Golftech develops greens usability mapping system

By ANDREW OVERBECK

CANTON, Ohio — Golftech has developed a greens analysis mapping system that helps courses determine the usability of their putting surfaces. The high-tech maps use GPS and robotic technology to quantify the relationship between slope and speed on a given green. The process identifies what percentage of the green can be used for hole locations.

The system, which has been evaluated by the USGA and used by several courses including Oakmont (Pa.) Country Club and Baltimore (Md.) Country Club, is particularly useful for helping older courses with contoured greens deal with increased green speeds.

“This is high-tech meets hole locations,” said Golftech principal Steve Hatfield. “Courses can find more hole locations and then we give them a map that shows hole locations as a percentage of greens area.”

The accurate maps are a result of Golftech's wheeled robotic total station, which collects data every foot.

“At the second hole at Oakmont, we found that less than two percent of the green was playable,” said Hatfield.

“Once the USGA takes away the 12-foot inside perimeter on a green, they have less than one-half of a percent of the green that is usable for hole locations. They have three options: play it and deal with the consequences of divoting the green or slow it down.”

While no action was taken as a result of the test at Oakmont, the technology has been embraced at Baltimore CC, where architect Keith Foster and builder McDonald and Sons used it to scale back slopes on three greens without altering their original character.

“We had three greens that had severe slopes where we didn't have any pin spots,” said superintendent Tim Kennedy about the 1926 A. W. Tillinghast-designed layout. “We had 9,000 square-foot greens that only had

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Greenside Injection unit customizes applications

By ANDREW OVERBECK

GLASTONBURY, Conn. — BioSafe Systems has developed a Greenside Injection unit to provide economic and convenient chemical injection for problem greens. The system was developed as a device to supply Zerotol to keep greens clean of algae, bacterial and fungal disease, but can also be used to distribute other products labeled for chempigation.

“Everyone has a green that does not respond to their program, this allows superintendents to zero in on the needs of a problematic green,” said John Wynne, BioSafe's director of sales for the turf division. “Whether its algae, anthracnose or LDS, this unit gives them the ability to provide parts of a specialized program for that one micro-environment.”

The below-ground unit is installed in an enclosed box that connects to existing irrigation piping. A control valve and Mazzei injector allows for scheduled and regulated applications that can be controlled through computerized irrigation systems.

“This is direct injection into the greenside loop and you can time the application at the front or the back end of the irrigation cycle,” Wynne said.

The first prototype went in last year at Glastonbury Country Club here and another is being installed.

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JustAir enters subsurface aeration fray

By ANDREW OVERBECK

ST. LOUIS, Mo. — After eight years working in the subsurface aeration installation business, Paul Tabor and Bill Fishburne have started JustAir, a division of Subsurface Technologies, based here. Both previously worked for the former Sub Air Inc., which has since been bought by a group of investors and renamed SubAir Systems (GCN, Jan. 2003).

“We started JustAir last year in the sports field market and in the past six months we have gotten into golf,” said Fishburne.

With their combined field knowledge the pair has "built a better mousetrap" according to Fishburne.

“We have stainless steel vaults that are welded and are waterproof, we have redesigned the directional valving to be more efficient and achieve higher pressures and air volumes and we have stainless steel air and water separators that

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Eastman adds new hover model, wheeled mowers

By ANDREW OVERBECK

PORTLAND, Maine. — Eastman Industries has expanded on its Hover Mower product line and made its first entry into the wheeled mower category with two new models.

The company has been a strong player in the floating mower market since being bought in 1999 by local businessman and former nuclear engineer Nicholas Nikazmerd. At that time, the company was known as Grass Craft, but Nikazmerd re-engineered the mowers and changed the name to Hover Mower.

“We started from new,” said Nikazmerd. “We redesigned the deck and impeller. About

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Maps identify hole locations

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two or three pin spots. At 10 on the Stimpmeter they were too fast, almost unplayable. You could miss an 18-inch putt and have 18 feet coming back."

The goal of the renovation work was to gain an additional three to four pin placements per green by softening the slopes while still retaining the general shape and feel of the greens. As a result, seven- and eight-percent grades were reduced to three- or four-percent grades, but not all parts of the green were modified. This is where Golftech's technology proved priceless.

"We took the slope analysis maps and identified what we could do with minimum disturbance," said Foster. "Once we shot grades we calculated what we were raising and cutting and then blended it all back in together. It doesn't look like I did anything, it all blends in so well."

The push-up greens were carefully dismantled, and the existing sod and profile mix was put back exactly where it was before the renovation work began. "You would be a fool to build a new green," said Foster. "The work is too good. This allows you to respect the early design and modify it ever so slightly and seamlessly."

The new greens will be ready for play later this month. Golftech's maps not only made the renovation process easier, they also helped Kennelly sell the project to his members. "There were a lot of members who thought we were destroying the greens and that they would never be the same," he said. "We needed something to show them what adding the cupping space would do because there was nothing under five-percent slope on the green. When we finish, we are going to do another series of maps to show them how we have softened areas up. We will be able to put pins in places they have not been in 20 years."

Golftech charges $1,500 per green for the mapping service and offers discounts for courses that map than seven or more greens.

Greenside Injection

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at Doylestown Country Club in Warrington, Pa."

"We are putting in a new irrigation system right now," said Doylestown CC superintendent Paul Bevan. "We have one green that gets anthracnose so we are going to try the injector system on that hole. We may put more out there if need be."

Bevan said the system will not only allow him to focus on his trouble green, but it will also save labor.

"If I have to go out there and spray one green, I have to have a guy mix it up, go out and spray it and then rinse out three times," he said. "It ends up being a two- or three-hour ordeal. Also, the injector takes it right out of the bottle, so you are not limited to using Zerotol, you could also use a wetting agent to control hot spots. It's a neat deal."

The Greenside Injector costs $650, takes half a day to install and is customized to each individual green.

"Once you figure out the size of the green, how long the heads are spinning and how many gallons are coming out of the head, the injector is sized for the correct ratio of gallons of concentrate to gallons of water," said Wynne.

Recognizing Environmental Excellence in Golf Course Remodeling and Renovation.

Golf Course News announces a new awards program to recognize the outstanding remodeling or renovation of a golf course. This award will highlight the exceptional collaboration among the golf course architect, builder and superintendent, with special emphasis on environmental enhancement.

With golf course renovation projects on the rise, many organizations and golf courses today are setting ambitious goals for meeting environmental standards. Golf Course News is proud to recognize this effort and will encourage proposals from recently remodeled golf courses and coordinate a panel of judges for this achievement.

Awards will be presented in a gala ceremony at the GCSAA annual meeting to the golf course and its superintendent. Special recognition will be given to the golf course architect, builder, and participating vendors.

Look for details in our June issue on how you can nominate a golf course remodeling project that deserves recognition.