

A Supplemental Irrigation System for Putting Greens

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(Top) Different heights of cut and different soils around greens make a supplemental irrigation system a worthwhile feature.

(Above) Bentgrass and Poa annua rough around greens can best be dealt with by resodding.

(Opposite page) The final product is playable.

HISTORICALLY, the rough grasses around putting greens generally receive low maintenance. In 1986, many clubs spent additional money to improve this area, not only to install a supplemental irrigation system, but also to lay new sod.

The importance of the rough surrounding greens is well documented. PGA Tour statistics show that John Mahaffey, who ranked first in hitting greens in regulation last year, hit 13 of 18 greens in his typical round. Obviously, the average golfer is chipping from these rough areas much more frequently. A good uniform turf here is highly desirable.

A supplemental irrigation system for the roughs adjacent to greens can be worthwhile. The sprinkler heads should be controlled individually, just as the putting green sprinklers. In the usual run of things, the rough grasses are generally irrigated along with the greens, but the two areas are mowed at different heights, and the soils of the two areas and their water requirements are frequently very different. This supplemental irrigation feature allows the superintendent to water the greens or roughs as necessary, helping to prevent overwatering. This means healthier turf in a critical area through irrigation flexibility and control.

At the same time, some clubs stripped off the old sod around their greens and resodded with better turfgrass species and varieties. This was especially true at older golf courses in the north and the transition zone, where *Poa annua* and bentgrasses have taken over the other, more desirable rough grasses. *Poa* and bentgrass at rough height present a difficult recovery shot for all golfers. Most clubs are resodding with a mixture of Kentucky bluegrass and one of the new turf-type tall fescues, which are quite good for roughs.