

Equipment Wash Rack Upgrade

Prairie Dunes Country Club, Hutchinson, Kansas

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Prairie Dunes Country Club is an 18-hole, links style golf course located in Hutchinson, Kansas. Built in 1937, 225 acres of the club's 334.5 acres are managed as prairie grassland habitat.

Superintendent Stan George had long felt the club needed a new wash rack system. The old wash pad consisted of two hoses on a 400 square foot, irregular concrete base. Constructed from concrete leftover from past projects, the uneven surface caused the accumulation of rinse water on the pad itself. In addition, the drains were failing, allowing unfiltered rinse water to stagnate above ground and potentially degrade ground water.

Despite the inadequacies of the wash pad, George found himself in a situation many superintendents find familiar—the club did not feel that it could allocate the funds to upgrade the system. His opportunity to push for the project finally came when the club decided to build an addition onto their Turf Management Center in

preparation for the 2002 US Women's Open. He initially proposed the wash rack as a stand-alone project, which was rejected. Finally, through several years of planning, convincing, politicking, and allocating funds, George finally ensured the master plan included a new wash rack area. The entire Turf Management Center upgrade, which included the addition of 5,000 square feet of offices, meeting room, locker rooms, equipment storage, and the new wash rack began in January 2001 and was completed in May 2001.

The Turf Management Center addition was designed to create a "U" shape, with the wash rack located in the "courtyard" between the two portions of the building. The wash rack position ensured that every piece of equipment passed through the area prior to entering the buildings, making equipment washing more efficient. Surrounded on three sides and covered with a roof, the 2,400 square foot area also provides extra equipment storage when needed, such as during the Women's Open.

Originally, based on a wash rack system George saw at Pinehurst, the club slightly changed the initial architectural plan to meet their specific needs. The original design called for four wash stations



The redesigned and greatly improved wash pad at Prairie Dunes Country Club provides adequate collection and filtering of wash water.

that drain to a collection/filtering system. Instead, the club moved the collection system into the center of the courtyard and doubled the number of wash stations. Each of the eight stations has a separate hose supplied from the irrigation system; a back-pack blower, pale, and shovel for clipping removal; and a "safety stick" (mandatory for adjusting reel parts during cleaning rather than using hands).

The design of the system is quite simple. The concrete pad is slightly sloped to enhance movement of rinse water and clippings into the collection pit from both sides. Rinse water is double screened to collect clippings before passing through a buried oil/water separator tank, much like a septic tank. The filtered water is discharged into a leach field.

Staff blows off equipment with a backpack blower and collects the dry clippings. Clippings that are washed off are allowed to dry overnight for easy removal from the front of the screens, shoveled into two five gallon buckets, and brought to the compost pile. The wash racks proximity to the maintenance building creates an



Failing drains and stagnate water were plaguing Prairie Dunes Country Club's wash pad before the upgrade.



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incentive for the maintenance staff to clean the pit daily or unpleasant odors will become prevalent.

Originally, the pit area was created to be large enough that a skid loader could be driven down into the sloped pit to remove clippings. Although this is possible, the staff does not attempt this procedure any longer because they felt uncomfortable with the close proximity of the loader to the irrigation line (located above ground and attached to the safety railing).

Additionally, they found it to be unnecessary due to the small amount of clippings to be removed if one is diligent about removing them daily.

If they were to do this project over, George said he would remove the concrete “bumper” installed just prior to the screening that was designed to protect the screens from the loader bucket. In its place, he would install another full-length screen instead of the one-third width pre-screen that is incorporated in the “bumper.” “I have found that this pre-screen performs unsatisfactorily compared to the full-width screen behind it,” states George. Except for this one minor detail, the staff has been extremely pleased with the operation, traffic flow, location, and results of the new wash rack facility. Aside from removing screened clippings regularly, ongoing maintenance has also been minimal.

Although the final cost was incorporated into the construction of the entire facility, the approximate cost of the wash rack was \$30,000. From the members perspective, although most do not visit the Turf Management Center (even during several open houses), those who do visit are impressed with the professional appearance, neat storage areas, and appreciate the wash rack as one way to care for their significant investment in equipment. ●



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