

Reply to Jean-Pierre Ouellet

Jean-Pierre

Thank-you for your comments. The Course Planning Committee agrees with the golf raters and your view that Pine Valley is a great golf course ranking as one of the best in North America.

We highlight the following key differences between Pine Valley and MBCC that we believe are important when comparing the two courses:

- Pine Valley was built on sand the ideal subsoil for golf courses as it helps drainage
- MBCC was built on clay the common subsoil in our area but does not drain well
- Proper drainage has been installed in Pine Valley greens MBCC greens do not have drainage
- Winters at Pine Valley are meaningfully warmer than in Montreal
- Pine Valley greens are large and offer a number of pin placements. We are striving to bring this to MBCC

The reasons we are recommending that our greens be rebuilt and converted to bentgrass are as follows:

1. Our greens are over 100 years old and not well suited to modern standards of condition, green speed, and traffic. Our greens were built in a style that is referred to as “Push-Up”, meaning they simply pushed up soil to create the green. This was often done with heavier soils that would hold moisture as access to irrigation was limited or non-existent one hundred years ago. Our greens have no internal drainage to remove excess water. **We had a very wet summer in 2022 which caused our greens in the summer months to be soft and roll at a slower pace than usual. Rebuilding our greens with modern drainage will improve the consistency of the playing conditions of our greens. We would highlight that the majority of the premier clubs in North America, Pine Valley included, have invested in drainage for their greens.**
2. Our greens have changed significantly over time resulting in notably smaller greens than were originally built in 1918. As the greens have become smaller over the years, the putting surfaces have become dominated by strong features or severe cross slope and many of the interesting pin positions that once existed are no longer available.
3. The results of the fall 2021 greens scan showed several of our greens lack the appropriate pinible square footage for the green speeds we like to maintain, and often available square footage is concentrated in a few small areas of the putting surface.
4. We hired two separate independent agronomists to review our greens in 2022, both of whom recommend converting our greens to bentgrass for several reasons including bentgrass’ resiliency to harsh winter conditions.
  - The USGA agronomist in his July 2022 report stated “Trying to maintain poa annua in Montreal is risky. While it might be a great option for places like Long Island New York,

you must remember you have much harder winters than they do. Creeping bentgrass is less prone to winter damage and a safer bet for northern locations like Montreal”

- This recommendation was further supported by our consulting golf course agronomist John Blandon, who stated in his October report that bentgrass not only provides outstanding playability day in and day out but also greatly reduces winter risks and allows to better cope with 30.5 plus degree days and heavy rainfall events and seasons extremes.
- Let us not forget the 11<sup>th</sup> green suffered significant winter damage in 2018 and took many months to recover.

5. New bentgrass greens are more environmentally sustainable as they require less water, less chemical and fertilizer applications and substantially less labour. According to the USGA, golf courses that have converted their greens to bentgrass have experienced a 25-50% reduction in chemical use.

We are confident that we will be successful in keeping the poa from returning. Our consulting golf course agronomist confirmed that implementing the right maintenance practise will result in a minimum amount of poa returning. Several Toronto area clubs rebuilt their greens following a disastrous winter in 2014 and have had great success in maintaining pure bentgrass putting surfaces. These clubs, such as St-Georges, Islington, and Burlington among others have identified how important bentgrass is to reduce risk moving forward and have made it a priority to keep the surfaces as pure as possible. Maintaining bentgrass requires understanding and commitment from both the club and the leaders in the agronomy department, absence of either will result in failure.

We believe rebuilding and expanding our greens will provide golfers with excellent putting surfaces, numerous new hole locations that will be exciting and challenging to play on. Inserting drainage, converting to bentgrass will enable more consistent playing conditions and make us more resilient to mother nature, especially important given our winters and lowering our dependency on pesticides.