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BY TRACY LANIER

REEL SHARPNESS: THE RELATIONSHIP & THE GRIND

It can be a dreaded word: relationship. "Yes, dear." "Sure, dear." "Of course I'd rather go shopping with you instead of watching the game." Yeah, right. But you know that without such minor concessions, your relationship might dissolve into little pieces and *then* you'd be sorry. The key is to keep the two elements of any relationship in harmony; if neglected, the consequences are undue stress and sometimes, even ruin. Not a pretty picture. Relationships are easily maintained with some regular attention and occasional adjustments, and your reel mower deserves the same attention to help maintain the relationship between the reel and the bedknife.

Unlike you and your significant other, a reel and bedknife should NEVER touch. Contact causes friction and heat buildup, resulting in rollover, dulled square edges, and distortion. The reel and bedknife should maintain a clearance of .001-2 inches. A mower with less clearance may result in an unacceptable cut quality, undue strain on drive mechanisms, and premature wear of the cutting unit. After all, a little space is always good.



As in any relationship, appearances aren't everything, but if there's trouble on the surface, it's often a sign of problems underneath. Of course, the best way to prevent such ripples is by taking preventive measures. You don't want your mate to be mad, so make sure you say a few nice words daily. You don't want your field to be uneven, so every day, spend a few minutes maintaining your reel blades.

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Backlapping is a simple process that should be performed regularly. It should take no more than 15 minutes to backlap a reel. And, depending on your hour usage and conditions, it can be performed a daily or weekly.

Backlapping helps maintain sharp edges by the application of special abrasive compounds while spinning the reel backwards, ultimately giving you a cleaner cut. This process should remove no more than .005-inches of metal—you don't need extreme changes, just subtle tweaks. Course compounds should be used first, followed by a finer abrasive to hone the edges. Sharpening compounds should not be toxic, oily or greasy. Recommended grits for larger cutting units are 60, 80 and 120; with smaller reels such as walking reel mowers, use a 120, 180 or 220 grit.

While daily maintenance helps keep a relationship strong, sometimes it still can get a little off track. So pause for a moment, take stock of the current situation and make some adjustments to get realigned. While regular backlapping is important, eventually a reel and its bedknife will require grinding.

Over time and use, a blade can get dull. This results in squeezing and tearing of grass instead of cutting. Tearing is a shock and can retard growth. Grinding will restore the cylindrical shape of a reel that has become cone-shaped and restore the edge if the grass is not being cut across the entire length of the bedknife.

After spin grinding, John Deere recommends relief grinding the reels because it:

- Removes metal from the trailing edge of the blade forming an angle (relief angle) to reduce the contact area of the cutting edges. This reduces blade contact area resulting in less friction.
- Ensures longer wear life.
- Makes backlapping faster and more efficient.
- Reduces squeezing and tearing of the grass as the unit dulls.
- Requires less horsepower to drive the reel.

John Deere also recommends backlapping after spin grinding to remove burrs and rough edges left from the spin grinding procedure. Backlapping produces a honed edge that will cut the grass evenly and leave the tops of the grass with clean, straight edges.

Working to restructure and correct the relationship (at home or on

the job) results in fewer daily problems and requires less energy to maintain it. Remember, a little regular maintenance now can help prevent major overhauls in the near future.

ST

Tracy Lanier is a Product Marketing Manager for John Deere Golf & Turf One Source, 800-537-8233.



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REEL LIFE

Here is a list of most manufacturers of reel mowers and accessories:

Cub Cadet Commercial	877-835-7841	John Deere	800-537-8233
Dixie Chopper	765-246-7737	Locke Turf	800-537-3713
Husqvarna	800-438-7297	Toro	800-348-2424
Jacobsen	888-922-8873	Tru-Cut	909-277-3180

REEL PRODUCTS FROM TORO

Toro provides the economical Reelmaster 2000-D to the innovative Reelmaster 3100-D Sidewinder. For large areas of turf, Toro

offers a full range of five- and seven-gang mowers, with power and attachments.

Financing options are available. The Toro Company/800-348-2424. For information, circle 082 or see www.oners.ims.ca/2907-082



REDESIGNED WORKMAN

The redesigned Toro Workman Heavy Duty now has significantly more legroom and adjustable seats and the fully hydraulic steering system makes it easier to turn. A higher dashboard means more accessible controls and gauges.

The Toro Company/800-348-2424. For information, circle 079 or see www.oners.ims.ca/2907-079



NEW DEALERS FOR SISIS

SISIS Inc. has appointed three new regional dealers to sell their turf maintenance equipment.

Midland Implement, Montana and northern CO, 406-252-5772; Revels Tractor, counties in SC, NC, and VA, 800-849-5469; and Georgia Turf & Tractor, Georgia, 800-736-4533.

SISIS/864-843-5972

For information, circle 080 or see www.oners.ims.ca/2907-080



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Circle 116 on card or www.oners.ims.ca/2907-116

COMPACT ZTR

The Yazoo-Kees compact Mini-Max zero-turn riding mower has a large fuel tank, dampened steering control, new hydraulic system, and warranty as larger mowers but at just 72 in. overall length. Units available with 17- or 19-hp Kawasaki engines and 42- or 48-in. cutting widths. Yazoo-Kees/877-368-8873 For information, circle 086 or see www.oners.ims.ca/2907-086



DETHATCHER

RotaDairon Emrex, Inc. is introducing its ED 130 dethatcher. This high tech machine not only enhances turf growth but also saves time with the quick remount device that allows you to replace knives quickly and safely without bolts. The ED 130 has a 51-in. work width and a work depth adjustment controlled by two stainless steel rollers. RotaDairon Emrex/570-602-3050 For information, circle 081 or see www.oners.ims.ca/2907-081



VERTICAL MOWING SYSTEM

National Mower introduces its new Vertical Mowing System (VMS). Designed as an attachment for National's 8400 and 84VAN mowers, the VMS can handle tough areas on

banks and slopes as well provide versatility like dethatching, stimulating root growth, and overseeding preparation.

National Mower Company/888-907-3463 For information, circle 090 or see www.oners.ims.ca/2907-090

COMPACT ZTR

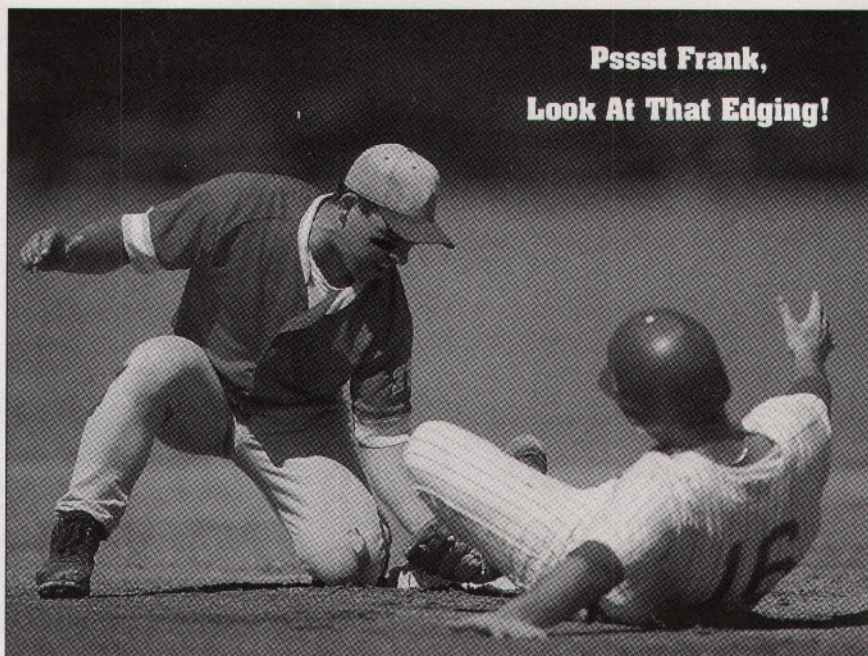
The new Scag Wildcat zero-turn rider is a stable compact mower with a 61-in. cutting capacity that fits tight areas. Low-back soft-ride seat and cupholder are standard. Twin stick steering mechanism means easy driving.

Scag/920-387-0100

For information, circle 088 or see www.oners.ims.ca/2907-088



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REDUCE BEDKNIFE-REPLACING TIME

The new MAG-Knife from Jacobsen uses powerful permanent magnets to firmly hold the bedknife to the backing on Jacobsen reel mowers. With no screws to remove or adjustments needed, the time needed to remove and replace bedknives is reduced from hours to minutes.

Jacobsen/888-922-8873
For information, circle 084 or see www.oners.ims.ca/2907-084



HIGH HP WALK-BEHIND

Hustler Turf Equipment has a new Super WalkBehind with a 23-hp Kawasaki with a 48-in. deck and 25-hp Kawasaki with 54-in. deck. Can run double blades or mulch. "H-bar Steering" is easy to learn and operate. Lifetime warranty on leading edge of deck.

Hustler Turf Equipment/800-395-4757
For information, circle 087 or see www.oners.ims.ca/2907-087



REELMASTER ROLLER BRUSHES

Toro says the Reelmaster 5000 and 6000 series fairway mowers now have powered rear roller brushes option available, which eliminate the clumping of grass clippings during wet cutting conditions.

Brushes are easy to install and operate, are belt-driven, and powered off the reel. Brushes should eliminate need to drag or blow fairways.

Toro/800-803-8676
For information, circle 085 or see www.oners.ims.ca/2907-085

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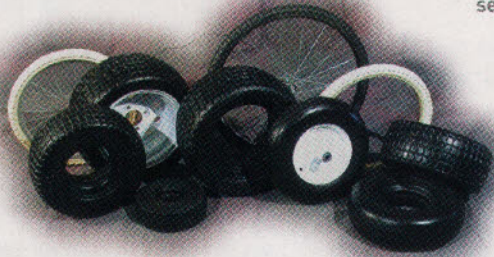
FLATFREE TIRES

New "Polyurethane Closed-Cell Foam" tires insure "no more flats" on the job. These tires are non-marking and won't dry rot or crack. They are 100% recyclable and applications include riding and ZTR mowers, as well as wheelbarrows and hand trucks.

Amerityre Corp./800-808-1268

For information, circle 091 or

see www.oners.ims.ca/2907-091



SOD CUTTER

BlueBird's SC18 sod cutter works on solid-rubber 10-in. tractor-tread wheels and 4-wheel drive transmission. Four speeds (two cutting, two transport) and a power reverse can cut up to more than 20,250-sq. ft. an hour. Cutting depth up to 2.5 in. with 18-in. cutting width.

BlueBird/800-808-2473

For information, circle 089 or see www.oners.ims.ca/2907-089



DEERE B SERIES

The John Deere B-Series lightweight fairway mowers offer latest technology in three levels of power.

The 3225B and 3235B machines feature a bedknife-to-reel adjustment, coupled with a triple pump, to increase cutting power and function. Standard micro-lap back-lapping with reel speed control provides state-of-the-art sharpening.

John Deere/800-537-8233

For information, circle 205 or see www.oners.ims.ca/2907-205



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Echo's EA-500 earth auger delivers the strength, durability, and reliability of commercial-grade equipment for one-time projects and repeated use, making it an ideal rental product. The powerful engine and wide range of attachment augers enable the unit to dig holes quickly and easily.

Echo Inc/800-673-1558

For information, circle 092 or see www.oners.ims.ca/2907-092



HUSQVARNA 64

The Husqvarna 64 is a classic reel lawn mower, ideal for small grass areas, and offers superior results with its Novocut cutting system. The unit is 16 in. wide with five blades; the cutting height is adjustable up to 2.25 inches. The Husqvarna 64 is quiet, efficient, and designed to be easy to push with an overall weight of 19 pounds.

Husqvarna/800-438-7297

For information, circle 093 or see www.oners.ims.ca/2907-093

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SAFE TO GO TO THE DOGS-AGAIN!

Once again, one of Mike Veeck's teams, the Charleston RiverDogs, is planning a special recognition and fund-raising event in support of STMA and SAFE - the foundation for Safer Athletic Field Environments. SAFE was formed by the Sports Turf Managers Association (STMA) to respond to the challenges facing those responsible for the care of athletic fields.

Veeck is proposing the plan for consideration to all of his teams, and hopes it will "catch on" with other teams as well. The event will include a half-day "on the field" workshop for sports turf managers, complete with vendor participation. The next part of the package will be a Sports Turf Managers Night at the Ballpark. Perks for the supporting chapter of sports turf managers will include: discounted tickets to that night's game; a table display that can be used for couponing, distributing information and branding by sports turf related sponsors; public address announcements and matrix board commercials about sports turf managers and participating sponsors; and a "first pitch" opportunity.

The rewards for STMA include the opportunity to inform the public about who sports turf managers are, what they do, and why it matters. The rewards for attendees: a great workshop and a fun evening at the ball-

park with peers, family, and friends.

The rewards for SAFE: funding! And a perk for the facility is more fans in the stands!

The 2003 Sports Turf Managers Night at the RiverDogs netted a check for \$1,000 to SAFE from the team. The RiverDogs are a Tampa Bay Devil Ray affiliate in the South Atlantic League. Their home field is Joseph P. Riley Jr. Park, which is located in beautiful downtown Charleston right on the Ashley River. The ballpark, built in 1997, has all the amenities of a modern professional baseball facility.

Funding for SAFE will help support research for better science, technology, and equipment. And it will support the education and training of sports turf managers and aspiring sports turf managers. Most importantly, your donation will help provide the best sports surfaces for all levels of play.

A safe, playable field is the strong foundation of any game. Working together, we can build the SAFE Foundation into a strong resource for sports turf managers around the world. Contact Steve Trusty (Steve@st.omhcoxmail.com) for information on making contributions to, or receiving research endorsements from, the SAFE Foundation.



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