Organic management plan offers best results

To the Editor,

Here at Lahontan Golf Club, we strive to be 100 percent organic through sustainable agriculture, by feeding the soil, not the plant! "Organic golf activists score major victory" GCN April 2002 and "The time for organic golf has arrived" GCN May 2002.

Our results have provided exceptional turf conditions, however, we realize that the definition of organic vs. inorganic can be subjective and is open to discussion. Synthetic vs. organic is easy to understand, but if a golf course over utilizes "organics" to the course, it could still result in leaching and runoff of phosphorus and nitrogen, requiring additional best management practices and mitigation to avoid contamination of waterways. Therefore, through all of this, management is pivotal to success, even if the course is organic.

I think Neil Lewis hits the point on the head by describing an "Organic Management Plan," "That implies the use of non-synthetic fertilizers coupled with a management plan that understands the agriculture of turf grass wholly and holistically."

Take care,

Martyn Hoffmann
DMB/Highlands Group, LLC
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Moss article covered bases

Editor's note: The following is contributed by Kevin Ross' response to Neil Goldberg's letter in last month's issue that raised several questions about Ross' article "Moss hits Colorado hard, more research needed" (GCN April 2002).

To the Editor,

I would like to address a few issues from Neil Goldberg's response and offer additional information concerning the Colorado moss symposium.

Concerning Terracyte, the article did indicate that Terracyte was one of the potential products that looked promising. I also stated, as did Dr. Koski, and Matt Nelson, USGA, at the symposium, that more research is certainly needed. As mentioned above, Terracyte has only been used in university research by Dr. Rossi, with quantifiable results.

The climatic conditions in Colorado are certainly much different than that of Ithaca, N.Y. It appears there will be more research conducted at Colorado State University, led by Dr. Koski, starting this season. This research will be sponsored by the Rocky Mountain Golf Course Superintendents Association.

The purpose of the article was to call attention to a problem that requires additional research and a solution. I interviewed many superintendents at the symposium, and most all stated they went home more confused than when they arrived. This should tell everyone something concerning moss.

In my report I did not find a cure-all for moss, no matter what product it is, and no matter who makes it.

Best regards,

Kevin J. Ross, CGCS
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Uihlein: Golf ball not to blame

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Woods stands 6 feet 2 inches tall, weighs 180 pounds and can bench press in excess of 270 pounds.

Today's chiseled professional athlete who is a member in the U.S. PGA Tour is using longer, lighter drivers with oversized clubheads featuring faces that trampoline at impact. The golf ball does not act alone, conspiracy theories not withstanding. NEWER COURSES WOULD BE A BETTER TEST

The U.S. PGA Tour plays 44 events per year. Since 1960 the USGA Men's Open has been played at 20 different courses. If it is the professional game that we are concerned about and this involves, at best, only 60 to 70 courses annually, why is there a debate that 16,000 golf courses are at risk due to the advances in the golf equipment technology?

In 1960 there were 6,000 golf courses in the United States. Today, there are more than 16,000. Over the past 42 years, more than 10,000 golf courses have been constructed. Since those modern courses have been built anticipating the evolution of technology, why have only two (Bellerive in 1964 and Hazeltine in 1970) been selected to host a USGA Men's Open? Doesn't it seem logical that a modern course would be the best test of the modern player and the modern power game?

Former USGA technical director Frank Thomas stated, "We should not worry about major distance changes in the future because the laws of physics will continue to prevail. Why is his research and viewpoint (www.franklygolf.com) being ignored?"

Each and every equipment rule in place has resulted from a working group and take relationship between the game's rules (the USGA and the R&A) and those who are ruled (the golf equipment manufacturers). We have ideas about the differences, most of it equipment-related changes. Unfortunately, with political white papers and a blatant media bias, the innocent golf ball has already been found guilty of crimes against the game. This situation makes any attempt at discussing where we go from here ineffective.

Walter Uihlein is the president and chief executive officer of the Acushnet Co.

A line in the sand

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safety reasons then construction, growth and maintenance costs increase up to 17 percent. How many developers will be discouraged from including a golf course in their future projects if acreage requirements continue to escalate?

Wally Uihlein's comment recently that the golf industry is flat and "pining in the same recession as the rest of the U.S." is true, but the primary problem is cost. It is a simple equation. The farther players can hit the ball, the more length and width we need for safe and enjoyable golf courses. This additional acreage means more development costs and greater maintenance budgets. These additional expenses are most likely going to be passed on to the golfer in the form of higher greens fees.

Let's hope we are not attempting to roll back the clock on the game. We just want to keep it affordable so golfers of all ages can enjoy it. Making golf more expensive, time consuming, and more intimidating is not the way to grow participation rates.

Damian Pascuzzo is the president of the American Society of Golf Course Architects and is a partner in Graves & Pascuzzo, Ltd., a golf course design and development firm in El Dorado Hills, Calif.

We want to hear from you

Letters to the editor are an integral part of GCN, so let your voice be heard. Send all correspondence to:

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