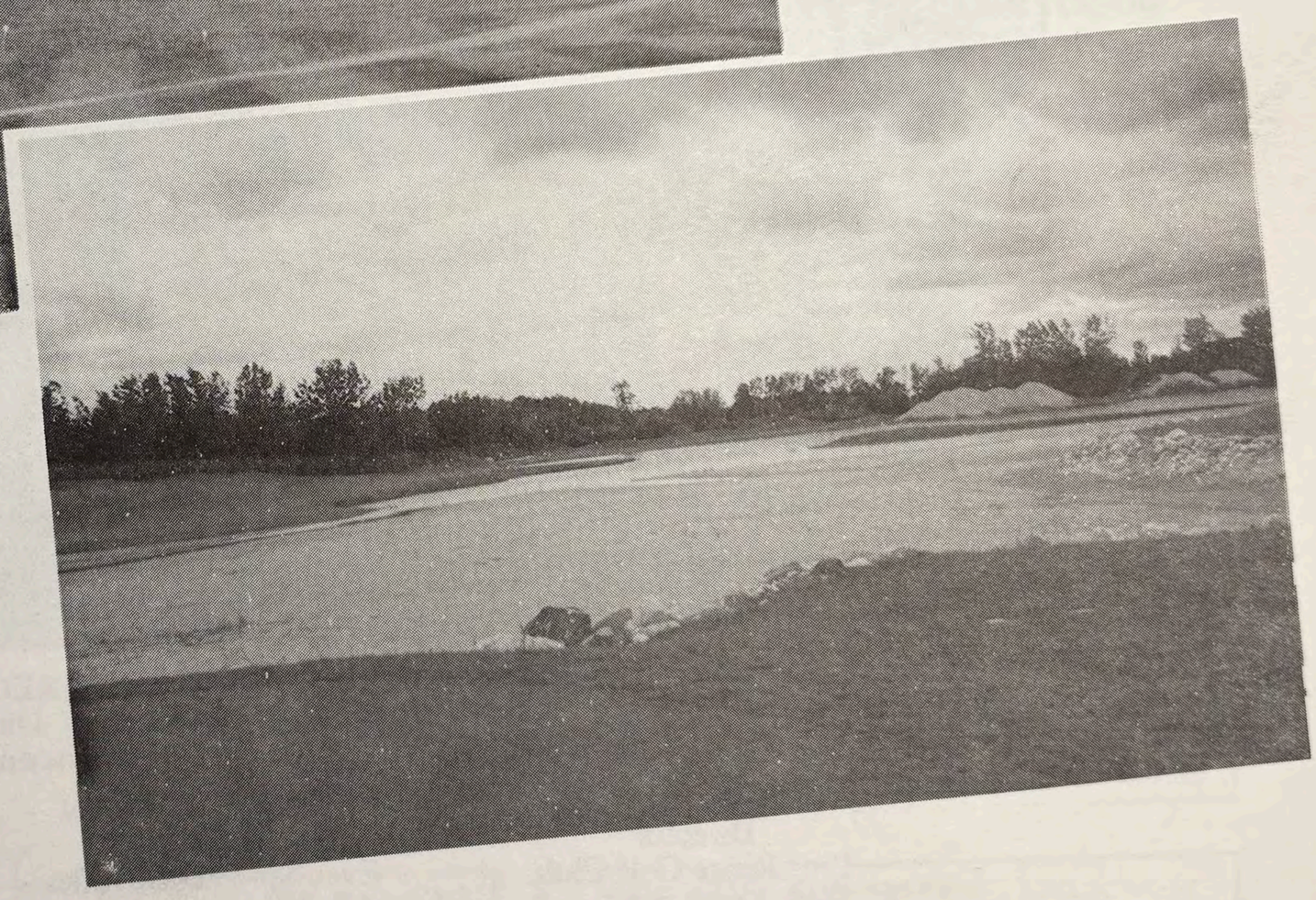

THIS ISSUE:

RURAL COURSE MAINTENANCE HOW IT DIFFERS

NEWSLETTER OF THE
GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENTS' ASSOCIATION
OF MANITOBA

HOW THE SMALL TOWN COURSE SURVIVES

by Mike Pritchard, Minnedosa Golf Club

With the ever growing golf courses today you would think that the smaller courses would slowly go under. This is not true here in Western Manitoba but just the opposite.

Most of the nine hole courses here in the western area are slowly moving toward the level that members only drempt of before. The sand greens are gone and the state of the art of irrigation has reduced many of the long nights of irrigating.

Here in Minnedosa I was exposed to the other side of being a superintendent rather than the way I was shown back in Carman with healthy budgets, new equipment, and a full time mechanic. This, along with many other new experiences that you are faced with, changes the way things should and will have to run.

When you are given a budget that you were expecting to be twice as large as it turns out to be you have to prioritize areas. Areas like signage, new equipment, and course renovations must be put aside to save for the fertilizer, chemicals and topdressing which you take for granted on the larger courses.

The small course may pull in smaller green fees and member quantities but it still requires the same amount of care as the larger courses. One of the problems that we were faced with early in the spring was that straight soil was used on the greens in the fall due to the lack of funds in the fall last year. I beleive that any area like this should never be neglected due to the damage it will cause down the road and the extra care should be taken when dealing with the greens. Items such as seed, chemical, proper topdressing, and fertilizer were never number one on the purchasing list here in Minnedosa but with some slight changes to the way things were run the money is now available.

Another important part of any golf course is the condition of the machinery and how it is treated. The situation that I was faced with was neglected machinery that had never been greased, washed, or well serviced. Without healthy mowers the course could not be cut properly. This was the beginning of some long hours of changing bearings and oil, greasing, and backlapping the reels that were in very rough shape. Alot of this was done by some volunteers from the community that have a lot of pride in their course.

The many volunteers was what got this golf year off to such a good start. I had members picking up garbage on the course, pushing snow off and on the greens, helping fix irrigation leaks, and just some simple tasks as organizing the shop and cleaning up from last year. This is something that really keeps this course afloat is the members willingness to lend a hand whenever I needed it.

When it comes to the operating of the small nine hole course it is not too different than the larger courses but on a smaller scale. We only operated this summer with myself, one full time employee, one university student and a high school student. This was the perfect amount of workers but some hard work and long hours were put in to accomplish a well groomed course.

Even though it is only a nine hole course it handles alot of overflow from the two major areas of Clearlake and Brandon. This makes it necessary for its constant upkeep and grooming keep the green fee players returning for a good round of golf on a small scenic course.

Alot of nine hole courses in Manitoba don't get the recognition that they deserve so next time you are in a small town stop in and check out the course it has to offer it may surprise you!

MAINTENANCE OF A RURAL GOLF COURSE

by Dave Oshust

Site: Sandhills Golf & Country Club, Carberry, Manitoba
Size: 9 hole, 3265 yds. from whites.
2976 yds. from reds.

Longest 9 hole golf course in Manitoba
Location: Approximately 1 mile Morth of Spruce woods Prov. Park.
Couse is cut out of 100 acres of bush with actual playing surface comprising of 31 acres from tee to green.
-2 par 3's, 5 par 4's, 2 par 5's.
-membership 200 plus.
-Green fee revenue 1992 -$40,000, 1993 -$44,000 as of August 31.

Maintenance budget: Approximately $70,000, with labour being biggest cost at $40,000.

When one first thinks of a maintenance program for a 9 hole public course, you might think the maintenance practices are less intense or the membership a little more forgiving. Well let me enlighten those who would think that.

As Gary Filmon might have put it, a golf course, is a golf course, is a golf course. It does not matter whether we are talking about an 18 hole private club or a rural 9 hole public course, as a Superintendent, my job is to ensure the best possible playing conditions at all times for our members and golfers.

Time management has to be biggest concern for a smooth operation. With a small staff, every job has to be coordinated with another in order to get the best possible results with our limited resources. As a 9 hole layout with a small budget, there are times we have to improvise with our procedures and equipment. I'll mention more about this as I go along.

Even though membership is on the small side, we too, have a Board of Directors who hold us accountable for what gets done on the course. Their demands would not be much different than any other course. If their request is not feasible, I will inform the board that it is not possible to do such a job. When I say not feasible, it is usually due to lack of equipment or available man hours. Most times the board is very understanding and is willing to postpone such ideas until further developments in equipment or man power availability.

As far as maintenance goes I would like to start off with a list of our equipment.

ITEM	AGE
1 -Dinosaur Massey Ferguson	Period of time unknown
1 -5 gang pull type fairway mower	unknown
1 -3 gang blitzer	unknown
1 -Jake Grennsking for tees	1979
1 -Toro Greens Master 3000	1991
1 -Ariens 60'' Commercial Outfront Mower	1991
1 -60'' Yazoo -only runs when it wants to	unkown
1 -Mete-R-Matic topdresser	1992
1 -Hardi-Sprayer w/6' Boom	1991
1 -J.D. AMT 600	1991
1 -Walk behind Jake 22'' Greens Mower	unknown

With equipment at a premium, it is very important that we have a regular maintenance schedule in place to ensure a smooth operation. As you all know, anytime there is an equipment breakdown it shows up immediately on the course. For those of us with no backup to rely on it is even more relevant that we have the down time kept to a minimum. Our maintenance schedule starts at the beginning of each day. Before any of the equipment is started up, our staff takes 15-30 minutes every morning to do a regular check over of each mower. Each mower has its own log book and the daily checks are recorded into them. The daily checks would include oil, hydraulic oil levels, tire pressure, belts, leaks, grease nipples, air filters and gas levels. Although these are simple checks it pays off big time over the course of the season. As of the middle of September this year, and going back to spring of 1992, we have had no major repairs or breakdowns.

We have had stoppages due to other problems as stress, vibration, wire disconnections etc. For the most part these are minor repairs that can be quickly fixed once in a while it takes hours or even days to trace these problems. When this happens, it definitely shows up on the course, as we all know, grass continues to grow. The members then start to ask questions about the 8'' rough or the ½'' greens. I find the best way to handle this is to just do as mom has always said ''honesty is the best policy.''

There are times we have to borrow equipment for projects. Our members can usually supply the necessary machinery as we need them. A good example would be when we borrow a loader to work on cart paths or topdress greens. Of course this equipment is subject to being free at the time we ask for it. At times we have to postpone a job to a later date, or look to someone else for borrowing. A good rule of thumb to follow, is just remember to keep a list in mind for every piece of equipment available through the membership. I have a list of 5 members who have loaders. When we need a loader, I just phone down the list until I find one that is free. The people are very happy to help us out.

When it comes to irrigation, the one word that comes to mind is PRIMITIVE! I'll explain why. We draw our water from 5 - 2'' Sand Points into a 4'' header attached to two 15 h.p. electric pumps. Our discharge pipe is a 6'' mainline, which is further reduced to 3'' lines on the fairways and 2'' lines around our greens. The system completes a circular flow around the course. We have quick-couplers (Q.C.'s) on our system, and during a normal summer it takes 4-8 hr. watering windows to completely water our fairways. This is done by running 16 Q.C.'S AT A TIME FOR ± HOURS EACH OVER × DAYS, ALTERNATING WITH CUTTING DAYS. The system is set up in such a way that there are **NO** footvalves on the sand points????. Instead, we have check valves located at the high ends of the sand points. These valves do not always hold a prime for the pumps. Each time we go to start the pumps we have to prime them with a separate pump and garden hose. Depending on the length of time the pumps have sat idle, it can take anywhere from 15 minutes to 2 hours for the pumps to catch the prime. I have looked around for 2'' footvalves and have not been able to find any that can fit down the 3'' casing that surround the 2'' pipe. If anyone knows of such valves **PLEASE CALL ME.**

TEES

As far as course maintenance goes, I think I''l start with the tees. We have 13 separate tees on 9 holes. Two of the ladies tees are make shift, off to the side of the par 5 fairways, on level ground. Our 11 regualr tees are small, averaging about 3000 sq. ft. per tee. The smallest tee boxes are on (you guessed it!) our 2 par 3's. Needless to say they are the ones that get the most damage done to them. We cut our tees 3 times a week at a height of 7/16''. They are contoured table top style and are bordered with 1½'' rough. I have found, with practice, that 7/16'' would be the lowest

possible height I would attempt on Blue Grass tees. We water our tees 3 times a week for 1½-2 hrs each time. Each tee has a single q.c. which allows us to apply from 5000-6000 gallons of water per week, per tee box. Because the sub-bases of our tees are built from the local sand, our filtration rate is unbeleivable! Ponding does notpresent a problem and if any does occur it usually filters down and away within the shift. Our tees remain playable at all times. We cut our tees on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, and water them on Tuesady, Thursday & Sunday a.m. before the golfers arrive.

Any damage on the tees is repaired once a week, usually on Tuesday or thursday. We have one or two people go around with a mix of seed and topdressing to fill in the divots. The seed is a tee box blend composed of:

30% Saturn Perennial Rye
30% Jamestown II Chewing Fescue
20% Baron K.B.
10% Glade K.B.
10% Ram K.B.

We have found this blend to have excellent germination and growth. A normal divot will completely recover in 4-6 weeks. I do not use fertilizer in the mix because our tees are on a regular fertilizing schedule throughout the year. This would lead me to believe that the tees would have a consistent source of nutrients already provided. The topmix is the same that is used on the greens, 80-20 (sand & peat). Our fertilizer is composed of slow release fertilizer and is applied at timely intervals from April till October. Our application program is as follows:

	TIME	PRODUCT
(6 week intervals)	End of April	21-26-6 @ 8lbs./1000 sq. ft.
	Middle of June	16-0-24 @ 6.5lbs./1000 sq. ft.
	Middle of August	16-0-24 @ 6.5 lbs./1000 sq. ft.

The mid-August application is combined with the aeration program for the tees. We aerate the tees once a year in mid-August. The 16-0-24 at this time is mixed with 55 lbs. (1 bag) of tee blend grass seed and then spread on the tees, after they habe been aerated, and the cores picked up. We then topdress (80-20) and mat the tees with steel mates.

HELPFUL HINT: In the past, I came across reading material by self-proclaiming lawn experts, on how September was the best month to seed grass for good germination. Although there is some truth to that I would just like to relate to you some of my experiences regarding September seeding. For years I used to overseed in September, up until 3 years ago. I found I was not getting favourable germinating results, and any grass that did come up would not last the winter because of the lack of development in the root system. It was very discouraging year after year. Three years ago I decided to bump up my aeration and overseeding date to mid-August. The idea behind this was to take advantage of the warmer soil and air temperature, and longer period of time for the seedlings to mature before winter set in. This was a decision I would never regret. Since I started overseeding earlier in the fall, I have had a huge success rate with the germination process, and not only that but the grass is mature enough to handle the winters, thus providing a thicker, healthier grass cover on my greens and tees.

FAIRWAYS:

The fairways at Sandhills Golf and Country Club are situated on rolling hills, which provide a lot of interesting shotmaking. The average width from tree line to tree line would be around 80-100 yds. Our rough is edged inwards on an average of 10-15 yards on each side of the fairway. This leaves landing areas of 40-60 yards wide. The rough is cut at 1¾'' two times a week with a 3 gang Blitzer Mower and follow that up with the 60'' Ariens to clean up along the fairway edge. We find 1¾'' a very manageable height for our membership, as it provides a better area before the thick trees and bush. This speeds up play by not allowing the ball into the bush and provides a decent shot from the rough back onto the fairway.

Our fairways are cut at a height of 11/16'' with a 5 gang pull type mower. They are cut at least 3 times a week, sometimes 4. It takes us 5 hours to cut 7 fairways. The par 3 fairways are cut with the tee mower at a height of 7/16'' with no ill affects. All the fairways are striped and contoured to add to the austhetics of the course. Our fertilizer program for the fairways calls for bulk fertilizer from a local agri dealer. The main reason for this is the cost factor. We have an agreement worked out with our local dealer for fertilizer vs. advertising on the course. Our schedule looks something like this:

Mid May	0-0-62.5 @ 50 lbs./acre Blended 11-52-0 @ 200 lbs./acre blended
Mid June	34-0-0 @ 300 lbs./acre blended 0-0-62.5 @ 50 lbs./acre blended
Mid September	34-0-0 @ 200 lbs./acre blended 0-0-62.5 @ 100 lbs./acre blended

A pull type spin spreader with a 40-60 ft spread is used. We fertilize around tees and greens, on the burms and rough with our cyclone cpreader at the same time we do the fairways, using the bulk fertilizer. Knowing how bulk fertilizer can burn grass if it is not watered in soon enough is reason enough to stay away from the tees and greens with the big spreader.

When applying the fertilizer to the fairways, I always apply it in the rain or just before it rains. This not only reduces man power, if we had to water with our Q.C.'s, but also reduces the risk of fertilizer burn to an absolute minimum. The total area of fairway and rough is fertilized, giving the course a consistant color. As mentioned earlier, our fairways are watered once a week when needed.

GREENS:

The greens are constructed of local sand with peat moss mixed in to a blend of 80-20. There are no drain tiles or Pea gravel layer under them. This type of construction provides little resistance for the water to drain. Even after cloud bursts, or a 3 or 4 day rain, the greens hold up very well, as the water immediately drains away making the greens playable all the time. The only problem with this construction is that there is too much drainage. We do run into problems with hot dry weather, as it seems we cannot get enough water on them. The greens themselves are 90% Pencross Bentgrass and the root system is not too bad considering the roots have to chase the water down as it drains. The average root length this year was 4-5'' in spring and around 2½'' during the summer months. Undoubtedly, we would have longer roots had there been a perched water table under the greens.

Watering our greens during a NORMAL summer would take place every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday mornings. We can only water 4 greens at a time for 1 hour each. We first do 1 set of 4, then a second set of 4, and finally the last green is included with our two nuseries and putting green. After the greens are done, which

takes about 3.5-4 hours, we move the heads onto our tees for 1½-2 hours. If it is a hot spell we syringe the greens for 20 minutes each on their non-watering days in order to carry them thru to the next day, when they would be watered as per schedule.

The greens are on a regular fertilizing schedule. The program starts in April and ends in October. The schedule looks something like this:

TIME	PRODUCT & RATE
End of April	10-18-22 @ 5.5-6 lbs./1000 sq. ft.
Mid June	16-0-24 @ 6-6.5 Lbs./1000 sq. ft.
End of July	Milorganite @ 9.5-10 lbs./1000 sq. ft.
Mid August	Milorganite @ 9.5-10 lbs./1000 sq. ft.
End of August	16-0-24 @ 6-6.5 lbs./1000 sq. ft.
*15th - 30th October	Milorganite @ 35 lbs./1000 sq. ft.

*The last application in October acts as a carrier for some of the chemical. It provides early spring green up as well.

We use slow release on the greens for three reasons. The first reason is, because of the excessive drainage on the greens, slow release fertilizer will not leach out as fast as bulk would. Secondly, because our manpower is at a premium, we cannot afford to have someone fertilzing once a week or every second week with bulk, and then having to water it in to prevent burning. Thirdly, we get a consistent growth rate throughout the 6 week period as apposed to spurts of lush growth rights after bulk is applied.

Our greens remain more consistent not only in growth rate but health wise, speed wise and color.

We cut our greens at ¼'' in early spring, 3/16'' by mid May and down to 145/1000 be early July. The height is then raised up starting in late August until it is ¼'' by seasons end. Our objective is to have smooth, firm, semi-fast greens by mid-July. We stimp our greens at around ''8'' in the mornings when cutting at our lowest height. We groom the greens, with turf groomers set at 1/16'' above the plane of the rollers. The greens are groomed 3 times minimum.

When the greens are aerated, it is usually done twice a year. The first time is late May or early June with the second taking place either the 2nd or 3rd week of August.

We topdress our greens on a regular basis throughout the season. Our first topdressing takes place in the first week of June and is repeated every 3 weeks. We wait until June for the first one because of the heavy topdressing that was applied in late fall of the previous year. The late fall application gets matted in sometime in April and carries us until June. Our last topdressing takes place in August, in conjunction with our aeration program. Then, of course, our heavy winter application is applied in late October. When the topdressing is applied during the summer months, it is applied at a very light rate. This maintains smooth greens and thatch control. Every 2nd topdressing is coordinated with an application of slow release fertilizer, thus killing two birds with one stone. Three or four days after the greens respond to the fertilizer, prompting members to ask us...''What did you use for topdressing?'', what they dont know won't hurt them as long as they are happy with the greens.

Winterizing the greens would be much the same as anyone else would do. Because we have greens that are 90% Pencross, I would like to think we would fair better than if they were predominately Poa. But, who can tell what Mother Nature is going to do over the winter? Of course, we wait as late as possible to apply the chemical before the snow flies. Our list of chemicals is as follows:

PRODUCT	RATE
Arrest	13 oz./1000 sq. ft.
Quintozene	50 oz./1000 sq. ft.
Tersan 1991	6 oz./1000 sq. ft.

The Arrest and Tersan 1991 are applied by sprayer, while the Quintozene is spread on with Milorganite as a carrier.

After all the chemical and fertilizer is applied, we then topdress the greens heavily for winter. We do not use straw or branches, because our greens are well protected from winter winds by the surrounding trees and bush. Our putting green is the only exception, we have to protect it by using snow fence.

STAFF DUTIES & DAILY ROUTINES

Every Monday, Wednesday and Friday is considered a cutting day. Greens (everyday), tees, fairways, aprons, and rough around tees and greens are cut on these days. Pins are changed, traps raked, tee markers moved, and garbage is picked up on these days as well. Fairway watering is started after fairways are cut.

Tuesdays and Thursdays are days when we do maintenance other than cutting, providing we are caught up on the cutting. Some duties worthy of mention are: Blitzing rough, pruning, weed eating around trees, watering greens, tees and fairways, spraying, topdressing greens, equipment repairs etc.

Saturdays and Sundays always have two people on each day. Duties on Saturday would include watering greens and fairways if needed, blitzing rough, cutting greens, weed eating and marshalling the course.

Sunday duties would be cutting greens, watering tees and fairways if needed, weedeating, changing pins and moving tee markers and marshalling.

Because of our small staff it is important that we work as a team. No one is exempt from any of the duties. I feel it is essential that each of the employees knows how to do every job and operate all the equipment. With this in mind it is not as worrisome to myself if someone is sick and not able to work, as the rest of the staff will absorb his/her duties for the day. This is where time management comes into play. Only when all of the work is done for the day, can we take on new jobs or duties. On rainy days we do equipment maintenance. Changing the oil, greasing nipples, cleaning air filters, etc., are done and recorded. In the event of 3 or more days of rain, equipment is repaired, shop is swept out and organized etc., until all duties are done. Then our staff is sent home until we are able to return onto the course.

I guess if I were to sum everything up, I would have to start by saying how fortunate I have been to have such a good staff to work with. As the old saying goes 'A superintendent is only as good as his staff allows him to be.' This is so true when it comes down to getting jobs done on time and done right. Secondly, to have a good maintenance program in place cannot be stressed enough. By just doing the little things like checking the oil level daily, prevents any major problems from arising. When your working with a small staff and a small budget, one learns to appreciate the little things that get done and so does your Board of Directors.