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I have just spent 3 days at Pine Valley. For those of you who are not familiar with Pine Valley it is in north west New Jersey and is always rated in the top 3 golf courses, most times first, in the USA. Those of you who have played at Pine Valley will agree that the conditions are spectacular.

The course opened in 1921. Their greens are as old as ours and were built exactly as ours were, state of the art at the time.

The course is managed by Rick Christian, the head green keeper for more than 30 years, Charley Raudenbush (his title is Golf Director but he effectively is the CEO) who's been with the Club for more than 40 years and the well known golf architect Tom Fazio who's been the Club consultant for more than 30 years.

I had a long chat with Charley about the golf course. In short this is what he told me:

- the greens are 102 years old, were built exactly like ours, were never redone (except for 14 which was originally lower than the surrounding lake and sometimes got flooded) and THERE IS NO PLAN TO REPLACE THEM. As a matter of fact the hope is that they'll be around for another 100 years.
- the greens are a mixture of poannua and bent.
- about 30 years ago they built a short course. All bent. In the ensuing years the poa started creeping back and for a period of about 10 years they spent a ton of money to get rid of the poa. They just could not do it and so gave up so the original all bent short course is now, like ours a mixture of poa and bent. Those who have played it will agree that the conditions are really good. The lesson here is that poa WILL COME BACK.
- in the mid 2000s they suffered a brutally hot summer (the temperature never went below 28C for more than 50 consecutive days and night) and the greens got very sick. They thought about going to bent which would have involved shutting down for a year or doing nine holes a year for 2 years. The governance model at Pine Valley is that of the "benevolent dictator". Then President God Brewer could have decided to go ahead basically by himself. He did consult some members and the decision was made not to cause the inconvenience to the members. They instead solved the problem of brutal heat waves by installing fans next to the greens and use them when the temperature gets very hot for prolonged periods of time. And trust me the decision wasn't about money.

In light of this I can't help but to question the statement that redoing our greens is a MUST. Perhaps we should get a second opinion.

By the way the USGA agronomist who visited our Club this summer stated in his report that if the greens are to be redone it would be PREFERABLE to use bent. He never says that the greens need to be redone.

Respectfully submitted.