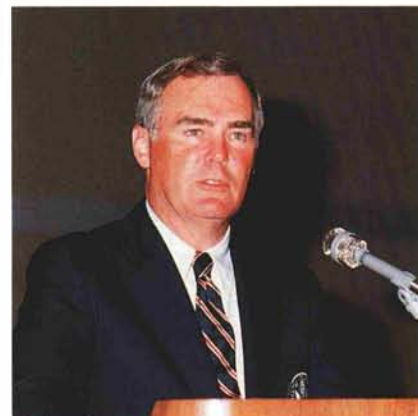


Getting It All Together For Another Golf Boom

February 13, 1989, Anaheim, California



F. Morgan Taylor, Jr.

FOR THE EIGHTH CONSECUTIVE YEAR the Annual Green Section Education Conference was held in conjunction with the Golf Course Superintendents of America International Turfgrass Conference and Show. This year more than 1200 people attended the Green Section program on Monday, February 13, at the Anaheim Convention Center in Anaheim, California. F. Morgan Taylor, Jr., of Hobe Sound, Florida, Chairman of the USGA Green Section Committee, introduced the morning's program of 19 speakers who addressed this year's theme, "Getting It All Together For Another Golf Boom." With hundreds of golf courses being built in the United States and hundreds more under construction around the world, the theme of the Educational Program was most appropriate. Following are the full proceedings.

THE BEST TURF TIPS OF 1988 — PART I

One of the most popular annual features of the Educational Program is the Best Turf Tips. This year, nine of the Green Section's agronomists reported on some of the ingenious innovations they came across while visiting golf course superintendents in every part of the country during 1988. We begin with Part I. Parts II and III appear later in this issue.

"Home on the Range"

by LARRY W. GILHULY
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*Where seldom is heard
A discouraging word,
And the skies are not cloudy all day.*

THESE WORDS may have been true for the early settlers of the West, but they certainly don't apply to today's heavily used golf course practice ranges.

Fortunately, on visits to golf courses in the West over the past few years, several ideas have taken shape and are beginning to improve the turf quality on practice range tees. Combined into a working package, these ideas can provide outstanding playing conditions, with only a moderate increase in expense and little increase in labor.

This simple program of improving turf quality begins with controlling where the golfers may practice. Ropes should be placed approximately seven feet apart across the width of the tee. After the ropes have been placed and anchored into the soil so they cannot be moved, individual practicing stations should be established approximately 10 feet apart. This can be done with various dividers, but placing bag holders and small buckets of topdressing for divot repair at regular intervals is especially effective.

Once these boundaries have been established, the method of rope movement must be very precise. Players generally tend to favor the right half of each

practice station. With this in mind, moving the individual stations in a sideways pattern following one day's use allows two days of use in each seven-foot-wide area. The ropes must be changed after each two-day period. Rather than consuming seven feet with each move, the ropes can be moved to use approximately four feet at a time. This can be done since the players also tend to shy away from the ropes when they're practicing. By following this rope movement pattern, a practice tee 40 yards deep can last as long as 60 days before the pattern is begun again.

While this program will help to distribute traffic evenly, the key to long-term success is the frequency of overseeding.



(Above left) Control of golfers and systematic rope movement are keys to a successful practice tee program.

(Above right) Use of pro shop personnel for daily overseeding is another vital key to success.

(Left) Without daily maintenance, turf conditions will be a problem!

At this point, the question of who will take care of the rope movement and overseeding operations must be addressed. If your golf professional realizes income from the facility, it would seem proper that he participate in maintaining the practice tee. By improving turf quality, more players will use the facility and generate more income for the professional. If this is the case at your club, worn areas on the tee should be top-dressed and overseeded at the end of each day by the person responsible for range cleanup.

This operation is quite simple, with the person using the remaining top-

dressing mixture in the buckets and other seed/soil material provided by the golf course superintendent. When this is done faithfully, the same 40-yard-deep tee will allow two months for perennial ryegrass regrowth before it is used again.

If the golf professional is not involved with the practice tee at your club, the maintenance staff must complete the daily overseeding operation in early morning, before play begins, if labor is available.

As a final note concerning this program, other cultural programs must be practiced to achieve long-term success.

Include a complete fertilizer and organic material in the topdressing mixture to help retain moisture and establish seedlings. Also, aerify the teeing surface at least twice a year with a $\frac{5}{8}$ -inch tine putting green aerifier, and a generous fertilization program should be maintained to sustain adequate turf vigor. Finally, best results occur with the use of triplex mowers, and remove clippings for further improvement in turf quality. The mowing operation can be completed early in the morning, and if rope movement is coordinated with the golf shop, the mower operator can be finished and on to the next job in no time.