It is important for each course to have its greens putt uniformly, at a speed its membership is comfortable with.

How Fast Are Your Greens? -- An Update

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THE SEPTEMBER, 1977, issue of the *Green Section Record* contained an article on the Stimpmeter, the USGA's new device to measure speed of greens. Over a two-year period, ending in 1977, the eight USGA Green Section Staff agronomists tested more than 1,500 greens in 36 states. Data from these tests confirms that the speed tables for regular membership play and for tournament play should remain as they were indicated in the original article; however, more testing is required before the speed chart for tournament play can be finally determined. For the time being the present chart must serve as a guide for tournaments.

The way putting greens are managed has enormous influence on their speed and consistency. Until the Stimpmeter was developed, however, superintendents could not measure to what degree and for how long management practices influence putting speed. With the Stimpmeter the superintendent can obtain a numerical reading which can be compared with the speed charts and used as a guide for adjusting management practices to obtain the speed his membership wants. The following are among the most obvious and important possible studies:

(1) The influence of fertilizer applications, nitrogen sources, rates and timing on green speed.

(2) The effect of grain on speed and direction.

(3) Differences in speed using single units vs. triplex mowers, free floating vs. fixed cutting units, in frequency and direction of cut.

(4) The effect of double vs. single cutting.

(5) The effects of aeration, spiking, vertical mowing — before and after.

(6) The effects of dew and surface moisture, wet vs. dry greens.

(7) Differences between grass cultivars prominently used for putting greens — stolonized vs. seeded greens, bentgrasses vs. bermudagrasses, etc.

(8) The effect of weeds such as *Poa annua*, clover, crabgrass, chickweed, etc., on speed. Speed differences when *Poa annua* is in seed vs. when not in seed.

Preliminary tests also indicate some interesting but not-so-obvious variables:

(1) There is a definite change in the speed of greens when measured in the morning; after cutting, and in the afternoon on the more liberally fertilized greens. Greens fed sparingly show less change.

(2) The bench-setting of a mower does not insure that the greens are being cut at that height. The thickness of the bedknife greatly influences putting green cutting heights. Free floating units require a setting different from rigid mowing units.

(3) The frequency of cut has a decided effect on green speed. Double-cutting on successive days increases the speed of greens.

(4) Heavy topdressing of greens with a soil mixture slows the green until the material is worked well into the turf. Heavy, infrequent topdressings cause speeds to oscillate whereas light, frequent topdressings improve speed and consistency.

Used properly the Stimpmeter will be an invaluable asset to putting green management programs. Its strength is its simplicity! A speed reading takes just a few minutes. It is possible, therefore, to monitor the speed of greens on a frequent schedule, measure differences and devise ways to promote uniformity through a greater part, or all of the playing season.

Stimpmeters and an operating manual are available to every golf club wanting one, as follows:

(1) One will be mailed in care of the golf course superintendent to each club subscribing to the USGA's Turf Advisory Service in 1978 as part of the annual fee.

(2)*USGA Member and non-Member Clubs and Courses will be entitled to purchase one Stimpmeter at a cost of $15. It too will be mailed in care of the superintendent.

(3)*Members of the Regional Association Liaison Committee may purchase one Stimpmeter at $15.

*Order your Stimpmeter directly from the United States Golf Association, Golf House, Far Hills, N.J. 07931.

Studies are needed to determine how various management programs affect speed of greens.