



Joe Sirianni, Supt. mowing the Olympic Club's 16th green with a Hahn West Point.

waiting for the day when the triplex putting green mower will vacuum grass clippings (and *Poa annua* seed) while mowing greens, and then discharge the load automatically on the way to the next green. The mower could also be rigged to apply small amounts of fertilizer, fungicide or insecticide (wet or dry) during the mowing operation. What a labor saver it will be!

If progress in equipment during the past 10 years is any indication of the coming 10, we are going to see more and more heavy machines used on greens. Early greenkeepers would have nightmares if they knew what we are doing and planning to do. Heavier equipment means more compaction, more wear, more grain, more thatch, more headaches for the superintendent devoted to quality golfing turf. And all of this is done in the name of "saving labor costs."

Resistance to this trend is already evident among some clubs and superintendents. Quality playing conditions and appearance is more important to the game than minimum budgets.

They hasten to point out that they, too, can mow 18 greens in less than three hours time with their sectionmen using the smaller walking mowers. And the sectionmen also fix ball marks on greens, touch up bunkers and overall, provide a finer, well-groomed golf course. They believe the time saved by triplex units is not all "saving."

The controversy will continue for there are good and not so good points on both sides. Perhaps with time there will be a blending of views, a compromise. Manhours are the difference. But this difference may be found in using the triplex mower on tees and, on Saturday and Sundays, on the greens when overtime must be employed. In this way, labor costs can be held down and, at the same time, quality turf preserved.

The following are comments of superintendents concerning the use of triplex putting green mowers. They are based on a variety of conditions and duration of use.

They Save Time

By Joe Sirianni, Superintendent, Olympic Club, San Francisco, California

I have had two triplex putting green mowers for the past three months, and so far, they have been very good. They are a great time saver and I am very happy with the job they have done for us to this date.

At the Olympic Club, we have 36 holes, and the new machines are used on both courses. Where it used to take three men on each course

from 3½ to 4 hours to cut six greens apiece, we can now cut the entire 36 holes in four hours with only two men! This gives me a chance to use the other four greensmen four hours every morning for jobs like working on their bunkers, cleaning up their sections, or for whatever needs to be done. In effect, the triplex putting green mowers have given me four additional

men to do the chores that, in the past, often went undone.

Our greens are largely *Poa annua*, average 5,200 square feet, and they are mowed five days a week during the cutting season; Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays. We are fully unionized and right now; my greensmen receive \$3.95 an hour or \$31.60 a day. This comes to \$684 a month for an 8-hour workday and 40-hours a week. From this you can see that overtime costs can be staggering. For our last fiscal year, overtime alone amounted to over \$18,000, and it was basically for cutting greens on Saturdays and Sundays. Something had to be done about it, and the triplex putting green mower was the answer. Where we once used six men on overtime, we now use two men, and they both come in on Saturdays and Sundays.

I am frequently asked about the 'quality of cut' and the compaction from the use of triplex mowers. So far, I have found the quality of cut very good, but again, I have only used the mowers for the last three months. If there is a

compaction problem, it hasn't shown as yet, and I am on the constant lookout for it.

As to the development of more grain on greens, I do think we will be doing more vertical mowing in the future. However, with the vertical mower attachments available for triplex putting green mowers, this does not present any major problem. In fact, more frequent vertical mowing may actually produce even better putting surfaces than in the past.

To sum up, I am very pleased with our triplex putting green mowers and see no reason why we would ever return to the use of the smaller units. Of course, if we get a lot of heavy rain and the greens become very wet, I'm a little reluctant to use the heavier triplex units. So we still occasionally use the hand mowers or smaller machines. We are not throwing them away. Nevertheless, the triplex mowers are certainly a time saver and have done a very good job for us. Any green superintendent would be wise to at least look and try these new machines.

Watch for Thatch

By **Harvey Hardin**, Superintendent, Indian Wells Country Club, Palm Desert, California

Indian Wells Country Club was fortunate in having the use of the first pilot model triplex green mower in early 1968. This was the mower first shown at the GCSAA International Turfgrass Conference held in San Francisco earlier that year. It received a full workout under our conditions as we used it six days a week for ten full months. Since that time, triplex putting

green mowers have been in almost constant use at Indian Wells.

Initially we used a circular mowing pattern on the greens. However, our members preferred the striped appearance of greens and it wasn't very long before we went to this type of mowing pattern. The new triplex mower performed beautifully for the first several months.

Supt. Harvey Hardin has used the Jacobsen triplex for four years at Indian Wells Country Club, Palm Desert, Calif.

