

Business Case for a New FlyRC Mower rev. 10/30/20

Background

For many years we paid a Club member a modest fee of \$1,200 per year to mow the field. Two years ago that changed, and entire membership took on the responsibility of mowing. At the time, we didn't have a mower. Fortunately, two members generously donated their used home lawn tractors.

We enjoyed 2 years use from these machines, but more importantly, the Club demonstrated we had the energy to mow the field ourselves. Both machines came to us at a critical time, have served us well and are now nearing end of life.

Why?

In addition to replacing the well-used home tractors with a reliable new machine, a new Zero Turn machine will significantly reduce mowing time. A larger cutting deck (52 versus 42) and faster ground speed (8mph versus up to 5.5mph) will decrease mowing time significantly. As an example, I mowed the field twice in the fall with my 50" Toro Zero Turn, it took about 20 minutes. (Note, cutting tall lush spring grass will take longer) A few weeks later a member mowed using one of our mowers, and it took about 40 minutes. And that was just the field, not the infield where the maneuverability of a Zero Turn will really shine.

How can we afford this?

We will finish this year with over \$6,000 in savings after we pay all our bills, including the rent. This savings comes from generous donations from Club members above the annual dues, underspending the budget, and the AMA field improvement grant. So we have the money to buy a new machine out right, but 0% financing is also available.

What machine?

Ron and I visited several dealers and investigated several machines. We not only shopped for the machine, but also the dealership that would accommodate us and provide the quality service.

Initially we were excited about the new Toro 50" Timer Cutter Zero Turn at \$3,299. While it had a similar name to my Toro machine, it was nowhere near the design and ruggedness and not suitable for our use. Even the dealer admitted it's a low end entry level homeowner zero turn machine.

We also looked at a 52" welded deck Simplicity Zero Turn Courier machine for \$4,299 plus tax. This is very nice machine with all the standard features of a solid residential Zero Turn, but with the added feature of a suspension system. For a little more money we could purchase an upgraded Simplicity model called Courier XT for \$4,999. The XT has larger tires, slightly faster mowing speed (+.5mph), cut & sewed seat with arm rests, additional anti scalping wheels on the mowing deck and commercial Briggs & Stratton engine. Both have a strong fabricated welded mowing deck, reliable engine, hydraulic drive train and rugged frame. With proper care and maintenance, these machines should service us well for many years.

We also looked at the Scag welded deck 52" Liberty Zero Turn. Scag is well known for their commercial machines and entered into the residential market a few years ago with the Liberty line. Overall the Liberty is similar to the Simplicity, same size engines (25hp), same hydraulic drive system (ZT-2800), fabricated welded 52" mowing deck, same size wheels etc. The Simplicity offers two additional features, front and rear suspension which smooths the ride when mowing at fast speed and a removable frame bedplate that allows easy access to the mower deck drive belt plus faster mowing speed (8mph versus 7mph). There was one disappointing discovery on the Scag, the seat is very small and narrow, so much so I couldn't fit in without raising the arm rests. I guess it wasn't designed for full size folks like me.

Simplicity and Scag are both well-regarded US based companies. Simplicity primarily focuses on the residential market with a company history dating back to 1922. Scag has an excellent reputation with commercial machines and entered the residential market a few years ago.

The Simplicity machines come with 3 year residential warrantee and the Scag Liberty with a 5 year residential. While the Scag warrantee is longer, I didn't view this as a game changer

FINANCING

We can obtain 0% financing for 36 months through either company. So if we use the \$1,000 previously donated by Club members and the \$400 AMA Field Grant we received as a down payment, we can finance the remainder over 3 years for about the same amount (\$1,200) we save by mowing the field ourselves. Purchasing a new machine now would allow us to enjoy the benefits already stated and not wait until the current machines fail. As indicated above, we have the funding and the purchase **WILL NOT RESULT IN AN INCREASE OF DUES OR AN ADDITIONAL ASSESSMENT.**

Recommendation

We recommend purchasing a Simplicity Courier 52" Zero Turn for \$4,299 plus tax from Campbell Services in Brookfield Ct. The Simplicity machine is \$700 cheaper than the Scag and has the added features stated above. Campbell Service is a small family owned business located a few miles up the road and has been in business since 1946. The Manger (Colin Campbell) is reputable, very accommodating and we believe would provide good quality service if needed, better than a larger distributor. He also is willing to store the machine through the winter for us. Pictures of the 52" Simplicity Liberty are below, which is considerable larger than the picture shown during the Zoom Club meeting, which was a 32" machine. I didn't have any pictures of a 52" machine at that time.

If we wanted to spend a few exact dollars we could purchase the Simplicity Courier XT for \$4,999. The XT has larger tires, slightly faster mowing speed (+.5mph compared to Courier and +1.5 mph compared to Scag), cut & sewed seat with arm rests, additional anti scalping wheels on the mowing deck and commercial Briggs & Stratton engine. These are all upgrades when compared to the both the Simplicity Courier and Scag Liberty.

Note: These machines are larger than our current lawn tractors and more valuable. This may require some alteration of one of the sheds, most likely just widening the old shed door, and some additional measures to prevent theft. These will be addressed in the future, if purchase is approved.



