



Observations from the Open

There are some who might have the perception that little can be gained by serving as a volunteer crew member at a major golf tournament. After all, isn't it true that these host clubs begin preparations years in advance, they increase the operating budget, and have a commitment from the membership that allows them to do whatever is necessary to shine for that one week in the spotlight? Well, yes, while all of that is true, serving as a volunteer at a major tournament can still be a very rewarding, educational experience.

A couple of small super tips that I learned while working at the U.S. Open at Congressional a few years back have helped my staff shine when we host our annual Member/Guest or Club Championship. Both of the following tips deal with preparing the putting surface for play.

The first tip is the use of a piece of plywood by the individual who sets the pins. The lightweight piece of plywood that was used at Congressional measured approximately four feet by four feet and had a round opening removed to insert the cup cutter where the new hole location was to be placed in the green's surface.

The biggest value of the board is to help prevent any dents, scuffs or other irregularities from being accidentally made on the green's surface. Without this board, as the operator works on the cup, the weight of their body could potentially result in indentations or scuffs and tears on the surface.

The board also allows the employee to place items such as a sand bucket, painting supplies, or the hole liner on the board while they work, without fear of the items causing indentations, or leaving debris on the green's surface.

The second useful tip that I picked up from the

A 4x4 piece of lightweight plywood protects the putting surface during preparations of the U.S. Open at Congressional CC. Photo by Darren Davis.

"Open" and have initiated for our special events, is the use of fine sieved green sand to help mask and smooth poorly repaired ball marks on the greens. By dotting a small amount of green sand in the small voids on the putting surface, there is an aesthetic improvement as well as a smoothing effect, so a golfer's putt is less likely to stray off line.

No, these little tips will probably not make your bermudagrass golf course comparable to a northern golf course with striped bentgrass fairways and four-inch bluegrass roughs with huge stands of large leaf deciduous trees. Nor will they make your greens roll like a finely manicured, tightly mowed bentgrass green; but I am a big believer that the little details such as these go a long way to the enjoyment of a round of golf.

DARREN DAVIS
Olde Florida Golf Club



Adding fine, sieved green sand to ball marks can clean up the appearance of our greens for a major club event. Photo by Darren Davis.