

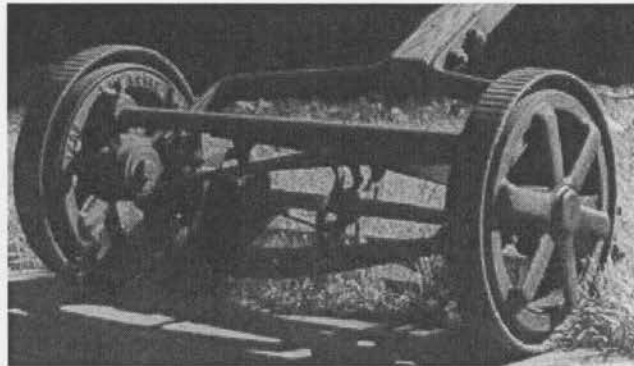
CHIPS & PUTTS

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Straight Talk about Reel Sharpening

By Oakcreek Golf and Turf

If there's a lifeline in the turf industry, it could possibly be the reel mower. It was the reel mower that made it possible to develop and maintain hybrid grasses used to provide the modern golfer with a median on which he can fulfill his ever popular leisure sport.

It's the reel mower that provides a common link between golfer.... superintendent.... grounds person.... mechanic.... and equipment dealer.

The golfer doesn't care what extensive practices must be performed by the superintendent, he's happy as long as he's got a good lie or the balls roll true.

The superintendent doesn't care what the mechanic is faced with in providing him a tool to manicure his turf, he's happy as long as the equipment performs flawlessly.

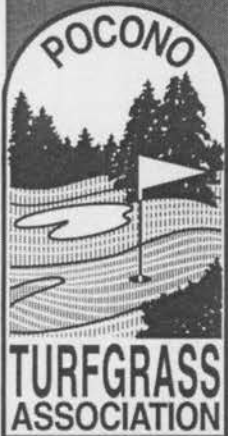
But.... the poor old mechanic is expected to make "silk purses out of sow's ears!" Mowers of today have the most sophisticated hydraulic systems, the most efficient engines, computer controls and gauges, all the features to keep the operator comfortable. Somehow "serviceable" was not a prerequisite.

In many ways the technology in today's equipment of the respective manufacturer's own service department. These deficiencies of the course filter down to the dealer's service department, then on to the repair shop at the golf course, or end user.

The recent emphasis and organizations of golf course mechanics is helping to satisfy these deficiencies. Some of the more active groups invite industry representatives in, to keep the members up to date on service tips and techniques. The sharing of experiences and ideas among the members at these meetings often accomplishes more than enough to be well worth the time, effort and expense.

We in the industry should rally to the support of the mechanics associations, assisting them in their desires to learn more and improve their stations in life.

(Continued on page 3)



President's Message.....

As the golf season comes to an end, it is a good time to reflect on how we performed this year, both on a professional level and a personal level. We should all ask ourselves...Was I an effective manager? Was I a good father? Was I a good coach? These are all things we should continue to improve upon.

As I have heard many times in the past, growing grass is the easy part of this profession. It is a good time of year to take some time off and enjoy the holidays with family and friends. If you continue to work the long hours and do not take your significant other Christmas shopping, you will probably be spending Easter alone.

The PTGA Board has been working on the golf schedule for the 2007 season. There may be some dates available, so if anyone is interested please let us know. I would like to thank the PTGA Board for dedicating their time this past year to the Association.

On behalf of the PTGA Board, I would like to thank all of you for your support in 2006. I wish all of you and your family, a joyous holiday season and a happy, healthy New Year.

Duane Schell

Editor's Notes.....

The holiday season is upon us and in full swing. The only difference this year is the absence of snow. The SNOW meeting may need help in coming to fruition this season.

The trade show schedule is at its mid point and Valley Forge is just next month. Wow! When will winter get here? Christmas in the Pocono Mountains without snow is a real possibility, and I for one am not happy about it. This time of year is about tradition and family, and if I can't yell at my kids about how badly they shovel snow, I don't know what I will do with myself.

On the brighter side, no snow means.....lower heating bills?

Anyway, progress is being made to secure meeting sites for next season's golf schedule and discussions about meeting speakers are also underway. If anyone has a topic or a speaker recommendation, please send me or Rick Anglemyer a note with your request. Rick has taken over as Education Committee Chairman for the upcoming year.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

Jim Gurzler



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CHIPS & PUTTS STAFF

EDITOR

Jim Gurzler
570-499-1441
jim@gurzler.com

Managing Editor

Melinda Wisnosky

Editorial Committee

Jeff Koch
Matt Brown

Past President

Eric Reed, Valley C.C.
570-788-4277
Barley5@ptd.net



PTGA Office

R.R. 1, Box 219
Harding, PA 18643
Phone/Fax: 570-388-2167

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(continued from Page 1)

We are regularly invited to participate in seminars at some of the associations around the country and share our experiences and knowledge of reel sharpening. We make every effort to accommodate any requests for our participation.

Through the years, we've found reel sharpening to be one of the most misunderstood and controversial topics facing the industry today. Analyzing the evolution of reel sharpening provides a more clear understanding of the subject.

In the past, once a reel left the manufacturer, there was no provision to accurately re-sharpen it. The accepted practice was that of single blade grinding. This method would be time consuming and accuracy rests in the talent of the person operating the grinder. The idea was to regrind each blade until it had a sharp cutting edge. In as much as this produced a sharp blade, it did nothing to ensure the reel to be a true cylinder. Even though the grinder operator took great care in keeping the blades the same length, it was never done without the need to back lap to re-create the cylinder. The amount of back lapping required, depended on the meticulous care of the grinder operator. Back lapping would then be applied until each blade would effectively cut a piece of paper as efficiently as a pair of scissors. It was not uncommon for back lapping to last for hours. The art of sharpening a reel also included grinding an angle off the back of the blade as to maintain as thin as possible a reel blade that would produce less friction when adjusted to the bed knife to create a shearing or scissor cut. In North-America it is as a shear that most reel mowers are used as to produce crisp, clean cuts at low heights.

In Europe, however, the reel mower because of it's tendency not to sling debris hazardously as a rotary or flail mower, would find it's place in mowing roadsides, verges and parks. Our British brethren often refer to a reel mower as nothing more than a rotating scythe. In this arrangement, speed, weight, and a sharp edge produces the cutting action. A bottom blade is added to enhance the action by supporting the grass as it's being cut. The reel is not required to slide across the bottom blade, thus, friction is not a concern. The quality of cut would be equivalent to that of a rotary or a flail.

Just as one would practice re-sharpening a rotary blade or a flail blade, all that would be required of a reel blade would be a sharp edge. it was this requirement that initiated the development of the spin grinder. The spin grinder proved to be an excellent device for producing a sharp edge to a reel blade. After sharpening a reel with a spin grinder, it would cut rather efficiently for a short period of time, producing a shear cut. This system works quite well as long as the reels are kept sharp by spin grinding regularly.

Since spin grinding produces an edge the full thickness of a reel blade, once the blades are slightly dull the pressure required to maintain a shear action with the bed knife will develop a considerable amount of friction. This friction will be enough to drastically affect the drive components of the reel mower. More power is required whether it's hydraulic, gear, or belt driven.

For two reasons this system totally replaces back lapping. First, the initial need to recreate the cylinder as with a single blade grinder is eliminated. Second, back lapping as a routine mid-season practice is replaced by a regular spin grinding to keep the blades sharp.

The best of both worlds is found in the practice of single blade grinding a relief angle off the back of a reel blade and then turning the reel to a perfect cylinder by lightly spin grinding. This method is used by all North-American reel manufacturers and is preferred as a maintenance practice by all O.E.M.'s.

This method also eliminates the need of the initial back lapping after grinding. By producing a relief angle, mid-season back lapping to maintain a sharp cutting edge can be enjoyed quite efficiently and effectively. Most all current production hydraulic driven reel mowers have a standard feature, a back lapping mode, by which all reel units on a multi-gang unit may be back lapped at one time.

When considering which method to adopt, several things should be considered:

- a) the reel mower's application,
- b) what is best to obtain optimum performance out of a reel mower,
- c) manpower: can you designate one or two persons to regularly and routinely sharpen reels,
- d) qualifications of manpower- is skilled personnel available for operating a grinder versus the simplicity of back lapping.

With all things considered, the decision should be based on preferences of the mechanics, for when all is said and done, they must be the ones to make it work.

Thanks to Oakcreek Golf and Turf
Reprinted from Turfline News



The Seven Dirty Words of Golf Course Maintenance Watch Your Language! USGA Green Section Record

by Patrick Gross

There are certain words that should never be mentioned in public, especially at a golf course. To do so would constitute a serious breach of decorum and good manners. Golf, being a game of etiquette and gentility, requires that certain social graces be observed. The following seven words are listed as a public service to golfers and superintendents to help you avoid social embarrassment.

Aerification: Does this sound familiar? "Just when the greens start getting good, they plug 'em and mess 'em up." You would think superintendents aerify on purpose just to upset golfers. The truth is, if you want healthy grass, you need to aerify. This process removes thatch, relieves compaction, stimulates root growth, and improves air and water movement within the soil. Aerification also helps prevent the discussion of some of the following dirty words.

Brown: Unfortunately, there is no room in the American golfer's vocabulary for the word brown. Grass must be green - perfectly, uniformly lush green, even if it means over-watering and plugged lies in fairways. There's nothing wrong with green grass, but there's nothing wrong with a little tinge of brown, either. It's a good sign that the course is not over-watered.

Fast: No matter how fast greens are, they are never fast enough. More time, energy, and money have been spent over the years to produce fast greens, but golfers want still more. Gradually, the pace of play grinds to a halt as golfers plum-bob their fourth putt. In the end, the quest for fast greens leaves in its wake dead grass and unemployed superintendents. Whatever happened to the goal of smooth greens with reasonable pace?

Bunkers: Golfers will tell you bunkers are always "too" something - too hard, too soft, too wet, too dry, too shallow, too deep, etc. All I can say is, "Too bad." Bunkers are hazards. Something is seriously wrong when courses are spending more time and money maintaining bunkers than greens.

Trees: People love to see trees on golf courses. Trees are beautiful, they are challenging obstacles, and they provide some degree of safety. But trees and turf just can't seem to get along. Excessive shade, root encroachment, interference with irrigation, and blocked air movement are just some of the problems caused by trees. When superintendents suggest removing trees to grow healthier turf, they are met with strong opposition. I have heard golfers say, "Do you know how long it took for that tree to reach that size and now you want to cut it down?" I think it is unfortunate that courses have suffered with terrible turf at the expense of trees. After all, the game of golf is played on grass.

Carts: The negative impact of golf carts on the playing quality of courses cannot be denied. Soil compaction, thin turf, abrasion, and wear injury directly affect turf quality. But if you suggest cart use rules or restricting carts to the paths, screams of protest can be heard throughout the course. Many golfers don't pay attention to the rules anyway and then wonder why there are brown spots (see dirty word #2). A significant amount of money is spent at courses each year for ropes, stakes, directional signs, and marking paint to restrain carts, not to mention the maintenance programs to correct the damage. Unfortunately, many courses are addicted to the revenue produced by the rental of carts, but I wonder if the revenue is enough to offset the damage caused to the golf course?

Rebuild: When all the agronomic alternatives have been exhausted and you still cannot grow healthy turf on the greens, many superintendents and green committees entertain the thought of rebuilding the greens. But be very careful about saying the "R" word. Golfers just don't want to hear it. To them it means change, it means disruption, and it means money. The thought of rebuilding greens becomes even more offensive if previous construction efforts failed to solve the problem. Before you consider rebuilding greens, make sure you are doing it for the right

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reasons. You may want to discuss some of the previous dirty words that led to the problem in the first place (aerification, fast, and trees). Then do your homework to ensure that the project is done properly and efficiently so that golfers can get back to playing the game they so dearly love in as short a time as possible.

In closing, I beg of you to please watch your language the next time you are at the golf course. Especially avoid these seven dirty words, because we don't want to have to bring you home and have mother wash your mouth out with soap.

*Pat Gross is the Director of the Southwest Region. He politely discusses these seven dirty words and more with courses in California, Arizona, Nevada, Utah, and Colorado. Reprinted courtesy of **Green Section Record** Jan/ Feb 1999 Vol. 37, #1.*

Subscriptions to the *Green Section Record* are available. Please contact USGA Green Section, PO Box 708, Golf House, Far Hills, NJ 07931-0708.

Turf Facts

The first United States patent for a reel lawn mower was granted to Amariah Hills on January 12, 1868. Early lawn mowers were often designed to be horse drawn. The horses often wore oversize leather booties to prevent lawn damage. In 1870, Elwood McGuire of Richmond, Indiana designed a very popular human pushed lawn mower; not the first to be human pushed, however. McGuire's design was very lightweight and



Photo by Mike Hartley, Philadelphia Toro
(Apparently his family doesn't understand multiple trips!)



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Pocono Turfgrass 2007 Golf Announcement

Well another Golf season is just around the corner. First, Let me start by thanking this year's superintendents and their clubs for hosting our monthly meetings. We had a great year. Next let me ask for your help, We are setting up the calendar for next year; any club who would like to host a Pocono Turfgrass Association monthly meeting please contact me or a Board member. Let us know what preference you have concerning which month works best for you. Thank you in advance for your help with this. Also, let us know of a special format you would like to play; i.e., Scramble, Best Ball, Stableford, etc. We are always looking for interesting new games to play.

This past year the board voted to allow those signing up late for our monthly meetings to be charged an extra fee. For the most part, this was not done, but will be strictly enforced this year. All we are asking is that you let someone know you are coming. It is only fair, especially to the host clubs who are preparing food and other things for our enjoyment. Another suggestion I will make is to set up your foursome in advance. Call the people you want to play with and set it up.

We, the Board and myself as Golf Chairman, look forward to putting on some great monthly meetings and hope you all get to attend some of them. Have a great off Season. See you at the Turf Shows and looking forward to spring.

*Steve Chirip
Golf Chairman*



Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

**Here's to a Happy & Healthy New Year from the
Board of the Pocono Turfgrass Association.**



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Syngenta now lets you use your points to register for the golf championship. Contact Lee Kozsey or your Syngenta rep for more details.

Correction The above information given me may be incorrect. Please check with your Syngenta Representative on point usage.

Trivia answer

What two days each year don't have any professional sports played on them?

The day before and the day after the MLB All Star Game.

Good Luck to Ohio State, Rutgers, and Penn State in their Bowl Games.

Upcoming Events

January 9,10, and 11, 2007

Eastern Turf Conference and Trade Show
Valley Forge Convention Center
King of Prussia, PA

January 25, 2007

Northeastern PA Turf Conference and Trade Show
The Woodlands Inn and Resort
Wilkes Barre, PA

January 26, 2007

SNOW Meeting Elk Mountain

February 16-20, 2007

2007 GCSAA Championship and Golf Classic
Palm Springs, CA

February 19-24, 2007

GCSAA Conference and GIS
Anaheim, CA

2007 Pennsylvania Hospitality Suite Information
Anaheim Hilton, in the El Capitain Room on February 22, 2007 from 7-10 PM.



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