

**Country Club of New Bedford**  
**Recommendation for Maintenance Guidelines**  
**2012**

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## Country Club of New Bedford Recommendations for Maintenance Guidelines

While reviewing a few issues of *Green Section Records*, I came upon this article with great interest. After reading it, I came up with a Maintenance Guideline, which I am recommending for the long term care of The Country Club of New Bedford. You will find these guidelines attached after the article. Please read the following and let me know what you think.

### **When in Doubt – Spec it Out**

Developing maintenance guidelines for your golf course can clarify priorities and serve as a useful budgeting tool. *By Patrick J. Gross, USGA Green Section Record*

“It is human nature to make comparisons, and that is especially true when it comes to golf courses. It seems every golfer has a built-in rating system of what constitutes a well-maintained golf course. People often ask if the USGA has any published maintenance standards. The answer is that while the USGA Green Section agronomists work closely with course officials and superintendents to improve golfing conditions, there is no cookie-cutter formula for proper golf course maintenance. Every golf course is different. Consider the number of variables inherent in each course, such as differences in microclimate, course architecture, terrain, amount of play, soils and construction techniques, water quality and availability, budgets, staff size, and many other factors. With so many variables, it is next to impossible to draw an accurate comparison. Instead of comparing your course to the one down the street, it is much more beneficial to accurately determine what it takes to make your course the best it can possibly be.

The corporate world has long recognized the benefit of developing a comprehensive business plan with specific goals and objectives for their company and its employees. The plan clearly states the role of each person in the organization, with specific performance criteria provided so that there is no misunderstanding about the expected outcome. How many golf courses can say they have a plan like this for the routine maintenance of the golf course? Green committees come and go, superintendents are hired and fired, and golfers’ expectations are raised based on the latest televised tournament. The actual daily conditions are usually the result of the superintendent’s personal maintenance philosophy and his interpretation of comments and complaints from the golfers. Who usually suffers, given such a wide range of opinion and lack of a clear goal? The Golf Course Superintendent. Developing a set of maintenance guidelines for the golf course will clarify maintenance priorities and keep the entire organization moving in the right direction.

**Why Are Maintenance Guidelines Needed?** There are several good reasons to develop maintenance guidelines for your course. First, it is a project that requires the

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superintendent and committee to organize and analyze the priorities for golf course maintenance instead of assuming that everyone has the same goals and standards in mind. Getting it down on paper makes it easier to analyze the situation and see exactly what it takes to maintain a golf course in the manner the golfers want it. In the process, the desires and expectations of the golfers are clarified, and objective standards are set for the routine maintenance and playing quality of the golf course. Developing such a document also removes subjectivity and provides a formula for comparing the desired results with the available resources. In the end, the guidelines become an objective standard that is measurable and provides a reference for decision-making.

Another reason in favor of developing maintenance guidelines is the short tenure of most green committee members and green chairmen. With only a short time to serve the club, most of the attention is on quick fixes and addressing personal preferences. The composition of the committee swings from low handicappers to high handicappers, and there is never a clearly stated vision regarding the ongoing maintenance of the golf course. The venerable golf course architect Dr. Alister Mackenzie summarized it best by stating, "The history of most golf clubs is that a committee is appointed, they make mistakes, and just as they are beginning to learn by these mistakes they resign from office and are replaced by others who make still greater mistakes, and so it goes on." The maintenance guidelines can be a valuable tool to speed the learning curve and provide guidance and continuity for future committees.

Finally, the maintenance guidelines are a useful tool to answer complaints from disgruntled golfers. It is impossible to please everyone. When a golfer is upset about a particular maintenance practice on the golf course, it is better to point to the maintenance guidelines to show that the superintendent is operating according to the plan. This makes the conversation objective and avoids personal criticism of the superintendent and maintenance staff.

**Conclusion:** The maintenance guidelines clarify the goals of the maintenance program and provide an objective standard to evaluate the golf course. It is always dangerous to assume that everyone has the same goal in mind when it comes to the conditioning of the golf course. So when ever there is any doubt, it is always better to spec it out."

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**Cutting Heights and Mowing frequencies:**

<b>Area</b>	<b>Months</b>	<b>Heights</b>	<b>Frequencies</b>
<b>Greens:</b>	April-June	.125	As needed
	June 11-September 30	.109	1-2 times daily
	October 1-November	.125	As needed
<b>Collars:</b>	April – October	.350	3 times/week
<b>Tees:</b>	April – October	.400	3 times/week
<b>Fairways:</b>	April – October	.500	3 times/week
<b>Intermediate Rough:</b>	April – October	1.00	3 times/week
<b>Primary Rough:</b>	April – November	2.50	weekly
<b>Secondary Rough:</b>	April – November	2.50	weekly
<b>Bunker Banks:</b>	May – October	2.50	Weekly

**Greens Speed:** We will *strive* to have a consistent stimp reading between 9 and 11 during the playing season.

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**Cultivation Programs:**

<b>Area</b>	<b>Cultivation</b>	<b>Timing</b>
<b>Greens:</b>	Aeration	April 30, Aug. 27-30
	Topdressing	Bi-Weekly As Needed
	Spraying Pesticides	Every week starting May-October
	Fertilizing	May-December As needed
	Rolling	June-September
<b>Tees:</b>	Aeration	September 10-12
	Spraying Pesticides	May – October As Needed
	Fertilizing & Topdressing	May – December As needed
<b>Fairways &amp; Roughs:</b>	Aeration	October 3 - Until Done
	Spraying Pesticides	May-October Once per month
	Fertilizing	Jun, Sep, Dec
<b>Bunker Banks:</b>	Spraying Pesticides	As needed
	Fertilizing	June, September

**Course setup:** Cups are moved Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday, and Sunday. If there is a tournament they are moved every day of the tournament. Pins are placed 6-6-

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6, front, middle, back. Tee markers are moved everyday. They are set up that if the tee markers are set in front of the tee, the pin placement is in the back of the green. Likewise if the tee markers are in the back of the tee, the pin placement will be in the front part of the green.

**Course marking:** Hazard markers are put out in early spring while painting hazards lines begin in May once every other week until October. Grounds under repair and bad areas are also marked as needed through out the season. All hazard markers are check weekly for proper placement.

**Bunker maintenance:** May-October mow surrounds weekly. Rake all bunkers every Thursday, or Friday unless there is a tournament, in which case the bunkers will be raked every day of the tournament. Watering bunker banks during the season will be as needed.

**Color versus playing quality:** This is where a meeting of the minds is essential. To the Superintendent, this indicates the type of fertility and irrigation programs that must be implemented to achieve the desired results. ***We need to come to an agreement on whether the maintenance priority is on promoting lush green turf or optimum playing quality.***

**Golf car policy:** Limiting golf car use on the golf course will be a committee decision. The committee is made up of Club Manager, Golf Pro, and Golf Course Superintendent.

**Course Closure for rain, frost, and winter play:** Committee decision made up of Club Manager, Golf Pro, and Golf Course Superintendent.

**Environmental issues/IPM thresholds:** Special environmental issues that affect the maintenance of the golf course should be noted. There may be specific restrictions on re-entry periods after a pesticide application. This will be done as needed.

**Tree maintenance:** Tree maintenance, or the lack of it, affects the appearance and strategy of playing the golf course. We normally prune trees in the winter months so that we will **not** disturb play in season.

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**Driving range set-up:** Divot Mix will be used daily or as needed by the Pro Shop, and Turf Care Staff.