

United States Golf Association, Green Section
Mid-Continent Region
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USGA Green Section *Turf Advisory Service Report*

SAN JUAN COUNTRY CLUB Farmington, NM

Visit Date: September 22, 2009 —Half Day Visit
Report Date: September 30, 2009

Present During Visit:

Joe Schmidt, Golf Course Superintendent
Randy Kahn, General Manager
Rick Trost, President
Cameron Hoffer, Assistant GCS
Bud White, Director, USGA Mid-Continent Region

Statement of Purpose: The purpose of the USGA Green Section is to assist subscribing courses in matters of agronomic management. All recommendations are offered free of bias, since the USGA has no connections or obligations to any manufacturer, supplier, or contractor. Additionally, since 'quick fixes' seldom result in permanent improvement, some of the recommendations in this report may not be easy to implement and it could take more than a single season to produce the desired results.



INTRODUCTION

On behalf of the USGA Green Section, it was a pleasure visiting San Juan Country Club and assisting with your agronomic programs for golf course management. The following report will summarize topics discussed during the Turf Advisory Service visit on September 22, 2009 at your club. We appreciate your support of the TAS and hope you believe it is a vital part of your maintenance program. Our unbiased recommendations are based on a continually up-to-date knowledge of trends in the industry and especially in your local region. This is the basis that makes the TAS so helpful and applicable to all levels of course maintenance.

Should any questions or comments arise, or additional clarification be needed, please do not hesitate to contact my office by phone or email.

I have to begin by saying that I was totally impressed by the improvements to maintenance you have achieved over the last year, which is certainly much credit to Joe and his staff. Additionally the club is reaping benefits from the investments you have made in budget, labor, and the new equipment lease package. I am pleased the club saw the need for this equipment, which we discussed in the past, to be able to not only improve playing conditions but to provide the needed maintenance for good turfgrass health on a daily basis.

GREENS

The greens were in very good condition at the time of my visit. Soil cores clearly showed good root development on the greens. You are beginning to make good progress with better organic management in the top of the root zone. The practice green, for example, received extra aeration this past year to work out the sod layer, and you consistently had 3+” of roots.

The change in watering practices Joe was implementing is the best approach to irrigation because deep and infrequent watering encourages a healthier root system that stays deeper in the soil. Moreover, with the salt management in the irrigation water, a deeper and somewhat infrequent watering helps keep the salts moves down through the profile versus “wicking” back up into the root zone through capillary action.

Number 15 green, as another example, had 4” of roots but the heavy organic matter layer is still present. However, signs were there that you were beginning to make progress in working some of this organic matter out through aeration. You have also



done a good job of moss removal on this green, which comes through your Quick Silver applications and also your water management.

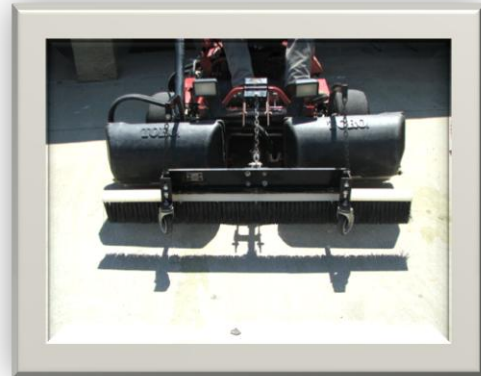
One of the main points of discussion during our visit was the development of greater putting green speed on a daily basis, and we discussed the variations and advantages of grooming. Developing true and fast greens is a combination of practices and includes mowing, cutting heights, rolling, grooming with the brush verticut and/or grooming reels, and topdressing. You have experienced a reduction in putting speed this fall which is due to the transition of the walking greens mower to the triplex and a raise of cutting height. We have clearly seen that the triplexes will mow about .010" higher than the 1000 model walker, and since you raise cutting heights you are approximately .015" higher on the height of cut going from .120" with the walker to .125" with the triplex. I recommend you reduce the triplex down to .120" and with the brushing and grooming, you should see a significant increase in putting speed. If .120" was your goal through the fall months, then you should probably lower the triplex on down to .115" to be more comparable.

Remember that in mid-fall the cutting is slightly raised to provide more winter hardiness. If your target cutting height is about .120" then you will probably raise it to .135" with the triplex.

We discussed the advantages of using brushes for grooming because of their effectiveness. Because it is done with the mowing operation, there is not an extra labor requirement. I recommend you investigate the brushing unit for the triplexes pictured below. The web address for this manufacturer is:

www.brushattachment.com

Periodic double-cutting with the brushes and going down and back in the same path has been most effective for grooming bentgrass and removing the leaves that do not add to the quality of the putting surface as I demonstrated with my pocketknife in the field. This brushing is done in conjunction with light vertical mowings on a regular basis and light dustings of topdressing.



I would also continue the Proxy/Primo applications in the spring for *Poa annua* seedhead management. You have had good success with this in the past, but the brushing and light vertical mowing in the spring will further help with seedhead management. After the two applications of Proxy/Primo, you should continue the Primo applications every two weeks until late June at the 4 oz./acre rate. The Primo is skipped in July and August, and begun again in September for the fall months. This will be another grooming aid to help with increased speed.

The newer greens that are a higher sand root zone lag behind the other greens in turf response as Joe shared with me. I suggest you implement a dormant feed fertilization in late November as this is a practice that has always promoted cool season grasses as early in the spring as possible without over stimulation in the spring. A complete fertilizer with about $\frac{3}{8}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. N/1000 sq. ft. works well. This same program would do well on these tees and fairways with the rate about 1 lb. N/1000 sq. ft.

TEES AND FAIRWAYS

In previous visits, we discussed at length the disadvantages of private carts and how they impose much more wear and compaction on the golf course than the cart traffic from the normal rental fleet with two people per cart. The aeration equipment for the fairways and tees that you obtained is the best on the market. Joe was able to get two applications in this year. This will prove to give very significant results in improved turf health and playing quality. If you can continue with two aerations per year throughout the golf course, along with gypsum applications for salt management, you will see continued improvements in quality on a year-to-year basis. I also agree with your thoughts of double aeration with the spoon-type machine in the roughs next week for the same reasons. This will especially be beneficial in the concentrated traffic areas such as the ingress/egress points from cart path to fairway.



We discussed tree root aeration again and I encourage you to keep this program in place root pruning trees every three to four years. Number 1 fairway is a prime example but any tees or greens with trees in the perimeters are other critical need areas.

I understand some members were opposed to the aeration process, but I want to remind you that San Juan Country Club lacked aeration for years, and you now have to “catch-up” to control thatch and compaction. However, I believe that as you see the results this upcoming spring and on into the summer, you will realize how needed this program is on the golf course. You are also getting as quality an aeration job as is available today through your equipment purchase.

CLOSING

Again, it was a pleasure to visit San Juan Country Club and discuss golf course maintenance. Besides providing agronomic advice that is unbiased and has no affiliation with any product or manufacturer, the USGA Green Section is the largest supporter of turfgrass research in the world. This research effort is critical to ensure the future of the game of golf and the industry of turfgrass maintenance. The thrust of this research is to provide superior turfgrasses that provide better playability and are easier to maintain while ensuring golf courses remain positive influences on the environment. Your club’s membership in the USGA and support of the Green Section helps make this research effort possible.

We strongly urge you to visit our website at www.usga.org to learn more about Green Section programs and to stay up-to-date on activities in the Mid-Continent area via our Mid-continent Regional Website which is updated every two weeks. Thank you for your support of the USGA Green Section Turf Advisory Service. Please do not hesitate to call my office should you have any questions concerning this report or if Karen and I can help you in any other way.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bud White". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Charles B. White, CPAg
Director, Mid-Continent Region

CBW:krw