

PAST AND PRESENT

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HOW OLD is your Sand Pro? Perhaps six, eight, or even ten years old? What's that? You say it has seen better days and owes the club nothing. Furthermore, the Green Committee now prefers to have the bunkers raked by hand. Maybe the old machine can be traded or sold to another golf course. More than likely it will be parked deep within the garage and serve as a future source for parts. How sad it is to see the dependable old mule unceremoniously cast aside after many trying seasons at the "beach." Other golf course equipment items meet a similar fate as innovations and changing management trends continue in our industry.

Perhaps not all is lost for the Sand Pro, however, as its fate may have been altered forever as a result of an innovative idea from Superintendent Bob Alonzi, at the Winged Foot Golf Club in Mamaroneck, New York. Mr. Alonzi realized that the machine's wide wheel base, low center of gravity, and excellent maneuverability make it ideal for use as a boom sprayer on relatively steep bunker banks and other areas that are less accessible to conventional spray booms. With several modifications he was able to develop a prototype spray rig which has proved successful in initial trials.

The modifications involved the use of a simple spray kit developed originally for All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs). The kit

includes a 10-gallon polyethylene tank, 12-volt electric pump, hoses, and a 36-inch boom equipped with three nozzles. Alonzi and his mechanic decided to mount the boom directly to an existing plow blade attachment off the front frame. The plastic tank and pump were attached directly behind the seat. The operator controls the pump with a toggle switch mounted on the dash. A rubber skirt has since been mounted on the prototype model to protect the applicator from spray drift. The skirt attaches to the front frame, between the boom and applicator. The boom can also be attached to the Sand Pro's rear frame to reduce spray contact with the applicator and prevent possible tracking. Alonzi and his spray technicians prefer the front mounting for visibility and control purposes and have not reported adverse drift or tracking problems.

The pump generates between 15 and 40 psi to provide approximately 2 to 2.2 gpm. Unfortunately, there is no agitator provided with the small spray kits, so chemical selection is limited to emulsifiable concentrates, liquid concentrates, and soluble powders. Alonzi has found that an additional 12-volt marine battery should be used during applications to avoid excessive drainage of the primary battery. The supplemental battery provides adequate voltage to operate the pump for 6 to 8 hours before recharging is required.

Calibration is handled as with any boom sprayer. The speed of the Sand Pro can be held constant with an accelerator lock. Run the Sand Pro over a set, measured distance, and time the run to calculate speed. Once a constant speed is determined, pump pressure and nozzles can be adjusted accordingly to obtain desired application rates. The machine provides a uniform and consistent spray pattern.

The Winged Foot crew uses the machine regularly to apply broadleaf and preemergent herbicides to bunker banks and around sensitive trees and border plantings. A significant savings in time has been realized with the modified sprayer. The compact sprayer might also offer a precise means for applying growth regulators to reduce mowing frequency and slow Bermuda-grass encroachment into sand bunkers.

The modifications can be completed using one of the kits for approximately \$400, a small cost considering the added versatility it provides to a pest management program.

So the next time a shop "cleanup" is scheduled and that old Sand Pro is discovered beneath the case of marking paint, consider resurrecting it into a new, useful equipment item. The favorable results may entice the imagination, spawning additional innovations with old equipment everywhere.

The prototype model in action around one of the many famed Winged Foot sand bunkers.

