

Problem areas on the golf course can be easily overlooked when viewed only from a golf cart.

decision is made, however, these two hours of every day can be the backbone of the maintenance program.

Mr. Milt Bauman, retired CGCS and 1981 GCSAA Distinguished Service Award recipient, followed this basic principle during his 45 years in the golf course maintenance business. To quote this successful superintendent, "Anyone can think of an excuse not to walk the golf course. The successful superintendent looks not for excuses, but for results!"



Working the Topdressing In and Rolling Greens Revisited

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DEEP AERIFICATION of putting greens has become a popular practice during the past several years. The ability of deep aerification equipment to punch through soil layers and improve both water percolation rates and soil oxygen content is an advantage when managing problem greens. Furthermore, when a proper topdressing material is worked into the aerification holes, the physical characteristics of a root zone mix can be gradually modified and improved.

In observing deep aerification operations on Florida golf courses for the past several years, a couple of logistical problems have been noted. First, the green surface is often very soft and easily rutted by topdressing application equipment, particularly following deep aerification with a Verti-Drain unit. Making the topdressing applications prior to conducting the deep-tine operation is a simple solution to this problem. It is also apparent that when the surface is topdressed prior to deep aerification, rutting from aerification equipment is minimized.

These concerns are somewhat minor compared to the problems encountered in working large quantities of topdressing sand into the aerification holes. Typically, one cubic yard or more of topdressing material per 1,000 square feet is being applied, and a variety of dragging, brushing, and matting operations are used to work the topdressing into the aerification holes. In one instance, high-pressure water hoses were used to wash the topdressing into the surface. These methods eventually move the material into the aerification holes, but they are time consuming and labor intensive.

My first turf tip for this year involves a better way of working in heavy topdressing applications following deep aerification. At Martin Downs Country Club, near Stuart, Florida, golf course superintendent David Oliver and his staff have been on a deep-aerification program for several years. After trying several different dragging arrangements, it was found that a simple board float made of two-by-fours was a very effective and efficient means of moving

a large quantity of topdressing material into the deep-tine aerification holes. The board float is pulled with a utility vehicle and a standard drag brush is attached behind the float. A couple of bags of cement mix mounted on the sides of the float help maintain maximum performance. The next time you want to incorporate a large amount of topdressing into a green, give this setup a try.

At last year's conference, Jim Latham discussed a method of rolling putting greens to temporarily increase their speed and surface firmness. Though I have a few reservations about rolling greens, there has been an increase in the use of this management technique. During my travels in 1990, I observed a couple of different rolling methods. At The Plantation at Ponte Vedra, outside of Jacksonville, Florida, bentgrass greens are being maintained. To help compensate for slower greens speeds when the bentgrass is cut at higher mowing heights during periods of stress, the greens are rolled for special events. Rolling is done with a unit



(Top) Rolling greens temporarily increases speed and surface firmness.

(Above) A board float made with two-by-fours is an effective tool to move large quantities of topdressing material into deep-tine aerification holes.

fabricated by course mechanic David Smith. An angle iron frame holds the roller in place, and a simple hydraulic piston arrangement raises and lowers the transport wheels. The roller drum is actually a giant pulley from a paper production plant that was lathed to produce a smooth surface.

At Grand Cypress, in Orlando, Florida, superintendent Tom Alex has been using a rolling program in his tournament preparation program. Their rolling setup consists of a walk-behind mowing unit that has a wooden box mounted over the front roller. Filling the box approximately two-thirds full with sand adds an extra 20 pounds to the unit. This past fall, when the World Team Championships were held at Grand Cypress, the combination of multiple mowings and rolling of the greens produced speeds in the range of 10½ to 11 feet. This is an excellent speed for championship play, especially on bermudagrass greens. It is important to note, however, that the rolling of greens is not an everyday practice at either of the courses mentioned.